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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

IN THEIR WORDS: TEACHERS' JOURNEYS TO SUSTAINABLE
DIRECT INSTRUCTION IMPLEMENTATION

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

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College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
School of Teacher Education
Educational Studies

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This Dissertation by: Tina Errthum

Entitled: *In Their Words: Teachers' Journeys to Sustainable Direct Instruction Implementation*

as been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education in College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in School of Teacher Education, Program of Educational Studies

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ABSTRACT

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A highly proficient Direct Instruction (DI) teacher is a teacher who is able to demonstrate the effective use of Direct Instruction curriculum and teaching methods, resulting in sustainability and high student achievement. In this qualitative case study investigation, I describe and, when possible, explain how two teachers reflected on the interactions among Direct Instruction curriculum, their teaching practices, and their beliefs to become highly proficient, sustaining Direct Instruction teachers. These two highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers aligned the DI curriculum and teaching practices with their beliefs. This study found that beliefs had more to do with the teachers' self-efficacy or beliefs in themselves than about teaching, student learning, and education in general. It was also found that sustaining a Direct Instruction implementation was not something achieved by teachers. Instead, it is a never-ending cycle of interactions among four key events: learning, achieving, believing, and enjoying. Leaders of Direct Instruction implementations must recognize that the ultimate goal of an implementation is not to solely change the teaching practices of the teacher but to strive for sustainability. This requires on-going professional development and leadership. Hiring individuals with dispositions that would orient them toward a Direct Instruction

approach to teaching could help accelerate the process as would ensuring that entry-level efficacy is high through training and on-going coaching.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finishing a case study is the consummation of a work of art. A few of us will find a case study, excepting our family business, the finest work of our lifetime. Because it is an exercise in such depth, the study is an opportunity to see what others have not yet seen, to reflect the uniqueness of our own lives, to engage the best of our interpretive powers, and to make, even by its integrity alone, an advocacy for those things we cherish. (Stake, 1995, p. 136)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As a Direct Instruction instructional coach, it is my job to train and provide on-going coaching and professional development to teachers using the Direct Instruction curriculum and teaching practices to teach elementary students. I always tell my teachers and paraprofessionals that we are all on the same “DI Journey,” with an end goal of being highly proficient at using Direct Instruction programs and teaching practices to maximize the academic achievement of all students.

We start as non-users and eventually move to different degrees of implementation and understanding. I can rather quickly, as a coach and trainer, move a teacher from a non-user to one who is a routine user. I define a routine user as a teacher who is able to implement all parts of the program. They read and follow the scripts, ask the questions, correct the students’ work, implement the remediation plans, and do what is asked of them. Such routine users have been asked to change their curriculum and teaching practices. Through the high structure embedded in Direct Instruction programs and the support of training and on-going coaching, I have found that teachers can become routine Direct Instruction teachers in a rather short period of time. In fact, Direct Instruction training and coaching models have been developed to determine how one can

most effectively and efficiently change the teaching practices of teachers so they can effectively implement the programs. But that is where my understanding of changing teachers within the Direct Instruction model seems to end.

Once my teachers are at a solid routine level of implementation, they start to spread out with regards to their level of use and effectiveness in teaching the programs to increase student achievement. Some teachers, regardless of my actions (or non-actions) as a coach or leader, stay at the routine level and will do so for as long as they are teaching the programs. I cannot help but note that no matter the amount of support I provide in modeling or coaching, or how much student data we look at (good or bad), some teachers seem content in simply going through the motions of implementing the program (reading the scripts, asking the questions, correcting student work). I find myself annoyed that I cannot change them. After all, I am of the behaviorist mind-set. I know that if the teachers “would just change” their practices, student growth would be off the charts. But I cannot change these teachers. I can predict, however, that when the next curriculum change arrives at the school, these teachers will transition into using the new curriculum without hesitation, forgetting Direct Instruction entirely.

I have other teachers who take to Direct Instruction like a fish to water. They are constantly asking for feedback regarding their implementation. They want to know how they can take the programs and instructional practices to the next level. They will read anything I send them. They are willing to do anything I ask them, often trying ideas out for themselves and reporting back to me how they

modified a part of the program or method to increase the effectiveness with their group of students. They speak highly of the program, its philosophy, and its effectiveness to their colleagues and administration. They are the highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers any administrator would be lucky to have and that all children deserve. These teachers get excited when their students are learning and are constantly trying to figure out ways to accelerate all students' learning. They will see more than average growth in student achievement. These highly proficient DI teachers admit to being hesitant in using any other teaching method or curriculum because they know the power of Direct Instruction. Within minutes of watching these teachers teach, I cannot help but think, "Man. They get it." But what is the "it" that they get? Why is "it" so easy for me to observe but so difficult for me to explain or teach to other teachers using Direct Instruction? Even more, how did these highly proficient DI teachers get so good?

Around the time I was beginning to ask these questions, I came across an article written by Crawford and Saulter (2011). This practitioner-based article offered characteristics of what they refer to as "real" DI teachers with whom they have worked. "Real" DI teachers seemed to have the "it" factor(s) I was seeing in highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. Though the authors were able to suggest common characteristics, they did not address my question as to how these DI teachers got to be so effective. Why does one teacher seem to embrace the programs, methods, and philosophy of Direct Instruction, while another one stays at a routine level of use, not seeming to want to do more than implement the program as he or she has been told to use? Both teachers started as Direct

Instruction non-users. Yet, both teachers have evolved to different degrees of implementation and effectiveness.

As an instructional leader and an advocate for student learning, I want more highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers in the classrooms. Is this within my control? Is there something I could be doing to influence and/or accelerate the process? As I see schools across the country move towards implementing more highly structured programs and teaching methods like Direct Instruction, I cannot help but wonder who these highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers are, how they got to this place in their teaching, and what I might be able to do to encourage and create more teachers like them.

Background

There has been growing recognition that the teacher is the most important factor in student achievement. Large empirical studies have concluded that “differential teacher effectiveness is a strong determinant of differences in student learning” (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 2). Holding teachers accountable for student achievement has been the focus of many change initiatives. Although the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (2002) began as an effort to look at school effectiveness, later modifications included the use of standardized tests to measure the progress of students through eighth grade. In 2010, the Colorado State Legislature passed Senate Bill 191. This bill holds teachers accountable for whether students are learning, basing 50% of a teacher’s evaluation on his or her students’ academic growth as measured partially by test scores. The message from educational leaders, policy makers, and government officials is clear:

“The single largest factor affecting academic growth of populations of students is differences in effectiveness of individual classroom teachers” (Sanders, 1998, p. 24).

Direct Instruction (DI; spelled with a capital D and a capital I) is a highly effective, scientifically research-based, integrated system of curriculum design and instructional techniques used in elementary schools with various populations of students including general education and special education (Adams & Engelmann, 1996).

Although the curriculum and teaching methods of this highly structured, behavioristic approach to instruction were initially developed and researched in the 1960s, with the No Child Left Behind Act commanding the use of empirically validated methodologies, DI has seen a resurgence of interest and implementation in schools across the country in the last 15 years (Barbash, 2011). Over 40 years of research and evaluation studies have been carried out to show that DI has strong, positive effects on student achievement regardless of student population (i.e., general education, special education, English language learners, rural, economically disadvantaged, elementary, and secondary) or content area (i.e., reading, math, language, writing; Adams & Engelmann, 1996; Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003; Schieffer, Marchand-Martella, Martella, Simonsen, & Waldron-Soler, 2002; Stebbins, St. Pierre, Proper, Anderson, & Cerra, 1977; Stockard, 2010, 2011; Stockard & Engelmann, 2010).

Although it is among the most thoroughly tested and proven approaches to teaching in education and it has seen an increase in interest and implementation since the passing of NCLB, Direct Instruction continues to be used by only 2% of K-12 teachers in our country (Barbash, 2011). If such effective teaching practices and curriculum exist, why are they not being used in more schools across the country? Knowing and seeing the

potential for positive impact on student achievement, why are teachers not implementing such effective practices? It is my hypothesis that Direct Instruction is rejected by teachers, not because it does not work—over 40 years of research proves that it does—but because traditional approaches to teaching teachers how to use DI fail to address the interactions among the change dimensions that lead to sustainability. In short, educational leaders fail to engender and align teachers' beliefs with the DI curriculum and the DI teaching practices responsible for student achievement.

Fullan (2007) described the following dimensions of change: (a) the use of new or revised materials (curriculum), (b) the use of new teaching practices or behaviors, and (c) changes in beliefs about how students learn most effectively and, therefore, how teachers should teach. The interactions among these three dimensions determine the strength of sustainability a change initiative will have. Sustainable change is defined as the capacity of an individual, organization, or system to learn; to change and improve; and to maintain and build on the improvements made in education, all leading to an improvement in student learning (Fullan, 2007). Therefore, if we want teachers to achieve high sustainability in their teaching of Direct Instruction, educational leaders must consider and monitor the interactions of the curriculum, the teaching practices, and the beliefs of each teacher.

Sparkes (1991) illustrated the relationship between the three dimensions by creating levels of the change process (see Figure 1). He theorized that teachers who are asked to implement a new curriculum progressed through these different levels. Although the diagram seems to portray change as a linear and invariant progression, Sparkes argued that achieving deeper levels of change (i.e., sustainability) can only

happen if significant movement occurs on all three levels (curriculum, practices, and beliefs). The ultimate goal for each teacher is what he referred to as “real change” or the aligning of one’s curriculum, practices, and beliefs. If all three dimensions or levels are not aligned, the teacher is said to have only made a “superficial change” (Sparkes, 1991).

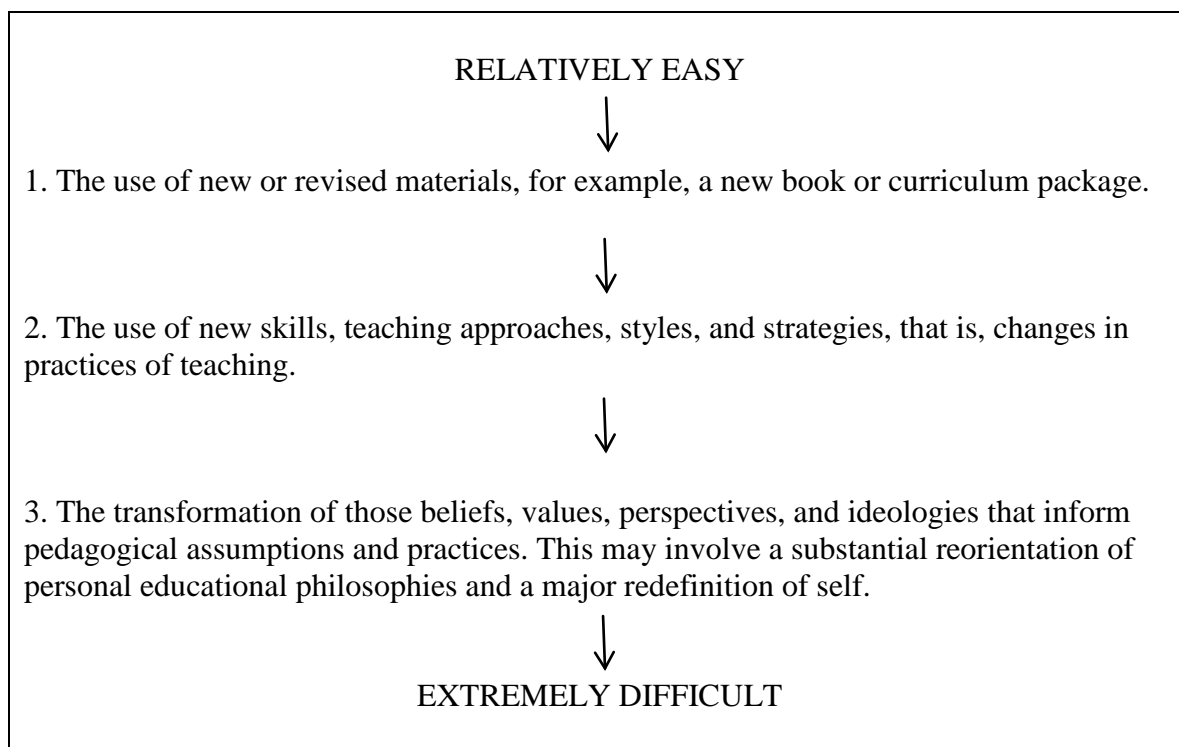


Figure 1. Levels of the change process.

Many reform strategies, including Direct Instruction, emphasize a change in curriculum and teaching practices only. They try to determine and emphasize the criteria for excellence in teaching practices on student performance. According to Sparkes (1991), this would result in a superficial change that will not lead to teacher sustainability because there is no emphasis placed on the third dimension, teaching beliefs.

Direct Instruction researchers (Gersten, Carnine, & Williams, 1982; Gersten, Carnine, Zoref, & Cronin, 1986; Marchand-Martella, Slocum, & Martella, 2004; Siegel, 1974; Siegel & Rosenshine, 1973) have determined specific teaching practices that must be in place to effectively teach Direct Instruction curriculum: set up and preparation (e.g., group organization, use of materials), formats (e.g., follows script, provides clear phrasing, emphasizes key words), signals (e.g., clear signals include “focus” cue), individual turns (e.g., name at end of directive, distributed across students), correction procedures (e.g., response and signal errors corrected), firm up (e.g., does a starting over to ensure mastery), pacing (e.g., quick lesson pace to ensure on-task behavior), and behavior management (e.g., praise provided, point system utilized). These practices are visible and measurable, making it possible to change and reinforce the teaching practices needed to implement the curriculum. As predicted, the findings also supported the notion that there was a positive correlation between the extent to which these prescribed practices are followed and the students’ academic achievement (Gersten et al., 1982, 1986; Siegel, 1974; Siegel & Rosenshine, 1973).

The superficial change of aligning one’s curriculum and teaching practices seems to be illustrated in the first group of teachers from the opening vignette. Crawford and Saulter (2011) confirm the notion of superficial change not being as effective when they state, “Administrators often have a difficult time putting their finger on what is wrong, or what these folks should change...Coaches note that these folks are sort of doing what they’ve been told to do, but somehow it just doesn’t work, it is ineffective” (p. 9). Crawford and Saulter go on to declare that such teachers are not “real” teachers. Sparkes

(1991) would say these teachers have not made a real change in engendering and aligning the Direct Instruction curriculum, their teaching practices, and their beliefs.

There are teachers in schools today, however, that embrace the Direct Instruction model—its philosophy, teaching practices, curriculum, and principles. They are highly proficient DI teachers, teachers who are able to consistently demonstrate their effective use of the DI curriculum and teaching practices, resulting in high student achievement. They are the best of the best in their schools, exhibiting qualities that are often difficult for principals and coaches to describe, but they know it when they see it. These teachers get “it.” Crawford and Saulter (2011) shared 10 visible characteristics of “real” DI teachers, teachers who appear to have gone beyond a superficial change: (a) they are motivated by seeing their students learn; (b) their students know that their success is important to the teacher; (c) they check for understanding more than is written in the script; (d) they give individual turns even when the script does not require it; (e) they are curious about whether their students are getting the right answer; (f) they want to analyze student tests and work for error patterns; (g) they brag about their students to other adults; (h) they want to display the best work their students do; (h) their students want to show their work to the teacher; and (i) their students have pride in their work and want to do their best.

In addition, these highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers often disregard the accepted theory and common practices of most educators in the country. They speak passionately about the effectiveness of the DI programs with their students. They seem to have experienced and embraced an alignment of the DI curriculum, their teaching practices, and their teaching beliefs, a feat many claim to be nearly impossible to do

(Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982). These highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers were the focus of this study.

Need for the Research Study

Currently, there is no research on the relationship between or interactions of Direct Instruction curriculum, practices, and beliefs among highly proficient DI teachers. In this dissertation, I describe and, when possible, explain through case study how two teachers reflected on the interactions among DI curriculum, their teaching practices, and their beliefs to become highly proficient, sustaining users of DI. We know the DI curriculum is effective with students (Adams & Engelmann, 1996; Borman et al., 2003; Schieffer et al., 2002; Stebbins et al., 1977). We know the teaching practices used in implementing the curriculum are research-based, teachable, and measurable (Gersten et al., 1982, 1986; Marchand-Martella et al., 2004; Siegel, 1974; Siegel & Rosenshine, 1973). What we are not sure of is how the three dimensions of change (curriculum, practices, and beliefs) interact to create highly proficient, sustainable DI teachers. In an era when accountability in education is paramount, examining and building the sustainability of effective and efficient teaching methods and curriculum like DI must be understood.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how the Direct Instruction curriculum, practices, and beliefs have interacted and influenced the process of becoming a highly proficient DI teacher. The questions guiding this study dealt with obtaining a deep understanding of the individual teacher's interpretation of this process—experiences, factors, and interactions—unique to each individual teacher, making a

qualitative approach, specifically case study, the most appropriate mode of inquiry. Case study requires a rich, thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the experiences, factors, and interactions of curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs of each highly proficient DI teacher that ultimately lead to sustainability and an increase in student achievement. These detailed descriptions can be accomplished through extensive semi-structured interviews, direct observations of teaching practices, and an analysis of documents and artifacts.

The following questions guided this research:

- Q1 How do Direct Instruction curricula, teaching practices, and beliefs interact to produce a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?
 - a. What factors and experiences, personally and professionally, influenced the proficiency development process for a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?
 - b. How did these factors and experiences interact to facilitate and/or hinder the process?
- Q2 How did a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher make sense of the process of becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?

Operational Definition of Terms

Direct Instruction. Direct Instruction (spelled with a capital D and capital I) is a comprehensive system of instruction that integrates effective teaching practices with curriculum design, monitoring of student progress, and staff development (Stein, Carnine, & Dixon, 1998). Throughout this study, Direct Instruction (DI) is defined as instructional programs developed in the tradition of Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) including commercial programs based on the techniques and sequences established by Engelmann and his colleagues.

Direct instruction. The term direct instruction (spelled with a lower case d and lower case i) refers to a system of instruction that is teacher directed and employs teacher modeling but which does not use the instructional design characteristics espoused by Bereiter and Engelmann (1966).

Highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. A highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher is one who is able to demonstrate the effective use of DI curriculum and teaching methods, resulting in sustainability and high student achievement.

Sustainability. Sustainability is the capacity of an individual, organization, or system to learn, change and improve, and to maintain and build on the improvements made in education, all leading to an improvement in student learning (Fullan, 2007)

Overview of Remaining Chapters

This study is organized by way of six chapters. Chapter I introduced the problem to be investigated, the need for and purpose of the study, the research questions to be answered, and the definitions of operational terms. In the succeeding chapters of this dissertation, I provide a thorough description of the research inquiry. In Chapter II, I present a review of the relevant literature that frames this study. First, I examine Direct Instruction, the research on its effectiveness with students, the teaching practices used by DI teachers, and research on teachers' attitudes toward Direct Instruction. I then consider literature on the change process of teachers, which includes changing teaching practices and beliefs. In Chapter III, I include the methodology and research design, describing the procedures for data collection, data analyses, and trustworthiness used to address each of my research questions. The two individual case studies are presented separately in Chapter IV. In Chapter V, I outline my interpretations of each individual case as well as

the findings of the cross-case comparison. In Chapter VI, I conclude my investigation by discussing the results of the study, the implications for educational professionals, and directions for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To successfully examine the notion of highly proficient Direct Instruction (DI) teachers, it is important to discuss how the dimensions of change (curriculum, practices, and beliefs) develop and interact. In this literature review, I summarize the theory and research that laid a foundation for this case study of highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. This chapter is organized by way of three sections. The first section looks at research specific to Direct Instruction. It defines Direct Instruction and reviews research on its effectiveness on student achievement, its research-based teaching practices, and the attitudes of teachers who use Direct Instruction. The second and third sections synthesize research on the change process. The second section discusses changing teaching practices and a factor that seems to play a part in the process--self-efficacy. The third section discusses changing teaching beliefs and a factor that seems to play a part in the process--cognitive dissonance. This chapter ends with a summary of the change process and the interactions of the dimensions of change for a teacher.

Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction Defined

Although there are similarities, a distinction between direct instruction (spelled with a lowercase d and lowercase i) and Direct Instruction (spelled with a capital D and capital I) must be made. The most general meaning of the term *direct instruction* is any

form of instruction that involves direct interactions between teachers and students. It is synonymous with phrases like teacher-directed instruction, direct teaching, and explicit instruction. It refers to the general instructional procedures used by teachers: high levels of student engagement, an academic focus, structured teacher-student interactions, carefully sequenced and structured materials, clear goals, specific time allocations for instruction, defined content coverage, student performance monitoring, and immediate, and academic oriented feedback (Rosenshine, 1986). Such methods have been proven effective in teaching economically disadvantaged primary students (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986).

Direct Instruction (DI), the focus of this study, is a highly effective, scientifically research-based, integrated system of curriculum design and effective instructional techniques used in elementary schools with various populations of students including general education and special education (Adams & Engelmann, 1996). Direct Instruction is a very specific instructional model consisting of specific teaching techniques and curriculum sequences (programs). It emphasizes well developed and carefully planned lessons designed around small learning increments with clearly defined and prescribed teaching tasks. The purpose of DI is to teach subject matter efficiently so all students learn all the material in a minimum amount of time. This is accomplished by developing and field testing instructional techniques through fast-paced, scripted, well-sequenced, rule-based, and highly structured and focused programs. Students are instructed in small, homogeneous groups of 8 to 12 children. They are given several opportunities to respond in unison as a group, as well as individually, with immediate feedback by the teacher using a specific correction procedure.

According to the authors of Direct Instruction, the single most decisive factor in students' performance is the instruction they receive from their teachers. Direct Instruction's philosophy is that if a child fails to learn, a teacher has failed to teach (Engelmann & Carnine, 1991). Because of this philosophical belief, the DI model attempts to control every variable in the teaching environment that makes a difference in how a child performs. The scripts tell teachers what to say and do, providing a clear and unambiguous communication plan between the teacher and students. By controlling every strategy, tactic, and specific technique used, DI programs and teachers are able to effectively accelerate student learning by teaching subject matter in a minimum amount of time (Engelmann, 1980).

Direct Instruction and Student Achievement

The research base for Direct Instruction is solid, confirming its positive effects on student learning (Adams & Engelmann, 1996; Borman et al., 2003; Schieffer et al., 2002; Stebbins et al., 1977). Such evidence comes from over 40 years of experimental studies that validate the principles and theory underlying Direct Instruction. For example, Project Follow Through (Stebbins et al., 1977), the largest federally funded educational study, concluded that Direct Instruction was the only model (out of nine) that demonstrated significant positive outcomes in the areas of basic skills, cognitive thinking, and student affect among economically disadvantaged elementary students. It was concluded that the DI model was the only one to be "generally effective in raising the achievement of Follow Through children to a level comparable with national norms" (Stebbins et al., 1977, pp. A168-A169).

In addition, small-scale pilot studies and comprehensive evaluations have documented and demonstrated the effectiveness of Direct Instruction programs and instructional techniques in various classroom settings. For example, one of DI's reading programs has been systematically investigated in a number of studies to prove its effectiveness with all subgroups of students (Adams & Engelmann, 1996; Schieffer et al., 2002). An effect size of .69 was found after a meta-analysis of 44 studies using DI reading programs was conducted (Adams & Engelmann, 1996), showing strong educational significance equivalent to a 10-point increase on an IQ scale. Twenty-five non-Follow Through studies were reviewed in 2002 indicating positive outcomes for all populations of students (Schieffer et al., 2002). Recent research findings continue to validate the effectiveness of DI programs and teaching practices with a variety of student populations across reading, math, and language (Stockard, 2010, 2011; Stockard & Engelmann, 2010).

The Direct Instruction model and reading programs have been recognized over the years as a model and programs that work. For example, in the late 1990s, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) released reports on effective models or reading programs based on independent evaluations of student performance, replication across a number of sites, and evidence of available support for implementation. It identified DI as one of seven promising programs for teaching reading and language arts (AFT, 1998a), DI as one of six school reform programs (AFT, 1998b), and one of five programs chosen as an effective reading intervention (AFT, 1999). In 1999, the American Institutes of Research (AIR; Herman, 1999) concluded that DI was one of only three approaches that could show strong evidence of positive outcomes on student achievement after an

independent review of literature on 24 prominent school-wide reform approaches was completed. A 2003 meta-analysis by the Center for Research (Borman et al., 2003) on the education of students placed at risk listed DI among the top three models, out of 29 studied, to show the strongest evidence of effectiveness.

Direct Instruction and Teaching Practices

The principles and procedures of the specific teaching practices for Direct Instruction were developed prior to the model's curriculum (Bereiter & Engelmann, 1966). Research findings on DI teaching practices consistently reinforced the necessity of having these principles and procedures in place to effectively teach DI curriculum (Gersten et al., 1982, 1986; Marchand-Martella et al., 2004; Siegel, 1974; Siegel & Rosenshine, 1973). The authors of these studies conducted formal observations of teachers implementing the prescribed teaching practices of DI. Rates and frequencies of critical practices were recorded and analyzed to determine the significance of such practices on the achievement of the students. These critical DI teaching practices were divided into eight hierarchical categories: set up and preparation (e.g., group organization, use of materials), formats (e.g., follows script, provides clear phrasing, emphasizes key words), signals (e.g., clear signals, include "focus" cue), individual turns (e.g., name at end of directive, distributed across students), correction procedures (e.g., response and signal errors corrected), firm up (e.g., does a starting over to ensure mastery), pacing (e.g., quick lesson pace to ensure on-task behavior), and behavior management (e.g., praise provided, point system utilized). These practices are teachable, visible, and measurable, making it possible to change and reinforce teaching practices needed to implement the curriculum.

The findings supported the notion that Direct Instruction teaching practices affect student achievement. The extent to which teachers adhere to the prescribed practices affects the level of achievement of the students (Gersten et al., 1982, 1986; Siegel, 1974; Siegel & Rosenshine, 1973). Therefore, DI experts insist on the importance of teachers receiving training and on-going support and professional development before and during the implementation of the programs (Marchand-Martella et al., 2004; Siegel, 1974). The ineffectiveness of DI often times indicates a lack of training of the teaching practices or not adhering to the program's procedures for implementation.

Direct Instruction and Teacher Belief

Only a small number of studies have been published addressing the attitudes of teachers implementing Direct Instruction. Most of these studies concluded that increasing competence in using the curriculum and seeing student progress were key factors in changing from a negative attitude to a more positive attitude toward DI (Becker, 1984; Gersten et al., 1986; Schug, Tarver, & Western, 2001). None of these studies examined beliefs of DI teachers, how beliefs were formed, how they changed, or how the beliefs interacted with related practices and curriculum.

Early studies asked whether educators liked using Direct Instruction and whether they found it effective (Ogletree & DiPasalegne, 1975; Ogletree & Ogletree, 1976). These studies found that although the majority of teachers found DI to be effective, over half of the teachers in both studies said they would use a different reading method if given the choice. Two studies looked at the attitudes of teachers using DI as part of a large scale implementation study (Gersten et al., 1986; Schug et al., 2001). Both concluded that the teachers' training and experience using DI affected their attitudes and

understanding. The use of DI over a period of time, along with increased understanding of the components of DI, produced significant positive change in the teachers' attitudes.

Bessellieu, Kozloff, and Rice (2000) noted that the inaccurate perceptions of Direct Instruction were often due to a lack of direct experience with the materials and their classroom applications. After DI programs were used by 83 teachers in an affluent school district, teachers expressed positive attitudes toward DI, its benefit to students, to themselves, and expressed a desire to use the programs in the future.

Two of the studies looked at the attitudes of pre-service teachers and recent graduates of a special education preparation program (Cossairt, Jacob, & Shade, 1990; Proctor, 1989). Both found that satisfaction and positive attitudes toward Direct Instruction increased after supervised, field-based experience. However, Proctor (1989) found that although 97% of the teacher candidates saw the effectiveness of DI in student learning, only 67% said they would use it in their own classrooms.

In her dissertation, Wilson (2000) attempted to identify reasons why some teachers have negative attitudes toward Direct Instruction. The negative attitudes she found were consistent with often cited criticisms of DI (Tarver, 2004): Direct Instruction stifles teachers professionally, teachers are not always informed about DI before being asked to implement it, scheduling and other logistics of the implementation process are disruptive, DI is deemed to not be appropriate for certain students, and teachers feel devalued as professionals by the level of the program's specificity for teacher behaviors.

The Change Process

In all, Direct Instruction is visibly, conceptually, and theoretically different from common practices and thinking around teaching and student learning. When educational

leaders choose to implement such a highly effective, yet different model for teaching, it requires change at all levels of the educational system. Looking at the change process at all levels of the educational system is important when trying to increase student achievement. However, the only way to accomplish the changes we need in student achievement is through intense focus on improving classroom practice. In other words, change will only occur through intense focus on the teacher; “educational change depends on what teachers do and think—it’s as simple and as complex as that” (Fullan, 2007, p. 129). Therefore, when teachers are asked to implement DI, leaders must be very purposeful in understanding and supporting the teachers through the change process.

Research on supporting teachers through the change process is often a focus for educational leadership because it is believed that under the right leadership and guidance, teachers will be more accepting of the changes they are asked to make (Fullan, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Hall & Hord, 2011; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). These research findings seem to make a distinction between two types of changes teachers can experience when implementing new curriculum or methodology: a change in the teacher’s practices and a change in the teacher’s beliefs. Along with curriculum, Fullan (2007) describes these as the dimensions of change: (a) the use of new or revised materials (curriculum), (b) the use of new teaching practices or behaviors, and (c) changes in beliefs about how students learn most effectively and, therefore, how teachers should teach. All three play a role in the change process; all three must be considered and monitored when a teacher is asked to make a change.

The Change Process: Changing Teaching Practices

Models of change are often created to help assess change at a macro level, the level at which most leaders view their organizations. These models can reveal why change occurs, how change will occur, and what will occur. There are models for change at all levels of an organization regardless of field. For example, psychologists have developed a cognitive-behavioral change continuum known as the Stages of Change model (SOC; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992) as a basis for developing behavior change intervention strategies (e.g., smoking cessation, exercise, substance abuse, and a variety of other problem behaviors). The first stage of change is called the pre-contemplation stage. This is when a person has no intention to change. Subsequently, something may happen that leads the individual to consider change and to form an intention to change—this is the contemplation stage. When this positive intention leads to initial behavioral efforts (often inconsistent), the person is considered to be in the preparation stage. When these efforts become reliable and the behavior is performed consistently, the person is in the action stage. Finally, after a person has been in the action stage for a given amount of time (usually six months), they are considered to be in maintenance.

The general appeal of these types of models is that instead of seeing change as a dichotomy, action or inaction, a person is seen as progressing through a stage sequence. By better understanding exactly where a person is in the change process, a better intervention for that person can be customized and provided to meet his or her current needs.

Educational leaders have created similar stage models of change to support teachers as they are asked to change curriculum or their teaching practices. These models attempt to explain and support teachers as they go through what is defined as a linear, unidirectional progression in changing their teaching practices. It is concluded by some that changing teaching practices is the first step in influencing student achievement (Guskey, 2002). Therefore, much of the research on teacher change focuses on determining the criteria and observable teaching practices needed to affect student achievement (Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1979).

For example, building on earlier research completed by Fuller (1969) on the concerns expressed by pre-service teachers, Hall and Hord's (2011) Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) is used by change facilitators to help individual teachers and schools involved in school improvement process. The Stages of Concern is a diagnostic dimension of CBAM that identifies seven stages of concerns (reactions, feelings, perceptions, and attitudes) practicing teachers often express and go through while implementing a new innovation. The Levels of Use is another diagnostic dimension of CBAM that identifies eight stages teachers go through as they change their practices to better align with the curriculum or innovation change.

Guskey's (2002) Model of Teacher Change suggested that the only way a change in a teacher's beliefs will occur is if the professional development opportunity seeks first to change the teacher's practices. After the teacher has changed his or her practices, he or she will see a positive change in student learning outcomes, which will then lead to a change in the teacher's beliefs. This is because teachers seldom commit to new instructional approaches or innovations until they have seen it work in *their* classroom

with *their* students. According to Guskey, the key to changing a teacher's belief is clear evidence of improvement in students' learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes can only be changed if the teacher changes what he or she is doing in the classroom (teaching practices; Guskey, 2002).

Many reform strategies, including Direct Instruction, emphasize structures, formal requirements, and evidence-based strategies, thus dealing with the curriculum and teaching practices dimensions. Strategies that focus on changing the teacher's practices in the classroom have been the rationale for high-quality or research-based professional development programs: trainings and workshops, instructional coaching, and on-going support from principals, consultants, instructional coaches, and other educational leaders. In fact, an instructional coach is defined as an on-site professional developer who teaches teachers how to use proven teaching practices effectively (Knight, 2005).

Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as "the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce outcomes" (p. 193). Self-efficacy is believed to be the most important characteristic and motivational force that determines a person's behavior change. Unless the person believes he or she has the necessary skills and abilities to perform the behavior in the first place, people cannot be expected to engage or even form intentions to engage in a behavior (Pajares, 2002). It is a future-oriented belief about the level of competence a person expects he or she will display in a given situation. In education, teacher efficacy is a type of self-efficacy that has been defined as "the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance" (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977, p. 137).

Individuals who feel they will be successful on a given task are more likely to have high self-efficacy because they adopt and pursue challenging goals, try harder to achieve them, persist despite adversity or temporary setbacks, and develop coping strategies for dealing with their emotions (Bandura, 1986). Given the pivotal role of self-efficacy beliefs in understanding human behavior, it is important to understand how these beliefs are formed, especially for teachers. Bandura (2001) identified four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, physiological and emotional arousal, vicarious experiences, and verbal persuasion.

Mastery experiences. Mastery experiences are the most powerful source of efficacy information because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can master whatever it takes to succeed in a particular field or endeavor (Bandura, 1977; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Bandura (1977) described the development of efficacy through personal mastery experiences:

Successes raise mastery expectations; repeated failures lower them, particularly if the mishaps occur early in the course of events. After strong efficacy expectations are developed through repeated success, the negative impact of occasional failures is likely to be reduced. Indeed, occasional failures that are later overcome by determined effort can strengthen self-motivated persistence if one finds through experience that even the most difficult obstacles can be mastered by sustained effort. The effects of failure on personal efficacy therefore partly depend on the timing and the total pattern of experiences in which the failures occur. (p. 195)

It is cyclical in nature; as the proficiency of a performance creates a new mastery experience, it serves as a new source of self-efficacy that either confirms or refutes existing self-efficacy beliefs. When individuals succeed in the accomplishment of a task, they have confidence to attempt and expect to succeed in a like task in the future without

external influence. Thus, there is a need for entry-level efficacy to be high in new, demanding situations, i.e., participants' doubts about success will be greatly reduced.

