

Interaction, Power, and the Institution: Uncovering the Negotiations that Organize the  
Planning Work of Social Studies Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

With the proliferation of standards and accountability systems in education, questions about how they function and intersect with broader patterns of institutional relations await investigation. The existing literature in social studies education is replete with studies that frame teachers' expertise for managing how instruction unfolds in the classroom and how sophisticated domains of knowledge contribute to the ways that teachers manage the complexities of their work. While valuable for better understanding what makes teachers effective, this dispositional and cognitive framing makes it difficult to capture the myriad negotiations at play when teachers plan instruction. Further, relations of power are often rendered invisible.

To uncover the negotiations and interactions that shape the work of teaching and learning requires research questions and method that bring the institution into view. There are two broad questions guiding this investigation. How are instructional design and planning activities coordinated, organized, regulated, and/or standardized by broader extralocal relations of power that function beyond the daily experiences of teachers? How do discourses and activities in the institution replicate, constitute, and/or challenge those institutional relations? My study drew on tools from institutional ethnography and was embedded in everyday experiences of teachers. Four teachers partnered with me, allowing me to observe their work as they planned their lessons. However, the interactional framing of the study required a shift in gaze away from teachers and to the production of instruction. Through teachers' conversations, activities, and materials, I mapped instructional units and analyzed them for predictable patterns and threads of interaction that crossed contexts and reflected institutional relations that shaped their work. Textual analyses related to curriculum documents at the state level were paired with the everyday experiences of teachers to illuminate points of intersection and how they were discursively constituted during planning. Rather than isolate these intersections as a study of the impact of standards on teaching, I positioned them in a complex

landscape of negotiation that connected the work of teaching and learning beyond the classroom walls. An intriguing glimpse into the production of the institution and the relations of power that contextualized the lived experiences of teachers was revealed.

## Acknowledgements

I have been mentored, inspired, and supported in this work by so many who generously contributed time, feedback, and encouragement. I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the committee, Dr. Peter Doolittle, Dr. Stephanie van Hover, and Dr. Jennifer Bondy, for stepping in to assist, for their patience with my process, and for their time reviewing and assessing these ideas. To my committee chair, Dr. David Hicks, I owe particular thanks for insisting that I keep moving forward when the distractions of life might have overwhelmed my good intentions. This dissertation would not have been possible without his guidance, conversation, and extraordinary commitment to my scholarship. The educators who volunteered to participate in my study reflect the spirit of collaboration and inquiry that epitomize the best of this profession.

The opportunities and expertise made available to me by my colleagues have been invaluable for extending and shaping my thinking. My years at Radford University T/TAC were instrumental for expanding my vision to see more broadly. Sophia challenged me to be better every day, granting me new opportunities to consider my work through different lenses. Sharon's openness to new possibilities inspired me to take my own risks. For fifteen years Ruth has been a cherished mentor and friend; she believed this work was possible long before I did and never wavered when I doubted.

I would like to thank my family for respecting the weeks I had to disappear, for knowing when to ask for an update, and for recognizing when I needed to talk about something else. Charlie, my husband and partner in all things, has graciously made my work the center of our universe for as long as I have known him.

My dissertation exists because of the exceptional net of intellectual and emotional support that surrounds me every day. At its heart, this research is about interactions and I have been graced with countless stimulating conversations by students, teachers, professors, and colleagues. All of them are deeply appreciated.

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DATE: April 28, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Hicks  
Melissa Lisanti

FROM: David M. Moore



Approval date: 4/28/2009  
Continuing Review Due Date: 4/13/2010  
Expiration Date: 4/27/2010

SUBJECT: **IRB Expedited Approval:** "Teaching, Standards, and Institutions", IRB # 09-235

This memo is regarding the above-mentioned protocol. The proposed research is eligible for expedited review according to the specifications authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. As Chair of the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, I have granted approval to the study for a period of 12 months, effective April 28, 2009.

As an investigator of human subjects, your responsibilities include the following:

1. Report promptly proposed changes in previously approved human subject research activities to the IRB, including changes to your study forms, procedures and investigators, regardless of how minor. The proposed changes must not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.
2. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.
3. Report promptly to the IRB of the study's closing (i.e., data collecting and data analysis complete at Virginia Tech). If the study is to continue past the expiration date (listed above), investigators must submit a request for continuing review prior to the continuing review due date (listed above). It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain re-approval from the IRB before the study's expiration date.
4. If re-approval is not obtained (unless the study has been reported to the IRB as closed) prior to the expiration date, all activities involving human subjects and data analysis must cease immediately, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.

**Important:**

If you are conducting **federally funded non-exempt research**, please send the applicable OSP/grant proposal to the IRB office, once available. OSP funds may not be released until the IRB has compared and found consistent the proposal and related IRB application.

cc: File

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** April 7, 2015  
**TO:** David Hicks, Melissa Wall Lisanti  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Teaching, Standards, and Institutions  
**IRB NUMBER:** 09-235

Effective April 7, 2015, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the Continuing Review request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

**PROTOCOL INFORMATION:**

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6,7**  
Protocol Approval Date: **April 28, 2015**  
Protocol Expiration Date: **April 27, 2016**  
Continuing Review Due Date\*: **April 13, 2016**

\*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

**FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:**

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

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Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

\* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

On March 19, 2015 the Varkey Foundation awarded the first Global Teacher Prize, with its one million dollar purse, to an outstanding teacher in the United States who was chosen from a global pool of candidates. What is most interesting for my work is that the winner has created something of a stir with her reflections in the days following. I actually recognized the name, Nancie Atwell, and could pull one of her well-used texts off of my bookshelf. In my first years of teaching she was an inspiration for a novice teacher trying to inspire her students to be passionate readers and writers in their exploration of history. Atwell's ideas for teaching literacy resonated with the choice and power I wanted to offer my students and reading her work made me believe I could design instruction that would make a difference. A day or so after winning the award, she was interviewed by a crew on CNN; she charmed them first with her stories of authentic literacy work in classrooms at the private, nonprofit school she founded and then with her decision to donate the prize money to that very school because she already had all that she needed. When asked by the interviewer what she would say to "kids out there who are trying to figure out what they want to do when they grow up and might be considering teaching," she told them that she would encourage them to "look in the private sector." After a brief and quiet chorus of hms and "why?" Atwell offered this reason:

Because public school teachers are so constrained right now by the Common Core Standards and the tests that are developed to monitor what teachers are doing with them. It's a movement that's turned teachers into technicians, not reflective practitioners. And if you are a creative, smart young person I don't think this is the time to go into teaching unless an independent school will suit you (Atwell, 2015).

With those fifteen seconds of speech, she left me speechless. Here was a pioneer receiving a substantial award on a global stage...guiding young people away from careers in public education. She didn't speak with a plaintive or angry tone, just candidly and with the strength of conviction behind her words. I knew that she had founded her own school to realize the power of implementing the curricula she believed were most authentic, but this was going so much further. What was most disconcerting was the powerlessness conveyed through her words. There was no doubt, no ambivalence, no wavering, and certainly no room for flexing intellectual muscle to be a creative, smart, or reflective professional. As a professional at the threshold of a career in teacher education, Nancie Atwell's words have defined a pivotal moment of reflection for me on the viability of preparing students for the complex landscape of teaching today and tomorrow.

Atwell was not the first to describe such constraints and powerlessness, but she did it in the wake of celebrating such public recognition for the field and she did it on CNN. An educator of great stature and reputation was giving voice to relations of power on a national stage. I am reminded, yet again, of how much more we have to learn and understand about how those relations are constructed and sustained, for both good and ill. While I collected my data several years ago, questions about how standards intersect with work in classrooms remain as relevant now as they were when I began my investigation. In fact, they may be more pressing than ever with the rise of national models for standards and assessment like the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

To date, the Common Core State Standards Initiative only includes history and social sciences knowledge and skills as embedded skills in the language arts. However,

the National Council for the Social Studies has published a College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards (C3) (NCSS, 2013). Multiple states, too, have experimented with developing their own standards and assessments for history, geography, political science, and so on. Students and teachers are experiencing standards-based reform in very different ways – a fact that is evident in the daily routines of schools and the research conducted there (Fuhrman, 2001; Grant, 2006, 2007; McNeil, 2000; Yeager & Davis, 2005). While recent research has begun to capture some of these different experiences, a lot of unanswered questions remain. What factors influence the ways in which history and social science teachers negotiate standards in their daily instruction?<sup>1</sup> Why can a high school history teacher in the progressive high school of a western suburb continue to offer instruction consistent with his focus on democratic citizenship (Hess, 2005) at the same time teachers in Mississippi (Vogler, 2006) and Kentucky (Fickel, 2006) find their practices tightly constrained by standards and testing? Why do teachers practice differently in their untested electives than they do in their classes with end of course tests (Gerwin & Visone, 2006)? How do some teachers continue to provide ambitious teaching of social studies (Grant & Gradwell, 2010) while Atwell (2015) talks on national television about the lack of creative space available to teachers? Explanations may well lie in the countless exchanges and interactions that constitute the environments in which teachers work and students learn. In short, while teachers bear the primary daily responsibility for navigating their students through curriculum, a host of other factors have everything to do with how they function at the

---

<sup>1</sup> While considerable debate exists over the nature of standards in social studies education, I will use the VDOE History and Social Science standards as my local context. Each grade's curriculum, as mandated by the state, includes a set of standards that integrates geography, civics, and economics with history. However, the discipline of history dominates the standards in most grades.

helm. The variability uncovered in these questions is what I find most intriguing and is the problem that guides my study.

The following chapters detail my inquiry into how social studies teachers planned instruction while enmeshed in myriad interactions with policy, students and administrators, departmental discourses, professional learning communities, and school and community contexts...all of which inevitably shaped the resulting instruction in some way or another. There are two broad questions that frame the study.

1. How are instructional design and planning activities coordinated, organized, regulated, and/or standardized by broader extralocal relations of power that function beyond the daily experiences of teachers?
2. How do discourses and activities in the institution replicate, constitute, and/or challenge those institutional relations?

Following this introduction are six more chapters. Chapter Two reviews the existing literature through two lenses: discussions of how standards have impacted social studies teaching and literature related to the contexts and interactions of teaching. What I found in this phase of my inquiry was ample space to add to conversations about how analyses of teachers' work might be positioned as dialogic negotiations with a wide variety of contextual factors. To complicate existing constructs of teachers as powerful decision makers in their classrooms by illuminating relations that shape their dialogues and decisions is the contribution I hope to make with this work.

Chapter Three details the methodological decisions and tools that made visible the interactions and relations I was investigating, as well as the limitations of the final work. After reviewing the particular challenges of my research questions, I explain why I chose

tools from institutional ethnography and critical discourse analysis to find evidence of the interactions and relations of power that shaped participants' work in instructional planning. Details of participants and data collection are provided. I also describe the process of mapping lesson planning and the texts and dialogues that intersect with those maps. The third chapter concludes with a brief overview of three analytical lenses that emerged from the data.

Investigating these questions was a complex process, and required a layered and recursive process of reading, analyzing, and writing. To genuinely uncover evidence related to my research questions and avoid a priori assumptions about constructs like lesson/unit planning, the institution, curriculum standards, the school, et cetera, I had to investigate:

- what key texts are connected to the planning processes of teachers;
- what activities constitute the production of planning;
- how those activities are embedded in interactions and dialogically produced and shaped; and
- how organizing and regulating frames coordinate teachers' work by connecting them to broader relations that extend beyond the classroom.

To organize this analysis, there are three chapters of findings. Chapter Four focuses on intertextualities embedded in state policy texts related to Virginia's standards for social studies as a means of identifying potential points of intersection with the activities of the daily planning work of teachers. Chapter Five attends to the dialogues of teachers in the field as they produce what content they will teach and how they will teach it. These dialogues capture other texts, voices, and interactions in their construction and their work



is positioned in a variety of complex interactions that take teachers beyond their daily spaces. Chapter Six brings the analysis full circle by connecting the planning activities and dialogic interactions outlined in the previous two chapters with texts and other relations that function to organize, coordinate, and/or regulate beyond the classroom walls: the school, time, and state policy.

The final discussion summarizes the findings and opens new questions for further exploration. What I find most exciting about my inquiry are the variety and depth of new questions that can fuel my future investigations. In addition to the potential implications of investigations like mine for the field and for scholarship, I also reflect on its impact on my own development and thinking. While there have certainly been times in my career when I felt as constrained as Nancie Atwell described for CNN, I now work with the power that comes from being able to see and understand the relations that make me feel that way. With that knowledge, I feel much better prepared to help my students navigate the stormy landscape of public schools instead of submerging their creative practices or choosing the public sector. Because our discourses play such an important role in the institutional relations we both experience and produce, we need creative and innovative conversations in schools every day. I now turn to existing literature to assess what the field has already learned about such dialogues.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

Because my research questions focus on how instructional design and planning activities are coordinated, organized, regulated, and/or standardized by broader extralocal (perhaps institutional) relations of power that function beyond the daily experiences of teachers, it was necessary to study the literature from several perspectives. First, I identified examples from the literature that captured the contested contexts of policy reform around curriculum standards. Next, I examined research on teachers' and schools' responses to standards, often finding research questions and methods that privileged the teacher and her knowledge base as the control-center of instructional decision-making and behavior management. Because I wanted to complicate this conceptualization, I then shifted my exploration to rich research outside of the field that addressed the complex contexts of teachers' work. Such research began to account for the interactions and relationships in which teaching was situated. Taken together, these discussions opened space for my inquiry into history and social studies education that fused standards into the environmental contexts and interactional processes that constituted the teaching process.

### **The Storm (Context)**

The proliferation of standards and testing into public schooling has been exceptionally controversial and situated in a media circus. The last thirty years have witnessed a strong surge of ideas linking education and schooling with economics, the market, audit cultures, and rationality. Business leaders, politicians, and policy makers have considered how education should both reflect and serve those ideas, effectively monopolizing public forums and discourse in order to promote such an agenda (Apple,

2005, 2006; Eisner, 1995, 2000; Emery & Ohanian, 2004). What has emerged is a renewed and increasingly intense focus on standards and testing that is intended to maximize schools' output of functional workers. Standards-based reformers, who include lawmakers and White House officials among their group, contend that public schools and educational experiences will improve for all students as long as faculties and school systems are accountable for students' performance in highly public and quantitative ways (Gencer, 2007; Harris, 2015; Office of the Press Secretary, 2007; NCLB is working, 2007).

Standards and testing initiatives are now entrenched in the daily work of schools. Reformers tout their successes in news briefs on assessment data and higher percentages of accredited schools while school systems hang banners and celebrate achieving accreditation, implicitly legitimizing the system of testing and accreditation (Lanier, 2007; Hu & Fessenden, 2007; Warmack, 2007). But these accounts do not consider the costs, sacrifices and constraints that sometimes make these changes possible. Journals for teaching practice tell mixed tales of gains and losses and periodically provide evidence of the crippling effects of standardization (NCLB era, 2007). Some schools flourish while others continue to flounder, seemingly trapped in a malaise of mediocrity and continued gaps in achievement. Recently, test scores have gained traction in the evaluation system for teachers, as divisions and states begin to use them to calculate growth measures for students (Harris, 2015; VDOE, 2015). Critics offer a variety of responses: inequities in funding and resources distribute the burdens of testing unevenly, standards and testing often lead to mechanized teaching and rote learning, or that changes in the name of standards-based reform are gradually robbing teachers of their sense of

efficacy as professionals (Brideau, 2007; Richardson, 2007; Rivera, 2007; Public Worried, 2007). A diverse group of people has been vocal in their opinions, ranging from students (Brideau) to parents (Rivera) to governors (Richardson) to the President.

However, much of this contentious debate occurs in newspapers and magazines, meaning that systematic research on how standards and testing have impacted classrooms is often missing from these hotly contested and highly public arguments. As Ogawa and his colleagues (2003) assert, “although analysts seem to agree that the development of standards has been a positive advance in the current educational reform agenda, there is little consensus regarding the impact they ultimately will have in classrooms by way of districts and schools” (p.3). In spite of a growing body of work that offers biting theoretical critique of standards in education, we still have significant gaps in our understanding of how standards and testing actually function as part of the daily work of teachers. Until now, the storm surrounding federal testing has had only indirect impacts on history and social studies, very real but nonetheless indirect. That may well change in the near future as the professional social studies community has begun to earnestly debate the place of social studies education in the next reauthorization of the Elementary Secondary Education Act and the proliferation of the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

Social studies and history educators are currently faced with a critical dilemma: vie for inclusion in federally mandated testing and accreditation programs or risk even greater decreases in funding and attention as math and reading continue to monopolize center stage. Research has begun to document a decline in time devoted to teaching social studies subjects in elementary schools, the primary reason for which is attributed to

its exclusion from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal legislation (O'Connor, Heafner, & Groce, 2007). In 2014, the General Assembly voted to reduce the number of state administered assessments, requiring divisions to replace them with local assessments in two courses of United States history in middle school and in third grade social studies (Chandler, 2014). Given federal emphasis on reading, math, and science, teachers and schools are sometimes forced to sacrifice time from other activities in order to meet testing benchmarks. Members of the National Council for the Social Studies have spent the last several years debating its position on NCLB as evidenced by discussions in their governing body, as well as passed and failed resolutions (Altoff, 2003; National Council for the Social Studies, 2002, 2003; NCSS Assessment Committee, 2007; O'Connor, et al., 2007). In 2013, they released a new set of College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) standards designed to support school divisions and states with adding rigor to their social studies standards. A recent surge in discourse favoring heritage history standards and traditional history (Evans, 2004; Gewertz, 2014; Grant & Horn, 2006; Vinson, 1999) indicates the importance of continued reflection on standards and their implications for history classrooms, particularly in an era when high-stakes testing will guarantee at least minimum coverage of them.

Decisions about what history counts and is important for students to know necessarily involve tremendous power (Counsell, 2000). Small committees of powerful elites can hold almost exclusive power over what standards include, implicating what knowledge is valuable, and whose history matters, and what history is fact. For example, Linda Fore (1998) detailed the ways in which a very small group of conservative policy makers retained tight control over standards content, which included minimizing

opportunities for public comment and dissent and excluding the professional social studies community from any kind of significant participation. More recently, Paul Spies and his colleagues (2004) described the intense conflict that erupted over proposed standards in Minnesota. Originally prepared by an appointed committee that failed to capture the diverse communities and perspectives of the state, the standards reflected myriad inaccuracies as well as a narrow framework embedded with racist and sexist interpretations. Most recently, in 2014, public debate erupted over revisions to the College Board's Advanced Placement United States History Standards (Levy, 2014), even earning public challenges to their design from the Republican National Committee (Ganim, 2015; Gewertz, 2014).

Educators have long debated the purposes of social studies education, the emphasis on history and other disciplines, as well as the urgency of rich educational experiences for citizenship (Evans, 2004). As Barton and Levstik (2004) have explained, history education in the United States has often served to forge a relationship between the past and present that bonds students to a common national heritage. They term this approach to history teaching the "identification stance" and note its emphasis on national heroes, celebrations, turning points, and the inexorable journey toward progress (pp. 45-64). Barton and Levstik note that, while potentially useful for building a sense of community, identification can also be very destructive as it lends itself to narrow and exclusive constructions of the community and attitudes of superiority and moral rectitude. The identification stance is a cultural construct and is not necessarily shared in all history teaching, though its proliferation in the United States is obvious (Barton, 2001; Barton & Levstik, 2004).

In spite of often narrowly conceived history standards and curriculum approaches, the national journals for social studies professionals feature a wide variety of strategies for supporting high quality instruction in standards-based contexts. Articles on pedagogy continue to focus on inquiry, document-based activities, collaboration, multiple perspectives, current events, and civic and global issues (Bolick, 2002; Cruz & Groendal-Cobb, 1998; Ferster, Hammond, & Bull, 2006; Fox, 2006; Hartoonian, Van Scotter, & White, 2007; Kohlmeier and Saye, 2014; Lark, 2007; Stevens & Fogel, 2007). Authors and experts encourage teachers to integrate these kinds of activities by adapting and aligning them to state standards (DomNwachukwu, 2005; Grant, 2007; Schwebel, 2014; Tomlinson, 2003; Vogler & Virtue, 2007; Yeager, 2005). The presumption is that that the classroom teacher will play a role that Stephen Thornton (1991, 2006) refers to as “curriculum gatekeepers,” sophisticated experts who “make day-to-day decisions concerning both the subject matter and the experiences to which students have access and the nature of that subject matter and those experiences” (p. 237). The “gatekeeping” role is critical in history teaching because heritage history standards often mean a marginalization or exclusion of peoples not in power, yielding a history that is largely irrelevant to members of excluded groups (based on race, gender, class, ethnicity, etc.) because they cannot or do not see themselves in it. At its most destructive, focusing solely on the history of the dominant culture reifies exclusion and subverts the pursuit of critique, equity, and justice. If standards like these dominate classroom instruction due to the constraints of mandated content and high-stakes tests, the costs to marginalized voices will be steep indeed.

The predominant use of textbooks in planning and instruction has been well documented over the last two decades and suggests that teachers often choose textbook related activities for their familiarity, structure, and convenience (Schug & Western, 1997; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1993b; Thornton, 1991). A remarkable surge in curriculum standardization and high-stakes testing has taken place in the intervening years, raising important questions. Have standards reified or contradicted the grand narrative of history so commonly found in textbooks? Have they begun to challenge the textbook's primacy in teacher planning? Discovering how standards intersect with the complex contexts of teachers' work is increasingly important for understanding the diverse consequences of standards-based reform.

### **Reconsidering Standards**

Standards exist in a wide variety of ways in education and include accreditation standards, performance standards, assessment standards, and standards of quality to name a few. There are standards for students, teachers, principals, schools, and school systems. Raymond Horn (2004) offers a definition of technical content standards that clarifies the standards of concern here. Technical content standards are curriculum content standards that students are required to master and are subject to some form of accountability measure, usually a standardized test. The authors of technical content standards generally present them as value-neutral, however they usually reflect the ideas and events that the dominant culture finds significant (Horn, 2004, p. 63-65). Currently, little consensus exists on how these standards actually function in schools and classrooms, with arguments ranging from tools of reform to mechanisms of control.



**Standards as Tools for Reform.** Policy makers have consistently argued that clear and coherent standards, administrated by strong central leadership, would improve teaching, standardize a body of knowledge for all students, and resolve inequities in students' opportunities to learn by holding schools accountable for the achievement of all students. In its 2001 Yearbook, the National Society for the Study of Education (Fuhrman, 2001) features a series of studies on the implementation of standards-based reform in the United States. The investigations included in this collection study schools, faculties, and students for their success, or lack thereof, in implementing and realizing standards-based reform. Where reform and improvement have not been realized, the researchers here offer several explanations based on their analyses: unresponsive teaching, inadequate professional development, and district capacity for change and reform (Fuhrman, 2001). Because this kind of framing presumes that standards-based reform should result in improved schools and student achievement (evidenced by test scores) their various research findings are necessarily constrained to discover problems in schools and in implementation like those listed above. While these reasons undoubtedly impact the quality of educational experiences, they allow little room for discussion of how standards may negatively impact teachers' work and students' learning. Nor do they offer conversation on their assumptions about standards, the function of standards, or on the complex outcomes that may result from new reforms.

National curriculum standards for history (for example, National Center for History in the Schools, 1996) and social studies (for example, National Council for the Social Studies, 1994) have existed for decades, but only as guidelines intended to assist

local authorities with designing instructional sequences for their communities.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, state departments of education have often published content standards for history and/or social studies. However, school systems and teachers enjoyed considerable latitude in their instructional choices before the implementation of public accountability measures. *A Nation at Risk*, published in 1983, congealed growing controversies on the future of schooling and provided a pivotal report that sparked a renewed cry for traditional history and mastery of the basics for students who appeared to be increasingly ignorant of them. Concern over international test performance and widening achievement gaps sounded the alarm for policy makers. State legislatures began to mandate tests as catalysts for reform that would improve instruction by forcing its alignment with standards (Grant, 2001). Kevin Vinson (1999) and Ronald Evans (2004) detail the development of traditional history content standards and the controversies that surround them over the last two decades. School faculties and system administrators have had to reevaluate their practices in order to focus on accreditation, as failure to meet accreditation status over consecutive years' results in serious consequences like funding cuts and reconstitution.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The debate over standards and curriculum for history and/or social studies is one with a long history. Ronald W. Evans' (2004) work, *The Social Studies Wars* (New York: Teachers College Press) is one source that discusses some of this history. Kevin Vinson's (1999) work on National Curriculum Standards offers another synthesis of these debates along with a proposed radical critique of standards drawing on the scholarship of Dewey, Freire, and Foucault. I only refer to national standards at this time to situate the development of state standards in a larger context, so I will not further detail this debate here. For the rest of the paper, I will refer to state standards that take a variety of shapes. For example, in Virginia, our standards are called History and Social Science Standards of Learning. What matters most for my argument are mandated content standards and how teachers and students negotiate them.

<sup>3</sup> For example, according to publicly available data on Virginia's Department of Education website (<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/src/accreditation.shtml>), 33 schools in 2007-2008 were potentially subject to reconstitution. Eight were listed as planning for alternative governance.

Several underlying assumptions are at work in these calls for reform and public accountability: inequities in opportunities to learn stem largely from inadequate teaching; student performance will improve if teachers follow technical curriculum standards as dictated by experts; and, teachers often resist improving their practice and need to be pressured into reform and then monitored for compliance. Standards and accountability, then, function as mechanisms for “quality control” in the teaching profession, improving student learning by improving teaching. However, asserting control can have serious negative ramifications as well. How might standards change teaching and schooling in ways that are damaging and counterproductive? How might standards and testing narrow our definitions of learning, success, and performance?

**Standards as Trials and Tribulations.** A growing body of literature examines and details how standards can function as bureaucratic controls over schools, teachers and students. Linda McNeil (1986, 2000) challenges the premise that standards and testing impact only those schools and teachers in need of improvement. Her observations and interviews in Texas magnets schools reveal frustrated faculties working to balance the demands of standards with what they believe to be responsive educational practice. State mandated curricula are completely disconnected from the missions of these magnet schools, forcing teachers to abandon or modify previously successful practice. “The effects of centralized controls over curriculum and teaching were so damaging, so limiting to the curricular content, and so de-skilling of teaching, that they seemed contrary to their own intent” (2000, p. 230). Her dense and rich study of power relations and control mechanisms in schools reveals classroom practices significantly constrained by the standardization of curriculum. However, because her conclusions are so deeply

seated in the negative impacts of testing and bureaucratic control, McNeil finds little opportunity to address any potential capacity for standardized testing and disaggregated data to improve the educational quality for children (Skrla, 2001). And yet, her studies reveal some alarming trends. The teachers included in McNeil's study are logically cast in reactive versus proactive positions with this kind of analytical approach that focuses on systemic control and power relations. If these kinds of changes and frustrations are occurring in magnet schools typically staffed by very creative and highly qualified teachers, one can only wonder at what might be happening in schools lacking the resources of more prestigious magnet schools. Her focus on magnet schools may not completely capture even deeper inequities in poorly funded and underperforming schools where faculties use standards and testing to justify rote, mechanical instruction (Kozol, 2005).

Other studies reveal similar constraints on teachers' practice in both the United States and Britain. Drawing on Foucault's theory of power relations, the construction of knowledge, and regulatory structures like the panopticon (Foucault, 1977/1995), investigators have examined standards as cultural constructions, as well as the supervisory strategies for constructing an "all-seeing" authority that can permeate the classroom walls without a physical presence (Bushnell, 2003; Perryman, 2006). Teachers' frustrations, diminished professionalism, and increasing state control over the nature of knowledge in both elementary and high schools are the milder ramifications of standards-based reform identified by this analytical approach (Bushnell, 2003; Perryman, 2006). To push even further, perhaps testing and data are the constructions of schools' images that reduce teaching and learning to a number and cloak inequity even as they

convey a false aura of transparency to the public (Vinson & Ross, 2003). “Elite and hegemonic images of the good are standardized. High-stakes testing is a means of enforcement of these images/interests. Teachers, students, parents, and principals are coerced toward such images via the tools of surveillance and spectacle” (p. 248).

The literature on standards and testing as tools for reform versus mechanisms of control reveals the politically charged and controversial nature of the new reform movement. Further, it exposes the need for understanding how these changes are actually affecting classrooms. Most likely, standards function in complex ways that vary across contexts and blur reform and control. Researchers from both positions can provide theoretical frameworks and examples from practice and experience that support their arguments. However, uncovering patterns and analyzing the mechanisms that influence them will require a large body of research conducted in diverse schools across the country. Given the recent surge in standards-based reform, this kind of work has intensified as well, examining how teachers might respond to standards in a variety of ways including submission (teaching to the test), accommodation (integrating standards into wise practice), and resistance (undermining mandated standards).

### **The Impact of Standards on Teachers’ Decisions**

**When the storm dictates the course – Teaching to the test.** The proliferation of high-stakes testing has raised the concern for many critics that classroom teachers might be “teaching to the test” as a result of state and central office pressures to maintain adequate pass rates among their students. However, what actually occurs in classrooms and how that might be consistent or contrary to instruction prior to the standards reform movement remains unclear despite the voluble arguments on either side.

A growing body of literature in history and social studies addresses “teaching to the test” generally, including an array of disciplines and grade levels in various investigations. Empirical studies on testing and teaching yield a variety of evidence to show the complexity of teachers’ reactions to standards and testing in their planning and teaching. The most commonly emerging findings involve narrowing curriculum to tested topics, increasing time on test preparation at the expense of other subjects, and altering instructional practices to more closely align with testing formats (Cimbricz, 2002; Gerwin & Visone, 2006; Segal, 2003; van Hover, 2006; van Hover & Heneicke, 2005; van Hover, Hicks, & Sayeski, 2012; Vogler, 2005, 2006). A growing body of work provides ample evidence of teaching framed by standards and testing. However, as I will discuss later, the situation is much more complex than “teaching to the test.”

S. G. Grant’s (2003) work with two high school history teachers in New York reveals the influence of standards and testing in several ways. Classroom tests featured formats similar to the Regents exam, certain topics were covered to prepare students for the exam, and both teachers cared about how students performed on the exams, particularly as passing test scores were important to many of the parents in their school community. Because Grant provides only a general overview of his method (interview and classroom observation), it is difficult to determine how his research model, interviews, or observations studied collegial relationships, administrative discourse, or student-teacher interactions in any meaningful ways. He provides basic discussions on the ways that other factors complicate teachers’ negotiations with standards and testing: relationships with colleagues and administrators, relationships with students, organizational structures and norms, as well as state policies. However, his analysis of

these factors in relation to his two participants is relatively minimal. He does report that the department at their school provided social and logistical support, but few opportunities to discuss ideas about learning and teaching history. This evidence caused him to conclude that that these two teachers were professionally autonomous and isolated, so colleagues had little impact on their instruction for better or worse (p. 170). Such a conclusion may be premature as failure to hear influences through discussion in department meetings may not indicate their absence. Further, the very fact these teachers act in a department would suggest that they are not isolated, and the department's lack of pedagogical discussion may be a profound influence in and of itself. Grant's analysis of student/teacher interactions is a largely attitudinal one that analyzes each teacher's general perceptions of their students' abilities, or lack thereof, with little attention to relationships or exchanges.

In his research of secondary history teaching in Mississippi and Tennessee, Kenneth Vogler (2005; 2006) found strong implications of testing on teaching and instructional decision-making. At the time of his study, the state of Mississippi required students to pass a test on United States history in order to receive a diploma. Even though pass rates did not have specific punitive consequences for schools at that time, just the pressures to serve students and own high rates of graduation had a marked impact on many teachers' instruction. The state of Tennessee requires schools to administer an end-of-course test on United States history, the results of which impact the school's accreditation and students' grades. Based on over 200 surveys collected from teachers across the two states, Vogler found that they significantly favored teacher-centered instructional tools like the textbook, lecture, and multiple choice questions over student-

centered activities like role playing, project based assignments, inquiry or response journals. Over 95% of the teachers in Tennessee agreed that helping students attain high exam scores and school accountability were factors in their decisions on what instructional strategies to employ. Over 90% of the teachers in Mississippi also agreed and over 80% reported actively devoting class time to test preparation ranging from one day to two months. (However, even teachers who reported that they spent no time in test preparation still favored traditional instructional methods, suggesting that these methods may be pervasive even without the influences of testing.)

While Vogler's study is informative and provides information from a large number of teachers, its focus on surveys raises some problems. It is necessarily dependent on how teachers represented themselves and their classrooms on paper. Further, the research design privileges the actions of teachers, as the questions elicit information on their decision making and opinions. Little space exists to consider the host of environmental and contextual factors that undoubtedly influence those decisions and opinions. Nor is it viable to study these complex interactions through a written survey administered from a distance.

Avner Segal (2003, 2006) interviewed secondary history teachers in Michigan to learn more about how they negotiated the implementation of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). Using the words of the teachers to describe changes in courses that had added a mandated test, the study revealed examples of narrowed curriculum that excluded important but untested topics, artificial and surface coverage of mandated topics, and restructured instructional sequences, as well as an overall tone of frustration and discontent among teachers (2003, p. 318). Interestingly, Segal chose not



to focus on these classroom impacts in his concluding discussion. Rather, he argued that standards and testing more likely influenced the attitudes teachers brought to their classrooms, causing them to make adjustments in their teaching whether they were truly mandated or not. By degrading the empowerment and professionalism of teachers, the MEAP itself may not mandate these kinds of changes but the surrounding discourses caused them nonetheless (2003, p. 318-320). Here again is evidence of the underlying conceptual framework that high-stakes testing is mediated in the classroom through teachers' attitudes, dispositions, and decisions.

