2016

Best teaching strategies and practices of session directors in the Especially For Youth program

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BEST TEACHING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES OF SESSION DIRECTORS IN THE ESPECIALLY FOR YOUTH PROGRAM

A dissertation proposal submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Learning Technologies

by

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October, 2016

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DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad, for your steady faith, love, and support to *infinity and beyond*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express appreciation for my committee chair, Dr. Madjidi, my pacer, whose vision of the finish line kept me focused and hopeful. I also want to thank my loving and encouraging trainers, my committee members. Thank you for pushing me.

I would like to thank my support crew and Pepperdine family, EDLT Cadre 19. I will always treasure our time together, and I am so grateful to have traveled this doctoral journey with you. To my racing partners, LPs Kim, Jesusa, and Sandra, thank you for your steady friendship and support.

In addition, I would also like to thank the Harris family, who provided much needed support fuel and respite during this doctoral journey. I am so grateful for my cheerleaders and biggest fans—my family and friends. Thank you all for your encouraging words that kept me going when I wanted to quit. I love you more than I can say.

VITA

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ABSTRACT

Especially for Youth (EFY) is a Brigham Young University Continuing Education program for youths (ages 14–18) that upholds the values and teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). During the week-long EFY program, or *session*, youths received classroom instruction with religious emphasis from EFY faculty. A subgroup of the EFY faculty include *session directors*, invited by EFY staff to supervise an EFY session. Recognized by the EFY program as high-quality teachers, session directors help reach the program's objectives by teaching youths and supporting EFY faculty and other staff. The purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching strategies and practices employed by the session directors, as well as to examine challenges faced, measures of success, and the overall recommendations made for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the EFY program.

This qualitative research study employed a phenomenological methodological approach to examine the current teaching strategies and practices of EFY session directors. Fifteen semi-structured interviews with the session directors were conducted, both face-to-face and via video conference. Key findings of the study yielded 30 themes and 53 subthemes.

Keywords: religious education, moral education, Christian, summer camps, youths, Especially for Youth

Chapter 1: Introduction

American youths between the ages of 10–19 are in a crucial developmental transition from childhood to adulthood. In the 21st century, high profile events involving youths, such as school shootings and epidemic outbreaks of sexually-transmitted diseases, heighten public concern about youths and youth culture in America (Smith, Denton, Faris, & Regnerus, 2002). Additionally, other problems labeled as *epidemic* among youths according to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (NCASA, 2011), include substance abuse such as smoking, drinking, misusing prescription drugs, and using illegal drugs. Despite difficulties facing youths, few scholars of American youths pay close attention to youth's religious lives (Smith et al., 2002), even though religiosity and religious affiliation are shown to help youths make decisions away from harmful practices (Barr & Hoffmann, 2008; Hardy & Carlo, 2005, Nonnemaker, McNeely, & Blum, 2006; Wills, Yaeger, & Sandy, 2003;). Youths who participate in religious activities seem to be less likely to participant in delinquent and dangerous or risky behaviors, (Smith & Faris, 2002).

Typically, schools have not been viewed as institutions where moral education, including topics of morality and ethics, are found (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). As teaching moral and spiritual values are neglected in secular education (Packer, 1975), youths are a population that many religious organizations, both congregations and para-church ministries, particularly seek to influence (Smith et al., 2002). Regardless of religious affiliation, there appears to be a growing awareness of the interest in religious and moral influences in the lives of youths by various professions, religious leaders, and educators (Smith & Faris, 2002). For example, Jewish, Islamic, and Christian faiths all evidence the need for religious and moral education and the development of educational experiences, particularly for youths.

The predominant model for American Jewish education is a part-time supplementary school occurring in synagogues or Jewish community-sponsored schools called Hebrew school, developed in the 1800s. The education for children and youths of a Jewish faith was to aid in the development of better men and women (Richman, 1900). In Jewish religious education, the study of and adherence to both written text (Torah) and the oral law (the Talmud) are a compilation of moral and religious truth and could lead to moral-religious practices. A study of these religious texts, as well as Jewish tradition, is the subject matter and means for Jewish character education (Chazan, 1980).

In addition to the Jewish faith, the education of youths in the Islamic tradition is also prevalent. In Islam, the word, *ta'dib* indicates that education is a process of helping individuals demonstrate appropriate moral and spiritual behavior for the sake of righteous living. Islam has always recognized the value of moral and spiritual education based on two main sources of text, namely the al-Qur'an and the as-Sunnah. Islamic education is a process of helping individuals become agents of knowledge through curriculum and school life, helping to reinforce students' values and behaviors (Kasim & Yusoff, 2014).

In addition to Islamic faith, Christian faiths seek to educate youths. Protestant theologian Bushnell (1847) in *Christian Nurture* emphasized the necessity of supporting the religiosity of children and young adults. One example of Christian religious education is the Catholic Church, which set up a network of parochial schools. Central diocesan and parish high schools, as well as private schools, grew out of academics and more European-style *colleges* run by religious groups (Hennesey, 1981). *The Catholic School* (TCS), a foundational charter for Catholic education, outlines Catholic principles in education emphasizing that Catholic schools do not exist primarily to form knowledgeable students for the workplace, but Christian citizens of character, possessing

values and virtues that would help students to contribute to society (Grace, 2013). Youth ministries and youth groups of various Christian sects consider moral development to be a crucial element of the church's youth ministry (Prins, 2002). Lee (1980) asserts,

> Virtually every Christian denomination strongly affirms that morality occupies a major position in its theory and practice. Moral judgement and moral development are emphasized in the religious education activities which the various Christian denominations sponsor or otherwise support. (p. 326)

One Christian denomination, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known as the *Mormon* Church, and herein referred to as the LDS Church, specifically seeks to provide programs to educate youths. The LDS Church is the fourth-largest Christian denomination in the United States and has over 15 million members worldwide. In 1912, the leadership in the LDS Church noticed the increasing number of students attending public school in the United States. As a result, the Church began constructing buildings adjacent to public high schools to provide religious curriculum, complementing the secular education received in the public high schools. The weekly religious education program for LDS youths was called *seminary* (Ludwig, 1992). Since that time the seminary program has expanded to involve 390,000 youths in over 170 countries (LDS, 2012a).

Seminary Program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The LDS seminary program provides weekday religious education (LDS, 2012b) and the purpose of seminary is to "help youth[s] . . . understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Father in Heaven" (p. x). The curriculum for seminary is based on the scriptural canon of the LDS Church: the Old Testament, the New Testament, the

Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants (LDS, 2012a). The four courses are taught once per year on a rotating basis. Seminary is taught by both volunteers and employees of the Church Educational System (CES), depending on the type of seminary program youths attend. All teachers receive the same instructional materials published by the LDS Church to enhance their teaching strategies and practices and create a positive learning environment for youths. Other auxiliaries developed by the LDS Church focus on religious education of youths.

Auxiliaries for Youths in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

In addition to the seminary program, the organizations and auxiliaries specific to youths in the LDS Church and responsible for religious instruction include the family, Aaronic priesthood (boys ages 12–18), Young Women (girls ages 12–18), and Sunday School (youths ages 12–18). In families, parents have the primary responsibility to teach their children. The other auxiliaries exist to support and strengthen the family (LDS, 2012c). Each auxiliary provides opportunities for young men and young women to learn and to teach the doctrines of the gospel.

In 2012, the auxiliaries of the LDS Church dedicated to youths, developed a new curriculum for Sunday worship titled Come, Follow Me for Aaronic Priesthood, Young Women, and Sunday School lessons. The purpose of the curriculum is to "help [youths] become converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ" (LDS, 2012d, p. 2) a conversion that occurs by daily living the gospel. The Come, Follow Me curriculum emphasizes that leaders and teachers of youths should emulate the way in which Jesus Christ taught as found in the Scriptures.

This commitment to strengthen youths of the LDS Church is not only reflected in the development of weekday religious education of Sunday programs, but in more socio-religious educational experiences for youths. Other opportunities for learning and development are offered

through structured, supervised extra-curricular activities such as summer camps and programs. One program targeting the spiritual and social development of youths ages 14–18 years, though not directly affiliated with the LDS Church, upholds the values and teachings of the LDS Church, is called Especially for Youth (EFY).

Especially for Youth (EFY)

History of Especially for Youth. EFY began in 1976, when a few employees of the Brigham Young University's (BYU) Division of Continuing Education program, including Ronald C. Hills, sought to develop an *education week* for youths. The first EFY was held on BYU Campus in Provo, UT with a total of 172 participants (EFY, 2015a). The second year, EFY increased by 500% enrolling 863 youths (Bytheway, 2003). Enrollment continued to grow steadily every year and the program began to expand to other locations in North America. From 1976 through 2015, a total of 848,548 youth have attended EFY in 1,687 sessions (EFY, 2015b).

Purpose of Especially for Youth. EFY is a summer camp with a religious emphasis, designed for youths (ages 14-18). The activities center on a spiritual theme to generate excitement for the seminary curriculum that will be studied in the coming year (Bytheway, 2003). The purpose of Especially for Youth (EFY) is to strengthen youth[s] in their commitment to live the gospel of Jesus Christ by providing inspiring, edifying learning opportunities and wholesome social experiences. This is done by:

1. Providing a well-balanced program socially and spiritually
2. Providing exceptional staff who encourage, assist, and mentor youth by living the gospel, teaching effectively, and administering activities appropriately
3. Bringing together those with similar values. (EFY, 2015e, para. 1)

Especially for Youth activities. The EFY program seeks to provide a well-balanced experience for youths both socially and spiritually. Participants of the EFY program are divided into groups of 10 to 15 and are assigned a counselor of the same gender. Two or three groups of both boys and girls together form a *company* in which the participants meet on a daily basis. The first day of the program, the participants meet their counselor and their company in orientation, games, and unity building activities. Throughout the week, participants at EFY attend dances, outdoor recreation activities, a service project, a musical program, a variety show, a fireside, and a testimony meeting. EFY participants also attend morning devotionals, participate in personal gospel study, and attend classes based on gospel topics. Though activities have changed and evolved throughout the history of the EFY program, there has always been an element of religious instruction for youths. Each week-long EFY session has over 15 hours of religious classroom instruction taught by EFY faculty (Bytheway, 2003).

Faculty of Especially for Youth. In 1976, Ronald Hills contacted Paul Warner, an employee of the LDS Church Educational System (CES), and a seminary pre-service instructor at Brigham Young University to find competent teachers for the program. After receiving approval from the Associate Commissioner for Seminaries and Institutes, letters were sent to selected seminary teachers inviting them to participate. The initial letter to the teachers invited them to present six lectures or workshops during the four-day program with an anticipated audience of between 50 and 100 youths at each class (Bytheway, 2003).

As of January 2016, the EFY faculty consisted of approximately 200 teachers, referred by the EFY program as *speakers*, who are members of the LDS Church. Though referred to as speakers, the role of the speaker is to facilitate, lead, and teach classes at EFY (J. Hucks, personal communication, January 25, 2015). Sixty-five percent of the EFY faculty are employed

by CES in the seminary and institutes of religion program while 35% (160) have other professions. Twenty percent (40) of the speakers are female, and 80% (160) are male (T. Myers, personal communication, December 3, 2015). All faculty develop their own class outlines, which they submit to the Materials Evaluation Review Committee (part of the Correlation Committee of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). The outlines include references to quotes, scriptures, and brief summaries of personal experiences. The Correlation Committee reviews each outline to ensure doctrinal purity and to maintain quality teaching (Bytheway, 2003). A subgroup of the EFY faculty include what the program identifies as *session directors*.

Session directors of the Especially for Youth program. The director of EFY and the program administrator supervising EFY faculty select, from the pool of faculty, individuals to be session directors. Session directors are added to the program, as needed, to match the number of sessions in a given summer (e.g., if there are 128 sessions of EFY in a summer, there are 128 session directors). Session directors are considered the adult leaders of the EFY programs. Qualifications for becoming a session director are based on the number of years of experience as a speaker and a consistent high quality of teaching in the EFY program (T. Myers, personal communication, December 3, 2015). The roles and responsibilities of the session directors include: helping to reach the program objective, providing a well-balanced program, facilitating communication with the speakers, working closely with the coordinators, supporting all staff in their duties, spending time with the youths, helping youths get involved, contacting administrators as needed, and assisting with hiring paperwork (EFY, 2015b). One of the main responsibilities of the session directors is to teach youths.

In a given week-long session, session directors teach seven 50-minute lessons on topics indicated in the staff handbook (EFY, 2015b), to the participants of the session. Sessions can

range from approximately 300 to 1000 attendees. The EFY administrators assign topics; however, the preparation, organization, and delivery of the teaching are at the discretion of the session director.

Problem Statement

Religious leaders and educators are interested in the moral and religious influences in the lives of youths (Smith, 2003). National youth organizations, local social service organizations, and private camps emphasize teaching good character and spiritual attainment (Ball & Ball, 1990). One program, Especially for Youth, targets the spiritual and social development of youths, and upholds the values and teachings of the LDS Church. An element of the program created to enhance the learning of spiritual and moral values are classes taught by EFY faculty. A subgroup of the EFY faculty, identified as session directors, are recognized as some of the highest quality teachers in the program. Currently, the session directors in the EFY program have over 300 years of combined experience teaching youths in faith-based religious settings (T. Myers, personal communication, December 3, 2015). In order to duplicate their success, it is important to understand the teaching experiences of the session directors and examine what they do to create positive learning experiences for youths.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived teaching experiences of session directors of the EFY program. This study examined the challenges faced, measures of success, and the overall recommendations made for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the EFY program. Methods of inquiry included phenomenological reflection on data elicited through semi-structured interviews, both in person and through video conferencing.

Research Questions

1. What teaching strategies and practices are employed by session directors of the Especially for Youth program?
2. What teaching challenges are faced by the session directors of the Especially for Youth program?
3. How do session directors of the Especially for Youth program measure their teaching success?
4. What recommendations would session directors make for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the Especially for Youth program?

Significance of the Study

To date, there is no published research on the EFY program. This study interviewed a diverse sample of session directors who were recognized by the EFY program as quality speakers. Speakers of the EFY program, as well as staff members involved in teaching youths at EFY, will be able to draw on ways session directors define success in teaching and garner knowledge from their recommendations for success. This study contributes to a more sophisticated understanding of what it takes to teach at the EFY program, and can help speakers

and staff improve their current strategies. The research findings will also allow the EFY program to create consistent training and orientation programs for EFY speakers and staff, furthering the efficiency of the EFY program. The significance of this study lies in the contribution it will make, not only to the EFY program, but to scholarly research and literature in multiple fields of study.

First, this study adds to research and literature on moral, spiritual or values-based education for youths, including programs and opportunities religious communities offer youths. Second, this study adds to research and literature in religious activities youths participate in outside of church that hold religious meaning or have religious emphasis, such as summer camps and programs. Third, this study may be helpful to religious educators of youth programs of the LDS Church, including teachers in the Young Men's, Young Women's, and Sunday School program, as well as weekday religious instructors in the Church Education System (CES) and the seminary and institute (S&I) programs, specifically.

Limitations

For a variety of reasons, most qualitative studies have limitations. This study is no exception. The following limitations of the study should be considered:

1. The phenomenology established for this study is limited to a specific area of education and may not apply to all areas of religious education programs in the United States.
2. The principal investigator is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and has been a speaker in the EFY program for 7 years.

3. The principal investigator assumes that her presence and the current state of mind of the participants had an influence on the participants' responses during the interviews.

Definition of Terms

Brigham Young University (BYU). Brigham Young University is a university located in Provo, Utah founded and guided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Brigham Young University, 2016).

Church Educational System (CES). The Church Educational System of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints consists of several educational programs, providing a combination of religious and secular education for youths and young adults (Ludwig, 1992).

Especially for Youth (EFY). EFY is a youth program sponsored by the Brigham Young University Division of Continuing Education to strengthen youths in their commitment to live the gospel of Jesus Christ by providing edifying learning opportunities and social experiences (EFY, 2015e).

Seminary. Seminary is a 4-year religious program for youths, ages 14–18 that provides weekday religious courses under the direction of the Church Educational System of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS, 2012a).

Session Director. A session director is an adult who supervises the EFY sessions. He or she helps reach the program's objectives by teaching youths and supporting EFY faculty and other staff (EFY, 2015b).

Summary

American youths are at a developmental transition from childhood and adulthood. Public concern for youths is heightened due to events including school shootings, outbreaks of sexually-

transmitted diseases (Smith et al., 2002), and reports of substance abuse, which are *epidemic* among youths (NCASA, 2011). Little attention is given to youth's religious lives, even though religiosity and religious affiliation helps youths make decisions away from harmful practices (Barr & Hoffmann, 2008; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Nonnemaker et al., 2006; Wills et al., 2003;). The teaching of moral and spiritual values is neglected in secular education (Packer, 1975), yet there appears to be a growing awareness of religious and moral influences in the lives of professions, religious leaders, and educators. For example, Jewish, Islamic, and Christian faiths have interested in the religious and moral development and educational experiences for youths. One Christian denomination, the LDS Church, developed programs such as *seminary* to provide youths with religious curriculum to complement their public education (Ludwig, 1992). Other organizations and auxiliaries developed within the LDS Church also focus on the religious education, such as the Aaronic priesthood (boys ages 12–18), Young Women (girls ages 12–18), and Sunday School (youths ages 12–18; LDS, 2012c). One program, developed by employees of Brigham Young University's Continuing Education program in 1976, called Especially for Youth (EFY), though not directly affiliated with the LDS Church, is dedicated to the spiritual and social development of youths and embraces the values and principles of the LDS Church.

EFY is a summer camp with religious emphasis, for youths (ages 14–18). Beginning in 1976, the EFY program started with 172 participants and has grown over a 40-year period, totaling 848,548 youths in attendance. The purpose of the EFY program is to "strengthen youth in their commitment to live the gospel of Jesus Christ by providing inspiring, edifying learning opportunities and wholesome social experience" (EFY, 2015e, para. 1). Part of the EFY program involves participants attending classes taught by EFY faculty. A subset of these faculty, called *session directors*, are the supervisors to the EFY sessions, and are identified by the EFY program

as quality teachers. This study sought to enrich current understanding of effective teaching strategies and practices of the session directors as they prepared and delivered faith-based messages to youths.

A review of literature is included in Chapter 2. The research methodology will be described in Chapter 3. The findings will be presented in Chapter 4. The summary, conclusion, and recommendations will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Effects of the Industrial Revolution on Youths in the United States

The Industrial Revolution in America had a great effect on the country legally, economically, and educationally (Senter, 1989). United States manufacturing methods changed from hand production methods to machine production. The nation began to transform from a rural agrarian society into an urban culture. The advancement of industrialization required a higher level of skills for workers, but fewer workers, resulting in increased demands for education beyond that given in the elementary (or common school) years (Goldin & Katz, 2008). As a result of these changes, young people were forced out of the work force (Bakan, 1971). Young people began to be more of an economic liability, as they were no longer essential for the survival of the family and were more of a threat to the work force. Consequently, perceptions of young people shifted from being essential for economic survival in the family to being less responsible (Senter, 1989). The emergence of a group of young people, or *adolescents*, came as a result of this period of modern urban industrial life. Before the last two decades of the 19th century, adolescence, as it is seen today, did not exist (Bakan, 1971).

This emergence of adolescence, due in part to the effects of the Industrial Revolution, created a societal focus on the development of these young people. Adolescence became a preparatory time between childhood and manhood or womanhood, where youths were primed for adult roles by attending school and participating in other organizations. One could almost call it an *invention* of that period (Demos & Demos, 1969). This focus on youth development is reflected educationally with the growth of high schools in the United States.

Education for Youths - The Origin of High Schools

In the late 19th century, public education for children between ages 6 and 18 was introduced on a very large scale in the United States. Under the English common law, parents had almost complete control over the education of their children; however, during this time, the state began to limit the control of the parents (Bakan, 1971). Instead of full entrance into the adult workforce, youths were now required to attend school (Senter, 1989), and many began to attend school beyond the elementary school years. The high school movement changed the education of American youths (Goldin & Katz, 2008). The first public secondary school system, built in the 1830s and 1840s greatly expanded after the American Civil War (Goldin & Katz, 2008). From 1871 to 1920, the number of American high schools grew from eighty thousand to 2.2 million (Tyack, 1967). This focus on the education of youths did not just happen in the secular world. Religious and church organizations also began to educate youths.

Religious Organizations for Youths

Eisenstadt (1962) described an emergence of an age group (or youth group) movement during the last two decades of the 19th century. Organizations and youth groups began to develop to help mentor youths preparing them for adult roles as well as recreational and cultural activities (Eisenstadt, 1962). In approximately 20 years, from 1881 to the early 1900s, 34 adult sponsored youth organizations were established in the United States (Senter, 1989). In the subsequent 20 years after the turn of the century, another 46 organizations for youths were created by adults, and 62 more from 1921–1940 (Toynbee, 1979). Of the original 34 adult sponsored organizations, 25 were from a religious, theological perspective (Senter, 1989). Examples of these programs founded in the 1850s were the interdenominational teaching programs, Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women Christian Association

(YWCA), faith-based organizations devoted to youths. The curriculum of the YMCA developed over time, and was committed to the education of *body, mind, and spirit* (Senter, 2014). Organizations dedicated to youths continued to evolve as the first great wave of church-based youth societies in the 1880s. Francis Edward Clark began the Christian Endeavor Society in 1881, beginning youth ministry as a profession, first at the regional and then at a national level (Strommen, 2011). Many main stream denominations and organizations such as the YMCA began to create camp programs for youths.

The first camp for youths was founded in 1885 by Sumner F. Dudley, a YMCA camp near Newburg, New York. Originally, these camps were mainly for boys, but in 1892 a private camp, called Camp Avrey, reserved a session for girls. Other organizational camping continued to grow with the development of Fresh Air Camps, designed for inner city youths (Ball & Ball, 1990). During this time, there was a strong spiritual emphasis, often with Bible study. National youth organizations, local social service organizations and private camps stimulated further growth in the western part of the Unites States. By the 1920s, many camps were more structured and had an emphasis on teaching good character and spiritual attainment (Ball & Ball, 1990).

Religious Organizations Foster Youth Development

As the population of the nation began to move from rural areas to towns and cities, the population increased and so did church attendance that allowed sub-organizations to develop within churches. These youth organizations were led by adults who had discretionary time to contribute to the young people in their community (Senter, 1989). Sunday became a time of education of youths within church organizations. Participating in Sunday School became a time for children to be taught faith-based principles for use at a later date—a storehouse of values and knowledge (Hunter, 1963). Additionally, youth organizations focused on a common objective to

foster faith as well as moral development for youths even though their programs differed (Eccles, Gootman & National Research Council, 2002).

As one of the stages of life where religious conversion is most likely to happen, youths are a population that many religious organizations focus on and seek to influence (Smith et al., 2002). Religious organizations, such as churches and synagogues, contribute to promoting youth development. Organizations help build a core set of values among the young, which helps them make important decisions (Eccles et al., 2002).

Moral Development and Values-based Education

Dewey (1964) argued that the objective of education is intellectual and moral growth or development. Dewey was an early advocate of a morality-based approach to education, the mindset that teachers should be instilling reflectivity, inquiry, and a capacity for moral decision making on the part of the student (as cited in Lovat & Clement, 2008). Moral development does not merely produce an increase in the context of thinking, but a qualitative transformation, or conversion that occurs in an individual's thoughts or actions (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Additionally, Thanissaro (2010) stated that moral development deals with values concerning a child's action and interaction involving spirituality. Peterson (2013) defined values as relating to "ethics (group, social and community norms, or standards) and are generally understood to refer to principles, attitudes, and capacities that are held to be important, good and desirable" (p. 74). For youths, their belief systems, in which there is sizable differences, influence how much youths internalize or reject the value system around them (Regnerus, Smith & Fritsch, 2003). Moral education, or the teaching of morals and values, is a vehicle for youths to internalize a value system.

The purpose of moral education is to help youths act with moral responsibility. Youths are confronted by a multitude of norms and values. Therefore, they must be assisted to attain the necessary skills for decision-making, basis of one's own internalized convictions (Prins, 2002). The objective of moral education is to stimulate an individual's thinking ability over time, enabling them to apply complex reasoning to solve moral problems. To consider the acquisition of values as part of a moral education is to consider moral principles children are developing (or not developing; Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). The need for the development of morals and principles heightens as decisions youths make and problems they face increase in visibility.

Religious Involvement Helps Youths

Problems youths face. High-profile events, including multiple school shootings and local epidemic outbreaks of sexually-transmitted diseases among the youth population, heightened public concern about problems youths face (Smith et al., 2002). Additionally, according to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (NCASA, 2011), substance abuse such as smoking, drinking, misusing prescription drugs, and using illegal drugs is an epidemic problem among youths. At least three out of four high school students in America (75.6 %) have used one or more addictive substances (NCASA, 2011). Over 90% of youths began smoking, drinking, and using other drugs before age 18 (NCASA, 2014). As such, there are efforts to promote more positive behaviors in teens, and research indicates factors that reduce the risk of harmful practices.

Factors that help youths. Factors that reduce the risk of teen substance abuse include parental engagement, role models and positive peer influences, future goals, school and community engagement, athletic involvement, and religious involvement (NCASA, 2011). The large majority of studies that include religious measures (especially church attendance and

importance of religious faith) have found these factors to be inversely related to juvenile delinquency, drug, alcohol, and tobacco use (NCASA, 2011). Teens who do not consider religious beliefs important are almost three times likelier to drink, binge drink, and smoke; almost four times likelier to use marijuana; and seven times likelier to use illicit drugs compared to their peers who believe that religion is important (NCASA, 2001). Among teenagers, reported religious involvement or religiosity is associated with reduced substance use risk (Barr & Hoffmann, 2008). In a study of youths in grades 7–11, more frequent attendance at religious activities and services were associated with a reduction in smoking (Nonnemaker et al., 2006). In a sample of urban youths followed from 7th grade to 10th grade, the greater the youths' private religiosity, the less likely they were to engage in substance use (Wills et al., 2003). This study defined private religiosity as believing in God, having the ability to turn to prayer when facing personal challenges, relying on religious teachings when they had a problem, and having religious beliefs as a guide to day-to-day living (NCASA, 2011). In addition to being one of the factors in reducing the risk of teen substance abuse, religiosity helps provide youths with pro-social behavior, or *moral directives* to help guide their decisions and behavior (Hardy & Carlo, 2005).

Pro-social behavior. Religiosity helps to promote prosocial behavior by fostering values in youths. Several reasons may attribute to the development of prosocial values, including the teaching of religious texts that emphasize such values (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Other reasons may include service opportunities through religious groups (Younis & Hart, 2002), as well as exposure to positive role models. When youths interact with role models, they internalize prosocial values and integrate them into their identities (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Teens who have positive peer influences and guidance of positive role models are at reduced risk of substance

abuse (Atkins, Oman, Vesely, Aspy, & McLeroy, 2002). Religious institutions and organizations may create an interpersonal network of support for youths that help protect them from pro-substance use influences (Bahr & Hoffmann, 2008). Other means of support for youths occur in structured, supervised extra-curricular activities such as summer camps and programs. Extra-curricular programs offer assistance in contesting individualism, materialism, secularization, and social isolation among youths (Cohen & Bar-Shalom, 2010). Summer camps and programs that provide socio-religious experiences for youths occur in a wide range of religious organizations.

Socio-Religious Experiences for Youths

Following World War II, the U.S. saw a rapid expansion and acceptance of youth summer experiences, such as camping, for youths. Some camps had broad acceptance while others began for a very specific purpose (Ball & Ball, 1990). Various religious organizations provide experiences beyond their local communities and congregations that expand a youth's experiences and aspirations, foster maturity, and enhance competencies and knowledge (Smith, 2003). Youths have an almost endless array of socio-religious activities to choose from such as summer camps, youth retreats, teen conferences, service programs, Holy Land trips, music festivals, denominational conventions, and the hajj to Mecca (Smith, 2003). Though attending for various purposes, millions of individuals, including youths, participate in camp experiences.

Benefits of camp programs. The American Camp Association (ACA) reported in 2011 that in the United States each year, more than 11 million children and adults attended camp. Nonprofit groups, including youth agencies and religious organizations, operate approximately 9,500 camps, and 2,500 are privately owned independent for-profit operators (American Camp Association [ACA], n.d.). Youths involvement in camps can have an impact on their growth and development.

For some participants, camps can make a profound difference in their lives (Henderson, Bialeschki, & James, 2007). Camps can facilitate life-long personal and social skills for youths such as leadership and self-efficacy that can be applied to their journey toward a successful adulthood (Henderson et al., 2007). Camps are a great place for youths to learn values and ethics that will serve them well in the future (DeGraaf, Ramsing, Gassman, & DeGraaf, 2002).

Two large studies conducted by Philliber Research Associates and the ACA took the science of studying camp experience to a higher level of validity and detail as they sampled individuals who attended camps across the United States (Henderson et al., 2007). The first study explored development outcomes of youths. In a survey of more than 5,000 participants and their parents across 80 camps accredited by the ACA, parents, staff, and participants reported significant growth in the following areas: self-esteem, independence, leadership, friendship skills, social comfort, peer relationships, adventure and exploration, environmental awareness, values, decision making, and spirituality. The results of this study suggested that parents, staff and participants of a camp experience demonstrate growth in positive identity, social skills, physical and thinking skills, positive values and spiritual growth. The overall results showed that camps help children become more confident and experience self-esteem, develop more social skills and help them make new friends, grow more independent, show more leadership qualities, grow more adventurous, are more willing to try new things, and realize spiritual growth, especially at camps that emphasize spirituality (American Camp Association [ACA], 2005).

The second study measured four domains of developmental supports and opportunities that individuals have during their camp experience. The study surveyed 7,645 boys and girls, between the ages of 10 and 18, attending one of 80 ACA accredited day or resident camps across the United States. The results of the survey indicated that the greatest strength of camp was

supportive relationships – specifically, the quality of relationships between youths and adult staff. Nearly 70% of campers experienced *optimal* levels of support, compared to an average of 40% of youths in some community-based organizations, and between 15–20% in some secondary schools. Camps represent one of the best opportunities youths have outside their family for experiencing adult-youth relationships (American Camp Association [ACA], 2006).

Henderson et al. (2007) summarized these two studies and several others, suggested that "in this day of accountability, documenting best practices and ensuring that goals have been achieved are paramount…further research is necessary to add to the growing knowledge base" (p. 756). There has been increased commitment to the development of practices that can have positive developmental outcomes for children participating in camp programs (McAuliffe-Fogarty & Carlson, 2007). As American youths are attending and experiencing positive developmental outcomes in camps and programs, it is important to examine the teaching and learning strategies and practices that occur in these settings. To do so, one must first examine the various approaches to understanding how learning takes place, by exploring the theoretical perspectives for learning instructional design.

Theoretical Perspectives of Teaching and Learning

Theoretical perspectives provide frameworks for describing how learning occurs in a particular instance and the way instruction is designed (Schuh & Barab, 2008). Duffy and Jonassen (1992) argued that instructional strategies and methods are influenced by philosophical assumptions. Examples of theoretical perspectives such as behaviorism, sociocultural/historicism cognitivism, and constructivism provide frameworks to describe the learning process and that influence the design of teaching instruction (Schuh & Barab, 2008).

Behaviorism. Behaviorism was a psychological school of thought during the first half of the 20th century and is the idea that one engages in specific behavior in the context of a particular stimuli in the environment. Prominent theorists in the field of behaviorism include Pavlov, Thorndike, Watson, Tolman, Hull, and Skinner (Schuh & Barab, 2008). Skinner's (1938) *operant conditioning* exemplified a behaviorist perspective as it describes how learning is a condition where behavior is followed by reinforcement that will increase the probability of repeated behavior. Reinforcement can either be positive or negative to shape behavior. Negative reinforcement is and aversive stimulus that is synonymous with punishment, while positive reinforcement is strengthening a behavior, or increasing the likelihood of the behavior, by an occurrence of an event. Another theoretic perspective as it relates to learning is a sociocultural perspective.

Sociocultural. A sociocultural theoretical perspective indicates that learning occurs in a complex social environment (Nathan & Sawyer, 2014). In a sociocultural perspective, knowledge is distributed in the world among objects and the creation of new knowledge is a shared experience opposed to an individual experience (Prawat and Floden, 1994). Traditionally, sociocultural views are aligned with the works of Vygotsky (Schuh & Barab, 2008). Vygotsky (1978) argued that thought and intellectual development emerge during social interaction and the mind cannot be understood in isolation of the surrounding society. Learning awakens when a child interacts with people in his or her environment. Vygotsky's *zone of proximal development* describes the distance between the actual developmental level and what the individual is capable of performing with the assistance of someone more capable. While a sociocultural perspective emphasizes the learning the context of one's environment, cognitivism provides a different perspective.

Cognitivism. Cognitivism initially emerged during the 1950s, stressing a renewed focus on the mind during the cognitive revolution. The mind was compared to a computer and was viewed an in information-processing system (Schuh & Barab, 2008). Cognitivism focuses on the processes that occur in the human mind, such as thinking, memory, knowing, and problem solving. Several influential theories of learning stem from cognitive frameworks, one of which is constructivism (Nathan & Sawyer, 2014).

Constructivism. Constructivism is a theory of learning or meaning making in which individuals create new understanding based on the connection of what they already know and new ideas in which they come in contact (Resnick, 1989). Learning proceeds from an individual's unique interpretation of the world and the reorganization of individual's knowledge (Schuh & Barab, 2008).

The originator of constructivism, Piaget (as cited in Nathan & Sawyer, 2014), claimed that all learning is mediated by the construction of mental structures or *schema*. Learning is an active creation process in which the individual constructs or creates meaning from the interactions between what they experience and their own ideas and not just a passive reception of information (Piaget, as cited in Nathan & Sawyer, 2014). As individuals are introduced to new material or information, they try to makes sense of the new material and, therefore, *construct* new meaning through a process of assimilation and accommodation (Piaget, 1956). The theory of assimilation, developed by Piaget (1956) explains assimilation as a process by which new contexts are united with one's logic and intelligence and involves organizing new information and extending the intelligence as the result of the expansion of new structures. Human knowledge reflects the ways in which individuals organize their experiences in the world, by

using concepts which fit the situations they encounter (Grimmitt, 2000). This framework of constructivism is the basis for other learning theories.

Transformative Learning Theory

The assumptions of transformative learning theory, developed by Mezirow (1994) was constructivist in nature and provided a framework for examining adult learning. The assumptions of transformative learning theory are constructivist because learners, according to Mezirow (1994), interpret and reinterpret their sense experiences that are central to making meaning and therefore learning. According to Mezirow (1996), learning is defined as the process of using prior experiences and interpretations of those experiences to construct a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience which in turn guides future actions.

Mezirow (1994, 1997) described ways of learning in the four following processes. The first process is refining or elaborating an existing point of view or our meaning schemes. The second process is to learn new points of view or meaning schemes. The third process is to transform one's point of view or meaning schemes. The fourth process is to transform the learners meaning perspective (Mezirow, 1994) or ethnocentric habit of mind. An individual experiences meaning perspective by becoming aware of his or her personal bias (Mezirow, 1997).

Transformative learning is a comprehensive, universal model consisting of the generic structures and processes of learning for adults (Mezirow, 1994). The process of effecting change in a *frame of reference* (including the two dimensions of *habits of mind* and *point of view*), the assumptions through which we understand our experiences which shape our perceptions, thoughts and feelings. An individual's assumptions then influence his or her action in the future (Mezirow, 1997). Mezirow (1997) defines *habits of mind* as habitual ways of thinking, feeling,

and acting constituted by a set of codes or beliefs. These codes may be influenced culturally, socially, educationally, economically, politically, or physiologically. A *point of view* is a feeling, belief, judgment, or attitude one has regarding specific individuals or groups and is subject to continual change.

In contemporary societies, individuals need to learn to make his or her interpretations of information rather than acting on the judgment and feelings of others. Adults have a *frame of reference* and set of experiences including values, concepts and feelings and define their life world and affect their *line of action* (Mezirow, 1997). According to Mezirow (1991), transformative learning can take place when the following components are involved in the learning process: distorted dilemmas, rational discourse, critical reflection, autonomous thinking, and decision making.

Distorted dilemma. Mezirow (1991) describes individuals as having disorienting dilemmas. Distorted dilemmas are experiences that affect individuals causing reflection or reexamination of their lives. Dilemmas or conflicts associated with the learning task or conflict foster opportunities for learner for deep change, transformation, and meaning making (Dirkx, 2001). At times the learner may have an *epochal* experience, described as profound and deeply moving experiences (Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006). These learning experiences allow individuals to evaluate themselves and relate learning to earlier experiences they have had and be part of a transformative or change process (Saines, 2009).

Rational discourse. Discourse is a dialogue allowing for examining evidence, arguments, and alternative points of view. Dialogue allows for more dependable interpretation or synthesis (Mezirow, 1997) and is essential to communication between individuals and learning (Mezirow, 1994). Environments that foster discourse and learning give individuals equal

opportunity to assume various roles (expound, defend, challenge, and judge arguments). Rational discourse is also encouraged in an environment free from coercion, where individuals have equal opportunity to assume various roles, become critically reflective of assumptions and are open to other perspectives. Additionally, individuals are willing to listen, to search for common ground or different points of view, and can make a tentative best judgment to guide action (Mezirow, 1997).

Critical reflection. Reflection involves a critical view of assumptions to determine whether the belief, often acquired through cultural assimilation in childhood, is functional for the individual as an adult (Mezirow, 1994). Mezirow argues that a critical dimension of transformative learning is critically assessing one's epistemic assumptions, or what he or she feels he or she knows (Dirkx et al., 2006). Most reflection takes place in the context of examining and solving problems (Mezirow, 1994) and this self-reflection can lead to significant personal transformation (Mezirow, 1997).

Kolb's experiential learning model. Other theorists such as Kolb (1984) consider reflection to be an important aspect of teaching and learning. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model has elements of reflection as it is a holistic perspective on learning that combines a learners experience, perception, cognition, and behavior. Learning is a "process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). Kolb (1984) describes four modes of the learning process which include the following stages: active experimentation, concrete experiences, reflective observation, and abstract conceptualization.

In active experimentation, learners make decisions and solve problems. They have concrete experiences where they are involved fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences. Following these experiences, learners reflect on and observe their experiences from many

perspectives called *reflective observation*. In the abstract conceptualization, learners create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories. Individuals enter an environment with previous ideas and beliefs and are not a blank slate that needs to be filled with information (Kolb, 1984).

In addition to Kolb's work on reflection, Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) argued in favor of the need for individuals to engage in the process of reflection and learning which can be enhanced by strengthening the link between the learning experience and a reflection. Reflection, in the context of learning, is a process in which individuals, in association with others or individually, explore his experiences to lead to new understandings. Boud et al. (1985) describe three elements of the reflective process including: returning to the experience, attending to one's feelings, and re-evaluating the experience. Returning to the experience implies that one recollects the event in his mind or recounts the experience by sharing it with another person. Attending to feelings means that one focuses on the positive feelings about the experience and removes impediment or obstructing feelings. The re-evaluating experience involves re-examining experience in the light of the new knowledge and the learner's conceptual framework, leading to the application of the knowledge into the learner's behavior (Boud et al., 1985).