Mastery experiences that contribute to higher teaching efficacy can include witnessing student learning. Teachers acknowledge that students learned the skill or concept that was taught to them through the new curriculum or teaching method. Such clear evidence of improvement in their students' learning outcomes increases the efficacy of the teacher, possibly leading to a change in his or her beliefs (Guskey, 2002).

Physiological and emotional arousal. The human body often provides clues of emotion that may not be evident to an observer. The level of physiological and emotional arousal a person experiences in a situation adds to self-perceptions of competence and self-efficacy. People rely partly on their state of physiological arousal in judging their anxiety and vulnerability to stress. If a teacher is experiencing fear or a heightened state of arousal, it is often due to feeling a lack of competence (Bandura, 1977). Arousal, such as elevated heart and respiratory rate, increased perspiration, or trembling hands, may have enabling or debilitating effects on a teacher, depending on whether the situation is seen as a challenge or a threat (Gregoire, 2003). If it is seen as a threat, the teacher will often times avoid or resist the change. The opposite can be true. Feelings of relaxation and positive emotions can signal self-assurance and the anticipation of future success. Moderate levels of arousal can often improve performance by focusing attention and energy on the task. The more positive feelings a teacher has, the more likely he or she will embrace the change.

Vicarious experiences. Vicarious experiences occur when one sees others successfully perform the activity they are contemplating (Bandura, 1977). People

actively seek proficient models who demonstrate the competencies to which they aspire. A conception of how a new behavior pattern is formed is achieved when watching others. They are then able to persuade themselves that if others can do it, they should be able to achieve improvement in their performance. In addition, teachers often have to compare their capabilities in relation to the performance of others because teaching lacks absolute measures of adequacy (Bandura, 1997). Such observations must be done skillfully so the teacher is watching a strong teacher model a lesson or teaching strategy that is broken into easy-to-implement steps. This helps increase learning and decreases potential resistance. Obviously, the more the teacher can see similarities between the model and his or her own teaching, the more likely the teacher will develop the belief that he or she can master comparable activities. Likewise, when a teaching model fails, the teacher may see the teaching task as out of reach.

Verbal persuasion. Finally, verbal persuasion positively affects self-efficacy when one is led to believe he or she can successfully cope with what may have previously been overwhelming. It is the collective voice of friends, colleagues, supervisors, and administrators who strengthen a person's belief that he or she is capable of achieving a desired level of performance. In schools, teachers often receive verbal persuasion in the form of professional development workshops that provide knowledge of a new strategy as well as persuasive claims about its usefulness. This knowledge and understanding of the theoretical perspective can increase technical competence. Conceptually, they know why they are doing something and to what end. Understanding the rationale of something can be difficult but in the end will have a greater impact. Teachers may also receive verbal persuasion in the form of specific feedback or encouragement from a

supervisor or colleague to convince them they can successfully implement a new teaching practice or curriculum. The power of persuasion depends on the credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise of the persuader (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, persuasion of one's personal competence must be associated with conditions to facilitate effective performance; otherwise, it will most likely lead to failure that discredits the persuader and negatively affects the person's self-efficacy.

The Change Process: Changing Teaching Beliefs

The study of teachers' beliefs is tricky because of their multi-dimensionality. Not only do they appear to be a multi-faceted and nonlinear in their development, they are also a messy construct to define and study (Pajares, 1992). Educational philosophers and anthropologists define beliefs as a proposition or statement of relation among things accepted as true. To accept a proposition as true is to value it in some way for logical, empirical, social, or emotional reasons (Eisenhart, Shrum, Harding, & Cuthbert, 1988). A belief is a way to describe a relationship between a task, an action, an event, another person, and an attitude of a person toward it. With this, it is argued that most of a teacher's professional knowledge can be regarded more accurately as a belief because knowledge is a belief that has been affirmed as true on the basis of objective proof or consensus of opinion (Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). What a teacher believes tends to be real and true to them. This knowledge (beliefs) guides their decision-making, their behavior, interactions, priorities, and goal setting. The beliefs determine what is ignored, valued, emphasized, or not examined. Beliefs create meaning for teachers and teachers will interpret ambiguous situations in ways that are consistent with their beliefs (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992).

Brophy and Good (1974) postulated that a better understanding of teachers' belief system or conceptual base significantly contributes to enhancing educational effectiveness because such beliefs affect one's actions or practices in the classroom. The powerful effects of beliefs are more useful in understanding and predicting how teachers make decisions and behave than any amount of knowledge they may have (Ernest, 1989). Unlike teaching practices, beliefs do not seem to be linear in development. Instead, beliefs are highly complex and dynamic. They tend to be a multifaceted, interconnected, overlapping series of processes, obstacles, and influences. Many classifications of teachers' beliefs can be examined. For example, teachers have beliefs about schooling and the purpose of education. Teachers will also have beliefs about learning and epistemology, teachers and teaching, academic content, and students and student learning. The most central classification of beliefs are the beliefs teachers have of themselves—who they are in relation to curriculum, colleagues, and students; their perceived strengths and weaknesses; values; self-efficacy; and matters about which they feel responsible.

Research findings suggest that teacher beliefs are formed and developed through a process of enculturation and social construction. The most influential factor on a teacher's beliefs is his or her personal experiences as students. Lortie (1975) describes this powerful phenomenon as the "apprenticeship of observation," in which the majority of teachers teach similarly to the way they were taught by their own teachers. They have spent thousands of hours in classrooms as students, internalizing models of good and poor teaching. Although teacher education programs and student teaching experiences can affect the belief structures of pre-service teacher candidates, candidates bring these

well-established, highly resistant to change beliefs about education to their programs.

Finally, teachers' beliefs can be influenced through the subculture of teaching itself, his or her school, colleagues, and the professional organizations in which he or she participates.

Once beliefs are formed, they become resistant to change because early experiences strongly influence practices that are consistent and reinforce original beliefs. In fact, the earlier the belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter; these beliefs subsequently affect perception and strongly influence the processing of new information. As noted by Guskey (2002), when one attempts to challenge or change beliefs, resistance is inevitable. Beliefs do not tend to change even when it is logical or necessary for them to do so (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Therefore, teachers tend to act according to their beliefs. When their beliefs align with the curriculum and teaching practices they are being asked to implement, such a congruency influences the likelihood that a change will be made, thus having an even greater impact on student learning.

Because student learning is the ultimate goal, understanding the beliefs of teachers, how they are formed, and how they are changed is the initial and most important step in initiating and integrating sustainable change among teachers (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Beliefs represent the most difficult and most substantial change to achieve because they involve the process of challenging the core values held by individuals regarding the purpose of education (Fullan, 2007).

Conceptual Change

Conceptual change is the process by which an individual changes his or her beliefs and understandings about a concept or skill. The term conceptual change is credited to Thomas Kuhn's (1970) description of theory change in science that occurs during a paradigm shift. Paradigms are central commitments that serve as the background and foundation from which one deals with problems (Kuhn, 1970). The notion of conceptual change, however, is traced back to Piaget's (1952) distinction between assimilation and accommodation.

Assimilation is the process of adding new knowledge onto one's existing knowledge. Teachers can come to a learning situation with little prior knowledge or with knowledge that is consistent with the new situation. In these conditions, assimilation occurs relatively easily because the learning is considered an additive process. He or she adds new information to knowledge structures and assumptions that will remain relatively unchanged. However, when a teacher alters the basic structure of his or her knowledge or beliefs after being exposed to new ideas, accommodation is said to have occurred. This results in a different way of seeing the world, modifying the central commitments, because the new ideas usually directly conflict with what he or she knew or believed previously. Kuhn (1970) described this kind of conceptual change as a paradigm shift.

Educational psychologists have taken the premise of assimilation and accommodation to study not only the learning process of students but also that of teachers. One of the most influential models of conceptual change learning came from teachers' attempts to promote scientific revolutions in the thinking of young learners

(Posner et al., 1982). These researchers noted that learners seemed to demonstrate strong resistance to adopting (or accommodating) scientific modes of thoughts even with the best efforts of instruction. With that, Posner et al. (1982) described the conditions they believed were necessary to affect change in beliefs. First, the teacher must be dissatisfied with existing conceptions. In essence, they must lose faith in their current ability to solve the problem. Teachers are unlikely to make major changes in their beliefs until they believe less radical changes will not work, ones in which they can assimilate to their current belief structure. Next, the new conception must be intelligible. The teacher must be able to see how the current experience could be sufficiently supported by a new concept. If they cannot picture it happening, they will struggle with making the change. Third, the new conception must appear initially plausible. Before a belief or understanding will change, it must appear to have the ability to solve the problem. Finally, the new concept should suggest the possibility of a fruitful research program. The new belief should have the potential to be studied and extended. It is not just specific to the current situation or event but can be seen as a possibility across many situations and events moving forward.

Conceptual change is not necessarily an abrupt change. In fact, for many, it is accommodation. Accommodation is the process of taking a small step toward the new belief by accepting some of its claims. Then other ideas are gradually modified to more fully realize the meaning and implication of these new commitments. Many times, accommodation occurs only after some failed attempts at assimilating the knowledge or belief are worked through. It may also involve many false starts and mistakes along with frequent reversals of direction. It rarely seems to be characterized by either a flash of

insight or a steady logical progression from one belief to another (Posner et al., 1982).

This suggests that when a teacher makes a conceptual change, interactions of curriculum, practices, and beliefs will occur.

Cognitive Dissonance

When teachers are asked to change curriculum or teaching practices, there can be a lack of procedural and theoretical clarity regarding the nature of the innovation and what its implications are for practice. This uncertainty can lead to resistance or avoidance because a physiological and emotional arousal has instilled fear in the teacher, making them question their ability to perform the task. They might see that their current beliefs do not work in the context of serving a specific student population, teaching a specific concept, or enacting desired outcomes. Their beliefs regarding teaching, learning, or their ability do not align with what they are being asked to do. They find themselves stressed, doubtful, anxious, or even threatened. These are examples of teachers being faced with cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957).

Cognitive dissonance refers to the conflict one feels when faced with a new attitude, behavior, or belief that is in conflict with an existing one. This conflict produces a feeling of discomfort or imbalance, leading one to alter his or her attitudes, behaviors, or beliefs to reduce the discomfort and restore equilibrium. Cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) suggests that as humans, we have an inner drive to hold onto all our attitudes and beliefs and to avoid disharmony (or dissonance). It is based on three fundamental assumptions. First, humans are sensitive to inconsistencies between behaviors and beliefs. Next, recognition of this inconsistency causes dissonance and motivates an individual to resolve the dissonance. Finally, dissonance is resolved in one

of three basic ways: changing one's beliefs, changing one's behaviors, or changing one's perception of behavior (rationalizing one's behavior differently). Dissonance can be reduced by "mentally devaluing the importance of the content or the effectiveness of the methods in question" (Wheatley, 2002, p. 7). When a person resolves dissonance by changing his or her perception of behavior, he or she could ignore or reject the data, exclude it from the domain of his or her belief, or make slight modifications to it so he or she is able to retain the original belief. This way of dealing with dissonance can be seen when an individual displays avoiding or resistant behaviors.

As noted earlier, undergoing a true belief change is the most difficult part of the change process. Research findings indicated that all real change requires loss, anxiety, and struggle (Marris, 1975). In other words, for a teacher to experience real change, there must be moments of resistance, doubt, or struggle during the change process. The teacher must experience cognitive dissonance. Hofer and Pintrich (1997) agreed, proposing that in order for beliefs to change, a person "must be dissatisfied with the existing beliefs, must find the alternatives intelligible and useful, and must see a way to connect new belief with earlier conceptions" (p. 123).

Wheatley (2002) believed that such doubts are not only beneficial but necessary if a teacher is going to experience true conceptual change. He stated that though positive teacher efficacy is important to the overall effectiveness of the teacher, one must be careful not to assume that a teacher experiencing uncertainty or doubt in his or her efficacy was negative. Cognitive dissonance can occur when a teacher is presented with new curriculum or teaching practices. The easiest way for a teacher to decrease the dissonance is to largely or entirely avoid the teaching practices or curriculum that caused

stress. It is critical that teachers and educational leaders recognize that doubts about one's efficacy are sometimes beneficial rather than problematic. Such doubts can be an indication of a teacher making a conceptual change, possibly leading them to a point of aligning their curriculum, practices, and beliefs.

The Change Process: The Interaction of Curriculum, Practices, and Beliefs

It is believed that change process among teachers involves an interaction and alignment of curriculum, practices, and beliefs. Clark and Peterson (1986) stated that understanding teachers' beliefs and practices should give us a better understanding of how these two interact to increase or inhibit students' academic performance. As teachers move toward aligning their teaching practices and beliefs, they are more effective in the classroom. For example, Roehrig, Turner, Grove, Schneider, and Liu (2009) found that teachers who demonstrated congruency in teaching practices and beliefs were more effective in the area of student engagement than those who had mismatches between practices and beliefs.

Sparkes (1991) argued that achieving deeper levels of change (i.e., sustainability) only happened if significant movement occurred with all three dimensions of change (curriculum, practices, and beliefs):

Even if changes do take place in their practices this does not mean that teachers will necessarily challenge or begin to change the ideologies and beliefs that inform their educational practices...or their relationships with children...If we are to talk of real change then a key dimension for consideration is the transformation of beliefs, values, and ideologies held by teachers that inform their pedagogical assumptions and practices. (p. 2)

From this perspective, the ultimate goal for each teacher is real change or aligning one's curriculum, practices, and beliefs.

As noted earlier, conceptual change, or change in one's beliefs, is the most difficult dimension to change. It is not sudden nor does it seem to follow a steady logical progression. The interaction of curriculum, practices, and beliefs will be different for each teacher depending on his or her personal experiences and how each experience is interpreted by the teacher. However, understanding the interactions and attempt to align them might be an essential step in understanding how teachers become highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the procedures I used to observe, describe, and analyze the interaction of Direct Instruction curriculum, practices, and beliefs among highly proficient DI teachers. To describe the research procedures for this study, I used Crotty's (1998) framework to present the epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. Two theoretical perspectives were used for this investigation: interpretivism and Sparkes's (1991) theory of change. Interpretivism was treated as a macro-theoretical perspective, while the theory of change was an academic theory used to support interpretivism. The methodology for this study was case study. More specifically, it was a multiple case study with a cross case comparison. The methods section details gaining access, participant selection, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, findings and data representation, and researcher stance.

Epistemology: Social Constructionism

An epistemology is "a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). Social constructionism, the epistemological framework used in this study, claims that meaning is constructed by individuals as they interact with their social worlds in a complex and subtle process of enculturation (Crotty, 1998). It claims that the way in which we meaningfully view the world is through the lenses of the

culture in which we live. Though individuals may make sense of the world in different ways, culture has such a hold on us that “we tend to take ‘the sense we make of things’ to be ‘the way things are’” (Crotty, 1998, p. 59). Because it gives us a definite view of the world, culture should be seen as a source of human thought and behavior rather than the result. Since the focus of this study was to understand the interactions and possible alignment of curriculum, practices, and beliefs, one must consider how culture influenced this as a new meaningful reality for the teacher emerged. Education in our country has an established culture--one we depend on to direct our practices and organize our experiences. This educational culture must be considered when attempting to understand interactions of curriculum, practices, and beliefs among highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers.

Theoretical Perspectives: Interpretivism and Theory of Change

Crotty (1998) defines the theoretical perspective of a research study as the “philosophical stance lying behind a methodology” (p. 66). Researchers bring forth certain beliefs and assumptions to their research. Such assumptions are grounded in theoretical perspectives. These perspectives serve the research in shaping “how we formulate our problem and research questions to study and how we seek information to answer the questions” (Creswell, 2013, p. 18). In short, theoretical perspective is “a way of looking at the world and making sense of it” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). In this study, two theoretical perspectives were used as lenses for exploring highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. At the macro level, I used interpretivism. The academic theoretical perspective I used to support interpretivism was Sparkes’s (1991) theory of change.

Interpretivism is a theoretical perspective that attempts to explain human and social reality. The goal of interpretivism is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation. Interpretivism acknowledges that such realities are often influenced by social and historical factors. So instead of starting from a specific theoretical stance, I developed a pattern of meaning from what participants said or did in their life and work settings. Because there was no established theory or defined pattern regarding how highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers' curriculum, practices, and beliefs interact and/or align, it was critical that these teachers' experiences and perceptions served as the foundation of this study.

The academic theoretical perspective used in this study was Sparkes's (1991) theory of change for teachers who have been asked to implement a curriculum. Building on Fullan's (2007) dimensions of change (curriculum, teaching practices, and teaching beliefs), Sparkes created "levels" of the change process (see Figure 1 in Chapter I). He theorized that teachers who are asked to implement a new curriculum progressed through these different levels. Although the diagram seemed to portray change as a linear and invariant progression, Sparkes argued that achieving deeper levels of change (i.e., sustainability) is extremely difficult unless significant movement occurs on all three levels (curriculum, practices, and beliefs). The goal for each teacher is what he referred to as real change or an aligning of curriculum, practices, and beliefs. If the three dimensions are not aligned, the teacher is said to have only made a superficial change:

Even if changes do take place in their practices this does not mean that teachers will necessarily challenge or begin to change the ideologies and beliefs that inform their educational practices...or their relationships with children...If we are to talk of real change then a key dimension for consideration is the transformation of beliefs, values, and ideologies held by teachers that inform their pedagogical assumptions and practices. (Sparkes, 1991, p. 2)

By using Sparkes's theory of change, I articulated how these dimensions of change interacted with one another among two highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers.

Methodology: Case Study

"Different ways of viewing the world shape different ways of researching the world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 66). With this in mind, the methodology used in this study was case study. Creswell (2013) defined case study research as

a qualitative research approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case themes. (p. 97)

The hallmark of case study is that it presents an in-depth understanding of the case. Case study researchers primarily ask "how" and "why" questions that are more explanatory and help get closer to the essence of the phenomena they are researching (Yin, 2009). Understanding "how" and "why" curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs interact among highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers was the purpose of this study. To have an in-depth understanding of this case, multiple sources of data were collected to provide a rich description. The thick description that characterizes case study allows readers to learn vicariously through narrative (Geertz, 1973).

The first step in case study research is to identify the case—the bounded system, the unit of analysis—to be investigated (Merriam, 2009). The case I wanted to provide an in-depth understanding was identifiable and had boundaries—highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers.

The second step is to consider the type of case study that would be most useful in helping provide an in-depth understanding of the case. This study was a multiple case

study with cross case comparison. I selected two individual teachers to allow for multiple perspectives regarding being a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. I chose two individuals because I wanted to collect extensive data accompanied by detailed interpretation of each individual or case. To do this, Creswell (2013) recommended using no more than four or five individual cases. Studying two highly proficient DI teachers in-depth provided ample opportunity to identify themes of each case as well as complete the cross case comparison. The individual cases used the logic of replication (Yin, 2009), wherein I replicated the procedures for each case. Each participant provided a case study from which facts were reported, analyses conducted, and conclusions made. Once each individual case was reported, issues within each case were identified and further analyzed to detect unique as well as common themes. This process, known as a cross case comparison (Yin, 2009), was not completed for the purpose of generalizing beyond the case but for understanding the complexity of the case. Individual cases and the cross case comparison results were the focus of my final analysis.

The third step, and the focus of the next section of this chapter, was deciding whom to interview, what to observe, and which artifacts and documents to analyze.

Methods

Gaining Access

I obtained approval from University of Northern Colorado's (UNC) Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the research (see Appendix A). Once the research proposal was accepted, I followed the district's protocol for permission to contact building administrators of schools that use Direct Instruction as the primary curriculum and teaching method.

Participants

A purposeful sample of highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers was used in this study. Purposeful sampling stems from the researcher's desire to discover, understand, and gain insight. This enables the researcher to select a participant from which the most can be learned. Creswell (2013) described purposeful sampling as "[T]he inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 156). It was also a convenient sample. There are highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers throughout the country, but I chose to interview teachers in Colorado because of time and travel limitations. The study began with a snowball sampling to identify potential participants as identified by an instructional leader at each building, followed by a unique sample based on the attributes of the highly proficient DI teacher (Crawford & Saulter, 2011; Merriam, 2009).

According to Merriam (2009), a way of finding participants who contributed to my understanding of the highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers was "to contact a key person who is considered knowledgeable by others and then ask that person for referrals" (p. 105). I contacted an instructional leader at various DI schools (principal, assistant principal, instructional coach, or consultant). This instructional leader had been trained in DI and had worked directly with the teachers on implementing DI programs and teaching practices. Though the instructional leader was not the one who identified the highly proficient DI teachers for this study, their identification of potential participants through the following selection criteria helped make Phase II's selection

criteria more purposeful and efficient. I presented Phase I's selection criteria to the instructional leader and asked if he or she worked with any teachers who met them:

1. Participating teachers taught an elementary grade at a public, private, or charter school in the state of Colorado.
2. Participating teachers taught at least two Direct Instruction programs as the primary method and curriculum (i.e., DI is not used as a replacement to the core program in a subject area).
3. Participating teachers taught the Direct Instruction programs to general education students.
4. Participating teachers had taught Direct Instruction programs for at least three years and/or have received formal training in Direct Instruction teaching techniques.
5. Participating teachers held a bachelor's or master's degree in education or met the Colorado's teacher certification requirements through their program of study.
6. Participating teachers showed reading achievement of students to be greater than comparable groups or state average.

I contacted instructional leaders at five different Direct Instruction schools. All five schools were charter schools in Colorado that utilized DI as the primary method of instruction and curriculum. One school did not return my phone call or e-mail. Another school was not able to participate due to the timing of the study. Phase I of the selection criteria yielded five potential participants for this study. A unique purposeful sample strategy was then used. First, I contacted each potential participant via e-mail or phone.

I provided a brief overview of the study, a description of her participatory role, and the research timeline. Once she acknowledged a willingness to participate and signed the participation consent form, I completed an initial on-site observation of each of the five individuals using two different qualitative observation forms (see Appendix B). The first form ensured that potential participants adhered to and demonstrated the research-based DI teaching practices. The second form was developed using Crawford and Saulter's (2011) "real DI teacher" criteria to further recognize highly proficient DI teachers. In addition to using the second form, I used my eight years of experience consulting, training, and coaching DI teachers (which I detail later in this chapter) to determine first-hand the proficiency level of each potential participant. These initial observations involved informal discussions with the potential participants who helped me determine who should be interviewed in-depth (Merriam, 2009). The information gathered during this initial observation was used as initial data in the case study, setting the stage for the first semi-structured interview.

Phase II selection criteria included the following:

1. Participating teachers demonstrated highly proficient Direct Instruction teaching practices as observed by me using the two qualitative observation forms.
2. Participating teachers expressed a willingness to participate.

Of the five teachers observed, two of them met the criteria of Phase II. These two teachers were contacted by e-mail and a schedule for the research to take place was set up. All participants signed the consent form prior to the initial observation (see Appendix C). The three teachers who were not selected were notified by e-mail. I

thanked them for their willingness to participate. The two teachers who were selected responded to my e-mail within two days.

Building rapport with the teachers was essential to the success of this case study. In an initial effort to build rapport, I explained the reason behind my interest in each individual at the onset of the first interview. Throughout the interviewing, observations, and time spent together, we started to get to know each other personally, moving from a researcher-participant relationship to one that I can only describe as getting to know a new friend. We shared mutual interest and stories of our personal lives as well as humorous antidotes and struggles currently taking place in our professional careers. The location of each interview was mutually agreed upon and when it involved a cost (coffee, lunch, or dinner), I paid for the participant's portion.

Data Collection

As a qualitative researcher, I used three methods for gathering information and promoting the trustworthiness of the research findings of this case study: semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and artifacts and documents analysis (including the use of a research journal).

Semi-structured interviews. Interpretivism emphasizes the importance of relying as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation (Creswell, 2013). When I could not observe previous practices, feelings, or how the teachers interpreted the world around them, I had to attempt to enter into their perspectives through interviewing. In understanding the purpose behind an interview, Patton (2002) stated:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe

how people organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (pp. 340-341).

For this reason, the use of semi-structured interviews was the main method for gathering information. The semi-structured interviews included an interview guide with a mix of structured and unstructured questions. This flexibility in the wording and the order allowed me to respond to the situation at hand and any new topics that were brought up by the participant (Merriam, 2009).

Each participant participated in four semi-structured interviews spread over a 10 week period to answer questions about her experiences with Direct Instruction, her teaching practices, and her beliefs. Because the interactions of curriculum, practices, and beliefs of highly proficient DI teachers have not been established, the semi-structured interviews allowed each participant (and myself) to explore experiences and factors that influenced their development. The use of spontaneous prompts and follow-up questions encouraged reflection and thoughtful self-evaluation by the participant.

Each interview was conducted in the middle of the school year and was approximately one hour in length. They took place in a location with minimal distractions, usually an empty classroom or the participant's home. The interviews were recorded using a digital recording device and transcribed within two days of the original interview by a colleague, me, or a transcription service.

The language the participants used to describe their thoughts and actions were analyzed prior to the following interview. Information gathered in each interview helped to outline subsequent interviews, a concept referred to by Parlett and Hamilton (1976) as progressive focus. The aim of case study is to thoroughly understand the case. If my

initial interview questions were not working or if new issues became apparent, the questions were adjusted. This was another reason the semi-structured interview format was the most appropriate approach for this study. A list of topics and the possible questions that provided focus for the interviews can be found in Appendix D. A list of the topics (not specific questions) was sent to the participants prior to the interview because research showed that teachers were often unaware of their own beliefs, did not possess language with which to describe and label their beliefs, and might be reluctant to espouse them publicly (Pajares, 1992).

Asking good questions takes practice (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, I conducted a pilot interview with a Direct Instruction teacher whom I did not select for this study. Through the pilot study, I learned which questions were confusing and needed rewording, which questions resulted in useless data, and questions or changes my pilot participant believed I should have included in the interviews.

Direct observations. As noted by Stake (1995), qualitative researchers for case study “try to observe the ordinary, and they try to observe it long enough to comprehend what, for this case, ordinary means” (p. 44). Interpretivism emphasizes a focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants (Creswell, 2013). Finally, Merriam (2009) distinguished observations from other data collection methods in that they take place in the setting where the phenomenon of interest naturally occurs and represents a first-hand encounter with the phenomenon of interest.

I conducted two to four classroom observations of each participating teacher as a non-participant/outside observer (Creswell, 2013). “The overall time spent at the site, the

number of visits, and the number of observations made per visit cannot be precisely determined ahead of time” (Merriam, 2009, p. 123). Observations were conducted until I had a good sense of what ordinary meant for each teacher. Because of the energy and concentration required, each observation session was an hour or less (Merriam, 2009). I took observational notes (see Appendix E) to describe the environment, activities, and teaching practices but did not participate in any activities. Through the observations of each teacher, I was able to notice things that were routine to the participant--things that helped to capture and understand the context in which the interactions of curriculum, practices, and beliefs occurred. I used my own knowledge and experience in training and coaching Direct Instruction to help understand what I observed first-hand. This allowed me to see additional areas of interest and importance that might not have been part of my initial conceptualization or were not mentioned during the interviews. As Stake (1995) noted, “The story often starts to take shape during the observation, [and] sometimes does not emerge until write-ups of many observations are pored over” (p. 62).

The purpose of the direct observations was to corroborate what was said during the interviews and determine the extent to which such information was reflected in the classroom setting. This study hypothesized that there was an interaction and alignment of curriculum, practices, and beliefs; thus, observing classroom practices, the physical setting, the activities and interactions of the teacher with his or her students, and subtle factors (non-verbals, informal and unplanned activities) provided necessary information in describing the interaction. This context and these specific observations and practices were used as reference points for subsequent interviews. I conducted the observations in each participant’s classroom during instructional time. Half of the observations were of

the teacher teaching a Direct Instruction program; the other half were of the teacher teaching a non-DI program.

As with interviewing, I completed several practice observations of a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher in a local elementary school prior to the direct observations that were used for this study. This helped me develop an effective plan for the observations and ensured that I was able to pinpoint specific DI teaching practices or experiences that might be a reflection of proficiency or an interaction of curriculum, practices, and beliefs.

Documents and artifacts. Documents refer to “a wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study at hand” (Merriam, 2009, p. 139). Artifacts refer to the objects in the environment that do not represent some form of communication as do documents. Documents and artifacts can tell about the inner meaning of everyday events or describe unusual human experiences. They can be a reliable source of data concerning a person’s attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world. This study involved looking at the interactions of curriculum, practices, and beliefs among highly proficient DI teachers. The documents and artifacts collected served as examples (and non-examples) of these interactions. Examples of documents that were collected included standardized test scores of students, examples of student work, lesson plans, written observation feedback from instructional coaches, presentation books and copies of lessons, and pacing guides and other data collection forms. Also, participant’s feedback regarding his or her interview summaries, observation summaries, and the draft of her case study were included as documents collected and used for analysis. Examples

of artifacts from the environment that were included were a physical map of the classroom, wall displays, hallway displays, and memorabilia of importance to the teacher.

Another document that was critical to the data collection process was my research journal. With every observation, interview, artifact and document gathered, I used my research journal to help clarify my understanding of the interactions of curriculum, practices, and beliefs of highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. The journal served as a place where I formalized my field notes, documented my reactions, reflected, and captured emerging questions, thoughts, and themes. It was a place where I kept track of my thoughts, musings, speculations, and hunches as I prepared my data for analysis. The research journal consisted of both digital and hand-written formats.

All raw data from this case study were stored in a case study database (Yin, 2009). The database contained the data of the case study including transcripts, field notes, reports, records, copies of documents, and my research journal. By keeping it organized in one place, I was able to locate specific data during the time of data analysis. The database also served as an element of trustworthiness, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Data Analysis

“Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data... [I]t involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read—it is the process of making meaning” (Merriam, 2009, pp. 175-176).

The end goal of data analysis was to find answers to my research questions:

- Q1 How do Direct Instruction curricula, teaching practices, and beliefs interact to produce a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?

- a. What factors and experiences, personally and professionally, influenced the proficiency development process for a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?
- b. How did these factors and experiences interact to facilitate and/or hinder the process?

Q2 How did a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher make sense of the process of becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?

Much like drafting and making revisions in the writing process, data collection and data analysis were interrelated and went on simultaneously during this study. I began with my own reflective experience of becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher by recording that experience in my researcher journal. This self-reflection encouraged my transparency. Going into the study, I knew the problem and selected a purposeful sample to collect data to address the problem. What I did not know was what would be discovered, what to concentrate on, and what the final analysis would look like. For each individual case, I analyzed the interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts (including the research journal) using progressive focus both in and out of the field to assist in conveying an understanding of highly proficient DI teachers. “The goals of the analysis are to reflect the complexity of human interaction by portraying it in the words of the interviewees and through actual events and to make that complexity understandable to others” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 202). The analysis for this multiple case study with cross case comparison occurred in two stages. First, each individual’s case was created and treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself. The second stage was to complete a cross case comparison. Both followed a similar format.

With regard to the specific method I used to analyze this data, I chose to follow the process outlined by Creswell (2013). Creswell (2013) described the data analysis

process as an analytical spiral rather than a fixed linear approach (see Figure 2). I started with data and ended with a narrative, circling around in the process using several analytical strategies that helped describe the case: sketching ideas, taking notes, summarizing field notes, working with words, identifying codes, reducing codes to themes, counting the frequency of codes, relating categories, relating categories to analytic framework in literature (self-efficacy, cognitive dissonance, theory of change), creating a point of view, and displaying the data.

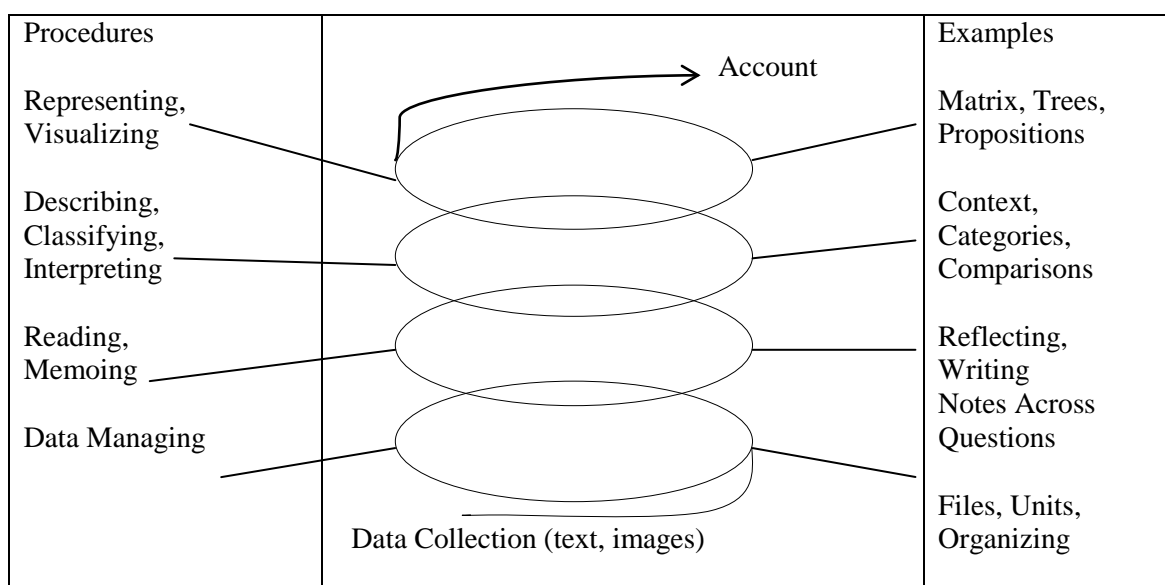


Figure 2. The data analysis spiral (Creswell, 2013).

I wrote a reflection of each participant's interview or observation in my research journal within 12 hours of leaving each visit. During this time, my reactions were combined with participant responses to make sense of the fresh data. These reflective exercises helped identify themes or hypotheses. The main purpose, however, was to

determine follow-up interview questions or observational and document gathering objectives for subsequent visits that attempted to focus the study on the case being described.

I read the transcripts while listening to the digital recordings a number of times so I could clarify responses and check the accuracy of each transcription. Participant confidentiality was maintained by giving each participant a pseudonym and saving the digital recordings on a password-protected computer. I also reviewed observational notes on an ongoing basis to uncover emerging patterns of behavior and experiences. These emerging patterns also guided subsequent interviews (Stake, 1995).