Gerwin and Visone (2006) found results similar to those in Segal's (2003) study; veteran teachers employed fact-based objectives aimed to cover mandated content, allowed minimal spontaneous classroom discussion and increased note-taking and individual seat work in their classes that required a state exam at the end of the year. Further, these same two teachers used different instructional approaches in their elective, and untested, courses; discussion was the primary instructional tool and controversial, open-ended topics constituted the curriculum. Gerwin and Visone's findings are a significant contribution to our understanding of how standards and testing influence instruction because we have the opportunity to see how the same teacher functions differently in varying classroom contexts i.e., tested subjects versus untested electives. Standards and testing are obviously an important new part of teaching context. While Gerwin and Visone do not explore the possible ramifications for teacher-centered analytical frameworks, they have nonetheless exposed the inadequacy of attempting to understand the influence of standards and testing through the teacher and his knowledge

of content, students, and pedagogy. I would argue that such an explanation simply cannot account for a single teacher who behaves differently across class periods.

In her study of seven new teachers in Virginia, van Hover (2006) concludes that “It seems as though a culture shift has taken place in Virginia’s schools – these beginning teachers are so used to the existence of the SOL tests, the influence has become as undetectable as it is pervasive” (p. 215). Virginia’s Standards of Learning and the state testing regime clearly dictate not only the content taught but also pacing and assessment structures, even though teachers do not necessarily recognize the control. Van Hover and Heinecke (2005) found that ten veteran teachers in Virginia adapted their pacing and topics to meet state standards and tests, reduced the amount of time they spend on higher order inquiry skills that were not tested, sometimes replaced project assessments with multiple choice tests, and used direct instruction to cover material efficiently and quickly.

In spite of the accumulating evidence that standards and testing are increasingly shaping instruction, the situation is much more complex even within the studies described above. Van Hover and Heinecke’s (2005) study also finds that despite teachers’ concessions to state policy, they continue to employ a wide variety of instructional practices, particularly their favorite ones, refusing to sacrifice them to more test-centered instruction. The two teachers in Grant’s study (2003) have not changed their beliefs about content and continue to use the instructional strategies and units of study they prefer. Further, Grant and Gradwell’s (2010) edited collection of studies authored by teachers reveal a wide variety of ambitious teaching practices in social studies. Vogler’s (2005; 2006) participants reveal that teacher-centered instruction is the preferred choice of most teachers whether or not they report concerns over test scores, giving lie to the

idea that standards and testing themselves force teacher-centered instructional choices. Segal (2003) argues that it is teachers' beliefs and discourses about standards that influence instruction, not the tests and standards themselves. Such widely mixed results for how teachers negotiate standards and testing reveal how complex they are to study and understand. In Cimbricz' review of the literature on testing and teaching, she argues "State-mandated tests do matter and do influence what teachers say and do in their classrooms. But while there is overall agreement that a relationship between the two does exist, the nature of that relationship is neither simple nor easy and requires further elucidation." (Cimbricz, 2002, p. 4).

Evidence from a variety of studies indicates that "teaching to the test" is an oversimplification of the complex negotiations revealed in classrooms. To better understand the relationships among teaching, learning, standards, and testing requires a conceptual space that allows for elements of both accommodation and resistance. Teachers clearly do not position themselves as accommodators or resisters. In fact, they may rarely have the time and opportunity to consider their feelings or position on state mandated policy. The rigorous pace and intensity of schooling often will not allow it. Instead, careful studies of their practices reveal a fluid, shifting movement between accommodation and resistance, sometimes both in the same moment.

**Riding out the storm – Accommodating Standards.** Some teachers opt not to divert their instructional courses when they encounter the standards and testing storm and choose instead to negotiate and adapt their practice. They put on their raincoats, marshal their strength, and continually alter their strategies to ensure their survival without sacrificing their course or final destination. Some teachers adjust content to ensure

coverage of tested topics and, at the same time, they protect their preferred instructional strategies, engage students in higher-level tasks, and incorporate important units that are not tested (Fickel, 2006; Gradwell, 2006; Grant, 2001; Salinas, 2006; van Hover, 2006; Webeck, Salinas, & Field, 2005). A middle school teacher in New York continues to utilize inquiry-based instruction and includes a unit that does not exist in the state standards (Gradwell, 2006). Teachers in one Kentucky high school narrow assessments and test rigorously, but they also continue to use their favorite instructional strategies (Fickel, 2006). One of the teachers in Grant's (2001) study is strongly committed to teaching his U. S. history course thoroughly even when state curriculum may suggest more surface treatments of some topics. The other is constantly balancing her own ideas of what is important with the state curriculum's requirements in her instructional choices. Whether it's the skills of inquiry (van Hover, 2006), a focus on social history versus political history (Grant, 2001), or the inclusion of multiple perspectives (McNeil, 2000), this body of work reveals history teachers who are often involved in balancing their own priorities as well as state policy in their classrooms.

However, in the standards-based era, most of the research on social studies teachers who continue to practice wisely, working to accommodate standards and high-stakes tests without sacrificing creative approaches to curriculum or student-centered learning environments comes out of suburban or exclusive magnet schools.<sup>4</sup> In the five secondary studies included in Yeager and Davis' (2005) *Wise social studies teaching in*

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<sup>4</sup> Davis (2005) stresses the importance of calling teachers' practices wise instead of best. Such a shift allows for researchers to capture the sophisticated practices that teachers employ in order to meet the diverse, and often individual, needs of the students in their classrooms. To argue that one practice is "best" is to reduce the complexity of teachers' work by suggesting that one set of "best practices" can be learned and implemented to ensure the success of all students. Yeager (2005) goes on to elaborate that wise practices are those that bring "creative, higher-order thinking and meaningful learning activities into particular school settings despite the pressures of standards and testing" (p. 2).

*an age of high-stakes testing*, four were set in suburban districts (two of which were home to universities) and the fifth was set in an advanced placement class. Unanswered questions about wise practice in schools that are struggling to meet accountability standards await future research. In studies like Grant's (2001) and van Hover's (2006), the mandated standards often generally coincide with the teachers' thoughts on what should be included in course curriculum. This potentially implicates the standards as reinforcement of the teachers' understanding of what content to teach and leaves unanswered questions about teachers who may find themselves in school contexts that the standards do not adequately serve. While the practices described above feature sophisticated negotiations and compromise, what evidence exists of overt acts of resistance to standardization?

**Battling the Storm – Resisting Standardization.** Teachers who are not content to simply survive the storm may choose to engage in acts of resistance, refusing to avoid the heaviest winds or highest waves. Teacher resistance to standardization often frustrates policy makers and draws criticism from state review teams and school reformers. However, resistance can also function as the mechanism by which teachers continue to engage in best practices in increasingly difficult circumstances. Kwai, Serriere, and Dana (2014) document the process by which teachers in an elementary school designated as “failing” worked with families to push back on standards-based teaching and testing pressures.

The literature includes cases of teachers who feel torn between what they believe is good instruction and what states are mandating they teach. McNeil (2000) observed teachers who felt serious ethical dilemmas and utilized strategies like double entry

notebooks that position mandated content against more complex representations of history that include multiple representations and critiques of the dominant narrative of progress. Many of the teachers in these magnet schools were experiencing the toll of negotiating their instruction against what they termed the “lies” they had to tell to do their jobs.

Most of the examples of teachers’ resistance reflect more private forms of challenge as opposed to their public performances of compromise and adaptation. Public performances of covering mandated content, minimum compliance with documentation and reporting requirements, and accepting school assessment data satisfy administrators and grant teachers the privacy they need to resist standards in their classrooms. When they shut their doors, teachers feel free to include extra content or to ignore the school assessment data because they do not agree with what it reports (McNeil, 2000; Salinas, 2006). Teachers in Virginia offer elective courses that challenge heritage United States history or opt not to implement test preparation materials mandated by their school systems (Smith, 2006). Some eleventh grade teachers in Texas cover material to minimize other intrusions into their instruction, refuse to provide administrators with any documentation beyond minimum compliance, and actively choose to ignore school system formative assessment data because they disagree with what it reports (Salinas, 2006).

Bushnell (2003) observed a few token acts of resistance in the schools she studied, usually in the form of water cooler conversations. While she focuses on elementary schools, her research is intriguing because she adds a layer of gender analysis to her study, contending that the feminization of teaching is increasingly distanced from

the masculinized power hierarchy in education policy making. Most of the teachers she observed were women who seemed most interested in nurturing children rather than in advancing their careers or in taking center stage in political arguments. Based on her observations, Bushnell hypothesizes that these teachers may assume an “adapt and move on” policy in practice even though they may be unhappy with changes wrought by the reform era. Bushnell’s findings leave her skeptical about the capacity for teachers to resist or change existing power structures because they are too far removed from policy discourses.

The existing evidence indicates that teachers engage in a variety of responses to standards-based reforms. They compromise; they rationalize; and they submit. They subvert; they critique; and they resist. A single teacher is likely to employ all of these responses at some time and may even employ more than one in a single moment. How, then, do we begin to understand this exceptional variability?

### **Capturing Variability in Implementing Standards-Based Instruction**

Research on how teachers accommodate and resist standards usually locates teacher knowledge, experience, and beliefs at the center of teachers’ responses to standards-based reform. Because much of this literature privileges the teacher as the gatekeeper in the classroom, one can expect the tremendous variability that is the result of a focus on unique individuals. An analytical focus that takes the individual teacher as its fundamental unit provides rich insight into the complex and highly variable work of teaching. However, such analyses yield findings that are difficult to generalize because they are clearly and intricately entwined with the individuals themselves. By shifting our gaze to systems and contexts, we might instead be able to locate mechanisms in the

context of teachers' work that help better explain how teachers function as they do in the standards-based era.

To date, research on teachers' negotiations of standards and high-stakes testing has been somewhat dismissive of the role of context. While researchers comment ephemerally on its importance, they continue to privilege the teacher and her knowledge base separate from it. A brief sentence or two mentions the importance of context, but the investigations themselves focus on teachers. For example, Diana Hess (2005) argues that the wise teacher in her case study enjoys the context of a relatively successful and affluent school that can afford to be more innovative, while other less affluent schools in the district face much more constrictive controls. S. G. Grant (2005) mentions that the working context is an important part of understanding the complexity of teachers' work. However, as in so many other studies, the gaze shifts to understanding wise teachers, not to the environments and interactions that initiate and sustain wise teaching practices. Wise teaching becomes synonymous with sophisticated knowledge and expertise, teaching philosophies, and beliefs about teaching and learning (Grant, 2005; Hess, 2005; Salinas, 2006; van Hover & Heinecke, 2005). Continued systematic study of teaching, whether through a content area, a particular context, or a comparative framework will be an important contribution to explanations for teachers' and students' considerably diverse experiences with standards-based reform.

To truly capture the complexity of teachers' variable responses to standards and testing, research must further push the boundaries of this question to expand our definition of what factors might contribute to the implementation of reform. Teachers' beliefs and their unique sets of knowledge and expertise have dominated the search for



explanations of such variability. At the other end of the spectrum lie complex external factors that influence the variability of how teachers carry out their practice: colleagues, students, and administrators, as well as state and local policy, the community's needs and priorities, and available resources. I will now turn to an analysis of the existing work that represents each end of this spectrum and argue the importance of shifting our research focus to the contexts in which teachers' negotiations of standards are situated.

**Focus on Diversity Among Teachers.** As previously stated, a significant amount of research on classrooms often locates the teacher at its center and seeks to understand what makes these diverse individuals tick. In his review of that research, Leming (1991) identified several potential characteristics that seem to predict social studies teachers' skills for fostering discussion and developing civic responsibility among their students: independent personalities, abstract belief systems, and tolerance for new and discrepant information. Research outside of social studies has followed similar lines. In their review of literature, Roehrig and Kruse (2005) identified multiple studies that demonstrated the importance of teaching beliefs on classroom practice, which echoed their own results in studying the practice of science teachers. They found that existing beliefs constrained the implementation of a new national standards-based (versus state mandated technical standards) science curriculum, when reform-based, student-centered instruction was inconsistent with teachers' preferences for teacher-based activities. This raises the question of how standards impact the daily instruction of teachers whose beliefs are consistent or inconsistent with the mandated content.

Lee Shulman's (1986; 1987) work with his colleagues at Stanford has evolved into a widely popular framework for understanding teaching practice, known as

pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), that integrates content expertise with sophisticated knowledge of pedagogical tools and beliefs about students' learning. Shulman (1987) argues that PCK "represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (p. 8). Therefore, a sophisticated and internally located knowledge base must become the focus of intensive study if we are to better understand the practices and profession of teaching. In order to elaborate a model for the complex work in which teachers engage, Shulman argues that expert teachers excel in transforming their own disciplinary knowledge into learning experiences that are capable of reaching students at appropriate levels of interest and engagement. He discusses the importance of teachers' capacities for comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, and reflection. Note that all of these processes are located internally to the classroom teacher, even instruction, because he focuses on the chosen acts of the teacher.

Shulman's work on pedagogical content knowledge has laid important foundations for teacher-centered research approaches, and yet he has acknowledged the possible limitations of this kind of research. In his otherwise complimentary foreword for George Hillock's *Ways of Thinking, Ways of Teaching* (1999), Shulman contends that the author "entertains the possibility that context plays a role in the shaping and sustaining of those beliefs and practices, and dismisses the hypothesis rather quickly. I think that in this matter, he and I have both erred." Lee Shulman and Judith Shulman (2004) have since revisited his earlier work and added a new layer to understanding how teachers learn and develop. Recognizing the importance of teachers' work as members of

“functioning learning communities,” they have proposed a new dimension to their model that they call community (p. 259). The new model integrates context as a part of understanding teachers’ development and acknowledges that features in the context may overwhelm teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge for explaining what happens in a classroom. Here, the authors note the importance of policy, networks, mentorship, resources, and so on (Shulman and Shulman, 2004). However, individual teachers continue to act as the center of the model for understanding teaching and the role of context is largely to explain teachers’ limitations or potential. The model stops short of studying contexts themselves or the ways in which contexts and teaching practices may be co-constitutive.

Centering our understanding of teachers by focusing on internal knowledge bases or belief systems is a problematic endeavor, as it fails to recognize teachers’ practice as negotiations within diverse environments and contexts. Analytical models that privilege the teacher in some way – her knowledge, his beliefs, her practices, his capacity for growth – is a seductive premise. It allows us to continue to locate the problems of schooling in a group of people that need to be and can be fixed. Professional development can continue to be organized as seminars and courses for individuals; teacher preparation programs can be accorded the capacity to produce “good teachers;” bad teachers can be replaced; wise teachers can be recruited; unskilled teachers can be developed; licensure requirements can be toughened; barriers to access can be erected; and on and on. However, in order to fully understand how teachers make decisions regarding what content to teach and what pedagogical strategies to use, investigators must go beyond surface treatments of classroom and school contexts.

**Contexts.** Classroom contexts are tremendously varied. Suppositions about the primacy of teachers' beliefs regarding content, teaching, or students become much more problematic when we consider the highly varied interactions in which these teachers participate in the course of their workdays. McLaughlin (1993) found that "students were the basic referents when teachers talked about their schools, colleagues, classrooms and commitment to teaching" and that "teachers discriminate their sense of professional efficacy on a *period-by-period basis* depending on their relationship with students in each class" (p. 81). Teachers construct different goals for their students and school; faculties design different missions for their buildings based on how they construct their students' needs and how they best hope to meet them. Student and family norms on attendance, completing homework, extracurricular activities, or the value of education, for example, have significant implications for how teachers construct their students' needs and subsequently design instruction (Talbert and McLaughlin, 1993b). Some students hold jobs outside of school while others are involved in a variety of extracurricular activities, both scenarios may complicate homework and additional study. How teachers and schools frame and negotiate issues like these necessarily influence instructional decisions during the class period. Such negotiations can clearly vary from classroom to classroom, even with the same teacher. An internalized belief system or knowledge base, no matter how sophisticated, does not fully explain the varied feelings of efficacy that teachers feel in their decisions.

**Collegial relationships.** Teachers work with colleagues in professional networks both within and beyond the school. The influence of these colleagues can have profound impacts on how teachers make instructional decisions. Smith (2006) and Fickel (2006)

found that social studies teachers often dealt with standards and reform through their departments, preferring to share frustrations or develop new materials with close colleagues rather than in more public forums. In their study of professional communities, Talbert and McLaughlin (1993a) and McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) found that strong, innovative, reflective and democratic department leadership and discourse can enrich the professional lives of teachers; however, the same mechanisms can undermine teaching when strong leaders subvert new ideas in favor of traditional ones, minimize available community resources, and espouse negative views of students and their behaviors. Similarly, weak leadership could undermine cohesion and minimize the capacity of teachers to collaborate for meaningful instruction. These results have significant implications for teachers' responses to standards and testing, raising important questions about how department discourse impacts teachers' decision making when they are confronted with mandated content and high-stakes tests.

McLaughlin's and Talbert's (2001) research also revealed that teachers working in districts that afforded them a voice in decisions and professional respect were more likely to engage in reflective and innovative collaboration and teaching. Similarly, teachers who were confident in their communities' respect for the profession of teaching were more likely to see their work as careers, engaging in professional development and continued growth. Standardization and testing are likely to impact these factors, as teachers perceive and experience losing control over decisions.

**Socioeconomic status.** Social class can work its way into classrooms in a variety of ways: through lowered expectations for students in poverty, limited course offerings or inferior teaching in schools serving poor communities, and less respect for students as

learners and individuals (Talbert & McLaughlin, 1993a). Teachers who come from moderate and high socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to feel positively about their performances when children have similar backgrounds and share enthusiasm for school and learning (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Families in less affluent urban systems face many more obstacles in accessing the bureaucratic controls over their large school districts than do their more affluent suburban neighbors living in smaller districts. They cannot always provide the same material resources often expected by schools and they often do not have confidence in their relations with faculties (Metz, 1993).

An emerging understanding in the existing literature is that schools serving high percentages of students in poverty are likely to experience standards-based reform in very different ways than schools serving affluent communities (DeBray, Parson, & Woodworth, 2001; McNeil, 2000; Sipple & Killeen, 2004). In their study of four schools, DeBray and her colleagues (2001) found that two schools, one in New York and one in Vermont, which were “better-positioned” to manage reform embraced changes and exceeded state mandates. The researchers identified the collaborative nature of the faculties, the internal culture of accountability that teachers already felt toward their students and the public, and mechanisms for the collection and analysis of data as the key factors in positioning these two schools to better meet state reform efforts. Meanwhile, two schools targeted to improve with the reform movement managed only a surface compliance, providing required reports and addressing some mandated content and skills. The researchers attributed the minimal gains in targeted schools to inertia in the faculty, the inability to analyze and respond to data, learned helplessness among teachers and students, and the inability to set short-term progress goals (p. 189-191). All of these

conclusions reflected the researchers' focus on the members of the faculty themselves, a very dispositional approach. However, while they did not draw particular attention to the fact, the two better-positioned schools served very different students than the two targeted schools. One screened candidates for admission while the other served a relatively affluent community that was predominantly Caucasian. The two targeted schools, on the other hand, served general populations legally mandated to attend the public schools in their attendance zones. The authors opted not to investigate issues of funding or systemic inequality or to artificially narrow constructions of student performance, favoring instead a definition of reform capacity that depended largely on the staffs inside the school. While the factors they identified undoubtedly influenced the reform processes in these schools, their restrictive lens on school capacity artificially limited their findings. What is perhaps more troubling is the study's implicit acceptance of reform and performance mandated by governmental policy. The discussion included no consideration or critique of how those constructs may have inevitably led them to the conclusions of deficiency they draw.

Sipple and Killeen (2004) found that districts serving high percentages of students in poverty were significantly more likely to offer GED alternatives to their students, attribute those alternatives with better serving students' needs; and, when schools had access to additional funding, it was most likely spent on increased attention to test preparation and academic remediation. Taken together, these studies have considerable implications for the teaching of history. Students facing structural and economic inequities are most in need of history instruction that, for example, teaches them about

power relations and economic development. These studies raise questions about the kinds of instruction to which these students have access.

Growing concern also exists that standards and testing-based reforms are contributing to the militarization of schools, with particularly serious ramifications for schools serving the urban poor. Studies in urban areas reveal increased emphasis on constrictive and basic skills instruction, less emphasis on creative problem solving, fewer interdisciplinary connections, and little opportunity for the expression of creativity or individuality in urban schools (Brown; 2003; Macrine, 2003; Skilton-Silvester, 2003). Perhaps even more disconcerting is the use of heritage history curriculum as a tool for enforcing hegemony, for example, a critical problem in reservation schools where students must learn that Davy Crockett was one of the first Americans and that Columbus was a hero (Jacobs, 2003). How do teachers in these schools negotiate mandated content compared to teachers in more affluent or “better-positioned” schools? Linda McNeil (2000) succinctly states one possibility: “An examination of the current system of standardization...reveals that once institutionalized, *standardization widens educational inequalities and masks historical and persistent inequities*” (p. 230). To better understand how processes of standardization may function in such ways will require a shift away from individual teachers and toward systems, processes, and contexts.

### **Shifting Our Gaze**

Work like Linda McNeil’s suggests that standards and testing operate as structural control mechanisms on teachers: constraining decisions, undermining sophisticated teaching and higher order thinking skills, and dictating limited instructional techniques. This argument is diametrically opposed to the language of reformers who insist that



standards and testing are the best tool for improving teaching and equal access to learning for all students. The reality most likely lies in the vast space between these two positions and depends largely on the diverse contexts in which teachers work and negotiate.

Researchers must begin to directly account for this variability through systematic investigations that examine the context as integral for our understanding of the impacts of standards and testing on what happens inside the classroom.

Charles Tilly's (2005) work on dispositional and relational accounts provides useful tools for assessing the contributions of existing research and also sheds light on possibilities for future work that have yet to be maximized. Previous research on standards and history teaching has provided valuable insight into teachers' work but has often privileged the teacher and her knowledge base as the control center of instructional decision-making and behavior management in the classroom. These accounts tend to be dispositional, focusing on teachers' mindsets and intentions, their "motives, decision logics, emotions and cultural templates" (Tilly, 2005, p. 14). However, a framework that depends on such an analysis presumes that researchers can accurately construct teachers' thoughts and logics – a valuable endeavor that is, however, somewhat problematic. And, further, such a framework depends on generalizations of these mindsets and thoughts so that patterns can be identified and explained collectively (Tilly, 2005, p. 28). Such generalizations are exceptionally difficult to make in teaching as they often fail to account for the individual variability essential to understanding the diverse work researchers find in classrooms.

A relational perspective, however, would privilege communication, environment, social life, and relationships as important mechanisms contributing to teachers'

constructions of their practice (Tilly, 2005). While motives, beliefs, and thoughts exist in the shadowy domain of the mind, discourses and interactions can be rendered visible through careful and intensive observation and analysis. Lee Shulman's work (1987) on pedagogical content knowledge carries with it an internal tension that can be resolved with a relational perspective. He notes a complex set of sources of PCK, many of them external to the teacher, among them curriculum, textbooks, previous scholarship, and colleagues. If we acknowledge the important role of these sources and reframe research to capture teachers' interactions with them, we might learn a great deal about how teachers and their working contexts constitute each other. In doing so, we can enrich our understandings of how standards and testing function in classrooms. More importantly, we might reveal how teachers and students experience standards and testing so differently.

Even with the recent surge in research on the ways that standards and testing function in school spaces, there are many questions left to study. While existing literature on ideas like teachers' beliefs, content knowledge, and collegial relationships can provide starting points for considering the factors that impact decision making, we now need to apply and investigate them in classroom contexts fundamentally changed by sweeping reform movements. These discussions leave open questions regarding factors external to teachers that might contribute to the variability in teachers' responses to standards: issues of socioeconomic status in school communities, student and teacher interactions, department and administrative leadership, and collegial networks. While some researchers have studied extensively the importance of context on teacher decision-making (McLaughlin 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Metz, 2003; Talbert &

McLaughlin, 1993a, 1993b;), they have not yet optimized the potential of these kinds of frameworks for studying the impact of standards and testing, one of many external forces influencing the practice of teachers today. Given the pervasive proliferation of standards and testing, we can anticipate that their impact on teaching contexts is worthy of study.

To contribute to this body of work, my research questions attempted to frame for study the intersection of state curriculum standards with the other activities and discourses that constitute planning. I also wanted to better understand how those intersections and activities connect teachers' work across contexts. Conducting such an investigation would require questions that avoided assumptions about the definitions and/or values of constructs like lesson plans, standards, or the school. Instead, I developed questions that allowed me to work in the everyday experiences of teachers to learn more about how their work was shaped.

- How are instructional design and planning activities coordinated, organized, regulated, and/or standardized by broader extralocal relations of power that function beyond the daily experiences of teachers?
- How do discourses and activities in the institution replicate, constitute, and/or challenge those institutional relations?

These questions guided me to methodological tools appropriate for uncovering the negotiations of work and lived experience that I detail in the next chapter.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

Every phase of my inquiry has been an evolution of reading, writing, and thinking. Even the selection of my methods required an intellectual journey that began as early as my class reflections on professional experiences and the readings of other theoreticians and researchers from a variety of fields. First, my experiences as a classroom teacher during Virginia's standards-based reform movement created tensions as I read and learned from the body of research on teaching and wise practice. I was uncomfortable reading about the work of teachers in studies with only limited discussions of the resources, pressures, demands, and influences of the contexts in which they worked. As I imagined a researcher conducting similar work with me in my classroom, I found myself wondering how my negotiations with standards would have been represented in their findings. Would I be found a "wise practitioner" who seamlessly balanced standards with ambitious teaching? Would I be cast as resistor or conformer? There just didn't seem to be the intellectual space in these studies for a teacher who found herself resisting on Monday, practicing wisely on Tuesday, and bowing to pressure on Wednesday. More importantly, while there were certainly moments when I felt like the veritable "king of the castle," completely free to make and execute decisions based solely on what I thought best for my students, such magical moments were rare and much harder to capture in some days, weeks, and years than others, and perhaps even then were illusory. Instead, in addition to the needs of my students, I also struggled with invisible but powerful demands of multiple constituencies: guidelines of administrators, expectations of colleagues, wishes of parents, and the pressures of end of course tests. In short, my tension with current research lies with power, the relations by which it is organized and the ideologies by which it is rendered invisible.

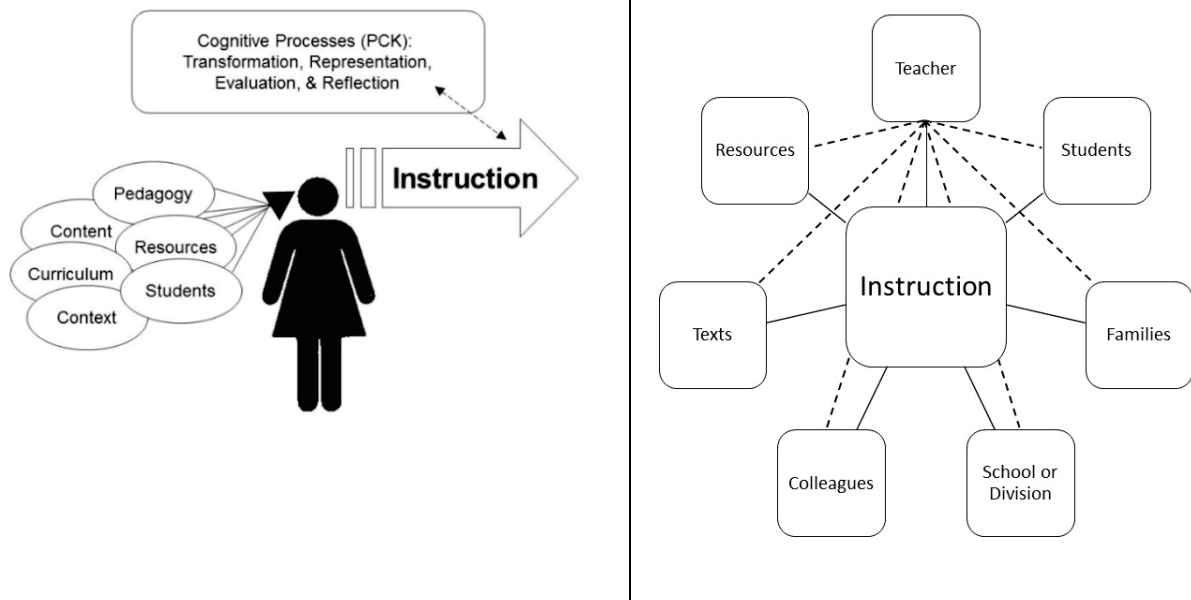
How, when, and in what circumstances does the classroom teacher hold power, exercise power, or yield to power? Perhaps the premise of teacher as “curriculum gatekeeper,” linchpin of standards-based reform, no longer works to capture the complex reality of those negotiations. How can we complicate the largely dispositional accounts of autonomous teachers with relational studies that position their work in highly regulated institutions? Teachers and their decision making processes are undoubtedly significant factors; however, schools and the larger systems to which they belong are complex institutions and those institutions necessarily influence the work that is done in them (Fairclough, 1995). Given the depth of my own experiences in the field and my area of interest, as well as the predominance of dispositional and cognitive research methods in studies of social studies teaching, I needed to look further afield for methodological tools that would support my line of inquiry.

### **My Challenges and Goals**

Because previous research on standards and teaching began with the premise that teachers were the key to understanding the implementation of standards in instruction, it adopted a dispositional conceptual construct from the outset. Resulting findings and discussions were inevitably constrained by that focus on individuals, their “motives, decision logics, emotions and cultural templates” (Tilly, 2005, p. 14). This meant that finding wise and ambitious teaching practice required locating and researching with wise and ambitious teachers. My goal was to depart from the individually focused dispositional accounts commonly found in the literature and to move toward a relational study of teaching that examined how individuals were connected in larger sets of social relations that influenced their work and practice within the institution. Rather than focus

on internal knowledge, beliefs, or motives, a relational perspective would privilege communication, social life and relationships (Tilly, 2005). Planning and instructional activities were situated in schools, institutions that were necessarily intricately implicated in the work of its members. A shift in focus and perspective from people to activities, and from individuals to webs of relations, required a similar shift in one's theoretical and methodological stances in order to adopt a lens for research that could "see" those activities as well as the largely invisible relations that organized them. As I grew increasingly intrigued with relational and interactional theories, I turned to testing what such framing might look like in practice.

When I considered carefully what dispositional and cognitive accounts looked like, I realized how deeply embedded they were with the power of teachers. To position teachers as instructional gatekeepers (with or without the knowledge and expertise of a variety of domains ranging from students to contexts to pedagogy) would look like the figure on the left. How would analyses change if the production of instruction became the organizing construct and a variety of negotiations intersected to create it (as represented by the figure on the right)?



*Figure 1.* Much of the existing literature on how social studies teachers make instructional decisions privileges them as the central nervous system of the classroom (left). Putting instruction at the center of the analysis positions teachers in complex webs of interaction and negotiation (right).

In the introduction to their edited collection of cases prepared by ambitious teachers of social studies, Grant and Gradwell (2010) alluded to the tension I was navigating. They argued that separating teachers from their contexts limited how deeply researchers could learn about the production of ambitious teaching and that these contexts include all kinds of factors like students, policies, curriculum, colleagues and administrators (p. 9). Like other investigators, though, they turned to the theoretical work of Shulman and organized these contextual factors as another layer, albeit a sophisticated one, of teacher knowledge...knowledge of context (p. 8). What resulted was a collection of teacher-authored case studies that provided a rich representation of diligent and innovative teaching that pushed beyond potential limitations that might have been imposed by contextual factors, particularly for less expert teachers. While such work had plenty to teach the field about the kinds of creative work still possible in the era of state mandated curriculum and assessment, I wondered if it could push even further and

transform our understanding of the production of ambitious instruction. Would questions arise and analyses sound differently if we investigated through the lens of relation and interaction? I explored excerpts from one of the included studies (Davis, 2010) that addressed overtly the kind of institutional context that interested me, “How I Learned To Stop Worrying About The Test And Teach Students To Write Well.” I posed questions that would shift the gaze toward interaction to test the viability of such an approach in my own inquiry. Figure 2 shows the results of that analysis.