Autonomous thinking and decision making. Reflection and discourse are processes of learning where individuals must be prepared to make many diverse decisions in their lives (Mezirow, 1994). Perspective transformation frees individuals from their habitual ways of thinking and acting to a new way of thinking. The key idea is to help learners actively engage the concepts presented in the context of their lives and together assess the justification of new knowledge (Mezirow, 1997). Learning is defined as a social process of not only constructing but

adopting a new interpretation of the meaning of one's own experience as a guide to further action (Mezirow, 1994).

Transformative learning and youths. The theory of transformative learning is used to explain the processes of learning for adults (Mezirow, 1997). However, this framework for learning could also be used in reference to the youths as they create meanings of their personal experiences that can guide future action. Youths have enough of an identity at that stage to be self-reflective (Erikson, 1968). Youths have *habits of mind*, or ways of thinking, feeling and acting by a set of codes or beliefs and points of view regarding individuals or groups as described as Mezirow (1997) as a *frame of reference*. They too have *disorienting dilemmas* (Mezirow, 1997) or conflicts associated with learning tasks that foster opportunities for profound, deeper change. Youths can participate in rational dialogue, interpreting or synthesizing their points of view, as well as a reflection of their own beliefs and experiences. They enter a learning environment with previous ideas and beliefs (Kolb, 1984) with the ability to reflect upon those experiences, adopt new knowledge that can then lead to the application of the knowledge into the learner's behavior (Boud et al., 1985). The learning required to prepare productive individuals must empower autonomous agents in collaborate context rather than uncritically acting on the ideas and judgements of others. Individuals acting autonomously are essential for moral decision making (Mezirow, 1997). A theoretical framework for how children and youths develop morally that influences their decision making is explained by Kohlberg's theory on moral development (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977).

Kohlberg's Theory on Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg developed an influential cognitive approach to learning values called Kohlberg's Theory on Moral Development (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977), a series of six

developmental stages that draws heavily on the developmental psychology of Piaget (Peterson, 2013). Moral development represents the change or transformation that occur in a person's thought, though the content of the values varies from culture to culture (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). The first stage of moral development is the *pre-conventional* stage, in which moral justification is focused on (1) obedience and avoidance of punishment; and (2) individualist concern. The next stage is the *conventional* stage where moral justification is focused on (3) conformity to social norms; and (4) the maintenance of social order. In the final, *post-conventional* stage, moral justifications is based on (5) notions of a social order; and (6) universal principles (Peterson, 2013).

Kohlberg's (1958) theory on moral development asserts that up to approximately 9 years old, children react to cultural habits based on authority commands, and their experience with reward or punishment for behavior. At about age 9 (the *conventional* stage), children's identification with rules is based on identification with the group. A minority develop to the *post-conventional* stage where an individual is able to make moral decisions based on self-defined moral values (as cited in Prins, 2002). Moral reasoning develops over time through a series of six stages. Stage one and two of moral reasoning development occur in the pre-conventional level. Stages three and four occur in conventional level. Stages five and six occur in the post-conventional, autonomous or principled level (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). The boundary between *conventional* morality (based on the social rules of the ecclesiastical institution and community) and a *post-conventional* morality (based on internalized convictions) must be crossed (Prins, 2002).

A relationship exists between the theoretical perspectives, theories of learning, and the facilitation of the learning process through instructional methods. Teachers or instructional designers base their teaching strategies and practices on a tacit theory or perspective of how

students think and learn (Schuh & Barab, 2008). The theoretical perspective of constructivism has been broadly influential in education (Nathan & Sawyer, 2014) and becomes a basis for the design of instructional methods.

Implication of Constructivism on Instructional Methods

In constructivism, the teacher's role is to be more interactive and less directive in the instructional process of learners (Greeno, 1998). Ausubel (1961) describes a process of discovery learning wherein the content is not simply given to learner, but the learner has to rearrange the information and integrate or incorporate it into their own mind. Instructionally, sense making opportunities are provided for the learner to be able to construct new understandings (Schuh & Barab, 2008).

Elements of constructivist pedagogy involves attention for student's background knowledge and understanding, the facilitation of group dialogue leading to a creation of a shared understanding of the topic, planning and unplanned introduction of knowledge through direct instruction, opportunities for student to change or add to existing beliefs through engagement in tasks, as well as the development of student's awareness of their learning process. Methods of teaching grounded in constructivist form of teaching focus on the learner's development of deep understanding in a subject matter of interest and a habit of mind that aid in future learning (Richardson, 2003).

Constructivism and transformative learning theory in religious contexts. Dirkx et al. (2006) asserted that transformative learning perspective adds a spiritual and even religious dimension to education. The core of transformative learning involves learning experiences that are deeply personal and meaningful. Personal and meaningful experiences are associated with a profound change in one's cognitive, emotional, or spiritual way of being. Learning that is tied to

past experiences and evokes change and promotes preparation to future decision making is reflected in religious education, in Christian education specifically. Hunter's (1963) perspective of Christian education, whether in the name of a church or that of society, was centered on the preparation of individuals for something that they will do later in life. Teaching can also have some effect upon the immediate, developing life of the student, and has some effect on the on-going value system of the learner. No training or education should take place in preparation for future decisions without relating the preparation to the present condition of the learner (Hunter, 1963). To understand how to evoke transformative learning with a spiritual and even religious dimension in an educational setting, one must examine the pedagogical practices related to religious education.

A pedagogical constructivism in religious education. Grimmitt (2000) suggested a three-stage pedagogical strategy in religious education that begins with preparatory pedagogical constructivism wherein students reflect upon their experiences and questions to prepare them to encounter the religious content. A teacher then contributes to the students' questions and reflections. The more teachers understand reflection and organize materials consistent with the practice the more effective learning can become. Learning can be enhanced with activities such as scheduling a time for debriefing, writing down the events and his or her reaction to the experiences (Boud et al., 1985). After students reflect on their own experiences, the second step is direct pedagogical constructivism. The students are introduced to the religious content directly as a stimulus for them to create their own understanding. The teacher may contribute to this process through various questions and interventions. In the third stage, supplementary pedagogical constructivism, the teacher introduces supplementary religious material which enables the thoughts or constructions of the student to be more complex or simply different from

what was previously thought. Introducing new material is not intended to abandon the student's personal interpretation or construction, but to consider critically the new knowledge being presented (Grimmitt, 2000). The way in which content knowledge is being presented relates to the blending of technology and pedagogical practices.

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

Mishra & Koehler's (2006) Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) provided a framework of teaching knowledge that includes the three areas of content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and technology (TK; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). The content knowledge explained by Shulman (1987) described teachers has presumably unknown by the students in various categories of knowledge base, includes knowledge of values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. Then, teachers seek to find ways to represent it, adapt and tailor the materials based on students' prior knowledge and understanding, described as pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Additionally, teachers need technology knowledge (TK), including knowledge of standard technologies described as chalk, whiteboards, and books as well as advanced tools such as the Internet and digital video. The intersection of the three components describes the abilities of a teacher to understand ways the subject matter can be changed through applying particular technologies to their pedagogy, including the affordances and strengths of various technologies (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). In addition to the framework of TPACK as it relates to teaching and learning, there are other constructs such as affect learning that are important to examine in the context of religious education specifically.

Affective Domain of Bloom's Taxonomy

In 1948, at the American Psychological Association convention in Boston, Massachusetts, a group of college examiners gathered to create a taxonomy based on educational

objectives. Benjamin Bloom chaired the committee and the taxonomy was later termed as *Blooms Taxonomy*. A taxonomy is a way for individuals to organize information and study relationships within the information to facilitate communication. The three major domains of the taxonomy include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. First, the cognitive domain is defined as the recognition or recall of knowledge. Second, the affective domain is defined as a change in interests, attitudes, and values. Third, the psychomotor domain is described as the manipulative or motor-skill area. In the context of religious youth education, the affective domain of Bloom's Taxonomy is discussed in greater detail as it relates to changes in one's interests, attitudes and values (Bloom, Krathwohl, & Masia, 1956).

The affective domain of Bloom's Taxonomy has five main categories along a continuum of internalization from lowest to highest as individuals experience growth in feelings or emotional area (attitude or self; Bloom et al., 1956). Bloom's Taxonomy describes five levels of affective learning from the simplest to the most complex behavior include receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing/internalizing values. Receiving is when the student passively pays attention or selectively attends. Responding means that students respond to a stimulus. Valuing involves attaching value to an object, phenomenon, or piece of information. Valuing can range from acceptance to a more complex state of commitment. Clues to these values are expressed in the learners' observable behavior. Organizing refers to accommodating in her own schema by comparing, relating, and elaborating. Characterizing and internalizing values mean individuals try to build abstract knowledge, creating a value system that controls behavior. The behavior is consistent and predictable. Characterizing and internalizing values includes the way in which individuals are emotionally processing or connecting with the environment (Bloom et al., 1956). To assist in the process of characterizing and internalizing

values, a teacher with affective characteristics can assist in creating affective learning experiences.

Characteristics of an affective teacher. As early as 1896, in a study conducted with 2000 school children, the children were asked to describe the best teachers they ever had. The characteristic most often identified was kindness (as cited in Gazda, Asbury, Balzer, & Childers, 1977). An *affective teacher* is one who demonstrates affective qualities is an individual who can understand student's problems, and who is friendly, cheerful, patient, helpful, fair, and has a sense of humor. An affective teacher personalizes a learning experience and presents information in a way that relates to the individual needs of the students. He or she displays a sense of humor, knows his or her subject well and disseminates information in a way that is personal for the students, such as incorporating the student's names in discussion (Rompelman, 2002). An affective teacher establishes rapport with students which promotes engagement in learning (Good & Brophy, 1973). The *real* teacher has an awareness of child, adolescent, or adult development, but assumes and affective stance in being a care giver to individuals he or she teaches (Rompelman, 2002). Characteristics of teachers and strategies they employ, influence the educational experiences of students. Teaching and learning in religious education is no different and reflect a wide range of practices.

Teaching Approaches in Religious Youth Education

One of the aspects of religious education that can lead spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development include the role of the teacher (Thanissaro, 2010). "How religious, spiritual, and moral matters are engaged with in teaching is likely to be very much influenced and shaped by how the students are taught" (Kasim & Yusoff, 2014, p. 555). Learners look to teachers as a source of expertise, leading them to fulfill their potential (Thanissaro, 2010).

In discussions of spirituality and moral values, there is a question of how teachers might use learning and teaching methodology to motivate and enhance learning for students (Kasim & Yusoff, 2014). It is practical for teachers to engage in spiritual and moral development values through religious education, especially if it helps the learner conceptualize how the values might fit with a commitment or action in the future. Religious education can provide a safe environment for individuals to learn spiritual values (Thanissaro, 2010).

Research on strategies and practices in religious education for youths reflect a wide range of practices. O'Grady (2008) suggests that religious educators should ask youths to take responsibility for being involved and participate in active inquiry and questioning. Religious education for youths should also involve hermeneutical tasks, ways or methods to make interpretations (O'Grady, 2008) of the Bible or religious texts. Other strategies include an emotional component to teaching.

The research of Archambault, Janosz, Morizot, and Pagani (2009) suggested the socio-emotional well-being should be a primary dimension that teachers of youths need to target. Additionally, Geiger (2015) suggested that the relationship of the teacher to the student should be less formal and more personal which fosters spiritual formation in an academic setting. A process called *notebooking*, or allowing students to write and reflect about the religious education curriculum in a way that is personally meaningful to them. The goal is to provide reflective opportunities for experimental learning and personal application of the religious content (Geiger, 2015) in the lives of youths.

The Stapleford Project, set up in 1986 by the Association of Christian Teachers in England, sought to develop materials for teaching about Christianity in religious education in schools. The goal of the project was to help teacher move away from teaching to help students

know Bible stories, but instead to explore the meaning in the Biblical text that changed the thinking and the lives of Christians (Cooling, 2000). The methodology developed from this project became known as *concept cracking* and can be summarized in the following four steps that can be remembered using the acronym USER as described by Cooling (2000):

1. Unpack the concept. The teacher needs to be aware of the theological concepts—their meaning and significance.
2. Select one or two concepts as a focus for the lesson. The teacher needs to focus on one or two concepts as to not confuse the pupil.
3. Engage with the pupils' world of experience. The teacher needs to find parallels in the pupils' life experience that will help the students understand the concepts being taught.
4. Relate to the religious concept. The teacher introduces the religious topic, draws out themes, expresses his or her views and encourages participation of the pupils. (p. 210)

The approach of the teacher, according to Cooling (2000) should be one of focus on the learner's development. "Religious content in religious education should be taught in such a way that it makes a contribution to the pupils' own personal development" known as a *pupil-structured approach* (Cooling, 2000, p. 162). In a *pupil-structured* approach, religion is usually viewed as constituting the human activities of seeking to understand oneself and of trying to lead a richer and fuller life (Cooling, 2000). It is important to make pupils and their concerns a key element in religious education (Erricker & Erricker, 2000; Jackson, 2004). Religious Education is about students receiving knowledge and understanding about religion and reflecting on their learning (Jackson, 2004).

Another approach of religious educators is what Erricker and Erricker (2000) describe as having narrative involvement. Narrative involvement means that teachers practice reflexivity and thinking and expressing themselves in the first person by sharing what they think and feel, admitting that they have been affected by the material that has been shared. This practice of narrative involvement and sharing personal feelings creates a vulnerability that therefore creates trust and acceptance by the students. As teachers are willing to speak from personal experiences, it encourages students also to express themselves (Erricker & Erricker, 2000). These general religious, educational practices for youths are more specifically defined in particular religious denominations. Literature published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well as publications from the leadership of the church provide information on teaching strategies and practices for youths.

Religious Youth Education in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Teaching and learning are highly valued in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Religious education has eternal implications and requires the influence of the Spirit of the Lord (LDS, 2012b). Organizations and auxiliaries within the LDS Church are dedicated to the education of various age groups. The organizations and auxiliaries specifically for youths have teaching strategies and practices unique to them.

Organizations and auxiliaries for youths. The organizations and auxiliaries specific to youths and responsible for religious instruction include the family, Aaronic Priesthood (boys ages 12–18), Young Women (girls ages 12–18), Sunday School (youths ages 12–18), and Seminary (youths ages 14–18; LDS, 2012c). In families, parents have the primary responsibility to teach their children. Other auxiliaries and programs exist to support and strengthen the family. (LDS, 2012c). Each auxiliary provides opportunities for young men, young women and their

teachers to learn and to teach the doctrines of the gospel. The Aaronic Priesthood, Young Women, and Sunday School meet each Sunday, while seminary occurs on the weekdays. Teachers of youths are appointed by a local leader of the congregation. The LDS Church provides the curricula, as well as guidelines and instructions, for gospel-teaching strategies and practices for all ages, including specific curricula for youths (ages 12–18).

In the manual titled *Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching*, lesson four which is titled, *Understanding Teaching Youth*, offers suggestions to teachers of youths such as seeking to understand the youths - the concerns and challenges they face. As youths are in transition between childhood and adulthood, they may find it difficult to feel that they fit in the larger society, particularly in societies where a youth's role is primarily to get an education. Between the ages of 12 and 15, most individuals increase in their ability to learn, in thinking logically, making good judgments, and making future plans. As such, teachers should take every opportunity to help young people adopt [the principles and standards] of the gospel and encourage them to take initiatives to do things that will increase their spiritual growth personally. Teachers should be supportive and have a warm demeanor by listening to students and respecting their feelings and what they have to say (LDS, 1999).

Come, follow me youth curriculum. In 2012, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints created a new youth curriculum for Sunday worship. An introduction to explain the new curriculum, found in the manual *Teaching the Gospel in the Savior's Way A Guide to Come, Follow Me: Learning Resources for Youth*, gives a description of the purpose of youth teachers. It states that teachers should "help [the youth] become converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ" and that this conversion happens by daily living the gospel (LDS, 2012e, p. 2). The way in which teachers teach youth, in "both formal and informal settings, will help them stay on the path and

progress toward personal, lifelong conversion" (LDS, 2012e, p. 2). A letter to parents, teachers, advisers, and leaders of youths from the First Presidency (the presiding or governing body of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) states that the most important part of the service to the youth "will be your [their] own daily spiritual preparation, including prayer, scripture study, and obedience to the commandments" (LDS, 2012e, p. 2). As teachers study and prepare to teach, the Spirit will guide them to teach the material and activities that will be more relevant and helpful for youths (LDS, 2012e).

Teachers of youths are to teach as the Savior taught. The strategies and practices for teaching this way are outlined in *Teaching the Gospel in the Savior's Way: A Guide to Come, Follow Me: Learning Resources for Youth* in the following ways:

> He loved them, prayed for them, and continually served them…He knows who they were and who they could become…He found unique ways to help them learn and grow ways meant just for them…He prepared Himself to teach by spending time alone in prayer and fasting…He used the scriptures to teach and testify about His mission… He shared simple stories, parables, and real-life examples that made sense to them…He asked questions that caused them to think and feel deeply… He invited them to testify, and as they did, the Spirit touched their hearts… He trusted them, prepared them, and gave them important responsibilities to teach, bless, and serve others…He invited them to act in faith and live the truths He taught…In every setting, He was their example and mentor. He taught them to prayer by praying with them. He taught them to love and serve by the way He loved and served them. He taught them how to teach His gospel by the way He taught it. (LDS, 2012e, pp. 4-5)

The instructions for the Come, Follow Me program also include instructions for teaching including: making connections, learning together and inviting the youth to act. Making connections means assisting the youth in making connections with what they are learning at church to what they are learning at home or in other settings. Learning together involves searching and considering the meaning of the scriptures and the words of the prophets, and seeing examples of the doctrine they are discussing. Moreover, one of the main objectives in teaching youths is for them to share what they learn (LDS, 2012f). Another program in the LDS Church focused on the education of youths is the seminary program.

Seminary. The seminary program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a weekday religious education program for youths ages 14–18 (LDS, 2012e, p. ix). Currently, over 390,000 students attend seminary in over 170 countries in the world (LDS, 2012a). Various types

of seminary programs exist in the LDS Church. In areas where a large concentration of LDS Saints reside, seminary is offered on a *released-time* basis in facilitates adjacent to high schools and specific to Church-owned seminary programs. *Released-time* seminary allows students to be released from their respective high schools for one class period to attend seminary and then return to school. In areas with smaller populations of LDS youths, *daily* classes are held in a meetinghouse or a private home before, during, or after school. Daily seminary classes held before the normal school hours are often referred to as *early-morning* seminary. In areas where youths cannot meet each weekday because of distance or other limiting factors, *home-study* seminary programs allow them to study independently at home and then meet with other youths for one or more classes each week (LDS, 2012g). To supplement or supplant the home-study program for students who cannot meet each weekday, the LDS Church offers an *online* seminary program, preferred when students and teachers have daily access to a computer with high-speed Internet. In *online* seminary, students complete online assignments asynchronously and meet once each week synchronously, either face-to-face or by a web conferencing tool (LDS, 2012h). In each of these types of seminary programs, the purpose and the content or curriculum of seminary are the same worldwide (LDS, 2012g).

The purpose of seminary is to "help youth understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Father in Heaven" (LDS, 2012b, p. x). The theological curriculum is based on the scriptural canon of the LDS Church: the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants (LDS, 2012a). The four courses are taught once per year on a rotating basis. In early-morning, home study, and online programs, seminary is taught by volunteer teachers and members of the LDS Church from

the local congregations who are appointed by local clergy. Released-time seminary classes are generally taught by full-time employees of CES. Seminary teachers are to: (a) live the gospel of Jesus Christ; (b) strive for the companionship of the Spirit; (c) teach the doctrines and principles of the gospel as found in the scriptures and the words of the prophets; and (d) administer the program's resources appropriately (LDS, 2012b, p. x). To help achieve the purposes of seminary, CES and church leaders provide suggestions for teachers.

Teaching Strategies in the Church Educational System

Teach moral and spiritual values. Within the public school system, youths learn philosophies of the world, ancient or modern, pagan or Christian. Youths are taught a secular curriculum including art, science, literature, history, and language. However, the sole focus of the Church Education System in the LDS Church is to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ (Clark, 1938/2004). The core outcome of religious education is to assist students in the process of becoming converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ and then deepen their conversion (Hilton, 2015). Teaching moral and spiritual values found in the gospel of Jesus Christ are neglected in education. One essential aspect of teaching moral and spiritual values is for the teacher to have the Spirit of the Lord with them as they teach (Packer, 1975).

Prepare and teach by the spirit. One of the fundamentals of gospel teaching and learning for youths includes teaching and learning by the Spirit (LDS, 2012i). The Spirit, Holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost can be described as the, "Spiritual guidance is direction, enlightenment, knowledge, and motivation . . . It is personalized instruction adapted to [one's] individual needs by One who understands them perfectly" (Scott, 2008, p. 2). A true understanding of gospel principles and doctrines can come only as individual minds are illuminated by the Holy Ghost and as students live gospel principles (LDS, 2012b). Scott (2008) suggests that learning can be

enhanced when learners pay attention not only to what they *hear* and *read*, but what one feels as prompted by the Holy Ghost. Teachers are encouraged to teach *by* the spirit (LDS, 2012j) including preparing lessons in advance as prompted by the spirit (LDS, 2012k) as well as follow guidance received during the lesson.

In preparation for teaching effectively, teachers must obtain spiritual knowledge (LDS, 2004). The first requirement of a teacher in the LDS Church educational system should be "a testimony of the truth of the gospel as revealed to and believed by the Latter-day Saints" (Clark, 1938/2004, p. 10). Teachers are prepared to teach doctrines found in the standard works, or canon of the LDS Church, as well as works from modern day apostle and prophets called to "declare the mind and will of the Lord to the Church" (Clark, 1938/2004, p. 10). Teachers should also create environments within the classroom that facilitate a learning experience for students by creating a positive learning atmosphere (LDS, 2012j).

Create a positive atmosphere. An essential component to creating an atmosphere of learning and having the Spirit, is to have an unrushed atmosphere (Holland, 2007). An atmosphere of learning can increase when teachers have a basic love and respect for the students (Packer, 1975). Sincerely loving those you teach (LDS, 2012j) can be enhanced by having a conviction that all individuals are basically good knowledge that each student is a child of God. (Packer, 1975). Learning is enhanced when teachers and students love and respect the Lord, one another, and the word of God. When students know they are loved and respected, they are more likely to come to class ready to learn (LDS, 2012b). Teachers can show love to their students by being generous in their praise and encouragement (Packer, 1975).

Use a variety of teaching methods. To help engage learners, it is important to teach with variety (LDS, 2012l) and use effective teaching methods (LDS, 2012j). Teacher should begin

lessons with something that will prepare the learners to engage in the material (LDS, 2012l). During the lesson, Packer (1975) suggested using teaching tools such as stories, object lesson, poetry, and hymns. Audio and video aides can add *spice* and the use of humor can add *sparkle* to the lesson. The *principle of apperception* can also be applied by the teacher of youths. Apperception is the process of understanding something in context of the individual's previous experience. Thus, teachers should be begin with the experiences of the students and what they already know about a subject and make a comparison to what the teacher would like them to perceive. When educators are teaching moral and spiritual values, they are teaching ideas that are sometimes intangible and connecting experiences that learners already have to the material will enhance their learning. Another teaching method employed by teachers should be asking questions (Packer, 1975).

Encourage two-way participation. Questions and answers are essential to any teaching method. Jesus Christ as the exemplar teacher, often did not answer a question with an answer, but with another question. Good questions to use when teaching moral or spiritual values or more subjective principles are thought provoking questions such as "Why do you think?" "In your opinion, what . . . ?" "Would you please explain?" (Packer, 1975). Asking questions during class encourages two-way conversations between teachers and students and encourages youth's participation.

Teachers need to encourage two-way participation between the teacher and the learner so the teacher is able to assess the learners understanding, create a feeling of ownership, and to learn from them (Scott, 2008). If students are hesitant to participate in the lesson it decreases their ability to learn. Additionally, teachers should be humble and willing to say, "I don't know,"

when they do not have the answers (Packer, 1975). Teachers are also encouraged to focus on the needs of the students in the class.

Focus on the needs of the students. Teachers should teach a message clearly and simply based on the individual needs of the learner (LDS, 2004). The difference between a good and a superb teacher is that a good teacher has studied the content of the lesson, and a superb teacher has taken the time to study the students (Packer, 1975). Teachers should have an understanding of what is happening in the lives of the students and know of their interests and desires (LDS, 2012d).

Invite learners to act. At the conclusion of the lesson, enough time should be given to effectively conclude the lesson by reviewing the main principles taught and invite learners to act in applying and living what they have learned (LDS, 2012l). One of the fundamentals of gospel teaching and learning for youths is helping them feel the importance of applying the doctrines and principles in their own lives (LDS, 2012i). As students learn doctrines and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, they will be more likely to make choices consistent with the Heavenly Father's will (LDS, 2012b). Inviting students to make choices to act as a result of what they learned is one of the most important responsibilities a teacher has (Bednar, 2012).

In the book, *Act in Doctrine*, Bednar (2012) iterated that it is the learners' responsibility to translate what they know into what they do. Intelligence is the application of knowledge and putting that knowledge into action and living according to principles is a great challenge. Members of the LDS Church, as disciples of the Christ, should not merely strive to know more, but rather consistently doing more of what they know is right, becoming better in the process (Bednar, 2012). In relation to teaching and learning in the context of youths, if teachers teach in

the way the Savior taught, they can help youths become converted, live worthily and make future decisions (LDS, 2012d).

Evaluate and reflect on teaching. After every teaching opportunity, the teacher should evaluate the experience was (LDS, 2004). It is important for teachers to reflect and ask themselves questions about when they thought the students were most engaged and willing to participate, when they felt the Spirit most strongly, or when they best understood the principles taught (LDS, 2012k). Effective teachers are always working to improve their knowledge and teaching abilities (LDS, 2004).

Another environment in which LDS youths are taught the gospel of Jesus Christ is in socio-religious programs developed by Brigham Young University's Continuing Education Division. A program called, Especially for Youth (EFY) is dedicated to the spiritual and social development of youths ages 14–18. The EFY program embraces the values and principles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and seeks to teach youths effectively based on the doctrines and principles of the LDS Church.

Especially for Youth

The Especially for Youth Program, founded in 1975, is run by the Brigham Young University (BYU) Division of Continuing Education. Programs within this division fall under the direction of the Church Education System (CES) of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As of May 2008, however, the EFY program reports to and only to BYU (J. Hucks, personal communication, May 6, 2015). Young men and young women, ages 14–18, are eligible to attend the EFY program. The week's activities are centered on a spiritual theme to generate excitement for the seminary curriculum that will be studied in the coming year (Bytheway, 2003).

The purpose of Especially for Youth (EFY) is to strengthen youths in their commitment to live the gospel of Jesus Christ by providing inspiring, edifying learning opportunities and wholesome social experiences. This is done by:

1. Providing a well-balanced program socially and spiritually
2. Providing exceptional staff who encourage, assist, and mentor youth by living the gospel, teaching effectively, and administering activities appropriately
3. Bringing together those with similar values (EFY, 2015e, para. 1)

The program provides a range of activities from five-day overnight camps on college campuses to Stay-At-Home sessions, where participants sleep at home and attend the session during the day. EFY also offers one-day express sessions, a day of activities, as well as EFY Express, which is a two-hour program (EFY, 2015f). Common to each of the variety of programs offered by EFY are speakers who create and facilitate religious classes for youths. Surveys distributed by the EFY program indicate that participants enjoy the classes at EFY.

Especially for Youth study. In an EFY Effectiveness Study completed in June 2015, 147 individuals who attended the EFY program completed an on-line survey on social media. Of the participants who completed the study, close to 100% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements as they relate to teaching and learning in the EFY program: EFY is spiritually strengthening, I value lessons learned at EFY, I admire the people who run EFY, EFY presenters are well prepared, I can learn a lot at EFY, EFY presenters teach well, I enjoy EFY classes (J. Hucks, personal communication, September 9, 2015). In this study, the *presenters* described were the speakers, or faculty, of the EFY program.

Faculty of the Especially for Youth program. As of December 2015, the EFY faculty consisted of approximately 200 speakers. Sixty-five percent (130) of the EFY faculty are

employed by the Church Education System (CES) in the seminary and institute (S&I) program while 35% (70) have other professions. Twenty percent (40) of the speakers are female, and 80% (160) are male (T. Myers, personal communication, December 3, 2015). All faculty develop their own class outlines, which are submitted to the Materials Evaluation Review Committee (part of the Correlation Committee of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) to ensure doctrinal purity and to maintain quality teaching. The outlines include references to quotes, scriptures, and brief summaries of personal experiences that will be shared by the speakers during their classes (Bytheway, 2003).

During the EFY program, speakers present lessons based on their approved outlines. To achieve the objective of providing inspiring and edifying learning opportunities for attending youths, EFY provides guidelines for faculty. EFY faculty are to teach in a way that is *appropriate, accurate,* and *applicable* (EFY, 2015a). *Appropriate* means that speakers use content and methodology to cultivate a positive learning environment where youths can understand by the Spirit. *Accurate* means that speakers teach principles and doctrines found in the scriptures and from the words of modern prophets. *Applicable* means that speakers teach material that are relevant and engaging to youths (EFY, 2015b).

Other teaching suggestions found in the *Staff Handbook* of the EFY program indicate that for all EFY staff members, including speakers, can increase their effectiveness as a teacher to lead discussions using a variety of questions that cause students to *search*, *analyze*, and *apply* the material (EFY, 2015b). *Search* questions direct the learners' attention and often includes a "look/listen" for phrase or words that begin with who, what, when, how were, and why. These questions help learners understand what the activity or lesson is teaching. *Analyze* question use phrases such as, "What do you think this means," "How is that," or "Why do you think that" and

help learners understand gospel principles found in the lesson. *Apply* questions help learners to apply gospel principles in their current situations or their future decisions and life experiences and typically begin with phrases such as "What did you learn from, "When have you felt," "Why should," and "What difference would it make if" (EFY, 2015c, p. 18).

To ensure that the faculty teach in a way that meets these criteria, a formal evaluation of speakers is done once every four years by a committee of professional trainers of teachers. These professionals have many years of experience teaching and directing sessions at EFY. This committee uses an official evaluation form that is kept on record in the EFY office. When evaluating a speaker, the committee member will give feedback if asked by the speaker otherwise the information is discussed as a committee and feedback is sent to the speaker if needed (T. Myers, personal communication, December 3, 2015).

Session directors of the Especially for Youth program. Session directors are selected by the director of EFY and the administrator working with EFY faculty. Session directors are appointed to lead the week-long programs and are added, as needed, to meet the number of sessions in a given summer (e.g. if there are 128 sessions of EFY per summer, there are 128 session directors). Qualifications for becoming a session director are based on number of years as a speaker and a consistently high quality of teaching (T. Myers, personal communication, December 3, 2015). The roles and responsibilities of the session directors include: helping to reach the program objective, providing a well-balanced program, facilitating communication with the speakers, working closely with the Coordinators, supporting all staff in their duties, spending time with the youth and helping them get involved, contacting administrators as needed, and assisting with hiring paperwork, if needed (EFY, 2015b).

One of the main responsibilities of the session directors is teaching youths. In a given session, session directors teach seven, 50-minute lessons on topics indicated in the staff handbook (EFY, 2015b), to the attendees of the session. Sessions can range from approximately 300–1000 attendees. Though topics for classes taught by session directors are given by the EFY staff, the preparation, organization and delivery of the teaching are at the discretion of the session directors.

Especially for Youth faculty training. In 2007 and 2008, the EFY program offered training in Salt Lake City, UT, where speakers were invited to attend two-hour training on ways to improve their teaching in an EFY setting. The EFY program provided information of the EFY website to help new or returning speakers. In 2008, there was a mentorship program where every new speaker was assigned a mentor teacher and encouraged to call his or her mentor with any questions he or she had. In 2009, the mentoring program did not continue because speaker feedback indicated that the mentorship was helpful, but not necessary (T. Myers, personal communication, December 3, 2015).

In 2015, the resources on-line included recommendations for speakers to reference materials produced by the LDS Church including "The Teaching Emphasis" Training Resource DVD, and The Gospel Teaching and Learning: A Handbook for Teachers and Leaders in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion. If possible, speakers are encouraged, but not required, to take a teaching course, Religion 471—Methods to Seminary Teaching (EFY, 2015d).

Training specific to session directors of the EFY program has changed over the years. Up until the spring of 2012, session directors met for a two-day training. As of 2016, the EFY program offers a three-hour long session director training meant for the following purposes: to inspire each session director to share uplifting messages, allow socialization and the sharing of

ideas among session directors, to view videos and listen to songs they will use in the upcoming summer, and ask questions. For individuals who cannot attend the training in person, the training is recorded and sent to them via e-mail (J. Hucks, personal communication, May 6, 2015).

Gap in the Literature

The LDS Church provides resources for teachers to improve their teaching and practices of youths. Material for teachers specific to religious education for youths attending summer camps and programs is lacking. To date, the principal investigator has been unable to find any published research on the teaching strategies and practices of faculty in the EFY program. The goal of this study is to reduce that gap in the literature by researching the session directors in the EFY program.

Summary

This chapter summarizes the shift of adolescents, or youths in the period in United States history following the Industrial Revolution. The chapter discusses the growth of youth education both secularly with increase of high schools in the United States (Tyack, 1967) and the rise of youth organizations, many which were of a religious, theological perspective (Senter, 1989).

In the 21st century, a focus on education of youths continues, as youths are making decision to engage in harmful practices such as substance abuse (NCASA, 2011). However, studies show that religious involvement is one of the key factors that reduce the risk of engaging in harmful practices and increases engagement in more positive, pro-social behaviors. Religious organizations seek to mentor youths by helping them build a core set of values which guide them to make important decisions (Eccles et al., 2002).

Another influence on the growth and development of youth occurs in summer experiences is also discussed (Ball & Ball, 1990). The American Camp Association reported, in

2011, that in the United States each year, more than 11 million children and adults attended camp in approximately 12,000 publically and privately owned camps (ACA, n.d.). Studies indicate growth in positive identity, social skills, physical and thinking skills, positive values and spiritual growth for individuals who attend camps (ACA, 2005). Camps are a great place for youths to learn values and ethics that will serve them well in the future (DeGraaf et al., 2002).

As youths attend and experience positive developmental outcomes in camps and programs, this chapter outlines theoretical perspectives of teaching and learning as a lens in which to examine the process of learning including behaviorism, sociocultural, cognitivism, and constructivism. Constructivism provides a foundation for other theories such as transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991) which defines learning as "the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of a meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 12). In addition to Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory, other constructs, such as the affective domains of *Bloom's taxonomy,* (Bloom et al., 1956) are explained as they relate to changes in the interests, attitudes, and values of learners. The highest level of growth in feeling or emotional area (attitude or self) described in Bloom's taxonomy is for the learner to emotionally process and connect with the environment that effects the consistent and predictable behavior of the learner (Bloom et al., 1956). The chapter then discusses links between theoretical perspectives of learning, theory and instructional methods (Schub & Barab, 2008). Literature on teaching methods based on a constructivist approach are included as well as teaching approaches in specific to religious youth education.

In conclusion, the chapter describes of teaching strategies and practices in the LDS Church, emphasizing specific strategies for teaching youths. Additionally, the history and

purpose of the EFY program, including information pertaining to the faculty of the EFY program are also discussed. Finally, as a gap in literature is identified in regards to teaching strategies and practices of high quality teachers, or session directors, of the EFY program.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the teaching strategies and practices employed by session directors of the EFY program, as well as to examine challenges faced, measures of success, and the overall recommendations made for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the EFY program. The lack of information regarding the teaching strategies and practices of session directors in the EFY program was outlined in the preceding chapter. This chapter describes the nature of the study, including the research design, and the research methods to understand the lived teaching experiences of the session directors of the EFY program. This chapter also describes the interview protocol, a statement of personal bias of the principal investigator, and the data analysis process.

Nature of the Study

In planning this descriptive study, the principal investigator's philosophical worldview assumptions, how that worldview aligns with the approach to research, and the methods used were considered. Four worldviews discussed in the literature that influence research include the following: a constructivist, postpositivist, pragmatic, and transformative view (Creswell, 2014). The various philosophical worldviews guide the research design, whether the design is qualitative, quantitative or, mixed methods. For this study, a constructivist or social constructivist worldview guided the selected qualitative design.

Restatement of research questions. This qualitative study addressed the following research questions:

1. What teaching strategies and practices are employed by session directors of the Especially for Youth program?

2. What teaching challenges are faced by the session directors of the Especially for Youth program?
3. How do session directors of the Especially for Youth program measure their teaching success?
4. What recommendations would session directors make for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the Especially for Youth program?

Qualitative Design

The basis of qualitative research, as described by Creswell (2007), involves a process that begins with a worldview and a specific theoretical lens which guides the selection of procedures used to study the issue or subject. The worldview that influenced this study is a constructivist or social constructivist view, which aligns with the selected qualitative research design for this study. A constructivist or social constructivist worldview means that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and interact with and develop an understanding from such experiences. The experiences of the participants varies from person to person, and the goal of research from a constructivist worldview is to discover different participants' views and make sense of their experiences through an inductive process (Creswell, 2014). With a constructivist worldview as a theoretical lens in which to study the participants, a qualitative design was selected for this research.

The purpose of qualitative research is to understand an area where little is known or where previously offered understanding appears inadequate (Creswell, 2014) and highlights the in-depth description of an individual's perspective (Patten, 2009). The main focus of qualitative analysis is to understand the ways in which people act and explanations that people give for their actions (Gray, 2009). The findings of qualitative analysis can lead to new views and broader

perspectives that help to interpret an issue or subject (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research is more exploratory and focuses on complexities without dictating preformed assumptions through hypotheses. Qualitative research explores breadth of possibilities instead of deriving an average (Creswell, 2007), differing it from quantitative research.

Qualitative research is different from quantitative research in several ways. Qualitative research is typically a situated activity in real-world settings (meaning not a lab) and exploring and discovering within that real-world setting (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things while qualitative research refers to the "meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things" (Berg, 2001, p. 3). Additionally, the researcher plays a different role in qualitative research compared to quantitative research. In qualitative research, the researchers are the key actors and guiding forces in gathering information, making observations, and conducting interviews in the research process. Researchers also play a key role in the interpretation of data during the analysis process.

The interpretation of data is unique in qualitative research as data analysis is an inductive process, meaning that the individuals interpreting the data build "patterns, categories and themes from the 'bottom-up'" (Creswell, 2007, p. 38). The analysis is a continual process of looking at the data collected and organizing the data into patterns, categories and themes until comprehensive set of themes is derived. An individual makes an interpretation of what he or she seeks, hears, and understands from the research. The results of the study include the voice and perspective of the participants and a description and interpretation of the problem which adds to the literature (Creswell, 2007). Various methodological designs for qualitative research include grounded theory, case studies, ethnography, narrative or, as in the case of this research, phenomenology (Creswell, 2014).

Methodology

Phenomenological approach. Many methodological designs exist in qualitative research. The five methodological approaches suggested by Creswell (2014) include case study, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative, and phenomenology. Case study and grounded theory explore process, activities, and events. Ethnography research explores behaviors across cultures. Phenomenology and narrative research both seek to study individuals' experiences. Narrative studies are best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a small number of individuals. Thus, for the purpose of this study, a phenomenological approach was best suited for the population and the phenomenon that was explored – the teaching strategies and practices of EFY session directors.

Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry approach that seeks to describe the lived experiences of individuals about a subject by the participants of the study (Creswell, 2014). Phenomenological research involves a deep understanding of the context and the actual participants' feelings about the phenomenon being researched (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Phenomenology refers to the science of describing what an individual perceives, senses, and knows based on his or her experience (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher seeks to understand an individual's perceptions through interaction with the participants compared to a lab or removed study typically done in quantitative research. Additionally, he or she interprets and describes the analysis of the data (Gay & Airasian, 2000). As with other qualitative research, it often takes more time due to the need to analyze rich data as it is prone to more interpretation (Berg, 2001).

The result of phenomenological research is the essence of the experience for individuals who have experienced a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Phenomenological methods have evolved in more than one direction and take several forms (Morse & Richards, 2002), one

of which is Giorgi's (1997) use of phenomenology in a descriptive sense with three interconnecting processes: *description, phenomenological reduction,* and *search for essence* (Morse & Richards, 2002). The *description* is the use of language to articulate the phenomenon. *Phenomenological reduction* requires looking several times at the data, with each angle adding to the perception of the phenomenon being explored. The process involves a description of things discovered by the sources of data and a reducing of the information into themes. Phenomenological reduction is a way of seeing the data and also listening with the intention of being open to new ideas and phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). The *search for essence* is seeking to find the invariant meaning of the phenomenon and presenting in a way that is meaningful to a community of scholars (Giorgi, 1997). To understand the phenomenon experienced by session directors in this study, the method of conducting interviews was employed.

The process of interviewing is one primary research method used to collect data in phenomenological studies and was the method chosen for this study. If the research is largely exploratory in examining the stories and perspectives of individuals, then interviews are the best approach. Interviewing enables individuals to reflect on their experiences without having to commit their thoughts in writing. If the interviewees have difficulty interpreting the questions, it is easier for the individual conducting the interviews to clarify, adapt, or improve upon the questions, if needed (Gray, 2009). The type of interviews used in this study were semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews are non-standard interviews and are often used in qualitative data analysis. Semi-structured interviews support a phenomenological approach in exploring the subjective viewpoints of the participants (Gray, 2009). Using a semi-structured interview approach offers the organization of pre-planned questions (Morse & Richards, 2002), yet allows

for further probing, if necessary, for greater understanding on the views of the interviewees (Gray, 2009). If a response is too brief, the interviewer can ask additional questions such as, "Can you tell me more about it?" The individual conducting the interviews can also ask additional questions not previously planned to explore unexpected or relevant material revealed by the participant during the interview (Patten, 2009).

Research Design

Selection of data sources. To gain access to the study participants, site approval was received (see Appendix A) from the individual in authority (Creswell, 2014), namely the director of the EFY program. Following site approval, an invitation e-mail was sent to the director of faculty who subsequently forwarded the e-mail to all 130 session directors (see Appendix B). The director of faculty also provided a list of session directors and their contact information, including their e-mail address, phone number, and the city and state in which the session directors resided. This list of session directors formed a sample frame, or list of population elements (Gray, 2009). First applying criteria for inclusion and exclusion for participating in the study, sampling methods were applied for selection of the interviewees. The selected individuals received a follow-up e-mail (see Appendix C) with information regarding the scheduling of the interviews. The e-mail included a list of dates and times to choose from for interviews as well as an attached informed consent form (see Appendix D) that the interviewees needed to review prior to data collection. The consent form minimized risk to the individuals during the study by requesting permission to participate, record the interviews, and use the content for research purposes. About a week before the interview, those participating in the study received another e-mail to (see Appendix E) to confirm the date and time of the scheduled interview and to receive

the interview questions to review, allowing him or her time to think about what he or she would like to share.

Sample size. With site approval from the director of the EFY program (see Appendix A), 15 EFY session directors were chosen as a sample size. The number, or sample size, of individuals interviewed differs with qualitative studies and no rules exist in determining a sample size for a study (Patton, 2002). Creswell (2007) notes a varying degree of sample sizes in phenomenological research ranging from 1 to 325 interviewees. For conducting interviews, however, the method used in this research, Patten (2009) suggests a small sample size. For data collection in the form of in-depth interviews the recommended number is 5-25 individuals (Creswell, 2007). Polkinghorne (1989) also recommends that researchers interview from 5 to 25 participants who have all experienced a phenomenon. The sample size of 15 chosen for this study encouraged saturation of information and ensured that the study would be completed in the time and with the resources allotted (Patton, 2002). Saturation means that that interviews take place until the new information obtained provides no further insight or development of new categories in the data analysis process. No new information is found that leads to greater understanding of the various categories (Creswell, 2007). To determine the 15 participants in the study, criteria for inclusion and exclusion were employed, as well as maximum variation and snowball sampling methods.

Criteria for inclusion. Criteria for inclusion were employed in this study. The master list of session directors received from the director of faculty for the EFY program, formed a sample frame, or list of population elements (Gray, 2009). The master list of session directors contained public contact information and all individuals on the list were eligible to participate in the study.

To be included in the study, all individuals had to be active or former session directors of the EFY program.

Criteria for exclusion. Criteria for exclusion were employed in this study. The criteria for exclusion of the sample were session directors whose proximity to the principal investigator did not warrant a face-to-face interview. An additional criteria for exclusion included session director who were unable to participate in an interview via video conferencing.

Maximum variation and snowball sampling. A combination of two sampling methods were used in this study: maximum variation sampling and snowball sampling. Maximum variation sampling is a qualitative sampling strategy where there are a wide range of variations across the sample (Patton, 2002). Maximum variation sampling technique was applied to include session directors with the following criteria: (a) male and female session directors (b) session directors employed by the Church Education System (CES) and individuals who are not employed by CES (non-CES) (c) former and current session directors, and (d) a geographically diverse sample based on the state in which session directors resided. Having applied these criteria, a list of finalist were created to be contacted to participate in the study. In addition to maximum variation sampling, the technique of a snowball sampling was also employed. Snowball sampling occurs when the first group of individuals participating in the study nominate subsequent individuals to participate (Gray, 2009). Following an interview, for example, the principal investigator asked the interviewee if he or she might know other individuals who may be interested in participating in the study.

Human subjects consideration. Federal regulations provide protection against human rights violations, and therefore, all researchers need to have their research plans reviewed by the

Institutional Review Board (IRB) on their college and university campuses (Creswell, 2014). The policy of Pepperdine University (n.d.) states the following:

> It is the policy of Pepperdine University that all research involving human participants must be conducted in accordance with accepted ethical, federal, and professional standards for research and that all such research must be approved by one of the university's Institutional Review Boards. (IRBs; "Human Subject Research," para. 1)

The IRB is guided by ethical principles as described in the Belmont Report, a set of guidelines to assist in resolving ethical problems surrounding the conduct of human subjects research (Pepperdine University, n.d).

As part of the protection of human subjects' process, each participant in the study received an informed consent prior to their participation in the study as outlined in the forms before data collection (Creswell, 2014). The consent form ensured that the participants in the study understood that he or she had the right to withdraw from any part of the process at any time. The form also assured the participants that there were no known risks associated with participation, confidentiality would be maintained, and that the results of the study would be made available to the participants after the study. The form contained a set of elements including the following: (a) identification of the researcher, (b) identification of the sponsoring institution, (c) identification of the purpose of the study, (d) identification of the benefits for participating, (e) identification of the level and type of participants involvement, (f) notification of the level and type of participant involvement, (g) notification of risks to the participant, (h) guarantee of confidentiality to the participant, (i) assurance that the participant can withdraw at any time, and (j) provision of names of persons to contact if questions arise (Sarantakos, 2005). The participant consent form for this study, including the aforementioned elements appears in Appendix B.

After approval from the dissertation committee, the application was filed with the Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board for an exempt review and a notice of approval was received (see Appendix F). The approval was then sent to Brigham Young University's Institutional Review Board for review and approval. The exempt review is applicable when the research activities present no more than a minimal risk to human subjects, as was the case in this study. It is also important to note that as part of the IRB process, the principal investigator completed the Human Participant Protection Education for Research Teams online course. The certificate of curriculum completion report is attached in the appendix (see Appendix G).

Risks and benefits. The only risk to the participants during this study was the time spent during the interview. To mitigate the effects of this risk, the time commitment necessary for participation in the study before the interview were examined. The only benefit to the respondents' participation was the insight gained from his or her reflection of and responses to the interview questions. This insight and self-reflection may have influenced them to change or modify their teaching strategies and practices in the future.

Data collection. Potential participants of the study were contacted with an invitation e-mail (see Appendix B). If the participants respond with a desired interest to participate in the study, a scheduling letter (see Appendix C) was sent with an attached consent form (see Appendix D). Interviews were scheduled with each participant for April–May 2016. If the interviewee requested an interview within a reasonable travel distance, a face-to-face interview was scheduled. If the participant was unable to meet face-to-face, or if the participant would prefer it, the interview was completed via video conference.

For the face-to-face interviews, the interviewed were conducted in a mutually agreed upon location. Interviews were conducted in a quiet location free from distractions and

accommodating to audio recording for better recording accuracy. Interviewees received an informed consent prior to their participation in the study. If the interviewee were not to have given consent to be recorded, the principal investigator would have only taken notes on a copy of the interview protocol. At the beginning of the interview, the purpose of the study, the amount of time needed for the interview, and plans for using the results of the interview were discussed (Creswell, 2007).

If the interviewee was not able to participate in a face-to-face interview, the interview was conducted via video conference and recorded using Snagit, a screen capture software. Camtasia Studio, another screen capture software, was also available to use as a back-up. The recording equipment was organized in advance of the interview (Creswell, 2007). Before the interview, the individual conducting the interview arrived 30 minutes before the interview and made the necessary adjustments to the camera and lighting while eliminating background noise. After the interviews were recorded, the interviews were saved to a USB drive.

At the start of the interview, it was confirmed that the interviewee received the informed consent. As with the face-to-face interviews, the purpose of the study, the amount of time needed for the interview, and plans for using the results of the interview were reviewed. If the video recording did not function appropriately, notes were taken by the principal investigator on a copy of the interview protocol (Creswell, 2007).

Interview Protocol

Interviewing techniques. During the interview, an interview instrument (see Appendix H) was used. As with semi-structured interviews, the order of the questions, depending on the direction of the interview were altered. Techniques such as probing for further views and opinions of the interviewee not originally part of the interview questions, but assisted in meeting

the research objectives, were also employed (Gray, 2009). To encourage thoughtful conversations, the individual conducting the interviews followed the cues of the respondent (Morse & Richards, 2002) and encouraged thoughtful responses by practicing active listening.

During the interview, the principal investigator practiced active listening skills by generating narrative from the participant without interrupting the interviewee (Morse & Richards, 2002). The interviewer did not just listen to the words spoken in the interview, but to the tone and emphasis of the respondent (Gray, 2009). Additionally, the interviewer listened to the participant, rather than being a frequent speaker, and responded with interest to the stories of the respondent (Morse & Richards, 2002). The interviewer also refrained from offering advice (Creswell, 2007) and tried to remain objective, professional, relaxed, and friendly (Gray, 2009) to help the respondent feel at ease and comfortable.

At the end of the interview, the respondent was asked if he or she had any questions or additional comments (Gray, 2009). A closing statement was then made wherein, the respondents were thanked, assured of confidentiality, and follow-up information was requested, if needed (Creswell, 2007). Requesting follow up information was done to gain additional clarity and depth from the participant's responses. The interview was completed within a 60-minute timeframe.

Confidentiality. As part of the data analysis coding process, the confidentiality of individual subjects was protected. The principal investigator created a master list linking study codes to subject identifiers, or pseudonyms, after which the interview transcripts were coded using the pseudonyms. Doing so prevented the distribution of confidential or personally identifiable information of the participants to the reader. This master list was kept on a USB drive apart from the original data and stored in a locked filing cabinet for three years, and

thereafter destroyed. The recordings of the interviews were stored on a password protected computer and/or in the video conferencing program and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation. Additionally, all relevant hard copy data regarding this study including interview notes and transcripts with identifiable information were located on a password protected external hard drive, CD and/or other similar electronic storage device, and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation. Additionally, relevant hard copy data regarding this study including de-identifiable transcripts with pseudonyms were located on a USB drive that will also be locked in a filing cabinet in the principal investigator's home for three years and thereafter, be destroyed. To aid in the completion of this data analysis process, a computer program was used for data storage and organization.

Instrumentation. The final interview protocol for the study (see Appendix E), as reviewed by the preliminary review committee, was approved and finalized by the dissertation committee. Since the interview instrument was designed for a specific one-time usage, traditional methods of establishing the reliability of a data collection instrument were not applicable.

The following 8-questions interview instrument was used for data collection. Careful attention was given to design the protocol questions such that they would be collectively exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Each of the interview questions was designed to correlate with the research questions described as follows:

Table 1

Research Questions and Correlating Interview Questions

Research Questions	Correlating interview questions
RQ1: What teaching strategies and practices are employed by session directors of the Especially for Youth program?	1. What strategies and practices do you use as a session director in your lesson *planning* and *preparations* to teach youths? 2. What teaching strategies and practices do you use in the classroom *as* you teach? 3. Are your strategies and practices different from teaching youths compared to other groups of people? If so, how? 4. What teaching strategies and practices have you observed in other teachers that you have adopted in your own practices? 5. What is your view on technology in teaching and how do or do you not incorporate it into your teaching? Why or why not?
RQ2: What teaching challenges are faced by the session directors of the Especially for Youth program?	6. What challenges do you face as a session director in teaching youths?
RQ3: How do session directors of the Especially for Youth program measure their teaching success?	7. How do you measure your success teaching as a session director?
RQ4: What recommendations would session directors make for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the Especially for Youth program?	8. What recommendations or advice do you have for other session directors and speakers at the Especially for Youth program?

Validity and reliability. Validity of the instrument was established to ensure that the questions on the instrument adequately addressed the constructs in the research questions. To facilitate the validation process, a four-step process was employed: (a) prima facie validity, (b) peer review validity, (c) pilot, and (d) expert review. Each of these steps will be described in detail below.

Step one: Prima facie validity. The main purpose of prima facie is to engage in analysis that would determine a breach in ethics or morals (Shrader-Frechette, 2000). Through careful consideration, the principal investigator determined questions that were not ethically

questionable. Initially, an interview protocol of 12 questions relating to each of the research questions was created.

Step two: Peer review validity. The principal investigator constructed a table, as shown in Table 1, showing the relationship between each research question and the corresponding interview questions. Please note that interview question 1, or ice-breaker question, "Tell me a little about how you began teaching with the Especially for Youth program" was not included in the interview protocol. The table of research questions and corresponding interview questions were reviewed by a preliminary panel of reviewers consisting of three researchers, who are currently doctoral students in the EDLT/EDOL at Pepperdine University. These students conducted their doctoral dissertations at Pepperdine University and employed a similar research methodology in their own research. The panel members have all completed a series of doctoral level courses in quantitative and qualitative research methods and data analysis.

The panel was given a package that included a summary statement of this research paper, a copy of above table, and instructions to follow to assess if the interview questions adequately addressed the construct investigated in the research question. The instructions were given as follows: Please review the summary statement attached to familiarize yourself with the purpose and goals of the study. Next, refer to the table and read each research question carefully. Next, review the corresponding interview questions. If you determine that the interview question is directly relevant to the corresponding research question, mark "The question is directly relevant to research question 1 – keep as stated." If you find the interview question irrelevant to the corresponding research question, mark "The question is irrelevant to research question 1 – delete it." Finally, if you determine that to be relevant to the research question, the interview question must be modified, mark "modified as suggested" and in the blank space provided recommend

your modification. There is also space provided for you to recommend additional interview questions for each research question.

Step three: Pilot. The principal investigator further refined the interview questions and procedures through a pilot testing process (Creswell, 2007). This allowed the principal investigator to assess the participants' degree of bias, refine the interview questions, as needed, modify the collection of background information, and adapt the interview procedures (Sampson, 2004). A pilot test was conducted with an individual familiar with the EFY program and who had teaching experience with youths in the LDS Church. As a result of the pilot testing, the principal investigator decreased the number of interview questions from 12 to 8 to allow for completion of the interview within the timeframe.

Step four: Expert review. The results of the work of the peer review panel were then presented to dissertation review committee consisting of three faculty members. Recommendations of the preliminary review panel were then examined and approved, or modified by the dissertation committee. In instances where a majority did not agree on a recommended modification, the committee chair had the final vote.

Validity and Reliability of the Study

Validity. Validity refers to whether researchers are observing and measuring what they are intending to measure. Researchers ensure validity for qualitative studies involving interviews by affirming that the interview questions directly relate to the research. External validity is the degree to which findings can be generalized to other settings. Internal validity means a strong connection between the evidence and the theoretical ideas. Techniques in ensure validity for this study, included *expert checking,* conducting a literature review, and analyzing the data to the point of saturation. This study used a process called *expert checking*, a procedure by which other

researchers collaborate and approve the analysis completed. A literature review was also completed in the previous chapter, allowing one to compare and contrast what other studies or experts have found in the field. Furthermore, validity was ensured through the data analysis process by careful study and examination of the data to the point of saturation, meaning that perspectives shared by the participants of the study were being repeated (Gray, 2009).

Reliability. Reliability is to the extent to which findings of a study relate to the stability of the research findings and can be replicated. As qualitative research often deals with unique settings or cases, external reliability can be a challenge. However, reliability can be increased using several approaches to research. In conducting interviews, for example, reliability can be increased by training the interviewers prior to conducting the interviews. Additionally, internal reliability can be improved by using multiple researchers during the analysis phase of research. For example, in this study, the individual conducting the research shared and compared codes and schemes with other researchers to determine whether or not the coding scheme was consistent. Finally, the use of computer-assisted programs was also used to ensure internal reliability (Gray, 2009).

Research Bias

In qualitative research the role of the principal investigator is to maintain objectivity and be aware of situations in which they may risk biasing the response of the interviewees. The principal investigator usually adopts a reflexive stance during the research process, by reflecting on their bias, their belief system, and personal background that may infiltrate their research practice (Gray, 2009). As such, a clarifying statement of bias was necessary as part of this study (Creswell, 2014).

Statement of research bias. The principal investigator is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, attended EFY as a youth and later worked for the EFY program. The principal investigator attended EFY as a participant for three summers (1994 – 1996). She later worked as a counselor and a coordinator for four summers (2001, 2002, 2003, 2005), working at approximately sixteen sessions of EFY in Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Ohio, New York, and Utah. Additionally, EFY employed the principal investigator as a speaker in 2009, and has taught at approximately fourteen sessions in California, Virginia, Texas, and Utah. As a faculty member, she has interacted with several session directors. Additionally, at each session, she has been observed by and has observed session directors as they teach youths. Having participated in the EFY program, the principal investigator sought to overcome personal bias and perception through epoche and bracketing.

Epoche and bracketing. Epoche, a Greek word, meaning to stay away from or abstain, is used in research regarding the perspective of the principal investigator. This occurs when the principal investigator sets aside his or her insights, prejudgments, biases and perceptions of the phenomenon being investigated during the data gathering and analysis process. For this study, the principal investigator focused on looking at the data as if for the first time and took no position prior to data gathering process (Moustakas, 1994). She laid aside her own beliefs and prejudgments and sought to examine the experience of each session director so that new meanings emerged. Through journaling on a document separate from the documents used during the study, the principal investigator reflected, in writing, on her personal bias, during the interview and data analysis process. This practice of laying aside personal understanding and experience is also called *bracketing,* or allowing the phenomena to *speak for themselves*. The principal investigator focused on putting herself in the place of the respondent, identified

meanings that emerge from the data, and sought to determine themes during the data analysis process (Gray, 2009).

Data Analysis

Inter-rater reliability and validity. During the data analysis process, inter-rater reliability was established, as well as increased external validity of the results through a three-part process. The process included the following steps: (a) coding, (b) peer review process, and (c) expert review process. Each step of the data analysis process is outlined in detail below.

Part one: Coding. All of the interviews were transcribed and then with the transcriptions, or raw data, the computer software, HyperRESEARCH, was used to look closely at the data and *code* keywords and phrases that reflected themes found in the research. These codes were then combined into broader themes (Creswell, 2007) and various constructs were found in the data. The broader themes, categories and patterns, were found using an inductive coding procedure, as described by Thomas (2006) in the following steps:

1. *Preparation of raw data files ("data cleaning")*: The raw data files are made into a common format and a backup is made of each raw data file.
2. *Close reading of text:* The researcher reads in detail the data. For this research, a closed reading occurred of the transcriptions of the recorded interviews.
3. *Creation of categories*: The researcher identifies categories and themes. The more general categories are derived from the objectives of the research while the more specific categories are derived from multiple reading of the raw data (in vivo coding). Meaning units are then created from phrases used in the text. Specialized software can be used to speed up the coding process.

4. *Overlapping coded and uncoded text:* A segment of the text may be coded in several categories and the text that is not relevant to the research maybe text that is not assigned to any category.
5. *Continuing revision and refinement of category system:* The researcher selects quotes from the data that convey main themes or essence of a category, searching for subtopics such as contradictory points of view, or new insights that are warranted. As an iterative process, the categories may be combined or linked as determined by the principal investigator.

For this study, the data found in the interview transcriptions and highlighted statements and sentences that were significant, aiding in the understanding of how the participants in the study experienced the phenomenon, were noted. The noteworthy statements were used to write *textual descriptions* of what the participants experienced. Statements were used to identify *structural description*, or an explanation of the context or setting that influenced how the individuals experienced the phenomenon. From these textual and structural descriptions, the *essential, invariant structure (or essence)* describing the essence of the phenomenon or common experience of the participants and the underlying structure were also noted (Creswell, 2007).

Part two: Peer review process. Initially, the first four interview transcripts were coded. Then, a panel of two peer reviewers, who are currently doctoral students in the EDLT/EDOL at Pepperdine University, discussed the structure of the coding procedure, including the categories and themes initially formed in relation to the statements and sentences found in the data. The peer reviewers recommended changes and modifications to the coding scheme, discussed these changes, and together developed consensus on the data analysis approach.

Based on the consensus of the data analysis approach, the remaining interview transcripts were coded. At the conclusion of the coding of all fifteen interview transcripts, the panel of two researchers, who are currently doctoral students in the EDLT/EDOL at Pepperdine University, reviewed the coding structure. The peer reviewers offered feedback and modifications to the coding scheme with the goal being arriving at consensus regarding the coding results. Both the peer review and the subsequent expert review process allowed for *expert checking,* a process for collaboration with other researchers for approval of the analysis process. Together, researchers compared codes and schemes to determine whether or not the coding scheme was consistent (Gray, 2009).

Part three: Expert review process. The principal investigator reviewed the peer recommendation with the dissertation review committee consisting of three faculty members, or expert reviewers, before finalizing the coding process. When the principal investigator and the peer reviewers did not arrive at consensus, the expert reviewers examined and approved, or altered the coding scheme. In instances where a majority did not agree on a recommended modifications, the committee chair had the final vote.

Summary

This chapter described the research methods that were employed in examining the current teaching strategies and practices of session directors in the EFY program. This chapter began with the description of the principal investigator's worldview and the chosen qualitative research design for this study, specifically phenomenology. The research questions were also discussed, as well as a detailed description of how the study ensured the protection of human subjects. Thoughtful considerations were given to potential risks for those who participated in the study. The only risk to the respondents' participation in the study was the inconvenience of time. The

only benefit to the respondents' participation was the insight gained from their reflections of and responses to the interview questions.

Summaries of the data collection strategies and instrumentation as well as the role of the principal investigator were also included. This chapter provided a detailed description of how session directors of the EFY program were identified and invited to participate in the study. First, site approval was received from the director of the EFY program. Following IRB approval, a master list of session directors containing contact information was also received. Criteria for inclusion and exclusion were applied to determine who could participate in the study. The used the method maximum variation sampling and snowball sampling were used to find a total of 15 session directors to participate in the study.

This chapter detailed how the semi-structured interviews were conducted, an explanation of the process in preparing for the interviews, and appropriate conduct during the interviews. The chapter described the process completed after each interview, including reflection and transcription of the recorded interviews, and the data analysis process using the qualitative software, HyperRESEARCH. Personal bias of the principal investigator in the data collecting and analysis process were also addressed. Lastly, the chapter described an iterative data analysis process to find categories and themes found in the research. Major themes arrived at and their descriptions, including sample participant quotes, are reported in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

Especially for Youth (EFY) is a summer camp with a religious emphasis, targeting the spiritual and social development of youths ages 14–18 years, and upholds the values and teachings of the LDS Church. The director of EFY and the program administrator supervising EFY faculty select, from the pool of faculty, individuals to be session directors. Session directors are considered the adult leaders of the EFY programs. One of the main responsibilities of the session directors is to teach youths. In a given week-long session, session directors teach seven 50-minute lessons, on topics indicated in the staff handbook (EFY, 2015b), to the attendees of the session. Sessions can include proximately 300 to 1,000 attendees, or participants. The EFY administrators assign topics; however, the preparation, organization, and delivery of the teaching are at the discretion of the session director. To examine the current teaching strategies and practices of these session directors, this study sought to investigate the answers to the following research questions:

1. What teaching strategies and practices are employed by session directors of the Especially for Youth program?
2. What teaching challenges are faced by the session directors of the Especially for Youth program?
3. How do session directors of the Especially for Youth program measure their teaching success?
4. What recommendations would session directors make for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the Especially for Youth program?

To investigate the answer to the four research questions, a qualitative, phenomenological research study was employed. Fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with current and former session directors of the EFY program. This chapter presents the findings of the study through an analysis of the responses of the interviewees to each of the following eight interview questions:

1. What strategies and practices do you use as a session director in your lesson *planning* and *preparations* to teach youths?
2. What teaching strategies and practices do you use in the classroom *as* you teach?
3. Are your strategies and practices different from teaching youths compared to other groups of people? If so, how?
4. What teaching strategies and practices have you observed in other teachers that you have adopted into your own practices?
5. What is your view on technology and teaching and how do you or do you not incorporate it into your teaching? Why or why not?
6. What challenges do you a face as a session director in teaching youths?
7. How do you measure your success teaching as a session director?
8. What recommendation or advice do you have for other session directors and speakers at the Especially for Youth program?

Interviewees

Fifteen session directors of the EFY program were interviewed for this study. Fourteen individuals were current session directors of the EFY program, and one was a former session director of the EFY program. The individuals consisted of 13 men and two women. The average age of the interviewees was 46 years old, with the youngest 33 years of age and the oldest 56

years of age. All interviewees were white/Caucasian and married. Thirteen of the interviewees had served full-time missions for the LDS Church in eight different countries; two interviewees had not served full-time missions. Regarding their highest level of education attained, one interviewee attended college, one had a bachelor's degree, six had master's degrees, and seven had completed doctorate degrees (see Figure 1).

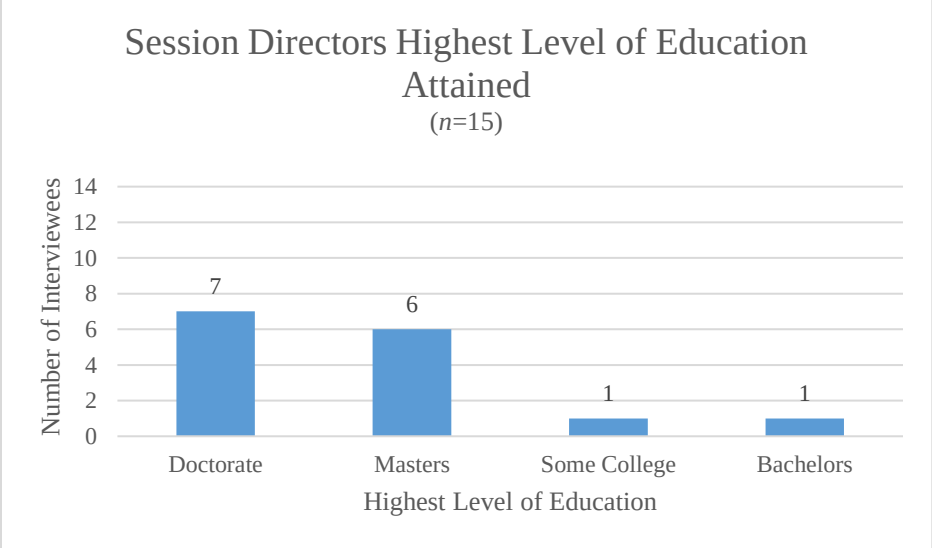

Figure 1. Highest level of education attained of EFY Session Directors.

Eight interviewees are currently employed in the Seminary and Institute (S&I) program of the LDS Church and seven interviewees are non-S&I, or are not employed by the S&I program of the LDS Church. Of the eight interviewees who were non-S&I, six of them had previously taught seminary for the LDS Church.

The average number of years the interviewees worked for the EFY program as a speaker was 17. Two interviewees had one-to-nine years of experience as a speaker for the EFY program. Eight interviewees had 10–19 years of experience as a speaker for the EFY program. Five interviewees had 20 or more years of experience as a speaker in the EFY program (see Figure 3).

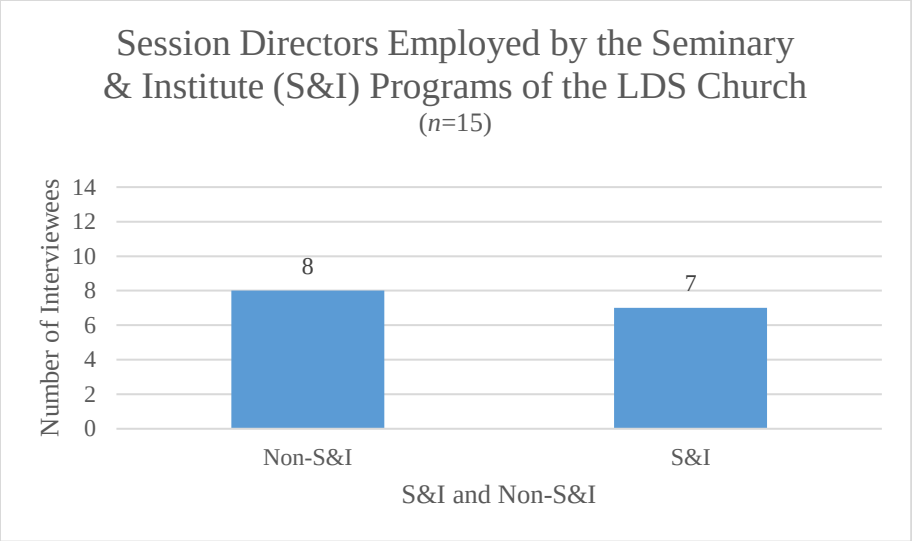

Figure 2. Session Directors employed by the seminary and institute programs of the LDS Church.

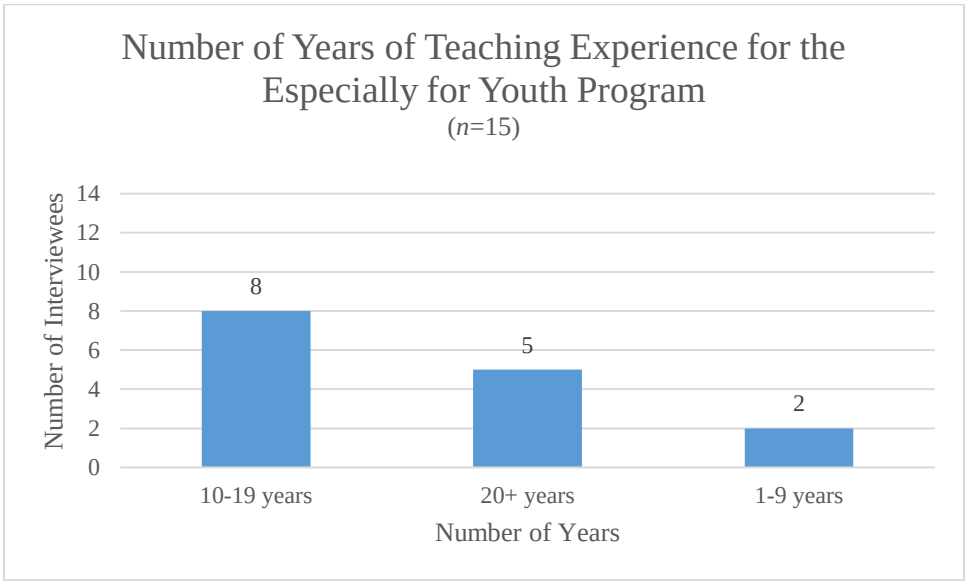

Figure 3. Session Directors years of teaching experience for the EFY Program.

The average number of years employed as a session director for the EFY program was 13 years. Six interviewees had one-to-nine years of experience as a session director for the EFY program. Five interviewees had 10–19 years of experiences as a session director for the EFY program. Four interviewees had 20 or more years of experiences as a session director for the EFY program (see Figure 4).

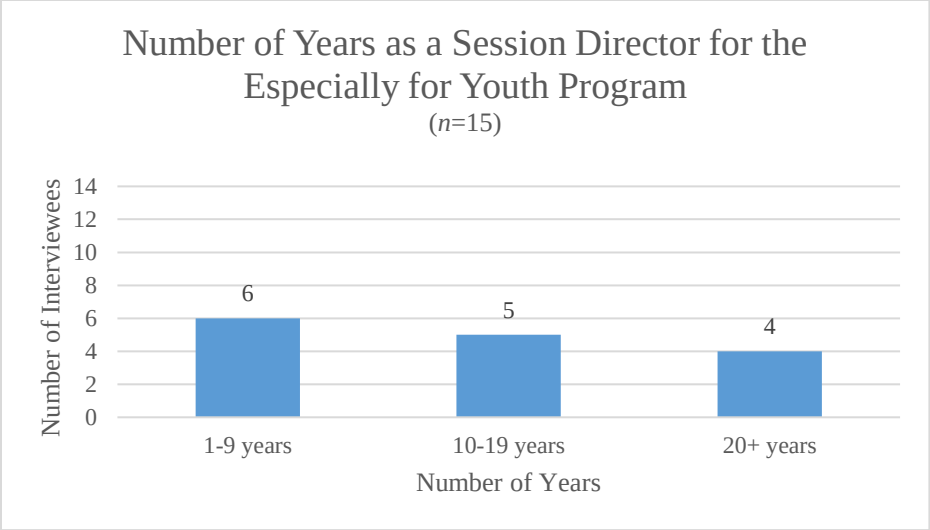

Figure 4. Session Directors years of experience as a Session Director for the EFY Program.

Data Collection

Selection of data sources. To gain access to the interviewees, the director of the EFY program provided site approval (see Appendix A) for the study. Following site approval, an invitation e-mail was sent to the director of faculty for the EFY program who subsequently forwarded the e-mail to all 130 session directors (see Appendix B). The director of faculty also provided a list of session directors and their contact information including their e-mail address, phone number, and the city and state in which the session directors resided.

All interviewees were initially contacted via e-mail (see Appendix B). From the e-mail, ten interviewees responded via e-mail indicating their interest in participating in the study. The interviewees were then contacted via e-mail to determine an agreed-upon platform (face-to-face, phone, or video conference). After the date, time, and location of the interview were determined, the interviewee received a scheduling e-mail (see Appendix C) including an attached informed consent form (see Appendix D) to be reviewed prior to the study. A confirmation of interview for research e-mail (Appendix E) was sent to one interviewee, but was not necessary for the remaining 14 interviewees as the date, time, and location of their interviews were already agreed

upon. The attached informed consent form (see Appendix D) with the scheduling e-mail (see Appendix C) minimized risk to interviewees during the study by requesting their permission to participate, record the interviews, and use the content of their interviews for research purposes. The informed consent form also included the eight questions used for the semi-structured interview, allowing the interviewee the opportunity to review the questions prior to the interview. Seven of the individuals who responded via e-mail were interviewed.

In addition to the e-mail, 13 individuals were contacted by phone, one of which was a former session director whose contact information was public information. Of the 13 individuals contacted by phone, eight agreed to participate in the study. After the individuals agreed to participate in the study via phone call, the interviews were scheduled. Following the phone call, the interviewees received a scheduling e-mail (See Appendix C) including and attached consent form that was to be reviewed prior to the study. Seven face-to-face interviews were conducted in five different settings. Of the eight individuals contacted by phone, who agreed to participate in the study, four interviews were conducted via video conference tools using Skype and WebEx, and four interviews were conducted by phone.

During the interview, it was confirmed that each person had received the consent form. A digital copy of the interview instrument (see Appendix H) was used to take notes about the individual's responses during the interview. As the interview proceeded, each interviewee was asked for further views and opinions, which was not originally included with the interview questions, but assisted in meeting the research objectives (Gray, 2009). The individual conducting the interviews practiced active listening skills (Morse & Richards, 2002), refrained from offering advice (Creswell, 2007), and sought to remain objective, professional, and relaxed (Gray, 2009). At the end of each interview, the individuals were asked if they had any questions

or additional comments (Gray, 2009). A closing statement was then made (Creswell, 2007), the interviewees were thanked for their time, and reassured of the confidentiality of their responses. Additionally, follow-up information was requested from the interviewees, if needed (Creswell, 2007). For three of the interviews, the practice of snowball sampling was employed to determine if the interviewees knew of anyone who might be interested in participating in the study. Though names of individuals were noted, none of the individuals were contacted.

Data Analysis

During the data analysis process, inter-rater reliability was established, and external validity of the results ensured through a three-part process. The process consisted of the following steps: (a) coding, (b) interrater reliability and validity, and (c) expert review process. Each step of the data analysis process is outlined in detail below.

Part one: Transcription and coding. All recordings were transferred to a computer, where each of the interviews were transcribed using the software HyperTRANSCRIBE. The transcriptions of each of the interviewers were labeled by the order in which the interviews were completed (e.g., Interview #1, Interview #2 etc.). The transcripts did not contain additional identifiable information. A list of individuals interviewed and the order in which they were interviewed was kept on a USB drive apart from the transcribed files.

The transcribed files of all of the interviews were then transferred to the computer software, HyperRESEARCH, to look closely at the data and to code key words and phrases that reflect themes found in the research. These codes were then combined into broader themes (Creswell, 2007), and various constructs were found in the data. The broader themes, categories, and patterns were found using an inductive coding procedure (Thomas, 2006).

Significant statements and sentences found in the interview transcripts were highlighted, aiding in the understanding of how the interviewees in the study experienced the phenomenon. Noteworthy statements were used to write *textual descriptions* of what the interviewees experienced. Statements to identify *structural description*, or an explanation of the context or setting that influenced how the individuals experienced the phenomenon were also used. From these textual and structural descriptions, the *essential, invariant structure (or essence),* describing the essence of the phenomenon or common experience of the interviewees and the underlying structure were noted (Creswell, 2007).

Part two: Interrater reliability and validity. Initially, the first four interview transcripts were coded. Then, a panel of two peer reviewers, who are currently doctoral students in the EDLT/EDOL at Pepperdine University, discussed the structure of the coding procedure, including the categories and themes formed in relation to the statements and sentences found in the data. The peer reviewers recommended changes and modifications to the coding scheme.