All sources of data (transcripts, observation notes, documents, and artifacts) were examined and coded into clusters of related concepts, terms, or ideas. A constant comparative method was used in which data were compared and sorted according to shared properties (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I listened and read each transcript a number of times to become familiar with the narrative and the language used by the participant. To code the data, I began by color-coding the back page of each printed transcript to indicate from which interview it came. I then cut up the transcripts, eliminating any portion in which I (the interviewer) spoke. Once all transcript pages were cut up, I randomly selected a response, read it, and coded it by writing the key word or words represented by that phrase, sentence, or response in the margin. This process continued until I had 10-12 different categories with specific examples in each category. This allowed for the easy retrieval and examination of the data as it was later analyzed. The process involved lengthy interaction with the data, to which I was constantly asking questions.

I then examined the 10-12 categories for nuances and larger themes. Finally, I put the themes together and showed how they addressed my research questions, both as individual cases and in comparison to each other, and produced broader implications.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a term used to describe the quality of the investigation. The criteria for developing the trustworthiness of an inquiry attempt to ensure that the research produces valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. To achieve trustworthiness in this qualitative study, credibility, dependability, and transferability were addressed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Credibility is the notion of how the research findings match reality. Although what is being investigated is a person's construction of reality, I increased the credibility of my findings in a number of ways. First, I used the strategy of triangulation. Triangulation includes the use of multiple methods and multiple sources of data to confirm emerging findings, leading to case study conclusions that are more convincing and accurate (Yin, 2009). This is a strength of case study research. I conducted multiple interviews, observations, and document and artifact collections. What was shared with me during an interview was checked against what I observed, which was also checked against the documents I collected. I also triangulated the data by comparing and cross-checking data collected within each series of interviews or observations.

A second strategy used to ensure the credibility of my study was member checking, i.e., providing opportunities for participants to review data and my interpretations for accuracy (Creswell, 2013). Participants were given the opportunity to

review the interview transcriptions and observation summaries to determine accuracy and provide further explanation or clarification. Neither of the participants provided feedback or clarifications of the interview transcripts or observation summaries. Also, each participant received a draft of her individual case study for review. Corrections and reflections that resulted from the member checks became additional data for the study. The first teacher, Donna Driven, asked that I change a word she said that she thought might be offensive. She also asked that I change her overuse of the word “like” when she was quoting herself or someone talking during the interviews. Emily Effective, the second teacher, did not ask that any portion of her story be changed.

Credibility was also established by making sure I was adequately engaged in the data collection process (Merriam, 2009). My goal was to get as close as possible to my participants’ understanding of how the curriculum, their practices, and their beliefs had interacted to get them to the point of being a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. As noted earlier, a friend-like rapport was established with each participant. They noted that it was easy to talk to me, our time together seemed to go by quickly, and they always looked forward to the next time we talked. They never referred to our discussions as interviews. One participant even said how much fun it was to have someone to talk to who shared in their passion for teaching and Direct Instruction.

Credibility was encouraged through peer reviews with my committee members throughout the data collection and analysis process. They asked me difficult questions about my methods, interpretations, and meanings. They also challenged me to look at alternative explanations and variations in my understandings. In addition, they served as a sounding board as I verbally processed my understandings and feelings throughout the

research process. These debriefing sessions were documented and added to the case study database.

I also ensured credibility by practicing the strategy of reflexivity: “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the ‘human instrument’” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183). To do this, I explain my biases, dispositions, and assumptions regarding my research at the end of this chapter. I also kept a research journal in which I adhered to a code of reflexive ethics that promoted self-awareness and documented ongoing analysis. It served as a way to capture conversations with myself about those participating in this study. I used the journal to take a critical look at my research behaviors and make practical modifications that served the best interest of those involved in and impacted by the research process. The goal in practicing reflexivity was to understand how my values and expectations influenced the conduct and conclusions of this study, not to necessarily eliminate them.

Dependability

Dependability describes the extent to which research findings can be replicated. I addressed dependability in my study through triangulation and the practice of reflexivity noted above. It also included the creation of an audit trail (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2009) refers to an audit trail as the chain of evidence that allows an external observer to trace the steps of the research process--from the development of the research questions to the case study conclusions. This helped to ensure no original evidence was lost, that there was strong construct validity, and that the study could be replicated if desired. Much of this audit trail was kept in the research journal as I reflected, questioned, and made decisions around the problems, issues, or ideas I encountered while collecting the data. It

was also supported through the establishment of a case study database, allowing for separation, yet availability, of the raw data and the case study report.

Transferability

Transferability, or external validity, deals with the extent to which the findings of a study apply to other situations. The inclusion of multiple cases is a common strategy for enhancing transferability of the findings (Merriam, 2009). However, transferability is ultimately up to the reader. As the researcher, I enhanced transferability by providing a rich, detailed description of the study's context so the reader would be able to determine the extent to which his or her situation matched my research context and be able to transfer findings. Although I passed my personal meanings of the events and interactions I found in each case study onto the reader, it is actually up to the reader to "add and subtract, invent and shape—reconstructing the knowledge in ways that leave it...more likely to be personally useful" (Stake, 1995, p. 455). I also encouraged transferability by purposefully selecting my participants so they, indeed, represented highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers.

Findings and Data Representation

The findings of this study are presented in a nontraditional format. Instead of one chapter serving as the research findings summary, I presented the two individual cases in Chapter IV and developed Chapter V to present the findings related to each case as well as the cross case comparison. By setting up Chapters IV and V in this way, I hoped to give the reader the opportunity to get to know each participant; understand the highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher's experiences from her perspective; and identify the development and interaction of the DI curriculum, practices, and beliefs. I used rich,

descriptive narrative and incorporated participants' direct quotations to describe what experiences and factors influenced or hindered this process. My goal was to share the story of how highly proficient DI teachers experienced and brought meaning to the interactions of the DI curriculum, their practices, their beliefs, and allow the reader to actually "add and subtract, invent and shape—reconstructing the knowledge in ways that leave it...more likely to be personally useful" (Stake, 1995, p. 455) before I presented my interpretation of the case studies. Chapter V presents the common and unique themes that emerged from each case by completing a cross case comparison.

Case studies often contain a substantial element of narrative. Good narratives typically approach the complexities and contradictions of real life. Accordingly, such narratives might be difficult or impossible to summarize into neat scientific formulas, general propositions, and theories (Benhabib, 1990). This "thick" and hard-to-summarize narrative is not seen as a problem in case study. In fact, it is often a sign that the study has uncovered a particularly rich problem. Therefore, the summarizing, determining findings, and generalizing often seen as ideal in research is not always desirable in case study research. As noted by VanMaanen (1988),

The idea is to draw an audience into an unfamiliar story world and allow it, as far as possible, to see, hear, and feel as the fieldworker saw, heard, and felt.... (the story) can stand alone with or without elaborate framing devices or extensive commentary. (p. 103)

To ensure the openness of the case study, I tell events of each story roughly in the order in which they were said to have occurred using long quotes to capture the voice of the participant. The use of long quotes also helps to avoid linking the case with the theories of any one academic specialization. This allows the reader to make different interpretations and draw diverse conclusions regarding the guiding questions of this

study. In holding back on interpretation and sticking to the story, readers are not pointed down a particular theoretical path or given the impression that there is a definite answer.

Narrative inquires do not—indeed, cannot—start from explicit theoretical assumptions. Instead, they begin with an interest in a particular phenomenon that is best understood narratively. Narrative inquires then develop descriptions and interpretations of the phenomenon from the perspective of participants, researchers, and others. (Flyvberg, 2006, p. 240)

Readers, therefore, are encouraged to discover and interpret their own path and truth inside each of the cases.

Before presenting my two case studies, I must be explicit regarding the conventions of the quotations from the transcripts that appear in my presentation of the interview data. The following explanations should assist in reading and understanding the teacher's perspectives and experiences. To begin with, both shorter and longer quotes appear in this manuscript. Shorter quotes are contained in quotation marks while longer quotes are in block format and indented from the left margin. Words the participants emphasized when speaking are *italicized*. Any body language, obvious emotion, gestures, pauses, or other key signals are contained in brackets such as [these]. Also contained in brackets are clarifying words or phrases that promote further understanding of a participant's meaning in a given quote. For example, if "we" is used, brackets might contain to whom the "we" is referring. Furthermore, because the spoken word is not always expressed as intended, there will be some deletions of participants' words. Deletions will include words such as *like*, *uh*, and *hmm* because words such as these might distract the reader from the main message of the quotation. Excessively repeated words and phrases and those that distract the reader from extracting the essential message

of the quotation will be removed and replaced with ellipses (three for the deletion of a word/phrase within a sentence and four for the deletion of phrases between sentences).

Also, these stories contain information relevant to this study but do not reveal enough information to expose the identities of the teachers, their schools, their colleagues, or their students.

Besides these exceptions, I have striven to preserve the voices of the teachers as they offered their perspectives and experiences.

Researcher Stance

Although subjectivity is present in all research, it is argued that researchers need to be more meaningfully attentive to their personal subjectivity throughout the research process “for these qualities have the capacity to filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe, and misconstrue what transpires from the outset of a research project to its culmination in a written statement” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17). As the researcher in this qualitative study, I had to acknowledge how my own background shaped my interpretations. I positioned myself in the research to acknowledge how my interpretations flowed from my own experiences and background (Creswell, 2013). The goal was to understand how my roles, values, beliefs, knowledge, experiences, and assumptions influenced the conduct and conclusions of this study, not to necessarily eliminate them.

As the researcher in this study, my professional experiences and training in Direct Instruction as a teacher, consultant, instructional coach, and trainer allowed me to have a deeper understanding of the DI curriculum, teaching practices, principles, and philosophy. These skills and knowledge helped in identifying highly proficient DI

teachers, articulate their individual experiences, and explain the interactions of DI curriculum, practices, and beliefs.

My own “DI Journey” began with an independent study of Direct Instruction, its history, research, principles, methods, and curricula during my undergraduate program. I completed my student teaching at a DI charter school and was offered a position there after graduating with my bachelor’s in elementary education. All seven years of being an elementary classroom teacher were in DI schools. I have taught almost all of the DI programs and levels in either classroom or tutoring environments. As an instructional leader, I have been extensively trained over the past eight years on DI leadership including becoming an effective DI trainer, supervisor, and coach. I have been a consultant, trainer, and instructional coach of DI curriculum and practices for over eight years, training and providing professional development and coaching to hundreds of teachers across the country during this time. In my current role as an intervention facilitator, I work with over 200 teachers in a school district that uses DI programs and teaching practices in elementary and middle schools. It is my job to create all formal trainings and professional developments, provide on-going coaching, analyze student and teacher data, collaborate with principals and district administrators, and make recommendations that will have the greatest impact on student achievement.

I am constantly trying to improve my own practices in teaching and leading Direct Instruction. I strive to better understand highly proficient DI teachers. As noted, I have worked with hundreds of teachers who use DI who have been able to change their teaching practices from those of non-users to a level at which they are demonstrating a solid implementation of Direct Instruction. Although I always say that all of my teachers

are on the same “DI journey,” I always wonder why some teachers move faster along the continuum than others. In particular, I wanted to know how a DI teacher moves from implementing Direct Instruction at a routine level to those who are able to take it to the next level and become highly proficient. I was professionally vested in this research and was eager to hear my participants’ stories.

I want all of my teachers to be highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. I believe this level of proficiency has the potential to increase sustainability of the model by teachers to ultimately increase student achievement. As the researcher in this study, I used my experience and knowledge to not only identify highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers but also to analyze the data, probe further, and describe the “DI Journey” taken by such teachers.

Even more, I am incredibly passionate about the effective and efficient education of all elementary children and believe that the use of Direct Instruction is the best way of achieving this. As a classroom teacher who chose to teach at a school that used Direct Instruction programs to teach general education students, I have seen the tremendous effect Direct Instruction has had on student achievement and student self-efficacy. Yet along with the success stories, my years as a DI teacher, consultant, trainer, and coach have been filled with questions, criticisms, and misunderstandings by non-DI educators. Through this process of educating, defending, and advocating for DI’s use in schools, I now see that much of my effectiveness is due to my own aligning of DI curriculum, my teaching practices, and my teaching beliefs.

In addition to positioning myself within the exploration to this inquiry by offering my relationship to the study, I must reveal what my own personal assumptions regarding

the interactions and alignment of Direct Instruction curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs were going into the research. These personal assumptions regarding highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers were as follows:

1. Becoming a highly proficient DI teacher requires a “real change,” a change in one’s beliefs about teaching and student learning.
2. Becoming a highly proficient DI teacher requires an alignment of the change dimensions: curriculum, practices, and beliefs.
3. Direct Instruction itself would be credited as having the biggest influence on this belief change.
4. Like the hierarchical and measureable Direct Instruction teaching practices used to create a routine user, there are controllable and measurable ways to change and accelerate teachers’ beliefs about teaching and student learning.
5. Teacher preparation programs are to blame for the disdain towards Direct Instruction and lack of sustainability in schools across the country.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented how I observed, described, and analyzed the interaction of curriculum, practices, and beliefs among highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. I used Crotty’s (1998) framework to describe the epistemology (social constructionism), the theoretical perspectives (interpretivism and change theory), methodology (case study), and methods I used to answer my research questions.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand how the Direct Instruction curriculum, practices, and beliefs have interacted and influenced the process of becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. The guiding questions for this research include the following:

- Q1 How do Direct Instruction curricula, teaching practices, and beliefs interact to produce a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?
 - a. What factors and experiences, personally and professionally, influenced the proficiency development process for a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?
 - b. How did these factors and experiences interact to facilitate and/or hinder the process?
- Q2 How does a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher make sense of the process of becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?

Each teacher's story is told in a separate section within this chapter through the use of passages quoted from the interviews and information obtained from the observations, the documents, and the artifacts. In each section, I begin with a vignette from an interview, introduce the teacher, and provide lengthy excerpts from the interviews so as to narrate and bring meaning to each teacher's experience. The analysis and reflection on each teacher are completed in Chapter V.

Donna Driven

How do you explain DI [Direct Instruction] to people?

I like to tell people what we [the school] do—that it's different. I say that I work at this awesome school. We're one of the top elementary schools in the state. I love saying that. And we teach in a totally different way. I do tell people that it is kind of hard to explain, but it's all teacher directed. There are not a lot of centers or explorative types of learning. It's all directed by the teacher and the kids are expected to choral respond and we give signals. And that's about where I lose them. I love telling people about it because it's so different. (February 10, 2013)

Do you have any desire to teach in a different style?

[Without hesitation] No. I believe in it. Even people who come in and think it looks weird or say they don't understand it or why it works. You can't refute that it works. The test scores and results the kids get are what they are. Whether it makes sense to people or not, it works. That's just a fact. (February 10, 2013)

So if the principal came to you this week and said, "We're changing gears next year. We're not going to do DI anymore." What would you do?

That would be really tough. Number one, I just don't see that happening. It's the foundation and the whole philosophy for why the school was started. But I think I would try to find another DI school (February 10, 2013). If someone were to come in tomorrow that I had serious conflicts in beliefs and style and attitude with, it would be hard for me to stay. If there were going to be huge changes in attitude and philosophy that impacted the moral of the school, that would be a big deal (February 21, 2013). Had I not found Direct Instruction and this school, I don't know that I would have stuck with teaching. (February 10, 2013)

Meet Donna Driven

Donna is a woman in her late forties. Her hair is light brown, her build petite, and her smile warm. She is well-spoken, speaking in a tone that is soft, caring, and genuine. She is clear in her thinking, concise in her words, and calm in her presentation. She says she has always had a laid back personality and is often teased by her family that if she were any more laid back she would be dead.

It's just who I am. Because I've been this way my whole life, I don't see it. I think I churn a lot on the inside, but it doesn't show on the outside. But I think

it's a couple of things. I think I used to be more competitive than I am and just life circumstances have humbled me and made me more real. So a child coming into the class forgetting their take-home folder or whatever, to me, in the vast scope of life and things, it's just not that big of a deal. Some of the teachers tend to take some of the student behaviors very personally. Like they're directed to them, or they're trying to make them miserable, or get under their skin. I don't view it that way. I know that kids are a lot more complex than that. I don't have that big of an ego to think they are doing it just for me. I've always been mellow. I used to be more competitive, but now I just take life day to day. Only certain things are important to me. I believe everything happens for a reason and it's all going to work out, so I don't get real shaken up about things. (February 21, 2013)

In talking to her and observing her teaching and interactions with colleagues and parents, she seems to exude a quiet confidence, always appearing relaxed and confident. Her face lights up when she talks about her teaching, her students, and her school.

You know, I really love it. When you enjoy what you do it doesn't seem like as much work (February 5, 2013). I really do think that my kids [students] are lucky. And I am a good teacher and it's not just because I have knowledge. I truly care about them. And I think, for the most part, I establish a really close relationship with each of my students. I don't go out of my way and really try to do that, they just know I love them. They know I care about them, they can tell by the way I talk to them and the way I treat them that I want what's best for them. So I feel like I have a high level of trust with my kids and because they feel that kind of bond and connection with me, I think they want to please me and I think they are excited about learning. I think most of them are excited about coming to school every day. I think that's a big part of it, the relationship. Sure, I have to be able to deliver the material and keep it interesting and be accurate in my teaching and things, but I think there are a lot of teachers that can get up there and teach a history lesson and be accurate in the dates and be accurate in the material or teach some math properly. But without any kind of connection or vested interest in the students, I just don't think you get the same results. (February 21, 2013)

The "vested interest" Donna has in her students being of strong character and reaching their academic potential is evident in her words, alive in her actions, and felt among her students:

I've always had a heart for the strugglers. I had a son who struggled, and as a parent watching that, that makes you sensitive to it. I know what these parents are going through when they sit down and they're struggling with these kids every night." (April 5, 2013)

With my reading group, I just really feel for those strugglers, and I feel like reading is at the center of everything. If you can't read well and understand well, it's going to impact the rest of your life. You know what I mean? School's tough enough. I love to just do everything I can for those kids. I think a lot of it is my mother's heart. I think that's where a lot of it comes from. (April 5, 2013)

I can't screw up somebody's child, or not care about somebody's child. I said that to people before, "This is the love of somebody's life." It made a big impression on me when I interviewed a couple of times at [another school]. They actually give statistics when they interview you that one year with an ineffective teacher sets a child back. They have numbers to put to it. It made an impact on me, how responsible we are to advance these kids as far as we can possibly get them, and [to be thinking], "Are you doing them a disservice?" I can't come in and just [do things half-way] every day because that's someone's child, and their future depends on it. There's a lot of weight in this job. (April 5, 2013)

Deciding to Become a Teacher

Life circumstances and timing did not allow Donna to pursue her childhood dream of becoming a teacher until she was in her mid-forties. She had told her parents in high school that she wanted to be a teacher but was discouraged because of the income and timing.

Teachers were a dime a dozen and they didn't think I could survive; and I was too influenced at the time. Looking back, I didn't have the internal strength to go against my parents. I figured they've got to know what's going on. I wish I had had the wherewithal to say, "Look. This is what I really want to do." (April 5, 2013)

Donna graduated college with a degree in psychology, married, and began a family. She considers herself fortunate in that even though she was not able to initially pursue teaching, she was always able to work in areas in which she was interested or thought she might enjoy. In addition to raising her children full-time (including several years of homeschooling), she found herself successfully beginning and managing many small businesses including a day spa. She credits the values instilled by her parents of hard work, pride, and commitment to the success of any venture she has taken on.

I'm very committed. My personality is such that when I go and do something, I go do it. I don't do things half-way. I dive in. If I am going to be a massage therapist, I'm going to own my own spa. And I did. And I made it as successful as I could make it and I took a lot of pride in it. That says a lot (February 21, 2013). If I'm going to be a teacher I want to be the best teacher I can be. It's not just a job for me. It's something I wake up every day and think about. "How am I going to do it well? What do I need to do to this and make it fun for the kids?" I think that carries over into other parts of my life. Like I've said, I've had several careers by now. And anything I've gotten involved in, I've always ended up really going overboard and really exceling. Not because I have all this great talent, but because I am so driven in what I do. I'm very committed to what I put my mind to. (February 5, 2013)

I think I was really instilled as a child to take pride in what I did and to be proud of anything that would have my name attached to it, and not to do anything half-way. And that's just how my parents are. They had very high expectations for me growing up.... Sometimes I feel [now] like I am so driven it's just consuming and I have to take a step back. I get pretty involved in whatever I do. (February 21, 2013)

[*Chuckling*] One of my biggest goals has been to learn to shut it off, because it could drive you nuts, and it can take over your life. I don't have a very demanding husband. You know, he's very supportive and everything but, at the same time, I want to be able to talk about something else. He can't just talk about this all the time, and I can tell when he glazes over. (April 5, 2013)

Regardless of the work or success, the desire to be a teacher was always in the back of Donna's mind.

I honestly feel like the whole massage therapy-spa thing was a step out of myself. My life prior [to teaching], all of my achievements and things I was interested in, all were more here [*pointing around the classroom*]. I was led into other situations, and they worked for me at the time, but I don't think that's who I truly was. I really feel I had the personality for this [teaching]. It wasn't like I came in [to teaching] and had to adapt or change. I think this is really more of who I was, but that's what I needed to do in my life circumstances at the time. It's almost like when I got here, I [said], "Oh. It's about time. I finally get to do what I wanted to do my whole life." (February 21, 2103)

At the age of 44, Donna realized that in order for her small business to continue to profit, it would need to expand, requiring a larger financial investment than she was comfortable expending. In addition, there was a buyer interested in purchasing the business, her

children were grown, and her income had become secondary to the family. It was the culmination of these circumstances that led her and her husband to the decision that the time was right for Donna to pursue a career in teaching: “I’m pretty self-driven. Once I set my mind on something, I do it. I’ve always been that way. I have a great support group in my family, but they weren’t pushing me or driving me along the way to do anything. I was just completely self-driven” (February 5, 2013).

Armed with a degree in psychology, an unwavering belief that she was meant to be a teacher, and the drive to make it happen, Donna started to investigate the steps she would need to take to become an elementary classroom teacher. She learned about ways to obtain her teaching license. She could go back to school and pursue a second bachelor’s degree in education. She could also obtain a license through an alternative licensure program that would require less time than another bachelor’s degree. Finally, she learned about charter schools and the requirements to teach at them: “I found out there were [charter] schools that you could go and teach at that you didn’t have to have the actual license to get your foot in the door. And I was all over that. So I started applying at every charter school in town” (February 5, 2013).

Reflecting back on the process, Donna was excited just to be given the chance to teach and honestly admits to not knowing that there were different ways to teach children.

Until I discovered Direct Instruction, I think I thought everyone was taught the same. I guess you picture what you had. The teacher getting up and talking; you play a few games; and you cut and color. I know for my own children, part of what I wanted was academic rigor. I wanted them to be challenged. I wanted them to have the best opportunities at education. I just didn’t realize all the bells and whistles that went into it. I volunteered in my [own] kids’ class some so I saw what went on, but as far as different teaching methods and different styles, I was

oblivious to that until I started teaching, learned Direct Instruction, went to school, and learned some more about what was going on. (February 21, 2013)

Though she does not believe anyone is born a great teacher, Donna does believe that good teachers are born with a disposition to do well at teaching, and that “certain personality traits have to be in place for you to be a good teacher” (February 21, 2013).

I think you have to have a genuine concern for people. You can get up there and talk at people, but that’s not teaching. You have to be able to connect with people and be a good communicator. I think you have to ‘get’ people. I’ve been told a few times that I just ‘get’ kids. I think when you are born you may have a disposition that would allow you to be a good teacher, but I’ve gotten to be a better teacher every year. It does take training. It does take work. It does take self-reflection. I really think you can grow and grow as a teacher if you have the right skill set going in. You need to be a kind, caring person; you really want to help people.... Everybody wants to be accepted. Acceptance is a big thing. (February 21, 2013)

Applying for teaching positions at all the city’s charter schools was a long and tedious process.

I had filled out so many long, involved [applications], typed pages of my educational philosophy and [attached] letters of recommendations. I had been through the mill in applying. Charter School of Direct Instruction was the furthest one from my house. I almost didn’t apply. If the application had not been so simple—two sides—I don’t know [*loss of words*]. I did it anyway and that’s the one that ended up. (February 10, 2013)

Charter School of Direct Instruction

Charter School of Direct Instruction (CSDI) is a K-12 charter school in its 18th year of operation in the western region of the United States. Its K-6 elementary school, of which Donna is a part, educates over 700 children each year using Direct Instruction curriculum and teaching practices as its primary method of instruction: “The students are taught a coherent, incremental, and content-rich curriculum in a fast-paced, highly interactive, teacher-directed manner that challenges all students to reach their potential as they move through achievement groups” (Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy, 2013).

The school has received countless awards honoring its excellence in academic achievement including the rating of an “Excellent School” by the state department of education every year since the School Accountability Report’s inception in 2003. Its elementary school also performs in the top 1% of schools in the nation each year according to the results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and it has been listed as an “exemplary” school by the Association for Direct Instruction (Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy, 2013).

The demographics of CSDI have become more diverse since it began in 1995. The diverse demographics and how the school is still able to increase and excel student achievement is something about which Donna enjoys talking.

Our demographics have changed. And to me, one of the proudest things I can tell people about our school is we have a broad socio-economic base. I found out this year 32% of our kids are eligible for free and reduced lunch, which is a 7% increase from last year. Yet, look at their scores; look where they’re performing. We have kids writing beautifully, reading beautifully, reading way above a second grade benchmark nationally [in second grade]. It doesn’t matter [where the child comes from]. The first thing people assume is that because of where our school is, they’re all the rich kids. And I’m like, “No, no, no. Not at our school.” And it’s not all the wealthy kids that are the brightest or that do the best; that work the hardest. Sometimes it’s the opposite. So to me, that’s probably the biggest feather in the cap for the school and method. It doesn’t matter which kid lives on which block. They’re all performing. (February 5, 2013)

At the time of applying, Charter School of Direct Instruction was expanding its K-8 program to include a high school and four classrooms each of grades K-6. Before she was called for an interview, Donna decided to visit the school. She sat in the back of three or four classrooms and went home not quite knowing what to think.

I remember going home and telling my husband, “That was so weird. I’ve never seen teaching like that before.” I had never experienced it—had never heard of it. And he was having me explain it to him. I said, “It’s even hard for me to explain...The kids answer, you know, and they all say it together and it’s all this speaking back and forth. The kids just don’t sit there and listen.” It was very

interesting and I was actually nervous, like, “Wow. Could I do that?” It was so different and unusual. And then I got called for an interview. I really wanted to be a teacher and I was happy to have the opportunity to get my foot in the door somewhere. (February 5, 2013)

Deciding to Work at Charter School of Direct Instruction

Donna interviewed for a teaching position at the CSDI. The interview process included talking to four or five different members of the school (principal, board members, teachers, and the instructional coach) one-on-one in a round robin fashion. Donna remembers being most intimidated about the idea of being coached, being watched, and told what to do.

[Coaching] scared me to death at that point. I’ve gotten over a lot of that, but that was probably an anxiety driver for me. Because, though I am driven, there was no way anybody was going to come in and observe me and be able to say anything. I had to work, work, work to be okay, or I wouldn’t have been able to sleep at night. (April 5, 2013)

She also remembers being asked by the principal how, on a scale of 1 to 10 energy-wise, she would rate herself.

You know, she’s sitting there looking at this 40-something-year-old woman. I’m 20 pounds overweight, whatever, and I said, “Honestly, I consider myself a ten.” I said, “I’m not talking physically. I don’t go out and climb a mountain every week, but mental energy, I can go 24/7. I’m just always thinking. I have a hard time slowing down. Mental energy, you can’t challenge me enough.” (April 5, 2013)

Looking back on the hiring process and deciding to work at CSDI, Donna light-heartedly mentioned that she may have been the perfect candidate for the school because “I was untainted. They were able to form me and brainwash me” (February 21, 2013). She had no prior teaching experience, no formal education in teaching, no strong preconceived ideas, opinions, or “informed beliefs” (February 21, 2013) on the best way to teach children. Donna concluded that the interview process for Donna was the school’s way of

determining whether any of her personal qualities, character traits, values, or beliefs would conflict with the mission of the school and the work required to ensure the high achievement of all students.

I think beliefs come out in the hiring process. You have to trust your administrators and the culture that you are in [are] going to get people that will match. I think that if you can get the right people in the door, [beliefs] are not as hard [to change] because you'll get that person that has the basic foundation that matches your system. I think beliefs are foundational. The school I teach in has to have a certain culture, has to have a certain base. And that's all beliefs. (February 21, 2013)

Maybe part of the beauty in me is I've never known anything else. I don't know the mediocre. I've never been allowed to be there. Because I'm a driven person and because I hold myself very accountable, this is the perfect atmosphere for me. Maybe I shouldn't go out and see [other ways of teaching]. (April 5, 2013)

You have to be a fit for wherever you're at. And I think prior to being in education I didn't realize that. "A school is a school and everyone does it the same." And I think that is a big myth that is out there. It's not all the same. I just think I'm so much more informed.... The philosophies have to be there and you have to be on board. There is nothing worse than having someone on your team that is not on board with what we do, that is constantly questioning what we do. (February 21, 2013)

Instead of a classroom teaching position, Donna was offered a full-time instructional assistant position. "The principal at the time just really felt strongly that it would be a better transition, especially for someone like me who was not in education prior, to start as an aide first. Get a year under my belt of just seeing the ins and outs" (February 5, 2013). Donna started as a second grade instructional assistant and has been teaching in the exact same classroom for almost six years.

Learning to Teach Direct Instruction

Donna continuously reinforced that there was never a single moment in which she finally felt she had arrived at being an effective Direct Instruction teacher or teacher in general.

There hasn't been a defining moment (February 10, 2013). I don't think that there was a light that went on one day. I think you have little experiences with kids every day, and different things happen along the way, and you go to this seminar, or you go to this thing, and you [say], "Oh, my God. That's incredible." (April 5, 2013)

Donna describes the process of becoming an effective Direct Instruction teacher as a gradual progression (February 5, 2013), noting on many occasions throughout the different interviews that her effectiveness has come with new and repeated experience, practice, and always wanting to challenge her capacity in using her "mental energy" (April 5, 2013).

I think the DI has just been a gradual progression (February 5, 2013). I think the whole first year was overwhelming. I was in survival mode... just learning the routines... there was just so much learning that even if you were good at it, you didn't relax. And honestly, I didn't really feel that good about my DI. It was very foreign to me when I was first exposed and it didn't feel natural.... I think every year it just feels more relaxed and natural. I completely understand the rationale. Every year I get up in front of kids I feel stronger; I've learned tricks. I've learned cute little things to have them do to make it more fun. Things that you just develop as you go along. Every year you're a little more effective because you know what worked and what didn't work. So just having that experience helps.... Now it's hard for me to get up in front of adults without saying, "Get ready." You just get so used to teaching that way, that rhythm. And it's very comfortable once you're used to it. (February 10, 2013)

In fact, Donna would say that she is still learning, still trying to improve her teaching.

Donna's responsibilities her first year were to teach her own reading, math, and spelling group, to support the classroom teacher during whole class instruction, and monitor recess, lunch, and carpool. She taught *Reading Mastery* (Engelmann & Bruner, 2003),

Connecting Math Concepts (Engelmann, Carnine, Kelly, & Engelmann, 2003), and *Spelling Mastery* (Dixon & Engelmann, 2007) during the small group instruction.

Direct Instruction is designed to be taught in small, homogeneous groups in which students are placed according to their instructional level, not necessarily their grade level. This allows all students, regardless of ability, to meet their academic potential. If there is a second grade student who is able to read at a fourth grade reading level, he will be in a group that is being taught the DI reading program at that level. If there is a second grade student who is reading at a first grade reading level, he will be placed in such a group. Regardless of the instructional level, DI aims to accelerate the learning of all students. At CSDI, there is no whole class instruction for reading, math, spelling, or writing. Therefore, CSDI hires a full-time instructional assistant for each classroom teacher to help teach the different instructional groups.

The whole ability-based system to me... how could you do it any other way? I know a lot of it is funding, and they don't have the manpower, and we're really blessed, because we have aides in every classroom, they teach their own groups, and we can break it down. But to not ability-base, to me, is almost criminal because [for example] the kids that I have in math. It benefits the low kids, but I think more, when you're looking, let's see how far these [the high kids] kids can go. You could have a genius in the back corner, but they're not being given what they need. They're not being challenged. (April 5, 2013)

Donna's initial training in Direct Instruction teaching practices and curriculum included a three-day DI conference during the summer prior to starting as an instructional assistant. At this training, she and other new teachers and assistants from her school were trained by national Direct Instruction trainers. She also attended a week-long training at her school where she learned how to use the DI teaching practices throughout the instructional day, not just when she had the curriculum in front of her.

On-going training, coaching, and support with Direct Instruction from the in-house instructional coaches was part of any new and returning staff's professional development at CSDI. The coaches with whom the teachers work have all taught at the school. In addition, the coaches have received DI coaching training from national DI trainers. Donna credits the coaches with having had the most direct influence on her mastering the Direct Instruction teaching practices.

It was the coach pretty much. I was observed a lot. I think all new people are observed a lot (February 10, 2013). In fact, I remember, specifically, I was kind of upset about it. My very first day of teaching. The very first day I went to reading. The very first day in front of kids. I was observed. I [think], "You don't even let me get in here and get my feet wet?" They wanted me to start right off the bat doing it properly. They didn't want me to start to form any bad habits or do it wrong. So I understand that, but you know, when you're nervous and you're trying a new thing it was like, "Really?" I felt like I was observed constantly that first year. (February 5, 2013)

She remembers being observed and given feedback regarding her teaching and student performance five or six times throughout her first year (February 21, 2013). Most of the observations and feedback came during the first half of the year, as that was when it was all new to Donna and the coaches wanted to make sure she had a solid understanding and implementation of DI.

[The coach] is very positive and she always tells you what you do well so you don't leave feeling, "Oh, gee. I'm a complete failure because I couldn't do this." I love her personality and she is always so great in her feedback in what you need to do differently. Not only does she tell you where you fell short a little bit, she makes suggestions, "Try this, try that." It's not just, "Okay, you did this wrong. Go fix it." It's a real supportive, positive, type of coaching which I think works for me. She comes in and observes for however long and then you have to schedule an appointment for a debrief. You meet with her for 15 or 20 minutes and she gives you your glows and grows. (February 5, 2013)

Because she did not have an education degree or formal experience in teaching, having the specific curriculum and teaching practices helped Donna succeed in helping her

students achieve academically. Such structure gave her experiences with specific teaching practices she could master over time.