Quoted Excerpt from the Text	Questions to Illuminate Interaction
<p>After teaching eight years...I made the move to Tapestry High School, a new urban charter high school in Buffalo, New York. I had been invited to participate in the planning of the high school piece of the Tapestry Charter, so I knew that the leadership was committed to teaching a diverse population of students... AND Lynn and I had researched the work of Expeditionary Learning for the secondary level, ..., we concluded that it would be the kind of progressive small-school model on which we wanted to base the high school program. Tapestry High School was then selected the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation as a recipient of a grant to be used toward implementation of the Expeditionary Learning Model (p. 78).</p>	<p>How did these planning dialogues construct and coordinate ambitious teaching?            How did garnering an invitation and participating in the crafting of the charter construct a position of power and leadership for this teacher?            How did the leadership communicate their commitment to diverse students and how did that communication contribute to a context for ambitious teaching?            How did sharing and exercising the power to define the models that would shape the daily business of the school influence the array of instructional choices available to this professional?            How did the existence of a robust professional learning plan and grant funding to support it create interactions that shaped these decisions about teaching and assessing writing?</p>
<p>I was afforded that golden opportunity to change my practice in the form of a new school and new job. But I believe that most teachers could do the same thing without this kind of drastic change in situation (p. 84)</p>	<p>How would this teacher’s shift in instructional design have been catalyzed without her move into a new institutional culture that she helped design?            What interactions would need to exist for other teachers to make similar shifts?</p>



<p>New York state law requires that selection to charter schools be based on blind lottery. All applications are put in a box and selection is by a neutral third party without any prior knowledge of who has applied (p. 79).</p>	<p>How does the existence of an application process in any form impact the student constituency in this school?</p>
<p>Charter school administrators must set goals for the percentage of students who will pass the standardized tests; if they do not reach these goals, the school must be shut down (p. 79).</p>	<p>What do the dialogues sound like as administrators navigate the decision making process for establishing acceptable performance? How does the power to establish your own goals change the institutional landscape versus schools that are subject to goals established by outside governing bodies?</p>
<p>The writing assessments that entered my gradebook were based on writing prompts that mirrored the Regents exam prompts as closely as possible. Such was the explicitly stated mandate from my public school administrators. As I recall it, my department chair said (quoting the assistant superintendent for curriculum), “All assessments must parallel New York State Regents Exams” (p. 81).</p>	<p>In what kinds of dialogues was this teacher engaged when making these kinds of decisions? What accounts for the change in positioning the teacher uses to describe her own power... as leader and ambitious in the new setting and subject to the decisions and wishes of leaders in another?</p>
<p>Over time, most students realized that “less is more” and only wrote what was absolutely necessary to get a 3. They certainly were not motivated to write well or to think historically... It’s not hard to understand why students felt no investment in these kinds of prompts. The more I assigned these essays, the less and less students wrote! And I couldn’t blame them (p. 83). AND When I changed jobs, I realized that these assumptions were not going to fly with a population of students who come from many different middle schools and backgrounds and who researchers tell us have a typical dropout rate of 50 percent. Some of my students at Tapestry were beautiful writers, but others literally could not put two coherent sentences together on a page (p. 85)</p>	<p>How do student voices and performance reveal their power to impact the thinking and decision making of teachers? How do teachers invoke the voices and needs of students in their planning negotiations? How do the students in a classroom impact the power of teachers to make decisions about how to teach?</p>

*Figure 2.* Quotes from the case study frame context as a knowledge acquired and managed by teachers. On the right, I pair new questions that frame context outside of the teacher’s thinking with a lens on interaction and negotiation.

Illuminating the critically important function that teacher knowledge plays in instructional design was certainly an important and significant line of inquiry. However, by reconsidering a variety of studies like the one above through the lens of interaction, I was further convinced that attempting to illuminate the interactions and relations of power that produce the planning work of teachers was worthy of much deeper consideration.

Additionally, while such research recognizes that teachers' negotiations with standards are necessarily caught up with a host of regulating texts (the standards, related policy texts, planning texts, etc.), these texts are represented largely as static and constant entities. However, while their language is certainly constant, as texts they are very fluid and move through instructional contexts in highly variable ways. Given its focus on the knowledge, beliefs, and dispositions of teachers, current research does not have the tools for accommodating such a fluid construction of texts as shifting dialogic partners for teachers. For my work, this involves examining how standards are negotiated in the classroom by capturing the complex web of extralocal connections in which teachers' work are situated.

Taken together, the challenges I posed required a research approach that (a) purposefully brought the relations of power that constituted and organized the institution into view for study while beginning in the daily activities of teachers; (b) could systematically illuminate and interrogate the fluidity of various standards and instructional texts in order to explore both teachers' negotiations as they implemented them *and* the complex and largely invisible ways that institutional relations regulated that work; and (c) was able to account for my biographical experiences as a teacher and

valued how those experiences, tensions, connections, and ongoing interactions served to open questions for exploration.

### **Why Institutional Ethnography?**

**Overview.** Institutional ethnography, a research approach pioneered largely by sociologist Dorothy Smith, offers the research and analytical tools to shed light on largely invisible extralocal relations that connect people across an institution.<sup>5</sup> While the remainder of this chapter will outline how I intend to use the tools of institutional ethnography to study teaching, I will begin with a brief discussion outlining the particular assets that such an approach brings to the kinds of questions about standards and teaching that concern me.

According to Dorothy Smith (2005),

“Institutional ethnography explores the social relations organizing institutions as people participate in them and from their perspectives. People are the expert practitioners of their own lives, and the ethnographer’s work is to learn from them, to assemble what is learned from different perspectives, and to investigate how their activities are coordinated” (p. 225).

Note the important departures from the preexisting conceptual premise of individual autonomous teachers currently found in the literature. Institutional ethnography allows research to begin in daily experience without a priori assumptions about how the work of teaching is organized or situated. Further, its emphasis is to move beyond individual experience in order to better understand how work is coordinated and regulated across

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<sup>5</sup> Dorothy Smith’s (2005) approaches to sociology for people and institutional ethnography evolved out of her intellectual work with women’s standpoint and broad questions about power and ruling relations. For a more detailed account, refer to the opening chapters of her work, *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*. Since then, her students and others have employed its tools to study a variety of topics like care in nursing homes, government interventions into the cases of domestic violence, university disability policy, and municipal planning (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). Campbell and Gregor (2004) argue for its power to serve research in the human services.

settings and contexts. Such a move has been problematic in previous research because the location of expertise and decision making “inside” teachers precludes the significant role that connections and relationships may play.

Rather than study teachers alone, researchers must undertake to understand the coordinated activities of teaching. While often overlooked, such activities are necessarily important to understanding how standards are negotiated in classroom instruction. By shifting the research and analytical lenses from *people to activities and events* (Nespor, 1997), we can turn our attention to revealing the broader connections embedded in them that are coordinated across the institution, in this case the school system. An approach like institutional ethnography allows the researcher to begin in the everyday experiences of teachers in order to discover “just how people’s doings in the everyday are articulated to and coordinated by extended social relations that are not visible from within any particular local setting and just how people are participating in those relations” (D. E. Smith, 2005, p. 36). My purpose then is to study the everyday work of teachers, neither teachers nor standards specifically, but rather how standards are positioned, constructed, and managed in teachers’ everyday activities. Further, how are those everyday negotiations connected and enmeshed in larger networks of social relations including relations of power?

**Institutional Relations.** To answer this question is to begin to illuminate the systems of relations that constitute the institution, a critically important contribution of institutional ethnography. According to Dorothy Smith, “it is a specific capacity of institutions that they generalize and are generalized” (D. E. Smith, 2005, p. 225). Through highly coordinated institutional relations, people transform their particular

everyday experiences into general realities accepted within the institution. In turn, people act in ways consistent with the general realities structured by institutional relations (D. E. Smith, 2005, p. 186). It is critically important to note that these relations are not automatically imbued with any particular evaluative characteristic. They are neither supportive nor pernicious, neither fair nor unjust. They are presumed only to exist and it is left to researchers to uncover the complex ways in which they function. Through these institutional realities we might learn more systematically about the ways that standards intersect with coordinated activities of teaching.

The implementation of state-mandated content standards has clearly become a part of the everyday working life of many teachers in Virginia. A number of research studies from across the country suggest a broad spectrum of possible responses and concerns, ranging from improving the experiences of students to stifling the creativity of teachers (Cimbricz, 2002; Gerwin & Visone, 2006; Gradwell, 2006; Grant, 2007; McNeil, 1986; Salinas, 2006; A. M. Smith, 2006; van Hover, 2006; Yeager & O.L. Davis, 2005). Taken together, this body of literature exposes how much we have left to explore and learn about how standards are negotiated in the classroom beyond very specific and variable cases of individual teachers. Whether the standards make a positive or negative footprint on classroom instruction is actually irrelevant at least until we can better understand how those negotiations are replicated and regulated across contexts, connecting them to larger systems of relations. Learning more about the institutional relations in which they are embedded may hold an important key.

**Emphasis on texts.** Because institutional ethnographers are interested in the ways that the daily activities of people are coordinated and regulated by relations far

outside the visibility of their own experience, they place a strong emphasis on the role of texts. Dorothy Smith (2006) defines texts as “words, images, or sounds that are set into a material form of some kind from which they can be read, seen, heard, watched and so on” (p. 66). Institutional texts are a primary vehicle for connecting and regulating the work of many people across space and time. They provide a constant frame of reference, a conceptual structure for carrying out work, and invisible ways to transform unique daily experiences into generally recognizable experiences subject to some form of accountability (D. E. Smith, 2005). Furthermore, institutional texts are engaged in conversation with multiple readers. It is important that the language remains the same; but it is also crucial that its “conversations” with people are multiple and different and it is through these diverse conversations that texts are made sense of and acted on (D. E. Smith, 2001). As I travel in classrooms, I don’t want my gaze artificially narrowed to the individual teacher’s work with fixed policy documents just because so much of the existing professional discourse focuses on them.

Institutional ethnographers expend considerable energy analyzing the ways that texts “are activated” in the daily activities of work; texts are in action (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; D. E. Smith, 2006; Turner, 2006). Conceding such fluidity to texts allows a researcher to investigate regulating texts, like state standards and policy documents, as negotiable even as they remain consistent in their language and purpose.

**Taking An Experiential Standpoint.** As I considered questions about how state standards intersect with classroom instruction, I was drawn to the daily activities that most directly constitute that instruction: negotiations and exchanges among teachers and their students. In an effort to narrow the scope of my project to a manageable “slice,”

opted to focus on planning and instructional design activities as they had significant implications for understanding the institutional relations that sought to generalize and standardize curricula. These activities constituted the institution even as they were regulated by it. I hoped to better understand how planning activities and instructional events were managed, reproduced, and coordinated as well as what relations of power were implicated in that management, reproduction, and coordination. Standards-based reform in Virginia has been administered in a largely top-down way via mechanisms like legislation, state standards, state committees, standardized end-of-course testing, and VDOE guidelines and memos (Fore, 1998). It is, nonetheless, classroom teaching activities that bear the responsibility for implementing it. Therefore, to assume the standpoint of teachers required that I begin the inquiry with their day to day activities. However, the inquiry does NOT end with these decisions as dispositional accounts do. Rather, I study up and out into the larger institutional relations that connect them. As I have argued earlier, teachers are consistently represented in all kinds of literature as the central nervous system of the classroom. Rather than implicitly accept that construction as a valid one, I would like to subject it to a critical gaze by studying the daily activities of teachers in order to find out how their work is coordinated, managed, and regulated across contexts.

Further, institutional ethnography positions its informants as proficient and knowledgeable.<sup>6</sup> This idea should not be confused with some notion that every person I work with has achieved some level of institutionally valued expertise in teaching.

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<sup>6</sup> My choice of the term “informant” is a purposeful one that follows the lead of Dorothy Smith (2005) and Campbell and Gregor (2004). Involving people in the field in research necessarily implicates both them and the researcher in relations of power. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, refer to the works mentioned here, particularly Campbell and Gregor’s (2004) discussion on pages 66-68.

Rather, it presumes that each person with whom I work is proficient at negotiating the relations of power that bind them to the institution. More importantly, as they use what knowledge they have to participate effectively in their work, people inevitably both adopt AND constitute the institutional goals and methods defined by those in power (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 41). Thus, informants are presumed to have a great deal of knowledge to share about how they do their work and conduct their daily activities within the organization; it is the responsibility of the ethnographer to let them share it without imposing exogenous meaning or predetermined conceptual structures (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; D. E. Smith, 2005; G. W. Smith, Mykhalovskiy, & Weatherbee, 2006).

**Framing An Everyday Problematic.** Institutional ethnography presumes the everyday world to be made of invisible ruling relations and social organizations replete with problematics that await discovery through exploration (D. E. Smith, 2005, pp. 38-40). The current literature on teachers and content standards in history classrooms exposes a complicated tension. Researchers generally convey teachers as the autonomous decision makers, and hence, the mediators of standards whether they value them or not. Policy documents position the teacher similarly, and yet simultaneously constrain their work to meet certain replicable and general guidelines. My experiences and conversations with colleagues have exposed a range of issues from powerlessness among teachers who feel increasingly constrained to teach in certain ways to those who feel relatively unaffected by policy changes. I find these tensions puzzling and pose them as my problematic.



I propose to study the well-documented variability of teachers' daily negotiations with state history standards and how little we have yet to uncover about how those negotiations are caught up in broader, complex, and largely invisible relations of power as part of educational institutions.

**Researcher as Member of the Institution.** The decision to pursue a research approach that borrowed heavily from institutional ethnography was pivotal for conducting a line of inquiry into my area of interest – the relations that organize, coordinate, or regulate the work of teachers. I could not presume to be outside of such work and conduct a remote or detached investigation since my own experiences were gleaned as a participant of the same institution I was seeking to uncover. When working with the tools of institutional ethnography, it was crucial for the investigator to avoid imposing preconceived or external constructs on what informants share; and yet it was also beneficial if the researcher had some knowledge of the contexts in which they planned to work. Many institutional ethnographies I reviewed began in the personal experiences and daily lives of the researchers (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; Diamond, 2006; Griffith, 1998; Turner, 2006). The ability to understand the standpoints I was likely to encounter, to have a sense of possible institutional signals, to be able to cast my research in ways that appealed to potential informants, and to sustain cooperative relationships in the field were important expertise for carrying out this kind of work. As Campbell and Gregor (2004) argue, those who hold power in the institution are not necessarily going to welcome research that subjects its operations to a critical gaze. Therefore, considerable work needs to be done in advance so that that terrain is not entirely unfamiliar in order to maximize the possibilities of a successful project (p. 65).

Here my experiences as a teacher, my knowledge of the organization that I intended to study, and my collegial relationships became assets for the work I proposed to undertake. I received permission to carry out my study in a school division where I already had a personal network on which to build as well as an understanding of the styles of interaction, the political landscape, and potentially sensitive issues typical of schools that can often pose barriers to researchers who do not (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

In fact, my existing relationships proved critically important in gaining access to participants and a research setting. When I met with the central office staff member responsible for approving my request, she shared with me that had my request originated from another and less trusted investigator it would have been much more difficult to gain their agreement as a partnering institution. They recognized that the embedded work I proposed to do could be very revealing in ways that might be misrepresented or damaging to the participants or the institution. As she explained it, I might have encountered teachers who didn't appear to plan, particularly if the researcher didn't thoroughly understand the broad and varied looks and shapes that planning might take.

Because I was an active member in the division in which I also conducted my research, I faced both a unique set of challenges and an instrumental set of advantages. I was always very aware of the duality of my roles and took several important steps to ensure the quality and validity of my inquiry. As noted above, the first was to choose a methodology for which such first-hand experience was an asset rather than a liability. There were a variety of methodologies for which my proximity to the research setting and participants would have been inappropriate, so I avoided them entirely rather than try to control for them. The second was continually reflecting on my own experiences

throughout data collection and analysis. Those writings helped me identify how my own understandings might be impacting my vision so that I could take special care to solicit the input of others to test my thinking. Third, I worked diligently to avoid imposing my own existing constructs on the data I collected, which required multiple readings of analyses to particularly search for such errors. For example, I insisted on allowing the data to define a process as foundational to the study as instructional planning. Rather than adopt an accepted definition for those activities, I uncovered them in the course of my work with teachers. Finally, I chose to collect a broad spectrum of data (which I will detail later) so that evidence could be corroborated across multiple sources.

While additional time, purposeful attention, and careful work were necessary to manage these challenges, I also enjoyed certain advantages that made my work very authentic. My participants were exceptionally generous with their materials and their conversations and were willing to include me in every phase of their work. They were candid and open and even involved me in their planning decisions at times. I had a deep familiarity with the professional learning community and had access to all of its artifacts. I also had teaching experience in the division and could take measures to ensure that I asked a comprehensive set of questions and minimized the risk of missing key details.

### **Data Collection: “Talking With People” – Participants and Dialogues**

**Participants.** Institutional ethnographies are not particularly concerned with “samples” of participants because they do not seek to generalize findings to “populations” or certain groups. Instead, their purpose is to shed light on how institutional relations function to generalize, replicate, and standardize work across different settings. Since the focus is on bringing the institutional relations into view,

institutional ethnographies instead seek informants who can speak from a variety of daily experiences with those relations (DeVault & McCoy, 2006). I began my conversations with four veteran middle school history and civics teachers in a school division in southwest Virginia. I have named them Chris, Marie, Marshall, and Renee for the purpose of protecting their privacy as much as possible. All of them were fully licensed teachers. Marie and Renee had teaching experience in more than one school division. Marshall had career experience outside of the field of teaching. Marie and Marshall were focused exclusively on secondary history and social studies education. Renee and Chris were licensed to teach students in a range of subjects. Years of teaching experience ranged from three to over ten.

**Contexts.** These four teachers worked in three very diverse school sites and because the focus of my study was contextual interactions, it was useful to collect some basic data on school contexts. In the year I began collecting data, enrollments ranged from approximately 200 students in one site (grades 6-8) to over 850 students in another (grades 6-8). In the larger site, approximately 25% of students were identified as disadvantaged economically; in the smaller site, approximately 57% of students were identified as disadvantaged economically. One site employed three teachers of social studies, one assigned to each grade level with one period that crossed over to another grade depending on the balance of enrollment. Another site employed more than ten teachers who taught social studies for at least part of the day. The third site was an alternative education program that employed one teacher who provided instruction in language arts and social studies to all of the secondary students who attended. Enrollment demographics there shifted frequently as students needed access to the placement. Race

and ethnicity were largely homogenous. The largest middle school site was the most diverse, but even then more than 94% of students were Caucasian. Both middle schools were identified with a marker for improvement by the state, but the smaller site was receiving more intensive scrutiny and oversight because of its status with various measures of accreditation.

**Expanding the pool.** All of my participants referenced at various moments their participation in a professional learning community made available by the division through a federal grant. Therefore, I identified a fifth participant who was the learning community's project director and who also served in a central office capacity supervising the social studies curriculum at the division level. A former elementary school teacher in the division, Tonya had joined the central office three years prior to my study. Because she completed the informed consent process, I was able to access a wide variety of division activities as a researcher as well as participant. Many of my field notes at the division level were connected to these activities.

**Dialogues.** For the institutional ethnographer, data begins in everyday, lived experience. "Work knowledge" is the construct used to describe the "expert and exclusive knowledge of what they [informants] do and of the contexts and conditions that complement their work" (D. E. Smith, 2005, p. 149). It emerges in experience and through dialogue with researchers; it is revealed through observations of daily activities and self-reflection. Experiences (and the discourses used to construct *and coordinate* them) constitute the social world and, thus, are critical data (D. E. Smith, 2005). DeVault and McCoy (2006) argue the importance of data collected while "talking with people" – the conversations that researchers have with people as they carry out their work.

Through interviews and other dialogues, researchers can glean quite a bit about how people describe their experiences and position themselves in the worlds in which they act (Kvale, 1996). As people explain what they are doing, how they are making decisions, and what they have to think about, they reveal clues about the processes in which they participate, how their work is organized and with whom it is connected. In order to dialogue with researchers as they work, people already think of their work in some kind of organized way. Interactions with the researcher lead to additional layers of organization (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; D. E. Smith, 2005).

As I talked with teachers about their planning and observed them in the acts of planning instruction, we discovered and constructed the processes that guide and regulate their work (D. E. Smith, 2005). In order to access people's "work knowledge" it was critically important to avoid the trap of speaking with the vocabularies of the institution. Using institutional language to describe activities necessarily inculcates the dialogue with the organizational and ruling conceptual structures that are supposed to be subjected to a critical gaze. Smith refers to this issue as "institutional capture" and argues that researchers must carefully monitor their dialogues with others to keep such professional vocabularies from subsuming the language of everyday experiences (McCoy, 2006; D. E. Smith, 2005). I tried to avoid accepting institutional terms at face value and presuming to know what my informants meant by them. I consistently encouraged dialogue in everyday language and moved dialogue to creep behind institutional relations.

In order to capture the planning process, my participants included me in a variety of ways based on the planning routines they used. Renee was my first participant and we met twice toward the end of the school year to discuss her upcoming instruction; during

the second meeting we talked at length about the plans she was currently developing. That dialogue was recorded and transcribed. Chris and I shared three private planning dialogues during which he shared with me the construction process of a variety of his teaching tools and instructional units. Those dialogues were recorded and transcribed. As we talked, our conversations wandered further afield, giving me valuable insight into department and school contextual factors. Additionally, I spent four days in his classroom collecting observation notes. I also intersected with him at a variety of division professional learning events and observed a presentation he made for his colleagues. Marshall and Marie met with me on three occasions to discuss planning processes and their upcoming instruction. I spent four days in their classrooms, corroborating their planning decisions with the instruction that was implemented with students. I had the opportunity to hear them make a presentation to a group of division colleagues, too. Because they collaborated on all of their planning, often over distance, they added me to their emails with each other and any other email communications that shaped their planning. Dozens of emails documented the iterative process they used to make decisions and develop materials, representing a unique intersection of talk and text and thus introducing the second critical layer of data for institutional ethnographers.

### **Data Collection: Exploring Texts and Intertextualities**

My study necessarily depended on texts – the standards and the host of accompanying texts that regulated and mediated their introduction into classroom instruction through the teachers who were held accountable for doing so. Institutional ethnography provided some valuable analytical tools for integrating texts in the study of work and institutions.

Texts play pivotal roles in the ontology of institutions because they are the mechanism by which work can be standardized across diverse and widespread contexts. Dorothy Smith recognizes the importance of texts and documents in institutional ethnography because they are the tools that allow the researcher to see beyond the immediately observable moment. Thus, texts play a critical role in the replication and standardization of experience and process. They “provide for the standardized recognizability of people’s doings as organizational or institutional as well as for their coordination across multiple local settings and times” (D. E. Smith, 2001, p. 160). Rules, guidelines, and processes of the institution are conveyed through standard texts that can be replicated and read by all kinds of people in all kinds of settings. They provide a constant and standardizing language for carrying out work. However, for the institutional ethnographer, they are NOT constant, static, or immovable.

Institutional ethnographers advocate the study of texts as “in action.” Key to integrating texts into this kind of study, is the idea that text are authored, read, and managed in specific times and places that have everything to do with how they coordinate activity in the institution. While they are a “constant point of reference,” they are also in a conversation with at least one, perhaps many, persons (D. E. Smith, 2001, p. 175). In this sense, standards and the various documents that surround them are part of conversations in most, if not all, teachers’ planning processes in Virginia. These conversations are necessarily governed by the time and space in which they occur; they can be highly variable depending on the audience, the time, and location; but they are nonetheless, a constant point of reference for all of the teachers who must negotiate them in their everyday work.



Data collection for this study included binders full of a variety of texts that represented different scales of work ranging from the individual classroom to the state of Virginia. Texts generated at the classroom level included letters to parents and students, classroom calendars, syllabi, lesson/unit materials, and email communications. Texts generated at the school level included communications with families, school websites, adopted textbooks, teacher handbooks, and newsletters. Division texts included pacing guides, professional learning plans, emails and memoranda...including the distribution of certain state documents. I focused on a set of state texts most germane to my line of inquiry: state content standards in history and social sciences, the curriculum frameworks that elucidated the standards, memoranda from the state superintendent regarding the implementation of the standards, and school performance report cards prepared by the Virginia Department of Education.

The texts described above did not singly and independently standardize work in the institution. That process occurred as documents were posed in dialogue with each other and the people who read them. Analyzing such intertextualities is an important part of conducting institutional ethnography. For example, how did teachers and administrators activate state curriculum documents and accountability reports in conversation with each other? How did school, county, and state regulating texts, as well as state approved textbooks, intersect with teachers' instructional activities? I was interested in how school texts reflected county texts; how county texts were connected to state department texts; or how state department texts talked to state law and policy. How did county curriculum guides connect to state standards documents? Dorothy Smith

refers to these kinds of layered texts as “hierarchical intertextuality;” higher level texts often dictate, control, or constrain the frames and concepts of lower level texts.

### **Instructional Units of Study: The Bridge from Data to Analysis**

As I worked through the pages and pages of data I gathered, I realized the enormity of the task of making sense of it all. While my thinking was very clear on the importance of studying teaching as a comprehensive set of activities and interactions, I had very little clarity on how to do that effectively. My early attempts to organize the data kept bringing me back to the participants as organizing frame, which was what I had identified as problematic in the existing literature. Because I recognized the importance in institutional ethnographies of allowing the data to reveal the analytic constructs, initial attempts to code transcripts and materials failed to illuminate ideas. I knew that mapping interactions would be an important part of analysis, but I struggled to determine how best to begin. Attempts to timeline were not fruitful because the planning of instruction moves around recursively across as well as back and forth among different steps and topics. A linear construct was inappropriate. Further, each individual had his/her own process, so I kept leading myself back to dispositional and cognitive interpretations.

I returned to the literature, once more reviewing other institutional ethnographies, and made some key realizations. I was interested in studying the interactional production of instruction. So, could I identify a unit of analysis consistent with that gaze? What, exactly, was produced? For all of my participants, planning processes produced instructional units of study. While that might not be the case in all contexts, for the processes I observed, units of study were the common outcome. Therefore, I turned my attention from participants to units. Through units, I could map work, interactions, and

intertextualities. My analysis focused primarily on these units as they were most deeply represented in data collection: Moving West, Turn of the Century, World War I, Analytical Writing, Historical Fiction, Issues in Economics, and Voting Rights.

Almost simultaneously, I discovered the work of another researcher for whom coding materials had been especially problematic because she, too, was seeking a more inductive approach to analyzing data (Grubs, 2006). The solution was to transform patterns into typologies of experiences. As Campbell and Gregor (2004) explain, institutional ethnography does not particularly seek to build abstract and generalizable theory out of collected data. Instead, it seeks to uncover the social world that makes it possible for people to work or act as they do. Therefore, identifying, testing, and corroborating a set of codes doesn't necessary help explicate the analysis. And yet, institutional ethnographers most certainly need means of making sense of their data and finding patterns in the relations that organize experience. Writing the stories of the experiences shared with participants, weaving in and out between interpretation and observation begins to reveal those patterns (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). This premise returned me to the usefulness of typologies. As I wrote and mapped the stories of units, types of activities and interactions began to emerge and, through those activities, interactions and coordination could begin to be traced. The work of analysis was finally underway.

### **Three Analytical Lenses**

**First Analytical Lens: Mapping Planning Processes.** Telling the stories of instructional design was a complex process to investigate. As is common in institutional ethnography, my own experiences and framing of the everyday problematic had raised

the possibility that lesson planning was a highly variable process across contexts and participants. That hunch certainly became clear as I worked with different participants. I worked diligently to avoid assuming that it would look or sound a particular way and instead allowed teachers the lead in explaining how they worked. Because I was focused on how work emerged, I didn't conduct an interview. As explored earlier in this chapter, I chose to "talk with people" who were doing their work. While these dialogues never followed a set pattern of predetermined questions, as is typical of ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 152), the following questions helped frame my attention and follow up inquiries.

- What documents do you utilize in your planning and how?
- How do you decide what content to teach?
- What instructional strategies do you use and do those choices vary in different classes?
- With whom do you talk about instruction?
- What process do you use to produce a plan for instruction?

It was not possible to completely capture planning work because it was not bounded by a set space or "planning time." I understood that teachers, in reality, made instructional decisions in many odd moments and places: in the car on the way to work, while reading a journal in the evening, or in the lunchroom while chatting with a colleague. I paid attention to conversational cues of these decisions. Institutional ethnography is a helpful approach here because it allows a broad definition of work that includes any intentional activities that take time, effort and resources to execute regardless of when and where they occur (D. E. Smith, 2005). Defining work this way is

important for studying teachers' planning activities, as many of them occurred in fleeting moments outside of the school and the school day and these activities were just as vitally important to carrying out their work as planning period activities were.

After studying and writing about transcripts, lesson materials, and field notes, the stories of producing instructional units were really about deciding what to teach and how to teach it. I uncovered several types of activity that were consistent across units and facilitated the organization of the analysis: determining what content to teach, deciding what to tell students directly, developing materials, designing opportunities for practice and processing, establishing procedures for assessment, and matching activities to available time. These activities never occurred in a linear or sequential progression; participants moved back and forth as different ideas occurred to them, sometimes even working on more than one unit at a time. Therefore, I used the typology and a circular conceptualization to map and made links in the instructional design process, anchored by the topic of the unit itself. Figure 3 shows one example of a unit map.

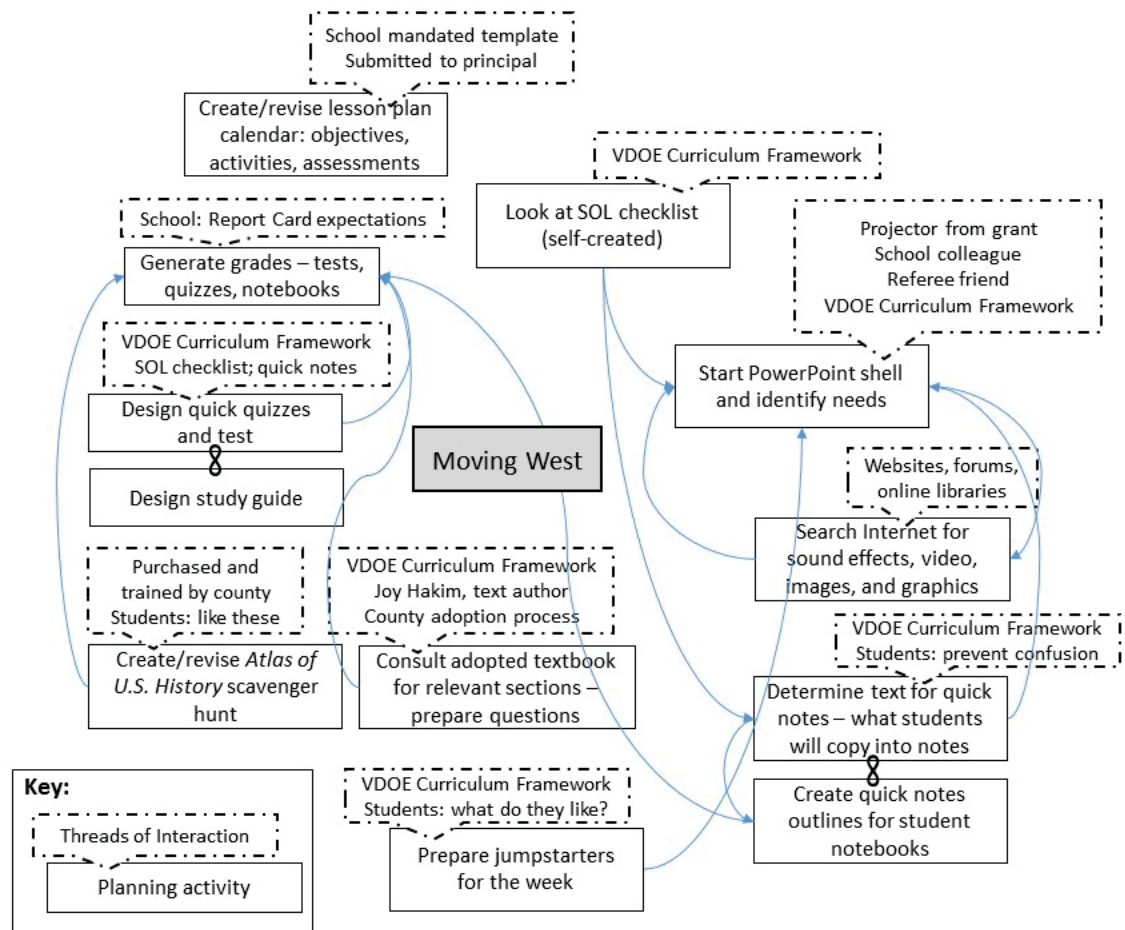


Figure 3. An example of a map of one participant’s unit planning process. The arrows indicate relationships among various activities.

Just like geographic maps, institutional maps are rendered meaningful only by the terrains or processes that they map. Further, they can be compared to others’ experiences, and reinterpreted, expanded, refined, and corrected as we learn more or if what we are mapping shifts or changes. After laying out the types of planning activities that constituted the story of the unit, I then re-read the data and preliminary journaling to identify interactions and extralocal relations. By mapping work processes in the institution, I could see how texts, colleagues, supervisors, students, Internet resources, etc., moved in and out of the daily activities of those who are engaged in the everyday work experiences. I considered questions such as:

- With what documents did people converse most often?
- How were intertextualities captured in documents that teachers produced?
- What people were positioned as powerful in the daily work of teachers?  
Colleagues, students, leaders?
- What resources connected teachers to broader communities beyond the classroom?
- What structures beyond participants' control impacted decision making?

More importantly, such maps can reveal how these interactions and negotiations happened in similar ways in different setting and contexts. By mapping multiple units across participants, I was able to see how actions and decisions became predictable and were coordinated and regulated beyond the individual's awareness. (Additional examples of unit maps are included in Appendix A.) Maps of teachers' planning processes provided important tools for moving analysis from the local setting to the extralocal relation, an important shift for illuminating the institutional organization of teachers' work. A crucially important layer of extralocal interaction for my line of inquiry was what role, if any, did state curriculum texts play in the design processes of teachers, introducing the second lens of my analysis.