The panel of two reviewers suggested that for interview question one, two of the six themes originally created could be combined into one theme, making a total of five themes. Additionally, one of the reviewers suggested the renaming of a theme to include a broader scope of information. For interview question two, one reviewer suggested condensing the original six themes to five themes. Suggestions for changes were not given for interview questions three through eight. No subcategories were formed for question four, but it was anticipated that they would emerge later with additional coding. The principal investigator and peer reviewers reached consensus on the data analysis approach that would be used for the remaining interviews.

Based on the consensus of the data analysis approach, the remaining interview transcripts were then coded. At the conclusion of the coding of all fifteen interview transcripts, the panel of

two researchers, reviewed the coding structure. The peer reviewers offered feedback and modifications to the coding scheme with the goal of arriving at consensus regarding the coding results. Both the peer review and the subsequent expert review process allowed for *expert checking*, a process for collaboration with other researchers for approval of the analysis process. Together, researchers compared codes and schemes to determine whether or not the coding scheme was consistent (Gray, 2009). As a result of the second peer review process, one peer reviewer suggested renaming one of the themes created for interview question three. The other peer reviewer suggested omitting one of the subthemes for interview question five and renaming a subthemes for interview question eight.

Part three: Expert review process. The peer recommendations were reviewed and if the peer reviewers did not arrive at consensus with the primary investigator, the dissertation review committee consisting of three faculty members, or expert reviewers, were available to examine, approve, or alter the coding scheme. In instances where a majority did not agree on recommended modifications, the committee chair has the final vote. For this study, consensus was agreed upon during the peer review process, so use of the expert review process was not needed.

Data Display

The data was organized by research questions. Frequency charts and transcript experts were used to indicate the themes that emerged from the interviews. To ensure confidentiality, the interviewees were referred to in the sequence in which they were interviewed (I1, I2, etc.). Each research question, in addition to the frequency charts, are supported by the interviewees' responses found in the transcribed data.

Research question one. Research question one states: What teaching strategies and practices are employed by session directors of the Especially for Youth program? To answer this question, interviewees were asked five interview questions that addressed this research question.

IQ1: What strategies and practices do you use as a session director in your lesson *planning* and *preparations* to teach youths?

IQ2: What teaching strategies and practices do you use in the classroom *as* you teach?

IQ3: Are your strategies and practices different when teaching youths compared to other groups of people? If so, how?

IQ4: What teaching strategies and practices have you observed in other teachers that you have adopted in your own practices?

IQ5: What is your view on technology in teaching, and how do or do you not incorporate it into your teaching? Why or why not?

Interview question one. The first interview question addressed strategies and practices session directors use in lesson planning and preparations to teach youths. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key practices: (a) Content Preparation, (b) Personal Spiritual Preparation, (c) Use of LDS Church Materials, and (d) Vision of Responsibility (see Figure 5).

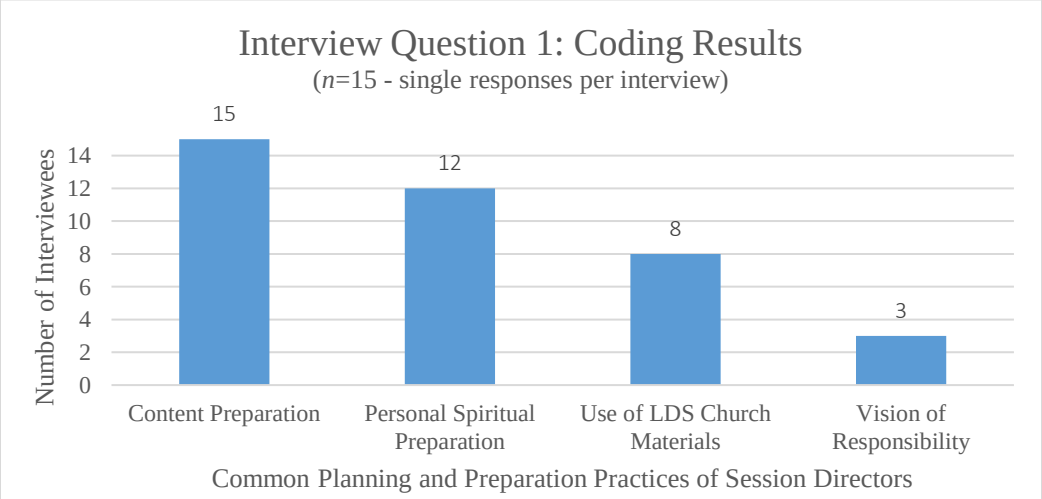

Figure 5. Common planning and preparation practices of EFY session directors.

Content Preparation. Through the analysis of the key practice of content preparation, the data yielded five additional practices, or subthemes, as ways in which the interviewees prepare the content for the lessons presented at the EFY program. The five subthemes were: (a) Use of Information from EFY, (b) Creating New Content, (c) Content Based on the Needs of Participants during the Session, (d) Brainstorm and Record, and (e) Draw from Current News and Media (see Figure 6). Each subtheme is described and examples are given as follows.

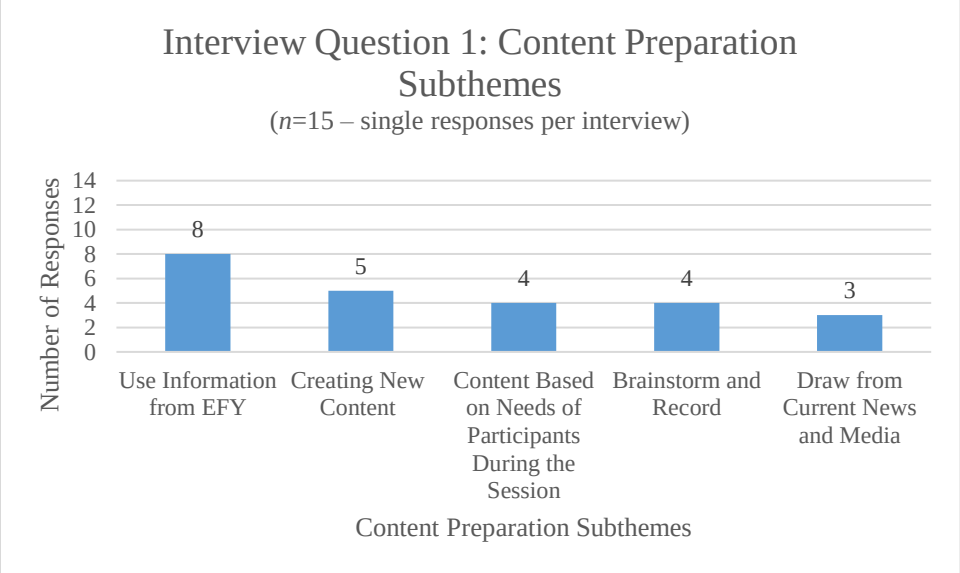

Figure 6. Interview question 1: Content preparation subthemes.

Use Information from EFY. The subtheme, Use of Information from EFY, means that Session directors use information given from the EFY program that informs the session directors of the guidelines and topics for the upcoming year. Interviewee 7 said, "I tried to be very supportive of the established theme set forth by EFY" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 15 added, "I kind of need to get my heart ready and my mind ready to kind of know the direction that EFY is going" (personal communication, April 5, 2016). Interviewee 6 described,

> I do review with some degree of clarity and some degree of emphasis on the theme as well as any guidance provided by EFY as to the types of messages and the tone of the

> message they would like provided. This is for session directing. I start with the framework provided by EFY, for example. (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Creating New Content. The subtheme, Creating New Content, is defined as not including content used for teaching in the past, or teaching topics that are new and different from what other teachers may be addressing. One interviewee stated, "I try to stay fresh. I'm not a believer in teaching the same lessons. I'm not in the same boat of saying this worked last year, let's see if we can continue to do this year [sic]" (I15, personal communication, April 5, 2016). Another interviewee added, "How can I offer a point of view on this subject they've heard 100 times that will be new to them? [sic]" (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 8 expressed a desire to use material that is "intellectual stimulating [sic]" and "things that are going to . . . cause the mind to turn on in new ways" (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Content Based on Needs of Participants During the Session. The subtheme, Content Based on Needs of Participants during the Session, suggests that changes and adaptations are made to the content of lesson once the session directors have time to meet and get to know the participants at the EFY session. Interviewee 13 exclaimed,

> I'm much more driven by, as I greet with the kids, as I meet with them, as I talk to them, as I hear their concerns, as counselors say, "This kid came to me with this problem. This kid came to me with this problem [*sic*]." I feel much freer as a session director to be able to address those, as questions come up and I think, "Oh, we need to cover that." (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Interviewee 5 and 8 illustrated examples of this subtheme. Interviewee 5 described:

> When I start to be around the kids and talk to the kids [*sic*]. Even listening to the teachers teach [*sic*]. So, I feel like a lot of what I do as a director, even though I know months in

> advance that I know I'm going to speak Monday night, Tuesday morning and on Wednesday morning [*sic*]. I still feel like a lot of the preparation that is in during that week [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Interviewee 8 added,

> So I eat lunch with [the participants] and interact with them and they'll tell what's hard and what their background is. As much as changing the content I think that maybe even more so it changes the way I teach. . . . [Y]ou've seen their faces and you know they need things that are immediately helpful [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Brainstorm and Record. The subtheme, Brainstorm and Record, suggests that session directors start to generate and record ideas of content that could be appropriate for their classes at EFY. Interviewee 11 stated, "[I] brainstorm over the course of a couple months" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 3 exclaimed, "I'm a brainstormer as I'm planning. I usually once we get the themes for a day for a session director or choose my topic as teacher. I will just fill notebooks up with all the different things" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 9 added, "I brainstorm, like crazy" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 12 stated:

> During the year, I take a lot of notes. . . . [W]hen I hear something, a nugget, or a story, or something that I would probably work well, then I will write it down, or I'll put it in my phone, or something like that, so I have this database of things and then the theme. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Draw from Current News and Media. The subtheme, Draw from Current News and Media, indicates that session directors use information from news and media for content in their EFY lessons. "We'll use active news. We'll use real time events" (I14, personal communication,

April 1, 2016). “I’m might use news stories” (I7, personal communication, March 23, 2016). One interviewee explained, “I bring pop culture” to the content of the lesson (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Personal Spiritual Preparation. The second theme, Personal Spiritual Preparation, included practices done by session directors to seek inspiration from God. One interviewee indicated, “I plan, but for me it is more like preparing myself spiritually” (I2, personal communication, March 18, 2016). The following subthemes of prayer, personal scripture study, and personal worthiness are illustrations of how session directors prepare spiritually (see Figure 7).

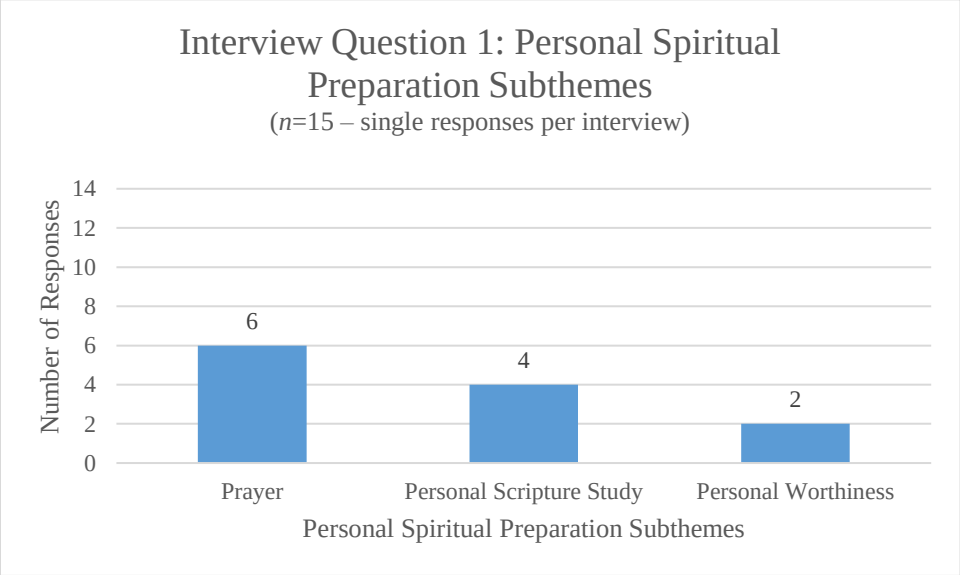

Figure 7. Interview question 1: Personal spiritual preparation subthemes.

Prayer. The subtheme, Prayer, is defined as the act of speaking to God and seeking inspiration from a higher power. “I rely more on prayer” (I1, personal communication, March, 18, 2016). “I get on my knees” (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016). “I just start to prayer, really hard [sic]” (I9, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Personal Scripture Study. The subtheme, Personal Scripture Study, is the time taken to read and study scripture, or holy writ. Interviewee 2 stated, “I just start paying attention to the

things that are interesting to me in scriptures" (personal communication, March 18, 2016). "I consider the topic and then I just use my normal life and scripture study to look for . . . you ought to highlight this and think about this. I just start paying attention to the things that are interesting to me in scriptures" (I14, personal communication, March 18, 2016).

Personal Worthiness. The subtheme, Personal Worthiness, includes living the standards of the LDS Church. Interviewee 2 stated "I try to stay worthy" (personal communication, March 18, 2016). Interviewee 14 added, "I try to be the kind of person that when I teach something, I am a testimony of it without saying I have to testify" (personal communication, April 1, 2016).

Use of LDS Church Materials. The third theme, Use of LDS Church Materials, is defined as the use of references published by the LDS Church. Two subthemes that emerged from the data were: (a) Quotes from LDS Church Leaders, and (b) Seminary and Institute Materials (see Figure 8). Each subtheme is outlined subsequently.

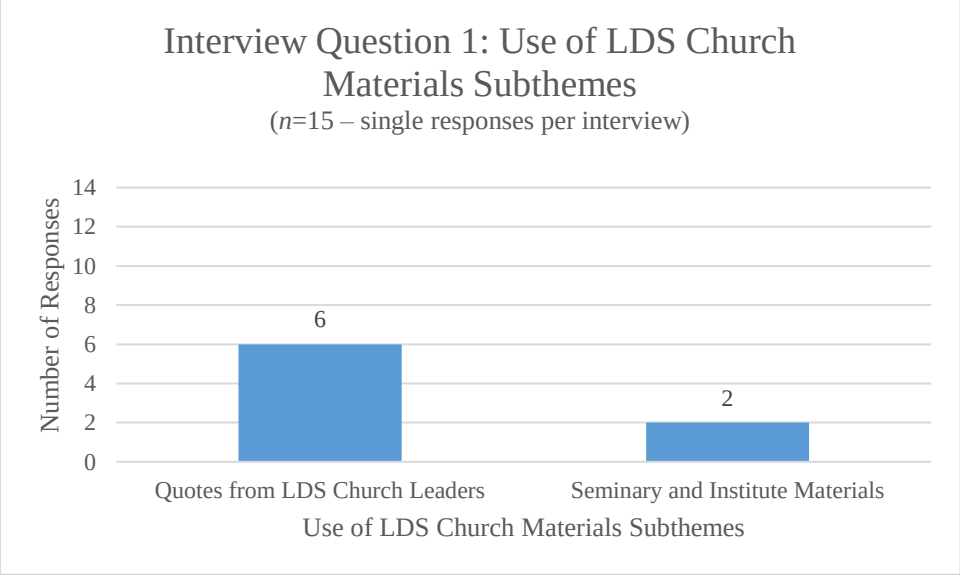

Figure 8. Interview question 1: Use of LDS Church materials subthemes.

Quotes from LDS Church Leaders. The subtheme, Quotes from LDS Church Leaders, are described as quotes from "prophets, seers, and revelators;" "apostles;" and "brethren." These include words spoken at the LDS general conference, a general meeting for the LDS Church,

including instruction given by the governing body and leadership of the Church. Interviewee 7 described,

> I always would use a prophetic quote and/or reference. Something that would say, "This isn't just me speaking, but here is something that supports the ideas that we saying [*sic*] and it's coming from a church leader that we sustain in that position." (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Interviewee 9 added,

> I want them to feel that tie with President Monson, or the prophet, and the apostles. So I solidify it, back it up, right? Top it off with something that the prophet has said so they look to him, not just to the scriptures, but modern day scripture also. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Interviewee 4 added, "I think it is paramount that I have the most recent general conference, what was said [*sic*]. I will have read through April conference and I pull quotes from there for the entire week." (personal communication, March 21, 2016)

Seminary and Institute Materials. The subtheme, Seminary and Institute Materials, is defined as manuals published by the LDS Church specific to teaching and learning in the seminary and institute programs. Interviewee 1 described their use of seminary and institute materials as follows.

> EFY has done a great job at saying, "Hey, we want you to utilize all the training you've used at seminary and institutes to strengthen our youth." That is where most of us are getting our strategies and our techniques and our methodologies. It's coming from these fantastic resources that they are providing for us . . . Those who are session directing and teaching, quite frankly, at EFY come from seminary and institute cadre of teachers that

> they have, and so we have been trained in very specific means, whereby we can prepare, and those include what we call the *Fundamentals of Gospel Teaching and Learning* [*sic*]. (personal communication, March, 18, 2016)

Interviewee 5 describes the learning explained in the *Fundamentals of Gospel Teaching and Learning* manual:

> There is a learning pattern that we use . . . It's got 5 steps . . . The first one is we help students the content and the context so they know what they are reading, who the people are, what the story line is [*sic*]. We want them to be able to identify doctrines and principles. *Identify* is the key word. We want them to understand those doctrines and principles. And then we want them to feel why those principles are important. Final thing is to help them apply those principles. That is the backbone of what I use when I'm teaching in the seminary classroom, and it is really the backbone when I'm teaching a group of a larger group. The teaching pattern is the same. Some of the details may be a little bit different. If I'm going to teach the scriptures to the youth, that's the pattern I'm going to follow. (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Vision of Responsibility. The fourth theme, Vision of Responsibility, is defined as a feeling of importance and influence as a session director. Interviewee 1 and 9 offer examples of this theme. "You know you, you have over 700 participants and it occurred to me the responsibility just kind of weighed on me in terms of all of these parents, all of these family members [*sic*]" (I1, personal communication, March, 18, 2016).

Interviewee 9 stated:

> It's a huge honor to be a session director and be with all of these amazing kids and young adults. I feel like I'm given the opportunity for one week to do what I can, not to teach

> my message, but Heavenly Father's message . . . You have one shot, one shot to teach these kids. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Summary of findings for interview question one. The first interview question addressed strategies and practices session directors of the EFY program use in lesson planning and preparations to teach youths. The data yielded four key practices including: (a) Content Preparation, (b) Personal Spiritual Preparation, (c) Use of LDS Church Materials, and (d) Vision of Responsibility. Analysis of the first theme, Content Preparation, yielded five subthemes, or key practices of content preparation: (a) Use of Information from EFY, (b) Creating New Content, (c) Content Based on the Needs of Participants during the Session, (d) Brainstorm and Record, and (e) Draw from Current News and Media. Session directors sought to support the information provided from the EFY program. Five interviewees mentioned a desire to "stay fresh" (I15, personal communication, April 5, 2016) and not rely on materials used in previous years. Interviewee 8 articulated the desire to develop "intellectually stimulating" content in preparation (personal communication, March 23, 2016). In addition, four session directors mentioned the importance of waiting until they arrived at the EFY session and had the opportunity to meet the participants, to finalize their lessons to meet the needs of the students. Some session directors also practice brainstorming and created a suppository of information containing to EFY ranging from "fill[ing] notebooks" (I3, personal communication, March 21, 2016) to putting "notes in [their] phone" (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016). A few mentioned the use of "real time events" such as new stories (I14, personal communication, April 1, 2016) or "pop culture" (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016).

The second theme, Personal Spiritual Preparation, indicated practices done by session directors to seek inspiration from a higher power. One interviewee noted, "I plan, but for me it is

more like preparing myself spiritually" (I2, personal communication, March 18, 2016), through the practices of personal prayer and scripture study. "I just start paying attention to the things that are interesting to me in scriptures" (I2, personal communication, March 18, 2016). An example of personal worthiness was articulated by Interviewee 14, "I try to be the kind of person that when I teach something, I am a testimony of it without saying I have to testify" (personal communication, April 1, 2016).

Three subthemes emerged from the data: (a) Prayer, (b) Personal Scripture Study, and (c) Personal Worthiness. From the third theme, The Use of LDS Church Materials, two subthemes emerged from the data: (a) Quotes from LDS Church Leaders, and (b) Seminary and Institute Materials. For the fourth theme, Vision of Responsibility, no subthemes were found.

Interview question two. To further understand research question one, the second interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices session directors use in the classroom *as* session directors teach youths. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key practices: (a) Student Involvement Strategies, (b) Teacher-led Techniques, (c) Flexibility, and (d) Practices to Avoid (see Figure 9).

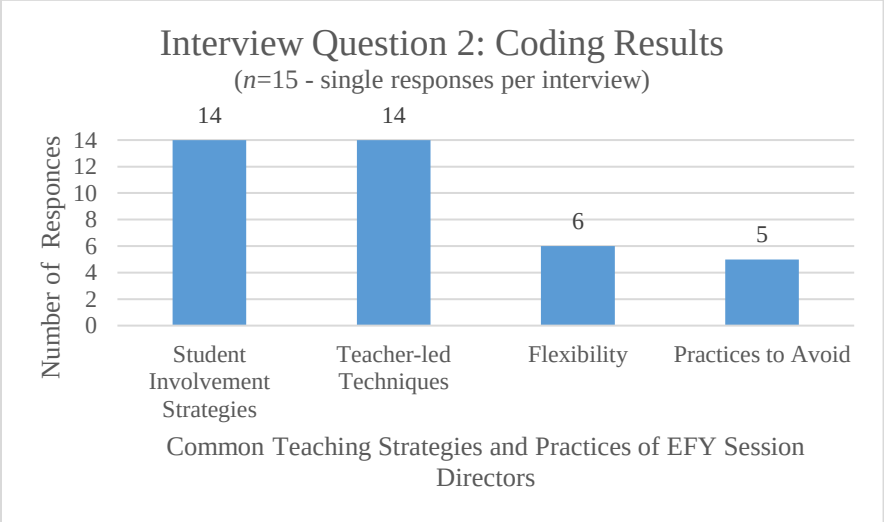

Figure 9. Common teaching strategies and practices of EFY session directors.

Student Involvement Strategies. Through the analysis of the key practice of student involvement strategies, the data yielded five subthemes, or practices, that session directors employ to engage students in the lessons. The five subthemes are: (a) Pair and Share, (b) Participants Share Experiences, (c) Ask Questions, (d) Participants in Front of Class, and (e) Writing (see Figure 9). Each subtheme is described and examples are given as follows.

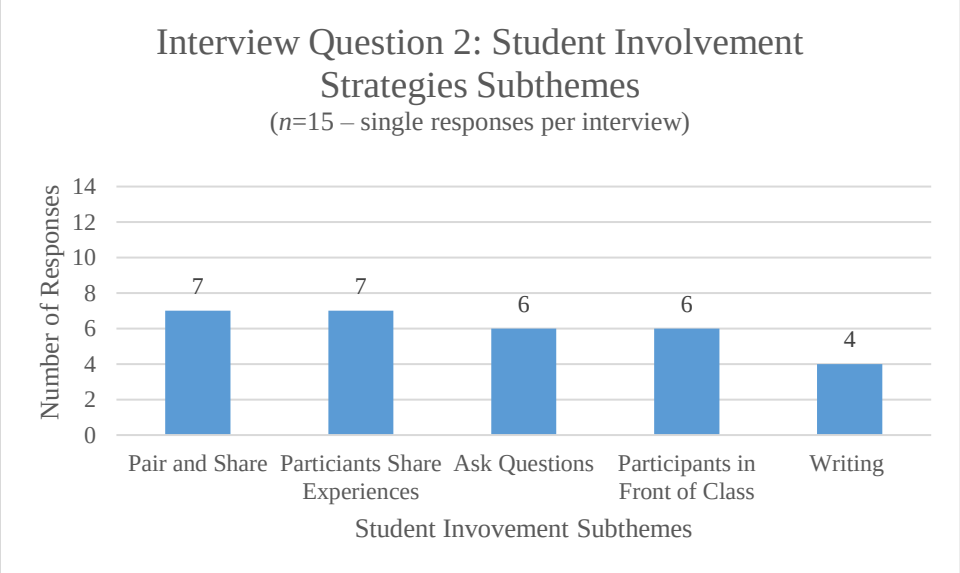

Figure 10. Interview question 2: Student involvement strategies subthemes.

Pair and Share. The subtheme, Pair and Share, is a practice in which students in a class are asked to answer a question from the teacher and share their idea with an individual sitting next to them. One interviewee indicated, "I try to generate participation from the youth, even if is participation with the person next to them" (I2, personal communication, March 18, 2016). Another interviewee stated, "It might be a question that then I kind of have them do a pair and share [*sic*]" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 1 added, in reference to using the pair and share strategy, "It gets loud. You have 700 students talking. I have found it is well worth having them feel engaged [*sic*]" (personal communication, March, 18, 2016). Interviewee 4 stated,

> I want them to talk to each other. I want them to turn to someone and at least have a conversation. . . . I really feel like it's beneficial and it's helpful, and that ultimately some of them, if not many of them, are actually talking to someone next to them about that verse or scripture or quote. (personal communication, March 21, 2016)

Interviewee 6 spoke of a caution when employing a pair and share strategy.

> I don't always employ the tactic of "turn to your neighbor and talk to each other." I find that what that has the potential of doing in a very large auditorium is those people who are shy and private and quiet feel uncomfortable [*sic*]. Those people who are gregarious and humorous and funny are going to pick it up and talk, talk, talk, talk. Unless you have 20 minutes to wrap them back around, you may not get that [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Similarly, Interviewee 13 added,

> Seminary and institute kind of went through a big phase a while ago of "the teacher shouldn't be the talking head," and so everything turned into "turn to your neighbor and talk about this," which is a great strategy in a seminary classroom and a great strategy in a Sunday school classroom. But, it's not a great strategy when you have 900 kids (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Participants Share Experiences. The subtheme, Participants Share Experiences, eludes to the idea that participants in class are asked to share an experience from their lives about the content being presented. Some interviewees indicated that they employ this strategy as a session director at EFY, while others do not. For example, Interviewees 9 and 10 indicated they employ the strategy of having participants share experiences.

> So lots of times as I'm teaching a principle, I'll say, "Who has experienced that?" have them share a story, and I hope that somebody else will connect that experience to their life and say, "Oh yeah, I have had that too [*sic*]." (I10, personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Additionally, Interviewee 9 stated,

> The very end of EFY, I always have the kids come up. I have one person in each company come up and I have the counselors assign one person they really felt like grasped the week and it was life changing for them, and they've got a great testimony and something they want to share. I have them stand up in front of everybody, and [say], "This is what I'm going to do to take it home" . . .When the[y] talk, the youth listen differently, plus . . . it solidifies their testimony and what they believe because they are voicing that [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Interviewees also indicated being "cautious and careful" about participants sharing experiences with the class (I4, personal communication, March 21, 2016).

> I really was frustrated at a time when . . . teachers who were involved with the program kind of got on this kick of, "Oh, would someone stand up and share your feelings about this?" Well, some girl stands up. Nine hundred kids can't hear a word she's saying, or we fumble with the mic to finally get it to her, and then we've lost the kids because five minutes has [*sic*] past . . . in [a] ballroom . . . it's not the place for "Let's have a discussion. How do you feel about this? Has anyone had an experience you'd like to share?" That just doesn't fly when you're in those large groups. (I13, personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Ask Questions. The subtheme, Ask Questions, describes the practice of session directors asking questions to participants. Interviewee 2 indicated, "Good teachers at EFY aren't afraid to ask questions" (personal communication, March 18, 2016). Interviewee 8 indicated,

> I feel much better as a teacher when I am getting some kind of participation from people. And so I'll have numerous spots over the course of a 45-minute class where I am asking questions that they respond to and then I'll ask, "What thoughts do you have about this, what might you say about this topic?" . . . Otherwise it just feels so rote and stale" (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Interviewee 11 indicated, "I want kids to be participating in thinking but I can't just open up a question and let kids share. Because if it's someone in the front, the kids in the back disengage" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 7 added,

> A lot of times I've found when you ask questions that are just cold, people give answers and it's not even the answer they want to give. They are just nervous and they're scared and they're scared what's on the top of their mind, but if they have a chance a think or practice and then you get some meaningful answers and then I can build off of them [*sic*]. Depending on the class size [*sic*]. Sometimes classes are so big that that becomes unruly and what happens, it becomes a show for ten and others tune out because they know that they are not part of it. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Participants in Front of the Class. The subtheme, Participants in Front of the Class, means that participants in the classroom are asked to come to the front of the class for a purpose indicated by the session director. Interviewees 1, 12, and 13 indicated that they have participants come to the front of the classroom. "I'll bring kids up on stage" (I1, personal communication,

March, 18, 2016). “Even if you have one volunteer or two volunteers from class [*sic*]. All of a sudden they are engaged (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016).

> I find myself engaging kids by having them come up, role play something, or read something, or hold something. And that way I can engage kids, but it’s safe. Safe for them and safe for me. They can come participate without feeling like they are going to be put on the spot. (I13, personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Writing: The subtheme, Writing, is defined as having participants write an answer to a question or a thought in the participant manual provided by the EFY program. One interviewee stated, “I’m asking them to write something down” (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Another interviewee stated, that they “giv[e] [the participants] a chance to write in their little notes (I13, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Additionally, Interviewee 15 invites participants to write after listening to music. For example, “After you hear this song, will you go to your journals and write down the first thought that comes to you mind [*sic*]?’ Now you have 800 youth in unison hopefully they will go into their journals [*sic*]” (personal communication, April 5, 2016). Interviewee 11 added,

> I’ll ask journal type questions. Share an experience or a chronicle or scripture story that they can relate to and then their sharing would be by themselves in a journal. It could be one strategy there is one that I use [*sic*]. So then I have 800 youth thinking, processing, or articulating at the same time and that’s the goal. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Teacher-led Techniques. Through the analysis of the key practice of Teacher-led Techniques, the data yielded twelve subthemes, or practices, that session directors employ as they teach. The twelve subthemes were: (a) Use of Scripture, (b) Narrative, (c) Music, (d) Use of

Media, (e) Humor, (f) Pictures or Images, (g) Variety, (h) Invite to Act, (i) Lesson Connectivity, (j) Object Lesson, (k) Physical Movement, and (l) Testimony (see Figure 11). Each subtheme is described and examples given as follows.

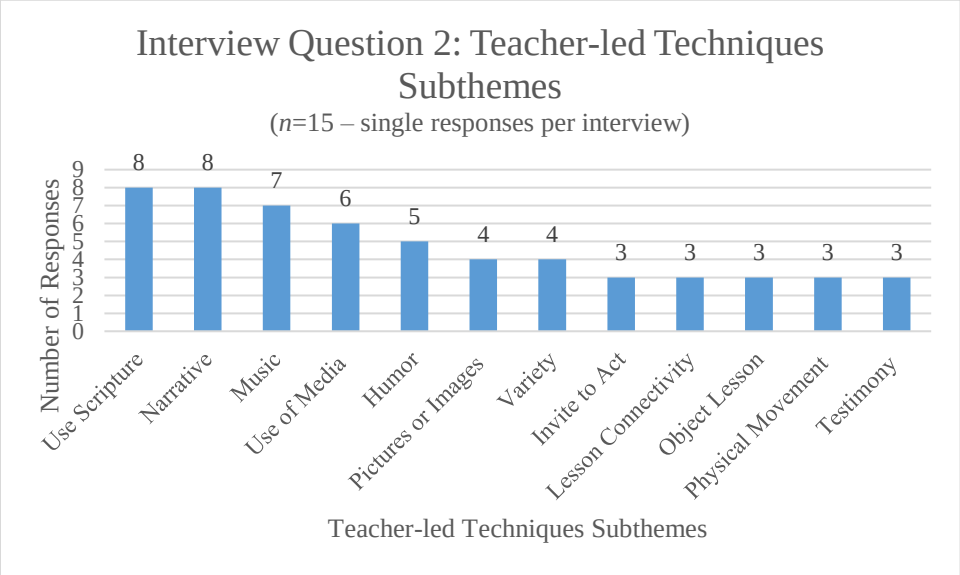

Figure 11. Interview question 2: Teacher-led techniques subthemes.

Use of Scripture: The subtheme, Use of Scripture, is defined as using the standard words of the LDS Church. Interviewees 1, 5, and 15 discussed the use of scriptures in their teaching strategies and practices. "I've always tried to make sure that we . . . got deep into the scriptures" (I1, personal communication, March, 18, 2016). "I try to be really heavy in the scriptures. I want to be really scripture based" (I5, personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 5 added,

> To me that means the thing that I love about the EFY audience is they are invested in their scriptures. I learned that right off the bat. The first time I taught an EFY class, it was amazing to me how willing they were to get into their scriptures. I've always felt like I want them to be really digging into the scriptures. (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Interviewee 15 indicated a desire for participants to look at scriptures by thinking, "How can I get them to look at verses of scriptures so they aren't just listening to my teaching of the scripture" (personal communication, April 5, 2016)?

Narrative: The subtheme, Narrative, indicates the session directors use story-telling as a strategy or practice, both of others and personal stories. Interviewee 11 stated, "Stories, stories are magical" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Concerning the type of stories the participant shares, Interviewee 11 added, "If I am speaking to youth, instead of sharing what I am experiencing now in my life, I would be more reflective from when I was a teenager" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewees 6, 7, 9, and 13 emphasized their desire to share personal stories.

Interviewee 6 stated,

> I've had experiences that maybe unique, for example, I have opportunities from time to time to be in geographies where the gospel is small. I went to church in Bangalore, India—one of the most humbling and sacred days I've had in my life. Without looking at as here is a map of travels, I look at here is the gospel wherever we are [*sic*]." (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Interviewee 7 indicated,

> I'd always try and use a personal or relevant experience. Something that is, once again, not just a great story, but an illustration of a thematic approach, or the point, or theme, or the objective that I'm teaching [*sic*] . . . I like to use personal stories, not because I'm an expert story teller because I am not, but it's because I can actually said, "I felt this way and I did [*sic*]. I know exactly how I felt because I learned this." I can say that for certain. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Interviewee 13 added a similar sentiment when he or she stated, “I think I’ve tried to engage [participants] with stories, with personal experiences” (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Additionally, this interviewee 9 indicated telling a personal story helps to connect with youths. For example, “I feel very strongly I always move into a personal story, something that they go, ‘[The session director] gets this…[they] understand me’” (personal communication, March 23, 2016). In contrast, one interviewee used the following caution when telling stories.

> I try to be careful with stories. Teachers that tell stories that I think, “That’s true [*sic*].” In storytelling, we can get off and start embellishing stuff. I really think that teachers that teach stories right on [*sic*] . . . I try to be very honest in my stories.” (I15, personal communication, April 5, 2016)

Music: The subtheme, Music, indicates the session director either plays a song or invites an EFY staff member to sing for the participants. A few of the interviewees specifically indicated that use of the EFY music. Interviewee 15 stated, “I like to use the music. I think the music is an integral part of the program. I think it adds power” (personal communication, April 5, 2016). Interviewee 8 recounted,

> Music—I don’t typically put my music at the end. I will put it in the middle. So that it causes a change of pace and maybe invites the spirit in, in different ways than just standard lecture format [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Additionally, Interviewee 7 added,

> [Participants] go home from the EFY session and they happen to put in their CD or whatever and listen to music, I’m hoping that it will evoke more than nice music, it will take them back to a devotional or a teaching setting where whatever it is that they learn

> from watching, observing, and they may pick up something from that class or from that experience [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Use of Media: The subtheme, Use of Media, means that session directors use audio or video as part of the lesson. Interviewee 6 stated, "For example, if I'm quoting President Gordon B. Hinkley, I'll often get a video clip of his speech, so it's his voice, his words, and not just rephrasing of them [*sic*]" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 9 added,

> I feel really strongly about using all the video that's out there. The church does the Bible videos, the *Mormon Messages* youth videos so intertwined with my presentation [*sic*] . . . I always try and keep their attention by putting in video so that they are constantly sitting there listening, constantly just watching someone talk or hearing someone else, but having them visually see something, hear music, hear someone tell their story [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Interviewee 12 recounted, "I spend so much time figuring out the proper ways to engage them and get them involved . . . whether its videos, those type of interactive activities" (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Humor: The subtheme, Humor, means that session directors use material in their lessons that is intended to be fun and amusing. Interviewees 2, 7, 8, and 13 mentioned the use of humor. Interviewee 2 stated, "I'm a big fan of humor. I think the general authorities use humor in the most sacred meetings, I think that means we should too (personal communication, March 18, 2016). Interviewee 7 added, "Humor . . . I try to incorporate it" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 8 indicated "[I use] humor . . . to catch them by surprise that sort of jolts the mind a little bit and says, 'Are you paying attention?'" (personal communication, March 23,

2016). Finally, Interviewee 13 said, “Humor is very engaging and it may not be on the list of some seminary teacher’s tool list” (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Pictures or Images: The subtheme, Pictures or Images, indicated that the session director uses a picture with assistance of a projector so all participants are able to see it. Two comments from interviewees indicated a use of pictures or images in teaching. “I love using pictures, images with those from the [LDS] Church’s library of images” (I4, personal communication, March 21, 2016). Another interviewee stated, “Pictures are always worth 1,000 words and sometimes can teach much more prolifically and powerfully than anything else (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016).

Variety: The subtheme, Variety, means that within a lesson, the session director will use a variety of instructional approaches. Interviewees 11 and 15 indicated that sitting and listening to a teacher is not ideal. Interviewee 11 stated, “Another teaching strategy is just variety. Talking for 50 minutes . . . death on a stick” (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 15 added, “Try to come up with more creative ways so they aren’t sitting there for 40 minutes listening to one speaker” (personal communication, April 5, 2016). Another interviewee indicated, “I will go look and see are there enough, sort of, shifts in speed or humor or maybe an object lesson, something that will help those that have become disengaged to reengage” (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Another interviewee suggested using five senses as a method to add variety. “If you add in different senses, it seems like it can make it more engaging . . . I like to add in food at some point during one of my lessons” (I3, personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 3 indicated use of a self-developed checklist as part of a lesson plan (see Appendix I) that is used to ensure variety. “I’m just the kind of person that needs a

checklist, but I don't want to do the same things. It keeps my variety [*sic*]" (personal communication, March 21, 2016).

Invite to Act. The subtheme, Invite to Act, means that session directors invite participants to act or do something different in their lives, inside or outside of class, related to the content shared in the classroom. Two examples of the idea to invite were stated by Interviewees 7 and 8.