Though she was initially intimidated by the idea of being watched, it quickly became “a regular thing to be observed and you kind of [get] comfortable with that. If you apply their feedback and really try to do what they say, then it becomes easier” (February 10, 2013). She went on to emphasize the value of coaching and the lining of truth behind being told to “Fake it until you make it.... [Just] getting up and doing it [the DI teaching practices]. Even though you are not that confident in it yet. The more you do it, the easier it gets. And I think there’s truth to that. So with the DI, that’s a big part of what we do (February 10, 2013). Having the teaching practices in place built Donna’s confidence in her teaching abilities. She knew her students were learning.

I like the level of engagement with the DI. The kids are more engaged, they’re more involved. I think they’re more attentive versus the kid who may just melt into the seat in the back row and not pay attention for 30 minutes. They’re expected to interact and it’s easy to monitor whether they’re interacting or not. So that’s a big thing. The ease in seeing how engaged your students are and how accurately they’re learning. Because you can hear when they say the wrong answer. And you can see when they’re checking out or when they’re not getting it. And so that aspect of it, just the fact that they’re answering, I know that helps them learn. But it is also a great tool as a teacher because you have instant feedback as to what your kids know and what they are doing. (February 5, 2013)

Aiming to master the DI teaching practices and curriculum quickly allowed Donna to focus on the development of the students’ character. She, herself, was able to be an example of how hard work and perseverance pay off.

Character is huge for me. That was huge for me before I ever became a teacher and then, the academics were thrown in on top of it. [Students] need to know how to be honest. They need to know how to treat people. They need to know how to persevere. You have to be a good person, no matter what you do. No matter how smart you are, how academically driven you are (April 5, 2013). I think bringing up kids is a very serious thing. For me, that’s what being a teacher is all about. The academics for me are secondary. (February 10, 2013)

When they [those in education] talk about establishing rapport, that's huge! I take a lot of pride more in...not so much in my teaching, but the rapport and the trust I have with my kids. They know I am not going to hang them out to dry. They know I am not going to embarrass them. They feel comfortable. That's big. If they can count on my emotions when I walk in the door; they can count on the fact that I am going to be even and I'm not going to be frazzled and I am not going to get that upset. To me, that is a victory. (February 21, 2013)

After a year as an instructional assistant, Donna was determined to have her own classroom. "I knew, just to be completely honest, that I didn't want to do that [be an assistant] again. I was here to be a teacher. That's what I wanted to do" (February 5, 2013). Her first choice was to stay at Charter School of Direct Instruction because "I loved what I was doing. I loved the DI" (February 5, 2013). But because the desire to be a classroom teacher was so strong, she found herself applying at other non-DI schools. She did not have to look far; Donna was offered a second grade teaching position at CSDI.

Becoming a Classroom Teacher

When Donna began her first year as a classroom teacher at CSDI, she realized how much she appreciated the administrator's decision to have her work as an instructional assistant her first year. Getting the first year under her belt as an assistant was just what she needed. "I'm really glad I did that. I think I would have been overwhelmed if I had just done the other [become a classroom teacher the first year]. So that, logically, was spot on because I learned a lot that first year" (February 5, 2013). Donna was thrilled that she was asked to teach second grade.

I absolutely love second graders. When I interviewed and I accepted the position they didn't know for sure where they were going to put me (February 5, 2013). I honestly feel like second grade was a perfect fit for me because when all my [own] kids were growing up, that was my favorite age span. I loved all the ages. But I absolutely loved seven- and eight-year-olds. I love the time of life they are in. Their innocence; their joy; their eagerness. Even kids who have had struggles

at seven- and eight-years-old still have a positive outlook, for the most part. A big part of the enjoyment of my job is [that] I get to relive that youthful joy I lived with my children every day. And it doesn't stop. It's like [the movie] *Groundhog's Day*. The kids get older; I get a fresh batch. I just love that. I love that energy. Most of the time I'd prefer to be around them to adults because they are so real, so honest, so fun to be around, and cute. (February 21, 2013)

Her classroom is set up in what is often referred to as a tradition model. All 29 student desks were in rows facing the front of the room (see Figures 3, 4, and 5). There was an overhead projector and chalkboard at the front, a single computer off to the side, cubbies for student materials and lunch boxes in the back, along with school supply shelves and cabinets. The walls were decorated with a variety of bulletin boards. A science bulletin board displayed the food pyramid and nutrition facts; a history bulletin board posted westward expansion memorabilia, and a couple of bulletin boards celebrated the students' growth in character and academics. Donna's desk was in the front left corner and her instructional assistant's was in the back right corner. There were two doors to the classroom, one from the hallway, the other from the playground.

It was during her first year as a teacher [her second year at CSDI] that Donna started to develop a strong understanding and appreciation for using established and proven curriculum and teaching methods to meet the academic needs of all students. Though she did not graduate from a formal teacher preparation program, her appreciation went beyond a compensation for something she may or may not have learned from such a program. From Donna's perspective, teaching a proven, systematic, and sequential curriculum is necessary to ensure equity in education for all children.



Figure 3. Donna's classroom.



Figure 4. Donna's bulletin board.



Figure 5. Donna's back wall.

I think you have to have a good established curriculum. I definitely believe we ought to be teaching proven material—aligned material. The core standards are good things (February 21, 2013). I'm not an expert in everything. I have different strengths and weaknesses. If you just turn a teacher loose to go into the classroom to come up with it.... I could go in and if I really liked teaching fractions, I could make a big deal about fractions and ignore division. (February 21, 2013)

Why rely on myself for that when the experts have done it? I mean, honestly. Give me something. I am happy about that. I wouldn't want to have to come up with that on my own. And these curriculums are tested; they're proven. I believe strongly that all the kids are being taught the same thing. It is standardized and streamlined and nobody's in their classroom just doing their own thing, which I think is fair to the children (February 10, 2013). Especially for the transient population that we have in [this state]—for the kids to pack up and move as frequently as they do. (February 21, 2013)

I definitely believe in teacher-directed instruction because I think kids are very creative and they can figure things out, but it is our job to give them that information. You know, that just simply put, it's our job. We have to provide the facts. We have to provide the knowledge. We have to provide the avenue to get that knowledge. And I think the exploratory learning has some benefit in that it kind of teaches them to think and figure things out, but I still think, even then, you have to be providing the direction and providing the material and providing the guidance for learning to take place. So the teacher-directed instruction, I don't know that I could do it any other way. I really don't think I could go to the school of expeditionary learning where they let the kids kind of guide and drive the curriculum because number one, they're going to end up with holes because they may go down a path too long, or too veered off. How do you meet core standards and things in that kind of environment? And you're doing a disservice to the kids because then they're going to get to the [state tests], the standardized tests, SATs, and college entrance and they won't have all that they need. (February 21, 2013)

I'm not totally dissing [center-based learning], but as a primary method of teaching? That's not teaching. That's just exploration. It should be the solidifier, not the primary method of relaying the knowledge. Kids can think and figure things out, but we have to give the knowledge and that's the beauty of teacher-directed instruction. They have to get it from somewhere first before they can use it and apply it (February 10, 2013). To me, the dream school would be 95% Direct Instruction and then every now and then we have a day of exploratory. Where we can explore and maybe do a day of centers for things we've already learned; enhance the learning with the hands-on. (February 21, 2013)

Though it may appear that she does the same thing over and over, Donna says this is not the case and that she never gets bored. She emphasized that DI, and teaching in general, has more to do with doing whatever it takes to help the students learn, regardless of a teacher's personal preference.

[Once you have] a structured curriculum to follow, you can bring in your creativity into it as a teacher (February 21, 2013). Although it [may] sound boring, when you're really trying to teach them something interesting and the content is good, it's just a method of administering the information. I am a firm believer that if you get up and [don't just act excited], but if you genuinely exude excitement about what you're teaching, they'll [the students] get excited. If you're bored with the subject, they'll be just as bored as you are. I have observed teachers that are very boring and monotone, and it can be. But if you're having fun with what you do, all the "Get readies" and everything is just a way to engage and manage the students. My days fly. I don't ever really feel bored. (February 10, 2013)

I work harder than most second grade teachers do every day. I have less planning time. I work at a faster pace. I have more papers to grade. Not only do I have to grade them once. I have to grade them twice because they have to correct those things. I just think it's the mentality on the part of the teachers. One staff member, a teacher that came to CSDI after teaching 13 years in a public elementary school, is used to doing it her way. She does not buy in [to how CSDI teaches]. If [she] just wants to continue doing what she did for 13 years before she got here, that doesn't work here. If you're not birthed into this system, it would be hard to step up. It's not an easy job. (April 5, 2013)

It also goes back to Donna being a perpetual learner, always wanting to learn little tricks to make instruction more effective and more engaging. Adjusting the DI teaching practices has helped Donna become highly proficient in Direct Instruction over the years. She is motivated by student achievement, both academically and behaviorally. She can adjust or add to a DI practice and know, rather quickly, from the students' response, whether it is effective or not.

[When asking a question and expecting a choral response], I realized that some kids just get used to saying the last thing they heard. So one of my goals with DI has been to keep my pace up and switch my questions so that they can't necessarily predict what I'm going to say next. It forces them to stay more engaged. (February 5, 2013)

The best way I find to get all the kids to answer on signal is to talk more in a rhythm. They call it pause and punch, but if you emphasis the way you want them to say it, then they will respond the way you want them to versus just talking and then asking for an answer back. If I say something in a silly way they will repeat it back in the same silly way. (February 5, 2013)

I don't necessarily like reading the definitions right from the script. If I can explain something and draw on my own examples, I prefer to do it that way. If you read through what they [the scripts] want before you go in there and you cover the material, I think you are fine. You just want to make sure you get all the different types of questions, the predictions, the author's purpose, and sequencing. You want to be sure to hit everything. For sure, you don't want to leave anything out. (February 5, 2013)

It was also during her first year as a classroom teacher that Donna decided to get her teaching license through an alternative teaching licensure program at a state university.

“I got my license because I wanted to have the credential for what I do. I wanted to have that certification” (February 10, 2013). She spent the year taking on-line classes and one on-campus, week-long class to meet the requirements. In a way, Donna was able to backfill some of the *why* behind the *how* she had been taught at CSDI.

There was a big emphasis on reading—segmentation, and the different sounds, and phonemes, and just a lot of lingo that as a lay person you don’t necessarily know. So that was very beneficial. And that really helped me become a better reading teacher. Just understanding it, not necessarily applying what they taught me because we do things so differently here. I have a better understanding of how things work with *Reading Mastery*. We were taught about reading and about why kids learn the way they do, how they form the sounds in their throat and in their mouth, the rules of phonics. But they didn’t actually sit down and teach us how to teach a child to read. (February 5, 2013)

She loved her on-campus classroom management course.

I’m that actively involved learner, so that was fun for me. The people that ran it were just really fun and they had all kinds of cute crazy ideas, a lot of them I’m too inhibited to do here, but it has helped me know some cute things to try, know how to manage, and know things [to do] to make the classroom run. That probably was the most beneficial class I took. Because if your kids are well-managed, then they will be set up to learn. And if you have the chaos and breakdown in the classroom, then it just doesn’t go well. So I loved that. (February 5, 2013)

Throughout her first year as a classroom teacher and going through the alternative teaching license, Donna continued to put everything she had into ensuring that her students were enjoying school and learning.

For me, the biggest measure of success is that my kids [students] come excited to learn. That’s the part I enjoy. Seeing the kids light up and say, “Wow!” and “Oh! That’s exciting!” I’m a firm believer right down to the scientific piece of the endorphins and storing things in long term memory. If it’s drudgery, painful, and boring they’re not going to like learning. And then they’re not going to like school. (February 10, 2013)

One of the biggest of compliments to Donna about her teaching comes in the form of parents and colleagues (privately) recognizing the personal connection, care, and concern she has for each of her students.

For me, it's the biggest compliment. I had a mom say this to me this year. It was after the first couple months of school. She came to me and said, "My daughter has always hated school. She cries when summer vacation is over. She cries in the car on the way to school." And she said, "Since she's been coming to your class I have not had that issue with her. She likes coming to school." And to me, what more is there? Yes, she's not my top scholar. But she is enjoying learning. She's probably doing better academically this year than she has in the past. So to me—are my kids enjoying school, not necessarily having fun, but are they being challenged? Are they seeing their successes? Are they growing? Self-esteem is huge for me. You know, I like building kids up and making them feel good about themselves. When the joy in their day is their time spent in my classroom...I take it very serious (February 10, 2013). So just to walk by and give the kid a pat on the head and say, "Wow, you did such a great job reading that story today!" Just to see them sit up just a little taller. To me that's huge. (February 21, 2013)

I had a teacher tell me once, and this was a true compliment to me, and I'm not bragging. She had been an aide in my classroom for a whole year, and then she had gone on, and she's a teacher now herself. We were just discussing a child, and discussing a difference of philosophy between me and another teacher. She said, "The difference in you, [Donna], is you look at a child, and you see all the potential there." She said, "You don't see that that kid has this problem and this problem. You take what's positive, and you see what they're going to be in 20 years. You don't see, 'Oh, this kid can't do that because he has this, this, and, this. You say, 'No. Every child is going to be somebody.' You take what they have and what their strengths are, and you grow that. Even if they only have one strength, you grow that." That's what we're here for. I think like, "Isn't that my job?" (April 5, 2013)

Continuing to Grow as a Teacher

I'm a realist, so show me reasons and show me data that say that this works. And [CSDI] has all of that data. I think our test scores speak for themselves. I mean, we're a top performing school. Our kids are able to excel beyond where they would be in other places. The amount of time a person has to hear something to remember it permanently. That data just speaks well to me, that repetition, repetition, repetition. It totally makes sense. I also like the multi-sensory learning, active versus passive. Just listening versus talking, listening, and seeing. It goes into your brain three different ways. It becomes a more permanent part of your body. The DI just makes sense. (February 5, 2013)

Donna has always loved data. It was during Donna's third year at CSDI that she really started to pay attention to the data on each of her students, from in-program mastery tests, progress monitoring assessments, and end-of-year standardized tests.

I take the scores very personally. More at the end of the year. When you get them at the beginning of the year, that's not your work. That's the first grade teacher's work. But when we took a mid-year math assessment this year I had the high kids, so that growth pressure is there. Can I make them grow even though they're already high? That's a challenge for me, and I took it very seriously when I saw that one of my kids did not grow. That's a reflection on me, and it's not about me. But I gauge my performance as a teacher by "Are they learning?" Why is that child not able to understand, or what is it? ...I'll be devastated if I get those scores back [in the spring] and I don't have growth. (April 5, 2013)

I don't think I got it [using data to measure achievement] until I was a teacher, because I wasn't involved in as much of the picture [when I was an assistant]. We are more now, and you get more vested in the individual ability of each child. (April 5, 2013)

I teach the low readers. I've taught low readers since I started here. So that is one of my more challenging classes. You know versus my math kids who are the top. And easy. They get it. Math is a no brainer. Reading has been a challenge. Because I have lower kids and they're just harder to get to do what you want them to do. And then you throw the DI in there and the scripts and it's kind of a little bit more intense....I love to just do everything I can for those kids. I keep kids in at recess, I tutor, and I want them to achieve. You can be in the bottom reading group and come away feeling good about what you did. (April 5, 2013)

[I told my reading group yesterday] that I wish I had had a tape recording of them reading at the beginning of the year, because their reading right now is so, so, so good. It used to take us forever to get through the word attack. We used to have 20 errors when we read, and they were choppy. Yes, they're still not great, but they're head-over-heels better than they were at the beginning of the year. (April 5, 2013)

My struggle is getting through a lesson in a day with them. And we are below grade level. So when that happens I feel responsible to get them as close to grade level as I can. So there's a little bit of pressure. We don't have game day like my math kids. "Are we having a game day?" No game days in there. We have to shoot to get a lesson done every day. (February 5, 2013)

The summer before starting her third year at CSDI, the administrators asked Donna to become the lead teacher for the first and second grade team of 18 teachers and instructional assistants. In addition to teaching full-time, she would attend the school's leadership meetings and then facilitate weekly team meetings where she would disseminate the information passed down from the administration. She would be in charge of all decisions made around moving students up or down in instructional groups and monitoring pacing, making sure each group was getting through the lessons at mastery. She would also problem solve with teachers who might be struggling with a child, academically or behaviorally. At the time, Donna felt under-qualified for the position but knew it was one of her professional goals. She feared that the opportunity may not come again, so she accepted. Other than being released from teaching a 25-minute spelling group four days a week, Donna's teaching responsibilities did not change.

I think I've learned more from that experience [being team leader], just going to the different meetings, being with [administration], listening to things, being more in on the data, and more in on some of the inside skinny. I think that's what has made me think, "Okay, now this [DI] is it. This is it for me," because I really can't see myself going in the other direction [a non-DI, unstructured teaching environment]. Not having the DI would be a big thing because once you've learned to teach that way it's just hard to do it another way. (February 21, 2013)

As Donna continued to grow in understanding Direct Instruction, the culture of CSDI, and her students, she started to be more aware and convicted in her beliefs regarding student learning and teaching. Even more, she notes the importance of a curriculum and teaching practices aligning with those beliefs.

Any time you're affirmed in anything, it's going to grow your belief. Do you know what I mean? Anything that happens that affirms what you've been doing. It solidifies the belief that you have.... The majority of the [teaching] behavior

changes provide increased achievement. Some of them don't, but it is a fielding thing. You go, "Oh, okay, that didn't work." (April 5, 2013)

I do believe my teaching practices are aligned with my beliefs. It's very hard for me, because of my personality, to go against my beliefs. So my teaching practices have to align. And it would be very hard for me to go somewhere else because that's so much a part of who I am. And everything I do in my classroom is trying to reinforce that belief system. The honesty, the character, and treating people with respect. I like the fact that they have to say, "Yes, Ma'am." That doesn't mean that I am some super power over them. It just teaches common respect and courtesy. And I just truly believe in all of that. It isn't hard for me to reinforce it or expect it because I truly believe it. (February 21, 2013)

The school had just hired a woman to work in human resources office. She brought her daughter to shadow for a day in Donna's classroom. Though the girl enjoyed her visit, Donna was told that the mom "doesn't buy in... I mean, what's she doing working here? If we're not good enough of a school for her to send her kid to, why is she here?" (April 5, 2013)

We have another [teacher] this year. I don't know if she is going to make it. She has a masters' degree in education. She doesn't have a lot of teaching experience. But she is coming in and wanting to do her own types of tests. She is not on board with the whole DI system, the *Reading Mastery*, and how we measure kids. She's not on board with that. So beliefs create bigger issues. (February 21, 2013)

I really need to have academic rigor. I really need to have teacher-directed instruction, and I need a conservative environment. I need structure (February 21, 2013). It's not just the DI. I love the structure we have here. The high level expectation, behaviorally; the uniforms. [The administrators] hold you to a high standard here. And we hold the kids to a high standard which is the whole philosophy. If the kids are expected to be excellent in the way they appear, then we need to be, too (February 5, 2013). I don't like a lot of free-form and chaos. I like that order. That order suits my personality (February 5, 2013). I love the structure. I like the control. I hate chaos, and with kids come chaos sometimes. I have visited public schools and observed and I don't know that I would be able to handle that noise and that type of situation on a regular basis every day, day in and day out. (February 10, 2013)

You know what I think the main issue is, honestly? Why people don't like the structured curriculum? Because then they're accountable. There's accountability. Because you are responsible to cover that material. You can't have that lazy day. You can't come in and have a play day. You are accountable

to deliver the curriculum and your pacing shows it and the kids' ability to perform shows it. So when people are given that much structure, it's like, "Ahhh! I am accountable to that" (February 21, 2013). You can't measure growth if what they are doing is completely different from what everyone else is doing. I think the biggest part is not wanting to be accountable. (February 21, 2013)

As Donna continued to talk about how her beliefs, she emphasized what she says has been the biggest lesson she has learned in teaching.

As far as DI and academic rigor, I fully believe it. You know before teaching, I was the parent that would say, "Oh, you've been at school all day, you shouldn't have a lot of homework. That's enough," type of thing. And now that I am in it, I see what kids can accomplish. The biggest thing that hit me when I started being a teacher here was that we totally underestimate what our children are capable of. I think kids are just capable of so much more and if you give them that opportunity and you give them that structure and put it out there, that they can really, really learn. (February 21, 2013)

I think [as a mom] I was just kind of okay with my own kids just floating along and doing a pretty good job. Even though they went to a great school, good thing they did because if I had sent them somewhere else, because I was so uninformed, I feel like they wouldn't have had such a good experience. (February 21, 2013)

I have a niece who's in second grade this year, and she and I are very close. I used to [provide] daycare [for] her before I came here. So we're very bonded, and I see her all the time. She's [now] in second grade; she's a very bright little girl. They tested for gifted and talented. Yet, she's not doing half in her school what we're doing here, and it's frustrating to me because I know I grew up that way. You taught second grade math to your whole class. You could have had a genius in the back corner, but they're not being given what they need. They're not being challenged. (April 5, 2013)

Just look at what we've done with the writing curriculum this year and the critical thinking language. I get up in front of second graders and say, "Okay. We're going to write a factual description, no opinions. You must have a compound in the predicate. You must have a detail in the subject. You must have multiple..." They know what I mean, and they can do it. If anybody had said that to me in second grade...*[loss of words]*. (April 5, 2013)

Even though I teach them [my students], I sit there at Knowledge Bowl [a quiz-like game played three times a year to show all they have learned to date] and put myself in the position of those parents in the classroom. If my [own] kid at second grade had been able to rattle off those kinds of facts, states and capitals, and whatever they throw at them, at seven and eight years old, I would have said,

“Wow!” I actually get in awe of what they [the students] do. Just in the scope of five different countries we’ve studied, they know the capitals, they know what type of government they have, they know the major religions. That’s huge at that age! I think [to myself], “Second grade!” (February 10, 2013)

Teaching Today

Donna is currently in her fourth year as a second grade teacher at CSDI. She is always looking for ways to “learn and be better” (February 5, 2013). Though not as often, she continues to receive on-going coaching from the assistant principal.

I don't think I said, "I don't need observing," because I think we can always use growth and input, but I think they're busy, and [administrators] tend to work on the things that need the most work first. Yes, I can improve, but there are other people who are really struggling or who need the help more than I do at this point. Every time [the assistant principal] observes me, I get good feedback. I get something. "Oh, yes. I'll try that." We can all grow, but in the priority of things, I'm not probably the biggest priority. (April 5, 2013)

Donna is constantly asking to attend and receive advanced training in all aspects of teaching, leadership, and student learning. She attends leadership seminars, teaching conferences and trainings, and is given release time to observe teachers in both her school and other elementary schools. Over the course of the interviews, she indirectly spoke of the different professional development opportunities in which she has participated. Most recently, she had attended a charter school conference in which she attended a session on stereotypes in the classroom and one on bullying. “That one was phenomenal. I learned so much at that conference” (April 5, 2013). Earlier this school year, she received the highest award for achievement in an eight-week Dale Carnegie leadership course hosted by her school in the evenings (Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy, 2012). She’s been to assessment and data seminars. She is the Response to Intervention (RtI) facilitator for her building. She is hoping to help with the new staff training in the fall. Two summers ago she sent herself to a five-day Direct Instruction coaching institute that was insightful.

“Even though I knew I wasn’t going to be doing any coaching [at that time], it gives you the other side—what they look for and the ins and outs of what you’re supposed to be doing” (February 5, 2013).

They can't send me to enough seminars. That's just who I am. I like the growth. I like the challenge. I like learning something new. People like me need that continued challenge. Maybe that makes me a good teacher because I'm a perpetual student myself. (April 5, 2013)

We've had conversations in the last week about where I'll be next year. I went to them, and I said, "I feel like one of my shortfalls as team leader is not having a thorough knowledge of first grade." Well, there are two openings [next year]. I said, "Do you want me to move to first grade? I'd love the opportunity to learn that end." I think as a teacher it would be beneficial for me to teach at different levels (April 5, 2013). I think some of the wisest people here on staff have taught at multiple grade levels. They just have a better idea of the full picture (February 5, 2013). I'm open to a move, but I am very comfortable where I am. That's probably why I haven't pursued [it]. (February 10, 2013)

I love observing other teachers (February 10, 2013). Coaching looks fun. It's teaching in a different way. And I like supporting people. I like helping people. And every now and then [the administrators] ask me to go in and watch a teacher if they're not quite sure what's going on and I absolutely love it. I even love the debrief with the person explaining what I saw and giving my suggestions as to what could maybe work for them. The times that I've gotten to do it I thought, “Wow! This is cool.” So that's just what I want to do next. (February 5, 2013)

I talk to my husband, about what my goals are and everything, and I would love to get into the coaching, and at some point, step out of the classroom more, but then my husband [reminds me], "[Donna], the thing you enjoy most about your job is the kids." That interaction, day-to-day, the funny things they say, the hugs, the smiles, what they did on spring break, that's really the part of my job that I love the most. To give that up..."(April 5, 2013)

A Final Story

I have one little boy. He's doing so much better now, because I've really ridden him all year long. He has a tough home situation. I'm not going to lie. I think his mom speaks the good game, and I think she does what she can, but their life situation is tough. He was my streetwise, you know, cool guy. "I don't have to..." you know, whatever.

He has come head-over-heels, I can't even tell you how much better he's doing, and it's the character. It's teaching him how to work, and teaching him the pride of, "Wow. Look what you did. You have turned in your homework every day this week. Doesn't that feel good?"

He was really the cool cat who didn't have to do anything, and I think part of it was to compensate for the fact that he was low, and he realized he was low, and the coolness was to overcome that. I just loved seeing that. If his family were to pull him now ... I told [the principal], "One of my greatest accomplishments would be to see a kid like that graduate from [our high school]."

To me, that's such a... [loss of words]. To be a part of that?! To watch a kid get their high school diploma, and go, "Wow. I helped that kid. I taught that kid. I'm part of the reason they're up there." That's huge for me. What better reward could you ask? Then, that kid who comes back when they're 20 years old, and says, "Wow, Mrs. Driven, I loved being in your class." I still have kids that come up and say, "Man, second grade was the best year." Your goal isn't to be their best year, but I feel really good about the fact that kids like to come to my class every day. They feel loved when they're here, and they feel safe, and they can tell me things... (April 5, 2013)

I have to be careful because it's the kind of thing I could talk about all the time. I love my job (February 10, 2013). You know, I really love it. When you enjoy what you do it doesn't seem like as much work. (February 5, 2013)

Emily Effective

How do you explain Direct Instruction to other non-DI teachers you know?

It's hard. It's a hard conversation to have because, geographically in this area, the model for being an effective teacher is constructivism and allowing kids to learn on their own. It's hard for other educators to wrap their heads around something that they've been taught is so wrong. Trying to explain to other teachers that this is what I do, [they respond with], "Isn't that the exact opposite of what we've been taught to do?"

I have a friend of a friend who teaches in the early childhood program at [a state university] and she's always very interested in what I do. She starts her conversations about the models they use, and so I don't even go there because I don't want to... I don't know... [loss of words]... You're questioning me as to whether or not I'm an effective teacher because I choose to do things this way. Because you choose to do things that way, I'm not saying that you're not an effective teacher, but I feel like that's how people come at me when they find out that I am a Direct Instruction teacher. That there's no possible way. That I'm doing kids a disservice. (March 8, 2013)

What characteristics do you look for in deciding whether someone is a good teacher?

I can have a conversation with someone and know within five minutes whether they're a good teacher or not. I don't know what it is. And that's a big thing for me. If I don't feel that you're a good teacher in the classroom, I don't want to put my time and effort into really building up a relationship with you. A lot of it is just my inner sense of things. My intuition has a lot to do with it. If I were to walk into a classroom and feel like the person doesn't have what it means [to me] to be a good teacher, I would see that the kids are off-task. The teacher doesn't seem motivated. When you walk into a classroom, you should get this sense of a certain level of energy. I get kind of turned off if I don't feel that certain level of energy, or feel the kids' level of energy; the kids' level of excitement or passion... if I don't feel the teacher's passion. (March 8, 2013)

If you could give three pieces of advice to a brand new teacher who is new to

Direct Instruction and to teaching, what would it be?

[In a patient tone of voice] I want to say, "The program that you are used to is going to be a little different than the programs that we're coming into. You need to give it some time, give it an open mind and be prepared to work hard, because you will work a lot harder than you have in the past, but you will see the results and you will see these kids grow, shine, and achieve much higher than you ever expected. If you ever have any questions or if you ever need advice or if you ever need anything, please, come to me. I'd be happy to help you out with anything that you need, but it's going to be stressful at first. You're going to be stressed out, but just give it some time and know that after a couple months, you'll feel much better."

What about an experienced teacher? Would it be along the same lines?

No.

What would you tell them?

Shut the fuck up and get over your shit [laughs].

Meet Emily Effective

Emily is a woman in her early thirties. She is petite in build, has long, strawberry blond hair, and big blue eyes. She easily captivates those with whom she speaks with her

witty, jovial personality, animated gestures, and no-nonsense-tell-it-like-it-is (even if it involves the use of a swear word) attitude.

I wouldn't say that I'm a difficult person to get along with, but I wouldn't say that I'm an "easy-breezy, right-away-someone-can-connect-with-me-and-feel-my-positivity" kind of person. I get along with people just fine. I really need to feel people out ahead of time. I think that makes for what you would call a "not so easy person to get along with" because I'm just not so forthright in being open to everyone. (May 9, 2013)

Yet this personal description is almost impossible to see when she is in front of her five- and six-year-old kindergartners who aim to please and connect with the teacher they have grown to admire over the past six months.

I would describe myself as a very passionate teacher. I think I'm a witty, sarcastic teacher. I set very high expectations for my students, which I think is hard for a lot of kindergartners. Some of them don't always think they can meet those expectations, but they can.

I think I'm a teacher who is nurturing in ways, but I think that if you were to take another teacher and look at me, they would not describe me as a nurturing teacher. I obviously care very much about my kids and want them to grow and learn and things like that, but I also treat them as students, not as babies or anything like that (March 1, 2013). The relationship of trust and loyalty changes from grade to grade, but a lot of these kids need to feel like they're loved, because they don't get any love at home. I'm not saying mushy-gushy love, but made to feel like they can succeed and that someone's behind them. (May 9, 2013)

I definitely describe myself as a fun teacher. I love to have fun with my kids, joke around, but they also know that learning is what they're there for. That's their job (March 1, 2013). I make taking pride in their work and wanting to do their best a priority in my classrooms. They don't want to disappoint me. I explicitly tell them that their success is important, "You just read 10 words! Oh, my gosh! You need to go read those 10 words to your parents tonight and show them what a great reader you are!" (May 9, 2013)

Deciding to Become a Teacher

My journey is a little bit different than most people who are educators now. Teaching was always in the back of my mind. Growing up, I would always babysit. I taught swimming lessons for years. I was a lifeguard. I worked with kids almost my entire young adult life, and so when I went to college, I was like, "Oh, man. What do I want to do? What do I want to do?" (March 1, 2013)

Emily decided that she would go into business because “I knew that I would make more money in the business field” (March 1, 2013). Upon graduating with a degree in business management and a minor in speech communication, she was not able to find enjoyable work in the business field so she worked as a waitress for a couple of years. With her mind still on teaching, Emily applied to a master’s and teaching licensure program at a private university. She also began volunteering in a neighborhood elementary school.

There was not a lot of teaching going on in the classroom. There was a lot of noise and movement. It was really loud and chaotic, and to me, that wasn’t what I wanted to do. That wasn’t appealing to me. I remember thinking, “That’s not what I want to do. I don’t want to be a classroom teacher. It’s not for me” (March 1, 2013). It was just chaotic and a lot of it had to do with classroom management and just the relaxed atmosphere, a kind of blasé look at how programs should be implemented, how kids should read, or the importance of reading and math, or the non-importance of social studies. I was like, “This is crazy. This is absolutely crazy and absolutely ridiculous. I don’t know how the hell anyone would want to be a teacher.” (May 9, 2013)

Emily was not accepted to the master’s program. Though initially disappointed, she concluded that “When one door closes, another one will open” (March 1, 2013). She went back to being a waitress.

A couple years of waiting tables passed and Emily decided to “try this [becoming a teacher] again and see if going to a different kind of school [a charter school] rather than a regular public school or neighborhood school, might be different” (March 1, 2013). One day in late September, Emily was looking through the help wanted ads and noticed an ad for an instructional assistant position at Charter School of Direct Instruction (CSDI), a charter school down the road from her house. She decided to apply. She was offered the position and accepted without really knowing what made this charter school different from other public elementary schools.

I didn't watch a classroom before I interviewed. I just interviewed and was offered the position. After I took the position, [I went] and sat for an entire day watching Direct Instruction. I just remember being very tired having watched and listened the whole day. It's so much harder sitting there than it is being up and teaching. (March 1, 2013)

Charter School of Direct Instruction (CSDI) is a K-12 charter school in the western region of the United States. Its K-6 elementary school was in its 13th year of operation when Emily applied. Charter School of Direct Instruction educates over 700 children each year using Direct Instruction curriculum and teaching practices as its primary method of instruction. "The students are taught a coherent, incremental, and content-rich curriculum in a fast-paced, highly interactive, teacher-directed manner that challenges all students to reach their potential as they move through achievement groups" (Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy, 2013).

The school has received countless awards honoring its excellence in academic achievement including the rating of an "Excellent School" by the state department of education every year since the School Accountability Report's inception in 2003. Its elementary school also performs in the top 1% of schools in the nation each year according to the results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and it has been listed as an "exemplary" school by the Association for Direct Instruction (Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy, 2013).

As an instructional assistant, Emily was responsible for teaching reading, math, and spelling to small, homogenous groups of students using the Direct Instruction programs *Reading Mastery* (Engelmann & Bruner, 2003), *Connecting Math Concepts* (Engelmann, et al, 2003), and *Spelling Mastery* (Dixon & Engelmann, 2007). Because the school year had already started, Emily missed out on the two-week training CSDI

provided for their new hires each summer. Instead, she worked directly with the in-house instructional coach to accelerate her learning of the Direct Instruction programs and teaching practices. The coach was a full-time classroom teacher who was released from some of her teaching duties to provide training and coaching to the teachers and instructional assistants in the building. Emily remembers being assigned to read the teacher's guides for the reading and math programs. She also remembers the coach modeling a couple of lessons. The instructional coach spent time observing Emily, stepping in and modeling when necessary, and providing written feedback on Emily's strengths and areas of improvement. Coaching, to Emily, was key.