**Second Analytical Lens: VDOE Texts and Intertextualities.** “The focus of institution mapping is first on individuals' observable activities with texts in particular settings. One can begin with a particular text – such as a report, memo, letter, or legislation – but the analytic goal is to situate the text back into the action in which it is produced, circulated, and read, and where it has consequences in time and space” (Turner, 2006, p. 140). Situating the text in peoples' observable activities is a key

component of what is missing in previous research on standards and teaching. Because the presumption that such negotiations were the products of teachers' internal processes, there was little need to observe the teachers and texts in action with each other.

However, by doing so I could learn much more concretely about how teachers negotiated standards and other institutional policies.

I began this line of inquiry with close reading and careful study of the discourses embedded in the state documents. In order to effectively recognize intertextualities with teachers' discourses, I needed a deep understanding of what existed at the state level.

Fairclough's (2003) work on critical discourse analysis was instrumental here. He calls for analyses that go beyond linguistics to what he has called "interdiscursive analysis" in order to explore "texts in terms of the different discourses, genres and styles they draw upon and articulate together" (p. 3). Drawing on constructs like voice, assumption (propositional and value), positioning, and exclusion, I analyzed how state policy discourses across documents (the standards, curriculum framework, and superintendents' memos) might have laid the foundations for institutional relations that coordinated the work of teachers. I employed the same constructs when analyzing transcripts to identify consistencies and fractures in the daily practice of teachers. Through these dialogic moments I began to reveal my final analytical lens – the institution.

**Third Analytical Lens: Uncovering the Institution – Regulating and Organizing Frames.** The models of text-reader conversations provided in Dorothy Smith's work (2001, 2006) were useful for illuminating broader relations of power and potentially regulating frames for teachers' work. She articulated the importance of looking for evidence of organizational processes, ways of authorizing certain actions,



ways that texts and readers construct and position subjects, as well as dialogues between texts. To that end, I moved recursively between state documents and school and classroom discourses to analyze intertextualities among them and how they were produced. These intersections were sketched into the unit planning maps as they were revealed. I also spent time noting and writing about ruptures and departures across discourses so that I would have a comprehensive understanding of how people and texts used language in the production of instructional designs. Dorothy Smith draws extensively from the work of George Herbert Mead to argue that “language is conceived as more like a zipper interlacing diverse subjectivities than as units of meaning traveling from one individual to another” (D. E. Smith, 2001, p. 178). This metaphor was helpful for opening analytical possibilities whereby institutional relations were both constructed and reproduced by participants. Analyzing discourse, through conversations, texts, et cetera was an important shift from previous research. It allowed me to focus on more visible and observable interactions than the kinds of internal factors like knowledge base, expertise, or motives that were widely used in the existing literature.

I began with a concept of institution articulated by Norman Fairclough. He argues that every social institution has its “own particular repertoire of speech events” as well as “its own differentiated settings and scenes, its cast of participants, and its own norms for their combination – for which members of the cast may participate in which speech events, playing which parts, in which settings, in the pursuit of which topics or goals, for which institutionally recognized purposes” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 38). The kind of regulated and organized interaction described here helped me capture the ordered contexts in which teachers carried out standards-based practice within certain prescribed

boundaries. While teachers' activities constituted certain routines of the organization they are constrained by them as well. I looked across the stories of instructional units to identify predictable routines that were replicated with little question across contexts. The typology of work activities that I introduced earlier in this chapter emerged as examples of such predictable and accepted routines associated with competent instructional design and lesson planning.

Furthermore, Fairclough goes on to argue that certain discourses, routines, or speech events begin to figure so dominantly that they become naturalized as common sense underpinnings of the way things are. As people acquire the ideological and common sense discourses of the institution, their vision becomes constrained to see the institution accordingly. These norms become invisible to the point that mastery of them indicates a certain level of competent membership in the institution (Fairclough, 1995, p. 42). When discourses become so dominant in the institution that they become ideological, they accumulate values, beliefs, and knowledge into representations of reality that are understood simply as "background knowledge" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 44). Ideological discourses, through the guise of "background knowledge," lend themselves to the idea that individuals are autonomous subjects capable of actualizing their mastered background knowledge to carry out the work of the institution. This construct of the institution took me back to the data and unit maps, searching for moments where the production of work was executed in such a way that it was negotiated automatically and implicitly accounted for factors beyond the local context of the classroom. I found three particularly compelling regulating or coordinating frames that appeared across every

unit's story: the school, the school calendar and schedule, and the state curriculum documents.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While my analysis was deeply layered and opened a variety of interesting lines of thinking, it also reflects some key limitations. One was its focus on a small group of teachers in one division. As explained more deeply in chapter two, my area of interest presented some challenges in gaining access to research sites. The study of power and institutional relations, as well as my intention to work with teachers as authentically as possible in their design processes, posed an interesting tension for personnel responsible for approving research studies in local sites. While I was able to learn a great deal about how institutional relations functioned in one division for middle school social studies teachers, comparing those functions across other grades, subjects, and divisions would expand understanding and complicate patterns in how standards and state policy coordinate the work of teachers and divisions.

Another set of limitations arose from my own novice understanding of the analytical methods with which I chose to work and study. While I read deeply about interaction and relation versus cognition and disposition and the tools of discourse analysis and institutional ethnography, existing examples were somewhat limited, particularly in the field of education. These methods and lenses were complex to implement and required no small amount of experimentation to develop well. Because of my inexperience, I encountered several unanticipated challenges that had implications for the study.

First, I did not account for the volume and diversity of data that would be generated through deep collaboration with participants. Every person's process was different and because I wanted my observations to be as authentic as possible, I found myself facing field notes, transcripts, lesson materials, emails, presentations, and all of the artifacts that emerge from the dynamic process of planning instruction. Further, no set of evidence looked like the next. As a result, I was deep into data collection before I genuinely understood what evidence would be most powerful and needed to be captured as well as how that might be accomplished. In some cases, I overlooked how supplementary evidence would strengthen the transcribed interviews and planning conversations. As an example, I worked with Renee first and realized later during my deeper analysis of the transcript that photographs of her binders would be useful to illustrate further the narrative she articulated in our dialogue. Even though I gathered the materials of the unit she planned while I was there, it didn't occur to me to collect snapshots of her other designs. I worked with her at the end of the year and, as often happens, she left the division over the summer. While I learned from that experience and collected much more from future participants, such gaps during data collection sometimes limited the final analysis.

Second, my initial attempts at analysis were rudimentary and when I reflected back on them together with the data, I found a number of dialogic moments that I could have extended with better questions for participants. My concern echoed Dorothy Smith when she argued, "The problem for the researcher is to avoid taking such terms of everyday talk for granted as the informant speaks his or her experience" (Smith, 2005, p. 132). There were times when my everyday experience as a teacher allowed me to

participate in the production of the ordinary talk of the profession. I did not always recognize the moments when we were using those “taken for granted” constructs like school, the state, or the schedule until after I had coded transcripts and begun analysis. I took those experiences back into future dialogues, but pursuing them in the moments they arose would have been most effective for revealing the very relations I was seeking to uncover. My skills in this area improved over time; however I didn’t consistently realize the level of awareness that would have prevented such missed opportunities.

Third, the process of capturing institutional relations was often challenging, particularly for a researcher new to the analytical tools of institutional ethnography and discourse analysis. To really uncover pivotal dialogic moments of regulation, coordination, or ruling in a way that supported ongoing analysis and reflection posed a unique set of complications. Managing those complexities began even with the IRB application and consent process, and I later realized that mine at times constricted my investigation and analysis. For example, I secured permission to record dialogues with participants, but that didn’t extend to hallway conversations with colleagues and more formal meetings. When I had opportunities to learn in these contexts, I had to rely on furiously sketched field notes and sometimes my memory. My consent process was thorough and targeted planning dialogues with teachers, but I needed better infrastructure for tracing their interactions with others. My participants volunteered to an open invitation through the division’s central office. Their colleagues and supervisors did not, which made following up problematic. While I had the opportunity to work with a key central office faculty member, I did not enjoy that luxury with some school-based personnel. Even in my work with participants, conducting embedded research sometimes

produced unexpected situations. When Marshall and Marie crossed my path in a school and invited me to share in an impromptu planning meeting, I found myself immersed in a rich discussion of how to begin their year. I was in the building in another capacity, but suddenly I was in a research moment with only my pen and notebook. And yet, that was exactly how the work of teaching was produced, sometimes spontaneously and sometimes by design. Recent literature in the methods and analysis of institutional ethnographies are creating a much deeper pool of knowledge for investigators who seek to manage these complexities in order to conduct research in everyday contexts (DeVault, M. & McCoy, L., 2012; Walby, K., 2013).

Finally, an important layer of institutional ethnography is the return of the research to its participants so that they have the opportunity to explore their lived experiences and deconstruct the relations of power that organize their work. As a novice investigator, I wasn't ready to approach that level of complexity and recognized it as a key limitation of the existing study. Taken together, these limitations keep me from saying that I have accomplished an institutional ethnography. However, by experimenting with its tools and methods, I have learned extraordinarily valuable lessons about the complex work of planning instruction. I am intrigued by the capacity it has to support future efforts to explore ruling relations and how they organize teachers' instruction.

What follows next are three chapters that explain the findings from each of the analytical lenses I explored. Because state documents are referenced so often in the rest of the findings, I begin with the close reading and discursive analysis of the state curriculum documents. I then shift to the results of mapping units of study, exploring unit

designs and how teachers talk about what to teach, how to teach it, and, finally, how those decisions emerge from a complex set of negotiations with variety of contextual factors like students, colleagues, and available resources, to name a few. The last chapter of findings investigates the line of inquiry on regulating frames and how the institution is both constituted and reproduced by teachers caught up in a broad set of extralocal relations of power, including, but not limited to, state curriculum policy.

## Chapter 4: VDOE Texts and Intertextualities

As a starting point for analysis, I first confronted questions about texts. How would a policy text (like a set of curriculum standards) function to regulate or coordinate the work of teachers around the state? How would it be possible for the institution (in this case the Board of Education (VBOE) or the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to “speak” about its role in organizing the work of teachers? While the direct interactions of VDOE or the Board of Education with teachers in the field are hard to capture, the work of Dorothy Smith provides an argument for framing and studying texts as critical processes in the constitution of organizational relations. The VBOE and VDOE publish a range of documents to communicate their positions on a variety of issues with educators around the Commonwealth. Several of them go through lengthy review and drafting processes indicating that great care is taken to make certain that communication is accurate, clear, precise, and strategically intentional. How might these texts be analyzed for evidence of regulation or coordination?

According to Smith (2001), texts make it possible for the same messages, numbers, and images to be replicated in the day to day activities of numerous people across spaces. They are, in essence, a means of speaking and can be positioned in dialogue with any reader. Therefore, “texts (or documents) are essential to the objectification of organizations and institutions and to how they exist as such” (p.159). Her emphasis on texts opens the possibility that they serve as a critical link between conversations we have in the everyday world and the broader relations that may connect and organize them. When I apply her logic to my own inquiry, I realize its importance. While studying and observing the daily work of teachers provide deep insight into local processes like planning instruction, teaching knowledge and skills, or managing students,



focusing only at this level limits my capacity to understand how those activities are organized into patterns that constitute the institution. Instead, if I analyze key organizational texts and then map those texts into other texts and into the interactions of the people who use them, I could begin to see how work and practice might be coordinated and organized into institutional routines. “Here is the possibility of *discovering* rather than presupposing organization and institution.” (Smith, 2001, p.192). While classroom observations and planning dialogues with teachers will reveal how policy texts occur in their work, I first address the organization and relations embedded in the texts themselves.

To better understand the role that curriculum standards play in the design processes of teachers and the daily work of students, I analyzed several key texts for evidence of discursive practices that state or imply the coordination or regulation of instructional practice. I began document analysis with the text at the center of standards-based reform in social studies education in Virginia -- *The History and Social Science Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools*. The standards are featured prominently on the VDOE website and are the primary reference tool available to teachers who visit the site looking for direction or guidance on expectations for Virginia students.

In the first sentence of the document’s preface, publication (not authorship) of the Standards of Learning is credited to the Virginia Board of Education (Virginia Department of Education [VDOE], 2008a). A short summary of the process by which the standards were revised and approved follows. The text explains that “a Board of Education Task Force, content experts, social studies educators, and community

representatives” extensively reviewed the standards and a first official revision was published in 2001. Then,

“As part of the Board’s seven-year cycle, the review process occurred again in 2008 and resulted in the standards contained in this document. Review committee members were encouraged to be judicious in the scope of their recommendations in consideration of the burden to school divisions of aligning curriculum, instructional materials, and professional development initiatives with the revised standards. The committee thoughtfully considered the key events and persons to be included. Names of individuals traditionally studied at grades K–3 have been included in the standards for those grades. In keeping with the committee recommendation to identify content that can be taught within the minimum instructional time, only individuals and events that are crucial to understanding the concepts identified are included in the standards for grades 4–12.”

Frequent use of the passive voice makes it difficult to identify processes of authorship and revision. For example, the text includes no indication of who encouraged the committee members “to be judicious in the scope of their recommendations.” While it is clear that a review committee existed to work with the text, the membership of the group is not named in the document, nor is it clearly established that the review committee resembled the 2001 group in its membership. Taken together, the opening paragraphs do convey to the reader that a process of drafting and revising the standards has been ongoing and included various voices at different points in time, as sequenced by a routinized and legislated schedule (VDOE, 2008a, 2008c). Fairclough describes texts like these as negotiated, “the outcome of a process of negotiation about which voices should be included in the text and in what relation.” (1995, p. 43). He goes on to explain that policy texts are intended to reflect a sense of consensus, which necessarily means that different voices are not included. What begins as a negotiated process finally emerges as a non-dialogic text (p. 43). Multiple voices were once part of the sometimes contentious standards drafting and revision processes, yet the final draft reflects one authoritative

voice that depends on a variety of discursive moves to convey its legitimacy for directing the instruction of students in Virginia (van Hover, Hicks, Stoddard, Lisanti, 2010).

One key paragraph (the fourth) in the preface to the Standards of Learning outlines how its publishers intend for educators to interpret the text as they organize their work. It is included below in its entirety. (The sentence numbers have been added for reference during the analysis.)

1. The History and Social Science Standards of Learning are not intended to encompass the entire curriculum for a given grade level or course nor to prescribe how the content should be taught.
2. It is understood that these academic standards are to be incorporated into a broader, locally designed curriculum.
3. Teachers are encouraged to go beyond the standards and select instructional strategies and assessment methods appropriate for their students.
4. The History and Social Science Standards of Learning, amplified by the Curriculum Framework, define the essential understandings, knowledge, and skills that are measured by the Standards of Learning tests.
5. The Curriculum Framework provides additional guidance to school divisions and their teachers as they develop an instructional program appropriate for their students.
6. It assists teachers as they plan their lessons by framing essential questions, identifying essential understandings, defining essential content knowledge, and describing the intellectual skills students need to master.
7. This supplemental guide delineates in greater specificity the minimum content that all teachers should teach and all students should learn.
8. Names of individuals whose study further enriches the standards and clarifies the concepts under investigation will be found in this resource guide.”

Fairclough draws on a range of scholarship in discourse analysis to offer several tools for analyzing how the text is constructed to organize or shape work and thinking. First, I consider who and what are included through representation in the text. In the first two sentences, an unidentified agent does not intend for the standards to become the curriculum and understands that they will become part of a broader and locally designed curriculum. In the fourth sentence, a second institutional text, the Curriculum Framework, is named and positioned as a text that amplifies the Standards of Learning.

The existence of two connected documents will offer opportunities to analyze intertextual relationships for further evidence of how the Board of Education (the publisher of these two documents) plans to shape social studies instruction in Virginia classrooms.

Teachers are included in sentence 3 as actors in the organization so that they may be “encouraged to go beyond the standards,” (by an unnamed agent), be assisted by the Curriculum Framework as they plan their lessons (Sentence 6), and provide the minimum content outlined in the standards (sentence 7). There is an even broader assumption that a group of people, teachers, exists in the organization with the skills to carry out these tasks without further direction or instruction (Smith, 2001). Students appear in sentences 3 and 8, as recipients of the school division and teachers’ instructional program and as learners of the minimum content, respectively. In considering voice in negotiated text, it is also important to analyze what isn’t present. The preface does not open a discursive space in which teachers are granted voice, particularly not a divergent voice that might express concern with time, pacing, and volume. No details are provided on how going beyond the standards might be accomplished. The document does not attempt to include divergent student or community member voices who might challenge the definition of “minimum content” or “essential content knowledge.” Here is more evidence of the implicit consensus reflected in non-dialogic policy texts. Readers may assume that the Board of Education has taken the appropriate steps to hear different voices and assimilate them into the published standards provided in the document that follows the preface. Fairclough (2003) argues that assumptions like this one play a key role in the reduction of difference (p. 46) and the reproduction of norms, so my analysis turns to them next.

Implicitness (through assumption) in texts reduces difference and creates a sense of shared meaning and Fairclough (2003) contends that the power to influence such “common ground” can carry with it the capacity to “exercise social power, domination and hegemony” (p. 55). Because I am interested in learning more about how relations of power may or may not organize the daily work of teachers, I studied the Standards of Learning text for evidence of assumptions that I might see evidenced in the plans, dialogues, and lessons of teachers. Fairclough (2003) identifies three kinds of assumption: existential assumptions (about what is), propositional assumptions (about what can or will be), and value assumptions (about what is desirable) (p. 56). There are many of all three evidenced in the paragraph above; I will focus on assumptions that will open a variety of intriguing questions for how they may be mapped (or not) into the field of teachers’ work.

I begin with the same paragraph above as it explicitly states how the Board of Education intends for the standards to function. I will also include the next paragraph in the document, which follows here, because it expands on the ideas articulated in the paragraph that precedes it.

9. The History and Social Science Standards of Learning do not prescribe the grade level at which the standards must be taught or a scope and sequence within a grade level.
10. The Board of Education recognizes that local divisions will adopt a K–12 instructional sequence that best serves their students.
11. The design of the Standards of Learning assessment program, however, requires that all Virginia school divisions prepare students to demonstrate achievement of the standards for elementary and middle school history and social science by the grade levels tested.

The high school end-of-course Standards of Learning tests, for which students may earn verified units of credit, are administered in a locally determined sequence.

Existential assumptions include the existence of Standards of Learning, that the standards are academic (sentence 2), and that the Curriculum Framework exists to amplify the standards. Sentences 4, 6 and 7 also mark a key assumption about what is—the use of the word essential four times implies that a particular minimum body of knowledge and understandings can and has been identified and, therefore, published. Further, the publisher of the document is assumed to be in a position of legitimacy to determine the minimum content requirement (sentence 7). Sentence 4 is embedded with the assumption that the mastery of an essential body of knowledge can be measured through a test and sentence 11 assumes that achievement of the standards will be evidenced through the SOL assessment program. Again, the reader may assume that the publishing organization is in a legitimate position to oversee the design and administration of such assessment program. Sentence 8 assumes that there are key individuals in history whose study would enrich the standards.

I also identify several key propositional assumptions. The Standards of Learning will not restrict classroom instruction from including additional knowledge and skills (sentence 1). Because teachers are encouraged to go beyond the standards, readers assume that they will take the initiative granted by such empowerment and do so (sentence 2). Divisions will collaborate with teachers in some way to develop instructional programs (sentence 5, further elaborated in sentence 9). Teachers will ensure that students have opportunities to learn the minimum content identified by the standards and developed more specifically in the framework (sentence 7). A test administered by the state will correspond to the knowledge and skills outlined in the SOL and Frameworks, successfully measuring student achievement in essential social studies

content and skills (sentence 4). Teachers and divisions will position the SOL and Curriculum Frameworks as guidance, and will consult the documents during their instructional planning and programming (sentences 2, 5, 6, 7).

Value assumptions occur in the text sample in both ways that Fairclough describes. Some are triggered by language features and others are deeply embedded and depend on a common familiarity that, in turn, reproduces a sense of consensus (Fairclough, 2003, p. 56). For example, take the assumption that localities (as defined by school divisions) and teachers will, in fact, design the instructional program appropriate for students and it will integrate the standards into a broader curriculum. To further emphasize the power of teachers and divisions to organize instruction, in the last four sentences of the paragraph, the standards and the framework are described with a form of “guide” or “guidance” three times. Additionally, the Curriculum Framework “assists teachers as they plan their lessons” (sentence 6). Fairclough (2003) uses the example of the word “help” as a trigger likely (but not certainly) to be positively received because of shared understandings of its definition to provide support or make something easier (p. 173). That example parallels the emphasis on “guidance,” “guide,” and “assist” in the text above, as they could potentially trigger a positive reception of the Standards and Framework. The authors likely expect readers to share a common understanding of guide/guidance as something more positive and flexible than, for example, direct/directive. Based on the meaning conveyed by the words “guide” and “assist,” readers can assume that the authors do not intend for the documents to be interpreted as unmalleable or as a substitute for appropriate instruction. Similarly, the use of the term “essential” to describe the understandings, knowledge, and questions included in the

documents triggers the reader to appreciate the content as significant and worthy of study for every student in Virginia, in short, valuable.

“Even ‘deeper’ are assumed values which are not ‘triggered’ in this way, but depend upon an assumption of shared familiarity with (not necessarily acceptance of) implicit value systems between author and interpreter (of course that familiarity may not in fact be shared” (Fairclough, 2003, p 173). Taken as a whole, these two paragraphs create a dense network of assumptions to construct a discourse with readers that teachers design appropriate instruction as they make sound decisions about how to teach and assess their students (sentence 3), drawing on the standards and framework for guidance and assistance. Because the language is framed such that the standards are not intended to “encompass the entire curriculum” and “it is understood” that they will become part of a “locally designed curriculum,” the text evokes for the reader the sense that teachers and school divisions will either welcome, expect, or accept this responsibility. It is in some way desirable that teachers and localities have a certain amount of agency and power to control the course of instruction in classrooms. It is assumptions like this one that may lead us to conceptualize teachers as “curriculum gatekeepers” with the power and skills to teach wisely (or not). The SOL and Curriculum Framework exist for a key purpose that is outlined in the one-sentence, concluding paragraph of the preface (that immediately follows the two paragraphs already analyzed). It reads, “The History and Social Science Standards of Learning and the Standards of Learning assessment program form the core of the Virginia Board of Education’s efforts to strengthen public education across the Commonwealth and to raise the level of academic achievement of all Virginia students.” This sentence anticipates that readers will recognize (and perhaps share) a



commonly held assumption that the SOL (and its assessments) are important for providing equal access to strong public education and academic achievement regardless of where you go to school (or teach). An assumption like this one explicates what Fairclough calls “assumed values” that can function at deeply embedded levels to construct desirability around a position.

If I stop the analysis of the documents here, I might travel into the field or analyze transcripts looking for evidence of teachers exercising their power to design effective instruction, pulling in essential knowledge and skills as part of a broader curriculum. I might be curious about what skills teachers need to make instructional decisions for their students or how divisions collaborate with teachers to design curriculum. However there are some complicating layers of analysis that render the role of standards in a much murkier way and begins to uncover how relations of power may be implicated. First, how might readers construct different assumptions of the text? And, second, what space is there for difference and how would it be positioned?

While the text may be premised on a set of assumptions, they are not necessarily shared by readers or interpreted identically across readings. Texts alone do not coordinate action; the coordination would be accomplished through the reading and talking of the texts in lived experience (Jackson, 1995; Smith, 2005). Readers could accept familiarity with the assumptions embedded in the document but make very different ones of their own. Consider the choice of the word “essential” to categorize the understandings, questions, and knowledge of the standards. A teacher could easily assume that such a choice renders the elements of any “broader curriculum” developed by teachers and divisions as non-essential or even irrelevant. Academic achievement has

been matched to measures of student performance on the assessment program (which is matched to the framework). Division personnel, teachers, parents, and students could therefore assume that an unsatisfactory score indicates inadequate student performance or teacher performance or some combination of the two, regardless of the quality of teaching and learning in a broader curriculum. Further, it could also be legitimate to assume that achievement in any broader curriculum would be less relevant and potentially completely unmeasured. Does that also make it without value?

Because the document states that teachers and divisions integrate the standards into a broader curriculum, readers are led to assume that power comes with that capacity. However, upon closer analysis, the document does not necessarily convey a lot of power as much as it does responsibility for the task. In the twelve sentences of the preface that outline how the standards should be used instructionally, teachers and school divisions never appear as the subject in a sentence of active voice. Instead, the Board of Education, the SOL, the tests, and the Curriculum Framework convey the action. In her analysis of curriculum reform at the college level, Jackson (1995) describes a process by which individuals are “displaced by an objectified system of curriculum planning and implementation in which documents replace individuals as constituents of social action” (p. 166). Teachers and divisions are represented so that they may receive encouragement (in passive voice from an unidentified subject, presumably the Board of Education) and assistance through the curriculum documents, a pattern that seems inconsistent with positions of power. Sentence 11 explicitly states that VA school divisions must prepare students to demonstrate achievement on the assessments, and sentence 7 identifies the information in the Curriculum Framework as the “minimum content that all teachers

should teach and all students should learn.” While the word “minimum” attempts to qualify the content of the standards, it is viable to draw the assumption that what is tested and measured for achievement is actually the true scope of what students must learn and what teachers must teach. Dorothy Smith analyzed a sample text of a grade appeal policy to show how it connects activities across time and space. In her example, she describes the importance of course grades in *authorized* courses (emphasis added) and that achievement and learning in unauthorized courses “disappears like water into the sand if the course has not been authorized as part of the university offerings by the appropriate procedures” (Smith, 2001, p.) That assumption gains more substantiation when paired with a comment earlier in the text that the 2001 revision of the standards focused on three priorities, one of which was “the quantity of content that can be taught and learned effectively in the minimum instructional time prescribed by the Virginia Standards of Accreditation for core academic disciplines” (preface, paragraph 2). If there are no legitimate ways at the state level to document additional or divergent kinds of achievement, and the essential knowledge and skills in the SOL are designed to meet the instructional time already prescribed in the SOA, what locally driven discourses (and assumptions) would be necessary to disrupt an intense focus on preparing students to demonstrate achievement on required content?

There are several key points that speak loudly by virtue of their exclusion from the document in the positioning of difference. Teachers (and divisions) are not granted the permission to disregard (or revise) content in the standards, even if they decide it is inappropriate for their students. While the Board grants teachers the responsibility of choosing strategies and assessments that are appropriate for their students, that capacity is

expected to be leveraged in the pursuit of the SOL at a minimum. Suggestions or resources for designing curriculum locally are not included or referenced. In the absence of infrastructure to support going beyond the standards, it seems possible that the encouragement (sentence 3) offered to teachers is shallow. Further, there is no indication that achievement, teaching or learning beyond the standards will be recognized in any methodical or strategic way. Beyond brief periods of public comment (usually limited to three minutes) during the review year, there is no mechanism for expressing or choosing a different philosophical stance than that articulated in the standards. Because the standards are framed as an effort to strengthen education and improve achievement, to be in opposition with them poses a risk of having oneself perceived as at odds with such goals.

Now the questions about how policy and power are organized in the field become even more interesting. When and how do teachers “go beyond the standards”? What language do they use to explain doing so? How do teachers position themselves in discourses around instructional design and where do the policy texts intersect with those discourses? Are there patterns in how teachers frame the standards, or their assumptions about teaching them, that corroborate, complicate, or contest the assumptions embedded in the policy texts? What additional dialogues or texts intersect with teachers’ decision making? How do divisions interpret policy texts and bring those interpretations into teachers in schools and classrooms? Are there other state documents that strengthen the evidence for what assumptions the state intends to convey through the SOL and Curriculum Framework? Most of these questions are best examined in the daily work of the organization (schools) as the texts are put into action through diverse readings and

interpretations by its members (teachers, administrators, etc.). However, the last one draws attention to the importance of evidencing patterns that solidify our understanding of the assumptions and discursive moves we see in a text. Before putting the standards into action with teachers' instructional processes, I will analyze other key state documents that begin to capture the complexity of the Board of Education's position (as articulated and executed through the Virginia Department of Education).

In her discussion of the significance of texts for institutional ethnographies, Smith explains that entering through one text usually opens the door to a web of others that together create "an archi-texture" on which the institution is designed (Smith, 2001, p. 187). The preface directly names a Curriculum Framework (a second text) that exists as a "supplemental guide" (sentence 7) to the SOL and amplifies its content (sentence 4). My analysis turns to the intertextualities between these two complementary policy texts.

The choice of title for the Curriculum Framework is significant. The preface to the SOL understands the existence of a locally designed "curriculum," so what should the relationship between that curriculum and the "Curriculum Framework" look and sound like? By definition, a framework is a basic and essential structure of pieces fitted together in some way. The use of the word "framework" here seems to be another of Fairclough's propositional assumptions; locally designed curriculum will be built upon the framework (which elucidates the standards) provided by the VBOE and VDOE. Regardless of grade level, each Curriculum Framework begins with the same one page introduction that outlines the state's expectations for how the Framework will inform teachers' work (VDOE, 2008b) The first paragraph almost directly repeats the information articulated in the preface to the SOL.

The History and Social Science Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework 2008, approved by the Board of Education on July 17, 2008, is a companion document to the 2008 History and Social Science Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools. The Curriculum Framework amplifies the Standards of Learning by defining the content understandings, knowledge, and skills that are measured by the Standards of Learning assessments. The Curriculum Framework provides additional guidance to school divisions and their teachers as they develop an instructional program appropriate for their students. It assists teachers in their lesson planning by identifying the essential content understandings, knowledge, and intellectual skills that should be the focus of instruction for each standard. Hence, the framework delineates with greater specificity the content that all teachers should teach and all students should learn.

Note the repeated use of “amplifies,” “guidance,” and assists” as well as the continued assumption that teachers and school divisions will develop the instructional program appropriate for their students. Readers are again reminded that the Framework defines the content and skills included in the SOL assessment program and that these content and skills are essential. The last sentence of the paragraph almost exactly duplicates sentence 7 in the SOL preface and makes the categorical assertion that the content is what “all teachers should teach and all students should learn.” However, there is one notable difference:

Sentence 7 in the preface to the SOL reads: “This supplemental guide delineates in greater specificity the minimum content that all teachers should teach and all students should learn.”

The sentence in the introduction to the Framework reads: “Hence, the framework delineates with greater specificity the content that all teachers should teach and all students should learn.”

The word *minimum* no longer appears adjacent to the content that should be taught and learned by all. The inclusion of the word *hence* in the Curriculum Framework establishes a direct relationship with the preceding sentence, guiding the reader to make an explicit connection between two ideas. One, the Curriculum Framework assists teachers with

lesson planning, and, two, for this reason (a definition for hence) the document is designed to elucidate the content that everyone should teach and learn.

After the first paragraph, the introduction to the Framework goes on to explain more about how to interpret the information contained in it. The descriptions are quoted below; I have numbered the sentences for purposes of analysis.

1. The Curriculum Framework consists of at least one framework page for every Standard of Learning.
2. Each of these pages is divided into four columns, as described below:
3. **Essential Understandings**
4. This column includes the fundamental background information necessary for answering the essential questions and acquiring the essential knowledge. 5. Teachers should use these understandings as a basis for lesson planning.
6. **Essential Questions**
7. In this column are found questions that teachers may use to stimulate student thinking and classroom discussion. 8. The questions are based on the standard and the essential understandings, but may use different vocabulary and may go beyond them.
9. **Essential Knowledge**
10. This column delineates the key content facts, concepts, and ideas that students should grasp in order to demonstrate understanding of the standard. 11. This information is not meant to be exhaustive or a limitation on what is taught in the classroom. 12. Rather, it is meant to be the principal knowledge defining the standard.
13. **Essential Skills**
14. This column enumerates the fundamental intellectual abilities that students should have—what they should be able to do—to be successful in accomplishing historical and geographical analysis and achieving responsible citizenship.

The information included in the introduction begins to outline a process for how teachers might use the SOL and framework as part of a larger process of instructional design.

VBOE/VDOE Essential Understandings are defined as “fundamental background information” and “teachers should use these understandings as a basis for lesson planning.” The Essential Questions are based on the standard and essential understandings and teachers “may use [the questions] to stimulate student thinking and classroom discussion” (S7). The Essential Knowledge identifies key content and

concepts “that students should grasp in order to demonstrate understanding of the standard” (S9). The assumption embedded here is that the standards require further detailing in order to successfully monitor progress and measure mastery. “Demonstrate understanding” implies that at some point students will be required to show what they know and can do and that there will be “correct” ways to do so. Sentences 11 and 12 return the idea of *minimum* to the standards, without using that word particularly. Instead, teachers are instructed that the “information is not meant to be exhaustive or a limitation on what is taught” (S11). Because sentence 11 frames for the reader what the essential knowledge is NOT, the word *rather* in sentence 12 cues the reader to expect a different or more precise description of what essential knowledge IS. The sentence goes on to define essential knowledge as “the principal knowledge defining the standard.” The choice of the word *principal* is significant, as it positions this knowledge as “first in order of importance” (oxford dictionary). Embedded is the assumption of a privileged body of knowledge about history and social science that all students in Virginia should learn, so it follows that all teachers should teach it. While the standards were previously described as minimum (in the SOL preface), they are now principal. Such a shift in language creates new tension around what power and flexibility teachers have to design instruction. The embedded assumption is that augmentation is welcome, but revision and omission are not because those choices would certainly impact student understanding of the knowledge already established as most important. Because the document is not a dialogic one, voices that might challenge the genuine flexibility offered by augmentation due to constraints of time, resources, students’ prior knowledge, etc., are absent. The only attempt to address voices that might challenge what was chosen as “essential” and “principal” is an implicit



assumption that offering the opportunity to teach additional content resolves that tension. Readers should presume that the document includes a well-designed core body of knowledge (developed through consensus during the adoption phase) that can be manageably taught and enriched through daily instruction.