> What are some practical implications that could be taught and/or directed emphasis to that they could build faith, by doing what [*sic*]? Giving them some practice things to do . . . If you teach doctrine, invite them to engage in it. Sometimes, literally say, "I'd like to invite you to try this in your life." (I7, personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Interviewee 8 added, "You have go to . . . it has to translate [*sic*]. Translate into new ways of understanding the gospel. New understandings, new behaviors right?" (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Lesson Connectivity. The subtheme, Lesson Connectivity, indicates that session directors plan for the lessons taught throughout the week to have a common theme, or thread, and are not isolated individual topics. Interviewees 4, 7, and 11 indicated their desire connect the lessons they give throughout the week. Interviewee 4 stated, "I'm trying to weave a message throughout the week . . . it is a week of a big talk" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Additionally, Interviewee 7 indicated, "My strategy has always been, everything is a thread. At the end of the week, what's the fabric? Fireside is building upon something I did at a Monday morning devotional and I map those out [*sic*]." (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 11 added, "My goal as a teacher is to have [lessons] build on each other and they weave throughout the whole week [*sic*]" (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Object Lesson. The subtheme, Object Lesson, means that session directors use an example from real life or a practical experience that teaches a lesson or principle. The response of Interviewees 9 and 11 indicate a use of object lessons as a strategy in teaching. "I always like to start off with kind of an object lesson, something that involves the youth so they are immediately turn to me and go, "Wow that was really cool" (I9, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Interviewee 11 added,

> I have brought my baby child up on Thursdays when we are having the young women's thing. Just talk about being a child of God. Of course when you bring a baby up every goes like "Ohhhh!!" [*sic*] So I guess that's an object lesson. Can't call a human an object . . . but something that associated with our goals, with their desires, with their innate dreams, and build on it and relate to it. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Physical Movement. The subtheme, Physical Movement, denotes that session directors move or walk around the classroom as they are teaching. Interviewee 3 indicated, "I've been working on trying to walk around more. I like to not be behind a podium if I can because it helps me if I'm physically facing different areas of people then I remember talk to all of them [*sic*]" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 5 indicated their preference by stating, "I'd rather by physically close to the students when I teach" (personal communication, March 22, 2016).

Testimony. The subtheme, Testimony, means that session directors share their personal religious beliefs with the participants. Interviewee 6 emphasized,

> If I'm not feeling the spirit, I can't figure out why it's not connecting. I can't see in the eyes in the individuals that it matters. Even in the hardest of times, even when I've been

> outdoors—where outdoors is the worst place to teach— I have learned that as soon as you find yourself rambling, or you find yourself not connecting, stop. Bear your testimony. Talk about the Savior. You don't have to say another thing about your lesson. (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Interviewee 7 added, "We might call this in the [LDS] Church, testify [*sic*]. I'm not just saying, 'This is true,' but 'if you do this, this will happen in your life' (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Flexibility. The theme, Flexibility suggests that during the lesson, session directors allow for changes and adaptations as the lessons progress. Through the analysis of the key practice of Flexibility, the data yielded two subthemes, or practices, that session directors employ that reflect flexibility in the classroom. The two subthemes include: (a) Pivot and Change, and (b) Have Few Main Points (see Figure 12). Each subtheme is described and examples given as follows.

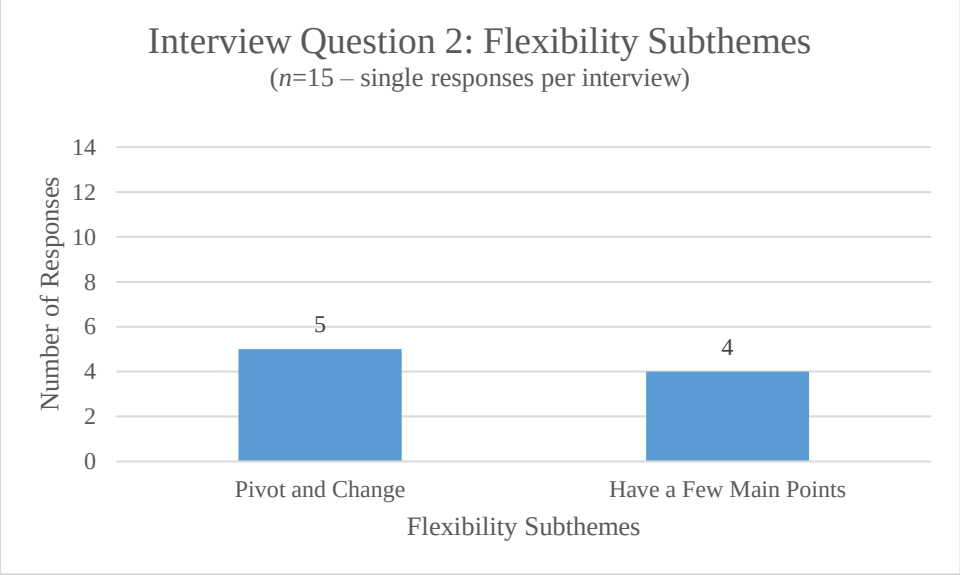

Figure 12. Interview question 2: Flexibility subthemes.

Pivot and Change. The subtheme, Pivot and Change, means during the lesson, the session director does or says something not previously planned prior to the lesson. Interviewee 2 stated, "I'll have something in the very moment" (personal communication, March 18, 2016). Interviewee 12 added,

> Every single time that I get up there and teach, I will say something that I had not prepared to say, or a scripture comes up in my mind that I will reference and will read on the spot. Sometime that was something that was not part of my preparation will always come out [*sic*]. To me, that is the spirit that is coming from something other than me that is bringing that to my remembrance, and bringing that to the forefront of the my mind because someone needed to hear that. There have been so many times where I have had, "That one thing that you mentioned about this" or "That one scripture that you added there at the end, that was perfect." That's when I know that I could not have done that on my own because I didn't know what that one kid needed to hear. What we believe is that higher power that knows everyone and knows what we all need, working through me to teach someone who is there [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Interviewee 9 sharing a similar experience stated, "I felt so inspired to tell the story but it wasn't part of my plan" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 12 also noted,

> I prepare. I will do an outline. But, when I'm up there, I'm not reading from a script. I am just doing what I can to say what I have prepared, but also allow myself to be open to something that I am prompted to say in the moment [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Interviewee 3 stated, “I don’t want it to be just, ‘We have to go here because this is what I planned, and we have to go here because this is what I plan.’ So being able to follow the group is important to me” (personal communication, March 21, 2016).

An interviewee shared an experience.

> When I was in Nauvoo, I taught the same class three times. I had 45 minutes, and I had twelve slides. The first class, we got through all 12 slides and the rhythm was fine and the message was adequate. The second time I got through three slides and everyone in that second class thought that they had the whole lesson because you have to adapt to the level of what they are learning, and allow the spirit to teach it and not cadence yourself through a teaching moment. The third time, I got through 9 of the slides and it didn’t matter. But, what you have to do as the facilitator of the spirit is be capable to pivot and close, and never made reference to the fact that, “Well, we’ve run out of time.” Or “I have three more slide to share with you . . . boom, boom, boom, there they are.” This is not about us as teachers; it’s about the adaptiveness in the room to the spirit teaching them in the time that they need to absorb it with the information that they need. It’s that pivoting and adaptation that doesn’t cause you to sequentially get through your speech. (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016)

An interviewee described a system used to allow for flexibility in teaching. Interviewee 4 stated,

> I want the PDF of the participant guide and for every session director message. I’m going to take that PDF and copy and paste it and put it on the right side of my PowerPoint slide and do a 16x9 PowerPoint slide (see Appendix J). With that up there, I will create links to wherever it is I want to go for that topic . . . it looks like I’ve written there with handwriting. I’ll have links or images or whatever is on my version of their participant

> guide. I click on those and it takes me out to a completely different PowerPoint (see Appendix K). I would go through that and when I exit out of that PowerPoint, it brings me right back to that again. It's like my home page. So, I can fluidly work through that. Go to any one of the ten, twenty, fifteen links that I have set up there . . . it will link out, touch that and come back. I like that because I'm not tied linearly to taking them through a presentation . . . I usually only go to two or three, maybe four. I know the conclusion, and I know the start. But, I'm not sure if I'm going to it here or there. It freed me up. It really freed me up. (personal communication, March 21, 2016)

Have a Few Main Points. The subtheme, Have a Few Main Points, indicates that lessons are simplified by only having a few ideas that the session director would like to cover. Interviewee 12 stated, "They hear so many talks that whole week, they can't possibly remember everything. So, if they just can remember one thing from everything that I say, then every talk that I give, I think that's good [*sic*]" (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Additionally, Interviewee 7 recommended having "one element that you are trying to emphasize—never go beyond three. If you say I'm doing four related things, it was just, usually in my experience, way too much; the cup was full and now you are just saturating" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Another interviewee said, "I have the three main points that I know I want to hit, but then everything else in between is kind of just go with the flow" (I3, personal communication, March 21, 2016). Instead of main points, Interviewee 2 reflected, "I think I need three scriptures per hour" (personal communication, March 18, 2016).

Practices to Avoid. Through the analysis of the key practice of Practices to Avoid, the data yielded two subthemes or practices that session directors seek to avoid in the classroom. The

two subthemes were: (a) Manipulation, and (b) Small Classroom Practices (see Figure 13). Each subtheme is described and examples given as follows.

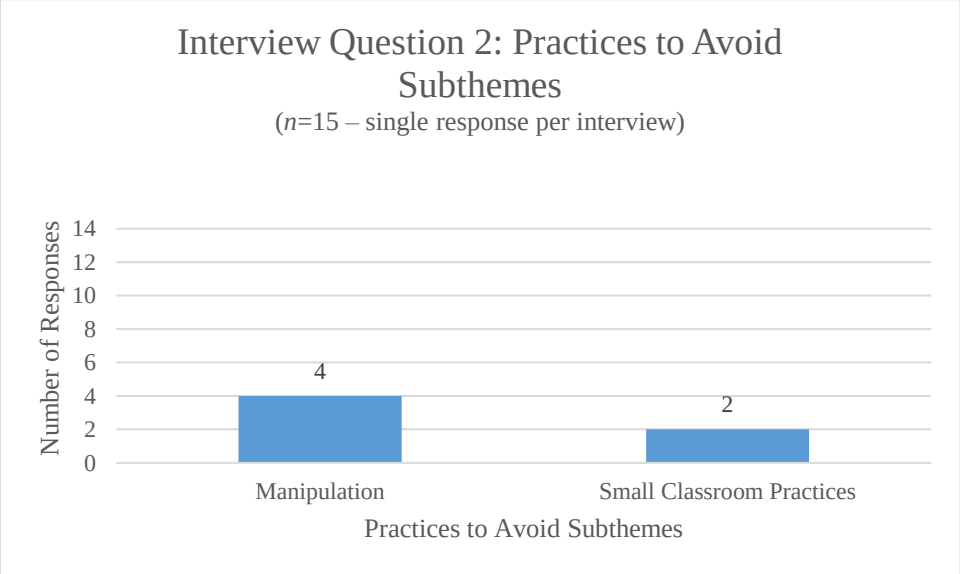

Figure 13. Interview question 2: Practices to avoid subthemes.

Manipulation. The subtheme, Manipulation, means that the session director is in some way coercing the students. One interviewee noted, "I wanted to move as far away from [manipulation] as I possibly could" (I1, personal communication, March, 18, 2016). Two interviewees suggested that manipulation happens through emotionalism. Interviewee 6 said,

> There are some teachers who try to manipulate emotion, who try to get a young person to cry as if it suggestions [*sic*] that is the manifestation of the spirit, when it is not . . . [M]y goal with the youth is to be less sensational. (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Additionally, another interviewee suggested, "Emotionalism as . . . [*sic*] we tend to shy away from that kind of thing as potentially manipulative or imitation of spiritual promptings, a substitute for spiritual promptings" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Small Classroom Practices: The subtheme, Small Classroom Practices, refers to practices that would be conducive to a classroom with a smaller number of students. Two interviewees noted large and small classrooms specifically. Interviewee 6 stated,

> Too often I have seen open chaos break out in some of the most skilled teacher environments. Everyone attributes to it to, "See, they're engaged." When in fact you may have lost the opportunity for the spirit to teach because you are still working through human dynamics. My gravitational pull is not toward a lot of small classroom interactivity in a large room. (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Interviewee 5 added, "There may be a lesson during seminary that has a great group activity or object lesson, but you can't do that with 450 kids" (personal communication, March 22, 2016).

Summary of findings for interview question two. The second interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices session directors use in the classroom as they teach youths. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key practices: (a) Student Involvement Strategies, (b) Teacher-led Techniques, (d) Flexibility, and (e) Practices to Avoid. The data analysis of the first theme, Student Involvement Strategies, yielded five subthemes: (a) Pair and Share, (b) Participants Share Experiences, (c) Ask Questions, (d) Participants in Front of Class, and (e) Writing. The pair and share practice is a practice in which the student shares an idea or answer to a question with the person sitting adjacent to them. One interviewee noted, "I try to generate participation from the youth, even if is participation with the person next to them" (I2, personal communication, March 18, 2016). Other techniques included inviting students to share experiences relating to the content of the class, and inviting them to the front of class to model or participate in some way. Session directors also said they invite students to write down their thought and impressions, typically in the participant journal received from the EFY program.

In the second theme, Teacher-led Techniques, the data yielded twelve subthemes, or practices, that session directors employ as they teach. The twelve subthemes were: (a) Use of Scripture, (b) Narrative, (c) Music, (d) Use of Media, (e) Humor, (f) Pictures or Images, (g) Variety, (h) Invite to Act, (i) Lesson Connectivity, (j) Object Lesson, (k) Physical Movement, and (l) Testimony. Eight session directors specifically mentioned the use of scriptures in teaching and their desire to "get deep into [them]" (I1, personal communication, March, 18, 2016). Narrative, or the sharing of stories, whether they be personal experiences or those of others, is a practice that eight session directors mentioned. Session directors also discussed the use of music, typically the EFY music produced for that particular EFY theme. The use of media in the form of audio or video material was also mentioned, including audio clips of a speech (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016), Bible videos, or Mormon Message youth videos. In regards to the use of humor, one interviewee noted, "[I use] humor . . . to catch them by surprise that sort of jolts the mind a little bit and says, 'Are you paying attention?'" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). The use of visual material, though not in video form, but in the form of still pictures and images, was another teaching strategy that session directors practiced. Described by one interviewee, "Pictures are always worth 1,000 words and sometimes can teach much more prolifically and powerfully than anything else (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016). The teacher-led strategy of variety was described by Interviewee 11, "Another teaching strategy is just variety. Talking for 50 minutes . . . death on a stick" (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

An additional teaching practice session director use is inviting the learner to act or do something in their lives inside or outside of class, related to the content shared in the class. Interviewee 7 stated, "If you teach doctrine, invite them to engage in it. Sometimes literally say,

'I'd like to invite you to try this in your life'" (I7, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 8 suggested teaching has to, "translate into new ways of understanding the gospel…new behaviors" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Session directors also articulated the practice of lesson connectivity, meaning the lesson on one day of the week was connected to a lesson on another day later in the week. Interviewees also mentioned the use of object lessons, meaning they used objects to helps students to visualize and understand concepts.

In large sessions of EFY, it is difficult for session directors to move around while they are teaching and be closer physically to the students, even though teachers would prefer it. Interviewee 5 noted, "I'd rather by physically close to the students when I teach" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Further discussion of this finding can be found in the discussion on the teaching challenges that session directors face in teaching youths.

Another practice categorized is a teacher-led practice is the use of testimony. This is a practice in which the teacher shares his or her religious convictions, beliefs, or feeling. Interviewee 6 explained, "I have learned that as soon as you find yourself ambling, or you find yourself not connecting, stop. Bear you testimony [*sic*]. Talk about the Savior (personal communication, March 22, 2016).

The data analysis of the third theme, Flexibility, yielded two subthemes or practices that session directors seek to avoid in the classroom. The two subthemes were (a) Pivot and Change, and (b) Have a Few Main Points. The data analysis of the fourth theme, Practices to Avoid, yielded two subthemes, or practices, that session directors seek to avoid in the classroom. The three subthemes were: (a) Manipulation, and (b) Small Classroom Practices. Pivot and change implies that teachers change their lesson plan as they teach according to what they feel and the perceived needs and desires of the participants. Interviewee 12 stated,

> Every single time that I get up there and teach, I will say something that I had not prepared to say, or a scripture comes up in my mind that I will reference and will read on the spot. Sometime that was something that was not part of my preparation will always come out [*sic*]. To me, that is the spirit that is coming from something other than me that is bringing that to my remembrance, and bringing that to the forefront of my mind because someone needed to hear that. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

In regards to having a few main points, Interviewee 7 suggested having "one element that you are trying to emphasize—never go beyond three (I7, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 3 added, "I have the three main points that I know I want to hit" (I3, personal communication, March 21, 2016). Teaching strategies and practices to avoid include emotional manipulation, and the use of small classroom practices. For example, one interviewee noted, "There may be a lesson during seminary that has a great group activity or object lesson, but you can't do that with 450 kids" (I5, personal communication, March 22, 2016).

Interview question 3. To further understand research question one, the third interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices specific to youths compared to other groups of people. Through the analysis, the data yielded three key themes, those being (a) Characteristics of Youths, (b) No Differences Teaching Youths, and (c) Differences Teaching Youths (see Figure 14).

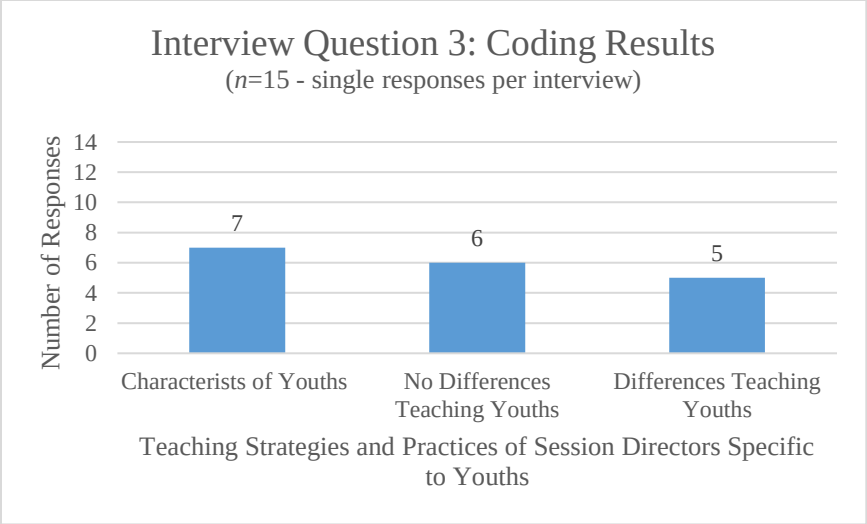

Figure 14. EFY Session Directors teaching strategies and practices specific to youths compared to other groups of people.

Characteristics of Youths. In the analysis of the theme, Characteristics of Youths, seven interviewees noted the differences of the characteristics of youths compared to other groups of people. Various characteristics were mentioned, including an eagerness and desire to learn, having less life experience, decreased attention span, and problems youths face unique to their age demographic. Interviewee I6 mentioned their eagerness to learn. "The youth generally know what they don't know and so they are kind of hungry. They are eager to learn . . . they sponge, they hunger, they love" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Two interviewees mentioned the life experience youth had compared to adults. Interviewee 1 stated, "For the youth, you are trying to draw things out of them than you are for the adults [*sic*]" (personal communication, March 18, 2016). Additionally, Interviewee 2 mentioned, "Older audience has more experience to draw from [*sic*]" (personal communication, March 18, 2016). One interviewee mentioned the attention span of youths and noted, "If you want to be good teacher? They are the acid test. They won't just sit there and nod. They'll fall asleep. They will turn to their phone in three seconds" (I7, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Another characteristic of youth is the problems they face as a group, such as "peer group pressure,

security . . . psychological changes in their lives . . . spiritual changes in their lives" (I7, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

No Differences Teaching Youths. The theme, No Differences Teaching Youths, suggested that the strategies and practices employed by session directors are the same strategies and practices they use with other groups of people. Examples of the theme were articulated by Interviewees 1, 3, 4, and 15. Interviewee 1 suggested that regardless of the age group, "Good teaching is good teaching" (personal communication, March 18, 2016). Additionally, Interviewee 3 stated, "The more I thought about [the question], really it's not that different" (I3, personal communication, March 21, 2016). Another interviewee indicated, "I don't think that I'm much different with other groups" (I4, personal communication, March 21, 2016). An interviewee added, "I don't think I change" (I15, personal communication, April 5, 2016).

Differences Teaching Youths. Through the analysis of the theme, Differences Teaching Youths, the data yielded two additional subthemes or practices where the interviewees described differences in their teaching strategies and practices with youth compared to other groups of people. The two subthemes were: (a) Pacing, and (b) Energy Level (see Figure 15). Each subtheme is described and examples are given as follows.

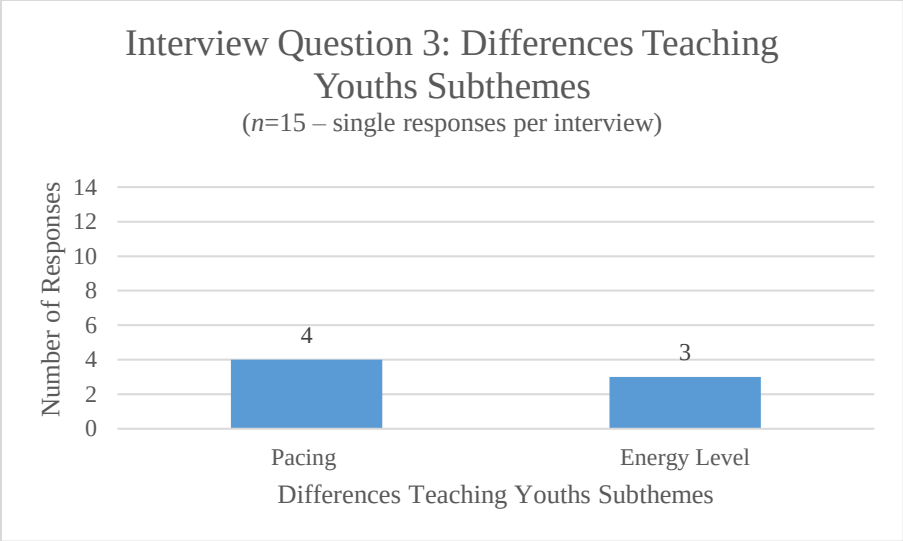

Figure 15. Interview question 3: Differences teaching youths subthemes.

Pacing. The subtheme, Pacing, suggests that for youths, an area session director will spend more time on one aspect of the lesson than another. Interviewee 5 spent more time on explaining the context and the background of scripture stories. "We'll take time and make sure they understand the individuals [who] are in a scripture story or if the context is important, we may spend a little more time on that just so they get it" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 8 suggested more time be spent on the application of information to a youth's personal life, comparing them specifically with college students.

> It needs to be something that they can very clearly see. "Why does this matter to me right now?" . . . So we spend a lot more time on application, even I don't do tons of this, but stories illustrating application [*sic*]. Explanation of application, them processing application . . . "[I spend] more time applying the principles to their lives. I find that adults and college students are better prepared to take abstract ideas and make them meaningful on their own . . . [with youths] we spend a lot more time on application . . . stories illustrating application. Explanation of application. Them processing application

> [*sic*]. I do very little of that with adult classes." (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Additionally, Interviewee 6, suggested an increase in speed of information, describing youths as being a part of an "immediate gratification society." For example, "[Youth have] immediate gratification for learning; if you do not adapt to their demand for immediate gratification or immediate curiosity, serving the immediate curiously [*sic*]. They will abandon you" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 6 added,

> I need step one to facilitate [their curiosity] by getting them immediately. I need to have gone down the path so as soon as talk about consecration and I jump into Hebrews and I'm talking about consecration in Hebrews, or I go to Alma and talking about him being consecrated by a high priest. I need to have gone to the footnotes. I need to understand what all of the Joseph Smith Translations for the Bible would be. I need to have researched enough that I can guide them expeditiously through it. (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Interviewee 3 suggested a specific amount of time to "chang[e] things up" by suggesting:

> With a 15-year-old, you want to make sure that at least every 15 minutes you are changing it up. It might be changing the discussion. It might be we are going to go from this principle to this principle. Or we're going to wrap this up in 15 minutes, and go to a video, or we are going to supplement a song right here . . . I don't like anything longer than about 15 minutes. Usually it's more like 10 minutes, just to kind of keep things moving. (personal communication, March 21, 2016)

Energy Level. The subtheme, Energy Level, can be described as having increased enthusiasm teaching youths. Two interviewees illustrate this point. "I know that probably sound

[*sic*] wrong, but I think the youth require a little bit more enthusiasm . . . we have five hundred youth. You have to be a little bit more engaging sometimes" (I9, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Another interviewee stated, "Enthusiasm for what I'm teaching is certainly needed at EFY. There certainly needs to be a certain level of enthusiasm" (I15, personal communication, April 5, 2016). Interviewee 7 added, "Energy levels. I may teach the same principle, but I may teach it in a different manner" (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Summary of findings for interview question three. The third interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices specific to youths compared to other groups of people. Through the analysis, the data yielded three key themes—(a) Characteristics of Youths, (b) No Differences Teaching Youths, and (c) Differences Teaching Youth. In the analysis of the first theme, Characteristics of Youth, seven interviewees noted the different characteristics of youths in comparison with other groups of people. These characteristics included eagerness and desire to learn, less life experience, decreased attention span, and problems youths face. The second theme, No Differences Teaching Youth, suggested that the strategies and practices employed by session directors are no different that teaching youths compared to strategies and practices used with other groups of people. Interviewee 1 suggested that regardless of the age group, "Good teaching is good teaching" (personal communication, March 18, 2016). The third theme, Differences Teaching Youths, suggested there were differences in teaching youths compared to other groups of people. The data yielded two additional subthemes or practices where the interviewees described differences—(a) Pacing, and (b) Energy Level. Pacing involves spending more time on one aspect of the lesson over another, such as providing youths with increase amount of context (I5, personal communication, March 22, 2016) or the application of information to the lives of youths. Interviewee 8 noted, "It needs to be something that they can

very clearly see. 'Why does this matter to me right now?' . . . So we spend a lot more time on application" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Energy level is described as having an increased amount of energy and enthusiasm when teaching youths compared to other groups of people.

Interview question four. To further understand research question one, the fourth interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices observed in other teachers that have been adopted as the interviewees' own practices. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key themes and practice, those being (a) Ways to Involve Students, (b) Don't Mimic, (c) Character, and (d) Use of Scripture (see Figure 16).

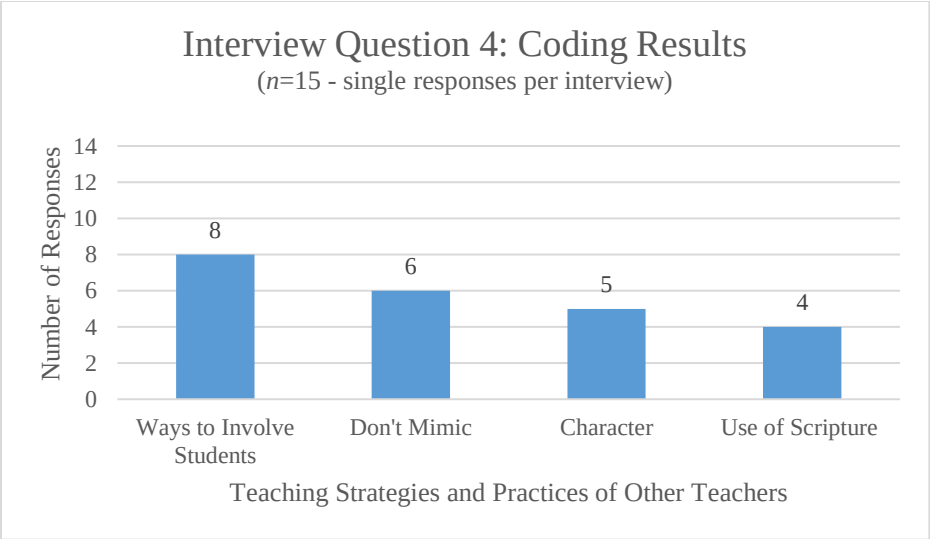

Figure 16. EFY Session Directors teaching strategies and practices observed in other teachers.

Ways to Involve Students. The first theme, Ways to Involve Students, refers to the way session directors help participants connect with the material being presented and actively do something during a lesson (see Figure 16). Interviewee 1 talks about the ability he observed in other session directors in the way they involve students.

> One thing that I learned early on as a session director to which [*sic*] I was very grateful for is the ability to involve every one of those students in the large group setting. At first,

> I thought, "No way, you are going to have to do more stand and deliver," but I saw teachers do this quite wonderfully, even in a large setting. (personal communication, March, 18, 2016)

One subtheme that emerged from the data analysis as one way to involve students was, Youths Sharing Experiences (see Figure 17).

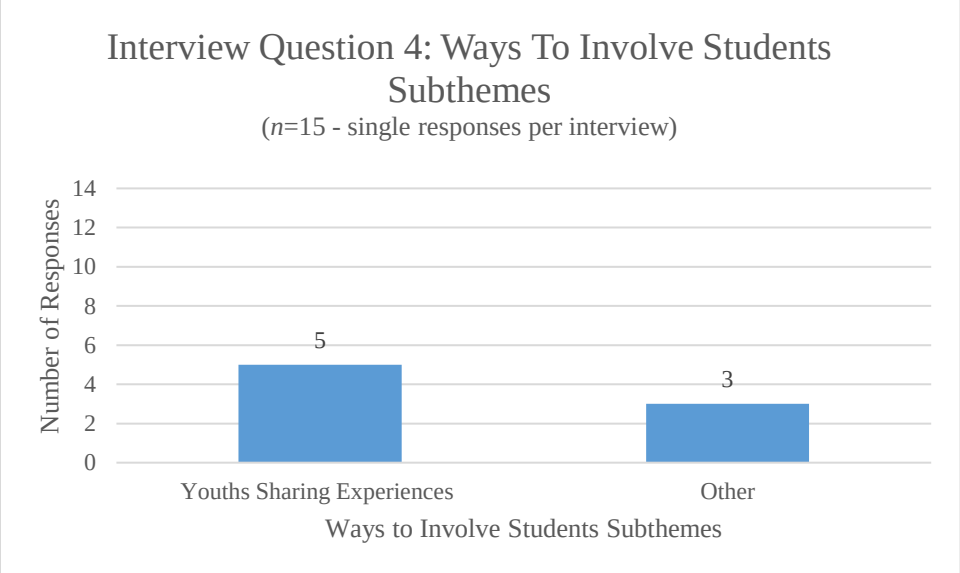

Figure 17. Interview question 4: Ways to involve students subthemes.

Youths Sharing Experiences. The subtheme, Youths Sharing Experiences, means that youths are given opportunities to share stories or experiences from their lives. Interviewee 5 stated, "A teacher will bring kids up to the front and give them a minute to share a story or an experience" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 5 used the example of pair and share activities. For example, "Some of them will do that with pair share activities where, even in a group of 500 kids, they can turn to a neighbor and talk" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 9 also noted, "He does this pair and share, and I've never really done that, and I should (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Another method that was observed in having students share is through the use of technology.

> Share through technology . . . I saw a teacher one time, he used a web based survey, like a poll app where you formulate your questions and the questions are put on the screen through the site. So you type in what the question is and then it [*sic*] a place for the students to text their response back to you. It gives a breakdown immediately of how many students felt one way or the other, and so every kid with a device (not all of them have them, but a large number of them did) to [*sic*] participate and give their answer, and then the results would appear on the screen. They really felt a part. "Hey, this is a give and take." (I1, personal communication, March, 18, 2016)

Don't Mimic. The theme, Don't Mimic, means that session directors do not try and imitate the teaching style of other teachers. Interviewees 6, 12, and 13 mentioned the desire not to imitate the strategies and practices of other teachers. Interviewee 13 noted, "Brother H uses humor so effectively. He's just as hysterical as can be. I can't keep the humor going the way he can. So, instead of trying, I say, that's his strength and I'll play to my strength" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 6 said, "But, I learned this—if I try to be Brother J, I won't be [me]. That was very helpful. So, I forced myself to not go look at others" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 12 added, "I'll never do the same thing that they do because the biggest danger that teacher or presenters can get into is not finding your own style, and not finding your own way of doing things, and you are just trying to mimic whatever one else does. It doesn't feel natural" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 13 also noted, "I think people have different strengths, and I think early on, I did try to kind of, try to pattern after speakers and teachers that I admired. But, I think the more I get into it, I'm just content to say, 'They have their strengths and I have my strengths'" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Another interviewee stated, "I might be the anti-technique borrower guy. If I

saw you teach, using object lessons, I might feel pretty compelled object lessons in that session [*sic*]. Weird, huh? Instead what happens is, 'Okay, I'm not going to repeat that'" (I2, personal communication, March 18, 2016).

Two interviewees noted that when they observe other teachers, they notice what they do and then "make it [their] own." For example, Interviewee 8 stated, "You have to make them [*sic*] your own. You have to adopt but also adapt; otherwise it is just going to fall flat" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Another interviewee shared a similar sentiment. "I'll watch how people speak or how they teach. I won't necessarily parrot what they do, but I'll say, 'Oh I like that.' Now, how do I do that where it's more my style? Then I'll tweak, or I'll change it, or I'll do something a little differently to fit in the way that I do it" (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Character. The theme, Character, is about the ways session directors are "making connections" and interacting with youths (I3, personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 4 noted, "Just the way that [other teachers] are able to reach and somehow connect with the youth [*sic*]. It's mannerisms, and it's who they are, and its character" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Similarly, Interviewee 3 added, "I really like watching [other teachers] teach when they are not teaching, meaning the ways they engage the youth when it's not their activity—talking to them, saying hi to them" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Another interviewee said, "I see teachers [build relationships with kids and] do that masterfully. They are sincere, they can relate to everyone in the class, they have empathy toward everyone in the class" (I14, personal communication, April 1, 2016).

Use of Scripture. The theme, Use of Scripture, denotes the way in which session directors utilize, reference, or teach from the scriptures, and the ways they invite students to interact with the scriptures. Interviewee 1 recounted,

> When I see a good technique, everything from just being the scriptures and ways that teachers get the kids in the scriptures in terms of how do they ask them or how to mark them or extract phrases or mine principle . . . ways they explain a particular verse of scriptures [*sic*]. (personal communication, March, 18, 2016)

"I've always seen the use of . . . scriptures" (I4, personal communication, March 21, 2016). "The way they taught a verse or taught a scriptures [*sic*] . . . Brother J seem to always be in the scriptures" (personal communication, March 21, 2016).

> Brother M is one my favorite teachers because he digs deep, but he never makes you feel stupid. Rather than replicating his approach, I wanted to know the scriptures well enough, so I could not necessarily quote them because I don't memorize well, but I wanted to know the doctrine well enough that I could talk to certain fascinating aspects of the doctrine. (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Summary of findings for interview question four. To further understand research question one, the fourth interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices observed in other teachers that have been adopted as the interviewees' own practices. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key themes and practices: (a) Ways to Involve Students, (b) Don't Mimic, (c) Character, and (d) Use of Scripture. The theme, Ways to Involve Students, include practices such as bringing students up to the front of the room and pair and share activities. As an example of the theme, Don't Mimic, Interviewee 12 stated, "I'll never do the same thing that they do…fin[d] your own style" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 13 said,

"I'm just content to say, '[Other teachers] have their strengths and I have my strengths'" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). The theme, Character, is the way session directors interact with youths when they aren't formally teaching. The theme, Use of Scripture, implies the way session directors utilize, reference, or teach from the scriptures and how they invite students to do so. For example, Interviewee 1 noticed how other teachers ask students "to mark them . . . extract phrases or mine principles . . . ways they explain a particular verse of scripture" (personal communication, March, 18, 2016). Interview 4 noticed how another teacher "[taught] a verse or taught a scripture" (I4, personal communication, March 21, 2016).

One subtheme generated from the data analysis of the theme, Ways to Involve Students included the theme, Youths Sharing Experiences. One interviewee observed teachers "bring kids up to the front and giving them a minute to share a story or an experience" (I5, personal communication, March 22, 2016). Another practice relating to the responses found for interview question two was the use of the pair and share practice in which participants "even in a group of 500 kids, they can turn to a neighbor and talk" (I5, personal communication, March 22, 2016).

Interview question five. To further understand research question one, the fifth interview question addressed the session directors' views on technology, teaching, how they incorporate technology into their teaching, and why or why not. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key themes, which are: (a) Negative View, (b) Ways to Use Technology, (c) Positive View, and (d) Use Technology Prudently (see Figure 18).

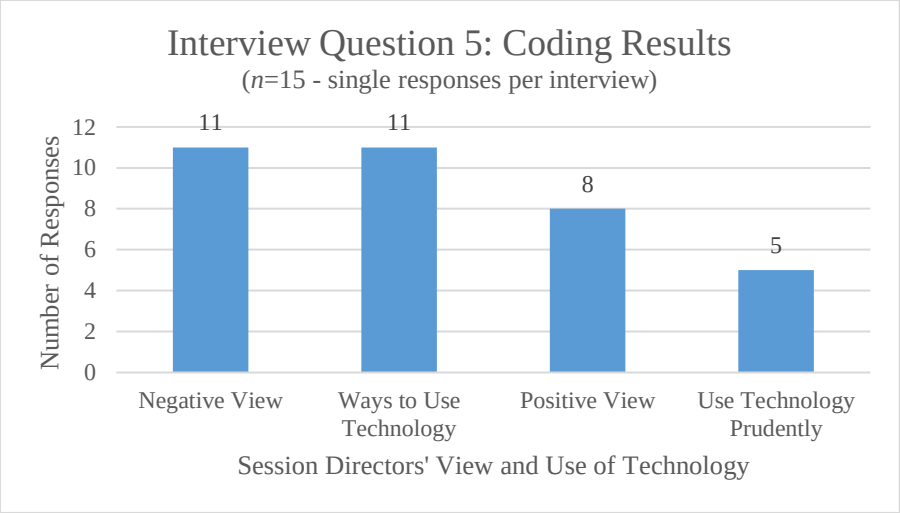

Figure 18. View and use of technology according to EFY Session Directors.

Negative View. Theme one, Negative View, indicates that session directors experience problems with technology and its use in the classroom. Through the analysis of the theme, Negative View, three subthemes emerged from the data—(a) Distraction, (b) Overuse, and (c) Compromises Social Skills (see Figure 19). Each of these subthemes are described as follows.

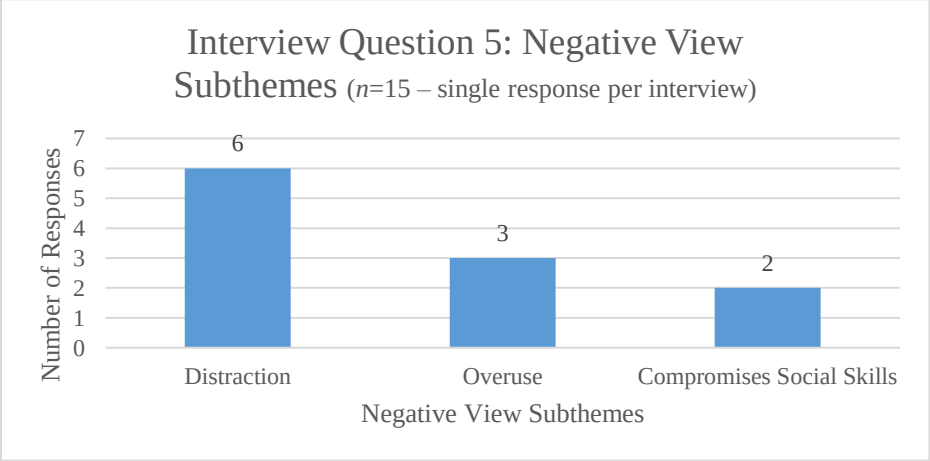

Figure 19. Interview question 5: Negative view subthemes.