I could have figured it out on my own. Would I be the level of Direct Instruction teacher that I am now by now? No, absolutely not (March 8, 2013). Coaching is essential, 100% essential. When I read over [my old written] observations [from CSDI] (see Appendix F), I was like, "This is why I was able to be such a successful teacher." I think about the teacher that I am now and the teacher that I was [when I had coaching], and I'm not as good of a DI teacher now as I was at CSDI. I'm just not. Part of that is because, for me as an individual, it's hard for me to reflect on my own teaching. As a DI teacher, you're moving so fast and doing so much, I think it's so hard to self-reflect, especially now. Now that I [teach] kindergarten and teach six classes of reading and two classes of math. When I have that constant tangible [written feedback] in front of me, or when I have someone modeling it for me, that's an invaluable tool. (May 9, 2013)

[Becoming a good teacher] is a mixture of an innate sense that you're given, but then you also need to be molded and worked. I don't think I would be as good of a teacher as I am now having not had this innate inner-working already in my DNA. I think a lot of teachers that struggle are missing one or the other. One, they don't have that innate sense, or two, they don't have that outside influence to really help them. (March 8, 2013)

I remember thinking prepping [for the lessons] felt most difficult for me in the beginning, very time consuming. Now, that's the easiest part about [DI], but when I was first beginning I would read that script over and over and over again. I would make sure that I had read the next ten lessons, that I was prepared, that all of my pronunciations were correct, that I had rulers ready, that I had everything ready and that took a lot of time. [It] goes along with format, like sticking with the script. (March 8, 2013)

Emily says that it took about a year and a half to get comfortable with DI curriculum and teaching practices to the point where she describes it as being very “natural.”

I had a good teacher [the coach]. I had good coaching my first two years of teaching Direct Instruction (March 8, 2013). It was always harped upon me that [individual turns] is such a crucial aspect of Direct Instruction. Now it’s just automatic, every time a new skill comes up—individual turn. (March 8, 2013)

I think going back and [giving delayed tests] is something that all teachers work on constantly throughout their entire careers—just being self-reflective and taking a look back. “Let me take a step back, let me look at my group or let me look at my class and really think about when I’m going along today or tomorrow, I need to remember this, this, to hit this, then hit this.” I think that’s what all teachers are taught to do (March 8, 2013). [Now] it flows very naturally to me; it feels very comfortable. It feels very easy. It is something that I just do. It’s very automatic for me. (March 1, 2013)

The Influence of Others

Emily credits certain individuals at CSDI as playing pivotal roles in her becoming the teacher she is today. The first person Emily spoke of as influencing her teaching was Barbara, the first grade classroom teacher to whom she was an assistant and whose classroom she shared her first year at CSDI.

She was amazing. She was awesome. The way she worked with those kids and the way the kids loved her (March 1, 2013). Even sitting in her classroom—working, doing other stuff—but being able to listen to her was such an invaluable experience (May 9, 2013). Looking back on it now, I would love to go back into her classroom and just refresh my memory of everything that I had forgotten about what an incredible teacher I thought she was. She did really inspire me to be the teacher that I am today. Just to see the kids’ love for learning in that school and the amount of knowledge that those kids had was really inspiring. (March 1, 2013)

The instructional coach was also a big influence on Emily’s new-found joy for teaching.

[She] was really big on making sure the [instructional assistants] worked to their full potential and made sure that they really dove into the program and pushed themselves more than what I see now with a lot of [assistants]. My responsibility

was to teach reading, math, and spelling. [The coach] really pushed me to do more—to teach science and to teach social studies. (March 1, 2013)

The thing about CSDI that I thought was so wonderful was that everything was done in Direct Instruction. It wasn't only reading, math, and spelling. Science, social studies, writing, grammar, everything used Direct Instruction. My entire day was blocked out using Direct Instruction. (March 1, 2013)

I remember after I taught my first science lesson on the solar system, I was like, "I want to do more of this. This is incredible." I have a horrible memory, but I can remember standing up in Barbara's classroom, being absolutely terrified and petrified teaching the solar system to these kids. I can see it. I remember the coach telling me, "Okay. Maybe, you might want to try moving around the classroom a little more instead of just standing totally still." That's really what set me to do more and be better and really push myself, that first science unit I taught. I was like, "Okay, yes!" (March 1, 2013)

Whenever I sat down with my coach at CSDI, I always felt very comfortable. It never was an anxious thing. Looking over the [written] observations, I'm like, "Gosh, it was so helpful to see, 'Okay, here's what we were working on before, here's where we are now and here's how we can improve.'" (May 9, 2013)

At the end of her year as an instructional assistant, Emily was offered a second grade teaching position at CSDI.

I worked at [Charter School of Direct Instruction] for a year as a teacher's aide, and I absolutely loved it. I fell in love with it. I worked in first grade. I absolutely fell in love with the kids, fell in love with the program, fell in love with the school, fell in love with everything. (March 1, 2013)

She enthusiastically accepted and was a second grade classroom teacher at CSDI for two years, being assigned to teach the lowest reading and math groups because her administrators noted that, "[I was] a really effective teacher. [I could] move these kids along, so Barbara and I were given the lower achieving kiddos" (March 8, 2013).

All aspects of the kids motivate me, but seeing their growth really is the huge motivator. Yes, that really motivates me. It's feeling like I'm effective to the point where I can see growth in my kids. Specifically, in kindergarten, I would say [the students] being able to read words that I know they couldn't have read two weeks ago. Then thinking about second grade, going from one syllable

words to even three syllable words, or seeing the progress of their spelling or their writing, or anything like that. That's the biggest motivator. (March 8, 2013)

I also think part of being a motivated teacher is the school community itself, the administration, the other teachers on your team. I know I've been in situations where I didn't feel like I had the support of the administration and that was not motivating for me at all, to push myself to be a better teacher than I knew I was. I mean, I can be a good teacher, but to push myself to be the best teacher, or to be a better teacher, I think you need more than just the students (March 8, 2013). That's why I keep [certain people] around me. I'm like, "Okay, yes. I need to look into that. Oh, yes. I should be doing that, too." Otherwise, I'd be too lazy and just be complacent. (March 1, 2013)

One of those "certain people" Emily kept around was her teammate Kelly. Similar to Emily, Kelly was in her second year of teaching, both of which were spent in second grade at CSDI. Though there were four teachers on the second grade team, Emily and Kelly sparked a professional relationship, which quickly became a friendship outside of school.

We'd seen each other in the hallways when I was an aide, and I can't remember how it all kind of came together, but it just clicked. It didn't take long either, because we weren't friends until the beginning of the school year when we were both classroom teachers.... There was a lot of PD [professional development] that went on before [the school year] started. We just felt an instant connection with each other. It was really easy to work with each other. And we got to school at the same time every day.... We were the only people in the building at that time. Also, being the fact of proximity. Our [classrooms] were right across from each other, so anytime I needed anything or anytime she needed something, it was just a quick hop across the hallway to figure out what to do.... I remember my first year [as a teacher], all the time at the beginning of the day, I would just go in there every morning and bug her. "I was looking over this" and "Are you thinking this is good?" (June 6, 2013)

We were trying to figure out how to make second grade better. Both of us were like, "We need to make this curriculum better." And then we changed it so that we switched for science and social studies. That was the first year that we had done that (June 6, 2013). [Emily taught Kelly's students history and Kelly taught Emily's students science.]

In making the curriculum better, it was important to Emily that she be part of the work and turned to Kelly and her instructional coach to mentor her in doing this.

Part of it was using [the coach] and Kelly as a resource. And just knowing my kids. Having a feeling of knowing where I could push them and their capabilities (June 6, 2013). [Developing the social studies curriculum] was fun. It was a lot of work, but it felt really good to put something out that I felt good about and that I'd accomplished. When we would be going over it as a class and I was like, "I see a mistake right there," it was good to know that it was my mistake and not someone else's. I enjoyed it much more for it to be my mistake and felt, "Okay. I had control over that and now it's something that I can fix quickly and easily." Whereas, if it's someone else's mistake, you're not part of the problem, so you're on the outside looking in like, "Oh, what an idiot." But when you're doing it yourself, it's an internal kind of motivation, "Okay, I can make this better." (June 6, 2013)

At the end of Emily's first year of teaching, Kelly left CSDI to pursue graduate work.

Two teachers were replaced on the second grade team. Emily began mentoring one of the new classroom teachers but found it difficult to work with the other one.

The roles had kind of switched because it was Andrea's first year teaching second grade, so then she would come over to my room and we would debrief. [I did not mentor] Beth the same way, because I'm just a bitch like that. Andrea didn't ask stupid questions. I felt that any time Beth came by to ask me something, I was "How can you not figure that out on your own?" I think that had a lot to do with the relationship building with Kelly and Andrea. I felt like we were on a common ground of equal intelligence or common sense. I remember Beth would come to me and I'm thinking to myself, "Are you fucking kidding me? Are you really asking me this right now? Get out of my face." [Laughs.] I can use my time in other ways. (June 6, 2013)

That's another thing. If I don't feel people are using their time in an efficient manner, that's another thing that really turns me off. And Beth would have 20 sticky notes on her desk. Just put them in one central location...this thing called a planner...instead of sticking 20 sticky notes around your desk. She would come to me and ask me a question about something that should have been taken care of four days ago because she wasn't using her time efficiently. Your emergency is not mine. (June 6, 2013)

During her second year as a classroom teacher, Emily began investigating different ways to obtain her teaching license. The program she was interested in was over two hours away, which would require her to move. In order to be closer to the

program she would eventually apply for and be closer to Kelly, she finished the school year at CSDI and moved north.

A Non-Direct Instruction Teaching Experience

Upon moving north, Emily was hired as a second grade teacher at a charter school that did not use Direct Instruction curriculum or teaching practices. Her new school had a library and offered a computer class, both of which Emily liked having. She also liked most of the curriculum the school had selected to use. Though she did not have a choice in *what* she could teach the children, she did have a choice in *how* she could teach it.

So I turned it into my own version of Direct Instruction (March 1, 2013). It's just so easy to be able to integrate into your classroom, even without the prescribed Direct Instruction curriculum, that I could use it in my classroom, no matter where I was. It's creating that effectiveness that I need and want for my kids. Whether you call it DI or you call it something else, it's still DI and it's so effective that it will just be used in my classroom (March 8, 2013). Turning everything into Direct Instruction makes teaching more effective.

I think it creates far more repetition for those kids who need the repetition. And for those kids who don't need it, they still have to respond, so their minds are still working, so they're not bored. They're still using their minds. (March 1, 2013)

I taught a whole group in math, so I had abilities anywhere from pre-K to fourth grade in a math class. Using DI for that math class really helped create an environment for all learners, and it really helped with classroom management as well. Classroom management is so much better when using Direct Instruction. (March 1, 2013)

If an administrator didn't want me to use DI, then I wouldn't use it when [he or she] was in the classroom, when [he or she] was doing a formal observation. It's so few and far between that somebody comes into your classroom, other than your kids. I know it's effective. I know that it's a classroom management tool. Why not use it? Just because it's not the mandated curriculum or teaching methodology, I would still use it in my classroom no matter what. (March 8, 2013)

The school was only in its second year of operation. Everything was “We’re still trying to figure it all out” (March 1, 2013). Things were constantly changing, which was a struggle for Emily, who had just left CSDI, a charter school that “had its systems in place. Everything was established. There was a reason behind everything. ‘Here’s what we do and here’s why we do it and here’s the path that we take to get there’” (March 1, 2013). In addition, Emily struggled to get along with her administrators and colleagues.

I didn’t like the administration. I didn’t like either of my team members either. I think that makes a huge difference. [The principal] gave me the creeps (March 1, 2013). Plus, he thought he knew it all and he had no clue what went on in my classroom. He walked in one day and was like “Oh! This is a well-oiled machine. She’s a really great teacher.” He had no clue what was going on. (March 8, 2013)

I didn’t like [my teammates] as people or their teaching styles. That made it difficult. The administration made it difficult. The fact that it was a new school made it difficult. The kids were awesome. The parents were awesome. In general, I liked the school. That’s what it comes down to, for me, period, is I like the classroom. I like the kids. It’s just everything else around, involved in the school, besides the classroom, that is really what drives me crazy. That’s the hardest part about being a teacher—everything outside of the classroom. Everything in the classroom, I control and can work with. I love the kids. I’ve loved the kids in all of the schools that I’ve taught at. The kids are wonderful. (March 1, 2013)

Pursuing Her Teaching License

Near the end of her year at the non-DI charter school, Emily found out she had been accepted to the teaching licensure program she had looked into over a year ago. The year-long program also had a master’s degree in education option that was appealing to her. The program was full-time, meaning she would not be able to continue teaching. “It was really interesting because as I went through the program, no one else had any other teaching experience, whereas I had already had these four years of teaching experience under my belt” (March 1, 2013).

The master's degree was pretty easy, really. It was just time consuming. The program I was in was not necessarily the right fit for me. I jumped through the hoop to get the degree (June 6, 2013). I'm glad I have it, but if I'm going to put that much time and energy and money into something [like a doctoral degree], I want it to be something that I'm more passionate about. (June 6, 2013)

As part of the program, Emily had two semesters of experience in the classroom. The first semester she spent two days per week in an elementary classroom.

It's nice to have a variety of people around you. I think that it's important to have a bunch of different people around you instead of people who all think alike. Even my practicum teacher, she was the exact opposite of how I am as a teacher, and she was an incredible teacher. She was an amazing teacher, but she was just a different teacher than who I am. (March 1, 2013)

She was very similar to me in her playfulness and her funniness with the kids, but her teaching methodology itself was different. She had stations throughout her classroom. There was very little direct instruction, lowercase direct instruction, never any capital D, capital I, Direct Instruction. It was all very "You're learning from your peers" type of thing. "Here's a quick blurb about what needs to get done. Now, go do it" type of thing. That was very interesting. (March 1, 2013)

I just need structure. I'm a very structured person and that's how I learned best, and so that's how I teach best. I don't know if it's control, but I definitely feel like I learn best in a very structured, rigid environment. If I'm told, "Here's a project, now go work in a group of your peers and get it done," it makes me very uncomfortable. I don't like it. I like to take responsibility for my own learning. A lot of that has to do with the fact that I feel comfortable learning that way [structured, DI], and so I feel comfortable teaching that way as well. It's not to discount her or feel like it's ineffective in anyway, it's just not what works well for me. What works well for me is structure. (March 8, 2013)

The second semester was her student teaching experience, the semester in which she spent almost the entire time in a classroom with a teacher Emily describes as ineffective.

She was not an effective teacher. I feel like she just checked out. She didn't seem to really care about the kids. She just wanted me to do all of the work and she wasted a lot of time. There was no sense of urgency. She was just like, "Yes...whatever..." [She] just went about her day not feeling like anything really needed to be accomplished. (March 1, 2013)

Whereas, I do feel like all of my mentors and the people that I have looked up to, or been a part of their classroom, they all share that common goal of: Kids are here to learn and it is my job to make sure that they do that no matter what. I am here for a reason (March 1, 2013). [An effective teacher] gets kids to learn. You're creating those high expectations. You are showing growth and achievement (March 1, 2013). I think, to each their own, if that's how you choose to run your classroom, that's how you choose to teach your kids, that's great as long as you are an effective teacher. No matter how you get there, you get there. (March 1, 2013)

I totally agree with it [the DI philosophy: "If a child fails to learn, a teacher has failed to teach"]. All kids have the potential. Every time I've set an expectation for a kid, they've always met it...always; no matter what. If a kid's not learning, it's not the kid's doing. The teacher's just not teaching (March 1, 2013). [Teachers have] excuse after excuse after excuse, but they need to be looking at themselves. (March 1, 2013)

So much time is wasted in a classroom. [A strong sense of urgency] is getting kids' minds moving...your voice increases in rate and words talked per minute. Your inflection quickens; the pace of your lesson quickens. The whole idea of kids moving at their own pace [*physically tenses up*]*—so much time is wasted in a day that creating that sense of urgency in the classroom of picking up the pace [is key]. "Here's the expectation. Here's what needs to get done. Now let's do it."* It helps with classroom management. It helps with getting more accomplished throughout your day. It keeps me and the kids excited about learning. Instead of talking at a slower pace where the kids' minds can turn off and wander, it keeps me up and raring to go, and it keeps them excited about learning. Whereas I know sometimes I'm super tired and I talk at a slower pace, I notice the kids' minds start to wander or they start to yawn or something like that. Keeping up that sense of urgency really helps to increase their learning. (March 8, 2013)

Emily graduated with her teaching license and began looking for an elementary teaching position. She went back to waitressing after she graduated because she struggled to find a teaching position. Her struggle had nothing to do with a lack of available positions but rather the fact that Emily admitted to being very selective when it came to deciding on a school of which she wanted to be a part.

I do have a different perspective, now going through the teacher licensure program, my field experiences, and teaching at non-DI schools, than I did just having worked at CSDI. I definitely don't think that one way is the "be all, end all." I definitely like Direct Instruction and think that it's amazing, but I also

know that there's room for other stuff within a school day. Having a content-rich curriculum is what I'm passionate about and what I want to teach. Right now, in [half-day] kindergarten, I'm not able to teach any science or social studies, except for a 10-minute block. Content-rich curriculum definitely plays a big role in my love for making sure that kids get everything that they need, not just reading and math, which I think has played a really big role in education these days. I think there's so much more that needs to go on. (March 1, 2013)

I think the majority of teachers I've spoken with can't change curriculum. Curriculum is at such a higher level now with districts that it's not something that is negotiable. If you disagree with the curriculum and you can't get over it, then you need to go somewhere else because that's not changing. That's all there is to it. I've heard teachers bitch and moan about this or that, having to do with curriculum. I'm just thinking to myself, "Then you need to change because that's not going anywhere. This district or school just spent X amount of money. You need to either figure out how to adapt with that curriculum or find a new school." (March 8, 2013)

In looking for jobs, I want to find a job that I think is the best fit for me (March 1, 2013). It's important because as a teacher you have these beliefs about the best way that kids learn or what's best for kids or the best way to go about making sure kids succeed. When you know that that's not happening in a certain school, or it doesn't jive with how your direction is focused, then you're just going to be unhappy as a teacher and not be behind the school or be as great of a teacher as you can be if you're not behind what they are doing at that school. I guess I went unemployed for a while because I was only applying at certain schools that I felt would mesh with how I thought was the best way to teach kids or how best they could learn. (May 9, 2013)

If I know I'm going to be unhappy at a school, there is no reason for me to work at the school. Why would I want to work somewhere where I know it's not a good fit? It is really important for me to look and find a school that I think would be a good fit for me because I know what I like. I know what I think works well in my classroom and I want to have those tools and resources available to me. There are schools that I know aren't a good fit for me, so I choose not to apply to those schools because I don't want to be unhappy where I work. I want to feel appreciated. I want to feel like I'm making a difference and that I'm changing kids' lives, and that I'm doing it effectively. (March 8, 2013)

Teaching at Another Direct Instruction School

After waitressing for a year and a half, Emily found a charter school in its first year of operation that was using Direct Instruction as the main curriculum and teaching

method. She was excited to take on this venture, remembering how effective it was and how much she enjoyed teaching it at CSDI.

Engelmann Academy (EA) is a charter school in a large rural town; 80% of the school's kindergarten through fifth grade students qualify for free and/or reduced lunch. The elementary campus was created to feed into the secondary campus, which was established over 10 years ago. Emily teaches a morning and afternoon session of kindergarten. There are 15 students in each session. There are two kindergarten classrooms and they group the students at their instructional levels for reading and math.

Three days ago, we were on *RMSE-K [Reading Mastery Signature Edition--Grade K]* lesson 97. They read top-to-bottom, bottom-to-top for the first time ever, and that felt really successful to me. I feel successful when one of my little six-year-olds, who freaks out every time she bumps her toe and needs her mom right away, doesn't affect everyone else and that she could make it through without having a total meltdown. There's...I don't know how to put it... academic successes and social successes as well. (March 1, 2013)

My lack of performance some days makes it feel like an unsuccessful day for sure. I know some days I'm like, "I did not do my kids justice today." Or, mentally, my mood was off or something like that, "I could've done such a better job." Personally, that's when it turns into an unsuccessful day. In a successful day, it turns into the kids, either their [academic] output or their interpersonal skills. (March 1, 2013)

Engelmann Academy is in its first year and has contracted with an outside consulting company to help with the training and implementation of Direct Instruction programs and teaching practices. Coming from CSDI, a school in which Emily was extensively trained, coached, and taught to use Direct Instruction, was an adjustment. She especially notes seeing so many of the teachers [and leaders] struggling with not just the teaching practices and curriculum but DI from a bigger picture.

The teacher that I can hear in the hallway, I'm like, "I have to close my door because she doesn't get it." I don't know how it is that she doesn't get it (March 1, 2013). I don't know what it is about it that makes it so natural. I don't know

how, for some people it's natural, and for some people it's not (March 1, 2013). I've already had two practice sessions on error corrections and to me it's like, "What's so hard? Why aren't people understanding error corrections?" It's a simple process. You do this, this, and this every single time. It's the same thing every single time. (May 9, 2013)

It's totally perplexing to me that it [DI] works for some teachers, and some teachers are totally taken aback and thrown off by it and think it's the worst thing...the devil. I feel like some teachers, too, who have had so much freedom, quote-unquote, "freedom" in their classroom feel really restricted by the script (March 1, 2013)... I'm going to take a wild guess as to part of it. The people that I have seen [that have] experience with being successful with it, it's been their first program that they've worked with. (March 1, 2013)

Emily has also struggled with the consultants who come in once every three months. She cannot help but compare them to the coach she worked with, respected, and admired at CSDI. She feels sorry for the teachers at EA and the non-existence of coaching (March 8, 2013). She knows the teachers need to be coached in order to become competent and confident teachers.

It's frustrating to see [*tapping table three times*], "This could be done better. This could be done better. This could be done better." But I'm sitting on the sidelines not able to make any of the changes that I know would make this a more productive school. I would absolutely love to do it [start a new DI school], but only with the right people on my team to know that it could be an efficient, effective system. (June 6, 2013)

The thing about the school that I work at now is there is no coaching. My aide in my room right now has even said to me, "I feel like I'm doing my kids a disservice because I don't know what I am doing. But I know that if someone was to come in and coach me, or I could watch another teacher, anything like that, I know that I would be a much more effective teacher than I am now." That's absolutely, I think, the case for any teacher. (March 8, 2013)

My aide has asked for help a *number* of times. She's asked for help and nothing has come from it (May 9, 2013). Instead of coming into the classroom and modeling or anything like that, [the lead teacher] will come in and say, "You didn't put the date on your [pacing sheet] about when you did remedies." It's all about the forms. (May 9, 2013)

[The consultants] are not personable. I have talked to other teachers in my school about it as well. I'm not the only one that feels like they're giving one

positive and six negatives (March 8, 2013). They come and observe me and then I'm pulled into the hallway to discuss the observation right then and there. It's kind of an uncomfortable, uneasy pit in your stomach. One of my very first observations, they pulled me out and asked me about one of my groups and I said, "I need to look and see what lesson they're on." She said, "You don't know what lesson they're on?" And I said, "I have six reading groups, so no, I don't know exactly what lesson they're on." (May 9, 2013)

[We] had an after-school training session. The whole practice session went off course because this lady brought up the fact that whenever [the consulting company] rolls into town they make us feel like we're not good at what we do. We're not told about what we do well and [the lead teacher] was like, "Oh, that's not the case at all. [The consultant] just sings everyone's praises. She just sings everyone's praises." I said, "Okay, well if she sings the teachers' praises, she needs to sing them directly to their faces. Or give them an actual output sheet." Nothing is ever given when an observation is done. No sort of tangible is given. (May 9, 2013)

My coach at CSDI gave me the freedom that I needed to do what I wanted to with the script in sticking with the script, but also understanding where I could move and shake it a bit (March 1, 2013). First it was "sticking to the script, sticking to the script." Then my coach was like, "Well, you're doing such a good job with sticking to the script, let's try XYZ." Then I was like, "Oh, my gosh, I can do XYZ? Okay, let's try XYZ." Then that was effective for me as well, once I was given "permission," I guess. It goes back to the whole thing as to why [I] need to have such a structured classroom. Because I feel like that's how I learned best. When I've been told, "Yes, this works just as well as this. Go ahead and try it." Then I'm like, "Okay! Yes, all right! Let's do it!" (March 8, 2013)

The administrative team at the new school is also new to Direct Instruction.

Emily has a hard time taking her administrators seriously because she "has this sense that, basically... I know more than they do" (March 8, 2013).

I'm working so hard to make sure that these kids are achieving to the best of their ability and that's not recognized. I'm being told, "No, you can't do this" [even though] I'm recognizing these kids can be pushed harder than their being pushed and there are things that I can take out and use to push them. It's very difficult for me to handle. [For example,] we were given cards [from the consultants] for every student in reading, language, and math to write our projected ending lesson and then any concerns about the student that needed specific data to back the concerns. I had at least 10 kids on those reading cards that I said need to be tested up into a higher group before they begin next year. (May 9, 2013)

That's one thing that pisses me off about the consulting company. It's like I work my ass off to push these kids more and more, and then my lead teacher will come to me and be like, "Now I see here that you did not do lesson 108 or 109." I don't feel like I can be honest with her and be like, "Well it's because I am fast-cycling them" because I've been told that I can't fast cycle them. But the presentation book clearly says that if they're at mastery at test "blank" and "blank," skip lessons "blank" and "blank." I shouldn't have to tell [the lead teacher] this. (May 9, 2013)

It just kills the whole morale of the school. It deflates the teacher. It takes the power out of the classroom, is how many teachers feel. That's kind of the idea behind a teacher: that you know your kids best, and you're there to make the decisions for them. Not some higher being who comes in every three months. (March 8, 2013)

The hardest part of teaching is relating to the other adults. Teaching kids is the easy part, I think. It's all the other stuff that goes along with teaching that makes it difficult. All of the politics involved with teaching and all of the day-to-day rigmarole makes teaching unappealing (March 8, 2013). I would love [to coach]. I think that that would be awesome, but in the back of my mind, it kind of worries me, too. Do I really have the interpersonal skills to work well with other adults? I don't know. I know that I have the interpersonal skills with a six-year-old, so I work really well with six year olds. Could I really?... Of course, I could do it [coach teachers]. (March 1, 2013)

Emily often finds herself comparing her teaching environments to her time at CSDI. For example, the pacing sheets that document the lessons she teaches every week at EA, to her, do not serve a purpose, especially when she looks back on how they were used at CSDI.

I think a pacing sheet is very effective if it's used effectively (see Appendix G). In the situation that I'm in now, our pacing sheet creates nothing for the teachers. It doesn't create any sort of data. It doesn't create anything except for just a quick map of you [the teacher] looking at it before you turn it in and seeing, "Okay, I did two lessons this week. I did one mastery test." It's just a recap of what you did over the week. (March 8, 2013)

[At CSDI] there was output involved with that pacing sheet, another form that showed all of the other groups, where they were (see Appendix H). It was one, reflective, but two, also gave you an idea of, "Okay. I see where this group is at. Let me push my group a little further to get them there, or let me see if I can move this kid in my class who I think could be pushed further to get them into the next group" type of thing. I think that was a very effective way to use a pacing

sheet. When nothing's created from the pacing sheet, it's ineffective and it just becomes busy work for the teacher. (March 8, 2013)

A Career in Teaching

Emily struggles with knowing whether she will stay in teaching as a career. She admits to wondering if she will ever find another CSDI. She wonders if she romanticizes her time at her first school.

Do you know how many times Kelly and I talk about this? It's just ridiculous. It's just a broken record. I said to her the other day, "I'm starting to feel like, 'Am I really going to be happy anywhere I go?'" Because I have not been happy anywhere since I've been at CSDI. All I do is bitch and moan and complain, not at school, but to other people, and I just can't figure out what it is that makes all these schools just make me feel horrible. If I went back [to CSDI] I'd probably hate it. I don't know. I'm feeling like, "Am I cut out to do this as my career forever?" I don't know. I'm feeling so jaded and I don't know if this is the right career for me. [After a couple of seconds of silence,] Of course, I love it. I love it so much, I do. (May 9, 2013)

Some days are better than others. Some days I feel like I could do this forever. Some days I feel like I could quit tomorrow (March 1, 2013). I love teaching. I love it, but I also hate it some days. It just drives me crazy. The whole big picture of education drives me crazy, at the national level of education, the state level of education, all of that is a little disheartening. I think it's the lack of respect for teacher, but I love it so much. I don't picture myself doing anything else, other than having some sort of impact on kids. (March 1, 2013)

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the results of the analysis of each teacher's individual case study and the cross-case comparison, highlight the similarities of their experiences, and note the unique differences. This chapter is presented in three parts. Part One analyzes Donna's story, Part Two analyzes Emily's story, and Part Three compares the similarities and differences between both stories in a cross-case comparison.

Part One: Donna Driven

Upon completing and analyzing the four hours of interviewing, four hours of observations, the documents and artifacts, and countless hours listening to the transcripts and coding data, four themes emerged that helped bring meaning to Donna's teaching experiences. The titles for the themes came from Donna's direct quotes: "My personality is such that...", "It's hard for me to go against my beliefs," "I am a perpetual student," and "We totally underestimate what our children are capable of." These four themes expanded Donna's dispositions and personal characteristics going into teaching, the impact of her beliefs on her work, the need for ongoing professional development, and developing a keen awareness of the ability of each of her students and how to teach to it.

Theme 1: “My Personality is Such That...”--A Look at Dispositions

Donna’s journey into teaching was not typical. Other than her experiences in being an involved parent in her own children’s education, Donna did not have a degree in education nor formal teaching experience prior to her first year at Charter School of Direct Instruction (CSDI). If knowledge comes from experience and perception, Donna had some perceptions but lacked teaching experience. She had not been exposed to theories of learning or teaching typically found in teacher education programs. Such programs play a role in the development and influence of many teaching practices and beliefs (Pajares, 1992). She did not know that “it’s not all the same” (February 21, 2013). Donna was not espoused to a particular method or methods of instruction. She did not know there were different curricula that could be used to teach children and that some teachers created their own. Other than knowing that academic rigor and strong character were important to her, Donna was unclear how teaching these would be accomplished in a school setting. She just knew she wanted to have a positive impact on children and assumed the school that hired her would give her the tools and support she needed to accomplish this.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2013) defines disposition as a prevailing tendency, mood, or inclination; temperamental makeup; the tendency of something to act in a certain manner under given circumstances. Donna postulated that the interview process at CSDI was more about determining a potential teacher’s dispositions—his or her temperamental makeup— than a focus on his or her teaching experience, knowledge, and educational philosophies. At the time of her application, CSDI was a well-established and successful Direct Instruction school. The administrators knew that most applicants

would have little to no knowledge or experience with Direct Instruction. According to Donna, having a lack of “informed beliefs” (February 21, 2013) and experience regarding teaching and student learning, and being birthed into this system (April 5, 2013) made her a “perfect candidate to get in at CSDI. I was untainted. They were able to form me and brainwash me (February 21, 2013). Maybe part of the beauty in me is I’ve never known anything else” (April 5, 2013). Because of the model they used, CSDI was confident they could give Donna the tools (Direct Instruction curriculum, training, on-going coaching, and support) to ensure her teaching practices would have a positive impact on student achievement. They just needed someone with a teachable spirit and a tenacious attitude to deliver such instruction.

Donna must have displayed favorable dispositions during the interview at CSDI because she was hired. What were the personality traits that Donna exhibited that exemplified dispositions that would match the mission of CSDI and of the Direct Instruction model? First, Donna was self-motivated and committed:

Once I set my mind on something, I do it. I’ve always been that way.... Anything I’ve gotten involved in I’ve always ended up really going overboard and really exceling. Not because I have all this great talent, but because I am so driven in what I do. I’m very committed to what I put my mind to.... If I’m going to be a teacher I want to be the best teacher I can be. It’s not just a job for me. (February 5, 2013)

Being a committed individual is critical when using Direct Instruction because it is not the norm in education today. As noted in earlier chapters, Direct Instruction is only being used in 2% of schools (Barbash, 2011). The learning curve can be significant for many teachers because they have never heard of, nor been trained in, Direct Instruction prior to their initial exposure. As noted by Donna, “If you're not birthed into this system,

it would be hard to step up. It's not an easy job" (April 5, 2013). To stick with something that is not naturally easy or familiar requires commitment.

Second, Donna takes pride and has a strong sense of personal responsibility in any task she is asked to perform.

Because I'm a driven person and because I hold myself very accountable, this [CSDI] is the perfect atmosphere for me (April 5, 2013). I think I was really instilled as a child to take pride in what I did and to be proud of anything that would have my name attached to it, and not to do anything half-way. (February 21, 2013)

Donna held herself personally responsible for her professional endeavors prior to teaching. She would celebrate and be challenged by success but would also be quick to own and grow from a mistake. All of this carried over to teaching: "I gauge my performance as a teacher by, 'Are they learning? Why is that child not able to understand, or what is it?' ...I'll be devastated if I get those scores back [in the spring] and I don't have growth" (April 5, 2013). She is an example of the Direct Instruction philosophy that "if a child fails to learn, a teacher has failed to teach" (Engelmann & Carnine, 1991) and the Direct Instruction belief that the most critical factor in the education of a child is the teacher.

Donna thrives in structured environments. Not only does she know that this is an environment in which she works best, she believes it is the most advantageous for her students as well: "I love structure. I like the control. I don't like a lot of free-form and chaos" (February 10, 2013). Since teaching at CSDI, she has "visited public schools and observed and I don't know that I would be able to handle that noise and that type of situation on a regular basis every day, day in and day out" (February 10, 2013). Direct Instruction is a highly structured curriculum and method of instruction. The lessons are

scripted; there are prescribed checks for understanding along the way; the teaching practices are measurable and must be mastered by the teacher. Direct Instruction helps keep Donna's classroom and days structured and consistent.

Finally, Donna is motivated by achievement. Direct Instruction is a source of visible achievement, both from the teaching perspective and the student learning perspective. From a teaching perspective, Direct Instruction has developed and researched eight hierarchical teaching practices that are teachable, visible, and measurable. Through training, coaching, and self-reflection, Donna was able to monitor her performance, see at which practices she was excelling and on which practices she continued to work to quickly become a routine user of Direct Instruction. From a student learning perspective, the mastery tests given every 5 to 10 lessons provided constant feedback to Donna regarding her students' learning. Believing that her teaching (or lack of teaching) is reflected in the test scores, she will adjust her teaching to either ensure or accelerate mastery. How can she get the students to master more material in less time? What does she need to go back and reteach to ensure they have mastered the material and can move forward in learning?