A final sentence concludes the introduction to the Curriculum Framework and reminds teachers and division personnel once more of the relationship between the framework and the SOL assessment program. “The Curriculum Framework serves as a guide for Standards of Learning assessment development; however, assessment items may not and should not be verbatim reflections of the information presented in the Curriculum Framework” (VDOE, 2008b). The VDOE also publishes SOL test blueprints which organize the standards into “reporting categories” and identify the number of multiple choice items included per category. By providing this information, teachers might assume the importance of further prioritizing the “principal” knowledge defined as essential that will be assessed more intensively by larger numbers of questions.

Communication from the VBOE/VDOE is not limited to the significant policy texts that reflect intensive cycles of authoring and revision. Information is regularly conveyed through the VDOE website, professional learning opportunities, and memos from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to principals and superintendents. Opportunities for professional learning made available through superintendents’ memos include emphasis on the SOL. For two online courses on geography and history made available to teachers in 2008, the superintendent cites the instructors’ experiences working with teachers to improve their instruction of the SOL as key points in their credentialing (VDOE, 2008d, 2008e). For example, memo #220 tells readers that the

course instructor “works regularly with Virginia teachers to improve their instruction to meet the *Standards of Learning* (VDOE, 2008e). When communicating the passage of legislation around educating students about the Holocaust, the Superintendent writes “I encourage all educators to assume the responsibility for ensuring that Virginia's young people recognize the importance of the related Standards of Learning in English and History and the Social Sciences.” (VDOE, 2009a). An analysis of memos connected to the 2008 revision of the SOL for History and Social Science indicates that the SOL, Curriculum Framework, and Assessment Blueprints are routinely positioned together in the discourse. For example, the subject line for October 9, 2009 reads “SUBJECT: History and Social Science Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework 2008 and the Impact on Assessment” (VDOE, 2009b) or this one for August 28, 2009 that reads, “SUBJECT: Implementation of New Standards of Learning Test Blueprints for the 2008 History & Social Science Standards of Learning” (VDOE, 2009c). As outlined in the review and implementation sequence, revisions in the standards necessarily lead to revisions in the framework and then to revisions in the assessment. The timeline outlines for school divisions exactly when assessment and accreditation will be linked to each revision of the standards.

Taken together, these intertextualities begin to construct a picture of the organizational relations that the VBOE, through the VDOE, hopes to establish around history and social sciences instruction for students in Virginia. Care has been taken, regardless of the document, to ensure that the language in each text does not prescribe one way of teaching. Instead, each policy document adds layers of work and organization to instructional practice and each layer is authored through the domains and

responsibilities conveyed to the VBOE and VDOE by the Constitution of Virginia or the General Assembly. Each document and memo is careful to clearly establish the legitimating authority, be it Constitutional, legislative, etc. that empowers the institution to make and execute such decisions and routines. For example, the standards document includes this statement in its introduction, “Pursuant to legislation from the 2000 Virginia General Assembly, the Board of Education established a seven-year cycle for review of the Standards of Learning” (VDOE, 2008a). In a superintendent’s memo about textbook adoption, readers learn, “At the February 19, 2009, Board of Education meeting the Department of Education was authorized to proceed with the K-12 history and social science textbook and instructional materials state adoption process. It is anticipated that the textbook and instructional materials review will be completed by January 2010.” In these two examples, the Virginia General Assembly, the Board of Education, and the Department of Education are framed as acting bodies with the authority to conduct the work proposed. Despite the careful attention to VBOE/VDOE’s specific spheres of educational work, an examination of the texts using the tools of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003) reveals that there are still dozens of assumptions embedded in the language with the potential to extend their influence more deeply into teachers’ decision making. We find a web of language that could position teachers very differently with respect to relations of power, depending on how variously they are interpreted and connected to other complicating dialogues.

Dorothy Smith frames texts and intertextuality in institutional ethnography in two intriguing ways. First, intertextuality “has a hierarchical structure where hierarchy is not conceived as an ordering of positions but of texts at one level that establish the frames

and concepts that control texts at lower levels and, inversely, of texts at lower levels that are fitted to the frames and concepts of higher order texts” (D. E. Smith, p. 212). As I analyze coded transcripts, lesson plans, and field notes, do I find examples of texts produced by teachers that reflect or align with the texts generated as Virginia policy? Is there evidence to suggest the standards and curriculum framework produce an ordering of instruction and planning in schools, and if so, how is that accomplished discursively through form, category, or position?

What makes the tools of institutional ethnography so useful for this analysis, though, is the conception of putting texts into action as processes in daily work. As Smith explains, “Disjunctures between the artificial realities of institutions and actualities that people live are not avoidable; they are *of* the transformation, the process of going from the actual to words or images that represent it” (emphasis original, D. E. Smith, p. 187). This positioning in the everyday allows for the implementation of institutional texts to shift and bend in the work of people from moment to moment. And, at the same time, they may act as means of coordinating through the standardization of process, routine, or dialogue, thus revealing relations of power. As Smith explains, “forms and other textual genres are designed to select from the actual that which fits the institutional frame” (D. E. Smith, p. 199).

Rather than analyze teachers, their pedagogical content knowledge, or what might be happening for them cognitively, we can analyze the webs of interaction that produce planning, teaching or learning. The assumptions and patterns revealed through my analysis of the Standards of Learning and related texts can now be contextualized in the field and analyzed as strands of broader and more complex instructional realities. So,

what kinds of interactions are occurring in the everyday because they are organized by institutional frames and, conversely, what is happening that isn't captured because it doesn't fit the frames? And, finally, how do teachers and divisions impact the frames provided by the VBOE/VDOE? S. J. Ball (1997) explains that "Policies do not normally tell you what to do; they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do is narrowed or changed or particular goals or outcomes are set. A response must still be put together, constructed in context, offset against or balanced by other expectations. All of this involves creative social action of some kind" (p. 270). To investigate these contexts and responses, I turn my attention to data collected in the field.

## **Chapter 5: Processes for Producing Planning**

After multiple readings and codings of the transcripts, field notes, and instructional materials, and recursively considering the problematic that framed the study, three lenses for analyzing the data began to emerge. Before I could consider how state policies and other contextual factors intersected with or shaped discourses on instructional design, I needed to first construct a clear picture of what interactions constituted lesson planning for my participants in the local experience of the classroom. So, my initial analytical lens focused on defining instructional planning as it is carried out in the local experiences of teachers. How was instructional design sequenced and organized in the daily experience of teachers? After I defined and mapped the planning process, I shifted the analytical lens toward illuminating the implicit and explicit interactions that constitute the planning process. Finally, I analyzed the planning process maps and interactions for evidence of regulating and organizing frames that position instructional design in broader relations of power that complicate our understanding of teachers as gatekeepers for instruction.

### **Defining and Mapping Instructional Design**

Free of the lesson plan templates of teacher preparation programs, the process of planning instruction in the real world of teachers' work can be quite diverse and individualized to the preference of each teacher. I completed my field work in a division that did not require a standardized lesson plan universally, nor was there a division expectation that lesson plans be styled, submitted, or reviewed consistently across schools. Teachers were free to use to what processes suited them best, unless they worked in a school site where a different decision had been made.

I explained in my methodology that I chose to talk with teachers as they walked me through upcoming lessons and allowed me to learn more about how they came into existence rather than interview teachers with direct prompts about how they plan. This approach gave me access to what their activities looked like “in action.” After initial coding, I re-read transcripts and codes looking for evidence of planning sequences that could be mapped to illustrate a process of instructional design.

### Defining “The What”

All four participants began with some version of the question “what do the students need to know?” Prior to this study, Chris created a detailed checklist of topics that students needed to know and used that checklist to guide his material development (see Figure 4 and Appendix B for full version). When I asked him how his routine began, he explained,

I thought that the checklist jumpstarter, saying that, that stuff I really stressed hard, that I had to do for myself. The other thing was, I realized I had to stress for myself, was with the books that we had there was no way (pause) to get an overview of what they needed to know just strictly from books.

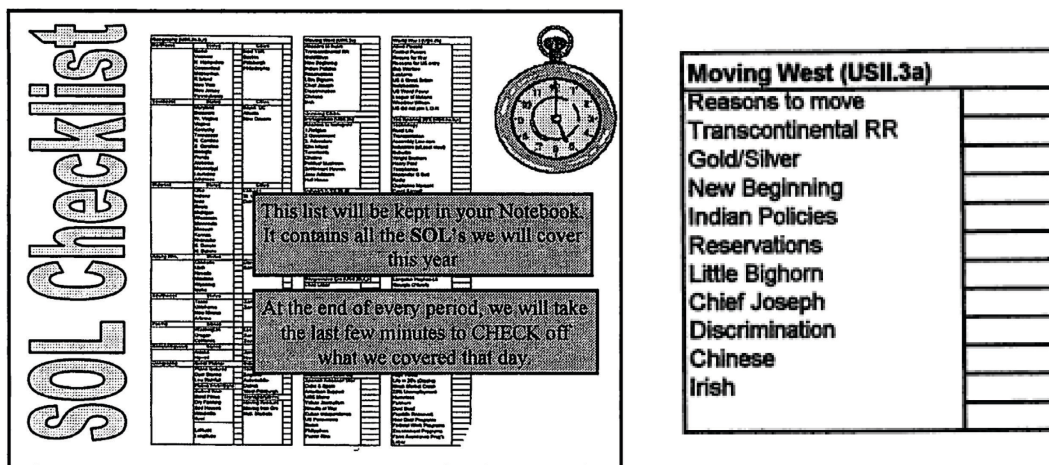


Figure 4. An example of Chris’s checklist (left); a sample unit is magnified (right). He introduced the checklist to his students on the first day of school and “at the end of every period, we will take the last few minutes to CHECK off what we covered that day.”

Embedded here is the assumption that there is a core body of knowledge that students “needed to know” (in the example above about Moving West) and the texts available to his students weren’t necessarily going to ensure that students had sufficient exposure to this information. Chris recognized that he needed a tool to ensure that he provided the information and that students could use to overtly track their progress in learning the information by checking things off. (I will return to a deeper analysis of the full checklist later when I consider it for evidence of organizing frames.) Because Chris emphasizes his need for an organizing structure to know what “to stress” with students, also implicit is an accountability for ensuring students learn this content, whether it is to himself or an external factor.

Renee began to discuss her lesson planning with references to specific content as well. When we met, Renee was designing instruction that would be consistent for the whole group regardless of the students’ grade levels (students in her classroom are in a variety of grades). She explained that, “We are doing, since SOLs are over, post-World War II genocide, the big SOL. So what we are doing is, ahm, studying that.” Before the SOL assessments were over, Renee’s instructional delivery model looked different but the planning process still began in the same place. (I will study this difference further as I move deeper into instructional design map.) Students entered Renee’s classroom through the legal system and could arrive at any moment. When they did, she began instructional planning with a pre-assessment process that involved working with the student to figure out what content they were learning prior to arrival. She outlined this quick interview as, “I’ll say, ‘Do you read? What grade are you in and where do you think you are?’ So I just name them lessons and towards the end I’ve done which



particular SOL it is.” These questions establish what content should come next in the student’s learning sequence. Implicit in Renee’s construction of her instructional design is the understanding that the most efficient approach for deciding what to teach next is to determine what students have already been taught and then move relatively linearly through the chronology of history from there, a pattern reflected in the Standards of Learning and many texts.

Marshall and Marie collaborate through each stage of the planning process. While decisions emerge out of dialogic negotiation, they still began in the same place that Chris and Renee did – identifying what students need to know and be able to do. They were beginning their year with a mini-unit on writing analytically and explained its purpose in a short conversation with me when we crossed paths on a teacher workday.

Marie and Marshall plan to begin the year with a short unit on writing analytically and will use the context of voting age to embed it in civics curriculum. They describe it as a “hard” skill for students to learn and they plan to put a big emphasis on “say something and back it up,” as Marshall describes. Based on their observations, students in their classes often prefer questions that can be answered simply with a quick search on Google. So, they will use a process of explicit instruction (through PowerPoint) to teach students how to construct and evidence a strong argument. They expect this instruction to pay off later when they introduce students to unit document-based questions that will require analytical writing skills in addition to content knowledge (Field notes, August 2009).

Just as Chris and Renee did, Marshall and Marie began their planning by identifying what students need to learn, in this case a key skill that would link to activities and assignments throughout the rest of the year.

To begin a lesson or unit plan with the knowledge, understanding, or skill to be mastered is a pattern reflected in planning methods throughout the literature (Dunn, 2010; Hattie, 2012; Lenz, 2003; Marzano, 2009; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Focusing first on desired outcomes is so deeply embedded in the process of lesson design that it has

become both normal and a characteristic that elevates instruction to the position of “effective.” The empirical validity of beginning lesson planning this way is not of particular relevance here. However, what is interesting for my problematic is that this decision point about how to begin is accepted so implicitly, without question for how it might direct or regulate the remaining steps in the process. Would instructional design look different if the starting point was working with students and parents to determine their goals and priorities or posing intriguing questions and following paths of inquiry wherever they led? For all five of the participants, planning begins with what to teach and that decision is made by adults. Here was my first glimpse at a routine so deeply embedded for my participants that it could be explored further as a construct of institutional relations. It occurred across all contexts in a fairly predictable pattern and drove the rest of the design process. Further, it illuminated the kind of taken for granted work knowledge that Fairclough (2003) called “background knowledge.” If unit and lesson planning consistently begins with questions about outcomes, how could contextual interactions (including standards of any kind) intersect and potentially organize the instructional choices that teachers make? I will return to this question in the final layer of analysis.

### **Mapping “The What” Into Interaction**

While determining what to teach was an adult decision for all of the participants, it was far from an exclusively internal and cognitive process for any of them. They certainly leveraged their own thinking and reasoning at sophisticated levels, but they were also enmeshed in complex webs of interaction and discourse. Contextual factors

like available resources, colleagues, the students, and time positioned participating teachers in negotiation as they determined what content or skills to teach.

When I asked Renee how she decided that her upcoming unit was going to integrate social studies and English through historical fiction, she explained:

I have a ton of resources, ton of books. That's the only reason. And we've done things like the *Pig Man* before, things that they may not have really heard of. And the reason that we did not do that again is because half of them that were here last year at this time did it then. And I didn't want to repeat it. So it's something always going on that you have to consider.

What on the surface appears to be Renee's decision to teach historical fiction is actually a complex set of negotiations with several different factors. First is the availability of resources, in this case her collection of trade books and novels, many of which belonged to her personally. She had been gathering books for several years: purchases from book fairs, gifts from students, library giveaways, and purchases for classes on teaching literacy. The same collection had existed the previous year, but she had opted for a whole class unit on *Pig Man*. That brought students directly into the planning process. Because she has students who return to her setting, she won't repeat a unit she did the previous year. Embedded here is the assumption that students will receive instruction around content that is new to them. Whether she would rather implement the unit she designed the year before instead of this year's unit is immaterial, even though it would have been new for some of the students. The students who had returned played a significant role in her decision to design something new. At another point in our conversations, Renee explained that even when a student arrives new "in the middle of third period, you have to have something for them to do." Her work is organized such that she accepts responsibility for ensuring that students have work to do. Here is evidence of the kind of control mechanisms outlined by McNeil's (1986) work on


reproducing institutional norms in classrooms. Repeating a unit would be inconsistent with this organizing frame of a teacher's responsibilities. In the last sentence in the excerpt, she tells me that there is "always" something going on that she has to consider. These word choices reveal important clues about how she positions her decision making. Fairclough (2003) describes a statement like this one as a statement of fact, a statement about what is (p. 109). The use of the word always invokes Halliday's (2013) description of usuality, a function of modality that positions the existence of "something going on" with certainty for the speaker. These negotiations are not things that Renee can, might, or choose to consider; they are issues and people that "you *have* to consider" (emphasis added).

Renee's negotiations around students were corroborated in conversations with Marie and Marshall. The field notes excerpt introduced above (about their unit on analytical writing) included a similar comment about how students impact the process. "They describe it as a 'hard' skill for students to learn and they plan to put a big emphasis on 'say something and back it up,' as Marshall describes." At least one factor in their decision about what to start teaching was what they had learned from their students' work in previous years. The importance of content and how students are positioned to know or learn it as context for instructional practices is evident in the literature as well. Talbert and McLaughlin (1993a) contend that teachers list subject area and students as the two most significant contexts for understanding their work (p. 61). Marie and Marshall reflect this pattern in the presentation they give to students when introducing document based questions. As they explain "the what" to their students, in this case a DBQ, they connect to the work of professional historians, positioning the knowledge and skills students will

learn in a broader academic conversation. It is interesting that in the last line they explain that this is the work that “real historians do.” Implicit here is the idea that the unit achieves at least part of its legitimacy through its relationship to professional work that could extend from courses like theirs.

**What is a DBQ?**

- In writing a document-based essay you essentially do what professional historians do. You assess and analyze primary sources; combine that analysis with what you already know about the subject identified in the question; come up with a thesis; and write an argumentative essay combining your knowledge and evidence from the documents. This is what real historians do! Cool!



*Figure 5.* A slide from Marshall’s and Marie’s PowerPoint that explains the rationale for learning how to write a document-based essay. Note the connections to the academic expectations of the discipline and the work of real historians.

If we studied these comments and descriptions through the lens of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), gatekeeping (Thornton, 1991), or knowledge of context (Grant, 2010), we would interpret the data as understanding and expertise that teachers gleaned over time and leveraged (or not) when making planning decisions. However, if we shifted the lens to interaction and negotiation, we would discover that it mattered which students were in the room, in the present moment AND in previous years, what those students had to say, and how those students responded to instruction in previous years. Such an interpretation opens the possibility that different students could and would catalyze different interactions and different paths of planning negotiation, the kind of “students as context” approach posed by McLaughlin and Talbert (1993).

Shifting the lens this way posed significant implications for a key concept of my investigation – relations of power. Teachers certainly had power over determining what to teach, a kind of institutional background knowledge that conveyed competence, in fact. Yet, if we recognized that students held some power to impact the process through their actions and words, then teachers no longer occupy an exclusive position of power from which to open and close the gate. Instead, both students and teachers had roles to play in planning what to teach.

Marshall and Marie went on to introduce a new relationship to manage in their decisions around what to teach. Because they teach eighth grade, students move to the high school in the year after they leave Marshall's and Marie's classrooms. Through a professional learning opportunity in the grant and other division activities, they had opportunities to dialogue with their colleagues in the social studies department at the high school. The excerpt from my field notes shows the importance of these conversations in Marie's and Marshall's decisions about what to teach.

While Marie and Marshall identified analytical writing as an area of need that should be developed for the purpose of improving students' performance on assignments throughout the year, they also made several references to their colleagues at the high school. In dialogues with two different teachers they heard about students' weaknesses in writing and Marie talked about "holes" in writing education. According to Marshall and Marie, of particular concern that they got "straight from" one of the high school teachers was students' skills for connecting arguments to the thesis. Document based questions were part of the curriculum for honors classes in ninth grade history and both teachers and former students had commented to Marie and Marshall on the challenges of completing them successfully.

In the excerpt above, several assumptions are embedded that position Marshall's and Marie's decisions in larger context with colleagues. First, they felt an expectation to prepare their students to be successful in high school history. Embedded here was the assumption that work they did with their students in the eighth grade would be potentially

important to their success in later grades. Perhaps more importantly, they accepted responsibility for filling “holes” in the writing curriculum that could make work more challenging for their students this year and beyond if not addressed. Marshall and Marie were connected into a larger of system of colleagues, some even beyond the school walls, each of whom shared responsibility for moving students forward in their skills (analytical writing in this example). Embedded in their dialogues was the assumption that students’ experiences across grades were supposed to build on each other, even though formal mechanisms for coordinating such work did not exist. Instead, it was through informal crossing of paths with high school teachers that these threads were woven.

For Chris, decisions about what to teach are made directly from the Standards of Learning. An introductory PowerPoint presentation that he shares with his classes on the first day of school explains the standards and their role in planning for the course. The slides are shown below (and posted on the classroom wall as well). The interaction I see reflected here is a “dialogue” between Chris and the standards document.

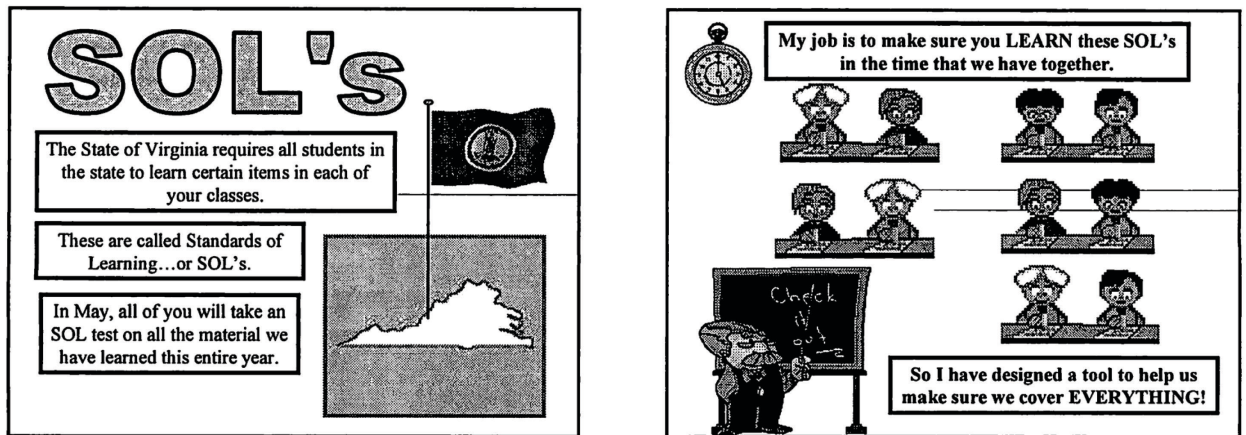


Figure 6. Slides from the PowerPoint that Chris shares with his students in the first days of school. Note the emphasis on bringing the voice of the state into the daily work of the classroom.

As Dorothy Smith (2005) explains, texts and readers can be positioned in conversation as the reader activates the text, constructs meaning, and responds. It's very possible that readers will construct meaning and respond in ways that are not exactly as the author had intended, hence the metaphor of dialogue as meaning is shaped and re-shaped (p. 105). Chris's role in the dialogue is to interpret and simplify the language and arrange it for a student audience. His explanation includes threads that resonate with the language and assumptions of the Preface to the Standards of Learning allowing it an important role in the dialogue of his instruction, in this example, around what will be taught. The preface states that "The History and Social Science Standards of Learning, amplified by the Curriculum Framework, define the essential understandings, knowledge, and skills that are measured by the Standards of Learning tests" (VDOE, 2008a, p. iiiii). It goes on to explain that the Curriculum Framework outlines the knowledge and skills that "students need to master." As Chris shares these ideas to his students, he reflects similar language: the state has identified "certain items" that "all students in the state" are required to learn. Further, "all of you [the students] will take an SOL test at the end of the year on all of the material we have learned this entire year." This direct link between the content of the standards and the SOL assessment program mirrors the connection described above in the preface to the standards.

Chris's copy of the curriculum framework is hole-punched, in a blue binder, and the pages are wrinkled from use. It was the only tangible resource that he pulled out during our conversations and he mentioned that he pulls his content from the Standards of Learning and Curriculum Framework at three different times in our first conversation. The checklist that he explained in the PowerPoint is organized into units that refer



directly to the corresponding standards. The list's units are as follows: Geography, Moving West, etc. Thus, the evidence indicates that Chris has engaged with these documents during his planning processes. However, the metaphor of dialogue for this process is an apt one. When I examined Chris's checklist, I looked for patterns in language and organization. I found that his overview is not an exact duplication of the standards and framework. Instead, in some cases, he has reorganized the curriculum into units that group similar content. Figure 7 depicts one example. For the dense standard USII.3a-e, Chris has identified Growing Cities as the broad theme and then created three smaller units that organize the content topically around immigration and discrimination (3b), the rapid scaling up of industry (3b, d), and the Progressive Era (3b, c, e). The essential knowledge in the framework is regrouped accordingly. Because he taught the forced relocation of American Indians first, he moved discrimination against Chinese and Irish immigrants ahead of his unit on reasons for increased immigration and the rapid urbanization of cities. That kept the conceptual unit outlined in the framework together but ordered it to suit Chris's sequence. While protecting the examples grouped together in the framework to explain cultural interactions and conflicts, interestingly, he taught discrimination against Chinese and Irish immigrants outside of the unit on immigration and industrialization that would have contextualized these conflicts. These shifts in the content's order position Chris as an active participant who is making meaning through his dialogic interaction with the framework. However, the framework is also a strong voice in the dialogue as the content listed is an abbreviated but exact match for the essential knowledge articulated in the framework. No detail outlined in the framework goes unrepresented on the checklist. No items on the checklist were deviations from the

essential knowledge articulated in the framework. Interestingly, the essential skills outlined in the framework are not included in any of his checklists.

Essential Knowledge from the 2001 VDOE Curriculum Framework (USII.3b)		Chris's Checklist for USII.3b Units
<p><b>Essential Knowledge</b></p> <p><b>Reasons for increased immigration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hope for better opportunities</li> <li>• Religious freedom</li> <li>• Escape from oppressive governments</li> <li>• Adventure</li> </ul> <p><b>Reasons why cities developed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialized industries including steel (Pittsburgh), meat packing (Chicago)</li> <li>• Immigration from other countries</li> <li>• Movement of Americans from rural to urban areas for job opportunities</li> </ul> <p><b>Inventions that contributed to great change and industrial growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lighting and mechanical uses of electricity (Thomas Edison)</li> <li>• Telephone service (Alexander Graham Bell)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Essential Knowledge</b></p> <p>Rapid industrialization and urbanization led to overcrowded immigrant neighborhoods and tenements.</p> <p><b>Efforts to solve immigration problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlement houses, such as Hull House founded by Jane Addams</li> <li>• Political machines that gained power by attending to the needs of new immigrants (e.g., jobs, housing)</li> </ul> <p><b>Interaction and conflict between different cultural groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian policies and wars               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reservations</li> <li>– Battle of Little Bighorn</li> <li>– Chief Joseph</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Discrimination against immigrants               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Chinese</li> <li>– Irish</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges faced by cities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenements and ghettos</li> <li>• Political corruption (political machines)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Indian Policies</b></p> <p>Reservations</p> <p>Little Bighorn</p> <p>Chief Joseph</p> <p>Discrimination</p> <p>Chinese</p> <p>Irish</p> <hr/> <p><b>Growing Cities:</b></p> <p><b>Immigration (USII.3b)</b></p> <p>Reasons to Immigrate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Religion</li> <li>2. Government</li> <li>3. Adventure</li> </ol> <p>Ellis Island</p> <p>Tenements</p> <p>Ghettos</p> <p>Political Machines</p> <p>Settlement Houses</p> <p>Jane Addams</p> <p>Hull House</p> <hr/> <p><b>Industry (USII.3b,d)</b></p> <p>Steel-Pittsburgh</p> <p>Packing-Chicago</p> <p>Urbanization</p> <p>Rockefeller-oil</p> <p>Carnegie-steel</p> <p>Ford-cars</p> <p>Advertising</p> <p>Low cost production</p> <p>Materials</p> <p>Energy</p> <p>Inventions</p>

Figure 7. The checklist that Chris uses to guide his planning and his students' self-assessment of their learning (on right) is closely correlated to the essential knowledge found in the curriculum framework provided by the VDOE (on left). Arrows indicate how Chris organized the content to suit his unit plan.

As illustrated in Figure 7, the connections between how Chris determines “the what” for his instructional planning and the curriculum framework are direct and dense, positioning this document as an important point of interaction for Chris.

The interactional discourses and representations of other voices that I found in the work of the other participants did not evidence themselves in Chris’s processes for determining what to teach; instead they are much more deeply embedded in his conversations about “the how” of his instructional plans.

### **Defining “The How”**

While the next step in the planning process introduced more variability in planning processes among the participants, the activities were grounded by the same purpose: to establish a viable method for conveying the information to students. As I analyzed transcripts, documents, and other materials, it became evident that every piece of evidence around “the how” of instructional design was caught up in interaction, dialogue, and context. Nevertheless, it is useful to provide a brief definition of “the how” in order to more explicitly map it into interaction.

Lesson planning emerged as a highly complex and fluid process that was not built on specific forms or documents. Only Chris produced a lesson plan document for my review, but it was created the prior year because the school was undergoing a review process that required it (which I will return to later). For my participants, all veteran teachers of at least three years, lesson plans did not need to exist as nouns. Instead, planning was a process of dialogue and activity. As outlined in the methodology, I sketched the story of each planning process. When I compared the stories to each other

and the preliminary layer of coding in my transcripts and observation notes, several types of activities emerged to constitute planning for “the how” of instructional design.


Determining what part of the content would be told explicitly to students included drafting or choosing information to put into a PowerPoint or on a notes sheet. Chris, Marshall, and Marie used PowerPoint as a primary vehicle for supporting direct instruction to students. (See Appendix C for examples from each.) Marshall, Marie, and Renee developed thorough sets of written instructions that conveyed content in a blend with activity instructions for students. (Examples collected as data included, but weren’t limited to, an analytical writing guide, a current event instructional sheet, and a reading log with prompts. See Appendix D.)

Paired closely with these decisions about what to put in writing for students were considerations about what opportunities students would need to process the stated information in order to practice and make meaning. Embedded in Marie’s and Marshall’s PowerPoint on analytical writing were specifically designated opportunities to stop and

**Here is an example of how  
NOT to write an introduction:**

- **Mommy and Daddy, I've been thinking a lot about curfews lately. Many of my friends are now allowed to stay out later and I think it's time you thought about extending my curfew.**

**Where has this writer gone wrong?**



*Figure 8.* Note the opportunity for students to read the sample and decide what element of the writing instruction is missing. This time to practice or process was a common element in teachers’ designs.

practice, silently, on paper, and out loud (see Figure 8). They also required students to complete an outline for their first analytical writing essay that paralleled the structure and examples that Marshall and Marie taught through the PowerPoint.

Similarly, Chris prepared PowerPoint presentations that chunked information into segments and included “quick notes” slides to prompt students to take notes (which would be assessed through notebook checks). The quick notes summarized the content that he narrated and illustrated in each chunk of content and served as study guides for students later. Processing opportunities also included activities that required students to act in some way with key information, like the task here to put an immigration story into chronological order. Additionally, Chris assigned readings and accompanying processing

The image shows two sample processing opportunities. The first is a 'QUICK NOTES' slide with a title in a stylized font. It contains two sections: 'Reasons people immigrated to the United States:' with a numbered list of three items (Religious Freedom, Government Freedom, Adventure) and 'Immigrants also came for:' with a numbered list of four items (JOBS!, Education, PEACE!, Other Family members came first). The second is a '10/21 Chronological Order' activity. It has a title and a sub-instruction 'Put this Immigration story in order.' followed by eight numbered events (A-H) and a vertical column of letters (B, D, A, C, F, G, H, E) for students to place next to the events.

10/21 Chronological Order	
Put this Immigration story in order.	
A. Millions arrive at Ellis Island	B
B. Immigrants leave their homeland in Europe.	D
C. New arrivals are inspected and interviewed.	A
D. Thousands travel in steerage class	C
E. As many as 10 people share a room in a tenement!	F
F. Those with criminal records are sent back to Europe.	G
G. Immigrants move into cities.	H
H. Immigrants move into ethnic neighborhoods.	E

Figure 9. Sample processing opportunities in Chris’s designs. The quick notes (left) were Chris’s method for communicating to students what they should write down in their notebooks and study later. The chronological order activity (right) required students to put the events they had heard about into an accurate sequence.

activities that were usually sets of comprehension questions that he authored to draw students to key or interesting content. (See Appendix E for an example.) Renee created checklists for each student to work through as they participated in an integrated social studies and English unit, usually independently (also included in Appendix E). A review of these materials revealed instructional steps that directed students toward reading text,

completing logs, drawing sketches, making connections, and completing vocabulary work. Written task prompts required students to make meaning from the text they chose and to analyze historical fiction as a genre.

As units evolved as sets of activities for providing new information and opportunities for students to think and practice, another kind of task emerged. Most teaching and processing moments required supporting material of some kind: assignments, content outlines, worksheets, readings, primary source documents, etc. That meant an often extensive amount of work locating, creating, or revising the necessary materials so that they closely matched the content and intent of each teacher's design. For each of the units I studied with the participants, only a minimal amount of supporting material was implemented exactly as it was designed by an external publisher or author. Chris spent hours building original PowerPoint presentations with animated stories, videos, games, and mnemonic activities (see Appendix C). The adopted text available for seventh grade did not include a lot of ancillary materials and Chris expressed his concern that students couldn't get exactly what they needed to know from the text. So, he created study guides for particular chapters of the text that attended to what students needed to know. When he used videos, he created his own sets of questions that served to elicit key information from students. Chris designed his own scavenger hunts to use with a set of classroom atlases (an example is included in Appendix F). Lessons were steeped in materials, all of which were designed by Chris over time. When searching for an activity to use in a lesson, he most often went to his own file cabinet or hard drive. The process of creating all of these resources involved intensive searches of external resources which I will detail later when "the how" is positioned in interaction. Marshall, Marie, and

Renee followed the same pattern. Workbooks, activity menus, study guides, PowerPoint presentations, reading logs, and much more were authored or adapted by participants. Renee had collected binders of activities to correlate with each standard, some of which included third-party materials collected from various publishers. However, they were mixed in with original materials and re-organized so that together the collection evidenced understanding of the SOL content and could be completed by students working fairly independently. She also created her own activity menus that offered students choices of how to process their learning. (Appendix F includes an example for the historical fiction unit.) Marshall and Marie spent considerable time and effort collecting resources and organizing them into layered projects for their students. (See Appendix I for an example of their document based question project on voting rights.) They exchanged dozens of emails passing iterations of various lesson resources back and forth for review and revision. (A sample email exchange is included in Appendix G.)