Distraction. The subtheme, Distraction, denotes that technology can become a distraction in the classroom. “It can very distracting if problems [with technology] come up” (I10, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 11 reported, “Sometimes I won’t have kids do things digitally, because I’ll say, ‘Hey, go to this scripture, or pull up your social media to share

something.' Then they are not with me anymore because they are in other places" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 14 similarly added, "If you say 'do something on your phone,' you know how quickly . . . literally in 30 seconds, how many different things can you look at and be distracted by . . . even 10 seconds" (personal communication, April 1, 2016). Additionally, Interviewee 14 noted,

> As I watch their eyes go from their phone to the scriptures to the board . . . with technology that's hard. There is not a ton of stuff that will help you just focus. You touch one button and you are on a different planet all of a sudden. (personal communication, April 1, 2016)

Overuse. The subtheme, Overuse, means that session directors feel that technology can be used too much and can "control" the classroom. Interviewees 5, 6, and 8 shared similar sentiments regarding the overuse of technology. "I've seen teachers use PowerPoint. I've seen them use it too much" (I5, personal communication, March 22, 2016). "Now of course the risk is that the PowerPoint begins to control the conversation…I think all of us have to be aware of, as we are using technology, to use it as a tool, and the technology doesn't control the class" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). One interviewee explained, "I know PowerPoint can be used effectively. But I just figure so many people are using it effectively that it kind of becomes ineffective" (I13, personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Compromises Social Skills. The subtheme, Compromises Social Skills, denotes that the use of technology inhibits interaction among peers. One interviewee noted, "[Technology] stops interaction between the students" (I14, personal communication, April 1, 2016). Another interviewee expressed this sentiment:

> I kind of see the technology probably more negatively than many of the teachers. Many of the teachers probably see it as this wonderful thing, as a generation that is built to use their thumbs and all that stuff. But, I just worry because I see so many of them with poor social skills. They don't know how to start a conversation with a stranger. They don't know how to sit down in the cafeteria and start a conversation with somebody. They'll engage in a conversation if I start it, but they won't just start a conversation with a kid sitting next to them. (I13, personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Ways to use technology. Theme two, Ways to Use Technology, provides examples of technology tools use in the classroom. Through the analysis of the theme, Ways to Use Technology, three methods, or subthemes, emerged from the data—(a) Presentation Software, (b) Mobile Devices for Live Audience Participation, and (c) Digital Scriptures (see Figure 20).

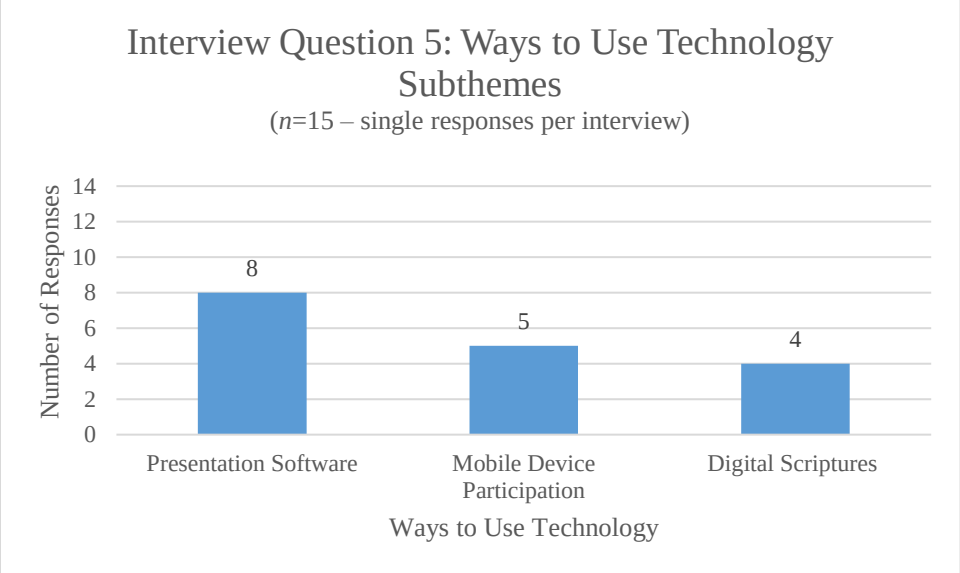

Figure 20. Interview question 5: Ways to use technology subthemes.

Presentation Software. The subtheme, Presentation Software, indicates the use of slide show presentation software such as PowerPoint, Prezi, and Keynote. For example, Interviewee 10 stated, "Usually I'm using like a presentation or PowerPoint, and I found that students really like to not only hear the quote but see the quote" (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Interviewee 14 added, “I do [use PowerPoint] for EFYs. They are so big; I have had sessions between 800 and 1100 kids, and visually it helps to have a giant projector up there to help you ask questions you don’t have to repeat” (personal communication, April 1, 2016). Interviewee 8 stated, “I do use power point; from time to time, I will have audio with the PowerPoint” (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 8 also stated reasons for using PowerPoint.

> The reason I use it is because I think that it helps visually for students to have something to look at. I think it focuses their minds. But, I’ll go away from the PowerPoint, but I still like the PowerPoint there to remind them there is a purpose, we are headed someplace, why he’s doing that [*sic*]. He’s going to circle back around or tie back in. So it is almost like reading the table of contents before you read the book. It sort of focuses things and outlines things, and the visuals are great. But also just sort of the mental focus and organization that can happen because of PowerPoint [*sic*]. So I don’t always, but I often use PowerPoint. I like them [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Interviewee 7 added,

> Sermon the Mount—to my knowledge—no PowerPoint on Sermon on the Mount. Does that mean . . . I’ve heard people take that and say, “So, Jesus would never use PowerPoint?” I don’t believe that’s true. He would use it, but he would use it well because he used loaves and breads. “A city set on a hill”—He could point to Tiberius easily. I don’t know if [He] did. Did He use teaching aids? We call them parables. And He was really good at that. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Mobile Devices for Live Audience Participation. The subtheme, Mobile Devices for Live Audience Participation, indicates the use of programs where the audience answers questions in

real time, and responses can be seen live on the web or in a PowerPoint presentation. Interviewee 12 stated, "I'll have them use their phone[s] and have them do an instant polling things sometimes, and put the results on the screen" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewees 10 and 14 mentioned specific live audience participation programs. Interviewee 10 stated, "Sometimes I'll use technology in that I'll use Kahoot to 'get to know me' . . . it's a fun, little interactive game that you use your cell phone for[*sic*]" (I10, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 14 added, "Poll Everywhere is another preparation thing. I try really hard to have inspired questions ready on those" (personal communication, April 1, 2016). Other interviewees stated that they have not used live audience participation programs. Interviewee 13 mentioned, "I haven't embraced it to the point where some teachers have. 'Text this in and we'll watch the screen, and we'll see how many opinions show up on these different topics'" (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Digital Scriptures. The subtheme, Digital Scriptures, refers to the use of the LDS Gospel Library mobile application to access scriptures. Three interviewees mentioned use of the digital scriptures. Interviewee 15 stated, "I'm starting to use my phone as my scriptures" (personal communication, April 5, 2016). Interviewee 2 added,

> I'm pretty fond of the idea that I can create tags in Gospel Library because as soon as I tag the scriptures, I have a whole list of scriptures that I can turn to, without necessarily putting them on board or remembering them. I can just link one scripture to the other because I have already tagged them in a general topic. (personal communication, March 18, 2016)

Interviewee 13 stated, "I'll encourage kids to look scriptures up on their handhelds if they don't have their scriptures" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). In disagreement with the use

of digital scriptures accessed by an app on a phone, Interviewee 9 remarked, “My scriptures have become my journal. I write all over the margins. I underline it. It becomes something that is meaningful. So for me, I don’t love the whole phone thing” (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Positive View. Theme three, Positive View, indicates that session directors think favorably of technology and its use in the classroom. One interviewee stated, “I use a lot of it” (I10, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Another stated, “I definitely incorporate it” (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 2 stated, “I try to master all the forms of technology” (personal communication, March 18, 2016). Interviewee 11 echoed, “As an EFY session director, man, I love it. It can do things for the learning experience that are really hard to match in other ways” (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Interviewees 4, 6, and 12 suggested other opinions. Interviewee 4 stated, “The larger the group, the greater the need, for me, in my opinion. Because I want everyone to be where we are, and I have less control over that the more they are attending, the greater number [*sic*]” (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 12 commented,

> I think you can get too wrapped up in that and the kids that are going to be distracted by their phone[s] are going to be distracted even if you [tell them] to put their phone[s] away. They’ll find a way. I’m just like, you know what? I’m not going to fight that battle. I’d rather just use it to my advantage somehow and use it to engage. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Interviewee 6 added,

> I believe that technology allows for rapid . . . in the time that you had mentioned anyone’s name, I probably would have Googled it, I would have read, and I would have

> known more about the person we're discussion [*sic*], even in a biblical sense or spiritual sense, than I could have ever done by just writing it down and hoping that I'll go back to it. So technology should be leveraged to learn. (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Use Technology Prudently. Theme four, Use Technology Prudently, means the session directors should use technology strategically and with caution. One interviewee suggested to "get ahead of it" by expressing the following view:

> You need to leverage it and not be leveraged by it. If you get ahead of it and use it, you will leverage it to facilitate greater learner and greater curiosity . . . so it means that what I am teaching should be more about facilitating their access and curiosity than gatekeeping their knowledge. (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Another interviewee stated, "There's got to be a point to it. I don't ever use technology for technology's sake" (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Interviewee 11 and 14 suggested not relying on technology. Interviewee 11 stated,

> If my message relies on technology—I have learned to never do that. Because that moment when you got to have it, it won't work. Something will be a glitch. Your computer won't sync up to the projector, the projector bulb burns out. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Interviewee 14 added,

> If you based your lesson on that, there is always something that goes wrong. The PowerPoint work or the Internet doesn't work . . . so it can't be right now with the way technology is, as the primary source. That happens is that you end up doing as a teachers [*sic*]. . . that kills the flow. How many times the teachers says [*sic*], "Let me try and get

that up." With our kids today, and adults, if they have 10 seconds to hold still, their phones are out. (personal communication, April 1, 2016)

Summary of findings for interview question five. To further understand research question one, the fifth interview question addressed the session directors' view on technology, teaching, how they incorporate technology into their teaching, and why they do or not do so. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key themes: (a) Negative View, (b) Ways to Use Technology, (c) Positive View, and (d) Use Technology Prudently. Theme one, Negative View, indicated that session directors encountered problems with technology and its use in the classroom. Three subthemes emerged from the data—(a) Distraction, (b) Overuse, and (c) Compromises Social Skills. One session director mentioned that sometimes they intentionally, "won't have kids do things digitally, because I'll say, 'Hey, go to this scripture, or pull up your social media to share something.' Then they are not with me anymore because they are in other places" (I11, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 14 similarly added, "If you say 'do something on your phone,' you know how quickly . . . literally in 30 seconds, how many different things can you look at and be distracted by . . . even 10 seconds" (personal communication, April 1, 2016). In relation to the overuse of technology, the session directors were referring to PowerPoint and teachers using it too much (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Issues regarding compromising social skills was the idea that a few session directors noted that participants have a difficult time caring conversations with their peers face-to-face.

Theme two, Ways to Use Technology, provided examples of technology tools used in the classroom. Through the analysis of the theme, Ways to Use Technology, three methods, or subthemes, emerged from the data: (a) Presentation Software, (b) Mobile Devices for Live Audience Participation, and (c) Digital Scriptures. The use of presentation software such as

PowerPoint is a strategy among eight session directors. Interviewees suggest using PowerPoint to "help . . . ask question you don't have to repeat" (I14, personal communication, April 1, 2016); to display quotes, "to not only hear the quote but see the quote" (I10, personal communication, March 24, 2016). An example, the use of mobile devices for live audience participation is using tools such as Poll Everywhere (I14, personal communication, April 1, 2016) for students to reflect and type answers to questions created by the teachers. Other session directors noted the use of mobile devices.

The analysis of the third theme, Positive View, indicates that session directors think favorably of technology and its use in the classroom. Interviewees expressed sentiments such as, "I use a lot of it" (I10, personal communication, March 24, 2016), "I definitely incorporate it" (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016), and "I try to master all the forms of technology (I2, personal communication, March 18, 2016). Caution and prudence in using technology was advised by some of the interviewees, reflected in theme four, Use Technology Prudently, who suggested that the use of technology should "facilitate their access and curiosity [rather] than gatekeeping their knowledge" (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016). Additionally, when technology doesn't work it can "kill the flow" of the class (I14, personal communication, April 1, 2016).

Summary of findings for research question one. Research question one states: What teaching strategies and practices are employed by session directors of the Especially for Youth program? The summary of findings for research question one are informed by the findings of interview questions one through five. The first interview question addressed strategies and practices session directors of the EFY program use in lesson planning and preparations to teach youths. The data yielded four key practices: (a) Content Preparation, (b) Personal Spiritual

Preparation, (c) Use of LDS Church Materials, and (d) Vision of Responsibility. Analysis of the first theme, Content Preparation, yielded five subthemes, or key practices, of content preparation: (a) Use Information from EFY, (b) Creating New Content, (c) Content Based on the Needs of Participants during the Session, (d) Brainstorm and Record, and (e) Draw from Current News and Media. The second theme, Personal Spiritual Preparation yielded three subthemes: (a) Prayer, (b) Personal Scripture Study, and (c) Personal Worthiness. For the third theme, Use of LDS Church Materials, two subthemes emerged from the data: (a) Quotes from LDS Church Leaders, and (b) Seminary and Institute Materials. The fourth theme, Vision of Responsibility, did not yield subthemes.

The second interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices session directors use in the classroom *as* they teach youths. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key practices: (a) Student Involvement Strategies, (b) Teacher-led Techniques, (c) Flexibility, and (d) Practices to Avoid. The data analysis of the first theme, Student Involvement Strategies, yielded five subthemes, or practices, that session directors employ to involve students. The five subthemes were: (a) Pair and Share, (b) Participants Share Experiences, (c) Ask Questions, (d) Participants in Front of Class, and (e) Writing. In the second theme, Teacher-led Techniques, the data yielded twelve subthemes, or practices, that session directors employ as they teach. The twelve subthemes were: (a) Use of Scripture, (b) Narrative, (c) Music, (d) Use of Media, (e) Humor, (f) Pictures or Images, (g) Variety, (h) Invite to Act, (i) Lesson Connectivity, (j) Object Lesson, (k) Physical Movement, and (l) Testimony. The data analysis of the third theme, Flexibility, yielded two subthemes, or practices, that session directors use in the classroom: (a) Pivot and Change, and (b) Have a Few Main Points. The data analysis of the fourth theme,

Practices to Avoid, yielded two subthemes or practices that session directors seek to avoid in the classroom. The two subthemes were: (a) Manipulation, and (b) Small Classroom Practices.

The third interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices specific to youths compared to other groups of people. Through the analysis, the data yielded three key themes: (a) Characteristics of Youths, (b) No Differences Teaching Youths, and (c) Differences Teaching Youth. In the analysis of the first theme, Characteristics of Youth, seven interviewees noted differences in the characteristics of youths compared to other groups of people. Various characteristics were mentioned, including an eagerness and desire to learn, less life experience, decreased attention span, and problems youths face. The second theme, No Differences Teaching Youth, suggested that the strategies and practices employed by session directors are the same for youths and other groups of people. The third theme, Differences Teaching Youths, suggested differences in teaching youths compared with other groups of people. The data yielded two additional subthemes, or practices, where the interviewees described differences: (a) Pacing, and (b) Energy Level.

The fourth interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices observed from other teachers that have been adopted as the interviewees' own practices. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key themes and practices: (a) Ways to Involve Students, (b) Don't Mimic, (c) Character, and (d) Use of Scripture. One subtheme, Youths Sharing Experiences, was generated from the data analysis of the theme, Ways to Involve Students.

The fifth interview question addressed the session directors' view on technology, teaching, how they incorporate it into their teaching, and why they do or do not incorporate it. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key themes: (a) Negative View, (b) Ways to Use Technology, (c) Positive View, and (d) Use Technology Prudently. Theme one, Negative View,

indicated that session directors detected problems with technology and its use in the classroom. Through the analysis of the theme, Negative View, three subthemes emerged from the data: (a) Distraction, (b) Overuse, and (c) Compromises Social Skills. Theme two, Ways to Use Technology, provides examples of technology tools used in the classroom. Through the analysis of the theme, Ways to Use Technology, three methods, or subthemes, emerged from the data: (a) Presentation Software, (b) Mobile Devices for Live Audience Participation, and (c) Digital Scriptures. Theme three, Positive View, indicates that session directors think favorably of technology and its use in the classroom. Theme four, Use Technology Prudently, means the session directors should use technology strategically and with caution.

Research question two. Research question two states: What teaching challenges are faced by the session directors of the Especially for Youth program? Interview question six addressed research question two. Interview question six states: What challenges do you a face as a session director in teaching youths?

Interview question six. The sixth interview question addressed challenges session directors face in teaching youths. Through the analysis, the data yielded three key challenges: (a) Connectivity, (b) Fatigue, and (c) Comparison (see Figure 21).

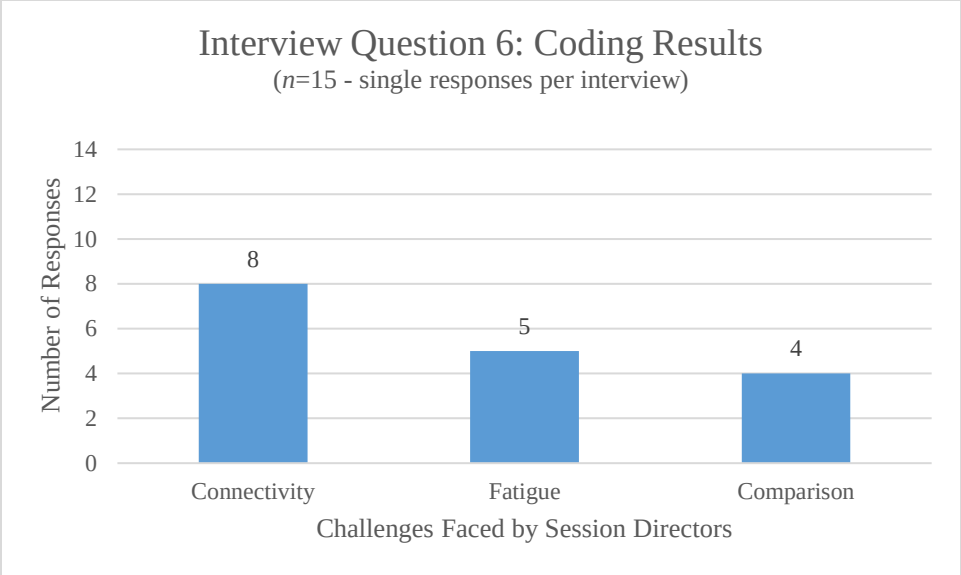

Figure 21. Challenges faced by session directors of the Especially for Youth program.

Connectivity. Theme one, Connectivity, refers to connection between teacher and learner, both inside and outside the classroom. Through the analysis of the theme, Connectivity, subthemes emerged from the data, which were: (a) Meeting Participants, (b) Physical Classroom Environment, and (c) Engagement in the Classroom (see Figure 22). Interviewees mentioned the size of the sessions as being a challenge, but the reasons why were prevalent in the following three subthemes.

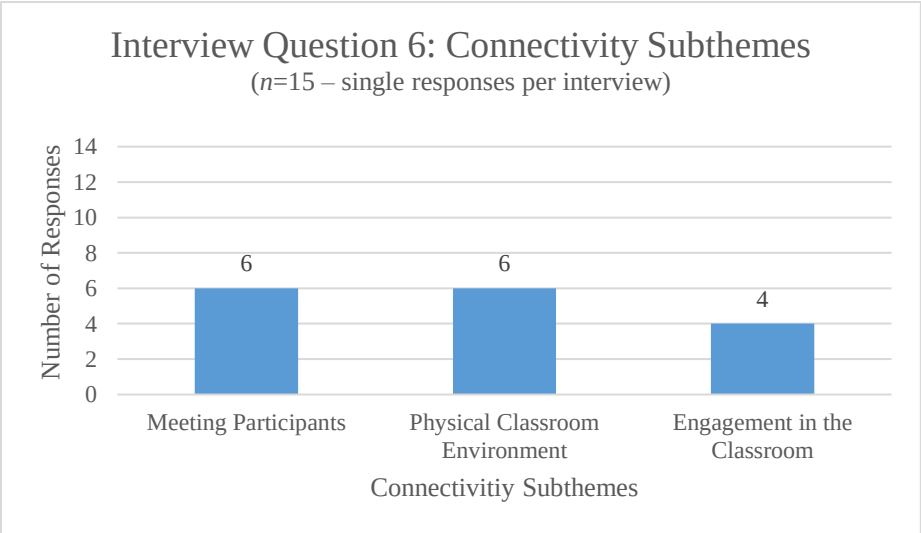

Figure 22. Interview question 6: Connectivity subthemes.

Meeting Participants. The subtheme, Meeting Participants, means that it is a challenge for the session director to meet the participants on an individual basis. Seven of the individuals interviewed for the study mentioned the difficulty of meeting participants at EFY individually. For example, Interviewee 15 stated, "Even though you don't get to know all of them . . . it's hard. I think that you have 800 kids there . . . something that's a challenge" (personal communication, April 5, 2016). Interviewee 8 added,

> It's hard to connect with that many people. It's hard to have a personal connection with 500 kids. That's a challenge . . . The size, and that leads it to being less personal. And then that worries me . . . connect with them in a personal way [*sic*]." (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Physical Classroom Environment. The subtheme, Physical Classroom Environment, suggests that the setup of the classroom is not conducive to teacher–student interactions. Interviewee 14 mentioned, "The venue is often a challenge really. Often" (personal communication, April 1, 2016). Interviewee 8 mentioned the difficulty in physically being among the participants. "I do a lot of movement among the students, and that can be done at times at EFY but often not." Interviewee 8 also mentioned the stage lighting can sometimes be challenging. "You are pretty divided from [the students] by a stage . . . So you are way up high and that visually works but to get down and be among them [is challenging]" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 11 added, "My position to them [*sic*]. Sometimes I am way up on a stage and to be able to get the lighting right, I can't see them" (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Engagement in the Classroom. The subtheme, Engagement in the Classroom, means that it is challenging for students to pay attention during class. Interviewee 4 noted one of the

challenges—"feeling like the kids are bored" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 5 added, "You know, you'll have a group of kids that are back in the corner or off to the side, that are kind of doing their own thing . . . I worry that they are not engaged. It's hard to engage an audience" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewees 2 and 3 mentioned that engagement can be difficult due to the amount of spiritual content.

> By Tuesday morning when a session director gives a devotional, there's a certain collection of kids that are already full. This is way too much in one week to have Sunday and then Home Evening. They are little bit done . . . Well, some of them checked out Monday night. That's enough. When is the dance? Give me food. (I2, personal communication, March 18, 2016)

Interviewee 3 stated, "Sometimes you can tell when you are teaching, you'll see that if it gets too spiritual, too long, some youth get uncomfortable because they are not use to thinking that hard, feeling that much" (personal communication, March 21, 2016).

Fatigue. Theme two, Fatigue, refers to the lack of sleep for both the session directors and the participants at the EFY program. Interviewees 1 and 11 mentioned the fatigue of youths. "It's very easy for these kids, especially later in the week. They are sleep deprived and tired. You are going to lose them" (I1, personal communication, March, 18, 2016). "They are up late at night in the dorm and so . . . Then they are sitting in those soft auditorium seats. Keeping them awake and keep engaging [*sic*]" (I11, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Others mentioned the physical rigor and fatigue of the session directors. For example, Interviewee 9 said, "I'm so tired by Wednesday, I can't even think straight. It so exhausting. It is literally exhausting . . . after I'm done with the week, I want to sleep for three days" (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Comparison. Theme one, Comparison, refers to session directors comparing themselves to other teachers. Examples include comments from Interviewees 4 and 9. "The greatest struggle I've ever had session directing is comparing myself to how it *should* be and how I've seen [*sic*] with other session directors" (I4, personal communication, March 21, 2016). "Measuring up against the greats of EFY; the greats of the Church. These teachers. These people" (I9, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Summary of findings for research question two. What teaching challenges are faced by the session directors of the Especially for Youth program? The summary of findings for research question two are informed by findings of the sixth interview question which addressed challenges session directors face in teaching youths. Through the analysis, the data yielded three key challenges: (a) Connectivity, (b) Fatigue, and (c) Comparison. The first theme, Connectivity, is informed by the subthemes that emerged from the data: (a) Meeting Participants, (b) Physical Classroom Environment, and (c) Engagement in the Classroom. The second and third themes, Fatigue and Comparison, did not yield subthemes. Seven of the fifteen session directors interviewed mentioned the difficulty in meeting the participants individually. For example, Interviewee 8 stated, "It's hard to connect with that many people. It's hard to have a personal connection with 500 kids" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). The recommendation discussed in the responses to interview question eight suggested ways that session directors try and get to know the participants. In connection with challenges related to the physical environment of the classroom, one interviewee noted, "Interviewee 11 added that due to the "positioning" and the lighting of the environment, "Sometimes . . . I can't see [the participants]" (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

The third theme, Fatigue, refers to the lack of sleep for both the session directors and the participants at EFY. Interviewee 9 noted, “I’m so tired by Wednesday, I can’t even think straight” (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Concerning the fourth theme, Comparison, Interviewee 4 stated, “The greatest struggle I’ve ever had session directing is comparing myself to how it *should* be and how I’ve seen [*sic*] with other session director” (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Another added that the challenge was, “Measuring up to the greats of EFY . . . those teachers. Those people” (I9, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Research question three. Research question three states: How do session directors of the Especially for Youth program measure their teaching success? Interview question seven addressed research question three. Interview question seven states: How do you measure your success teaching as a session director?

Interview question seven. The seventh interview question addressed how session directors of the EFY program measure their teaching success. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key measures of success, those being (a) Informal Feedback, (b) Feeling, (c) Formal Evaluation, and (d) Unknown (see Figure 23).

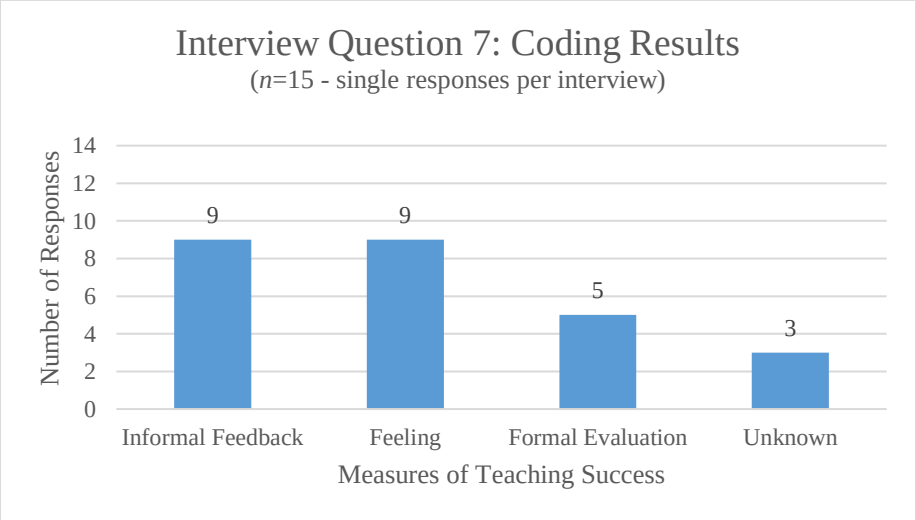

*Figure 23***.** Measure of teaching success of Session Directors of the EFY program.

Informal feedback. Theme one, Informal Feedback, includes comments made and conversations with individuals present during a lesson, and changes made in the lives of participants attending EFY. Three subthemes emerged as a result of analysis of theme one: (a) Comments from EFY Staff, Family Members, and Participants, (b) Not Based Participants Comments, and (c) Youths Lives Change (see Figure 24).

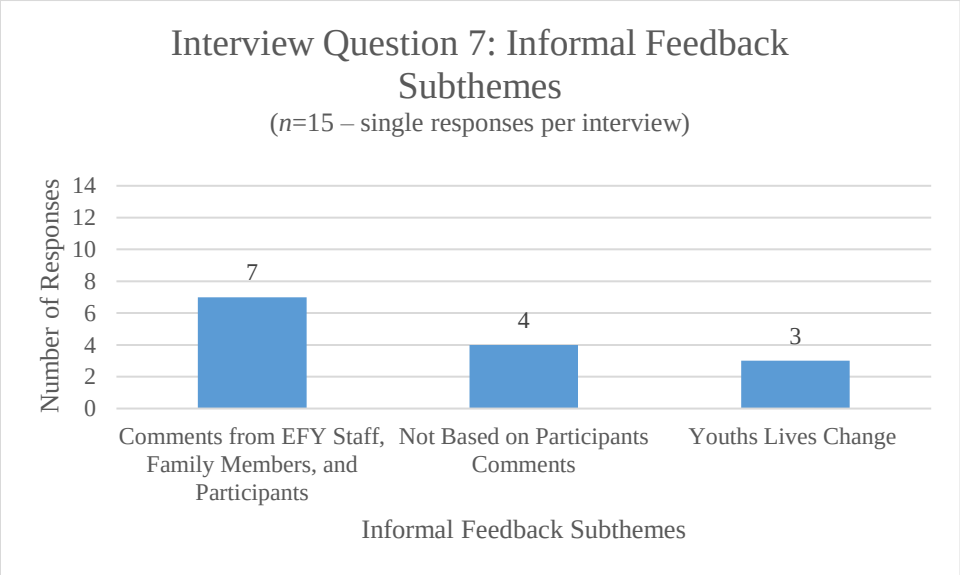

Figure 24. Interview question 7: Informal feedback subthemes.

Comments from EFY Staff, Family Members, and Participants. The subtheme, Comments from EFY Staff, Family Members, and Interviewees includes informal conversations following a lesson. EFY Staff include comments from coordinators, building coordinators, and counselors. Family members include the session directors' spouses and children who attend the session. Interviewee 5 stated, "I think it's helpful during the course of EFY to get feedback from counselors . . . It's really helpful to hear counselors talking about what their youth are doing" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 12 noted, "Another way is, of course, when you get feedback from the kids . . . It is kids that come up to me and say, 'I really needed to hear that'" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Another interviewee stated,

> In school, a success rate might be measured by a test, but I think at EFY success rate could be measure [*sic*] by how many kids stand and come after to come talk to you [*sic*]. How many counselors say something positive because they've seen it all summer? How many kids want pictures with you? Those are tangible measures of kids are connecting here [*sic*]. . . If nobody is saying anything I say, "Oh, maybe I missed it. Maybe I missed that one." (I13, personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Not Based on Participants Comments. The subtheme, Not Based on Participants Comments, is a contrary view of the previous subtheme. Interviewee 2 stated, "I think with every youth is programed and prone to say, 'You're so awesome,' that I can't really use that as a measure of success" (personal communication, March 18, 2016). Interviewee 6 added that success is "Not measured by the . . . handshaking, the picture taking, none of that, zero, zilch, nada . . . because those outward manifestations are often the most hollow and often representative of a failed effort (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 10 stated, when everyone comes up and says that was great that was great . . . you know you might think that was you instead of the spirit (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Youths Lives Change. The subtheme, Youths Lives Change, denotes that the interviewees indicate how they plan to make changes in their lives or be different as a result of what was experienced in the classroom. Interviewee 12 stated,

> It is kids that come up to me and say, "I really needed to hear that. I'm going to make a change in my life because of something that you said. I am not really [*sic*] to live the gospel" or "I have more renewed excitement to live the gospel because of what happened this week." When you hear kids that are ready to make changes in their lives because of what was said [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Interviewee 3 added, “When someone says, ‘I want to be different because of coming to EFY,’ that’s when I know it was a success” (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 7 stated, “I think the true measure of success you probably won’t know for a long, long time until you see how their lives turn out” (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Feeling. Theme two, Feeling, suggests that during or after a lesson, session directors’ emotional state, or reaction to their teaching, is an indicator of success. The three subthemes emerging from the data analysis of theme two were: (a) Personal Feeling, and (b) Feeling from God (see Figure 25).

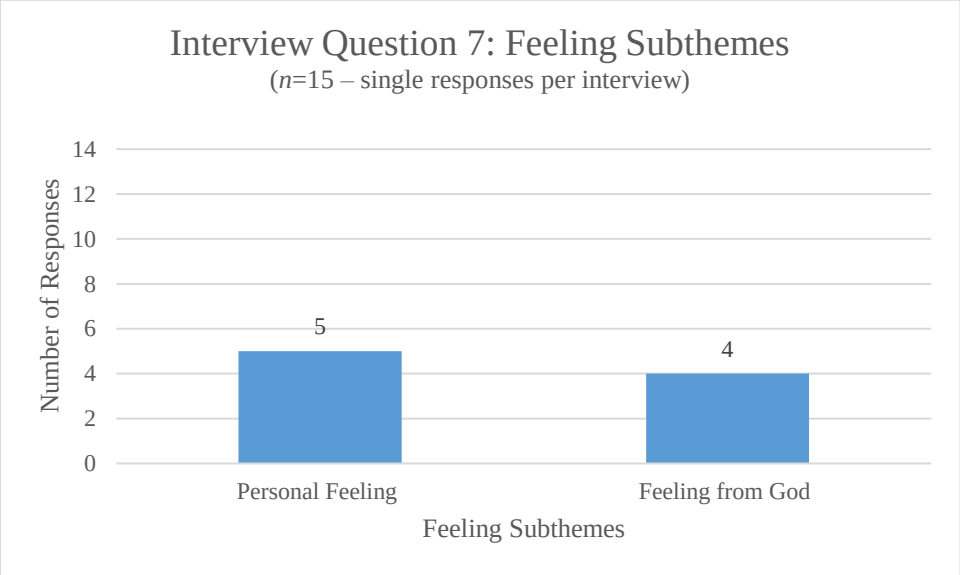

Figure 25. Interview question 7: Feeling subthemes.

Personal Feeling. The subtheme, Personal Feeling, means that session directors have a general emotional state or reaction either during or following their teaching experience. Interviewee 4 stated, “I just feel good. I just feel like it was simple, it was clear. There was a clear beginning and a clean ending” (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 8 added, “What I feel inside is important, right? If I feel edified, then I hope that they felt edified. If I feel enthused and positive, then my hope is that they do as well” (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 9 agreed, “It wouldn’t matter if not one person said, ‘Hey good

job' as long as I feel that feeling, that peace and that power that comes when you are on the right point and the kids are engaged" (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Feeling from God. The subtheme, Feeling from God, means that session directors feel an impression that is coming from a source other than their own feelings. Interviewee 1 noted, "The only true measure of our success is really the confirmation that the spirit is there" (personal communication, March, 18, 2016). Interviewee 15 agreed, "I think there is a feeling there that maybe the Holy Ghost just says, 'This is good'" (personal communication, April 5, 2016)." Interviewee 12 added,

> The one way that I [measure my success] is if I feel the spirit. I don't need people to come up and tell me that they felt the spirit because I could feel it. If I've felt the spirit, then I know then that's been good. Because, I haven't made it about my energy style. I haven't made it about the technology. I haven't made it about anything that it's not supposed to be about. I've made it about the gospel. I've made it about Jesus Christ. I've made it about what it should be about so the spirit could be there. I think that is the number one way that I can gauge success. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Formal Evaluation. The theme, Formal Evaluation, is the evaluation system of the EFY program given to interviewees and EFY staff to provide feedback on teaching that is sent to the session directors via e-mail following the session. Interviewee 1 and 8 both mentioned, "Some years they do feedback for session directors and they give it to us and we can read it and there are some surprising things that come there at times that are very helpful [*sic*]" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). "There are a lot of evaluations out there that go out from our students. EFY is great at measuring and taking evaluations from our students" (I1, personal

communication, March, 18, 2016). An additional formal method of evaluation is whether or not the EFY program asks the session directors to return the following year.

Interviewees 2, 8, and 10 all asserted that they know they are teaching successfully if the EFY asks them back to teach another year. Interviewee 2 stated, "The success is whether or not they ask you back" (I2, personal communication, March 18, 2016). Interviewee 8 added, "If EFY continues to ask me back" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 10 agreed, "They invite me back" (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Unknown. The theme, Unknown, denotes that session directors are unaware, or feel as though they do not know if they have been successful. Interviewees 1 shared, "The great reality of this is that you never will know. A teacher will never know the full impact of their teaching" (personal communication, March, 18, 2016). Interviewee 5 agreed, "I don't know that I'm ever successful at reaching 500 kids" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Sometimes you can just tell that you are connecting; then there are other times when you are not sure if you are connecting, and you may or may not be" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). One interviewee stated that they measure their success very poorly.

> I've had session where I've thought, 'Wow, the spirit was present. That felt really good. I shared my heart.' I felt like I left it all out there and I really think the message made sense.' And you look at the kids and they are just like clueless. I've had other sessions where I felt, 'Well that stunk. I added no value.' In fact, the Spirit went right out the door when I went out there' and I get 15 e-mails. (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Additionally, one interviewee even noted feelings of failure in regards to success as a session director. "I usually think that every time I directed a session I always felt like I failed. It

was horrible. I hated it. It was usually my [spouse] that walked me out of that one… 'No, you're okay' (I7, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Summary of findings for research question three. Research question three states, How do session directors of the Especially for Youth program measure their teaching success? The summary of findings for research question three are informed by the findings of the seventh interview question which addressed how session directors of the EFY program measure their teaching success. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key measures of success: (a) Informal Feedback, (b) Feeling, (c) Formal Evaluation, and (d) Unknown. The first theme, Informal Feedback, is informed by three subthemes that emerged from the data: (a) Comments from EFY Staff, Family Members, and Participants, (b) Not Based on Participants Comments, and (c) Youths Lives Change.

Informal Feedback, from interview question seven yielded nine responses from session directors indicating that they measure their response in one of three ways, reflected in the three subthemes. First, session directors receive comments from others, including EFY Staff, Family Members, and Participants. For example, "It is kids that come up to me and say, 'I really needed to hear that'" (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016). One interviewee stated that, "At EFY success rate could be measured by how many kids stand and come after to talk to you . . . how many kids want pictures with you . . . those are tangible measure of kids connecting" (I13, personal communication, March 24, 2016). This is in contrast to others who say that success should not be based on comments from youths. Interviewee 6 stated that success is, "Not measured by the . . . handshaking, the picture taking, none of that, zero, zilch, nada." (personal communication, March 22, 2016). The subtheme, Youths Lives Change, were reflected in Interviewee 3 wherein they articulated, "When someone says, 'I want to be different because of

coming to EFY,' that's when I know it was a success" (personal communication, March 21, 2016).