Taking a closer look at the visible characteristics outlined in Crawford and Saulter's (2011) article, it is clear that these characteristics are specific examples of a Direct Instruction teacher who is achievement-driven or motivated by seeing his or her students succeed in learning. The Direct Instruction teacher's students know that their success is important to the teacher. The teacher checks for understanding more than is written in the script, gives individual turns even when the script does not require it, is curious about whether his or her students are getting the right answer, and wants to

analyze student tests and work for error patterns. The teacher brags about his or her students to other adults and wants to display the best work his or her students do. The Direct Instruction teacher's students want to show their work to the teacher; they take pride in their work and want to do their best. Each of these characteristics describes Donna. These characteristics are beyond the routine level of implementation. They are easy to see but harder to measure. But it is believed that possessing such characteristics is part of the make-up of a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher.

Donna wants to see her students succeed. Success begets success. Might having these characteristics be important when looking at the sustainability of Direct Instruction in schools and with teachers? It is easy to train and coach specific teaching practices that will eventually bring a non-user to a routine user. But in terms of sustaining Direct Instruction and becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher, what role does one's dispositions play? Does it make things easier or serve as a source of acceleration? Is there a guarantee? It is clear that Donna's dispositions going into her teaching experience with Direct Instruction created a smooth transition. She had no prior teaching experience or training. She was committed and had a strong sense of responsibility. She thrived in structured environments and was motivated by achievement.

Theme 2: "It's Hard for Me to Go Against My Beliefs"--The Impact of Beliefs

As Donna's data were sorted and coded, one phrase kept repeating itself: practice what you preach. Donna's "practice what you preach" category was brimming with examples of how not only her beliefs aligned with the curriculum and teaching practices used at CSDI but that such an alignment was a requirement for her. She constantly gave

examples that spoke to her belief system. When she was teaching, those beliefs were emulated in her interactions with the students. Interactions with her colleagues continued to reinforce her beliefs.

Donna initially claimed that her beliefs had changed once she started teaching at CSDI (February 21, 2013). However, as she began to explain how she became a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher, “change” is not the word that would be used to describe the evolution of Donna’s beliefs. She admitted to lacking “informed beliefs” (February 21, 2013) about education and teaching going into teaching at CSDI. And that is, indeed, what they were. It would take real teaching experiences and success with students for Donna to be able to articulate what she believed about teaching and learning and the role she played in both. The beliefs she was able to articulate prior to teaching had mostly to do with the character of children. For example, she remembered having strong beliefs about the importance of developing strong character in children. Because CSDI emphasizes this development, it aligned with what Donna felt was an important part of child development:

It’s very hard for me, because of my personality, to go against my beliefs. So my teaching practices have to align. And it would be very hard for me to go somewhere else because that’s so much a part of who I am. And everything I do in my classroom is trying to reinforce that belief system. The honesty, the character, and treating people with respect. I like the fact that they [the students] have to say, “Yes, Ma’am.” That doesn’t mean that I am some super power over them. It just teaches common respect and courtesy. And I just truly believe in all of that. It isn’t hard for me to reinforce it or expect it because I truly believe it. (February 21, 2013)

When it came to Donna’s beliefs about the specifics of teaching and student learning, Donna’s lack of “informed beliefs” (February 21, 2013) was caused by lack of experience. Therefore, beliefs that were most impactful for her going into her teaching

career were her beliefs about her own ability to make a difference in her students' learning--the beliefs that would lead to positive experiences. Because she has felt tremendous success using the Direct Instruction model, she is very efficacious in knowing she could contribute to student learning using this curriculum and teaching practices. This confidence set the tone as she spoke about her beliefs around teaching and learning today. All Donna's beliefs were grounded in the notion of self-confidence and whether she could see herself successfully executing the task to increase student success. This had everything to do with self-efficacy.

The question then became whether Donna experienced "real change" according to Sparkes (1991). Sparkes postulated that in order to have experienced "real change" that would lead to sustainability, an alignment of curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs must occur. Marris (1975) said that real change in beliefs would require loss, anxiety, and struggle. In other words, there must be moments of resistance, doubt, or struggle during the change process for a teacher. They must experience cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957).

Donna has experienced and requires that curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs align for her. This alignment of curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs has contributed to her becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. It has also influenced her sustainability in teaching Direct Instruction. Although change theory claims a person has to go through cognitive dissonance for the change to be sustainable, Donna seems to have reached this alignment without loss, anxiety, or struggle. Whether a change in beliefs occurred in a life experience prior to teaching was not determined. She also reflected on how beliefs were fleshed out during the hiring process at CSDI:

Beliefs come out in the hiring process. You have to trust your administrators [are] going to get people that will match. I think that if you can get the right people in the door, [beliefs] are not as hard [to change] because you'll get that person that has the basic foundation that matches your system. I think beliefs are foundational. (February 21, 2013)

Although Donna might not have been able to articulate these beliefs her first year and actually considered leaving the school because she wanted to be a classroom teacher, through strong positive teaching experiences that resulted in student growth, she quickly assimilated philosophies and beliefs prevalent in the school: "Any time you're affirmed in anything, it's going to grow your belief.... Anything that happens that affirms what you've been doing. It solidifies the belief that you have..." (April 5, 2013). What Donna seemed to be saying was that without real life experience, articulating beliefs about larger educational ideas (curriculum, preferred methods of instruction, theories of learning) could be difficult, if not impossible. An inexperienced teacher can explore ideas and discuss theories but to ask for someone's belief system prior to any experience is premature and might result in one espousing to a belief system for no reason other than having to pick something.

Donna is more convinced today than ever that the Direct Instruction approach to teaching and student learning is what is best for students and advocates for it every chance she gets. Five years later, she admitted, "Had I not found Direct Instruction and this school, I don't know that I would have stuck with teaching" (February 10, 2013). There is tremendous power in Donna's alignment of beliefs, practices, and curriculum: "This [DI] is it for me. Not having the DI would be a big thing because once you've learned to teach that way it's just hard to do it another way" (February 21, 2013).

Theme 3: “I am a Perpetual Student”
--The Need for Ongoing Professional Development

Donna’s third theme did not emerge until the transcripts of the interviews were being coded. Since then, it had proven to be a critical aspect in Donna becoming and remaining a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. Example after example of Donna’s need to be mentally challenged piled up during the data sort. This pattern was initially discovered in the third interview. Once this happened, earlier interviews were reread. Without fail, *every* interview was peppered with casual references to a training she had attended, a conference her school sent her to, a recent observation she had participated in, a professional book she was in the middle of reading, or a meeting she was looking forward to attending. It was such a natural part of her conversation and life that it was almost overlooked and utterly taken for granted. The significance, however, was paramount to her sustainability at CSDI and in teaching Direct Instruction: “They can’t send me to enough seminars. That’s just who I am. I like the growth. I like the challenge. I like learning something new. People like me need that continued challenge. Maybe that makes me a good teacher because I’m a perpetual student myself” (April 5, 2013).

Even from her initial interview at CSDI where she told the principal “...mental energy, I can go 24/7. I’m just always thinking. I have a hard time slowing down. Mental energy, you can’t challenge me enough” (April 5, 2013), it was clear: Donna needed to always be learning. It is never ending. This need to be challenged mentally might also explain why Donna never saw her evolution in mastering the Direct Instruction teaching practices as a single life-changing event but rather “a gradual

progression” (February 5, 2013). She is always looking for ways to be more effective and efficient in the classroom. This teachable spirit was sure to have been influenced by the way she was raised but was also critical during her first year of learning Direct Instruction.

She worked extensively with the instructional coach in the building to accelerate her learning of Direct Instruction: “It was the coach pretty much. I was observed a lot. I think all new people are observed a lot” (February 10, 2013). Coaching and additional training were on-going at CSDI. It did not matter whether you were a first year Direct Instruction teacher or a veteran--all teachers and instructional assistants were observed and given feedback throughout the school year. In addition, teachers at CSDI were given opportunities to watch other teachers teach Direct Instruction. During her year as an instructional assistant, when she was not teaching her own groups, she was sitting in the back of her classroom teacher’s class, watching the teacher use Direct Instruction during all parts of the day. Finally, the students were released from school early on Fridays to allow grade level teams to get together and collaborate regarding student data, teaching practices, and additional training. This built-in time to communicate with the team and administration helped the teachers recognize that they were in it together and could do the work.

Donna quickly learned and applied the Direct Instruction teaching practices, which resulted in student growth. She taught small, homogenous groups of students. This feature helped with classroom management because she could keep a close eye on each student, making sure they were participating in each lesson. Also, first year instructional assistants and teachers at CSDI were usually not given the groups of

students who needed the most support for growth (i.e., the lowest performing groups). Donna was given groups that were performing at grade level. Consistent teaching would result in the students making adequate growth each year. Also, because the students were all performing at about the same level, Donna could teach to that level, not having to worry as much about differentiating for the wide-array of abilities typically found in whole-class instruction. She knew that if she was teaching to mastery, it would be reflected on the students' mastery tests given every 5 to 10 lessons. With every reading, math, or spelling test given, Donna experienced visible achievement or a mastery experience, which served to raise her self-efficacy.

This confirmation led to an alignment and enjoyment of the work she was doing, which made her want to learn more, which led to adjusting teaching practices, which (hopefully) had a positive impact on student achievement, which further validated a belief system that she was able to positively impact student learning: "The majority of the [teaching] behavior changes provide increased achievement. Some of them don't, but it is a fielding thing" (April 5, 2013). But for Donna, the learning has never stopped. Although she might be able to demonstrate proficiency on all the Direct Instruction teaching practices, she wants to continue to learn ways to of being even more effective and efficient, fueling her self-efficacy. To do this, she needs to continually be professionally developed.

Theme 4: “We Totally Underestimate What Our Children Are Capable Of”--Having a Keen Awareness of How to Teach to the Ability of Each Child

There was a peculiarity in Donna’s stories of achievement and being achievement-driven noted in the first theme that is worthy of extension and discussion as it contributed significantly to the fourth theme that emerged from her data. When speaking of the success of Direct Instruction, Donna was always quick to offer the statistics of the school’s academic performance: “We’re one of the top elementary schools in the state. I love saying that” (February 10, 2013). She loved telling people about the school and success it had experienced. Yet, when asked about what success meant to her or to give personal teaching examples of success, *every* story Donna shared of her success in teaching came from a different kind of achievement. Her stories focused on the connections she had made with her students, helping to develop strong character in each of them, building trusting relationships, and instilling a love for learning. In essence, she strove to build strong self-efficacy in them. Donna passionately explained and gave examples of building rapport and having a “genuine concern for people.... Everybody wants to be accepted. Acceptance is a big thing” (February 10, 2013). Achievement to Donna was more than academic growth.

This seemed to contradict her being achievement driven. Donna was motivated by academic achievement. She bragged about the school’s test scores. She held herself personally accountable for the academic growth of her students. Yet every example of personal achievement and success she gave had to do with growth in the students’ character. Why did there appear to be a disconnect between what she defined as success

and what she felt as success? Upon further reflection, a couple of factors seemed to be interacting.

First, to Donna, the academic success of her students was a given, a non-negotiable. She never hesitated, nor questioned, whether every single one of her students would learn to read, do math, master facts about the American Revolution, or learn how to classify a sentence. They would. Learning academic content was a given because she knew what to do to make this happen and what to do when it did not. This could be tied to her disposition of personal responsibility. It could also be because she had witnessed the incredible academic growth of all students using the Direct Instruction curriculum. In her mind, she knew that using Direct Instruction programs and teaching practices would guarantee the students' academic success. She did not have to create this.

She did not have to determine what her second graders knew and what they were expected to know by the end of second grade. Direct Instruction has researched and developed the curriculum to provide the specific, sequential steps needed to ensure students are learning. Because Direct Instruction places students in small homogeneous groups for their core subjects (reading, math, and spelling), Donna did not need to use as much teaching energy to determine ways to differentiate for a wide range of student ability. Students in her group were at the same instructional level. Checks for understanding were built into the Direct Instruction curriculum and came in the form of mastery tests given every 5 to 10 lessons. Quite simply, Donna was tasked to master the Direct Instruction teaching practices. If she could do this, student growth would be guaranteed. Therefore, the faster she did this, the faster the students would grow. The science of teaching was provided.

This assurance also allowed her to develop a keen awareness of the ability of each of her students. Because she had a solid foundation of effective teaching practices and curriculum, she was able to play with the teaching practices to see how the students responded and if achievement could be increased, accelerated, or both. For example, near the end of the third quarter, Donna's reading group was on lesson 111. Looking at a calendar and knowing that there were 145 lessons in this level of the program, she was hoping to finish the program by the end of the school year. If they could do it, this group (the lowest second grade reading group) would end the year reading about a half a year above grade level. She constantly tried to teach more lessons in less time. In math, she saw how far she could push her group--the highest math group in second grade. Currently, her math group is further in the program than any second grade math group has ever been. This challenge was exciting for Donna, knowing that this group would leave second grade having mastered academic standards that surpassed second grade. All these sources of visible achievement fueled her motivation to work with students at all abilities because all students could be challenged to meet their academic potential.

She knew that all of this success was a result of her work, her knowledge, and her experience. The more she learned about Direct Instruction, the more aware she became of every child's ability and potential. In the end,

The biggest thing that hit me when I started being a teacher here was that we totally underestimate what our children are capable of. I think kids are just capable of so much more and if you give them that opportunity and you give them that structure and put it out there, that they can really, really learn. (February 21, 2013)

The conviction with which she stated this spoke to her ability and confidence in knowing what to do.

In the world of teacher-centered and student-centered models for teaching, Direct Instruction tends to fall on the teacher-centered side of the continuum. But in listening and reflecting on Donna's story, it could be argued that Direct Instruction is incredibly student-centered. Donna knew exactly where each student was in his or her academic or behavioral progress. More importantly, she had been given the training, tools, and constant support to teach to these abilities and show more than average growth in a year. She was "devastated" (April 5, 2013) if her students did not demonstrate growth; she was inspired by seeing growth in children who required the most support; and she was always looking for the challenge of accelerating the learning of all her students regardless of ability: "Every child is going to be somebody. You take what they have and what their strengths are and you grow that. Even if they only have one strength, you grow that" (April 5, 2013).

With this strong self-efficacy and sense of responsibility came an acute awareness of where each of her students was performing academically and behaviorally. The combination of using the same curriculum and teaching practices and constantly receiving feedback from someone who knew both (an instructional coach) extended Donna's ability to not only accelerate student learning but also know that the growth (or lack thereof) was within her control. Because she had developed an unwavering belief in her ability to grow children in all areas of their life, such a belief was passed onto the students.

Donna was able to focus much of her teaching energy on encouraging the development of strong character in each of her students by placing them in instructional groups so they would feel successful and see their hard work pay off in learning. In

essence, she was able to replicate the cycle of learning, achieving, believing, and enjoying that she experienced in her own teaching with her students, which is expanded upon later in this chapter.

Part Two: Emily Effective

Upon completing and analyzing the four hours of interviewing, two hours of observations, the documents and artifacts, and countless hours listening to the transcripts and coding data, four themes emerged from Emily's data. The titles for the themes came from her direct quotes: "Coaching is essential. 100% essential," "It's nice to have a variety of people around you," "I do have a different perspective," and "I am here for a reason." These four themes expanded the role and necessity of instructional coaching on Emily's growth as a Direct Instruction teacher, the importance and influence of people in her teaching career, the impact of her beliefs on her work, and the incredible sense of urgency she displayed in ensuring student achievement.

Theme 1: "Coaching is Essential. 100% Essential"--The Role of Instructional Coaching

Prior to teaching at Charter School of Direct Instruction (CSDI), Emily had no teaching experience or formal training in education. For this reason, when she was introduced to the instructional coach and the coaching model used at CSDI to train and support the teachers as they implemented the Direct Instruction curriculum and teaching practices, she was very open to being helped. She saw the coach as someone who would teach her what she assumed the other teachers received during their teacher education programs. The instructional coach would teach Emily what to teach and how to teach it.

Emily said that coaching was part of the culture at CSDI. Everyone who worked with the students received training and on-going coaching regardless of experience or position. What might have varied was the number of observations a highly effective teacher would receive versus a teacher who was new to or struggling to effectively use Direct Instruction: “I could have figured it out on my own. Would I be the level of Direct Instruction teacher that I am now by now? No, absolutely not (March 8, 2013). Coaching is essential, 100% essential” (May 9, 2013).

Emily believes that coaching should be a requirement for all teachers, even the most effective ones: “As a DI teacher, you’re moving so fast and doing so much, I think it’s so hard to self-reflect” (May 9, 2013). Even though the program is highly scripted and structured, Emily still needs to be able to reflect on how effective her presentation of the material was. Having a coach help in this process by being an additional set of eyes was critical to her growth as a Direct Instruction teacher. In addition, when the instructional coach gave both verbal and written feedback, it allowed Emily to go back and reference the suggestions as she planned future lessons. She found herself motivated to learn more about what she could do or change in her delivery to increase student achievement because the suggestions from the coach were relevant and helpful.

Taking a closer look at the Observation Feedback Forms Emily provided as documents of her growth (see Appendix F), it is evident that the coach used the teaching practices identified on the Qualitative Observation Guide (see Appendix B) to provide specific and frequent feedback to Emily. Emily was observed five times in a little over two months by the coach in the area of reading; each observation lasted from 10 minutes to one hour in length. She said that the same frequency occurred during math, spelling,

and instructional time that did not include the use of a specific Direct Instruction program when she became a classroom teacher.

Whatever was new for Emily in teaching received intense focus and feedback from the instructional coach. For example, when Emily was learning how to teach reading, she was observed two days in a row at the beginning to make sure she was making the changes that would have the greatest impact on student achievement. Once it looked like she was getting a strong understanding of the practices and curriculum, the frequency of observations decreased but they never went away completely. There was always a new group of students, a change in program levels, or a new format on which to be worked.

According to Emily, “The thing about CSDI that I thought was so wonderful was that everything was done in Direct Instruction. It wasn’t only reading, math, and spelling. Science, social studies, writing, grammar—everything used Direct Instruction. My whole day was blocked out using Direct Instruction” (March 1, 2013). The teaching practices carried across all subject areas, which made a lot of sense to Emily and accelerated her effectiveness. Also, the feedback she received was very specific--a mixture of teaching practices she was doing well and practices she needed to continue to work on. At the top of every subsequent observation were the teaching practices she was to be working on since the prior observation. Emily said this pattern continued for the two years she worked with her coach at CSDI: “I had good coaching my first two years of teaching Direct Instruction” (March 8, 2013).

The coaching model used at CSDI was part of every teacher’s professional development plan. It was not until she experienced teaching at a Direct Instruction

school in which “there is no coaching” (March 8, 2013) did Emily experience first-hand how critical initial and on-going coaching was to the implementation of Direct Instruction and making highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. Had Emily never left CSDI, she might not have understood this to the level at which she does today. She sees it in her current colleagues who have said to her, “I feel like I’m doing my kids a disservice because I don’t know what I am doing. But I know that if someone was to come in and coach me, or I could watch another teacher, anything like that, I would be a much more effective teacher than I am now” (March 8, 2013). This teacher yearned for support but was not getting any from the administration or the consultants who come in once every three months. This was incredibly frustrating for Emily to witness because she knew that it did not have to be this way and that ultimately the students were the ones who lost. Emily predicted that colleagues such as these would not remain at the school very long because they were not receiving the support they needed during the initial implementation of Direct Instruction. Because of this, they were not seeing student growth and their confidence in teaching using this method of instruction and curriculum was decreasing.

When looking at on-going coaching through the lens of what it takes for a teacher to sustain an implementation, it is clear that for Emily coaching was key. The coaching she received at CSDI helped to instill a belief that she could do it and make a difference in the academic and behavioral success of her students. She could see the direct relationship between her teaching practices and student success. The coach provided verbal persuasion in the form of frequent and specific feedback and vicarious experiences through modeling difficult teaching formats. Because this was continuous, Emily was

able to witness many mastery experiences through her students' achieving. This confidence in herself and her ability fueled her desire to continue wanting to teach using Direct Instruction when she left CSDI.

Many years passed between leaving CSDI and finding another Direct Instruction school. Once she was hired at the new Direct Instruction school, Engelmann Academy (EA), three years later, one might have thought that Emily's love for Direct Instruction would have picked up where it left off at CSDI. This did not happen. The lack of coaching played a significant role in her dissatisfaction with the school: "I think about the teacher that I am now and the teacher that I was [when I had coaching], and I'm not as good of a DI teacher now as I was at CSDI" (May 9, 2013). In essence, on-going coaching is a way to achieve and maintain teacher confidence and effectiveness. It cannot stop once the teacher feels good about what he or she is doing. Systems must be in place to continuously give teachers the opportunity to grow in their learning and recognize the success of their students. Even with the extensive training and coaching she had received in the past, the likelihood of Emily wanting to continue to do this work long-term is questionable because she does not feel like she is being challenged to grow as a teacher within the Direct Instruction model: "It's frustrating to see. 'This could be done better. This could be done better. This could be done better.' But I'm sitting on the sidelines not able to make any of the changes that I know would make this a more productive school" (June 6, 2013).

Emily's experiences with extensive coaching in one Direct Instruction school and no coaching in another Direct Instruction school served as testimony to the role coaching played in not only helping teachers implement the program to see student achievement

but also to help them with their attitudes toward the curriculum and teaching practices.

Without support for teacher growth in the form of instructional coaching, Emily concluded the likelihood of sustaining a Direct Instruction implementation was minimum at best.

Theme 2: “It’s Nice to Have a Variety of People Around You”--The Influence of Others

The role individuals played in Emily’s professional career, quite literally, made or broke the experience for her. With every story of success or frustration, it all seemed to go back to one thing for Emily: the adults with and for whom she worked. Relationships played a key role in Emily’s professional and personal life. Emily was incredibly consistent in her message as seen in her opening vignette and throughout her descriptions of people with whom she has worked: “If I don’t feel that you’re a good teacher in the classroom, I don’t want to put my time and effort into really building a relationship with you” (March 8, 2013). To her, every person fits into one of two categories: a good teacher or a bad teacher; a good administrator or a bad administrator. Emily stated that much of her deciding whether a person was a good teacher or not was “just my inner sense of things” (March 8, 2013). But based on the characteristics Emily gave in describing people who have played a positive role in her development as a teacher and to whom she looked for advice and motivation, qualities of a “good teacher” could be gleaned. To Emily, good teachers are motivated and passionate about their work (March 1, 2013). They are highly organized and teach with an incredible sense of urgency (which is expanded in the fourth theme). Time is not wasted in these teachers’ classrooms and the day is very structured. Nothing is left to chance, everything happens

for a reason, and these teachers feel personally responsible when a child is not learning. Her mentor teacher, Barbara, served as a strong example of a “good teacher” as did her colleague and friend, Kelly. She witnessed Barbara instill a love for learning in her students and Emily remembered being impressed with how much the first graders Barbara taught were able to remember (March 1, 2013). Kelly was easy to work with (June 6, 2013) as they both worked to make the second grade curriculum better.

A “bad teacher” is the opposite of a “good teacher.” He or she is unmotivated, unorganized, and has a “blasé look at how programs should be implemented, how kids should read” (May 9, 2013). The teacher does not use his or her teaching or preparation time “in an efficient manner” (June 6, 2013) and there is “no sense of urgency” (March 1, 2013). Even in her role as mentor to two new teachers, she chose one over the other because one was organized and thrived in a structured environment like Emily. The other, to Emily, was ineffective because she did not use her time efficiently and asked “dumb questions” (June 6, 2013).

According to Emily, much of that had to do with one’s dispositions going into teaching (March 1, 2013). Teaching Direct Instruction was not a necessary quality of a “good teacher” to Emily, even stating that she did not believe Direct Instruction was the “be all, end all” (May 9, 2013). She has always said that as long as a teacher is being effective, it does not matter what he or she chooses to do. This was evident when she described her cooperating teacher during her classroom practicum before student teaching. That teacher taught the complete opposite of Direct Instruction but Emily remembered having tremendous respect for her because she was highly effective at ensuring students were learning.

Much of Emily's frustration with teachers lay with those who were not effective and would not change or be open to something like Direct Instruction that would make them more effective, as illustrated in her opening vignette in what she would say to the veteran teacher if a change was required. She also expressed this later when she explained that in most schools, the curriculum was non-negotiable: "If you disagree with the curriculum and you can't get over it, then you need to go somewhere else because that's not changing. That's all there is to it" (March 8, 2013). When implemented correctly, Direct Instruction has the potential to bring out the "good" qualities Emily described in a teacher—the structure and organization, the sense of urgency, and personal responsibility. It would seem natural then for Emily to be most influenced by people who had successfully implemented Direct Instruction.

Depending on which category Emily placed a teacher or administrator determined the time and energy Emily gave to that person regardless of his or her title. She had no qualms saying that she would continue to use Direct Instruction even if an administrator told her not to use it (March 8, 2013). It had everything to do with being effective and categorizing that administrator as ineffective or a "bad administrator." It was also reiterated early in the interviews that Emily needed to be surrounded by people who shared the same work ethic as hers, if not stronger, because otherwise she would become lazy and complacent (March 1, 2013). She found herself struggling to work for an administrator when she felt she knew more than he or she did (May 9, 2013). For example, in her current Direct Instruction school, Emily admitted to not being able to take the administrators seriously because she "has this sense that, basically... I know more than they do" (March 8, 2013). She was disheartened by the lack of leadership in

schools because it became a detriment to the teachers, the implementation, and the students.

I think part of being a motivated teacher is the school community itself, the administration, the other teachers on your team. I know I've been in situations where I didn't feel like I had the support of the administration and that was not motivating for me at all, to push myself to be a better teacher than I knew I was. I mean, I can be a good teacher, but to push myself to be the best teacher, or to be a better teacher, I think you need more than just the students. (March 8, 2013)

Theme 3: “I Do Have a Different Perspective”--The Impact of Beliefs

One of the uniquenesses of Emily's story was the variety of teaching experiences she has had in both Direct Instruction schools and non- Direct Instruction schools. These experiences have provided many moments of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957)-- moments when she felt conflicted because she was faced with a new attitude, practice, or belief that conflicted with an existing one: “I do have a different perspective, now going through the teacher licensure program, my field experiences, and teaching at non-DI schools, than I did just having worked at CSDI” (March 1, 2013).

When she began at CSDI, she “fell in love with it.... I absolutely fell in love with the kids, fell in love with the program, fell in love with the school, fell in love with everything” (March 1, 2013). The sentiment of “I want to feel appreciated. I want to feel like I'm making a difference and that I'm changing kids' lives and that I'm doing it effectively” (March 8, 2013) was reinforced at CSDI. She was given the tools and support she needed to help increase her self-efficacy and the belief in her ability to make a difference. She was able to witness tremendous growth in her students, which confirmed her beliefs in herself and her ability to impact student learning. When she left this school where “everything was established. There was a reason behind everything”

(March 1, 2013) for a non- Direct Instruction charter school in its second year of operation, she found herself using many of the Direct Instruction teaching practices in delivering curriculum that was not Direct Instruction curriculum: “I just need structure” (March 8, 2013). The need for structure had been a reoccurring idea for Emily since she was originally thinking of going back to school to become a teacher and began volunteering at a neighborhood school prior to CSDI, when she noticed, “There was a lot of noise and movement. It was really loud and chaotic, and to me, that wasn’t what I wanted to do. That wasn’t appealing to me” (May 9, 2013). It was natural to assume that the structure of the Direct Instruction model would be most appealing to Emily and would guarantee longevity in her teaching career.

She became dismissive of the non-Direct Instruction charter school because of the lack of experience of the administrator, the staff, and the overall wasted time in trying to create an effective teaching system. What she was able to take from the school was an appreciation for things that were not present at CSDI: students using technology and the school having a library. It also confirmed to her that “having a content-rich curriculum is what I’m passionate about and what I want to teach” (March 1, 2013).

This self-awareness, what she believed was best for students, and her beliefs about education in general came through these different teaching experiences and environments. She had experienced teaching in start-up schools, which she found aggravating due to the fact that she had been part of CSDI, a school that was well established. She had experienced teaching in schools with a content-rich, specific curriculum and believed it was what was best for students. Again, going into any teaching environment, she was looking for structure:

I'm a very structured person and that's how I learned best, and so that's how I teach best. I don't know if it's control, but I definitely feel like I learn best in a very structured, rigid environment. It's not to discount [a teacher] or feel like it's ineffective in anyway, it's just not what works well for me. What works well for me is structure. (March 8, 2013)

When looking at Emily's beliefs through Sparkes (1991) model for real change and sustainability, Emily's changes in beliefs about teaching and learning were developed over time. She went from having uninformed beliefs to ones that aligned with the curriculum and teaching practices. Once she had experienced successful teaching at a school that provided the structure she needed (CSDI), she experienced an alignment of her curriculum, practices, and beliefs. Knowing this alignment was possible and how confident she felt as a teacher because of it, it is unlikely that Emily will settle for a misalignment moving forward in teaching: "I guess I went unemployed for a while because I was only applying at certain schools that I felt would mesh with how I thought was the best way to teach kids or how best they could learn" (May 9, 2013).

When Emily had the opportunity to teach at another Direct Instruction school, one would assume that she would naturally fall into the environment and feel competent and confident teaching in the structured manner she did years earlier. But this did not happen. There was a different sentiment felt in teaching at Engelmann Academy than in her time spent at CSDI. Although she began with confidence in her ability to teach children, she struggled with being supported in growing and sustaining this belief: "I definitely don't think that one way is the 'be all, end all.' I definitely like Direct Instruction and think that it's amazing, but I also know that there's room for other stuff within a school day" (March 8, 2013). Now that she is back at another Direct Instruction school, Direct Instruction is seen as the "be all, end all." This adjustment in Emily's

beliefs has come only after experiences working in a number of different types of schools and with a variety of people.

It is really important for me to look and find a school that I think would be a good fit for me because I know what I like. I know what I think works well in my classroom and I want to have those tools and resources available to me. There are schools that I know aren't a good fit for me, so I choose not to apply to those schools because I don't want to be unhappy where I work. (March 8, 2013)

Emily believes in Direct Instruction. She believes in the need for structure. But something is missing. She is not enjoying this teaching experience, leaving her to question whether she could see herself teaching at this school, or anywhere, long-term.

In looking for jobs, I want to find a job that I think is the best fit for me (March 1, 2013). It's important because as a teacher you have these beliefs about the best way that kids learn or what's best for kids or the best way to go about making sure kids succeed. When you know that that's not happening in a certain school, or it doesn't jive with how your direction is focused, then you're just going to be unhappy as a teacher and not be behind the school or be as great of a teacher as you can be if you're not behind what they are doing at that school. (May 9, 2013)

Theme 4: "I Am Here for a Reason"--Teaching with a Sense of Urgency and Responsibility

The fourth theme that emerged from Emily's data was a sentiment that seemed to be woven throughout her entire story; it could be seen in the three themes described above as well as in the following phrases: "I'm working so hard to make sure that these kids are achieving to the best of their ability" (May 9, 2013); "I work my ass off to push these kids more and more..." (May 9, 2013); "Every time I've set an expectation for a kid, they've always met it...always; no matter what" (March 1, 2013); "If a kid's not learning, it's not the kid's doing. The teacher's just not teaching" (March 1, 2013); "So much time is wasted in a classroom" (March 8, 2013); "There was no sense of urgency" (March 1, 2013); "He had no clue what was going on" (March 8, 2013); "Kids are here to

learn and it is my job to make sure that they do that no matter what” (March 1, 2013); “She wasted a lot of time.... She was just like, ‘Yes, whatever.’ She just went about her day not feeling like anything really needed to be accomplished” (March 1, 2013); “If I don’t feel people are using their time in an efficient manner, that’s another thing that really turns me off” (June 6, 2013).”

Emily’s sense of urgency was alive in all aspects of her teaching because she believed it “really helps to increase [student] learning. It helps with classroom management. It helps with getting more accomplished throughout your day. It keeps me and the kids excited about learning” (March 8, 2013). For example, at her current school, she is constantly looking at the students’ mastery test scores and trying to determine how she can teach more in less time. When the program says to skip certain lessons, she does: “I’m recognizing these kids can be pushed harder than their being pushed and there are things that I can take out and use to push them” (May 9, 2013). She was anxious to fill out her end of the year student cards, noting that at least 10 of the students needed to be tested to a higher reading group for the fall (May 9, 2013).

The pacing sheets and group lists contributed to Emily’s sense of urgency in wanting to move students academically:

I think a pacing sheet is very effective if it’s used effectively. [At CSDI] there was output involved with the pacing sheet, another form that showed all of the other groups where they were. It was one, reflective, but two, also gave you an idea of ‘Okay. I see where this group is at. Let me push my group a little further to get them there, or let me see if I can move this kid in my class who I think could be pushed further to get them into the next group’ type of thing. (March 8, 2013)

Emily is a teacher who teaches with an incredible sense of urgency and responsibility.

She knows what she likes. She likes it because she knows it works. She has little

patience or tolerance for teachers, administrators, or school systems that try to stand in her way: “I know it [DI] is effective. Why not use it? Just because it’s not the mandated curriculum or teaching methodology, I would still use it in my classroom no matter what” (March 8, 2013). Emily is bold in saying these things. But she will also be quick to take personal responsibility for the growth or lack of growth in her students: “I totally agree with it [the DI philosophy of if a child fails to learn, a teacher has failed to teach]. [Teachers have] excuse after excuse, but they need to be looking at themselves” (March 1, 2013).

Her sense of urgency also carried over to the school system and administrative team itself. She has worked in highly efficient and effective schools and does not understand why all schools and teachers are not operating at that level. She has now worked in two schools that were in the “We’re still trying to figure it all out” (March 1, 2013) stage of development. She has not enjoyed these experiences for a variety of reasons. First, she could see where improvements needed to occur to make the system more efficient and effective but felt her hands were tied because she was just a teacher: “This needs to change. This needs to change. This needs to change” (May 9, 2013). Another reason was that when the school acknowledged that they might not know what they were doing, they often hired consultants who were considered to be experts in the field to help with the implementation. Emily’s experiences with the consultants at Engelmann Academy were not positive:

[The consultants] are not personable. I’m not the only one that feels like they’re giving one positive and six negatives (March 8, 2013). It just kills the whole morale of the school. It deflates the teacher. It takes the power out of the classroom, is how many teachers feel. That’s kind of the idea behind a teacher: that you know your kids best, and you’re there to make the decisions for them. Not some higher being who comes in every three months. (March 8, 2013)

At the same time, Emily would love to be a DI instructional coach someday. She would also like to be part a new DI school: “I would absolutely love to [start a new DI school], but only with the right people on my team to know that it could be an efficient, effective system” (June 6, 2013). The right people means with “good teachers” and “good administrators” according to her definition. She believes this would be key in developing and sustaining highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers.