Another layer of the instructional design process for every unit was establishing procedures for assessing learning. Marshall and Marie put a strong emphasis on rubrics as part of their assessment planning. As discussed earlier, they had participated in conversations with high school teachers about gaps in student skills for analysis and writing. So, they designed a writing-intensive set of instructional experiences that featured an analytical writing assessment with each unit. Rubrics were an important part of the assessment process and revealed a deep intertextuality with the instruction provided because Marshall and Marie developed their own parallel to the unit's construction. For example, the mini-lessons for analytical writing focused on these topics: Introduction and Thesis (were to answer to the question), The Body of the Essay

(three paragraphs that each represented a point of analysis with topic sentence that referenced the thesis and supporting evidence), The Conclusion (referred back to the thesis), and Public Speaking. Throughout each mini-lesson, students were offered opportunities to correct sample errors and practice the conventions of language that Marie and Marshall wanted them to adopt. Notice how all of these mini-lessons were evidenced in the rubric for the final assessment rubric (Figure 10). Appendix H includes the rubric for their document-based question project which reflects similar goals and structure.

**Essay Assignment #1 Voting Age  
Rubric**

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>
Thesis statement clearly answers the essay question	15
Each paragraph includes a topic and concluding sentence	15
Thesis statement is supported in body of essay through the use of evidence	15
Essay is analytically written with attention paid to grammar and spelling	15
Oral presentation is memorized and covers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Answers the question</li> <li>▪ Covers three main points</li> <li>▪ Concludes</li> </ul>	15
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>75</b>

*Figure 10.* Marie’s and Marshall’s rubric used criteria drawn straight from their PowerPoint presentation that they used to teach students what skills they wanted evidenced in their writing.



Chris designed multiple choice unit tests, open book quizzes, and frequently used PowerPoint presentations to administer quick quizzes of one to five questions. Many of his games and activities were designed as formative assessments to determine what students had learned. Renee collected and assessed the work that students completed as part of their independent projects. It was important to each participant that they be able to document what students had learned and where they needed additional practice. They did so through assignments, marking incorrect answers on discrete tasks or using rubrics to assess more complex work. (For full examples of assessment tools, see Appendix H.)

The series of activities each participant designed had to be matched to available time. As Renee shared, “If you start a project, I try to make it within a week time, because that gives me ten class periods and that is a great week of getting ten in.” Renee could call the week a “great” one if she was able to implement ten periods of instruction for social studies and language arts. With interruptions by counselors and other service providers, new students entering class, etc., she often faced the challenge of lost time. Her unit on historical fiction was more open and flexible in how students moved through it, so imposing a time frame of ten periods compartmentalized the work and prevented it from becoming too diffuse over time. Calendars, checklists, and dialogues were part of the process of determining how much time could be allocated and what activities would fall away if necessary. Over time, Chris had developed a variety of instructional materials related to each unit and he created a calendar that sequenced his choices into appropriate amounts of time and topic. Marshall and Marie used a web-based calendar to organize their lessons and to share topics and deadlines with families.

Taken together, observing instructional design in action revealed a fluid and iterative integration of several types of activities: determining what information would be told explicitly, creating opportunities for practice and exploration which would support student learning, writing and adapting the relevant materials, structuring a plan for assessment, and matching the instructional sequence to available time. Watching teachers plan and hearing their stories about units they had developed revealed that planning was a fluid and iterative process. None of them evidenced a linear routine of stable and predictable steps that recurred in the same sequence for each unit. Instead, participants moved back and forth between types of activities, creating and revising, and sometimes planning several units at once. Marie and Marshall exchanged emails throughout the last month of school and over the summer as they revised and planned three different units to open the year and a unit that would be taught much later in the year. One day their communication would focus on the rubric for the writing assessment and the next it would be the sound and visuals for the PowerPoint. While each teacher popped around the planning process as ideas occurred to them or new resources caught their attention, there was a predictable cycle shared in common across all contexts.

Planning was a set of practices that happened in advance of the unit. Most, if not all, of the unit's content was negotiated in advance of the unit's implementation. Marie and Marshall worked intensively on four different units over the summer. Similarly, Renee shared that she was contracted ten days before the year started and used that time to go through each of her units determining what needed to be supplemented or revised based on students' interactions with the activities in the previous year. Chris revised his existing materials well before the unit so that they would be ready to implement, a pattern

further revealed by the lesson plan frames from the previous year that were just marked with adjustments to sequencing, etc.

Monday 9/18	Tuesday 9/19	Wednesday 9/20	Thursday 9/21
<b>SOLs/Objectives:</b> Constitution Day	<b>SOLs/Objectives:</b> USII.3 Moving West Gold and Riches	<b>SOLs/Objectives:</b> USII.3 Moving West Land	<b>SOLs/Objectives:</b> USII.3 Moving West Railroads Cattle New Life
<b>Materials:</b> Pencil, BrainPop, Schoolhouse Rock, Notebook	<b>Materials:</b> Pencil, SOL Checklist, Notebook	<b>Materials:</b> Pencil, SOL Checklist, Notebook, Scavenger Hunt	<b>Materials:</b> Pencil, SOL Checklist, Notebook
<b>Procedures:</b> 1. Jumpstarter 2. Schoolhouse Rock- Constitution <i>Elbow Rm.</i> 3. <del>BrainPop-Bill of Rights</del> 4. <del>BrainPop Quiz</del> 5. Vocabulary 6. Checks Please <i>Cover page</i> <i>Chap 11</i>	<b>Procedures:</b> 1. Jumpstarter 2. Gold PwPt. 3. Homework 4. Checks Please <i>Elbow Room</i>	<b>Procedures:</b> 1. Jumpstarter 2. Stamp HW 3. Land PwPt. 4. <del>Atlas Scav. Hunt</del> 5. Checks Please	<b>Procedures:</b> 1. Jumpstarter 2. RR, Cattle, New Life PwPt 3. <del>Audio book Ch 13</del> 4. HW 5. Checks Please <i>Atlas Scavenger Hunt</i> <i>Quiz</i>

Figure 11. Chris’s adjusted plan for the week. For all participants, the process of matching instruction to available time was an important phase of planning. Activities were carefully sequenced and arranged to make the most of time.

When I asked Chris how the addition of new content at the front of his chronology would impact his planning for the opening of the year, he pointed me to an existing PowerPoint and unit on moving west that he would expand to include developments in the south. He commented that he had already planned to revise the PowerPoint for the upcoming year so that it was more consistent with his newer approach, an evolution toward increasingly visual content. In his words, “As a matter of fact my earliest PowerPoints - I did have words and now for the most part - I want to say that I try to eliminate verbiage and tell stories and animate things exactly as I want things to flow.” It is a revision process he affectionately termed “trying to one up myself.” For all four participants, planning was a

phase of instruction that happened well ahead of implementation. Similarly, assessment was a phase of instruction that happened at the end of an activity or unit, through tests, quizzes, papers, or projects. Sometimes summative unit assessments provided information to teachers that they would use to adjust the unit the following year. Marshall and Marie were trying to improve their students' impact essays based on previous year's responses. Renee pulled an activity out of the binder if it proved a poor match for students.

Given the complexity of the instructional design process, each unit emerged as a web of activities that led to the implementation of classroom instruction. As I studied the work in each of these types of activities, interactions with external factors were ubiquitous and deeply embedded. It is these negotiations that make the work of planning so interesting, complex, and variable.

### **Mapping “The How” Into Interaction**

**Students.** Throughout the instructional design process, participants frequently either implicated or directly referenced students as important points of interaction when planning instruction. Through their comments and designs, I found evidence of how students shaped instructional designs as participants negotiated what they heard from them and how best to meet their needs.

Well before class, Chris developed PowerPoint presentations that told a key story like the relocation of American Indians or the rise of big business (through visuals and animation) and that story provided the structure for organizing the lesson hooks, key content, student notes, and memory or review games that transform the story into a

lesson. He collected both cartoon, self-illustrated, and historical images to interest the students. He explained the importance of story in his planning in our conversation:

I guess one thing, that after teaching history, I believed in it. I actually start the year with a top ten list. Day 1, the Top 10, David Letterman kind of thing. You put on a goofy tie and microphone. Have guests in class and then I do a top 10 list why you learn history. And one of them is storytelling because I guess my honest belief is that, you know what, you say you hate history, well that's baloney, because everybody tells stories. You told a story 'what happened yesterday,' you tell stories, engage in stories, that's conversation. It's human nature. Well that's really what history is.

Chris was speaking through the lens that story was an excellent way to frame history and that performance made those stories even more compelling to the audience (so put on a goofy tie). By analyzing Chris's comments through an interactional lens, I could move beyond his "honest belief" around narratives to see another contextual (and external) factor that was embedded in his dialogue. As he's explaining the importance of story, his discourse invoked a group of students who say they "hate history" and to whom he must offer genuine reasons (ten of them) for participating in class. (Links to state policy will be examined in the next chapter.) When Chris said, "you know what, you say you hate history," he reshaped the frame and was no longer talking directly to me; instead, he was talking to his students as if they were present for our conversation. He used a series of brief statements of fact that connected these dots: you (the students), stories, human nature, and history. The intended result is to tie students directly to the instruction he intends to provide and offer an argument to students already positioned to "hate history." I observed Chris making similar comments to students during a classroom observation. Embedded here was Chris's assumption that his instruction tapped into stories because they engaged and entertained students, leaving them with the understanding that they liked history. His dialogue framed his narrative approach as an important and effective

one for students, based on feedback he received from them around what they liked about class, not a knowledge base on cognition or learning.

The students' preferences and levels of engagement emerged as an important influence on his decision making during planning as well. As we were reviewing some of his content on Chief Joseph in his westward movement unit, he explained:

I have found that at the beginning it was really cool to see a video clip mixed in with the notes. But as the years progress, that isn't so cool anymore. It's not as handy. Ah, some of them will pay attention and some of them will instantly tune out. If something is engaging, engaging, engaging, and then you throw a video clip at them and then that sort of summarizes everything, I found that that isn't as cool as it used to be.

Here Chris deepened his intentionality around the students when making design choices.

By invoking the language that a practice wasn't "as cool as it used to be," he constructed what Fairclough (2003) would call an evaluative statement that positioned an instructional practice as an undesirable one because students didn't provide the same positive feedback or engagement. He went on to say that "Yeah, sometimes I'll just say just by how I gauge a class, ah we're not going to watch that today, you got the point."

Students were active players in the Chris's moment to moment instructional decisions.

While it is useful to process these decisions as Chris's knowledge about his students or his cognitive capacity to assess engagement, it is also important to frame it as an interactional negotiation. By demonstrating engaged behaviors and providing Chris with positive feedback when they were enjoying themselves, students had some power to shift the path of the lesson. Notice that Chris did not invoke a voice of power, telling students why it was important that they engage or insisting that they follow his direction and participate. Instead, he would intentionally shift gears in the moment and skip a video or

intentionally revise older versions of PowerPoint to “one-up” the ones that had become less novel.

Planning with student voices in mind and issues of relevance were not unique to Chris’s process. Renee’s conversation included such evidence as well. When she was working through her choices for an upcoming unit, she explained how her decision was influenced by her students.

And they're street wise enough to get it and they can handle it. And to be quite honest with you I probably wouldn't do some of these same lessons in a normal school, but they are too experienced that anything else would bore them. In fact, there was a bit of a riot the last couple of days over the simplicity of the lessons, too simple for them.

Her interactions with students in recent days had shaped how Renee would plan and implement the next unit in a way that would not underestimate the experiences of her students and cause them to push against or reject her instruction. Like Chris, she didn’t want them bored or disaffected by the instruction she was attempting to provide. Her discourse did not position herself in a way that she would expect students to engage with or be interested in her instruction simply because she had the authority to design it as she saw fit. Instead, she implied a responsibility to keep from boring her students which would have been the result had she oversimplified the content she was teaching. A few comments later, she went on to describe this negotiation more explicitly and, simultaneously, embeds the assumption that her students have at least some power to direct her decision making and the course of the unit. “So, obviously some of the plans that I've already decided to do are not going to be done because it's too simple, or too Mary Poppins-y for them [Renee laughs].” Her use of the modal adverb “obviously” indicated certainty that her plans would not go forward as intended. Further, the reason

they could not go forward was attributed to the students' perceptions of their simplicity and naiveté (Fairclough, 2003, p. 89). Such instruction would be inconsistent with the complex world these students had to navigate.

While Chris invoked a group of students to whom he could speak directly in the first example about students, Renee went another step and enacted the perspective of her students by directly performing their voices around the relevance of instruction. It had been a challenging week for the site and she wanted to explain how those challenges intersected with her work as a teacher. She told me that she had learned a lot about life that week and when I asked her how so, she responded,

I don't know. Just how they are in a totally different mind. We had four kids committed to ANONYMOUS like for a while today. So it's dealing with that issue of coming in and out, of I'm gonna come in here and teach you – Oh, we're going to read *The Watsons Go To Birmingham* and, you know, let's draw a sketch. You know. To them it's like [adopt student voice] 'Really? We are? No.' [Return to her own voice] You know what I mean?

As I listened to Renee take on her students' dismissal of an activity that would be typical in many classrooms, I could hear her attempting to negotiate the broader and very significant real-world concerns which her students experienced and which impacted their capacity and willingness to engage. Therefore, she decided to focus on historical fiction connected to post-World War II genocide. Her "street-wise" students could handle it and that topic was demanding and complex enough not to warrant students' dismissal of it. Invoking their voices for herself created a sense of her dialogues with them. It was a negotiation with which she still struggled as she turned and waited for a corroborating response from me at the end of her final question, "you know what I mean?" Here again, the students are positioned with a fundamental importance as Renee conceptualized the larger purpose of her instructional designs and teaching.



Drilling down from large questions around relevance and purpose to the daily logistics and specifics of instructional choices revealed students as points of interaction for all of the participants. As I studied Chris's instructional designs for units from moving west, through immigration, to the Progressive movement, his students' voices were implicated throughout. He chose jumpstarter lesson hooks because he knew them to be students' favorites, revised activities and procedures when enthusiasm lagged, and spoke several times about his goal to be entertaining or his "entertainment trigger." Renee adjusted her expectations for her students' writing and accepted what effort they would commit and she made a product menu (see Appendix F) for her unit because her students liked to have some control over how to show what they learned.

Marshall's and Marie's planning process revealed an important emphasis on designing instruction and materials that they hoped would better meet future students' needs for clarity and accessibility. These needs were communicated to them through their present students. As Marie explained in an email to me, "This is how Marshall and I plan- we fix things right after we grade." Marie's words position student performance on activities and assessments as communication from students for how instruction and materials should be improved. Marie did not suggest that they alter, adjust, tweak, or revise their materials; instead she used the verb "fix" which would indicate a need for correction or shoring up the instruction. In this case, students had the power to communicate something that was wrong in their current versions of materials. Marshall and Marie shared the following exchange around students in reference to their opening lessons on writing impact analyses for current events:

Marie: ...I think that this will be a really good way to start current events next year- we will get better second paragraphs (Email, 5/20, 12:11pm).

Marshall: ...This looks awesome and will be helpful to our sanity and maybe, just maybe the students will use it (Personal Communication, 5/20/09).

Embedded here were several assumptions. Students, through their work, indicated that determining the proposed impact of the current event on the world (in second paragraphs) was still a problematic skill for many of them. Marie and Marshall accept that communication as an issue for themselves to address through future instruction. They also predict that revisions to their instruction will impact the quality of communication and support for the skill, thereby improving second paragraphs. They exchanged emails with each other with several iterations of the supporting materials attempting to define different kinds of impact in ways that students would be able to access. The resulting materials reflected a compromise between what Marshall and Marie knew about the learning target and what they thought students would understand. For example, Marshall conceptualizes a definition for impact and then modifies it because “No way they would know that hell I was talking about.” What was particularly interesting in the exchange above was that Marshall named the interaction with students explicitly and positioned them with the power to use the materials or not. While Marshall’s wry sense of humor could not be reflected through email, his comment mirrored a variety of informal conversations he and Marie had (between themselves and among others) about how students respond to various kinds of activities, requests, and instruction. They were not passive recipients of teachers’ decisions; they were actors with the power to shape how teachers designed instruction and materials. Teachers certainly have the power to create something, “And maybe, just maybe the students will use it.”

If looking through the lens of sophisticated facets of teacher knowledge, this evidence revealed insights into what participants knew and understood about their

contexts. Renee had learned that choice was important to keep her diverse students engaged and behaving respectfully. Chris knew that keeping students engaged through entertaining and technologically enhanced stories that unfold on the screen would accomplish his outcomes. Marie and Marshall recognized the importance of equipping their students with skills for future schooling. However, that is only one dimension for understanding these negotiations. When the data are framed as evidence of negotiated outcomes, students become visible as they impact the decisions of their teachers. Participants' discourses did not discursively construct a landscape in which they could just tell students what to do based on their own priorities and wishes. Instead, they invoked assumptions about students' power to shape decisions. For Marshall, a teacher could make an instructional opportunity, but it remained to be seen if students chose to adopt it. Renee framed students' voices refuting instruction that oversimplified the complicated world in which they were navigating. Opening ways to see the push and pull of negotiation in the planning process adds complexity to the relations of power in a classroom. While the participants certainly held a position of privilege and power over their students, with the capacity to determine what would be taught and how, their language did not construct an exclusive hold on such power. Rather, it revealed a shifting context of relations that caught them up in negotiations with their students.

**Available tools and materials.** The instructional units that I studied with teachers implicated a dense set of tools and materials in their production. The availability of projectors, SMARTboards, computer stations, software, textbooks, reference books, novels and trade books, newspapers (print and online), paper, and even scissors and glue were part of teachers' contexts and therefore impacted the decision making process.

Norms around such resources were never far from the planning negotiations that teachers undertook every day.

The evolution of Chris's quick note routine was deeply embedded with references to tools and materials. Years before my study, Chris used a note-taking routine with students that was developed by Teachers Curriculum Institute and published through their History Alive! course materials. While he generated the content, he followed a formatting principle that instructed students to put teacher directed content (notes and input) on the right side of a notebook and processing activities and student writings on the left side. By the time we worked together on this study, he had adopted a new routine.

They used to keep a spiral bound notebook, I kinda followed all the guidelines with that. And I got sick and tired of the glue sticks, I got sick and tired of trying. It almost seemed to me, a great idea/theory but trying to make a very specific activity fit exactly what was on the other side of the page every time, I didn't know how practical that was for me. So I kinda went through a phase where number one our school kinda went to the binders. So I said, you know what, good I'm gettin' rid of glue sticks. So that kinda initiated the scrap the right/left entirely out. Then I started using this tool [puts hand on projector] I was able to get this. I don't know if this is three or four years I have had a projector. So I started to design PowerPoints that more told stories and then I showed you the pattern of how the quick notes page. And then I designed a notes page. I basically designed the actual notes page. I figured that's better than a blank white sheet of paper because a lot of them didn't have a flow.

When I analyzed this account through the lens of available tools and materials in his school and classroom contexts, it became evident how those factors could impact decision making. In this short explanation of his quick notes, Chris referenced the challenges of a specific notebook format, management concerns with glue sticks, the possibilities made available by a new computer projector, the power of a software application to convey the stories that were the foundation of history, and a note-taking page he developed that suited the instructional decisions made possible by the projector

and software (and which he made available to students using a printer and copier). What looked on the surface like a simple routine was actually the product of an evolution in Chris's negotiations with managing resources (and thereby instructional time) efficiently for himself and his students. (The pressing need for efficiency and managing time will be addressed in the next chapter.) While Chris had a partiality to story in previous years and had already been creating intricate hand-drawn visuals to support those stories, it was the new availability of PowerPoint and a projector which made it possible for him to use those routines to frame his entire instructional design. Through these tools, his lesson hooks, stories, visuals, memory games, and quick notes could be integrated efficiently into one delivery system that minimized confusion, potential distractions to student attention, and time lost to transition.

I can complicate the account even further when I identify the intersection of available tools with another point of interaction already discussed, the students. (Chris also introduced another point of interaction, the school. I will address it later in the analysis.) Earlier in our conversations Chris had expressed a concern that his students were struggling to know what to write down during lessons and, by extension, what to study and learn as he was sharing his cartoon visuals and stories.

The problem with these is, some of the stuff, I didn't have them write all this down and that seemed to be always an issue. What do I need to write down; what do I need to know? And I tried to strip it down once I started using this tool [Quick Notes Sheet].

With his PowerPoint and projector controlling the flow of information in an organized and sequenced rhythm, his students could interact with the instruction with fewer questions, challenges, or anxiety around what they "needed to know." Chris shared that when he started aligning his PowerPoint notes with the quick note format, "That actually

cut out a lot of confusion immediately.” Here again was the embedded assumption (not unlike Marshall’s and Marie’s) that effective instruction clearly communicated what students needed to know. Student confusion was important communication to each teacher for improving instructional design for which teachers needed to account, as opposed to a natural part of learning new skills. Interestingly, confusion was never framed as a valuable part of the learning process. Instead, there was a deeply embedded assumption that it was their role as competent teachers to prevent and/or minimize it.

Available materials and tools and their intersection with students also emerged in the evidence of Renee’s designs. She had created a menu of activities to offer the students some control in their environment, but the choices were necessarily constrained by what materials she was able to make available to them for two reasons. First, materials had to be closely monitored.

We have limited resources here ‘cause everything has to be counted and packed up. So one of those filing cabinets has all kinds of supplies in there and library book, ahm I don't know, the things that you put the audio in, I put a set in each one. And I can close it and I have physically labeled on each bag how many should be in there. So that's made my life easy.

Renee had to design a system that would make managing colored pencils, pencils, and markers efficient to monitor. Second, she had to make sure that students weren’t accessing tools they weren’t allowed to have, like scissors. So, her product choices necessarily were adapted to minimize those tasks. As she explained, “So any cutting, that's why I hesitate on ever doing this, ‘cause I have to cut everything.” (Here again school occurs as point of interaction, which I will take up later in the analysis.)

Another negotiation for Renee to manage at the intersection of resources and students was the match between them.

...because it's hard for me when they are on first, second grade reading levels to be a good reading teacher because you know first, second grade reading levels are little kid books. And they are not going to do that. They will certainly revolt. Students were not interested in texts that were appropriate for young readers, regardless of the maturity of their own reading skills. The mismatch between available resources and the students' engagement meant that Renee's instructional design had to negotiate the gap and make crossing it accessible to students. Further, her social studies instructional designs had to account for and mitigate reading concerns.

Chris, too, had a concern about a mismatch with his school adopted text. However, the mismatch was with the state curriculum framework rather than the students. As documented in my analysis of "the what," Chris created an instructional tool that served as an assessment inventory to account for any potential gaps between what the students needed to know and what was provided through the text series (the checklist discussed at the introduction of this chapter). He also described during our conversation his reluctance to issue, use, and send the texts home regularly because they were divided into four smaller texts and required an inventory at multiple times during the year. For him, this was an inefficient use of his time with students, particularly for texts that were not well aligned to the curriculum.

Like Chris, Marshall and Marie designed PowerPoint presentations to teach content or skills explicitly and used their text to supplement the primary instructional designs. At a presentation for their colleagues, Marshall and Marie described the potential for their civics curriculum to be dry and boring without an instructional design that tapped into students creative energies. As discussed above in my analysis of how they decide what to teach, replicating or scaffolding up to "real" work in the field was a priority for them as well. Their unit designs were connected to a variety of materials

drawn from external sources. They used newspapers to teach current events, pulled readings from editorials, position papers, and magazines, and created analytical tasks with state and federal laws and case briefs. Marie drew resources she had collected for teaching argumentation with debate teams. They also borrowed ideas from lesson plans created by content specific centers for learning. Ready access to the internet was extremely valuable to Marshall and Marie for collecting these materials.

Gathering, filtering, and aligning resources from the internet were important planning negotiations for all of the participants. Marie searched the web for a “primary document that illustrates that women were required to give up property rights, family money or salary upon being married.” Chris used [animationlibrary.com](http://animationlibrary.com) and the United Streaming repository to gather sound effects, animated graphics, and video clips to enhance his storytelling through PowerPoint. He also searched the web when we wanted a primary source image or document to connect to one of his stories or teaching points or help with a feature of PowerPoint that was troubling him. Renee described a web resource that had been particularly important for her own instructional development ([readwritethink.org](http://readwritethink.org)). I asked her to tell me how she found it.

Browsing about a year ago. ‘Cause last year was the first year I taught English and I needed major help. So I found that website and it was my life source for a few months. And I go back to it every now and then. I’m certainly not as dependent on it as I used to be.

Renee described herself as needing help and knew that she would need to interact with an external resource to get it. She is the only teacher of language arts and social studies in her site, so support would have to come from a more extended community. Her comments also indicated a fading of support as she became more certain and expert in her own practice. While resources like this one were valuable, rarely did they yield



something that could be used as it was originally created. As Renee explained, “The beginning of the story for day 2, I actually took that off of readwritethink.org, National Council for English Teachers, and I just kind of modified it to be my own.” For these kinds of resources to be part of the instructional design process for teachers, they had to be readily and easily accessible in their professional contexts. Because they were available, they expanded the interactions of the teachers beyond the walls of their classrooms. Sometimes they accessed those resources from a position of certainty, like Marie did when she knew exactly what example she wanted from a document and went searching for it. Sometimes they accessed those resources from a position of need, as Renee did when she found herself struggling with an unfamiliar content and needed a “lifesource.” Chris depended on broad searches for uncovering interesting images that would add appeal for students and targeted searches of specific resources to animate his stories. Participants’ interactions beyond the classroom walls were not limited to online or digital resources. Professional networks also created additional layers of interaction beyond the classroom and school that helped shape instructional design processes for each of the participants.

**Professional networks.** Given the significance of PowerPoint as a primary tool in Chris’s design and instructional delivery, we explored how he began to move that direction and the story revealed the importance of professional interactions with a colleague. He had “to credit the science guy,” a colleague on the faculty. As Chris described, his colleague

Got in the teaching profession and was really into technology. When I was first here we didn’t have a lot of technology. I had an overhead projector pretty much. I had my own personal computer we did grades on and email. And that’s pretty

much all we had – I mean I had – when I started in the mobile unit. Mark got a projector through a grant and he started putting stuff on the screen. Here also was evidence that available resources and tools impacted the process of instructional design. Introduction to a new technology by a colleague, both of which are interactional factors, shifted the instructional design processes in a new direction. The interactions initiated a new dialogue for Chris around how instruction might be delivered. Chris went on to explain his thinking when he was first exposed to the use of PowerPoint in the classroom.

And I'm like man that's pretty cool. But the problem, I thought, was if you're just going to throw words on it, which was how he started, that's no better than an overhead projector. So I think it was kinda an innate thing, like, man I could tell stories and motions. And I basically became infatuated with the PowerPoint. I guess that's not tradition. As a matter of fact, my earliest PowerPoints, I did have words and now for the most part I want to say that I try to eliminate verbiage and tell stories and animate things exactly as I want things to flow.

The focus on narratives was clear in this excerpt and Chris attributed the match between his skills and priorities with what PowerPoint offered him as an “innate” connection.

While Chris quickly recognized the match between his colleague's technology and his own instructional practices around stories, there was also evidence of the importance of context. His colleague didn't just introduce him to a new technology; he triggered an internal dialogue for Chris around using the technology to detail essential content more effectively in a way that moved beyond the explicit detailing of notes which simply replaced an overhead projector with a computer projector. Observing his colleague's instruction made visible this point of tension and shifted Chris toward a more animated and visual method for using the technology in keeping with his priority on entertaining his students. It was impossible to predict how Chris's instruction and materials might have evolved had his colleague not introduced him to PowerPoint and opened the door

for the introduction of projectors in the school more widely. Even if they had come eventually, the development of Chris's instructional design as an evolution of his negotiations with content, the students, school, and colleagues began to be impacted the moment he began exploring with his neighbor down the hall. The positive outcomes of these negotiations continued to be affirmed as Chris was consulted by a variety of colleagues, even at the division level, on how to replicate his work. These relations of power will be addressed more deeply in the next chapter.

Like the interaction described above, Chris's discourse embedded negotiations with colleagues around the work of instruction generally rather than content specifically for his own planning and unit designs. References to formal or informal professional networking were focused on topics like using technology, introducing multiple and varied texts into units, and meeting state benchmarks. My field notes and the interview transcripts around his instructional planning included only a few references to other colleagues. They were with social studies teachers in other schools through his work on a professional learning grant team, with a fellow referee who worked at a neighboring university and had expertise in PowerPoint, and with other teachers in his department. (He also referenced leadership which I address in the analysis of coordinating frames for his work.) In contrast to Marshall and Marie, Chris saw the instructional design process as one for him to enact independently, sometimes drawing on the experiences and lessons learned in places outside his classroom. He was the only adult in the building teaching social studies in his grade level and he never identified any easy mechanisms for collaborating more closely beyond his school. In the absence of these conversations, his primary dialogic partner was his well-used curriculum framework, and given the

discourses in his school context, these conversations with the state standards were accorded exceptional value. I will analyze these text-reader dialogues much more deeply in the next chapter.

Renee's position was similar to Chris's, as she was the sole teacher of social studies and language arts in her entire school. Her isolation was compounded by the unique layer of teaching multiple contents at the same time in the same room. Only in extremely rare and unique alternative settings were teachers charged with that kind of individualized instruction. When she struggled with helping students make connections to the content in her lesson activities, she ended up seeking out colleagues who knew them better.

Renee: So for me the biggest challenge planning is finding those clicks that I'm too naïve to know. It's almost too...and I have to get on that level, and it's morbid.

Researcher: Making those connections?

Renee: Yes.

Researcher: How do you do it?

Renee: One is mental health counselors are here and I talk to them about certain things.

Here again, the students' needs emerged as an important layer for Renee to negotiate. She positioned herself as "naïve," which embedded an assumption of lacking the experiences which matched those of her students. She felt urgency for filling that gap as she described it her "biggest challenge." In order to figure out how to help her students connect their learning with their prior knowledge and experiences, she sought out the mental health professionals who worked closely with the students and knew them well. Thus, she positioned them with expertise about students' real-life experiences (and their resulting mindsets) that she didn't have and from which she could learn. They could tell her when her examples, analogies, and points of connection were too simple to be real

enough that they would interest her students. Beyond the mental health counselors who could support her learning about her students, the professional interactions in which she engaged around instruction or content would necessarily extend beyond the walls of the school.

To continue to grow her capacity to help her students make connections, Renee leveraged her experiences in graduate school as well. At the time of my research, she was completing a Master's degree with a local university. As she explained, "I have two literacy courses that I'm taking for my masters and I learned a lot about literacy and how to connect to kids, especially these." Here, Renee positioned herself as a learner with a commitment to connecting to her students. By participating in class and applying her learning, she could improve her instructional designs to better serve her students who had varying levels of need around literacy than she had anticipated. She told me that she struggled to support students, who were sometimes many grade levels behind in reading.

But after taking those two courses I learned so much about how to break it up. I mean, because I had to be retaught all that stuff. I mean you're dealing with high school, you expect them to know how and most of them do, but not on...it's so many levels. And I feel like this caters to everybody.

Note that Renee said she decided on strategies because they *catered* to everybody. Her planning decisions were made to meet the requirements of the students, not her own style or preferences. The reading logs Renee shared with me were not independent creations of her imagination; they were produced at the intersection of her graduate class in literacy, her diverse students' needs, and a sample template on the internet that she adapted.

Renee's tests were also about to intersect with her graduate program in addition to some text materials and the standards. She had recently finished a course on assessment and shared:

And as far as making the tests, I've pulled good things out of the book, and things that, really SOL stuff. So, I took a, ahm, assessment class, though, this semester and I'm like OK, now I have to go back and fix all this stuff.

As Marie explained in one of the examples above, teachers received input that required them to make adjustments and revisions to their instructional designs, in other words, to "fix" what they did. Here, Renee described how the expertise of her professor indicated problems with her assessment designs that would need to be resolved. When I asked her to elaborate, she explained,

How you put your responses. Numerical order, alphabetical order, that your matching should always be more answers than questions. I always wanted it to be, you know. He was real big on what you're, you know like Bloom's taxonomy, like display and whatever. He wanted that shown on the test and I'm like that's not what that means. It means can they know the stuff? He was too obsessed with the SOLs, not the framework. I'm like there's a difference. I mean that [points to framework document] gives you the specifics of what the kids have to know. He just never got it. I don't....Ahm, what else? About how you test for validity for reliability.