The second theme, Feeling, is informed by subthemes that emerged from the data: (a) Personal Feeling, and (b) Feeling from God. The third and fourth themes, Formal Evaluations and Unknown, did not yield subthemes. Personal feelings are feelings described as "good," (I4, personal communication, March 21, 2016), or "enthused and positive" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Feelings form God were indicated by feeling "the Spirit" (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016), meaning the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost. Formal evaluations eluded to session directors being asked back to teach another year for the program or evaluations that are filled out by the participants or other EFY staff and sent to the session directors following the session. The theme, Unknown, relates to session directors not knowing whether or not they had been successful.

Research question four. Research question four states: What recommendations would session directors make for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the Especially for Youth program? Interview question eight addresses research question four: What recommendation or advice do you have for other session directors and speakers at the Especially for Youth program?

Interview question eight. The eighth interview question addressed recommendations made to other session directors and speakers in the EFY program. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key measures of success, those being (a) Be Fully Engaged, (b) Content Preparation, (c) Be Humble, and (d) Support EFY Staff (see Figure 26).

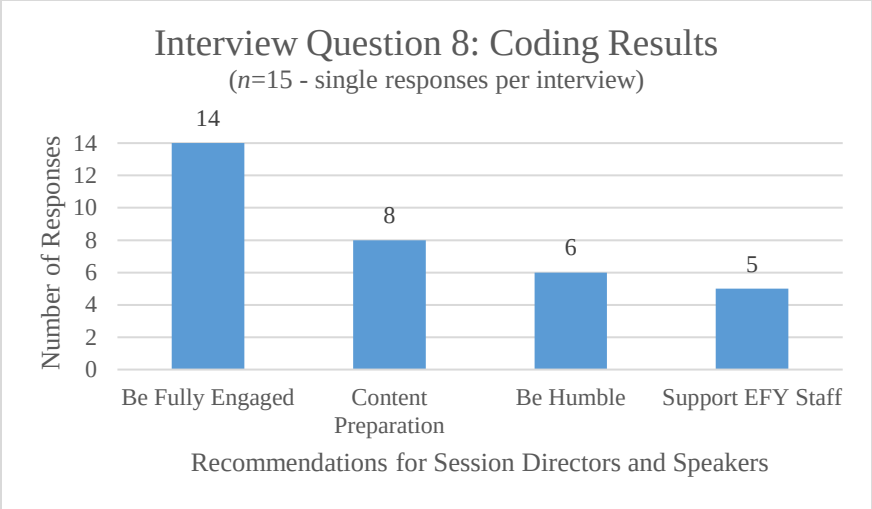

Figure 26. Recommendations of exemplary teaching practices of Session Directors and speakers of the EFY Program.

Be Fully Engaged. The theme, Be Fully Engaged, is informed by the subthemes that emerged from the data. The three subthemes were (a) Be Real. Be You, (b) Connect with Participants, and (c) Participate (see Figure 27).

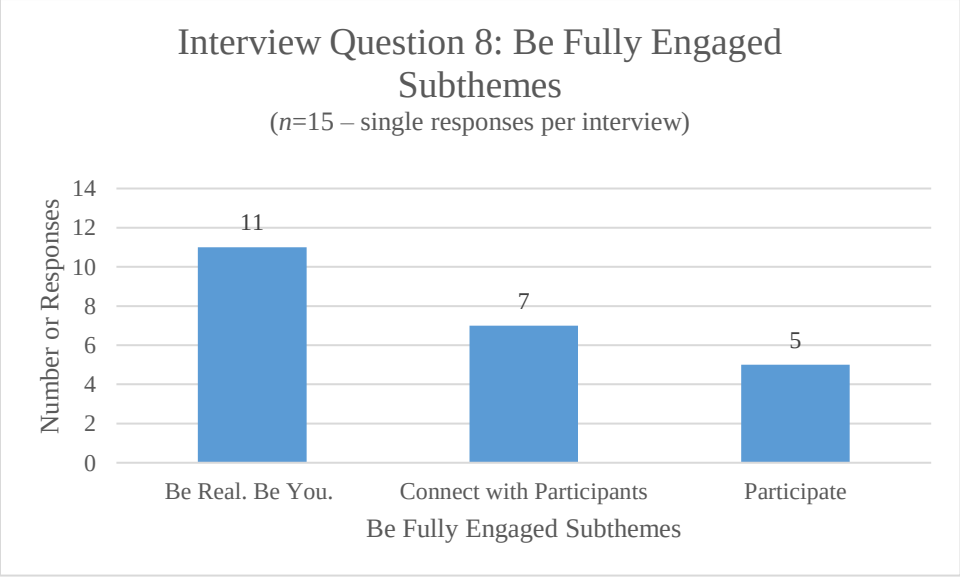

Figure 27. Interview question 8: Be fully engaged subthemes

Be Real. Be You. The subtheme, Be Real. Be You means that session directors do not try to imitate other individuals, but be themselves. Two examples from the interviews are from Interviewees 6 and 9.

> If you teach through someone else's eyes or someone else's lens, you'll lose the gift that you can offer. . . . Bring your gifts. Bring what you have to bear on the strengthening of these kids. Don't bring what others have. Bring what you have. (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016)

Interviewee 9 recounted,

> My best advice I was ever given . . . be yourself. You can go try to be [*sic*]. If you watch someone who is really great and you try and go adopt [*sic*], and I don't mean like teaching strategies, but that's the most important thing is [*sic*] when you implement the teaching strategies, be yourself when you are doing it, cause the youth will see right through it . . . Teach like you teach, talk your language and love the kids like you love them. Not feel [*sic*] like you have to be too funny, if you're not that funny. Be you. Just be you. Cause you want the youth to be them [*sic*]. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Connect with Participants. The subtheme, Connect with Participants, means that session directors seek to meet and talk to participants attending EFY during times when they are not formally teaching. "I'll take advantage of down time and just visit with kids. I think and I hope that that pays off when I'm back in front of them as a teacher . . . that translates to the ability to connect" (I5, personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 5 added,

> If I stand up at the beginning of the day, I'm stranger to that person on Monday and so, what can I do over the course of the week to break down that barrier, being the adult in charge and make a connection with them [*sic*]." (personal communication, March 22, 2016)

> If a session director is not careful, they have been teaching the masses and they haven't gotten to know kids, and even though you can't get to know very many of them, I still

> think there is power in getting to know a handle full [*sic*], or at least a small handful. (I15, personal communication, April 5, 2016).

Interviewee 7 and 12 mentioned connecting with participants in "informal teaching moments." Interviewee 12 stated,

> We find informal teaching moments during the week, where we will be walking and we'll see kids hanging out together. We'll stop and we'll talk to them. We'll ask them their names and where they are from. Then they'll ask us a question. "Hey . . . I have a question for you." Then there is an informal teaching moment right there. That means the world to those kids. You don't have those opportunities . . . it also helps you when you're up there in front of everybody doing the formal teaching. If they have engaged with you and seen you out there dancing, and if they've seen you in informal situations . . . then, they are going to listen to you that much more when you are doing the formal stuff. That would probably be my number one thing that I would tell session directors. It's not directly related to teaching, but it's indirectly related to teaching. (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Interviewee 7 also noted,

> So you have a formal setting here, but for me the teaching was, "Okay, but how do I connect with them? . . . I would give [the participants] something that would always attach to the lanyard, and it would always give me a change to have a one-on-one experience (it's brief, especially when you are at a BYU [Brigham Young University] session with over 1,000 kids) I'd tie something, I would put a tag on it. Anything . . . So that way when I would see a participant from a distance, I could say, "I already talked to that one" That way I would know in my informal situation, I'd walk over and I'd talk

> [*sic*] to them. Now some would argue that's not teaching, and my strategy and my essence, any time, is an opportunity to connect with a human being is an opportunity to teach. . . . For me, classroom is not a border of walls, classroom is any opportunity to teach, so that might be standing under a tree, that might be saying hello, that may be with a podium, with a mic, it might even be a talent show . . . I started viewing classroom as a different experience; a classroom is any opportunity to teach. That's your classroom. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Participate. The subtheme, Participate, means that session directors are participating in activities outside the scheduled formal teaching moments. Interviewee 12 suggested, "Be involved. This is something that really doesn't have to go with the teaching. It goes back to that old phrase that says, 'People don't care what you know, until they know that you care'" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 3 recounted, "Be engaged the entire week and not just the moments when you are on the stage" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 9 added, "I just have to go prepared and be willing to be with the youth every second . . . be willing and ready to dive in and commit 100%, 150% the whole week" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 13 stated,

> The session director has got to be really visible. You've got to be there greeting kids as they come in. You've got to be there in the cafeteria greeting kids as they come and go. You've got to be there at the games, cheering for all the kids. Some session directors haven't quite gotten out of the teaching box where they come and do their need [*sic*] presentation with their cool little PowerPoint, and then they kind of go back to their dorm room and sit 'till their next presentation. They are not taking advantage of that opportunity to really engage with kids (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Content Preparation. The theme, Content Preparation, denotes recommendations session directors have in preparing the content for their lessons. Two subthemes emerged from the data analysis. The two subthemes were (a) Stay Current, and (b) Be Relevant (see Figure 28). Each of the subtheme under Content Preparation is described subsequently.

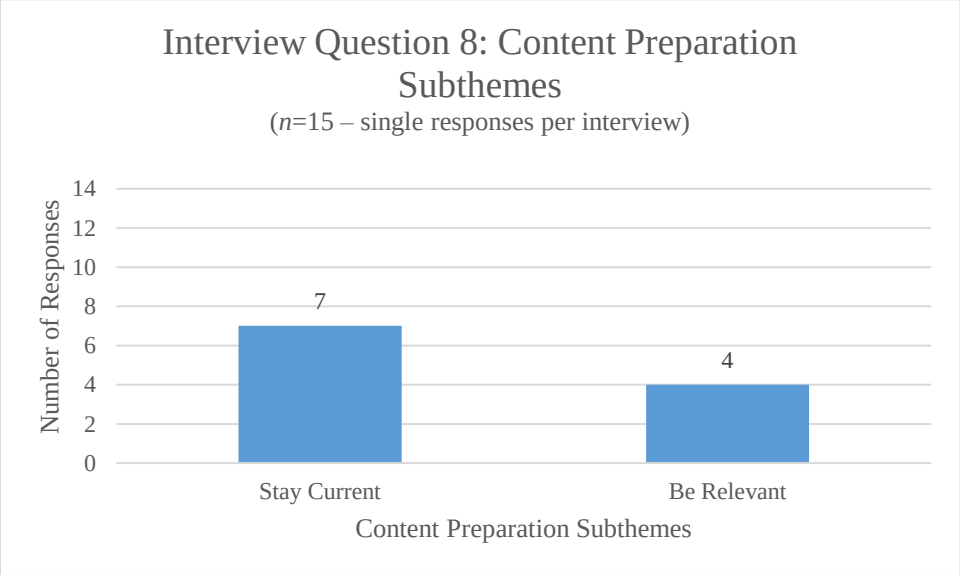

*Figure 28***.** Interview question 8: Content preparation subthemes

Stay Current. The subtheme, Stay Current, means that content used by session directors in their lessons is up to date, and they are not reliant on material used in previous years. Interviewee 3 stated,

> Be current…The session directors will keep the same lesson even though the theme is different, and just change five minutes of their lesson; and it's the same and teachers will keep the same lesson they have had forever and they are good, but their quotes are from President Hunter or from Elder Maxwell. It's okay to have a few like that, but when it feels like your lesson was pulled out of 1983, I don't think that is as relevant for the youth who want to hear about President Monson and Elder Oaks and people who are little

> more relevant to them in their life [*sic*]. I think that is something that I would encourage. (personal communication, March 21, 2016)

Interviewee 14 echoed,

> Stay fresh [means] to be like the brethren. Have you noticed the old apostles we have are still trying to keep up with teaching techniques, technology . . . issues of the young people . . . As you are session director, you cannot rely on the way you taught in '85. (personal communication, April 1, 2016)

Interviewee 15 stated, "I try to stay fresh. I'm not a believer in teaching the same lessons. I'm not in the same boat of saying this worked last year, let's see if we can continue to do this year. I like to go in fresh" (personal communication, April 5, 2016). Interviewee 7 recommended, "You get into the auto pilot. 'I've done this for seven years. I just get in and give the same talks.' I don't have a problem with that. Just make sure that the seven talks that you are giving, that they are updated and you are tweaking [*sic*]" (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Be Relevant. The theme, Be Relevant, indicates that content session directors use for their lessons be information that is relevant and meaningful to youths. Interviewee 14 recommended, "[Figure] out about why the youth should care about anything [session directors] are saying or how it is relevant to them. The one thing that I've learned over the years. The youth will tune you out if they don't think you get them or if they don't think that you understand them . . . Try to make it as relevant as possible" (personal communication, April 1, 2016). Interviewee 7 stated, "Another key element would be making it relevant. Relevant to the audience" (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Be Humble. The theme, Be Humble, means that session directors have a modest view of their role as a session director. Interviewees 1, 2, and 15 suggested having humility as a recommended practice for session directors.

Interviewee 1 warned,

> Students can be very kind and nice and say the nicest things about you. You don't ever want to inhale. It can easily distort. You can all of a sudden start thinking, "Hey, I'm a pretty good teacher. You know I'm a pretty good teacher. I can teach 700 or 800 students and they love it." That can be dangerous in terms of the minute you start to believe that you have made it as a teacher it hinders your progress. (personal communication, March, 18, 2016)

Interviewee 2 recounted,

> The advice that I have for teachers and session directors generally comes down to the moment you forget humility, you were [*sic*] done. And you are doing to do something and you might even think it is really good, and it will fail and you will do damage. Guarding that humility should be a number one priority. (personal communication, March 18, 2016)

Interviewee 15 stated,

> Session directors sometimes think they are more important than they really are—that twisted philosophy can change the way they interact, and the way the session director I think can hurt the program . . . It is easy to fall into idea that we are the session director and we matter a lot, that we are important. (personal communication, April 5, 2016)

Support EFY Staff. The theme, Support EFY Staff, means that during the session directors are spending time with, getting to know, and mentoring other EFY staff members,

including speakers, field coordinators, building coordinators, counselors, and speakers. Two interviewees mention the need to support the teachers (or speakers) in the session. Interviewee 10 stated, "I always try to really connect to the teachers that are going to teach in my session early on" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 13 added,

> If the session directors are supposed to be the experienced ones, we need to be more willing to mentor teachers by saying "hey, I really like the way you did this. I really like the way you did that." Now, I try to do that, but it's awkward because they don't know you. I always feel like the teachers are going to say, "Who the heck are you to tell me what to do?" I think that is something that the program, in general, could try to do a little better is [*sic*] mentor teachers. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Other interviewees mention the need to support the counselors specifically. Interviewee 1 stated, "I would say that one of the responsibilities of the session director is really to build up and strengthen the counselors and your other student leaders. That's as important as anything we do at a session" (personal communication, March, 18, 2016). Interviewee 15 stated, "So whatever we can do as leaders to help bless those counselors bless the youth, I think that's where I start" (personal communication, April 5, 2016). Interviewee 13 added,

> I think another mistake that session directors make is they forget that they need to be the counselor's counselor. Talk to the counselors. Find out what they are doing for their devotional. Ask if I can come to a devotional. I try to be there for the counselors . . . I try to earn their support by showing interest in their lives and what they are doing. Asking them about what their plans are [*sic*]. So, I think sometimes session directors make the mistake of thinking I'm just here for the kids, and they overlook their responsibility is [*sic*] to the counselor as well. (personal communication, March 24, 2016)

Interviewee 14 also noted the need to support counselors by stating,

> Personally too, I spend way more time with the counselors than I do the kids . . . and I'm not talking about them liking me, I'm talking about real interactions. Go every night, and I'll watch the guys teach at night and we'll talk about it. Really change some things. Even though these counselors are return missionaries, they'll do things when they are teaching that little tiny tweaks will completely change their effectiveness, so I spend a lot of time with them . . . I wouldn't tell the session director, you only work with the counselors, or you only work with the kids. Go where you are going to do the most good to help the session be a success. (personal communication, April 1, 2016)

Interviewee 9 noted supporting the field coordinators and building coordinators (BC),

> The field coordinators and the BCs, the staff, they need you. I feel like we are there for them, and they are there for the counselors and the counselors are there for the kids. It's kind of this little cycle. They are in hard times in their lives, making big decisions. They need to feel loved and encouraged, and sometimes they want questions answered and they want to know that you care about them. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Summary of findings for research question four. Research question four states, What recommendations would session directors make for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the Especially for Youth program? The summary of findings for research question four are informed by the findings of the eighth interview question which addressed recommendations made to other session directors and speakers in the EFY program. Through the analysis, the data yielded four recommendations, those being (a) Be Fully Engaged, (b) Content Preparation, (c) Be Humble, and (d) Support EFY Staff. The first theme, Be Fully Engaged, is informed by the subthemes that emerged from the data: (a) Be Real. Be You; (b) Connect with

Participants; and (c) Participate. Eleven participants discussed the subtheme, Be Real. Be You, meaning session directors are not trying to be or act like someone else, but simply needing to be themselves. Interviewee 6 suggested, "If you teach through someone else's eyes or someone else's lens, you'll lose the gift that you can offer. . . . Bring your gifts…Don't bring what others have. Bring what you have (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interview 9 added, "My best advice I was ever given . . . be yourself" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). The subtheme, Connect with Participants, means that session directors make efforts to meet as many participants as possible, come creating ways to do so, such as giving something to the participant that would attach to their lanyard, or nametag, during the session (personal communication, March 23, 2016). The subtheme, participate, infers that session directors make efforts to participate in other activities of the EFY program other than the formal teaching times.

The second theme, Content Preparation, is informed by two subthemes that emerged from the data analysis: (a) Stay Current, and (b) Be Relevant. Themes three and four, Be Humble and Support EFY Staff, did not yield subthemes. Content Preparation, suggests that session directors stay current, meaning that their lessons are up to date and they are not relying on old material they used in previous years. Interviewee 3 suggested, "When it feels like your lesson was pulled out of 1983, I don't think that is as relevant for the youth" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). The subtheme, Be Relevant, means that session directors are using material applicable and familiar to youths.

Summary of Findings

Research question one states: What teaching strategies and practices are employed by session directors of the Especially for Youth program? The summary of findings for research question one are informed by the findings of interview questions one through five. The first

interview question addressed strategies and practices session directors of the EFY program use in lesson planning and preparations to teach youths. The data yielded four key practices: (a) Content Preparation, (b) Personal Spiritual Preparation, (c) Use of LDS Church Materials, and (d) Vision of Responsibility. Analysis of the first theme, Content Preparation, yielded five subthemes, or key practices: (a) Use of Information from EFY, (b) Creating of New Content, (c) Content Based on the Needs of Participants during the Session, (d) Brainstorm and Record, and (e) Draw from Current News and Media. The second theme, Personal Spiritual Preparation yielded three subthemes: (a) Prayer, (b) Personal Scripture Study, and (c) Personal Worthiness. The third theme, The Use of LDS Church Materials, yielded two subthemes: (a) Quotes from LDS Church Leaders, and (b) Seminary and Institute Materials. The fourth theme, Vision of Responsibility, did not yield any subthemes.

The second interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices session directors use in the classroom *as* they teach youths. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key practices, those being (a) Student Involvement Strategies, (b) Teacher-led Techniques, (c) Flexibility, and (d) Practices to Avoid. The data analysis of the first theme, Student Involvement Strategies, yielded five subthemes: (a) Pair and Share, (b) Participants Share Experiences, (c) Ask Questions, (d) Participants in Front of Class, and (e) Writing. The second theme, Teacher-led Techniques, data yielded twelve subthemes, or practices: (a) Use of Scripture, (b) Narrative, (c) Music, (d) Use of Media, (e) Humor, (f) Pictures or Images, (g) Variety, (h) Invite to Act, (i) Lesson Connectivity, (j) Object Lesson, (k) Physical Movement, and (l) Testimony. The data analysis of the third theme, Flexibility, yielded two subthemes, or practices: (a) Pivot and Change, and (b) Have a Few Main Points. The data analysis of the fourth theme, Practices to

Avoid, yielded two subthemes, or practices that should be avoided: (a) Manipulation, and (b) Small Classroom Practices.

The third interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices specific to youths compared to other groups of people. Through the analysis, the data yielded three key themes, those being (a) Characteristics of Youths, (b) No Differences Teaching Youths, and (c) Differences Teaching Youths. The first theme, Characteristics of Youths, and the second theme, No Differences Teaching Youth, did not yield subthemes. The third theme, Differences Teaching Youths, yielded two additional subthemes, or practices, where the interviewees described differences: (a) Pacing, and (b) Energy Level.

The fourth interview question addressed teaching strategies and practices observed in other teachers and then adopted as the interviewees' own practices. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key themes and practices, those being (a) Ways to Involve Students, (b) Don't Mimic, (c) Character, and (d) Use of Scripture. The first theme, Ways to Involve Students, produced one subtheme, Youths Share Experiences. The second, third, and fourth themes—Don't Mimic, Character, and Use of Scripture—did not produce subthemes.

The fifth interview question addressed the session directors' views on technology and teaching, how they incorporate technology into their teaching, and why they do or do not incorporate it. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key themes, those being (a) Positive View, (b) Negative View, (c) Use Technology Prudently, and (d) Ways to Use Technology. The analysis of theme one, Positive View, did not produce any subthemes. For theme two, Negative View, three subthemes emerged from the data: (a) Distraction, and (b) Overuse, and (c) Compromises Social Skills. For theme three, Use Technology Prudently, no subthemes emerged from the data. In the analysis of theme, Ways to Use Technology, three methods, or subthemes,

emerged from the data: (a) Presentation Software, (b) Mobile Devices for Live Audience Participation, and (c) Digital Scriptures.

Research question two states: What teaching challenges are faced by the session directors of the Especially for Youth program? The summary of findings for research question two are informed by findings of the fifth interview question, which addressed challenges session directors face in teaching youths. Through the analysis, the data yielded three key challenges, those being (a) Connectivity, (b) Fatigue, and (c) Comparison. The first theme, Connectivity, is informed by the subthemes that emerged from the data: (a) Meeting Participants, (b) Physical Classroom Environment, and (c) Engagement in the Classroom. The second and third themes, Fatigue and Comparison, did not yield subthemes.

Research question three states: How do session directors of the Especially for Youth program measure their teaching success? The summary of findings for research question three are informed by the findings of the seventh interview question, which addressed how session directors of the EFY program measure their teaching success. Through the analysis, the data yielded four key measures of success, those being (a) Informal Feedback, (b) Feeling, (c) Formal Evaluation, and (d) Unknown. The first theme, Informal Feedback, is informed by three subthemes that emerged from the data: (a) Comments from EFY Staff, Family Members, and Participants, (b) Not Based on Participants Comments, and (c) Youths Lives Change. The second theme, Feeling, is informed by two subthemes that emerged from the data: (a) Personal Feeling, and (b) Feeling from God. The third and fourth themes, Formal Evaluations and Unknown, did not yield subthemes.

Research question four states: What recommendations would session directors make for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the Especially for Youth program? The

summary of findings for research question four are informed by the findings of the eighth interview question, which addressed recommendations made to other session directors and speakers in the EFY program. Through the analysis, the data yielded four recommendations, those being (a) Be Fully Engaged, (b) Content Preparation, (c) Be Humble, and (d) Support EFY Staff. The first theme, Be Fully Engaged, is informed by three subthemes that emerged from the data: (a) Be Real. Be You; (b) Connect with Participants; and (c) Participate. The second theme, Content Preparation, is informed by two subthemes that emerged from the data analysis: (a) Stay Current, and (b) Be Relevant. Themes three and four, Be Humble and Support EFY Staff, did not yield subthemes. To further illustrate the data, frequency charts and transcription excerpts found in Chapter 4 were then used to display the data and compare the frequency that those groupings demonstrated, with further discussion of the implications are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Irrespective of religious affiliation, there is a growing awareness of the interest in moral and religious influences in the lives of youths in various professions, including religious leaders and educators (Smith, 2003). To help mentor youths, organizations, and youth groups develop programs to help prepare youths for adult roles, and provide recreational and cultural activities (Eisenstadt, 1962). National youth organizations, local social service organizations, and private camps emphasize teaching good character and spiritual attainment (Ball & Ball, 1990). Various religious organizations provide experiences beyond their local communities and congregations that expand a youth's experiences and aspirations, foster maturity, and enhance competencies and knowledge (Smith, 2003). For some participants, the camping experience makes a profound difference in their lives (Henderson et al., 2007). Camps can facilitate the development of life-long personal and social skills for youths, such as leadership and self-efficacy that can be applied to their journeys toward successful adulthood (Henderson et al., 2007). Camps are a great place for youths to learn values and ethics that will serve them well in the future (DeGraaf et al., 2002).

In 1976, employees of the Brigham Young University's (BYU) Division of Continuing Education program, affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), developed an *education week* for LDS youths. EFY is a week long summer camp with a religious emphasis, designed for youths (ages 14-18). From 1976 through 2015, a total of 848,548 youth have attended the EFY program (EFY, 2015b). The purpose of EFY is to "strengthen youth[s] in their commitment to live the gospel of Jesus Christ by providing inspiring, edifying learning opportunities and wholesome social experiences" (EFY, 2015e, para. 1)

Part of the learning opportunities for youths who attend EFY are their participation in religion classes taught by EFY faculty members. The director of EFY and the program administrator supervising EFY faculty select, from the pool of faculty, individuals to be session directors. Session directors are considered the adult leaders of the EFY programs and have been identified by the program as *high quality* teachers (T. Myers, personal communication, December 3, 2015). In a given week-long session, session directors teach seven 50-minute lessons on topics indicated in the staff handbook (EFY, 2015b), to all participants of the session. Sessions can range from approximately 300 to 1000 attendees, or participants.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the teaching strategies and practices employed by session directors of the EFY program, as well as to examine challenges faced, measures of success, and the overall recommendations made for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the EFY program. To accomplish the purpose of the study, a qualitative, phenomenological research study was employed and 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with one current and fourteen former session directors of the EFY program. This chapter presents the findings of the study through an analysis of the each of the eight interview questions.

This chapter serves to discuss the conclusion and recommendations of the study including summary of the results highlighting key findings. In addition, the chapter will discuss implications of this study for various groups. In conclusion, recommendations for future research will be shared in addition to final thoughts from the principal investigator.

Results and Discussion of Key Findings

The findings of this study were specifically geared to the teaching strategies and practices of session directors of the EFY program. Throughout the following sections, results of the study

will be reviewed and the analysis focused further on specific themes that arose from each respective research questions and how these themes may relate to the literature. The number of themes yielding from the semi-structured interviews totaled 30 themes and 53 subthemes. The following are key findings related to research question one.

Results for research question one. Research question one states: What teaching strategies and practices are employed by session directors of the Especially for Youth program? The first five interview questions served to answer this research question. The five interview questions collectively yielded a total of 19 themes and 40 subthemes. The following results are a combination of the findings pertaining to the first five interview questions in answer to research question one.

Plan and Prepare. All fifteen interviewees discussed the need for preparing material for their lessons for EFY. The data from the interviews showed what resources session directors use to develop the content for their lessons. The interviewees sought to support the goals and objectives of the EFY program and the materials provided to them prior to their teaching assignment. Then, the process of brainstorming ideas and recording, coupled with their personal spiritual preparation, such as prayer, scripture study, and personal worthiness, were also common among session directors. These practices reflected information found in LDS Church materials as it relates to teaching youths. A letter to parents, teachers, advisers, and leaders of youths from the First Presidency (the presiding or governing body of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) states that the most important part of the service to the youth "will be [their] own daily spiritual preparation, including prayer, scripture study, and obedience to the commandments" (LDS, 2012e, p. 2). Obedience to the commandments infers the fourth subtheme mentioned—

personal worthiness. Additionally, the practice of daily scripture study is emphasized as a preparation for teachers to learn the gospel (LDS, 2012b).

Another teaching preparation strategy suggested by interviewees mentioned their desire to "stay fresh" (I15, personal communication, April 5, 2016), create new material, and not rely on information used in previous years. Interviewees emphasized the need to seek for the material that offers a different point of view or that is "intellectually stimulating" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). These practices support the literature on pedagogical constructivism, in which the teacher introduces supplementary religious material that enables the thoughts or constructions of the student to be more complex or different from what was previously thought. Introducing new material is not intended to abandon the student's personal interpretation or construction, but to consider critically the new knowledge being presented (Grimmitt, 2000).

In addition to developing new content that would be different from what youths have heard before, another strategy in planning and preparing to teach youths is to base the material on the needs of the participants, or students. Four interviewees articulated explanations why they made changes to their lesson plan during the session. They felt it was important to teach based on the needs of the students. Session directors were unaware of students' needs until they were able to meet them in person. Others indicated their use of drawing from current news and media, which also supports the idea of meeting the needs of the students as it relates to the world they live in. This practice of focusing on needs of the students support the literature surrounding the qualities of an effective teacher who seeks to personalizes a learning experience and presents information in a way that relates to the individual needs of the students (Rompelman, 2002). This practice also supports the work of Hunter (1963) who advised that no education should take

place in preparation for future decisions without relating the preparation to the present condition of the learner. The process of getting to know the learner is also reflected in the literature found in LDS Church materials. Teachers are advised to teach a message based on the individual needs of the learners (LDS, 2004), and teachers should have an understanding of what is happening in the lives of the students, knowing of their interests and desires (LDS, 2012d). Packer (1975) stated that the difference between good and a superb teacher is that a good teacher has studied the content of the lesson, and a superb teacher has taken the time to study the students.

In addition to preparing material based on the needs of the students, session directors also use LDS Church materials, including quotes from LDS Church leaders. One interviewee described quotes from LDS Church leaders as, "modern day scripture" (I9, personal communication, March 23, 2016). This practice reflects the suggestions made by Clark (1938/2004) who encouraged LDS religious educators to use the words from modern day apostles and prophets called to "declare the mind and will of the Lord to the Church" (p. 10). In addition to quotes from LDS Church leaders, the use of seminary and institute (S&I) materials were commonly used. One interviewee stated,

> EFY has done a great job at saying, "Hey, we want you to utilize all the training you've used at seminary and institutes to strengthen our youth." That is where most of us are getting our strategies and our techniques and our methodologies . . . we have been trained in very specific means . . . those include what we call the *Fundamentals of Gospel Teaching and Learning*. (I1, personal communication, March, 18, 2016)

"The Fundamentals of Gospel Teaching and Learning" are found in chapter two of *Gospel Teaching and Learning: A Handbook for Teachers and Leaders in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion* (LDS, 2012b). Additionally, Interviewee 5 noted a practice used in lesson

planning and preparation—the five-step pattern used to teach the scriptures to youths—the same pattern explained in the aforementioned handbook. The five steps include, "help[ing] students learn the content and context . . . [helping students] identify doctrines and principles . . . [helping students] understand those principles . . . help[ing] them to feel why whose principles are important . . . help[ing] them apply those principles" (personal communication, March 22, 2016).

Students Share. Session directors desire to involve the students in different ways of allowing them to share thoughts, ideas, and experiences. This practice reflects what Scott (2008) described as needing to encourage two-way participation between the teacher and the learner. Asking youth to share their perspectives by talking to the person next to them (pair and share), inviting participants to ask questions, or to write their thoughts down are all forms of promoting two-way participation through the practice of reflection and constructing new knowledge based on a student's own experiences. As individuals are introduced to new material or information, they try to makes sense of the new material and, therefore, *construct* new meaning through a process of accommodation (Piaget, 1956). Learning is an active creation process in which the individual constructs or creates meaning from the interactions between what they experience and their own ideas and not just a passive reception of information (Piaget as cited in Nathan & Sawyer, 2014). Boud et al. (1985) suggested that the more teachers understand reflection and organize materials consistent with the practice, the more effective learning will be. Relating to religious education specifically, Jackson (2004) noted that the goals for students of religion are to receive knowledge and understanding about religion, and to reflect on their learning. As participants reflect on their learning, they are experiencing constructivism, a theory of learning or meaning making, in which individuals create new understanding based on the connection of what they already know with new ideas (Resnick, 1989). Creating an opportunity for group

dialogue supports a constructivist pedagogy, which involves attention to students' background knowledge and understanding. The facilitation of group dialogue leads to a creation of a shared understanding of the topic and creates opportunities for students to change or add to existing beliefs through engagement in tasks (Richardson, 2003). Additionally, according the literature, giving students' time to debrief, write down events, and his or her reactions to the experiences can enhance learning (Boud et al., 1985). In a similar vein, Geiger (2015) also suggests a process called *notebooking*, or allowing students to write and reflect on their religious education curriculum in a way that is personally meaningful to them. The goal is to provide reflective opportunities for experiential learning and personal application of the religious content in the lives of youths.

Use Scripture. Examples of using scripture were described by session directors who stated their desire to "[go] deep" (I1, personal communication, March, 18, 2016), "really di[g] into the scriptures or "be really scripture based" (I5, personal communication, March 22, 2016). In connection with the literature, O'Grady (2008) asserts that religious education for youths should also involve hermeneutical tasks, ways or methods to make interpretations of the Bible or religious texts. The use of scripture echoes a practice advised by religious educators in the LDS Church to teach doctrines found in the standard works, or canon of the LDS Church, including the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price (Clark, 1938/2004, p. 10). The practice of using scriptures reflects the literature as it relates to teaching seminary, as the curriculum for seminary is based on the scriptural canon of the LDS Church, including (LDS, 2012a).

Narrative. The use of narrative, described as sharing stories or personal experiences, is another teaching practice session directors employ. Interviewee 6 stated, "I've had experiences

that may be unique" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 7 added, "[I] try and use a personal or relevant experience" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 13 stated, "I've tried to engage [participants] with stories, with personal experiences" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). More specifically, Interviewee 11 added, "If I am speaking to youth, instead of sharing what I am experiencing now in my life, I would be more reflective from when I was a teenager" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). One interviewee added a word of caution in telling stories. "We can get off and start embellishing stuff . . . I try to be very honest in my stories" (I15, personal communication, April 5, 2016). In connection with the literature pertaining to religious education, Erricker & Erricker (2000) noted that the practice of narrative involvement and sharing personal feelings creates a vulnerability that therefore creates trust and acceptance by the students. As teachers are willing to speak from personal experiences, it encourages students also to express themselves.

Music. Another strategy or practice employed by session directors is the use of music. Music was mentioned by seven of the interviewees as a strategy or practice used while teaching, following the guidelines found in the *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook, which encourages the use of music as it can enhance the gospel learning experience (LDS, 2012b). More specifically, three session directors indicated the use of the EFY music. For example, Interviewee 15 asserted, "I like to use the music. I think the music is an integral part of the program" (personal communication, April 5, 2016). Interviewee 8 added, "It causes a change of pace and maybe invites the Spirit in, in different ways than just standard lecture formal [*sic*]" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). One interviewee noted that one of the reasons for the use of music during a lesson is that when participants go home and listen to the music, "it will evoke more than nice music, it will take them back to . . . whatever it is that they learn[ed]"

(I7, personal communication, March 23, 2016). It is important to note that one interviewee stated, "I feel a lot of pressure as a director to use the music and I don't like it . . . I feel like I'm promoting something" (I5, personal communication, March 22, 2016).

Humor. Another strategy noted by session directors is the use of humor. The use of humor supports Romelman's (2002) description of an effective teacher as one who displays a sense of humor. LDS Church material suggests the appropriate use of humor (LDS, 2012b), yet there is little description in the literature about what it considered appropriate. Interviewee 2 stated, "I'm a big fan of humor. I think the general authorities use humor in the most sacred meetings, I think that means we should too (personal communication, March 18, 2016). Interviewee 3 added, "Humor is very engaging and it may not be on the list of some seminary teachers' tool list" (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Variety. Another teaching strategy that session directors employ is not using only one practice or method in teaching, but many. The use of a variety of teaching methods is noted as an important practice to help engage learners (LDS, 2012l). Interviewees expressed a desire to avoid a lecture type format. Interviewee 15 stated, "[I] try to come up with more creative ways so they aren't sitting there for 40 minutes listening to one speaker" (personal communication, April 5, 2016). Interviewee 11 added, "Another teaching strategy is just variety. Talking for 50 minutes . . . death on a stick" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). One interviewee described variety as a being a "sort of, shift in speed or humor or maybe an object lesson, something that will help those that have become disengaged to reengage" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). To assist in planning for use of variety, Interviewee I8 uses a self-developed checklist as part of lesson planning (see Appendix I). The use of a variety in teaching methods is reflected in the literature pertaining to creating materials for teaching.

Shulman (1987) asserted that teachers not only use content knowledge in their teaching, but teachers find ways represent it, adapting and tailoring the materials to fit the needs of the students, described as pedagogical content knowledge.

Invite to Act. An additional teaching practice session directors use is inviting the learners to act or do something in their lives, inside or outside of class, related to the content shared in the class. Interviewee 7 stated, "If you teach doctrine, invite them to engage in it. Sometimes literally say, 'I'd like to invite you to try this in your life'" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 8 suggested teaching has to "translate into new ways of understanding the gospel . . . new behaviors" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). To this point and in connection to the literature, Mezirow's (1997) transformative learning theory suggested that learning must empower autonomous agents in collaborate context rather than uncritically acting on the ideas and judgments of others. Individuals' autonomous acts are essential for moral decision making (Mezirow, 1997). Geiger (2015) noted that the goal of teaching is to provide reflective opportunities for experiential learning and personal application of religion in the lives of youths. Hunter (1963) explained that religious teaching is the teaching of faith-based principles that become a storehouse of values and knowledge for use at a later date. Thanissaro (2010) added that it is practical for teachers to engage in spiritual and moral development values through religious education, especially if it helps the learner conceptualize how the values might fit with a commitment or action in the future. The LDS Church literature suggests that teachers should take every opportunity to help young people adopt [the principles and standards] of the gospel and encourage them to take initiatives to *do* things that will increase their personal spiritual growth (LDS, 1999). In connection with the practice of inviting students to act or do,

the Come, Follow Me curriculum suggests that one of the attributes of the how the Savior taught is to "invite individuals to act in faith and live the truths He taught" (LDS, 2012e, p. 4).

Testimony. Another practice categorized as a teacher-led practice is the use of testimony, in which the teacher shares his or her religious convictions, beliefs, or feelings. If teachers do not feel they are connecting with the students or "see in the eyes [of] the individuals that it matters" (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016), then a testimony can be used. Interviewee 6 continued, "I have learned that as soon as you find yourself rambling, or you find yourself not connecting, stop. Bear your testimony. Talk about the Savior (personal communication, March 22, 2016). This practice of sharing one's testimony is found in LDS (2012b), which states that one's testimony strengthens the faith of others. A testimony can be a "simple statement of what a person knows to be true, spoken with sincerity and conviction . . . a simple affirmation of how a person feels" (LDS 2012b, p. 33). This practice of testimony reflects the practice previously mentioned in the section, Narrative, wherein Erricker and Erricker (2000) described the practice, *narrative involvement*, as it relates to religious educators. In this practice, teachers practice reflexivity and thinking coupled with expressing themselves in the first person by sharing what they think and feel, admitting that they have been affected by the material that has been shared.