Part Three: Cross-Case Comparison

When asked how they got to be as good as they were in teaching Direct Instruction, both Donna and Emily described a factor they both experienced firsthand and saw in others who took to the practices and curriculum of Direct Instruction with greater ease; both Donna and Emily knew no different. Donna described this when she talked about the process of getting hired at CSDI. Part of what she had going for her was that she did not know anything different: “They were able to form and brainwash me” (February 21, 2013). When she talked about teachers who struggled with Direct Instruction, she noted, “If you’re not birthed into this system, it would be hard to step up. It’s not an easy job” (April 5, 2013). Emily also postulated that the reason she and others were able to take to it so quickly was that “It’s been their first program that they’ve worked with” (March 1, 2013). These teachers knew no different. They did not know what they did not know; therefore, they found themselves working even harder to master whatever curriculum or teaching practices were put in front of them with the hope of catching up to their trained or experienced colleagues.

However, both teachers also had dispositions or a temperamental make-up that allowed growth to be maximized and accelerated as a Direct Instruction teacher. Both

Donna and Emily thrived in a work environment that was very organized and structured. They did not like a lot of chaos or movement within the classroom. For Emily, such chaos and relaxed atmospheres equated to a blasé look at program implementation and poor management (May 9, 2013). Donna added, “I don’t like a lot of free-form and chaos. I like that order. That order suits my personality (February 5, 2013). I love the structure. I like the control. I hate chaos, and with kids come chaos sometimes” (February 10, 2013). Donna and Emily both taught with a strong sense of urgency and took personal responsibility for the successes and failures of their students. Their goal was to teach as much as they could, knowing that if done well, they could accelerate the learning of all their students. They were highly motivated by the achievement of their students because they saw how their teaching directly impacted it.

Change Models and Direct Instruction

Research has proven the teaching practices that need to be established and maintained to reach a routine level of implementation of Direct Instruction (Bereiter & Engelmann, 1966; Gersten et al., 1982, 1986; Marchand-Martella et al., 2004; Siegel, 1974; Siegel & Rosenshine, 1973). One of the goals of this research was to take it a step further and determine what it took to become a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher--one who is able to demonstrate the effective use of Direct Instruction curriculum and teaching methods, resulting in sustainability and high student achievement--because it was hypothesized that if the teacher was able to master the teaching practices of Direct Instruction, there would be a greater chance the teacher would be able to and want to sustain teaching using this approach. Sustainability, as defined by Fullan (2007), is the capacity of an individual, organization, or system to learn; to change and improve; and to

maintain and build on the improvements made in education, all leading to an improvement in student learning. In talking to the two highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers for this study, there were definite patterns in their development as Direct Instruction teachers that developed them into highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers that could ultimately contribute to sustainability.

Going into this study, it was hypothesized that an interaction took place among the three dimensions of change--curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs (Fullan, 2007) that led a teacher to becoming highly proficient. What it was and how it was interacting had not been determined. Change is often pictured as growth that is linear in nature--of individuals progressing through a series of events or stages (Prochaska et al., 1992). Educational leaders have created change models that attempted to explain and support teachers as they went through a linear, unidirectional progression in changing their teaching practices to affect student achievement.

For example, Guskey's (2002) model of teacher change (see Figure 6) suggested that the only way a change in teacher's beliefs would occur was if the professional development opportunities sought first to change the teacher's practices. After the teacher changed his or her practices, he or she would see a positive change in student learning outcomes, which would then lead to a change in the teacher's beliefs. This linear model can be used when looking at both Donna's and Emily's experiences in becoming highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. Both of their experiences aligned with this model for change.

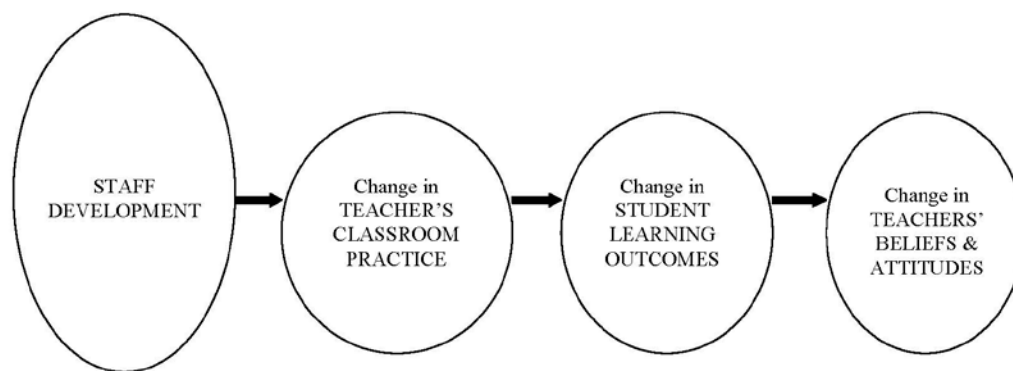


Figure 6. Model for teacher change (Guskey, 2002).

Donna and Emily both began at the same school with no formal training or education in teaching. They received initial training and on-going coaching (staff development) in Direct Instruction. This staff development led to a change in classroom practices. The teachers were using the Direct Instruction teaching practices to teach the Direct Instruction curriculum. Donna and Emily witnessed an increase in student learning because of their teaching practices. The students were exceling academically and behaviorally. This in turn contributed to Donna and Emily having positive attitudes and beliefs toward Direct Instruction, its effect on student learning, and their own confidence in being able to teach in Direct Instruction. As a result, Donna and Emily appeared to have aligned the change dimensions. The alignment of their curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs was a characteristic found in both highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers as a necessity to their teaching. It was not optional.

Looking at the teachers' experiences through Sparkes' (1991) theory of change (see Figure 1 from Chapter 1), similar patterns emerged for both teachers. They were given the Direct Instruction curriculum. With this new curriculum came new teaching practices that were different than those found in traditional teaching models. With

training and on-going coaching, the teachers were able to make a “superficial change,” thus achieving a routine level of Direct Instruction implementation. What seemed to have pushed both of these teachers into the “real change” level of Sparkes’ theory of change was the alignment of their beliefs with the curriculum and teaching practices. The teachers might not have necessarily experienced a change in beliefs from one set of beliefs to a different one, but change did occur in their beliefs as the beliefs were developed and articulated. Like Guskey’s (2002) model for change when looking at Donna and Emily’s experiences through Sparkes’ model, it is clear that both teachers were able to become highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers through an alignment of curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs. What are the effects of this alignment on sustainability?

The Sustainability Cycle

In telling the stories of two teachers becoming highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers, it was first thought that, like mastering the Direct Instruction teaching practices to become a routine user, sustainability would be linear in development and practices would be teachable, visible, and measurable. It was hoped that patterns would emerge that could be used to predict and create more highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers like Donna and Emily. An alignment of curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs was a common characteristic found in both individuals. This alignment contributes to being highly proficient and is believed to be an integral role in sustainability. Contrary to original thinking, however, sustainability itself is not something that is “achieved” in the sense of a pinnacle or culminating event. Instead, it is a never-ending cycle of interactions that must remain constantly in motion.

The rest of this chapter examines the events that make up and are constantly interacting within what will be called the Sustainability Cycle (see Figure 7). The Sustainability Cycle was developed while comparing and contrasting Donna's and Emily's experiences in becoming and remaining highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. Factors that contribute to the cycle are called events rather than steps or stages, which are terms often used in describing linear growth models. Instead, what was found was different experiences that fit under a particular event caused interactions with other events in the cycle. A clear understanding of the cycle, of each event within the cycle, and movement throughout the cycle is described below. After that, both highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers' experiences are explored using this cycle.

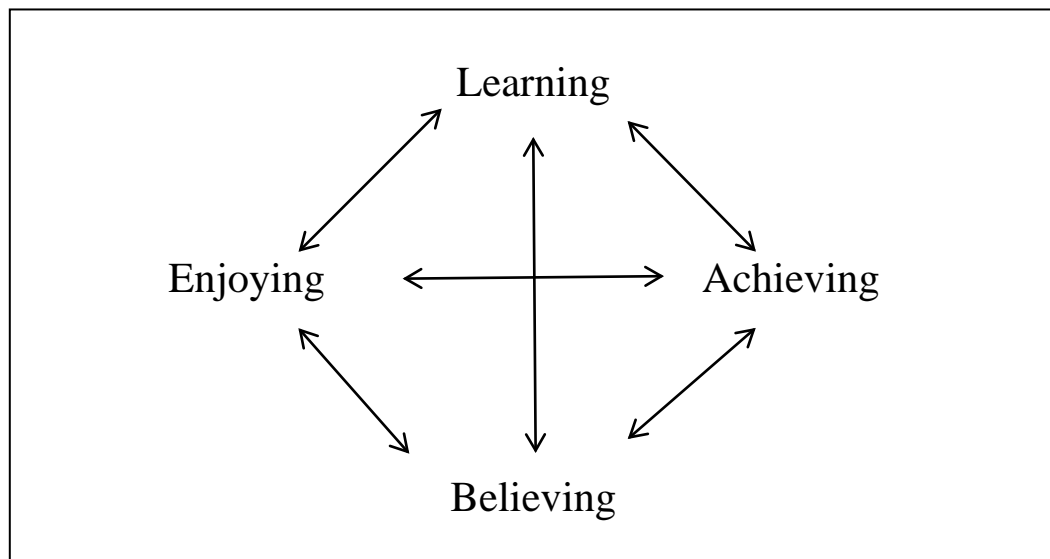


Figure 7. The sustainability cycle.

The Four Events of the Sustainability Cycle

For Direct Instruction teachers who are highly proficient and have achieved an alignment of the change dimensions, such an alignment does not result in sustainability. Sustainability is something that must be maintained and on-going. This never-ending cycle of interactions includes movement among and between four key events: learning, achieving, believing, and enjoying. Each event is described below using a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher as the element that is wished to be sustained. A teacher can enter the sustainability cycle at any event.

Learning for a DI teacher takes place in a number of ways. The teacher can receive initial, on-going, or advanced training in a particular Direct Instruction teaching practice through a trainer, a coach, a consultant, an article, or a book. The learning could also be in the form of more general teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, or an examination of beliefs and attitudes of either Direct Instruction or teaching and student learning. This learning can be as formal as a university course or as informal as a conversation with a mentor teacher or colleague. A teacher can also experience learning through attending conferences, working with an instructional coach, or reading professional magazines, books, or blogs. A teacher can be asked to be on a committee that requires them to take on a new role in addition to their classroom responsibilities (leadership, curriculum council, etc.). Anything that leads to a new or deeper understanding can be considered learning. It takes place when one takes the steps in trying to become more effective. This would be categorized as the “change in teachers’ classroom practices” stage of Guskey’s model of change (see Figure 6).

The *achieving* event of the sustainability cycle can be influenced by many different experiences. The most noticeable experience is seeing students succeed academically. The teacher uses his or her new learning, hoping that it will result in a positive impact on student learning. “The majority of the [teaching] behavior changes provide increased achievement. Some of them don’t, but it is a fielding thing. You go, ‘Oh, okay, that didn’t work’” (April 5, 2013), Donna explained. In the case of the two teachers used in this study, both were highly motivated by the achievement of their students. For sustainability to continue, the teachers must be able to witness their work having a positive impact on the students.

Direct Instruction is a source of visible achievement. First, mastery tests are given every 5 to 10 lessons in each Direct Instruction program, which means a teacher can frequently see whether his or her students are achieving because of his or her teaching. This too aligns with Guskey’s (2002) model of change. After a teacher changes his or her teaching practices (demonstrates achievement in learning them), he or she should see a change in the students’ learning outcomes. Initial moments of achieving, both by the teacher and the students, can also be accelerated through effective training of Direct Instruction teaching practices. These practices are teachable, visible, and measureable, creating a direct and noticeable connection between learning and achieving. Instructional coaching of these teaching practices can also accelerate this interaction because it provides opportunities for the teacher to reflect on his or her teaching with another person. The verbal persuasion helps the new Direct Instruction teacher connect his or her teaching practices to student success.

The third event in the cycle is *believing*. Guskey (2002) concluded that after the teacher witnesses a change in student learning outcomes, he or she will experience a change in his or her beliefs and attitudes. This is because teachers seldom commit to new instructional approaches or innovations until they have seen it work in *their* classroom with *their* students. Sparkes (1991) would say that a change in beliefs must occur for “real change” and sustainability to exist. The changes in beliefs by both Guskey and Sparkes suggest a change in their beliefs about education, teaching, and student learning. However, it was found that from the perspective of the two highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers used in this study, the believing event that interacted during the sustainability cycle had more to do with their ability or self-confidence using Direct Instruction curriculum and teaching practices.

Self-efficacy or “the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce outcomes” (Bandura, 1977, p. 193) seemed to play a larger role in the participants’ beliefs both initially and throughout the implementation. The teachers might have had ideas based on their work with children in other capacities regarding child development but with regard to the formal education of children, both teachers had undeveloped beliefs. They both said that their beliefs had changed; however, when probed further, it had more to do with their beliefs about themselves and their ability to teach Direct Instruction than a change in educational beliefs. This increase in self-efficacy led to positive teaching experiences that eventually led them to being able to develop and articulate beliefs about teaching and student learning. Because they had not experienced success with any particular model for teaching prior to Direct Instruction, it was difficult for them to articulate beliefs about teaching and learning at the beginning of

their teaching careers. When taught Direct Instruction and experiencing student success, their beliefs had to do with their beliefs in their ability.

The final event in the sustainability cycle was subtle at first but was proven to be one of the most critical events of the cycle. It is also the event that took the visual depiction of sustainability from a linear model to an interacting cycle. In short, if the sustainability of a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher is the ultimate goal, the teacher must be *enjoying* the work they are doing. Enjoying can be underrated or even seen as self-serving by some. It is a construct that is multi-faceted and hard to measure. But enjoying seemed to be the event that kept the highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers moving throughout the sustainability cycle. It was also the event that kicked them out of the cycle or caused them to stall, as was seen with one of the teachers. Joy does not necessarily have to be felt “in every minute of every day, but their work is punctuated regularly by moments of exultation and joy (Lemov, 2010, p. 215)”; however, the event is critical to sustainability.

Moving through the Sustainability Cycle

Sustainability is not achieved in the sense of a pinnacle or culminating event. Instead, it is a cycle that must remain constantly in motion. Momentum is created and maintained by moving throughout the events of the cycle. It was made clear by the two highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers in this study: no matter how passionate one is about Direct Instruction or how effective Direct Instruction is proven to be, the Direct Instruction teacher must be continuously moving throughout the cycle in order for her to sustain being a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. The movement does not have to occur in a particular order but interactions between and among all four events must

occur. This was displayed by using arrows that point in all directions between all events. If ever an event in the cycle is terminated or removed or an individual stalls at an event for too long, sustainability of Direct Instruction by the highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher can, and most likely will, be weakened or compromised entirely.

The rate and pattern in which a teacher moves through the cycle is determined by their interactions with the four events (learning, achieving, believing, enjoying). Some of these interactions are contributed to by the specific Direct Instruction features; others are specific to the teacher and their dispositions and personal experiences. These uniquenesses determine the rate and pattern made by the teachers as they cycle through the sustainability cycle. They can also contribute to where the teacher slows down, speeds up, or stops completely.

Many factors specific to the Direct Instruction model are likely to increase the chances of sustainability among highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. For example, teachers are given a highly-structured, developed, researched-based program and methodology of instruction. The Direct Instruction teacher is not expected to create a comprehensive, sequential, and standards-based curriculum for every subject. Teaching energy is spent on mastering the Direct Instruction teaching practices, not the development of curriculum and other teaching methods. If the teacher sticks to the script and structure of the Direct Instruction programs and works to master the teaching practices, he or she will see growth in her students. The “learning” and “achieving” interactions are tightly connected and visible in the Direct Instruction model. As the mastery of the teaching practices increases, so do the comfort and confidence of the teacher in his or her teaching.

Direct Instruction teachers also teach small, homogenous groups of students placed at their instructional level. This design allows teachers to accelerate the learning of all students, regardless of their level, because they are learning with peers who have similar instructional needs. Instead of trying to differentiate a reading lesson among a classroom of children whose abilities can span many grade levels, the teacher focuses on instruction at one level for each of the different groups. When this practice is mastered, student success can be accelerated, again causing an interaction among “learning,” “achieving,” and “believing.”

Working with a Direct Instruction coach can also contribute significantly to the sustainability among highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers for many reasons. Coaching seems to be an experience under the “learning” event but it can cause interactions with the other three events somewhat simultaneously. If the teacher likes the coach and is learning new things, this might lead to a reason he or she “enjoys” his or her work. He or she “enjoys” the connection with his or her co-worker. Coaching can also serve as verbal persuasion, interacting with the “believing” event. The coach is able to encourage the teacher as he or she works through the “learning.” Coaching also interacts with the “achieving” because the work of the coach is to help the teacher change his or her teaching practices to result in student achievement. The coach observes, models, reflects, and has many conversations with the Direct Instruction teacher. Therefore, the coach can help a highly proficient teacher remain in and move throughout the sustainability cycle.

Finally, because Direct Instruction is so structured and precise, a teacher who has dispositions similar in make-up will most likely be able to keep moving through the

cycle. Dispositions could serve as the catalyst into the sustainability cycle or a contributing factor as to why teachers can cycle through it quickly. The teacher's temperamental makeup is such that he or she enjoys working in this type of environment, is motivated by achievement, and believes he or she is personally responsible for the success of the students. When the teacher has learned Direct Instruction, sees that it works, and it aligns with his or her beliefs in him- or herself, the teacher is more likely "enjoying" the work he or she does. The Direct Instruction teacher will want to learn more, which might increase his or her confidence and beliefs. Learning more about something one enjoys might make him or her enjoy it even more, which makes him or her work harder to see the students or themselves "achieving" at higher levels. This increases teacher confidence in what he or she is doing, which makes him or her want to learn more. And so the highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher continues to cycle through, interacting with the four events of the sustainability cycle.

The Sustainability Cycle and Donna

Looking at Donna's teaching experiences, it could be concluded that she is currently in, and cycling through, the sustainability cycle. She had always wanted to be a teacher and enjoyed working with and being around children prior to her formal teaching experience. When she began working at CSDI, she experienced a tremendous amount of "learning" through training and coaching. This "learning" has never ended. For example, by learning advanced Direct Instruction strategies or a way to incorporate a new classroom management strategy, she is trying to find more effective and efficient ways to increase student learning, or their "achieving." If the "learning" increases "achieving," she continues to change her practices and might go back and want to learn even more.

Initial “achieving” led to an increase in her beliefs about her ability to teach Direct Instruction. As she cycles through the sustainability cycle, her beliefs in her ability to teach using this model increases, causing her to enjoy the work she does. When she enjoys what she does, there is an urge to want to get better at it and she believes she can do it. So she begins cycling through again.

Once Donna became a routine Direct Instruction teacher, she did not quit growing as a teacher, challenging herself, or expecting her administrators to challenge her. It was Donna’s experiences and stories that contributed the most to the importance of the “learning” event of the sustainability cycle. She spoke of it so naturally and has continued to be challenged in using her “mental energy” (February 5, 2013) that her presence in the sustainability cycle is on-going. Because Direct Instruction includes its own set of teaching practices, it is predictable that many will see the mastering of the teaching practices as the pinnacle event. That “learning,” in essence, can stop after the teacher has mastered the practices. This was not the case with Donna or any other highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher.

She gladly attends conferences even if not related to Direct Instruction. She attends leadership seminars, works with the instructional coach, asks for feedback, is the lead teacher, and reads any book her principal recommends. She “enjoys” all of these “learning” opportunities because they ultimately make her a better teacher and increases the students’ “achieving” both academically and in character. “They can’t send me to enough seminars (April 5, 2013),” Donna proclaims. “I like the growth. I like learning something new. People like me need that continued challenge. Maybe that makes me a good teacher because I’m a perpetual student myself” (April 5, 2013).” As she noted, her

math group is achieving at levels higher than any second grade math group has ever attained at this school. She was able to teach advanced writing skills to her students and she was able to bring the “lowest” reading group to grade level by the end of the school year. Her students love coming to school and working hard for her, demonstrating the strong character Donna strives to instill in each of them.

Donna’s beliefs about her ability to teach Direct Instruction continue to be challenged or confirmed through new experiences. The extra time required and responsibilities of teaching at CSDI do not seem to bother Donna because she sees the impact it has had on the students. “You know, I really love it. When you enjoy what you do it doesn’t seem like as much work” (February 5, 2013). She is willing to “work harder than most second grade teachers do every day. I have less planning time. I work at a faster pace. I have more papers to grade” (April 5, 2013). Because she is supported in her desire to grow, she sees her students (and school) succeed and because she believes she is able to make a positive and influential impact on her students, she enjoys her work.

She says she has visited other schools and has stated that she could not teach in those schools. She claims, “I really can’t see myself going in the other direction [a non-DI, unstructured teaching environment]. Not having the DI would be a big thing because once you’ve learned to teach that way it’s just hard to do it another way (February 21, 2013). Had I not found Direct Instruction, I would probably not be in teaching” (February 5, 2013). This sentiment had to do with her self-efficacy, her beliefs about herself, and how she could make the greatest impact on student learning. Could she teach using other teaching practices and curriculum? Yes, but her confidence would be challenged, she would experience new learning, might not see the students achieve at the

levels she sees currently, and she might not enjoy the work. It is unknown whether Donna would be able to sustain in another teaching model because she has only experienced teaching at CSDI, a Direct Instruction school. At CSDI, Donna's presence within the sustainability cycle has not stopped. As long as she is supported in learning and sees the students achieving, she will continue to be a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher.

The Sustainability Cycle and Emily

Although at different times, Donna and Emily both started their teaching careers at the same school. While at CSDI, Emily seemed to enter into and move through the sustainability cycle in a manner very similar to Donna's. "I absolutely loved it. I fell in love with it. I worked in first grade. I absolutely fell in love with the kids, fell in love with the program, fell in love with the school, fell in love with everything" (March 1, 2013). She received on-going professional development, mostly through the instructional coach. Through this "learning," she was able to see her students "achieving" at high levels, which was a source of enjoyment for her and built her confidence and "believing" in her ability to make a difference. Because her practices, the curriculum, and her beliefs seemed to be in alignment, she was enjoying the work she did, which made her want to learn even more.

It was not until she left CSDI that her ability to remain in the sustainability cycle was compromised. Through other teaching experiences, schools, and methods, Emily has experienced slow-downs and stops in sustainability. Her not being able to fall back into the sustainability cycle has gone on for so long that she finds herself wondering if teaching is the right profession for her. "I'm feeling like, 'Am I cut out to do this as my

career forever?’ I don’t know. I’m feeling so jaded and I don’t know if this is the right career for me” (May 9, 2013). Emily left CSDI, a school that “had its systems in place” (March 1, 2013), to join a school that did not. She went into the non- Direct Instruction charter school experience believing that she had the capacity to positively impact student learning. She enjoyed teaching and used Direct Instruction whenever possible, most likely trying to find her way back into the sustainability cycle. But she was not learning. Her leadership did not challenge her to grow; they “had no clue” (March 1, 2013). Her staying at the non-Direct Instruction charter school would have been out of convenience, not because it was something she ultimately enjoyed. Emily has always enjoyed working with the students. It was the people with whom she worked that she struggled the most (March 1, 2013). She expected all schools to function at the level of CSDI and when that did not happen, Emily’s movement through the sustainability cycle was compromised. If she was not “learning,” she would be “too lazy and just be complacent” (March 1, 2013). This also affected her confidence in being able to do the work, which left her not “enjoying” this teaching experience as much.

This non-Direct Instruction teaching experience did, however, contribute to her beliefs about herself and what she felt most confident in how and what to teach:

If I know I’m going to be unhappy at a school, there is no reason for me to work at the school. Why would I want to work somewhere where I know it’s not a good fit? It is really important for me to look and find a school that I think would be a good fit for me because I know what I like. I know what I think works well in my classroom and I want to have those tools and resources available to me. There are schools that I know aren’t a good fit for me, so I choose not to apply to those schools because I don’t want to be unhappy where I work. I want to feel appreciated. (March 8, 2013)

Much of this was due to the positive experience she had had at CSDI. When she found Engelmann Academy, another Direct Instruction school, one would have thought that

Emily could have and would have picked up where she left off when she left CSDI, loving everything about the teaching of Direct Instruction and its effect on student achievement, her beliefs in herself, and her enjoying. This, unfortunately, was not the case. At CSDI, Emily had “learned” how to be an effective Direct Instruction teacher. She saw her students had “achieved” at high levels. She “believed” in her ability to make a difference in the lives of students using these teaching practices and curriculum. She “enjoyed” the work she was doing. All of these events were interacting continuously. Now, four years later, all of these events had become past tense. Her momentum through the sustainability cycle was weakened. Looking at the sustainability cycle, the stop could have been caused by a compromise of couple of different events.

It could have stopped at “learning.” Emily’s analysis shows time and time again the importance of people in her life. In her teaching, these people are her leaders and colleagues who keep her motivated to learn more and become better. Much like her non-Direct Instruction charter school experience, EA is a new school trying to get their systems in place. Emily knows what she is doing and knows what needs to be done in order for her students to be achieving at high levels. But she is not being challenged by a team to learn, keep getting better, and continue to increase student achievement. In fact, she seems to be receiving the opposite of that. She is being treated the same as everyone else in the building--as someone who does not know about Direct Instruction. She has no support for growth or “learning.” This does not lend itself to the “enjoying” event very easily. She is quickly becoming disheartened with the systems set up by the consulting company, systems that are more punitive than encouraging. Because of this struggle, she is beginning to doubt herself and her ability to make a difference. Emily concludes, “I

think about the teacher that I am now and the teacher that I was [when I had coaching], and I'm not as good of a DI teacher now as I was at CSDI. I'm just not" (May 9, 2013).

This belief about herself will affect the achievement of her students and whether she enjoys teaching. Because her beliefs about her ability to implement this program have been compromised, there is a misalignment, causing her discomfort and insecurities.

The chances of Emily being able to remain in this school long-term with no intervention or change in "learning" are minimal at best. She already questions whether she is cut out for a career in teaching because every teaching experience since her time at CSDI has lacked in the area of "learning." Whether she can articulate it or not, she yearns to be challenged to learn more, take on more, and be supported in her growth as a teacher. She wants to be part of a system in which she can fall back into the sustainability cycle where learning, achieving, believing, and enjoying are all interacting. Such an alignment and interaction has proven powerful in Emily's teaching career.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand how curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs have interacted and influenced the process of becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. The guiding questions for this research included the following:

- Q1 How do Direct Instruction curricula, teaching practices, and beliefs interact to produce a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?
 - a. What factors and experiences, personally and professionally, influenced the proficiency development process for a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?
 - b. How did these factors and experiences interact to facilitate and/or hinder the process?
- Q2 How does a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher make sense of the process of becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher?

In this chapter, I discuss the results of this study. These results have implications for educational leaders that might or currently are supporting the implementation of Direct Instruction in their schools. I offer limitations and recommendations for future research as well as revisit Sparkes' theory of change. Finally, I explore how this inquiry has served as a window into which I have viewed my own experiences in leading and teaching using Direct Instruction.

Change and Alignment of Curriculum, Teaching Practices, and Beliefs

Although it is among the most thoroughly tested and proven approaches to teaching in education and it has seen an increase in interest and implementation since the passing of NCLB, Direct Instruction continues to be used by only 2% of K-12 teachers in our country (Barbash, 2011). Knowing and seeing the potential for positive impact on student achievement, why are teachers not implementing such effective practices? It was hypothesized that Direct Instruction would be rejected by teachers, not because it does not work—over 40 years of research proves that it does—but because traditional approaches to teaching teachers how to use Direct Instruction have failed to address the interactions among the change dimensions of curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs that lead to sustainability.

It was thought that having a better understanding of these interactions among highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers would help educational leaders know what might be contributing factors to the sustainability of the model. Before discussing the results further, a clarification must be made on an assumption that was unknowingly present at the beginning of the research. It was assumed that being a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher and being able to sustain the Direct Instruction implementation were synonymous ideas. If a teacher was highly proficient, he or she would be able to sustain the implementation. Just as if he or she was able to sustain the implementation, it was because he or she was highly proficient. As seen with the two teachers in this study, this was not necessarily true. Both teachers were considered highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. However, Donna has continued to sustain the implementation through interactions within the sustainability cycle. Emily, on the other hand, though

highly proficient, is currently in a school in which she is not interacting within the sustainability cycle. She is struggling with whether she even wants to continue being a teacher.

Prior to this research, it was predicted that changing curriculum and teaching practices would result in a routine user of Direct Instruction. After all, the structure and scripts of Direct Instruction along with teachable, visible, and measureable teaching practices have been shown to be effective when implemented correctly. A teacher is somewhat forced to change his or her teaching practices if they are going to be using the Direct Instruction curriculum. This would result in a routine user. However, it was believed what needed to change in order to become a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher was the teacher's beliefs. More specifically, it was thought that by changing the teacher's beliefs about teaching and student learning, an alignment of the three dimensions would occur. This alignment proved to be true for the two participants in this study in becoming and remaining highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. However, it was not beliefs about teaching and learning that had to change.

The beliefs that did change and develop for Donna and Emily were their beliefs in themselves, their self-confidence, or self-efficacy. It is important to emphasize that their beliefs about learning and teaching were developed from successful teaching that resulted in student learning. Such success fueled their beliefs about themselves. Certain characteristics of the teacher and the environment contributed to the initial self-confidence of the teacher in implementing Direct Instruction. This could include the teacher's dispositions going into the teaching experience, proper training, and on-going coaching throughout the implementation.

Now that both teachers had been teaching for a couple of years, they stressed the importance of being part of a school that aligned with their beliefs on how to best teach students. Again, although they are now able to articulate their beliefs about teaching and learning, both are grounded in high self-efficacy in teaching Direct Instruction or their beliefs in themselves to be able to successfully implement DI. In many of the conversations with Emily, she alluded to the idea that she was easily “turned off” (June 6, 2013) by teachers who did not appear on board with the mission of the school. This was seen in her impatience for experienced teachers who resisted Direct Instruction. It was also witnessed in her not teaching for a year and a half after completing her master’s degree because she wanted to find a school that aligned with her practices and beliefs. In Donna, this alignment was seen when she talked about the fact that she might not still be in education had she not found her school and Direct Instruction (February 5, 2013). It was also confirmed when she questioned of the mother who was willing to work at the school but not send her child there: “If we’re not good enough of a school for her to send her kid to, why is she here?” (April 5, 2013).

This alignment of curriculum, teaching, practices, and beliefs allowed both teachers to enter into and move throughout the sustainability cycle.

Sustainability: A Never Ending Cycle of Interactions

Another distinction must be made with two additional terms: change and sustainability. The entire tone of the first chapter spoke of changing something in a teacher—a behavior or a belief—with the hopes of reaching sustainability. It was thought that through changing particular beliefs, sustainability would be achieved, almost as a pinnacle event. However, just because something changes or evolves does not mean

that it reaches sustainability because sustainability is not something that is achieved. It is on-going as depicted in Figure 7 of chapter V. At most, all that the change in practices or beliefs can do is jump start the teacher into the sustainability cycle. Once the practices are mastered, they must continue to be fine-tuned, added to, and confirmed; otherwise, the teacher will experience a stall in the sustainability. A teacher must be continuously cycling through the sustainability cycle, interacting with the four events. Sustainability does not end. This understanding and the events that make up and interact within the sustainability cycle were unclear prior to this research.

Liking Your Job Matters

In our current educational state, districts, schools, and teachers are experiencing mandates with regard to what to teach and how to teach. It might seem plausible that teachers will do what they are told because most will—for a while. Although research might be able to prove the effectiveness of such mandates, “educational change depends on what teachers do and think—it’s as simple and as complex as that” (Fullan, 2007, p. 129). Mandates, initial implementation trainings, and reporting data to stakeholders might ensure a routine start-up of the implementation. The growth of the teacher, however, will be linear, very similar to Guskey’s (2002) model for change. If we want effective practices and curriculum to continue to be implemented, we must strive for sustainability, which is a never ending cycle of interactions between learning, achieving, believing, and enjoying. Of these four, the event that seems hardest to measure, and even more difficult to teach, is “enjoying.”

In an era of data, measurement, and accountability, how does one measure “enjoying”? In fact, there is some awkwardness in discussing the construct itself because

it is so hard to define and measure. What might be a source of enjoyment for one individual might not be for another. When thinking about teaching in general, a field that is often seen as a selfless profession, to speak of the importance of “enjoying” the work one does seems rather self-serving. But gaining personal enjoyment from the work appears to be critical to the momentum required to continue moving through the sustainability cycle. “Enjoying” was never addressed in the literature review as a predictor of change or a sustainability event. The need to learn more about the construct and how it affects teaching Direct Instruction (and sustainability in general) is examined in the future research section below.

Implications for Direct Instruction Leaders

In creating highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers, Direct Instruction leaders must recognize the importance of and work toward the teacher experiencing an alignment of the Direct Instruction curriculum and teaching practices with their beliefs (specifically self-efficacy). It seems this alignment serves as a foundation or catalyst for sustainability of the implementation. As noted, Direct Instruction makes it rather easy to create routine users of the programs--teachers who change their teaching practices to align with the curriculum. The Direct Instruction curriculum is developed and highly structured. The teachers can be trained in the Direct Instruction teaching practices that will have the greatest impact on student achievement. If educational leaders are not aware of the need for alignment to affect sustainability, it is easy to create and settle for routine users. In essence, teachers will vacillate between the “learning” and “achieving” events of the sustainability cycle. If an organization only wanted routine implementations, Direct Instruction would be a model to use. However, if they want to create sustainability,

which is believed to have a greater impact over time, leaders need to encourage teachers to become highly proficient, which involves an alignment of curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs. It also involves moving throughout the sustainability cycle.

Hiring individuals with dispositions that would orient them toward a Direct Instruction approach to teaching could help accelerate the process of becoming a routine Direct Instruction teacher and potentially a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. Dispositions also seem to be a more accurate measure (rather than one's beliefs prior to teaching Direct Instruction) on whether the teacher will reach an alignment of curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs. Characteristics similar to the ones Donna displayed in this study--being self-motivated and committed, having a strong sense of personal responsibility, needing a structured work environment, and being achievement driven--could play a large role in a teacher becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher.