What was most interesting here was the negotiation in action. While Renee accorded the instructor the power to impact her decision to revise her assessments and make them sounder structurally, she pushed against the instructor's focus on matching the questions to Bloom's taxonomy and the Standards of Learning. Instead, she argued for an alignment with the more specifically detailed framework. However, she did not argue his position on the SOL from her own expertise about what students needed to know.

Rather, she positioned the VDOE curriculum framework against his position, elevating its primacy over any opinions of her own or her instructor's. (I will revisit this statement when I analyze regulating frames in the next chapter.) Renee's comments revealed that

her tests existed at the intersection of questions available through her text and the curriculum framework, and would soon reflect the learning she gleaned from her peers and instructor in her assessment class.

Marshall and Marie were also connected with professionals beyond the school walls. I introduced a first layer of these connections when I analyzed the impact of conversations with high school teachers on their instructional designs. Two high school teachers particularly were important threads in their network. Some of these dialogues were initiated in the course of activities within a professional learning cohort that was grant-funded to enhance the teaching of history in the school division. Through those evening seminars, summer academies, and field trips, Marshall and Marie connected with K-12 colleagues across the division. Further, in my capacity as grant coordinator, I was available to teachers in the division as an instructional support and communication liaison. Marie and Marshall contacted me in this role as frequently as any other participant with requests for support locating primary source documents, connecting with university historians, or selecting challenging yet accessible readings (email communications). When Marie wanted to locate a primary source that served a particular and targeted instructional purpose she contacted me to determine which university history professor had spoken at one of the seminars around the topic. She in turn contacted the speaker and made the following request by email.

I attended your seminar on the history of the women's suffrage movement you presented for the Teaching America History lecture series.

I am working on a writing assignment for my students and I am hoping that you can help me track down a document.

I am looking for a primary document that illustrates that women were required to give up property rights, family money or salary upon being married.

I have looked and looked and haven't come up with anything that I can use. I really need a state law or a court case that would make this loss of property rights

a matter of public policy. I am relating this lack of rights to the argument in favor of gaining the right to vote.

When she found herself facing a resource limitation, she immediately tapped into a division infrastructure that was made possible through her participation. While reaching out to university expertise would always be an option, the mechanisms for doing so and the likelihood of a receiving a helpful response were improved because Marie worked in a division context where these relationships were formalized. For six years, systemic professional learning opportunities were available and necessarily impacted the instructional design landscape for the division each time a participating teacher applied new learning in their own work. Chris and Renee participated as well. Renee expressed how important participating was when she described how isolated she was in her work. “That is where the grant has been great for me, ‘cause I’ll either be inspired by something that they do to create here, or I will get a different perspective. And some encouragement.” As we explored her independent units for American history, I found excerpts from several grant readings (historical sources and monographs) that had been integrated into her lessons for students.

Marshall and Marie had one additional layer of dialogic negotiation that made their design experience fundamentally different; it was their own collaboration with each other. They both taught the same grade level and content area in the same school, across the hall from each other. They co-planned all of their units, but delivered them independently. However, the depth of their collaboration during the planning phase was evidenced in relatively consistent classroom implementations I observed. Every piece of instructional material I gathered from them included contributions from both of them which were negotiated over email and in person as suggestions were passed back and



forth. They sat together in every seminar and brainstormed applications during processing time. Their relationship gave them additional power in the design process because, when they occasionally experienced challenge from parents, they knew that instruction and expectations were held in common elsewhere in the grade level. Parents called and met with them individually when they had concerns, but when they explained them to me, Marshall and Marie's responses were consistently threaded with the pronoun "we." For example, Marshall explained that when a student was frustrated with a grade, "we" explained how important these skills are for students "to have in high school" (field notes). Risk was easier to take because a partner was there taking it, too.

The remaining points of interaction functioned in a more complex way and served to coordinate, organize, and sometimes regulate teachers' work. The school (and its leaders), time, and state policies emerged in the analysis with both implicit and explicit evidence of how they impacted instructional designs, at least in part through power and ruling relations. The next chapter will spotlight these negotiations.

## Chapter 6: Regulating and Organizing Frames

My analysis suggests that regulating frames are very complex and not limited exclusively to the standards but include time and the school as actors, additionally. In fact, it may be the intersection of these interactions that I find most intriguing.

### The School

In both Chris's and Renee's design processes, a set of routines, practices, and norms that coordinated their activities on some level emerged which they labeled discursively as "the school." I have already discussed how Renee organized her menu options for students with consideration for regulations around materials access and inventory. This decision was a departure from her previous choices.

All of that stuff [pointing to a bookcase] are just other resources that I used teaching that I can't necessarily do with these kids. We did interactive notebooks in, ahm, my classroom at Another School Division, and, ahm, the kids had their own art cabinet. You got the scissors and the glue and you knew this is what you had to do. And see here, I can't really do that. They have their notebooks, and they do a lot with it, but I can't do the same things here.

Renee's dialogue revealed a tension between what choices she would like to make and what procedures she must follow to comply with the site's regulations. Her choice of the word "can't" positioned the school's regulations with the power to control her decision in this case. What complicated the interaction further was the shifting certainty in her discourse as the narrative progresses. She moves from "can't necessarily do" to "can't really do" to "can't do." The modal adverbs served to gradually position her less powerfully and the school's policy more and more powerfully. Those shifts, however, did indicate a negotiation rather than a fixed rule within her practice. Her shifts in language (evidenced through the adverbs) paired with her menu choices reflected her willingness to find ways to manage the school's rules in order to find some flexibility in

what she could offer students for demonstrating their learning. (Her willingness to create sets of materials in labeled plastic bags was discussed earlier in the analysis.)

Nevertheless, some school policies were non-negotiable and, therefore, organized Renee's work and planning – she would never offer the students an opportunity to use scissors for their project work.

The school as a coordinating context around resources was evidenced in Chris's design processes as well. Earlier in the analysis I discussed the evolution of his quick notes instructional tool. One of the factors embedded in that story was the decision to adopt binders as the organizing tool for all students several years prior to my work with him. When I asked him how the faculty decided that they preferred binders, the explanation uncovered an interesting process that intersected a principal, students and their families, faculty, and cost efficiency.

Well, some questions with administration, I don't know. There was a thing, three or four years ago. Shawna [the principal] said that kids, I mean that's a never ending problem. Kids not having pencils, supplies, et cetera. It was our job as the school to provide. This was a few years ago that she said that we had to provide if they didn't have it. So we got loads of pencils and I had a closet full of extra binders for kids that didn't have them. And if we were all going to binders then we just got, I don't even know, thousands of binders. And we were able to provide them to any kid for any class. And it was sort of just a universal thing.

He and his colleagues became conflated with the construct of school, as indicated by his comments that it was “our job *as the school*” [emphasis added]. Chris's description discursively constructed an obligation that he asserted with a high level of commitment to the truth (Fairclough, 2003, p. 170). When taken together, “it was our job as the school to provide” and “we had to provide if they didn't have it,” established a reality in which teachers and leaders, acting as the school, were required to ensure that students had the materials to participate fully in their instruction. He did not choose phrases such as “we

should provide” or “we are supposed to provide” which would have evidenced a more moderate commitment. Further, Chris explicitly includes himself within the coordinating context of the school by saying “it was our job as the school.” Note the choice of the pronoun “our” and the continued references to “we” throughout the excerpt. While his discourse established a shared obligation that would direct his work, it also attributed the driving force behind it to an individual principal. Chris made two direct references to that fact – “Shawna said” and “she said that we had to provide.” This tension may have contributed to the less committed final statement that “it was sort of just a universal thing.” “Sort of” created a hedge that softened the certainty around the truth (for Chris) of the decision as “universal” (Hodge and Kress in Fairclough, 2003). This softening suggests some interesting complexity. Were teachers actually free to make another decision or was it not a universal decision because, in reality, it was largely made by one and then implemented by all? While a principal was instrumental in making the decision, it was, nonetheless, the collective group acting as the school which bore responsibility for instruction that went well beyond the classroom walls and reached into the community to provide for its needs.

Regardless of any ambivalence around its universality, Chris followed the direction of his principal and adopted the use of binders, which in turn led him to redesign his process for taking notes (as discussed in the explanation of his quick notes in Chapter 5). Here was evidence that Chris negotiated with the school and its leaders when planning instructional opportunities. Whether there was room for flexibility around this decision was irrelevant. What mattered was that Chris’s discourse did not position himself with the power to choose differently. He had to provide materials and the school

made cost effective binders available; so he provided binders to students who needed them and asked other students to use the same organizing structure. Using this structure opened the door for a different kind of notebook format, which in turn made space for a different instructional design. What was perhaps most interesting was that this complex set of events was reduced to “our school kinda went to the binders” when Chris first recounted the evolution of his quick notes. The layers of coordinating and decision making were obscured by the naming of “school” as the actor until we intentionally explored it further.

Renee’s conversations also referenced the school specifically in her decision making. The site in which she worked established a routinized and controlled environment that would protect the safety of adults and students while attempting to serve students instructionally and therapeutically. All of the students in attendance had a history with the legal system. Renee alluded to institutional norms around control several times. First was the rule that students were not allowed to use scissors at any time. At another point in our conversation, she explained that because no two of her students were ever working on the same content she was struggling to figure out how group activities might work. “So, I do miss doing more social activities. But they just can’t. And really, the General School prefers it being quiet.” Note the school norm that aligned quiet classrooms with order and control and Renee wanted to satisfy the site’s “preference” for quiet. Implicit here was the assumption that Renee risked upsetting the quiet if she implemented a group activity that exceeded norms for volume or resulted in challenging behavior.

Renee did prioritize embedding student choice wherever she could; she offered work menus and book choices and allowed them to vote on the whole group activities she used in language arts. Doing so, however, positioned Renee to push against another institutional norm. As she described, “Well, other teachers made the, ahm, [Renee looks over her shoulder and lowers voice] you're in General School; this is the way it is. That's often the case.” Unfortunately, the mechanisms of control and supervision did not always accomplish a safer environment and incidents did occur that resulted in the removal of students to even more restrictive environments. Renee found the space to work against the norm of control, but only because she could make the choices available in structured and quiet ways that did not attract the attention of other adults in the school by creating problematic student behaviors. In fact, her students reinforced Renee’s negotiation of the norm by presenting more restrained and controlled behavior in her classroom. She explained that another adult in the school faced more student resistance as a result of her hovering and nagging. Embedded here was the implication that offering choices was a successful and viable instructional approach because it limited instances of challenging behavior. While providing students with choices was a well-accepted and even desirable practice in the field, had her students not managed it well or created stress beyond the classroom, Renee may well have chosen to negotiate the landscape quite differently.

The instructional design data I collected from Marshall and Marie pose an interesting departure from the experiences of Chris and Renee. When I analyzed the first set of mapping and coding for the field notes, transcript, emails, and lesson materials, I found no references that explicitly invoked the school (or by extension, its leaders) as

actor or regulator. When I mapped the unit design processes and laid points of interaction into the map, I found a fleeting reference to leadership when they invited an administrator into their classrooms to observe student presentations (Email, 11/16). Offering a new audience for their students was important to them, and such a move would also connect the successes of their classroom with broader discourses in the school and, perhaps, even into the community. I also knew from experiences outside of my research that teachers in the building were expected to make a syllabus and assignment deadlines available to families regularly. That information positioned Marie's and Marshall's webpages and calendars within a broader institutional frame for teachers. The final embedded relation connected to the school was the daily schedule. I will address it in more detail in the next section.

Despite these few examples, I reflected on the data and considered why their experiences with school as coordinating frame might have been so different from the explicit references that laced Renee's and Chris's dialogues. In both instructional contexts for Renee and Chris, there were very particular challenges in the needs of large percentages of students. In Renee's case, the tasks of providing supervision, monitoring, and services to a constantly shifting student population inside the legal system were accomplished through a variety of institutional norms around order and control. In Chris's context, the school was faced with large percentages of students who didn't have the materials teachers felt they needed in order to engage fully with instruction. Newsletters to families throughout the year consistently encouraged involvement in school activities and offered ways of doing so. In both cases, needs were most efficiently met with a broader and coordinated effort, hence the role of the school. Perhaps the

context in which Marshall and Marie worked did not present similar kinds of broad challenge that required coordinated solutions, or perhaps needs existed but were solved more locally within teachers' classrooms or were even overlooked because they didn't represent a critical mass of the students. Additionally, Chris worked in a school that had been in improvement status with the state which meant that a visiting team evaluated the site and made recommendations through the leadership. The principal was charged with implementing changes that would improve student performance and, as a result, teachers were required to submit lesson plans (regardless of their students' performance) and participate in regular meetings to discuss student progress (field notes). Perhaps an implication of school improvement was an expanded role for the school and its leaders as coordinators of teachers' work. These are issues that might merit further investigation.

## **Time**

Closely associated with the organizing frame of the school was its schedule and calendar and how it organized time. Broader negotiation with time was such a basic, consistent, and deeply embedded factor of the instructional design process that it made fundamental the importance of an interactional lens for studying "the how" of planning for learning. Each unit, regardless of who designed it, was correlated to a timeframe. School schedules were designed and implemented by administrators, site based teams, and/or division leadership. While participants were free to organize the time within the schedule as they chose, none of them expressed any power or idea for attempting to shape the schedule itself. Nevertheless, any number of external factors impinged on the available timeframe, requiring teachers to adjust and manage instructional goals.



Renee's discourse around time and planning evidenced these factors explicitly.

She explained,

Yes we do a rotation between three classrooms. And they'll come in here in the mornings for social studies and then in the afternoons for English. And each class period, it's supposed to be 55 minutes, but it's never quite that long 'cause with bathroom breaks, and court, and POs [parole officers] coming in and out, sometimes it takes a little bit longer to get back here."

In Renee's alternative placement setting, movement was intensively controlled and monitored. She was required to supervise a restroom break which necessarily impacted the available instructional time. She planned accordingly for forty minute chunks of instruction rather than the fifty five minutes indicated on her schedule. Her discourse also deepened an institutional norm which required that parole officers have the capacity to move about and see students as needed (and court directed) in a way that made their work efficient but was not necessarily sensitive to the instructional environment. As a matter of practicality, it made sense to Renee to plan proactively for interruptions and time constraints. She went on to say explicitly that units were designed around ten days to build in time for disruptions. "Because normally, you know, between mental health groups and court, no kid's in here ten periods ever during the week."

Renee faced an additional complication around time. She was employed to provide instruction to students removed from their school settings in varying divisions. Some of them were on block schedules, some on modified blocks, and some on period schedules in their home schools. While all of the students were in the same classroom for the same 45-55 minute window, she had to provide enough instruction to compensate for the content they would miss for the duration of their exclusion from the school setting. It was her responsibility to return students to school without gaps in their instruction, whether they had social studies for 45 or 90 minutes, every day or every other day, in

their home schools. After estimating where they were in the sequence of the standards, she had to provide enough independently paced lessons for their content and grade levels to keep them progressing with their peers. She explained,

And the other challenge to that is, you know, we have to figure out if they're on a blocking schedule, are they on a seven period day, period day schedule, are they A-B block? Like what school do you come from?

For Renee, time was an extraordinarily complicating factor to negotiate and she expressed little flexibility in how she could meet those expectations. In her words, "It's just a lot to be prepared for." She spent some time describing the process for inducting new students while coordinating the independent work of each of the other students. Each student had a day sheet (provided by the site) on which she recorded the lesson assignment and progress (correlated to an SOL). She had been managing that complexity more easily when the copy machine was close to her room and visible. Its location allowed her to assign tasks and lessons more fluidly and immediately as soon as students were ready because she could produce whatever materials they needed in the moment. When a new student arrived she could immediately assess where they were and copy the materials that matched their next steps. The process was proving more difficult when I was working with her. "On a day sheet, what I have to do, and this makes it very difficult 'cause before we had a copier and they moved it out there beside the other one. So, I have to plan everything beforehand." Because Renee could no longer craft lessons immediately as new students arrived or current students progressed, it created a greater sense of urgency around having the entire year of independent lessons created in advance. When students arrived she could have one copy readily available and then make what

materials she needed day by day when she didn't have students to supervise. She described the tension she felt about this approach.

And, honestly, it seems, ahm, lazy, but I only plan when I need to because the different, ahm, the difference in the kids per day is so incredibly diverse. It would be silly for me to plan, almost even for tomorrow. I have to literally, I like to plan for days and weeks, that's the way I work. But here you have to plan period by period, day by day. So if I have enough to cover me for tomorrow, ok.

Renee would have preferred to plan strategically for days or weeks at a time and captured the uneasiness she felt when she said it “seems, ahm, lazy.” However, her existing planning practice was to plan for the whole year in advance by filling a binder for each standard with lessons that explicated the content. Then she made materials, assigned lessons, and assessed progress day to day. Her rhythm was directly regulated by the constraints of her school context: the shifting student membership of the class (students entered and exited at any time), the institutionalized requirement for constant supervision (she couldn't use a copier during class), and the school's commitment to provide each student with content that matched the VA SOL content they would have received in their home schools. To that end, she created entire courses based on the essential knowledge in the standards that could be started and implemented as soon as students arrived.

Marie's instructional context was much more straightforward; all of her students were in eighth grade and received 45 minutes of civics instruction every day. Yet, her designs were also embedded with negotiations around a schedule that dictated the length of time available in each period each day and over which she had no power. For example, she wrote in one email, “The writing power point is an attempt to introduce the analytical essay to students- we will go over each section on a different day- that power point represents a collection of mini lessons on writing analytically...” The opening unit was designed to teach students the skills of analytical writing, a key foundational skill

that Marie hoped would lead to better essays throughout the year. Because it was a skill that would require intensive explicit instruction, it had to be divided into a series of mini-lessons in order to accommodate the forty five minute period that the schedule allotted. Fairclough (2003) argues the importance of recognizing what does not get said and that is an important lens here. At no time was there any consideration that some lessons might need to take longer to accommodate practice or that fragmenting the writing process into mini-lessons might reduce instructional efficacy. The school schedule is accepted and planned for implicitly and without question or diversion.

Even when she appeared to bump against the time constraint of the schedule, she accepted and planned accordingly. Marie was working with Marshall to plan their unit on energy policies and sent him a draft of the PowerPoint they would use to introduce a reading to their students. She was concerned that the period wouldn't be long enough to accommodate both the original PowerPoint and the time it would take for students to read the article. She had revised and condensed one from a previous year and she wrote to him, "I want this thing to take like 20 minutes so they can just start reading. What do you think? We can discuss when you get back...." Marie and Marshall had identified a text they liked and in order to ensure that students had adequate time to read and process while fitting the lesson into the period allotment, they adjusted their opening presentation to an appropriate timing. Further, the pacing indicated that the stage needed to be set in in the first lesson and concluded promptly so that students would have enough time to plan their presentations within the time allocated for the unit. She would later describe that pacing:

First two weeks- analytical writing. Essay due same day as their one minute oral presentation.

Third week- Current Event Lesson. Writing an analysis and a summary  
 Two weeks- Intro to US Constitution- History Alive activity  
 One week - Energy reading material that will culminate in an oral presentation by each group. (Email, 8/12/09)

Here was Marshall and Marie’s outline for the first six weeks. All of the participants with whom I worked could articulate a broad rhythm of instruction and time that kept them focused and moving forward and around which they were organized.

Chris, too, organized his units in advance and even shared them with students and families in his course syllabus, making public for the community his intent to ensure that all essential knowledge and skills would be taught over the course of the year.

<b>7th Grade Social Studies</b>			
<b>Grading Period</b>	<b># of Periods</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>SOL's</b>
<b>1st six weeks</b>	8	Introduction/Class Set Up	
	8	United States Geography	USII 1a-c, f,g USII 2a-c
	8	Westward Movement	USII 1a-f USII 3a-b
<b>2nd six weeks</b>	15	Progressive Era	USII 1a-f USII 3b-e
	15	Imperialism/Spain Am War	USII 1a-f USII 4a
<b>3rd six weeks</b>	15	World War I	USII 1a-f USII 4b
	15	The Roaring Twenties	USII 1a-f USII 5a-c
<b>4th six weeks</b>	13	Great Depression/New Deal	USII 1a-f USII 5d
	17	World War II, The Holocaust	USII 1a-f USII 6a-c
<b>5th six weeks</b>	15	The Cold War	USII 1a-f USII 7a-c
	15	Civil Rights Movement	USII 1a-f USII 8a
<b>6th six weeks</b>	15	1950's-Present	USII 1a-f USII 7d 8b
	15	Review	All

*Figure 12.* The copy of the syllabus that Chris provides to his students at the beginning of the school year.

As I analyzed his outline, I found several interesting relational patterns. It was arranged by grading period, which was a structure determined at the division level. Each grading period was thirty instructional periods (six weeks) which Chris divided into unit topics

directly correlated to the Standards of Learning. He provided his students with a grade sheet for the year during the first week of school and the intertextuality with this document was clear. Weekly quizzes checked intermediate progress and two unit tests and notebook checks were included each grading period. Tests and notebook checks came at the end of units, so two units were necessarily accomplished per grading period. In Chris's methodical organization for his course, I found evidence of multiple scales of work: the state (through the alignment to Standards of Learning), the division (through number of grading periods), and the teacher (through the amount of time for each unit and the sequence of instruction). I also noted the almost perfectly sequential movement through the Standards of Learning and the commitment to integrate fifteen class periods of review at the end of the year. When his students were scheduled to take the SOL assessment earlier in May, he compressed other units to ensure his window for review was protected.

And this year I actually got caught for time. It kinda caught me off guard a little bit. I realized a little late that spring break was a full week and my test was earlier than ever, so civil rights I actually kinda glazed over in about eight or ten days.  
[Chuckle]

This layer of coordination began to reveal how state curriculum policies, in concert with the state assessment program, potentially organized the daily work of teachers.

### **State Curriculum Policies**

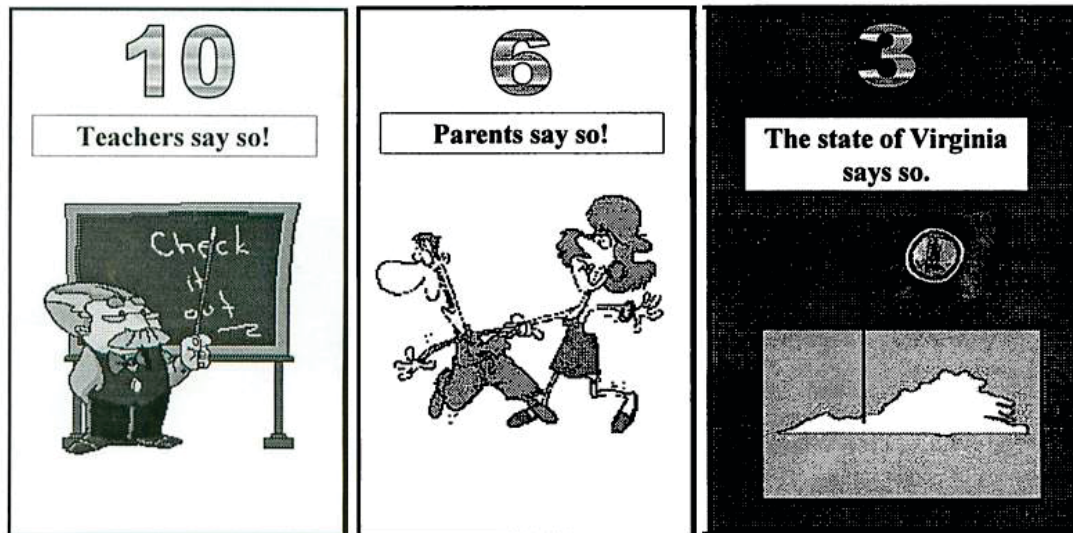
As I outlined earlier in the analysis, the intertextualities among the Standards of Learning, the Curriculum Framework, the Assessment Blueprint, and Superintendents Memos created a discourse that privileged the standards (and their elucidations) as the body of knowledge that students should and needed to know. The first phase of my analysis revealed how these documents worked together to create a system for

establishing a common body of historical knowledge that all students should know, including how that knowledge would be measured through a state-wide assessment program. How this privileging discourse would functionally shape teachers' work was left to be investigated. My analysis turned to tracing evidence of textual relationships in the space between the state's position and teachers' daily work. I uncovered a host of discourses which positioned teachers in both explicit and implicit negotiations with their working contexts, the framework, and the assessment program together.

Chris's process for determining what to teach introduced standards as a point of discursive interaction and opened the inquiry into how they might work as a regulating or coordinating frame in the way that Dorothy Smith described as a function of institutional texts. Just because the essential knowledge and skills are textually mediated so explicitly into his unit outlines doesn't necessarily lead to the conclusion they exist that way because he privileges them over other choices he might make. In order to better understand how the curriculum framework may or may not function to coordinate teachers' decision making about *what to teach and how to teach it* requires a deeper study of the discourses for evidence of relations of power. Further, does that evidence extend beyond the work of one person and suggest a pattern of relations in which teachers across local contexts are bound up in similar discourses?

As introduced earlier in my analysis, Chris's decisions were very directly connected to the standards. Upon closer inspection, I also found evidence of the curriculum framework as a privileged voice carrying power in his negotiations. It first emerged through his opening lesson on his top ten reasons to study history (Figure 13). What was most relevant for clues to relations of power was the way he introduced voices

beyond his own and the relative positioning of those voices. Not only was the state of Virginia given voice, it weighed in at number three on the list, well above parents and teachers. In fact, teachers were positioned at the bottom of the list, at number 10.



*Figure 13.* Chris introduces the voice of the state to his students with a presentation at the beginning of the year. These slides are part of his Top 10 reasons to study history. Note the positioning of the state voice at #3, while parents and teachers occupy reasons #6 and #10, respectively.

While the list was meant to be entertaining, it was also intended to be informative. It included reasons like “To learn why things are the way they are now,” and “To learn about other cultures and places.” The top reason offered is “To learn from our mistakes and hopefully we don’t repeat them.” The evidence suggests that some time and preparation were invested in creating his list strategically, and most importantly, it is a key visual for the dialogue Chris opens with students. They receive a clear message that the “state of Virginia” carries enough importance to be positioned high on the list.

Later in the PowerPoint, Chris explained his role in position to the standards and threaded the same state regulating power, this time in relationship to his own role as teacher. The discourse here is revealing (Figure 14). “My job is to make sure you



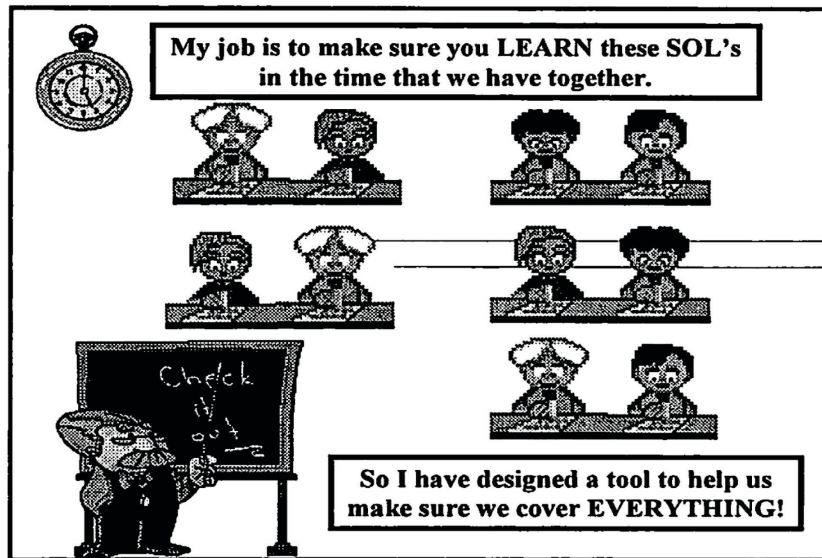


Figure 14. Chris introduces the standards to his students at the beginning of the year.

LEARN these SOL's in the time that we have together." This is his only reference to his responsibilities as a teacher in the introductory materials and instruction he provides his students and he offers it as an assertion of fact. One of Fairclough's (1995) lenses for critical analysis is to consider discourse for the voices it includes and the space it opens for difference or negotiation. Here, there is little room for negotiation or different opinion. When students are included in the text, it is to ensure that they learn the SOL's and within a particular timeframe. The teacher is positioned as the person "to make sure" that students learn the SOLs. The implicit assumption conveyed by the emphasis on LEARN (depicted in all capital letters) is that instructional opportunities for learning the SOL will be the job of the teacher. Regardless of his own internal dispositions around his responsibilities, the reality that he was constructing dialogically for his students (and their parents) distinctly and overtly positioned the SOLs as regulating frame, not only for his job, but the instructional work they will do together in the classroom.

I found intertextuality in the opening two paragraphs of his syllabus (Figure 15). I noted Chris's reference to the standards "as adapted by Anonymous County Schools." In my research I found no evidence of a supplementary district curriculum.

**Social Studies Objectives:** The class objectives will follow closely with the State of Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL's) as adapted by . . . . .  
The course deals with American History from the post Civil War Era to the present. Geography and current events will be studied as they relate to topics in our nation's history over the past 130 years.

This year, the students will keep an SOL checklist in their notebook. The checklists contain ALL of the State S.O.L.'s for seventh grade social studies. At the end of class everyday, we will check the objectives covered during the day's lesson. This will guarantee that our objectives for the entire year are being covered.

*Figure 15.* Chris's syllabus reflects intertextualities with his opening PowerPoint presentations that stress the importance of the Standards of Learning.

Tonya, a curriculum supervisor in the division, shared with me that teachers were encouraged through professional learning to use the standards as a guide and adapt it to make the match for students. She was not aware of any division adaptations. Chris may have even meant "adopted" by the division. The last sentence was also telling. Students would mark off the checklist of topics from the framework every day, which would "guarantee" that objectives (already defined as the SOL) were being covered. Embedded deeply here was the corroborating assumption to the state policy. This content was what students needed to know and what Chris felt responsible for *guaranteeing* his students would learn. Renee's discourse also emphasized the importance of the VDOE mandated content, as articulated and detailed in the curriculum framework, when she pushed against the instructor's approach to assessment in her graduate school class (as introduced in the previous chapter). She explained that the framework outlined the standards more thoroughly. "I mean that [points to framework document] gives you the specifics of what

the kids have to know.” Here again, the curriculum framework was readily available to the teacher and was positioned as what “the kids have to know.” The consistency with the discursive reality created by the VDOE definition of the framework was clearly evident. Renee’s unit plans also mirrored Chris’s organizational pattern around the standards.

But I was going to tell you, do all of these notebooks, like I have to be prepared to teach whoever comes in here, so I made individual lessons correlated with the SOLs for every subject. Well I'm working on it. And some of them are, ahm, [gets up and moves to shelf of notebooks] I'll do world history. This has been a lot of work. (Interview)

For Renee, being prepared meant having materials organized into independently paced lessons for each piece of information from the SOL that students had to know. The school required teachers to fill out day sheets that documented the work each student did in class every day. Through the day sheet, Renee communicated a list of tasks aligned to the SOL and then provided it (with the relevant materials) to students so that they could work independently, consulting with her as needed. Developing all of those lessons was a time intensive process and required her to draw on all of the interactional factors discussed in the previous chapter.

As we studied her binders, she showed me a variety of lessons. One binder she wanted to share was her binder for the high school Virginia and US History Course; it was correlated to standards VUS.11 and 12 (World War II content). It included, among other things, a source analysis of the rules for Japanese internment camps, analyzing a political cartoon about U.S. involvement, listening to oral history recordings of American responses to Pearl Harbor, and studying posters from the home front. Table 1 shows the tight correlation between essential knowledge in the curriculum framework and her chosen activities.

Table 1.

*Instructional Activities Aligned to Essential Knowledge*

Renee's Activity	Standard Of Learning/Curriculum Framework Correlation
Source analysis of the rules for Japanese internment camps	<p>VUS.12c</p> <p>Reasons for internment of Japanese Americans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong anti-Japanese prejudice on the West Coast</li> <li>• False belief that Japanese Americans were aiding the enemy</li> </ul> <p>Internment of Japanese Americans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japanese Americans were relocated to internment camps.</li> </ul>
Listen to oral history recordings of American responses to Pearl Harbor	<p>VUS.11a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While negotiating with the United States and without any warning, Japan carried out an air attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. The attack destroyed much of the American Pacific fleet and killed several thousand Americans. Roosevelt called it —a date that will live in infamy -- as he asked Congress to declare war on Japan</li> <li>• Identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data to increase understanding of events and life in the United States. (VUS.1a)</li> </ul>
Studying posters from the home front	<p>Economic resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States government and industry forged a close working relationship to allocate resources effectively.</li> <li>• Rationing was used to maintain supply of essential products to the war effort.</li> <li>• War bonds and income tax were used for financing the war.</li> </ul> <p>Human resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More women and minorities entered the labor force.</li> <li>• Citizens volunteered in support of the war effort.</li> </ul>

There were no lessons in the unit binders that Renee could not explicitly link to the VDOE curriculum framework; further, from Renee's perspective, there were lessons

that targeted each piece of content at least superficially, so that students would have had exposure to it. The pattern was corroborated in the binders for World History units.

Ahm, sometimes if, like, for example, this is SOL two about the Old and New Stone Age. They do a VENN diagram, a cloze activity and then they get to check it themselves. They have to be an archaeologist and read about Stonehenge and do like this artifact analysis form a website I found. Then they have to make their own cave art and do a formal report about what they found and how it related. And then they take a test...

These topics mirrored the essential knowledge outlined in the curriculum framework.