Lesson Connectivity. A teaching strategy employed by session directors this is unique to the opportunity for them to teach several times in a week-long session of EFY is the use of lesson connectivity. This strategy implies that session directors develop a common theme or thread to all of the lessons they teach. For example, Interviewee 4 stated, "I'm trying to weave a message throughout the week . . . it is a week of a big talk" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). This is not a strategy found in the LDS Church literature pertaining to this practice in teaching youths.

Pivot and Change. Another practice used by many session directors is to change a lesson plan in the moment he or she is teaching. The theme, Pivot and Change, was used to explain this practice. Interviewee 12 stated, "I will say something that I had not prepared to say, or a scripture comes to mind that I will reference and I will read on the spot" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 12 also shared a story that "wasn't a part of [the] plan" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 3 described this notion as "following the group," instead of what was planned for the lesson (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 6 described it as "pivoting and adaptation that doesn't cause you to sequentially get through your speech" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). To support this practice of flexibility in teaching, Interviewee 14 created a PowerPoint slide with "links to wherever it is I want to go for that topic" (see Appendix J; personal communication, March 21, 2016). According to the LDS Church literature, pivot and change is connected to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, or the Spirit, described as "spiritual guidance is direction, enlightenment, knowledge, and motivation . . . It is personalized instruction adapted to [one's] individual needs by One who understands them perfectly" (Scott, 2008, p. 2). This malleability or flexibility in teaching is also facilitated by not having too many ideas or points to teach during a lesson.

To facilitate a more flexible lesson, having only a few main points as a basis for teaching was also noted. In teaching religious content, this practice aligns with Cooling's (2000) concept cracking, or selecting one or two concepts as a focus for the lesson. Interviewee 7 suggested having "one element that you are trying to emphasize—never go beyond three (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 3 added, "I have the three main points that I know I want to hit" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 2 described, "I think I need three scriptures per hour" (personal communication, March 18, 2016).

Practices to Avoid. In the discussion of strategies and practices teachers employ, many session directors suggested practices they prefer *not* to employ, typically due to the large number of students in their classes. For example, Interviewee 13 noted that a pair and share strategy, "It's not a great strategy when you have 900 kids" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Additionally, three interviewees noted that having students share experiences with the entire group should be done with "caution" (I4, personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 7 offered a suggestion to successfully have participants share experiences.

> I've found when you ask questions that are just cold, people give answers and it's not even the answer they want to give. They are just nervous and they're scared and they're scared what's on the top of their mind, but if they have a chance a think or practice and then you get some meaningful answers and then I can build off of them. (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Both of these strategies, articulated as practices to avoid, were also promoted by other session directors. Conflicting viewpoints on the pair and share strategy and the practice of having students share experiences were identified.

Emotionalism. Another practice to avoid was described as the manipulation of students through emotionalism. For example, one interviewee defined emotional manipulation as "trying to get the youth to cry as a manifestation of the Spirit, when it is not" (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 8 added, "Emotionalism . . . We tend to shy away from potentially manipulative or imitation of spiritual prompting (personal communication, March 23, 2016). The literature in connection with this practice asserts specifically that stories "should never be used for emotional manipulation" (LDS, 2012b, p. 67). A definition of emotional manipulation was not articulated in the literature.

Mimicking. Another practice session directors seek to avoid is the practice is the mimicking, or copying the exact strategies and practices of other teachers. Though many session directors noted that they do borrow strategies and techniques, many make a concerted effort to not do exactly what another teacher did or tried. In reference to observing other teachers, Interviewee 12 stated, "I'll never do the same thing that they do . . . fin[d] your own style" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 13 stated, "I'm just content to say, '[Other teachers] have their strengths and I have my strengths'" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Another interviewee stated, "I might be the anti-technique borrower" (I2, personal communication, March 18, 2016). Interviewee 12 suggested, "You have to adopt but also adapt, meaning that it's good to adopt practices, but adapt them to "[your] style" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). The idea of not mimicking or trying to teach like another teacher is expanded in the answers to research question four regarding recommendations made by session directors to others.

Pacing. The practice of pacing involves how long a teacher will teach one aspect of the lesson compared to another. Though the structure of the lesson may be similar, four interviewees mentioned the pacing of the lesson, or how much time they spend on one apect of the lesson compared to another would change when they were teaching youths. For example, Interviewee 5 said, "We may spend a little more time on [context]" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Another interviewee added, "We spend a lot more time on application . . . explanation of application" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016), meaning how the content connects or relates to the life experience of the learner. One interviewee described youths as being a part of an "immediate gratification society," and therefore teachers need to increase the pace of the lesson and "guide [students] expeditiously through [the scriptures]" (I6, personal

communication, March 22, 2016). Additionally, three interviewees noted that when teaching youths, there needed to be an increase in "energy level" (I7, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewees suggested the need for "more enthusiasm" (I9, personal communication, March 23, 2016) or a "certain level of enthusiasm" (I15, personal communication, April 5, 2016).

Technology. Session directors indicated varying viewpoints on the use of technology in teaching, the choice of whether or not to use technology, and trying to learn new technologies. Eleven of the fifteen session directors interviewed expressed negative views of technology and how it can be a distraction for students, be overused, and can compromise social skills, meaning the ability to converse face-to-face with others. Ten session directors expressed a positive view concerning the use of technology, many of which overlapped, meaning that some participants said both positive and negative comments concerning the use of technology and teaching.

Regardless of their opinions, in answer to research question one, many session directors incorporate technology into their teaching and consider it a practice. This notion of choosing appropriate technology for teaching is reflected in the work of Mishra & Koehler's (2006), who describe a framework for teaching knowledge that includes content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and technological knowledge, known as technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK). The technology portion described by Mishra & Koehler (2006) explained the necessity of knowing the standard technologies described as chalk, whiteboards, and books, as well as advanced tools such as the Internet and digital video. The intersection of the three components of the TPACK framework describes the abilities of a teacher to understand ways the subject matter can be changed through applying particular technologies to their pedagogy, including the affordances and strengths of various technologies.

Use of Media. Session directors use various forms of technology in their teaching. More specifically, they use media, including the use of audio or visual materials. For example, with the use of quotes from LDS Church leaders, some session directors will "get a video clip of [the] speech, so it's [their] voice, [their] words, and not just rephrasing them (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016). The use of videos, such as the Bible videos, the *Mormon Messages*, or youth videos produced by the LDS Church are part of the library of media utilized by session directors. The use of visual material, though not in video form, but in the form of still pictures and images, is another teaching strategy that session directors practice. Described by one interviewee, "Pictures are always worth 1,000 words and sometimes can teach much more prolifically and powerfully than anything else (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016). In addition to visual material in the form of pictures and images is the use of an object. In relation to technology as it relates to audiovisual resources, the *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook supports the use of audiovisual resources as they help students visualize and experience events, as well as dramatize how other people apply or live gospel principles. In addition, objects and object lessons help students visualize and understand concepts, particularly as related to scriptures (LDS, 2012b) and are used by session directors. The practice or use of object lessons is supported in the Come, Follow Me curriculum. Referring to the way in which the Savior taught, it stated that He used real life examples that made sense to the learner (LDS, 2012e). Other forms of technology are also utilized by session directors.

Presentation Software. The use of PowerPoint as a presentation software is a widely used practice. Comments from session directors in regard to the benefits of using a presentation software, such as PowerPoint, include that it's a way to "ask [a] question you don't have to repeat" (I14, personal communication, April 1, 2016); in displaying quotes, "to not only hear the

quote but see the quote" (I10, personal communication, March 24, 2016); and to "to remind [the participants] there is a purpose" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). In other words, the PowerPoint helps with the organization and structure of the lesson.

The literature found specific to LDS teaching strategies as they relate to use of computer software states,

> Computer presentations can also be used to outline key points of the lesson, display scripture references, and provide visual instruction for learning activities. Using technology in these ways can benefit students who learn visually and can help students to organize and better understand what they learn. (LDS, 2012b, p. 71)

In contrast to the strategic use of technology, other session directors warned against the overuse of PowerPoint or allowing the PowerPoint "to control the conversation" (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016), having seen teachers use it "too much." One interviewee created a system that allows the session director to "not [be] tied linearly to taking them through a presentation" as the tool of PowerPoint is designed to do (I4, personal communication, March 21, 2016).

Mobile Devices. Another strategy in practice in the form of technological tools for the classroom includes the use of mobile devices for two purposes: live audience participation and to access digital scriptures. Currently, there no literature was found that regarding the use of mobile devices in LDS religious settings; however, the purpose for which the technology is used does relate to the literature. For example, the use of mobile devices for live audience participation, using tools such as Poll Everywhere (I14, personal communication, April 1, 2016) allows for students to reflect and type answers to questions created by the teachers. This practice of reflection and then articulation of thought followed by sharing ideas is similar to the literature

connections made concerning the process of writing, as previously articulated in an the Students Share section. Additionally, allowing participants to think and write answers to questions invites the learner to participate in the process of reflection. In Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model, he describes the process of *reflective observation*. In this practice, learners create concepts that integrate their observations from the perspective that individuals enter an environment with previous ideas and beliefs, supporting the idea that learners are not a blank slate that needs to be filled with information (Kolb, 1984). As students are allowed to read or see the responses of others, and as individuals read responses to similar questions, they create new understanding based on new ideas in which they come in contact (Resnick, 1989).

Additionally, session directors advised that technology be used with caution and prudence. One interviewee suggested that technology should be used to "facilitate their access and curiosity [rather] than gatekeeping their knowledge" (I6, personal communication, March 22, 2016). Not relying on technology were suggestions given by Interviewees 11 and 14. "If my message relies on technology—I have learned to never do that. Because that moment when you got to have it, it won't work" (I11, personal communication, March 24, 2016) and "when [the technology] doesn't work . . . [it] kills the flow (I14, personal communication, April 1, 2016).

Research question two. Research question two states: What teaching challenges are faced by the session directors of the Especially for Youth program? The results for research question two yielded a total of three themes and three subthemes. The following are key findings related to research question two.

Connectivity. One of the challenges faced by session directors is the connection between the teacher and learner, both inside and outside the classroom. Seven of the session directors interviewed mentioned the difficulty in meeting participants individually. For example,

Interviewee 8 stated, “It’s hard to connect with that many people. It’s hard to have a personal connection with 500 kids” (personal communication, March 23, 2016). The recommendations discussed in the responses to interview question eight suggested ways that session directors get to know the participants. This practice aligns with the literature related to the relationship of teacher to student. Geiger (2015) suggested that the relationship of the teacher to the student should be less formal and more personal, which fosters spiritual formation in an academic setting.

Often the feeling of connectivity to youths is hindered by the physical size and layout of the room, or the classroom environment. Session directors desire to move around the classroom and be in close proximity to students, and this practice “can be done at times at EFY but often not (I8, personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 11 added that due to the “positioning” and the lighting of the environment, “Sometimes . . . I can’t see [the participants]” (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

The challenge of connectivity with youths and getting to know them individually, or observing them in the classroom, are practices that relate to literature shared with regards to research question one, in which teachers make plans to teach after they get to know the students. For example, Hunter (1963) stated that no education should take place without relating the preparation to the present condition of the learner. In literature discussing the qualities of an effective teacher, Rompelman (2002) stated that teacher should personalize a learning experience based on students’ needs. Finally, the LDS Church materials advised individuals to teach a message based on a learners’ individual needs (LDS, 2004).

Fatigue. Another challenge for session directors is fatigue, referring to the lack of sleep for both the session directors and the participants at EFY. Interviewee 1 stated, in reference to the students, "They are sleep deprived and tired" (personal communication, March, 18, 2016). Interviewee 11 added, "They are up late at night" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 9 noted the fatigue of the session directors as well. "I'm so tired by Wednesday, I can't even think straight" (personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Results for research question three. Research question three states: How do session directors of the Especially for Youth program measure their teaching success? The results for research question three yielded a total of four themes and five subthemes. The results for research question two yielded a total of three themes and three subthemes. The following are key findings related to research question three.

Formal Evaluations. Session directors measure their success based on formal feedback. The formal feedback can be measured in one of two ways. First, session directors are asked to come back as session directors for a subsequent year. Second, individuals in attendance at an EFY session provide evaluation and feedback that is sent to the session directors following the session via e-mail. For example, "There are a lot of evaluations out there that go out from our students. EFY is great at measuring and taking evaluations from our students" (I1, personal communication, March, 18, 2016). In addition to formal evaluations, session directors measure their feedback with informal measures.

Informal Feedback. Session directors measure their success through informal means of comments made from individuals who attend the EFY classes including EFY staff, participants, and sometimes family members. For example, "It is kids that come up to me and say, 'I really needed to hear that'" (I12, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Interviewee 5 commented

that it was helpful "to get feedback from the counselors" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). One interviewee stated that, "At EFY success rate could be measured by how many kids stand and come after to talk to you . . . how many kids want pictures with you . . . those are tangible measure of kids connecting" (I13, personal communication, March 24, 2016). This measure of success is contrasted by others who say that success should not be based on comments from youth. Interviewee 6 stated that success is "not measured by the . . . handshaking, the picture taking, none of that, zero, zilch, nada" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). One type of informal feedback session directors receive is specific comments made by participants regarding the changes in their lives they want to make as a result of their learning.

Youths Lives Change. One form of informal feedback for session directors in determining their success is the comments participants make suggesting changes they want to make in their lives as a result of their experiences at EFY. Interviewee 3 articulated, "When someone says, 'I want to be different because of coming to EFY,' that's when I know it was a success" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Another example was from Interviewee 12 who said that they feel successful when a participant says, "I'm going to make a change in my life because of something that you said" (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

This notion of making life changes and "being different" aligns with the literature related to Mezirow's transformative learning theory, in which learning is defined as a social process of not only constructing but adopting a new interpretation of the meaning of one's own experience as a guide to further action (Mezirow, 1994). Speaking specifically of Christian education, Hunter (1963) noted that education is usually centered on the preparation of individuals for something that they will do later in life. The feeling and desire to make changes in one's life relates to literature from Dirkx et al. (2006), who stated that a learner may have an *epochal*

experience, described as profound and deeply moving. These learning experiences allow individuals to evaluate themselves, to relate learning to earlier experiences they have had, and to be part of a transformative, or change, process (Saines, 2009).

Feeling. Session directors indicated that another way they measure their success is by a feeling, either during the lesson or following a lesson that was positive in nature. "I just feel good," Interviewee 4 noted (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 8 added, "If I feel edified, then I hope that [the participants] felt edified. If I feel enthused and positive, then my hope is that [the participants] do as well" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 9 agreed, "I feel that feeling, that peace and that power that comes when you are on the right point and the kids are engaged" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Session directors attribute these feelings to feelings from God through the Holy Ghost, also referred to as the Holy Spirit, or Spirit. One interviewee stated, that the only "true measure of success is really the confirmation that the Spirit is there" (I1, personal communication, March, 18, 2016). Interviewee 12 stated, "The one way that I [measure my success] is if I feel the Spirit" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). These sentiments align with the LDS Church literature in regard to teaching and learning *by* the Spirit (LDS, 2012i), and if they have the feeling that the Spirit was present, then that is how session directors measure their success. However, some teachers, regardless of their own personal feelings, do not know if they were successful.

Unknown. Many session directors do not know whether or not they have been successful. For example, Interviewee 1 stated, "The great reality of this is that you never will know. A teacher will never know the full impact of their teaching" (personal communication, March, 18, 2016). Another said, "I don't know that I'm ever successful at reaching 500 kids" (I5, personal communication, March 22, 2016). One interviewee even noted, "I usually think that every time I

directed a session I always felt like I failed. It was horrible. I hated it. It was usually my [spouse] that walked me out of that one . . . 'No, you're okay'" (I7, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Results for research question four. Research question four asked: What recommendations would session directors make for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the Especially for Youth program? The results for research question three yielded a total of four themes and five subthemes. The following are key findings related to research question four.

Be Fully Engaged. The first way to be fully engaged as a session director is to offer one's unique talents, gifts, and abilities as a person and as a teacher. Eleven interviewees discussed this idea of not trying to be or act like other session directors, but simply be yourself. For example, Interviewee 6 suggested, "If you teach through someone else's eyes or someone else's lens, you'll lose the gift that you can offer. . . . Bring your gifts . . . Don't bring what others have. Bring what you have (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 9 added, "My best advice I was ever given . . . be yourself." (personal communication, March 23, 2016). In addition to being yourself, the second way to be fully engaged as a session director is to take advantage of opportunities to get to know participants during times when session directors are not teaching. Many session directors noted that getting to know participants was a challenge, and many made suggestions in regards to this challenge. Interviewee 5 stated, "I'll take advantage of down time and just visit with kids" (personal communication, March 22, 2016). Interviewee 15 added, "If a session director is not careful, they have been teaching the masses and they haven't gotten to know kids" (personal communication, April 5, 2016).

Interviewee 12 called these visits “informal teaching moments” (person communication, March 24, 2016).

> We will be walking and we’ll see kids hanging out together. We’ll stop and we’ll talk to them . . . We’ll ask them their names and where they are from. Then they’ll ask us a question. “Hey . . . I have a question for you.” Then there is an informal teaching moment right there . . . For me, classroom is not a border of walls, classroom is any opportunity to teach. (I7, personal communication, March 23, 2016)

Interviewee 7 suggested a way to connect and get to meet participants by giving something to the participant that would attach to their lanyard, or nametag, giving the session director a chance to have a one-on-one experience (it’s brief, especially when you are at a BYU [Brigham Young University] session with over 1,000 kids) so that way when I would see a participant from a distance, I could say, “I already talked to that one.” (personal communication, March 23, 2016)

This ability to connect with youths in informal settings supports Geiger (2015) suggestion, as previously mentioned, that the relationship of the teacher to the student should be less formal and more personal which fosters spiritual formation in an academic setting. LDS (2012e) stated that the way in which teachers teach youths in “both formal and informal settings, will help” youths (p. 2).

Another way session directors can be fully engaged is to be involved in activities outside their formal teaching moments. Interviewee 3 suggested, “Be engaged the entire week and not just the moments when you are on the stage” (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 9 added, “I just have to go prepared and be willing to be with the youth every second . . . be willing and ready to dive in and commit 100%, 150% the whole week” (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 13 stated, “The session director has got to be

really visible" for example, greeting kids in the cafeteria," and being at "the games, cheering for all the kids" (personal communication, March 24, 2016).

Content Preparation. Recommendations for other session directors and speakers at EFY include preparing content in lessons that are up to date and relevant to the youths they are teaching. Session directors should not rely on old material they have used in previous years. Interviewee 3 suggested, "When it feels like your lesson was pulled out of 1983, I don't think that is as relevant for the youth" (personal communication, March 21, 2016). Interviewee 14 added, "As you are session director, you cannot rely on the way you taught in '85" (personal communication, April 1, 2016). Interviewee 7 also suggested, "Make sure that the seven talks that you are giving, that they are updated and you are tweaking [*sic*]" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). In a similar vein, session directors stated that they should make their lessons meaningful to youths and their experience. Interviewee 7 stated, "Another key element would be making it relevant. Relevant to the audience" (personal communication, March 23, 2016). Interviewee 14 stated, "The youth will tune you out if they don't think you get them or if they don't think that you understand them . . . try to make it as relevant as possible (personal communication, April 1, 2016). This analysis of the data relates to Cooling's (2000) idea of *concept cracking*, where he suggests the steps in teaching religious concepts. One of the concepts is to engage in the pupils' world of experience, making parallels to their lives. Packer (1975) suggested the *principle of apperception* for teachers of youths. Apperception is the process of understanding something in context of the individual's previous experience. Thus, teachers should begin with the experiences of the students and what they already know about a subject, and make a comparison to what the teacher would like them to perceive.

Be Humble. Another suggestion offered to session directors and speakers of the EFY program is to be humble, denoting that session directors should have a modest view of their role as a session director and their abilities to teach. Interviewee 1 warned, "You can all of a sudden start thinking, 'Hey, I'm a pretty good teacher' . . . That can be dangerous in terms of the minute you start to believe that you have made it as a teacher, it hinders your progress" (personal communication, March, 18, 2016). Interviewee 2 added, "The moment you forget humility, you are done. Guarding that humility should be a number one priority" (personal communication, March 18, 2016). Interviewee 15 stated, "Session directors sometimes think they are more important than they really are—that twisted philosophy can change the way they interact, and the way the session director I think can hurt the program" (personal communication, April 5, 2016).

Support EFY Staff. The final recommendation offered to other session directors and speakers is to support EFY staff. This infers that session directors are spending time, getting to know and mentoring other staff members, including speakers, field coordinators, building coordinators, counselors, and speakers. For example, Interviewee 13 stated, "[Session directors] forget that they need to be the counselor's counselor" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). This role of mentorship to other young adults and adults echoes the previous suggestion made in finding opportunities to teach during informal teaching moments.

Implications of the Study

As the study came to its conclusion, it became apparent that there were implications associated with the findings in various fields of research. Those implications apply to faith-based and other programs concerned with the moral, spiritual, or values development of youths, as well as summer camps and programs for youths, particularly with religious emphasis. Other implications include technology integration strategies for teachers as well as teaching strategies

and practices for religious educators affiliated with the LDS Church. Additionally, the implications include suggestions for the development of the EFY program.

Implications for faith-based or other programs with emphasis in moral, spiritual, or values development. Moral development represents the transformation that occurs in an individual's structure of thought and the values associated with this development may vary from culture to culture, and from religion to religion (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Research and practice in values education, however, will continue to develop (Peterson, 2013). Though the content of the teaching material may be vary between different faith-based, religious organizations or communities, the strategies and practices can still be utilized in analogous fields, including programs with emphases in moral, spiritual, or values development.

Implications for technology integration in the classroom. Mishra & Koehler's (2006) Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) provides a framework of teaching knowledge that includes the three areas of content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and technology (TK; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). With a knowledge of standard and advancing technologies, a teacher is able to judicially determine the affordances or practices of various technologies as they combine with a given pedagogical practice or strategy. The facilitation of technological tools in teaching and learning environments, particularly in large group settings of a hundred or more individuals, provides opportunities for increases structure, participation, and connectivity among learners. The use of technology in a classroom setting should be done with clear purpose and leveraged to enhance a given practice. At times use of technology in a classroom may be avoided, if the technology as a tool does not enrich the intended learning outcome.

Implications for summer camps and programs for youths. This study adds to research and literature in religious activities as youths participate in summer camps and programs. Non-profit groups, including youth agencies and religious organizations, run approximately 9,500 camps in the United States (ACA, n.d.). In reference to two large studies conducted by the American Camp Association about the effects of camp attendance, Henderson et al. (2007) noted that in documenting best practices, further research is necessary to add to the growing knowledge base. The Especially for Youth program has grown and evolved since the first summer in 1976 and a total of 848,548 youths have attended the program (EFY, 2015b). This study specifically examined best teaching strategies and practices of teachers within the EFY program; other summer camps and programs may examine the program and the teaching and learning that occurs within the program as a potential model.

Implications for religious educators affiliated with the LDS Church. This study may be helpful to religious educators of youth programs of the LDS Church, including teachers in the Young Men's, Young Women's, and Sunday School programs. Weekday religious instructors in the Church Education System (CES) and the Seminary and Institute (S&I) program could benefit from the results of this study. Many of the teaching strategies and practices aligned with literature published by the LDS Church, and this information may help to expand these teaching practices.

Implications for the Especially for Youth Program. The research regarding teaching strategies and practices related to youths attending the EFY program could potentially help speakers and session directors improve their teaching practices. This research could outline teaching strategies and practices for the development of training for new teachers, advance the evaluation system of current faculty, and be used to create professional development materials

and systems to improve teaching practices in the EFY program. This research could also be used to inform and develop EFY staff training.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to determine current teaching strategies and practices of session directors of the EFY program. Although the topic has been researched, further research opportunities would continue and expand the research as it relates to religious teaching strategies and practices for youths. This study was limited to 15 participants. Based on the collected data and the experience of the principal investigator, the following recommendations for future study are proffered.

1. Expand the results of this study by conducting a similar investigation of teaching strategies and practices using a quantitative method with a survey tool distributed to all session directors of the EFY program, increasing the sample size of the research.
2. Conduct a study of faculty of the EFY program from the perspective of individuals being taught, the youths. This would expand the research on strategies and practices that allow for increased learner engagement.
3. Conduct a comparative study between EFY faculty and other educators of youths in summer camps with religious emphasis. This would allow the researcher to examine different religious beliefs, practices, and cultures, and their impact on the teaching and learning of religious content.
4. Conduct a study on informal teaching moments, the impact of the unstructured interactions between teacher and students, and the perceived impact on learning.

Final Thoughts

This study was of particular interest to the principal investigator having had affiliation with the EFY program. Looking the program through the lens of a researcher allowed her the opportunity to see firsthand the conscious efforts and strategies of session directors of the EFY program. She felt it an honor to sit and listen to many inspiring teachers who are deeply convinced in their faith, and seek to inspire youths in the best ways possible, all while giving the credit to God for their successes. This was a crowning and very personalized learning experience for the investigator—a honing of her educational undertakings.

Though the recordings and findings of this study were extensive, many details, comments, and stories were not included in this research. One overarching theme, however, repeated several times in various research questions was the idea of teachers not comparing themselves to others and not trying to imitate the teaching approach of their peers. This idea helped the principal investigator to see that what is more important than the teaching strategies and practices one seeks to hone and perfect, is the person who the teacher is and is striving to become.

A very clear moment of illumination during the research process allowed for a deeper perspective of teaching and learning in contexts where the goal of teaching is to inspire personal growth and change. Teaching that inspires change and action requires connection, both in the mind, with the illumination of new ideas, and the heart—a feeling or sense of desire, coupled with the commitment *to do*. Some may describe that feeling as the Holy Spirit, or a feeling from God; others may not. But a high impact teaching and learning experience must motivate to action, or the impact of the teaching becomes just nice ideas. Youths come to classes, or learning opportunities, with various backgrounds, understandings, knowledge, and experiences. The role

of the teacher is to connect with, lift, and inspire the learner. Together, the teacher and the learner not only grow in knowledge and understanding, but as human beings.

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APPENDIX A

Site Approval

To Whom It May Concern,

As the program director of the Especially for Youth (EFY) program of Brigham Young University's Continuing Education department, I give Traci Garff permission to conduct research as part of her doctoral dissertation at Pepperdine University in the EdD Learning Technologies program. EFY will provide her contact information of the session directors to be able to conduct interviews regarding their current teaching strategies and practices.

If you have any questions, feel free to call me Monday – Friday between the hours of 8:00 am – 5:00 pm at (801) 422-7826 (MST).

Thank you,

J.D. Hucks

J.D. Hucks
EFY Director
Continuing Education – Brigham Young University

APPENDIX B

Invitation E-mail

Dear EFY Session Directors,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study I am conducting for the completion of my doctoral dissertation at Pepperdine University, entitled — Current Teaching Strategies and Practices of Session Directors in the Especially for Youth (EFY) program.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the teaching strategies and practices employed by session directors, as well as examine challenges faced, measures of success and the overall recommendations made for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the EFY program.

My research study incorporates a phenomenological approach in which I will conduct in-person or video conference interviews with as many as 15 session directors. It is anticipated that the interview will require no more than 60 minutes. The expected timeframe for this study is to conduct interviews in March 2016.

All individuals who participate in this research will receive a copy of the completed study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with me, Pepperdine University, or any other entity.

Thank you in advance for your help. If you would be interested in participating, please contact me via e-mail at tsgarff@pepperdine.edu or by phone (914) 552-8608. We will then schedule a time for an interview. If you have any concerns or questions about this study, I am happy to answer them. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,
Traci Garff, M.E.T., Ed.D Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

APPENDIX C

Scheduling E-mail to Interview Participants

Dear <<First Name>><<Last Name>>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a study I am conducting for the completion of my doctoral dissertation at Pepperdine University entitled — Current Teaching Strategies and Practices of Session Directors in the Especially for Youth (EFY) program.

As mentioned, the purpose of my study is to investigate the teaching strategies and practices employed by session directors, as well as examine challenges faced, measures of success and the overall recommendations made for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices in the Especially for Youth program.

Additionally, I have attached a consent form for you to review prior to the interview. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with me, Pepperdine University, or any other entity.

Thank you in advance for your interest in this study. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail at tsgarff@pepperdine.edu or by phone at (914) 552-8608.

Warm regards,
Traci Garff, M.E.T., Ed.D Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

CURRENT TEACHING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES OF SESSION DIRECTORS IN THE ESPECIALLY FOR YOUTH PROGRAM

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Traci Garff, a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D Learning Technologies program at Pepperdine University, because you are or have been a session director in the Especially for Youth program. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Please read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will also be given a copy of this form for you records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate the teaching strategies and practices employed by session directors of the Especially for Youth program, as well as examine challenges faced, measures of success and the overall recommendations made for the implementation of exemplary teaching practices.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer for this study, you will be asked to participate in a 60 minute interview. If you live in a location that allows for a face-to-face interview, the interview will be conducted in a location convenient to you and the principal investigator. Interviews may also be conducted via video conference, if a face-to-face meeting is not possible. All interviews will be audio/video-recorded.

The following questions will be asked in the interview:

Ice breaker: Tell me a little about how you began teaching with the Especially for Youth program?

1. What strategies and practices do you use as a session director in your lesson *planning* and *preparations* to teach youths?
2. What teaching strategies and practices do you use in the classroom *as* you teach?
3. Are your strategies and practices different from teaching youths compared to other groups of people? If so, how?
4. What teaching strategies and practices have you observed in other teachers that you have adopted into your own practices?
5. What is your view on technology and teaching and how do you or do you not incorporate it into your teaching? Why or why not?
6. What challenges do you a face as a session director in teaching youths?
7. How do you measure your success teaching as a session director?
8. What recommendation or advice do you have for other session directors and speakers at the Especially for Youth program?

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The only potential risk associated with participation in this study is the inconvenience of time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to society which include:

1. The compilation of results of the study will be beneficial to the learning and practitioner communities at large.
2. Findings of the study will shed light and inform scholars and practitioners on teaching strategies and practices of religious youth educators.

In addition, upon your request, a completed copy of this study will be provided to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will keep your records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Your interview will be transcribed by the primary investigator. Your responses will be reviewed and coded using a pseudonym as your identity and the information identifying you with the pseudonym will be maintained separately. The audio/video-recordings of the interview will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. The data will be stored on USB drive locked in a

filing cabinet in the primary investigator's place of residence for three years, and thereafter, be destroyed.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or completing only the items which you feel comfortable. Your relationship with your employer will not be affected whether you participate or not in this study.

EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Traci Garff at tsgarff@pepperdine.edu or her faculty supervisor Farzin Madjidi at Farzin.Madjidi@pepperdine.edu if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

APPENDIX E

Confirmation of Interview for Research Study

Date
Dear Brother/Sister (Last name of recipient),

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research study entitled ― Current Teaching Strategies and Practices of Session Directors of the Especially for Youth (EFY) program Your interview has been scheduled for _____ (scheduled date/location) at _____ (scheduled time).

A list of the interview questions is included. Please take time to review them prior to the interview. I would like to reiterate that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate or refuse to answer any or all interview questions. All information collected in the study is completely confidential.

Thank you, again, for volunteering your time to this research study.

Warm regards,
Traci Garff, M.E.T., Ed.D Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

APPENDIX F

IRB Notice of Approval

PEPPERDINE

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: February 23, 2016

Protocol Investigator Name: Traci Garff

Protocol #: 15-10-090

Project Title: Current Teaching Strategies and Practices of Session Directors of the Especially for Youth Program

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Traci Garff:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chairperson

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives

APPENDIX G

Curriculum Completion Report

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI)

GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH - BASIC/REFRESHER CURRICULUM COMPLETION REPORT

Printed on 04/15/2014

LEARNER	Traci Garff (ID: 4119358)
DEPARTMENT	Learning Technologies
EMAIL	tsgarff@pepperdine.edu
INSTITUTION	Pepperdine University
EXPIRATION DATE	04/14/2017

SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH - BASIC/REFRESHER : Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

COURSE/STAGE:	Basic Course/1
PASSED ON:	04/15/2014
REFERENCE ID:	12801512

REQUIRED MODULES	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction	04/14/14	3/3 (100%)
Students in Research	04/14/14	8/10 (80%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE	04/14/14	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE	04/14/14	4/5 (80%)
The Regulations - SBE	04/14/14	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE	04/14/14	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE	04/14/14	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE	04/14/14	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE	04/15/14	4/4 (100%)
Research with Children - SBE	04/15/14	4/4 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE	04/15/14	4/4 (100%)
International Research - SBE	04/15/14	3/3 (100%)
Internet Research - SBE	04/15/14	5/5 (100%)
Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections	04/15/14	5/5 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees	04/15/14	4/4 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects	04/15/14	1/5 (20%)

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI Program participating institution or be a paid Independent Learner. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI Progam course site is unethical, and may be considered research misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Program Course Coordinator

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI)

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH CURRICULUM COMPLETION REPORT

Printed on 09/26/2014

LEARNER	Traci Garff (ID: 4119358)
DEPARTMENT	Learning Technologies
EMAIL	tsgarff@pepperdine.edu
INSTITUTION	Pepperdine University
EXPIRATION DATE	

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH : This course is for investigators, staff and students with an interest or focus in **Social and Behavioral** research. This course contains text, embedded case studies AND quizzes.

COURSE/STAGE:	Basic Course/1
PASSED ON:	09/26/2014
REFERENCE ID:	12801510

ELECTIVE MODULES	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Course Introduction	09/26/14	No Quiz
Research Misconduct (RCR-SBE)	09/26/14	5/5 (100%)
Data Management (RCR-SBE)	09/26/14	5/5 (100%)
Authorship (RCR-SBE)	09/26/14	5/5 (100%)
Peer Review (RCR-SBE)	09/26/14	4/5 (80%)
Mentoring (RCR-Interdisciplinary)	09/26/14	5/5 (100%)
Using Animal Subjects in Research (RCR-Basic)	09/26/14	4/5 (80%)
Conflicts of Interest (RCR-SBE)	09/26/14	4/5 (80%)
Collaborative Research (RCR-SBE)	09/26/14	3/5 (60%)
Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic)	09/26/14	4/5 (80%)
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Course Conclusion	09/26/14	No Quiz

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI Program participating institution or be a paid Independent Learner. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI Program course site is unethical, and may be considered research misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Program Course Coordinator

APPENDIX H

Interview Instrument

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Interview Questions:

Ice breaker: Tell me a little about how you began teaching with the Especially for Youth program?

1. What strategies and practices do you use as a session director in your lesson *planning* and *preparations* to teach youths?
2. What teaching strategies and practices do you use in the classroom *as* you teach?
3. Are your strategies and practices different from teaching youths compared to other groups of people? If so, how?
4. What teaching strategies and practices have you observed in other teachers that you have adopted into your own practices?
5. What is your view on technology and teaching and how do you or do you not incorporate it into your teaching? Why or why not?
6. What challenges do you a face as a session director in teaching youths?
7. How do you measure your success teaching as a session director?

8. What recommendations or advice do you have for other session directors and speakers at the Especially for Youth program?
9. Demographics

Age _____

Gender _____

Marital status _____

Ethnicity _____

Highest level of education attained _____

Industry currently working in _____

Mission_____ Location_____

CES/Non-CES _____

Number of years teaching at Especially for Youth _____

Number of years as a session director _____

Other teaching experience _____

APPENDIX I

Example Lesson Plan Checklist

LESSON

Day, time:

MUSIC:

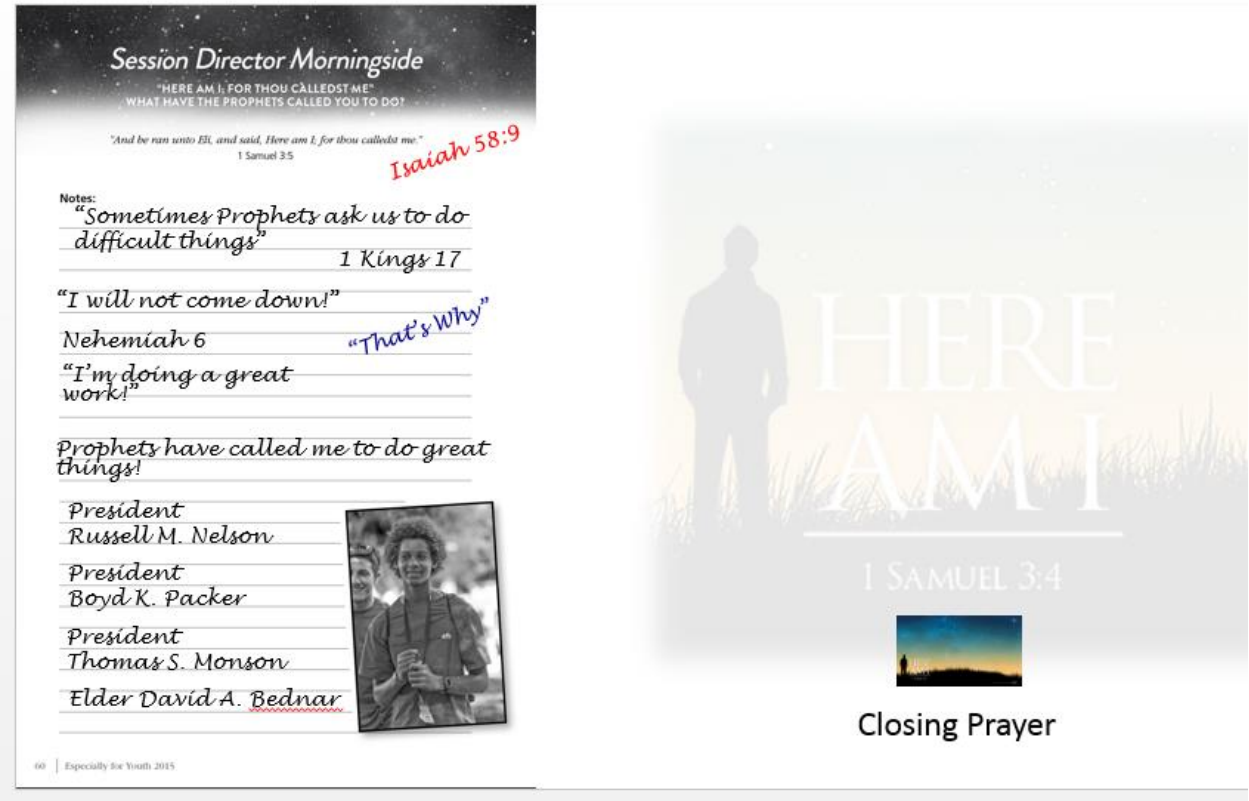
NEED, BRING:

PREP and SETUP:

☑	
	One-liner(s)
	List like Pres. Monson—optional
	Scriptures
	Words of living prophets
	Music (hymn or EFY song)
	Video—optional
	Photos
	Other media (online poll, facebook, youth.lds.org, etc.)
	Large activity
	Smaller activity (recharge)
	Readiness
	Question—group (answer with mic)
	Question—pair share
	Question—think and write
	Encourage journal writing
	How to apply when they get home and in life
	Story and/or personal example
	Change of pace every 15 minutes
	Lighthearted moment
	Testimony/application time
	Effective Principle(s)
	Challenge to DO
	Senses (taste, touch, see, smell, hear)

APPENDIX J

Example PowerPoint Slide 1



APPENDIX K

Example PowerPoint Slide 2