Direct Instruction leaders must recognize that the ultimate goal of the implementation is not solely changing the teaching practices of the teacher. Although it is an effective place to start (because it usually increases student achievement), sustainability is an on-going interaction of events. The leaders must continue to challenge themselves and the organization to meet the needs of all their Direct Instruction teachers wherever they are in the implementation. They must work earnestly to ensure that the four sustainability cycle events are activated and interacting for their highly proficient teachers. Initial trainings and on-going coaching can help accelerate a teacher to a routine level of implementation. However, such professional development cannot end once the teacher demonstrates proficiency or after a set number of years. Teachers

need to be continuously growing so these “learning” events can interact with “achieving,” “believing,” and “enjoying.”

This study confirmed the results of other studies on the effectiveness of Direct Instruction when teachers are trained and supported throughout the implementation (Gersten et al., 1982, 1986; Marchand-Martella et al., 2004; Siegel, 1974; Siegel & Rosenshine, 1973). The keyword is *throughout*. Coaching teachers in Direct Instruction is not something that ends after a certain number of observations or a particular level of effectiveness. There will always be a different group of students. There will always be a different grade level, program level, or challenge. On-going coaching of Direct Instruction can help teachers become self-reflective because there is always someone there to offer an interpretation, suggestion, or validation. The extent to which teachers adhere to the prescribed practices and feedback of the coach affects the level of achievement of the students (Gersten et al., 1982, 1986; Siegel, 1974; Siegel & Rosenshine, 1973). Coaches have the potential to be a constant source of fuel to all the events in the sustainability cycle.

There is a need for entry-level efficacy to be high in new, demanding situations. When this happens, a teacher’s doubts about success can be greatly reduced because with every experience of proficiency, a new mastery experience is created. This experience serves as a new source of self-efficacy that either confirms or refutes existing self-efficacy beliefs. When individuals succeed in the accomplishment of a task, they have confidence to attempt and expect to succeed in a like task in the future without external influence.

It seems logical that the more a person believes in something, the more likely they will strive to see it sustained. However, the beliefs that one has about his or her ability to perform the task have more of an impact on change and sustainability than beliefs the individual might have about the concept, method, or curriculum. A teacher might say, “I do not believe in Direct Instruction.” But examining the statement further, it might not be Direct Instruction that is causing the disbelief but the teacher’s belief in his or her ability to teach using the Direct Instruction curriculum and teaching practices. When looking at some of the criticisms against Direct Instruction (Direct Instruction stifles teachers professionally and teachers feel devalued as professionals by the level of the program’s specificity for teacher behaviors; Wilson, 2000), one can start to see that the negative attitudes that might lead to negative beliefs might have more to do with lack of self-efficacy. Knowing what they know and what they have experienced, they do not believe they can be as effective using Direct Instruction as they would using other curriculum and teaching practices. Had these teachers had the right support going into the change to Direct Instruction, their attitudes might have been different, thus affecting their beliefs about their abilities.

Leaders must also recognize the role “enjoying” plays into the professional lives of the teachers. It is the work of an educational leader to ensure that the highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers in his or her building are enjoying their work. The difficulty is in determining what the source of enjoyment is for each teacher. It is the responsibility of the leader to have this awareness and if a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher is currently stalling in the sustainability cycle, determine why and try to improve the situation. The expectation is not that the teacher enjoys every aspect of his or her job but

it is an event that is interacting with the other three events in the cycle. For Emily, the breakdown in enjoyment had to do with the lack of leadership in her buildings. This could be the case for other highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers.

Limitations and Future Research

A couple of limitations to this study could serve as areas for future research. The selection of participants was one limitation. Both participants began their teaching careers at the same Direct Instruction school and neither of them had a degree, formal training, or experience in education prior to starting. Future research of highly effective Direct Instruction teachers should seek to understand the perspectives and experiences of highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers from other schools, other parts of the state, and other parts of the country. Secondly, including Direct Instruction teachers who have had formal training in a traditional teacher preparation program, have taught using other curriculum and methods prior to Direct Instruction, or who use it in a learning environment other than general education would allow researchers to deepen the understanding of highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers, change, and sustainability of the Direct Instruction model.

In addition to research that addresses the limitations of this study, several other areas for future research emerged from this study. First, a closer look at sustainability and the events within the sustainability cycle is required. In the beginning, this study aimed to look at change and how curriculum, practices, and beliefs changed or did not change as highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers worked toward an alignment. Knowing now that an alignment might serve as a catalyst for sustainability, other factors that contribute to the ongoing sustainability of the model could be examined.

Any of the four events of the sustainability cycle could be examined further as well as how and when they interact with each other. For example, at the “learning” event, a closer look at the instructional coaching of Direct Instruction teachers would be advantageous. What are the characteristics of effective Direct Instruction coaches according to highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers? What should the relationship look like? What should the frequency and intensity of the coaching cycles look like? On-going coaching seems to play a significant role in the implementation and sustainability of Direct Instruction at all events of the sustainability cycle regardless of the experience or success of the teacher. The coaching model and coach-teacher relationship must be investigated.

Another event of the sustainability cycle worthy of investigation is the “enjoying” event because it did not surface in this study until the analysis. What are factors that contribute to the enjoyment of highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers? Are there similarities and uniquenesses? What roles do people (administrator, co-workers, families, students) and environment (curriculum, classroom, location) play in contributing to the enjoyment of working as a Direct Instruction teacher?

In addition, the rate of movement and patterns within the cycle are worthy of examination. What factors, specific to Direct Instruction, contribute to staying in the cycle? What factors outside of Direct Instruction contribute to staying in the cycle? Are there ways to accelerate through the cycle? For example, specific Direct Instruction characteristics seem to contribute to an acceleration from “learning” to “achieving” events—instructional coaching, mastery tests, a developed curriculum, and small, homogenous group instruction. What might contribute to an acceleration between other

events? What role do dispositions play in the rate, events, or movement through the cycle?

Finally, the sustainability cycle was created using data collected on two highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. This cycle could be used to examine highly proficient teachers in other models of teaching or of individuals in professions outside of education. Do highly proficient teachers in a different model for teaching experience the same events for sustainability as experienced by highly proficient DI teachers? For example, would a teacher who teaches using a more constructivist approach to teaching have experiences at each event? What would the experiences at each event be for such a teacher? Looking at the cycle for professionals outside of education, do highly proficient employees in other professions follow a similar, never ending cycle? How might understanding this cycle benefit employers as they strive to have highly proficient members on their team?

In essence, this study developed a new theoretical construct. Could this construct of sustaining an action, thought, or belief be used outside of a professional setting? For example, could it be used to look at sustaining a hobby (gardening, dancing, photography), a relationship (between spouses, siblings, friends, co-workers), or staying healthy (eating and physical activity)? Could it be used to explain why we choose particular hobbies or try new things? Could it be used as a lens through which we look at why a person might be pursuing a career change or a move across the country? The sustainability cycle is a theoretical construct that invites the question, “Why do we continue to do certain things, but struggle to maintain and do others?”

Theory of Change Revisited

The academic theoretical perspective used in this study was Sparkes' (1991) theory of change for teachers who have been asked to implement a curriculum. It is important to revisit this theory and its impact on this research and the findings. Building on Fullan's (2007) dimensions of change (curriculum, teaching practices, and teaching beliefs), Sparkes created "levels" of the change process (see Figure 1 in chapter I). He theorized that teachers who are asked to implement a new curriculum progressed through these different levels. Sparkes argued that achieving deeper levels of change (i.e., sustainability) is extremely difficult unless significant movement occurs on all three levels (curriculum, practices, and beliefs). The goal for each teacher is what he referred to as real change or an aligning of curriculum, practices, and beliefs. If the three dimensions are not aligned, the teacher is said to have only made a superficial change:

Even if changes do take place in their practices this does not mean that teachers will necessarily challenge or begin to change the ideologies and beliefs that inform their educational practices...or their relationships with children.... If we are to talk of real change then a key dimension for consideration is the transformation of beliefs, values, and ideologies held by teachers that inform their pedagogical assumptions and practices. (Sparkes, 1991, p. 2)

By using Sparkes' theory of change, I articulated in chapter V how these dimensions of change interacted with one another among two highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers. Both teachers seemed to experience the alignment as described by Sparkes.

Data in this study offered an additional perspective on sustainability that did not seem to fit within Sparkes' model. Therefore, the sustainability cycle was created to note the interactions for highly proficient DI teachers. For example, Sparkes referred to levels of change, depicting "real change" as linear in nature. The sustainability cycle referred to events; thus a cyclical picture was drawn with interacting arrows. Another difference in

the models was the type of beliefs described as changing. Sparkes described real change as a transformation of beliefs, values, and ideologies held by teachers. Beliefs that affected the sustainability cycle were beliefs a teacher had about his or her ability to perform the task at hand--his or her self-efficacy. This is not to dismiss beliefs regarding teaching and learning but to clarify that self-efficacy beliefs had a stronger influence on a highly proficient DI teacher's ability to sustain the implementation according to the data in this study. If we looked at the teachers in this study according to Sparkes' theory, the teachers' change in beliefs about teaching and learning was more of a becoming aware of and being able to articulate them. It was not that one believed one thing and now believed something completely different.

Impact of the Study on the Researcher

This study served as a window into my own experiences in being a Direct Instruction teacher, instructional coach, trainer, and consultant. It challenged many of the assumptions I had on what it took to be a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher, how sustainability was created and maintained, and the influence I have as an educational leader in supporting the development and sustainability of highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers.

In chapter III, I outlined five assumptions or predictions I had going into the research. Throughout the research and analysis process, these assumptions were challenged, resulting in a better understanding.

The first assumption was probably my largest assumption: I thought that becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher would require a teacher changing his or her beliefs about teaching and learning. By change, I thought it would be a change

of believing one thing to believing the opposite, making a 180 degree change. I did not see development in proficiency as change. What I found in these participants' stories was that they did not necessarily make a 180 degree turn in their beliefs about teaching and learning because they really did not have informed beliefs going into their teaching experiences. Their beliefs about teaching and learning were developed over time with experience in using the Direct Instruction programs effectively. It was actually their self-efficacy or beliefs in their ability to perform the task that were affected. The more they saw that what they were doing was working, the more confident they became, which helped develop and define a set of beliefs about teaching and learning.

The second assumption was that becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher required an alignment of the change dimensions: curriculum, practices, and beliefs. In examining the data provided by the teachers in this study, this assumption was validated. Both teachers were highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers and both teachers experienced an alignment of their curriculum, teaching practices, and beliefs.

The third assumption was that Direct Instruction would be credited with having the biggest influence on the change of beliefs. As noted in the first assumption, becoming highly proficient did not necessarily reflect a change in beliefs about teaching and learning. This did not deter me from thinking that Direct Instruction was still incredibly impactful on the teachers' experiences in becoming highly proficient. Of all the assumptions, this was the one I struggled with the most when I learned that Direct Instruction was credited with only playing a small role in the teaching experiences of these two highly proficient teachers. I remember coding Donna's data and making a note next to the emerging categories: "Her story is so much more than DI." I also remember

my internal reaction in hearing Emily proclaim, “I definitely don’t think that one way is the ‘be all, end all’. I definitely like Direct Instruction and think that it’s amazing, but I also know that there’s room for other stuff within a school day” (March 1, 2013). I was caught off guard by what I heard. But once I listened, read through the data, and started to put their stories together, I was quickly able to see that, indeed, their stories were so much more than Direct Instruction itself. Direct Instruction served, in many ways, as a catalyst for them in becoming the teachers they are today. It gave them the confidence in using the curriculum and teaching practices to teach children. Direct Instruction complemented their dispositions going into teaching.

Fourth, I wanted to determine hierarchical, controllable, and measureable steps or stages in becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. What I found was that in becoming highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers, there is no such thing. There are factors like disposition or instructional coaching that can contribute to the process but the teachers did not tell the same story of development. This was confirmed even more when looking at the sustainability cycle. Although four events were identified, the experiences that contribute to each event and how they interact with each other is going to be teacher-specific.

Finally, I assumed that teacher preparation programs were to blame for the disdain toward Direct Instruction and the lack of sustainability in schools across the country. This assumption dovetailed with thinking that a set of beliefs had to change. I had assumed that teacher preparation programs told teacher candidates to believe one thing but when they eventually learned Direct Instruction, they would change their beliefs. This assumption was not addressed in this study because neither of the teachers

participated in a traditional teacher preparation program. This might be an area of future research.

As I prepare for the beginning of this school year, I am challenged to increase the number of highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers with whom I work. I am determined to look at all these teachers with the sustainability cycle in mind. I am dedicated to celebrating good teaching. Although I might not have a list of teachable and measureable steps to take, I have a better awareness of factors and events that might contribute to and interact during such growth. I also know the types of reflective questions I want to ask teachers. Most importantly, I recognize that when highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers are in the sustainability cycle, momentum is critical. As their leader and coach, I play a critical role in keeping the momentum going.

Conclusion

Highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers have aligned the Direct Instruction curriculum and teaching practices with their beliefs. When first learning Direct Instruction, beliefs had more to do with the teachers' self-efficacy or beliefs in themselves and their abilities to teach DI. Through successful teaching experiences that resulted in student learning, teachers became better equipped to articulate beliefs about teaching and student learning. It was also found that a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher was not able to sustain a Direct Instruction implementation automatically. Sustainability of Direct Instruction is not something that is achieved. Instead, it is a never-ending cycle of interactions among four key events: learning, achieving, believing, and enjoying (see Figure 7: The Sustainability Cycle). Leaders of Direct Instruction

implementations play a vital role in the sustainability of highly proficient Direct Instruction teachers.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



Institutional Review Board

DATE: January 4, 2013

TO: Tina Errthum
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [402168-2] In Their Words: Teachers' Journeys to Successful Direct Instruction Implementation

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: January 4, 2013

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB verifies that this project is EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Dear Tina, Your revised Narrative and Consent documents look great. I am approving your proposal. I wish you well in your research. Best, Wendy Highby

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

APPENDIX B

QUALITATIVE OBSERVATION GUIDE

Qualitative Observation Guide

Teacher	Date	Program	Lesson	# of Students/Grp
School	Obs Begin	Obs End	Les Parts Obsr'd	

Prior Grows/Assignments _____

<p>Set Up & Prep</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + - On Schedule (Schedule Posted) + - Seating (Student Engagement) + - Seating (Teacher Monitoring/Feedback) + - Materials Ready/Procedures Posted + - Ready Position & Other Rules <p>Formats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + - Group Responses: Accurate/Fluent + - Presented Faithfully/Fluently + - Responses Verified/Repeat—Firm + - Key Words(P&P)/Sounds: Holds/Q&Q + - Appropriate Prompts/Reps/Fluency <p>Signals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + - All S. Start/Stop Together + - Loop/Tap/Fingers/Pt-Touch/ Hand Drop/Audible + - Consistent/Clear/Crisp + - Think Time/Get Ready <p>Individual Turns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + - Individual Responses: Accurate/Fluent + - End of Each Task/Page + - Unpredictable Order + - Most to Lowest Performers + - Student Name Last 	<p>Corrections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + - All Errors/Immediate + - Program Appropriate + - Consistent/Positive + - Fluency/Tracking <p>Firm-Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + - Good-Eye List (Review) + - Starting Over/Delayed Tests + - Fluency: Lists/Facts/Other + - Written Materials (PRB) + - Checkouts/Mastery Tests <p>Pacing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + - On Target (Pacing Guide) + - Rapid (Perky; Not Poky)/Steady + - Transitions Brief & Organized <p>Behavior Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + - Demands the Students' Best + - Monitors Behavior: Enabling/Academic/Seatwork + - Positive/Catches S Being Good + - Reinforcement: Behavior Specific + - Reinforcement Variety + - Reinforcement Distribution + - 3 - 1 Ratio: <u>Appropriate</u> + - <u>Inappropriate</u>
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Highly Proficient Direct Instruction Teacher Observation Form**Teacher** _____ **Date** _____**Lesson** _____

1. Teacher appears to be motivated by seeing students learn. Yes No

Example(s):

2. Students know the teacher thinks their success is important. Yes No

Example(s):

3. Teacher checks for understanding more than is written in the script. Yes No

Example(s):

4. Teacher gives individual turns even when the script does not require it. Yes No

Example(s):

5. Teacher is curious about whether the students are getting the right answers. Yes No

Example(s):

6. Teacher analyzes student tests and work for error patterns. Yes No

Example(s):

7. Teacher brags about students to other adults. Yes No

Example(s):

8. Teacher wants to display the best work the students do. Yes No
Example(s):

9. Students want to show the teacher their work. Yes No
Example(s):

10. Students have pride in their work and want to do their best. Yes No
Example(s):

11. Teacher uses Direct Instruction principles and philosophy during non-DI instruction.
Yes No
Example(s):

12. Teacher appears to enjoy teaching. Yes No
Example(s):

Source: Crawford & Sauter (2011).

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN HUMAN RESEARCH



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: In Their Words: Teachers' Journeys to Successful Direct Instruction Implementation

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The primary purpose of this study is to describe the process of becoming a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher, a teacher who is able to consistently demonstrate his or her effective use of the DI curriculum and teaching practices, resulting in high student achievement. The first phase of participant selection consisted of your administrator referring teachers that he or she believed fit the criteria of a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. The second phase of participant selection consists of an on-site observation of all referred teachers teaching a Direct Instruction program. This observation will take about 45 minutes. Through these observations, three participants for the final study will be selected. If you are not chosen to proceed in the study you will have the option to help me in piloting the interview questions, taking no longer than one hour.

If you are chosen to participate in the study, interviews, observations, and data collection will proceed. Over the course of four to six interviews, you will describe factors and interactions that have contributed to or hindered your development as a highly proficient Direct Instruction teacher. In addition, you will be observed four to six times teaching both Direct Instruction programs and non-Direct Instruction programs. Finally, you will be asked to provide documents that demonstrate your proficiency in Direct Instruction (i.e. student test scores, certifications, lesson plans, etc.). Student documentation should be de-identified prior to being given to me; e.g., student test scores or examples of student work should be stripped of any potentially identifying information. You will be given opportunities to give feedback regarding your interview summaries, observation summaries, and the draft of your case study throughout the study. Your participation is very important to the researcher. Thank you for your time and assistance.

By completing the consent form, you give consent to participate in the study. Participation includes both the initial on-site observation and any subsequent interviews, observations, and data collection. This consent form will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher advisor's office for three years, and then destroyed.

Due to the nature of the study (the referral by your administrator, the on-site observation, and the necessity to obtain school district permission), some of your fellow employees, including supervisors, will likely be aware of your participating in the study. The data collected in this study may be published; however, I will strive to protect the confidentiality of your digitally-recorded responses and documents (including transcripts, field notes, reports, and document copies) by using electronic file encryption on a password-protected computer. Non-digital data will be kept in a locked file cabinet. All audio recordings and documents will be destroyed after three years. Additionally, all proper names and places will be changed to pseudonyms to maximize confidentiality.

Participation requires the completion of four to six interviews. Each interview should take you 60 minutes or less to complete verbally. A list of discussion topics will be sent to you prior to each

interview. It is not necessary to formally prepare for the interview, but to simply start thinking about them as you reflect on your teaching experiences. Please take your time to participate in each interview, and think about each question carefully. There are no "correct" answers to any question. With your permission I intend to record the interview. Four to six observations will occur during your instructional time, but will not require any additional time from you. Document collection will take place during the interviews and may require a few minutes to collect the actual documents. While there are no direct benefits, the information you provide will help educators and interested individuals understand how Direct Instruction teachers become highly proficient. Participation in this study has minimal foreseeable risks or discomforts, such as those faced while being observed on a typical workday, or those encountered when engaging in discussions with colleagues about one's career path, teaching philosophy, and teaching methodologies. Respondents must be at least 18 years old in order to participate in this study.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, nor will your decision affect your employment status. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Subject's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview #1: Understanding participant's personal teaching story

Instructions for participants: *Although this is an interview, the intention is to have a conversation about topics of educational importance. I am interested in your story, your perceptions, and your experiences. If you are uncomfortable with any question, you may decline to answer. If you would like to end the interview at any time, you may do so without repercussions of any kind. I appreciate your time and willingness to share with me.*

The first interview contains general questions about your teaching career.

Discussion topics sent to each participant:

Your teaching story

Timeline

Influences

Accomplishments

Challenges

Possible questions for probing:

How did you decide to become a teacher? Tell me the story.

(Childhood, undergraduate, first three years, additional degrees, mentors, schools, positions, principals/leaders, trainings, current position)

Who has influenced you in your teaching career? How has he/she done so?

What do you hope to accomplish in your role as a teacher?

How would describe yourself as a teacher?

Describe the environment that you learn best in? What is most helpful? What is least helpful?

(colleagues, administrators, district staff, outside consultants)

Do you like teaching? What do you like about your job?

Where do you see yourself (professionally) in five years?

Interview #2 and #3: Understanding participant's knowledge, training, and use of Direct Instruction

Instructions for participants: *Although this is an interview, the intention is to have a conversation about topics of educational importance. I am interested in your story, your perceptions, and your experiences. If you are uncomfortable with any question, you may decline to answer. If you would like to end the interview at any time, you may do so without repercussions of any kind. I appreciate your time and willingness to share with me.*

The second and third interview contains general questions about your knowledge, training, and use of Direct Instruction curriculum and practices.

Discussion topics sent to each participant:

Direct Instruction

How you became a Direct Instruction teacher

Possible questions for probing:

Tell me about Direct Instruction.

How did you become a Direct Instruction teacher? Tell me the story.

(Trainings, professional developments, programs taught, feelings, thinking)

Successes- What does success mean to you?

Struggles-

What role did professional development play in your learning of Direct Instruction?

How do you get better as a teacher?

Interview #4 and #5: Understanding participant's Direct Instruction teaching practices and beliefs

Instructions for participants: *Although this is an interview, the intention is to have a conversation about topics of educational importance. I am interested in your story, your perceptions, and your experiences. If you are uncomfortable with any question, you may decline to answer. If you would like to end the interview at any time, you may do so without repercussions of any kind. I appreciate your time and willingness to share with me.*

The fourth and fifth interview contains general questions about your DI teaching practices and your beliefs towards Direct Instruction, teaching, and learning.

Discussion topics sent to each participant:

To Be Determined- Based on direct observations, artifacts and documents collected to this point

Possible questions/topics:

How has Direct Instruction impacted your teaching of other subjects?

What about Direct Instruction “works” for you?

How is DI viewed by others?

If you could give three pieces of advice to a teacher who is new to Direct Instruction, what would they be?

APPENDIX E
OBSERVATION FORM

Observation Form

Teacher: _____ **Date/Time:**

Observer: _____ **#of students:** _____

Program/Lesson _____

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes

APPENDIX F

EMILY OBSERVATION FORMS

Observation Feedback

Name:	Emily	Date:	Monday, October 02
Obs. Begin:	9:15	Obs. End:	10:15
Program:	RM I	Part(s):	all
Lesson #:	133ish	# in group:	6
Observer:	Instructional coach		

Previous Assignments:

Things going well:

1. You are doing a great job with giving think time. You get the students to focus on the word or sound, give them think time, then ask for them to respond on signal. This is great. If ever you are struggling with keeping their voices on signal, it may be because they are not getting enough think time.
2. You were prepared with the script, you knew what you were expected to teach.
3. Everyday you are bringing more of your personality to the lessons.
4. Individual turns were given in an unpredictable order, saying the students name last. Students were firm as a group before you went to individual turns. Thus, they were at mastery when you went to individual turns.
5. You modeled proper sounding out of words and sounds, holding the sounds for two seconds each.
6. You verified the first time responses for the sounds and words.
7. Your signals are coming right along!
8. Keep catching them being good. This group wants to work hard for you!

Things to work on:

1. Signal to the stop sign, then threw. (I modeled this for you.)
2. Tracking is a big deal, make sure you are always watching and positively praising students that are tracking. When they are all doing it, give them points.
3. Continue to encourage perky story reading. "Read it like we speak."
4. When an error is made, students are to say the word, sound it out, say the word again, and start from the beginning of the column/sentence (as a group...even if individual made the mistake). Model, lead, test.

That word is test, what word?	test
Sound it out.	teeessst
What word?	test
From the top.	
5. Write down and review words missed as a group during whole group story reading. Review before individual students read the story.
6. Keep in mind and record the errors made during story reading.

Put a sticky at the top of each reader to be a bookmark. This will get them to the proper place more quickly.

Observation Feedback

Name:	Emily	Date:	Tuesday, October 03
Obs. Begin:	9:35	Obs. End:	9:45
Program:	RM I	Part(s):	1 st time story reading
Lesson #:	134	# in group:	7
Observer:	Instructional coach		

Previous Assignments:

1. Signal to the stop sign, then threw. (I modeled this for you.)
2. Tracking.
3. Continue to encourage perky story reading. "Read it like we speak."
4. Correcting an error with a model, lead, test. Whole group.
5. Write down and review words missed as a group during whole group story reading
6. Keep in mind and record the errors made during story reading.

Things going well:

1. Students were seated to allow for full engagement.
2. The transition from the word attack to the story reading was brief.
3. Think time during the first time story reading was great. Keep in the rhythm of "next word, what word, yes"
4. You asked back. "Touch the title, get ready."
5. Excellent job following along with students reading the story the first time.
6. All errors were corrected as a whole group. Just make sure all words are sounded out.
7. You wrote down the tough words for review after the first time story reading.

Things to work on:

1. Keep it up! Keep it up! Keep it up!
2. Keep it perky...during story reading, modeling perky reading is essential.
3. Spread out the positive praise. Keep encouraging students throughout the story reading. Who is reading it like we speak? Who is tracking all the time? Who is reading it smoothly? Let them know as individuals and as a group (points). They need it!

I'm going to go over Checkout procedures with you. They will begin tomorrow!

Seating chart starting tomorrow:

Allison	Marcus	Eric	Tony
Jordan	Brennan	Tyler	Karen

Teacher

You teach to your right side, therefore the students that can hold their own should stay to your left.

Observation Feedback

Name:	Emily	Date:	Tuesday, October 24
Obs. Begin:	9:20	Obs. End:	9:37
Program:	RM I	Part(s):	Word attack, story reading
Lesson #:	150	# in group:	7
Observer:	Instructional coach		

Previous Assignments:

1. Keep it perky...during story reading, modeling perky reading is essential.
2. Spread out the positive praise. Keep encouraging students throughout the story reading.

Things going well:

1. Rules were reviewed prior to beginning the lesson.
2. Appropriate amounts of think time were given. When you did the top down, bottom up, it was great. I was nervous, but your timing was wonderful.
3. Individual turns were given at the end of each task in an unpredictable order, using the student's name last.
4. Errors were corrected using the program appropriate correction procedure. "That sound is e. Everyone, what sound?"
5. You started over when an error was made, you gave delayed tests to students who missed sounds/words. (Brendan-e)
6. Pacing is on target. This group is appropriately placed.
7. Transitions were brief.
8. Students read the story smoothly, tracking as they and others read.
9. You are doing a great job picking up signaling and management.

Things to work on:

1. Use teacher student game to encourage on task behavior of students. If you place the clip board on your lap, you can quickly give and take points. This group needs constant feedback on their learning behavior. Tell them to check their posture. Say "I like how Allison is sitting tall." "Do it the Marcus way." A great time to remind and reinforce is when you are turning pages in the presentation book.
2. When you tell the students to sound out the word for the first time, make sure you do not sound it out with them.
3. When signaling to sound out the word, make sure your finger is under the word. Be sure to slash through words that have stop sounds.
4. By verifying first time responses, students get an extra repetition and reassurance that what they said was correct.

Please continue to pre-read your script to know what is to come.
How are they doing on checkouts?

You will order RM II material from Kelli.

Observation Feedback

Name:	Emily	Date:	Thursday, November 09
Obs. Begin:	9:35	Obs. End:	9:45
Program:	RM II	Part(s):	story reading, take home
Lesson #:	2	# in group:	4
Observer:	Instructional coach		

Previous Assignments:

1. Use teacher student game to encourage on task behavior of students.
2. When you tell the students to sound out the word for the first time, make sure you do not sound it out with them.
3. When signaling to sound out the word, make sure your finger is under the word.
4. By verifying first time responses, students get an extra repetition and reassurance that what they said was correct.

Things going well:

1. Students are seated close to you so you can encourage their behavior and participation.
2. The students do a great job of having no extra talking.
3. All students were tracking while others were reading. Nice job keeping the expectation high.
4. Individual turns during story reading were given in an unpredictable order, saying the students name last.
5. You tracked errors during story reading.
6. Errors were corrected immediately. At this point in the program, students still need to sound out words that are read wrong during story reading.
7. Students went back to their desk quietly. Excellent job praising them when they were seated at their spot correctly.

Things to work on:

1. Because your group is so small (and behind) this is the perfect opportunity and time to get a lot of one-on-one reading in with the students. You can play fluency games, do daily checkouts, etc. Every child should read with you every lesson. You can help them build their fluency, confidence and accuracy in their reading. You can also play, "Read it like Ms. Effective" after reading the story twice (in script).

Take advantage of this opportunity and let's get this group going!

2. I gave you the word lists that are taught as lessons. I usually read the lists before teaching lessons 5-8 and send the review sheet home for review five nights. Please do this and keep reviewing the words until they are at mastery.

Observation Feedback

Name:	Emily	Date:	Wednesday, December 13
Obs. Begin:	9:20	Obs. End:	10:05
Program:	RM II	Part(s):	word attack, taught story reading
Lesson #:	29	# in group:	4
Observer:	Instructional coach		

Previous Assignments:

1. Because your group is so small (and behind) this is the perfect opportunity and time to get a lot of one-on-one reading in with the students.
2. Giving lessons with words only as word lists to study over a number of days.

Things going well:

1. You verified first time responses during word attack.
2. Individual turns were given in an unpredictable order, saying the students name last.
3. Pacing of the lesson was appropriate. Word attack was from 9:15-9:30. Great!
4. Transitioning to the reader was quick and quiet.
5. You ignored and praised. You made comments on who was ready to go during story reading. "Great job following along with your finger."
6. Think time was appropriate for the tasks. You waited at the focus for a second before signaling for through the word.
7. You presented the script faithfully and fluently.

Things to work on:

1. Increase the number of individual turns given during word attack. Because this group is so small, lots of repetitions should be given. Remember how well you do in the word attack will be reflective in how well the students read the story. Include popcorns, advanced DI, etc. I will model this tomorrow during word attack.
2. When an error is made during the word attack, the students say the word, sound it out, and then back up a few words to give them a delayed test. Make sure they are firm on the missed words before turning the page.
3. We talked this morning about how not to let a student consume the class with distractions. Do not get in a confrontation with him. Catch him and the other students being good. It's easy to see when he is off, but he really needs to hear when he is following directions.

APPENDIX G

PACING SHEET

Name _____ . = lesson completed at mastery

Week of _____ / = lesson not completed/not at mastery

Lesson Progress

Subj.	# in group	Subject Level	M	T	W	Th	F	Lesson/ Day	Test or C.O.	# stdnts passing	Not passing/ Notes
R											
M											Math Facts:
S											
Grammar:											
Writing:											
History:											
Science:											

Comments: _____

APPENDIX H

GROUP UPDATE FORM

1st-2nd Group Lesson and Number Update

Reading:

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Lesson #</u>	<u># of Students</u>
Payne (I 60)	RM II	69	5
Evans (I 91)	RM II	71	4
Griffin (I 109)	RM II	100	8
Bates (I 130)	RM II	114	9
Smith (I 120)	RM II	155	10
Fernandez (I 108)	RM III	3	10
Howard (II 10)	RM III	9	6
Strickland (II 36)	RM III	19	6
Lang (II 27)	RM III	27	5
Hunt (I 145)	RM III	48	9
Bass (II 56)	RM III	69	12
Stone (II 111)	RM III	102	3
Massey (III 1)	RM III	113	13
Effective (II 145)	RM III	136	10
O'Brien (III 1)	RM III	140	9
Jackson (III 10)	RM IV	2	13
Miller (II 67)	RM IV	5	7
Estrada (III 30)	RM IV	10	13
Price (III 1)	RM IV	17	16
Welch (III 69)	RM IV	38	11
Bryant	RM IV	70	9
Reese (III 95)	RM IV	117	9
Baldwin (IV 15)	RM V	34	8

Math:

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Lesson #</u>	<u># of Students</u>
Payne (A 16)	CMC-B	98	6
Bryant (A 70)	CMC-B	111	8
O'Brien (A 60)	CMC-B	110	4
Smith (A 70)	CMC-B	119	10
Lang (A 78)	CMC C	3	8
Evans (A 90)	CMC-C	8	10
Hunt (A 90)	CMC-C	25	8
Bass (A 90)	CMC-C	27	8
Baldwin (B 1)	CMC-C	30	11
Griffin (B 1)	Saxon 3	37	15
Massey (B 108)	Saxon 3	50	7
Jackson (A 90)	Saxon 3	70	14
Miller (B 81)	Saxon 3	102	11
Stone (C 1)	Saxon 3	106	10
Fernandez (C 1)	Saxon 3	116	7

Estrada (B 98)	Saxon 3	128	6
Welch (C 1)	Saxon 3	126	11
Price (C 22)	Saxon 5/4	8	10
Strickland (C 30)	Saxon 5/4	39	8
Howard (3 15)	Saxon 5/4	50	13
Bates (3 1)	Saxon 5/4	79	14
Effective (3 70)	Saxon 5/6	133	6

Spelling:

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Lesson #</u>	<u># of Students</u>
Payne (FC RM I)	SM A	58	14
Griffin (FC RM I)	SM B	25	10
Lang (FC RM II)	SM B	41	14
Howard (FC RM I)	SM B	45	11
Stone (FC RMII)	SM B	47	16
Bates (FC RM II)	SM B	77	9
Smith (A 1)	SM B	86	9
Estrada (B 7)	SM B	117	13
Welch	SM B	120	11
Strickland (A 1)	SM C	50	12
Hunt (B 7)	SM C	75	11
Bass (B 50)	SM C	71	11
O'Brien (B 80)	SM C	74	14
Price (B 50)	SM C	81	12
Reese (B 67)	SM C	95	12
Baldwin (C 1)	SM C	116	10
Effective (C 29)	SM D	59	8
Bryant (C 42)	SM D	109	10