The VDOE document articulated that students need to know how archaeologists interpret artifacts from the past at sites like Stonehenge (the artifact analysis and archaeological reading), the differences and changes between the Old Stone Age and the New Stone Age (the Venn diagram activity), and how humans arrived in North America (the content focus of the reading exercise and cloze activity). Knowledge of cave art was one of the specific essential knowledge facts detailed in the document within the Old Stone Age (VDOE, 2008b). Here again, there were no lessons that layered additional content or skills beyond the essential knowledge, and each activity served a specific opportunity to process required knowledge. It was important, though, to recognize that Renee's instruction was the result of a dialogue with the document. While the topics and lesson targets conveyed the voice of the VDOE framework, the activities, resources, and materials reflected Renee's voice as a designer of engaging instruction that leveraged a variety of activities. Making cave art required the colored pencils that Renee kept secure and inventoried to meet the school's policy. The archeology reading and artifact analysis were modified from an online resource. The readings were carefully selected and Renee created the cloze activity based on a strategy she learned in her graduate class on literacy. Finally, Renee matched the content for Old and New Stone Ages to a compare/contrast

graphic organizer. In this one short unit I found evidence of several points of interaction and negotiation, all of which were implicitly coordinated by the knowledge deemed essential in the curriculum framework because that content organized the rest of the instructional choices.

Because all of her binders (units) were so tightly correlated to the VDOE framework, they were legitimized as instructional practices that could be used even when it was difficult to determine what instruction would serve a student best. As Renee shared,

And a lot of times, if they come in here in the middle of May and they've never been to school, I start them on the first lesson, just because they can work through ten lessons in ten days. You know, I mean it just depends on how long they're here.

If a student arrived from a grade level that was tested by the state in a public school they were responsible for taking the same assessment. By working through the lessons from the beginning, they were likely to learn at least something that would appear on the test. Thus, she could evidence that their time in her classroom would have been purposeful.

In direct contrast to these deeply correlated units was the unit Renee was in the middle of planning when I visited after the assessments were over. While the big ideas were studying the elements of historical fiction (a reading SOL that crosses secondary grades) and considering perspectives and narratives on genocides (a history SOL for both US and World curricula), the design was much broader and open to a variety of student responses. (Unit materials are included in the appendix.) Students worked with logs and projects that allowed them considerable choices for how they interacted with their chosen novels. The differences were pronounced and reveal the flexibility that Renee leveraged

when she felt free of the regulating frame of the VDOE Standards of Learning. I will explore this decision in more detail later.

The unit designs I studied with Chris reflected a similar relationship with the Curriculum Framework. I documented that Chris implemented a “quick notes” system when the school adopted binders as the primary choice for students’ materials. He discussed the value of the system for eliminating students’ confusion around what to write down and study. When I analyzed the PowerPoint presentations in conjunction with the students’ notes sheets and the VDOE curriculum framework, I found very explicit relationships in the discourse (Table 2).

Table 2:

*Alignment Between The Curriculum Framework and Moving West Unit*

Curriculum Framework Topics Related to Moving West (USII.3a-b)	Chris’s Headings for Moving West Quick Notes Student Handout
5 Reasons for Westward Expansion (includes the transcontinental railroad)	I. Why did so many people move west during the 1800s? (1-5) II. Transcontinental Railroad
Interaction and conflict between different cultural groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian policies and wars               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reservations</li> <li>○ Battle of Little Bighorn</li> <li>○ Chief Joseph</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	III. “Indians”: Chief Joseph: Nez Perce: George Custer: Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse: “Custer’s Last Stand”: Reservations:

Chris’s content organization aligned directly to the topics in the framework. The discourse of the state text was transparently matched to what content he was giving

students. Chris's voice in the design process included fairly straightforward negotiations. He chose to create a unit on westward movement and focused only on the elucidations in USII.3b that related to moving west. (That standard included additional information that he left for the next unit on the Progressive era.) He added two basic questions to enhance the story of the transcontinental railroad and added some prior knowledge and details on Indian policies, including a few more specific characters to enhance the telling of the story of Little Bighorn. Figure 16 further revealed the close alignment between the notes that students were asked to record and the content in the framework.



**Chris' Quick Notes (in PowerPoint)**

Chris takes the essential knowledge from the curriculum framework (shown in the dashed boxes below) and creates "Quick Notes" slides in his PowerPoint to alert the students of information they need to record.

**Handout for Students to Complete**

Students are expected to fill in the quick notes on the sheet below exactly as they see them on the screen in the PowerPoint.

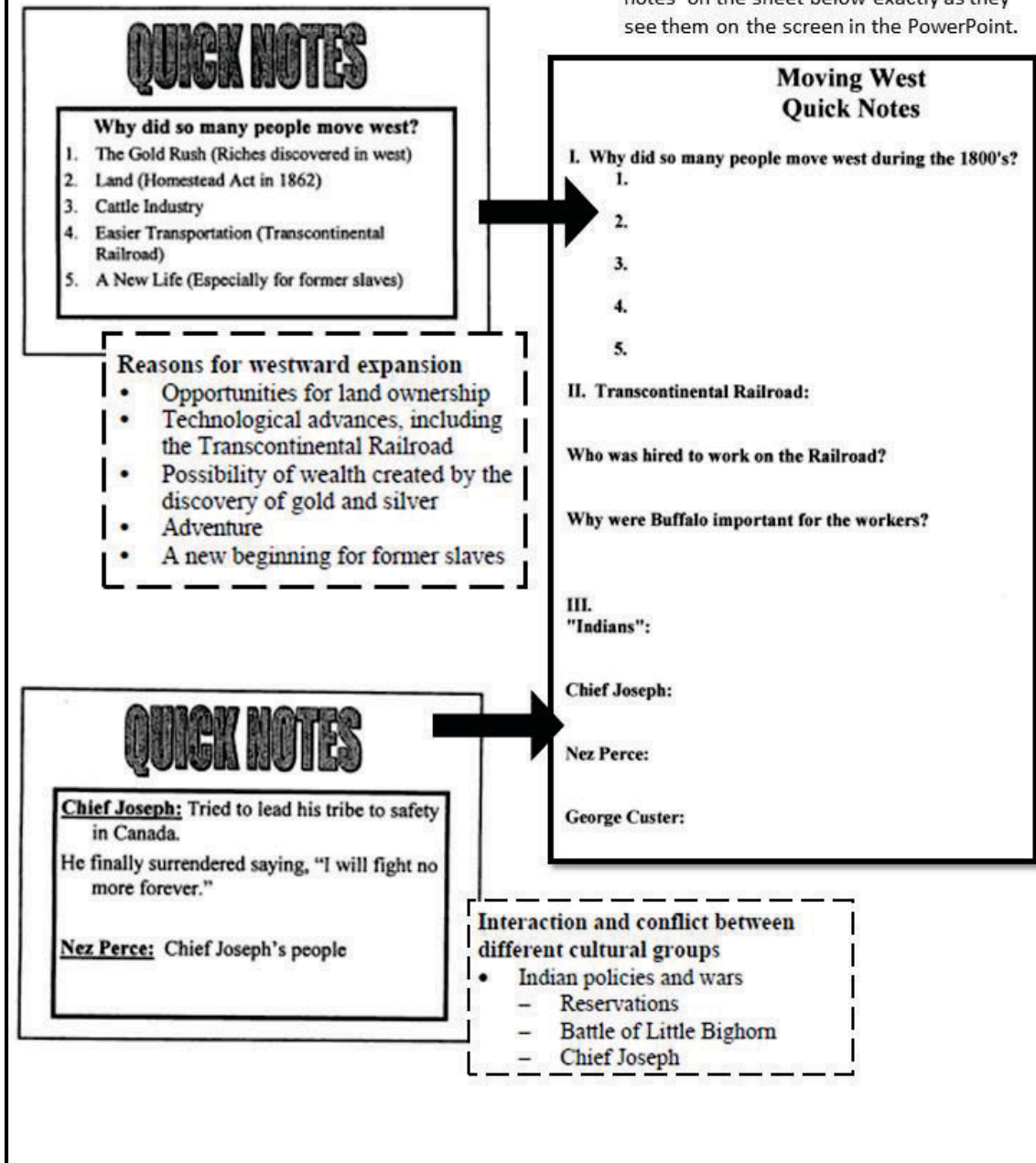


Figure 16. Chris's quick notes outlines for students and PowerPoint slides bear significant intertextualities with the curriculum documents provided by VDOE.

Chris required students to focus their attention on the information articulated in the essential knowledge. Very little additional language was added and it was still focused on what students needed to know. Chris's voice did reframe one of the reasons for migration west, shifting adventure to the cattle industry. Through this shift he was able to make the concept of adventure more explicitly connected to the west and connected it to clips from western movies.

For kids who like movies. Again this is sort of a commercial break. History....[film clip plays], here's some old west type of movies. You got movies about gangsters in the old west, John Wayne. [clip plays] And then my favorites. I'm not a big western guy but there are some movies that kind of relate to the topic. They're fiction but they're really not in a lot of cases. Kids know, you know, oh yeah, yeah, that's on every tv show you've seen. Yeah, that's what it looks like.

Even though Chris integrated his own interpretation of adventure, it was still in service to ensuring that students remembered adventure as a layer of westward movement. Because he thought memory was improved through engagement and entertainment, he included video clips that he believed would make visual the state content and capture his students' attention. I noted again the intersection of interactions with students. Chris may not have been "a big western guy" but he still attempted to leverage a tool that he thought his students would like.

Chris's focus on the curriculum framework was further evidenced in his planning conversations. When I asked him how he decided on the content for his PowerPoint lesson on westward movement, he told me "Yeah....Chief Joseph and Bighorn were the two big ones for the seventh grade. They [the standards/framework] don't go much further than that." He could tell me exactly what the students needed to know based on the state's guidelines. So, the unit would focus on these two stories. He continued,

Well this one, I actually, this is one of the earlier ones. I would probably...would

like to redo it. I think I started, I found this, it's like, you know this really sounds, this is really cheesy 'cause we really only got two stories to really really hit on hard about the Native Americans. I know sixth grade they pound that into you. So, I found this [referring to slide with map of major Indian tribes on it], and I'll basically tell them there's hundreds of sort of native tribes, but we kinda, the reader's digest, well, I gotta tell ya a couple specific stories. This is an earlier version of the storytelling that was basically just a map and all that was on this one was...this is Chief Joseph's trail. One of the white men troops was killed and so that made them even more mad and they started chasing them and chasing them and chasing them. And that pretty much was the end of it. So I guess this sort of a primitive version of later storytelling ones that have gotten a little bit better.

The concern Chris reported here was not about the content focus. He referred back to the two stories from the framework that would frame their lesson on Native Americans And The Old West. (A copy of the PowerPoint slides for this lesson can be found in Appendix C.) Instead, it was about the quality of the storytelling embedded in the PowerPoint. He expressed an interest in revising the PowerPoint and noted this one as “sort of a primitive version.” His choice of the word primitive described the rudimentary presentation of the slides which included a photographic portrait, a map of Chief Joseph’s route, and a video clip. Taken together, these resources adequately met the requirement of the content; Chris had no issue with needing to refine that layer of the plan. However, it no longer met Chris’s standards for the use of animations and an unfolding story.

He went on to show me stories that he felt represented his evolution: an elaborate animated unfolding of the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, the story of Joe (a fictitious factory owner who represented the growth of big business), and an allegory of the stock market crash in 1929. These shows featured homemade animations that took a long time to storyboard and create, but for Chris the value was in making concepts more accessible to his students through story, a narrative format that he knew his students would recognize and retain. Chris spent considerable time putting together entertaining

and engaging lessons that were completely regulated by the VDOE framework. Even where he adds his own layers, like his allegories or the assassination tale, it is in service of helping students remember the state required content. When I checked in with him about pulling information for his Native Americans lesson from the framework, he replied,

I don't even know if they mention Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. See some of it earlier, I haven't gone back and revamped everything. But some of it I probably could scrap. But to me, I guess, who killed Custer?

Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were not actually named specifically in the framework, only the Battle of Little Bighorn. It was telling that Chris considered revising his content to “scrap” references (characters, in this case) that would have become extraneous simply because they weren’t mentioned in the framework. But as he worked through his thinking, he came to realize the complexity of teaching Little Bighorn without them. How could he tell a story of a defeat without a victor? His conversation here evidenced the kinds of dialogue that teachers have with the policy documents they are charged with implementing.

What was particularly revealing was Chris’s comfort level with organizing content so closely to the standards’ regulating frame. At no time in our conversation did he express dissatisfaction with the implementation of the curriculum framework; none of my coding or mapping captured a distinct resistance toward such a focus. In fact, I learned through my work with Tonya at the central office that Chris was contracted twice to scale his work up to support other teachers in the division with materials that replicated his, one way that his process was legitimized more broadly (field notes, interview). His presentations for his colleagues in the professional learning grant were well received and

he was asked to share his materials any number of times. Here, Chris's tight alignment with the standards accumulated threads of support from division discourses. He was also asked by his principal to mentor a teacher in another grade into his routines and strategies given their success with the students. Chris was the only teacher of seventh grade history students in his site and a review of the school assessment data revealed pass rates ranging from 93% to 96% in each of the three years prior to and including the year I conducted my research (VDOE school data report builder). This was very confirming and legitimizing data for the way he organized and delivered instruction. Chris was very pleased with how his students performed, as were school and division leaders. While he was caught up in a variety of negotiations around students, colleagues, school policies, and resources, he nonetheless spoke with the certainty of someone whose students performed well on the state assessment of the content deemed important for all students to know.

His emphasis on achievement as demonstrated by the state assessment was echoed in school discourses as well. In the spring issue of the school's newsletter, the principal's message to families said that "Spring is upon us and with May comes the Virginia SOL tests....once again. ...It would also be helpful if you could reinforce with your student how important the SOLs are, both for themselves and XMS, and encourage them to try their hardest" (April, 2009 issue). Here, the regulating frame of the standards reaches out to catch the community up in its net. The principal's message is the first in every issue, and in April's issue is paired with a photo of a bulletin board. The large, individually cut, title letters say "XMS" Pledge to Pass and dozens of colorful paper hands are signed by students and stapled to the board. On the second page of the issue is

an article by one student writer on the SOL testing. In her words, “Some of you may wonder what the purpose of the SOL testing is. Teachers have to work very hard at preparing all students for the tests.” Also on page two is a second article in which another student author interviewed five teachers about how they were preparing students for the SOL assessments. Captured here are a broader set of relations that communicate the standards and assessments as a regulating frame for the work of students and teachers in classrooms. Responsibility for student success is discursively framed as a primary role for the teachers in the building. The Standards of Learning assessments appear in each of four issues of the newsletter I collected that year (beginning at the start of the year), in the memories of teachers, in the encouragement of the principal’s messages, with tips for being successful on them, and in plans for celebrating when they have concluded. In the year prior to my study, a team from the VDOE had been to the school to make observations and prepare a report for improving results. Achieving better results became such a priority that it permeated through all kinds of discourses across the school, thus revealing an interesting intersection among regulating frames. Here, discourses and interactions around the importance of teaching the VDOE standards gathered additional threads as state texts were interpreted through the frame of the school. Given this deeply embedded discursive reality of intense regulation by the SOL, it was not surprising that once the assessments were over, Chris did an enrichment project with his students that deepened their study of the standard on the Civil Rights Movement (the content that he had to compress to make room for test review).

While Chris was able to leverage standards-driven instruction to establish a position of power, Renee had a different sense of her position. As we were talking about

her upcoming unit on historical fiction, she expressed her pleasure that all of her students would be working on the same topic together. When I clarified with her that every student would be working through the same process but with different pieces of fiction, she told me, “Right, exactly. That is why, ahm, after SOLs are over, it's so nice to actually teach again. It's one thing. And it covers just about everyone. I try to get the big topics.” Embedded here was the assumption that before the SOL assessment window, the work that Renee did was not meeting her definition of the work of teaching. For her, genuine experience teaching meant working with students together around “big topics.” Before the assessments, though, her work was actually a complex instructional implementation and monitoring of a wide variety of independently paced modules of her own design. While many would certainly define that as teaching, Renee felt like she was “actually” teaching once she was free to design and implement a “big topic” unit with a group of students.

While the closing of the assessment window brought the pleasure of teaching again, it also brought some complexity as well. As Renee explained,

But see since SOLs are over and they know they're over, and you cannot justify what you do. Cuz I've had to tell them, yes, SOLs are over, but your grades aren't. And see some of them in school on Friday said to them, they're done. So, I have to justify continuing.

Renee was referring to the SOL assessment window that had just finished at her site. Several adults had conveyed to students that instruction ended when the tests were completed and students were struggling to engage in her class because they shared that assumption. Even though Renee was enjoying teaching again, her students were not as delighted to continue their work. Renee’s comment “So, I have to justify continuing” was particularly revealing. Her use of “so” indicates that her justifying was a consequence of

others telling students that “they’re done” (an interesting intersection of the school and the assessment). Further, she felt required (“I have to”) to push against that assumption. The choice of “justify” was interesting because the definition carried with it a sense of having to demonstrate proof of the rightness of her position. She did not choose a discourse that implicated power like “I have to demand continuing”, “insist continuing”, “require continuing,” or even “explain continuing.” “I have to justify continuing” was also in contrast to her previous thought that “you cannot justify.” By the time she had finished articulating her thought, she had shifted her position, possibly because the observation between them reflected how she had offered justification to the students. While the SOLs were over, their grades weren’t. Embedded here was the assumption that her ability to justify continuing resided in something she could control, collection and assessing their work (versus the value of instruction or skills students would benefit from having). She invoked her point of power in the face of a significant point of power that was intruding into her instruction and classroom via the state assessment (with her colleagues). In one small piece of discourse I could see evidence of the state, the teacher, colleagues, and students engaged in negotiation around the legitimacy of instructional work outside the frame of the state content and assessment.

Also embedded in Renee’s discourse was the conflation of the curriculum with the assessment. When she said the SOLs were over, she meant the tests and the instruction of the content they assessed. Discursively, the regulating power of the standards and framework was necessarily intersected with the assessments across the research settings in which I worked, as echoing the intertextuality I identified in the textual analysis of Chapter 4. Chris’s instructional designs featured frequent references



throughout the year: students checked off SOL topics covered at the end of class daily; they periodically completed summary readings and multiple choice questions from an SOL Coach publication; they took quick quizzes and unit tests aligned to the framework (see Appendix H for a sample); and in the final three weeks, they completed SOL review sheets (see Figure 17), games, and practice tests.

### SOL Review Sheet #3

The answers to all of these statements/questions is a term from your SOL checklist:

#### USII.3a West Review:

1. Silver/Gold Riches found in the west
2. L Battle site where Custer was killed by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse
3. \_\_\_\_\_ said, "I will fight no more forever". He was a Nez Perce chief.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Connected eastern and western United States. Materials, people and Cattle could now be shipped across the whole country.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Immigrants that were discriminated against. Worked on Railroads.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Reason for former slaves to move west.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ White Americans set aside this land for Native Americans.

*Figure 17.* An example of the SOL Review Sheets that students in Chris's class complete as they prepare for the assessment. Note the alignment, including the particular SOL designation.

The units I studied with Marshall and Marie were the most augmented of the ones I observed. While the curriculum framework didn't come up in their design processes, there was an embedded layer to consider. Their units focused on topics like the U.S. Constitution, the Executive Branch, Economics, Political Parties, and State and Local Government. All of these were required content in the standards. (See figure 18.)



	Unit	Essay	Reading Material	Project/ Activity
CE.11-13 focus on how economic decisions are made, the structure and operation of the U.S. economy, and the role of government in the U.S. economy.	Unit 1: Economics	Letter to Editor Opportunity Cost	Social Welfare Smoking	Advertisement
CE.5 focuses on the political process at local, state and national levels of government.	Unit 2: Political Parties and Elections	Compare and Contrast Political Parties	<i>Look in the Mudslinging Book</i>	Political Campaign VA Governor
CE.2 focuses on the foundations of American constitutional government, including the Constitution and Bill of Rights.	Unit 3: Path and US Constitution	Federalists/Anti Federalists	<i>Bill of Rights Smoking Same Sex Marriage 4<sup>th</sup> Amend Gun Rights</i>	Document Play Amendment Poster Project
CE.6 focuses on the structure and powers of the national government and the lawmaking process. CE.10: Judicial Branch	Unit 4: Three Branches of US Government	Executive Branch	Imperial Pres Supreme Court Congress	Did My Bill Pass?
CE.9 focuses on how public policy is made	Unit 5 Energy Policy		Energy Policy	Project Choices Documentary Poster Pod Cast Video- Play or a Music Vid
CE.3 focuses on duties and rights of citizenship. CE.7-8 focus on state/local government	Unit 6: Citizenship and State/Local Government	DBQ/ Rep. Democ Essay	Immigration Smoking	In class time for DBQ/Last Essay

*Figure 18.* This is the topic list and organizational structure brainstormed by Marie and Marshall (the chart on the right). I analyzed it for intertextualities with the VDOE Standards of Learning; note the inclusion of the key content from the standards (listed on the left). The only standards not explicitly represented are those relating to embedded thinking and citizenship skills. Like the state curriculum does, Marshall and Marie embedded this content within their units across the year.

As Marie walked with me out of the building one day, she talked about the document skits her students had done to illustrate the origins of the Constitution. When I asked if she went by the list in the framework or revised the list at all, she told me that she and Marshall thought the list there was pretty representative and sufficient for their needs. So, the additional layers of analytical writing, current event impact essays, and applications to current issues were supplemental content, not substitutions.

I got another glimpse of how Marshall and Marie experienced the standards and assessments later in the year when they presented to their colleagues in the professional learning grant on a class project they had done on the amendments. As they described it,

students worked in small groups to research and prepare a creative presentation about one of the key amendments to the Constitution. They mentioned twice that it was implemented after they had covered what students “needed to know.” One of the teachers asked how long it took them to complete it and the answer invoked a lengthy response and rationalization that was interesting to analyze.

Marshall: You cannot do something like this, you know, in a day, you can't do it in a day. Ahm, but I, you know/

Marie and I, you know, there's a lot of SOL pressure on all of us, ahm I think, but the bottom line is they seem to remember this. And, ah, you know we allow SOL review time, a little over a week. And I know that sounds crazy for the civics SOL. It's like a Sylvan learning center for us. As we get closer, we go nuts. But we try and build in opportunities like this because

Marie: Our class is boring

Marshall: To an eighth grader it's kind of like watching paint dry, occasionally, so

Marie: We try to do things like this to kind of jazz it up. I mean this is boring stuff.

Marshall: It's tough.

Marie: It's dry.

Marshall: And you know, then at the end of the year, you hear that they enjoyed these the most and I think they do retain it better when they have the opportunity to do a little bit more than just sit there listening to us talking about it/

Ahm, but you know, you have to, you have to weigh that against your own comfort level and how stressed you are about the SOL tests. So, ahm, but it, it is time consuming.

Marie and Marshall were not immune to the regulating power of the standards and the assessment system. Instead, they negotiated it with a week of intensive review to make sure that students had what they needed. While their response could certainly have been limited to the direct answer of two weeks, they immediately feel the need to offer more discussion of their thinking. Marshall initiated a justification for spending two weeks this way first by acknowledging that they felt the same pressure that their colleagues did. Then he and Marie offered three rationalizing arguments: this was what students

remembered, their content would have been boring if left to its basics, and this was what students enjoyed the most.

Embedded here were several assumptions that were not inconsistent with patterns I found in Renee's and Chris's discourses. First, there was a content to cover (and sometimes it's like watching paint dry). Second, an important narrative of effective teaching was meeting students' need for engagement and participation. They had an entertainment trigger of sorts, too. Notably, opportunities like this project were "built in," adding evidence to the argument that deviations from the standards were limited to augmentations. Finally, they did feel an obligation to an intense review period making certain that students had clarity around the content they needed to know, even if it was "crazy" and made them "go nuts."

While Marshall and Marie made efforts to ensure that students knew the essential knowledge and skills in time for the state assessment, as I argued above, their units did reflect the most augmentation. Explicitly teaching analytical writing, identifying issues in current society through which to teach required content, and student-created presentations were unique to their setting when compared to Chris's and Renee's. Their school context was markedly different in its lack of emphasis on the SOL as a regulating frame for instructional design until the assessment window appeared on the immediate horizon. Instead, their discourses focused on preparing students for high school demands, challenging students to develop skills in argumentation, and learning the work of historians. Considering intersections like these raised intriguing questions to be explored in the discussion that follows.

## Chapter 7: Discussion

My research in the field began with these two questions: How are instructional design and planning activities coordinated, organized, regulated, and/or standardized by broader extralocal relations of power that function beyond the daily experiences of teachers? How do discourses and activities in the institution replicate, constitute, and/or challenge those institutional relations? In her framework for conducting institutional ethnography, Dorothy Smith (2005) suggested two key dimensions for the study of institutions: the production and implementation of text as coordinating mechanism and the lived everyday experiences of the people closest to the work. My research followed these two lines of inquiry and generated intriguing insights into the questions of interest.

In order to add complexity to narratives that position instructional design as a cognitive process and result in studies that privilege teachers as powerful gatekeepers for the quality of instruction implemented in classrooms, I sought to study the production of instruction in complex contexts in which teachers are positioned in myriad negotiations with extralocal factors. After wrestling extensively with data analysis, I finally realized that doing so required shifting completely away from teachers and toward instruction as the unit of analysis. Designing instruction was revealed to be a complicated process in each context and the next hurdle was deducing how to break it down for deep and systematic analysis. I needed an organizing construct that could be examined through discursive and relational lenses and mapped into interactions within and beyond the classroom. At the same time, in the tradition of institutional ethnography, I resisted choosing a construct and imposing it on the data I collected. Several failed attempts at analysis kept leading me back to comparing and contrasting people rather than work production and contexts. As I experimented with mapping the data in a variety of ways, I

eventually realized that the consistently emerging theme was a design process that resulted in the production of an instructional unit. That is not to say that in other contexts it wouldn't be different – discrete lesson plans versus units of study, a textbook, or a policy, for example. I had the privilege of studying three processes of instructional design (with four teachers), all of which consistently resulted in the production of a variety of instructional units. Through these units I could trace a host of interactions and negotiations that organized, regulated, and/or standardized the work of producing instruction.

I found evidence that the state curriculum and related policies did function as threads of broader relations that were intended to both coordinate and regulate the work of teachers. A careful analysis of key state policy documents related to curriculum revealed discourses which established a minimum body of knowledge important for all students in Virginia to know and which teachers were expected to provide. An assessment system would hold teachers and students accountable for teaching and learning what was “essential.” (This analysis was the focus of Chapter 4). However, juxtaposed with the documents' language of essential knowledge was additional language that communicated flexibility for the development of local curricula which integrated the essential content knowledge and skills. The texts layered together to create ample space for ambiguity regarding their interpretation, rendering them fertile ground for diverse readings and implementations across contexts. Texts like these only impacted or transformed work through iterations of complex “dialogue” with readers. To better understand how curriculum policies were “read” by teachers, my questions then took me

into the field to find out how and to what extent these discourses proliferated the daily language of teachers.

### **Uncovering the Institution: Points of Interaction, Negotiation, and Regulation**

It was imperative to keep the analytical lens wide enough to observe the production of the institution and the broad array of relations of power that likely functioned within it. Just because the state standards were written in language designed to coordinate the work of teachers, I did not assume they did so. Rather than artificially narrow the focus to standards as regulator, I wanted to be open to discovering whatever manifestations of ruling relations were revealed in the data. I found both insights and a variety of unanswered questions for further study. Power was implicated in a range of ways.

At the most basic level, access to resources made possible some instructional choices and constrained others, and even here I could detect traces of power that sometimes privileged teachers' decisions and sometimes privileged contextual factors. Chris positioned his decision to redesign his notebooks as result of the school's decision to use binders universally. There was no reason that binders could not accommodate his original structure based on the interactive notebook, but that fact is immaterial to understanding the institutional relations of power. Based on the precepts of institutional ethnography, I accepted that Chris was an expert at navigating the systems of his everyday experience and his discourses positioned the power of the school to set parameters for student supply lists and materials as above his own. Such privileging of the school and available resources recurred in Renee's instructional units as well. She could not design or include activities that required the use of certain materials because

policy dictated they not be available to students. However, not all of the analyses around resources revealed patterns of constraint or regulation. Chris discovered the LCD projector through the work of a colleague and went about securing one for himself through a grant, making it possible for him to remake his instructional structure through PowerPoint. Renee created a special drawer of the adolescent literature that appealed most to her students for its realism and attention to challenging themes.

All of the instructional design processes shared another thread that privileged the power of teachers to design instruction. Every unit I mapped evidenced a deep network of connections to outside resources: a collaborative professional development grant, university faculty, Internet resources, graduate school classmates, and colleagues. Further, in almost every case, those resources were adapted by the participants who felt it their responsibility to make the materials match their needs. Here was where I found the evidence most consistent with arguments that teachers enjoyed considerable power to determine what resources and practices made their way to students. And yet, these understandings raised other questions. The production of work in the division I studied was shaped by the availability of an active professional network; what differences might I have encountered with participants who didn't participate in the broader professional learning community or in divisions where such a mechanism didn't exist? Would it always be replaced with other means of networking and sharing or would I find work that was more driven by the text or policy, for example? I found some hints of that possibility in my own research. While all of my participants were members in a professional learning community made available for a limited time by the school division, Marshall's and Marie's materials reflected a significantly deeper intertextuality with the activities



and resources made available during those sessions, including their own follow-up communications with guest speakers. In observing their participation, I realized that they were caught up in dialogue with each other in every session which implicated the importance of having a teaching neighbor across the hall share in the same experiences. In contrast, Renee and Chris spent their daily work in relative isolation from a curriculum perspective. They were the only teachers of the grade and content in their buildings. While they participated in discussions with a diverse group of colleagues in the learning community, when they returned to their schools to plan instruction their dialogic partners were, by necessity, texts...websites, the curriculum framework, etc. Participating in the planning processes of more teachers would yield interesting insights into how this pattern might be replicated more widely.

Another significant complexity was the voices of students that teachers invoked as part of their planning processes. While teachers sought out a variety of resources and materials to include in their designs, their choices were often mediated by their students. I found it particularly intriguing that these voices often included students from past years as well current students, constructing a broad pattern of dialogue not limited by time or space. Chris needed a note taking system that would not overwhelm or create confusion for his students and he provided entertaining stories to hook his students' interest since they didn't like history. Marshall and Marie continued their amendment project because it was the kind of work their students reported as their favorite and they redesigned unit materials because student work in previous years didn't evidence what they hoped. Renee's designs offered her students some autonomy and choice which they valued by behaving appropriately, a contrast to the resistance they offered a neighboring colleague

who used a more directive approach. By granting the students voice in their dialogues with me, sometimes even adopting a teenager's tone or affect, teachers constructed classroom contexts in which they negotiated activities based on how students responded to instruction. Instructional decisions were compromises between what teachers wanted to happen and what they predicted would help students be successful and engaged. Observations in Chris's, Marie's, and Marshall's classrooms corroborated this shifting dialogue based on students' comments and questions. In the existing research, such knowledge or understanding of students is constructed as an important facet of teachers' thinking and cognitive expertise for designing instruction. How much more complex could this picture become if we studied recordings of classrooms and re-conceptualized these decisions as products of interaction in which both teachers and students share and negotiate power over the course of instruction?

Even more powerful than students and teachers, and perhaps the single most powerful regulating contextual factor, was time. For every instructional design process that I observed, a substantial amount of time and negotiation were directed at determining what students needed to know and how to organize the instruction of that content into the amount of time available to teachers and students. School schedules, syllabi, course calendars, and plan outlines were ubiquitous, as were teachers' dialogues about the constraints of time. Renee lamented time lost to transitions and appointments to provide therapeutic services. Marie and Marshall reorganized their writing unit and course readings to fit neatly into a class period and make time for student practice. Chris's syllabus included a course outline that indicated the number of class periods allocated for each standard of learning. While teachers exercised decision making within the available

time, they had no power over the broader schedule itself. Since their students were in secondary schools, it was imperative that they leave each day on time so that they would arrive promptly in their next class. Extending a lesson was not an option. Similarly, division leadership, working within the parameters of state mandates, established the date for implementing the state assessment. All four informants worked backward from that date and built in two- to four-week windows for review and preparation for the assessments. That window was the deadline for ensuring that all required content had been taught.

Universally, the participants in my study engaged in at least episodic dialogue with the state curriculum standards. The interactions were sometimes direct when teachers pulled out state texts and engaged in “conversation” with them during planning. Such conversations made the coordination easily visible. While I didn’t always see the original negotiations with state curriculum documents, I often uncovered intertextualities among teachers’ instructional materials and state curricula. Renee’s independently paced unit binders, each carefully correlated to a Standard of Learning, included activities designed to tease out essential knowledge and skills. Chris’s instructional materials were tightly focused on the language of the VDOE Curriculum Framework. Marshall and Marie developed a unit sequence that traced back to the key themes articulated in the standards for their grade level. Sometimes the interactions became events in the stories participants told of their planning. Renee shared that she could choose any instructional focus she wished but not until the state assessment window had passed. Marshall and Marie described a window of intense preparation that they would undertake with their students as the assessment window approached. Almost inevitably, participants’

discourses carefully and clearly framed content from the state framework as what “students needed to know.” Diverting from that content only happened when it served to augment the essential knowledge and skills by making them more engaging, memorable, or, for Marshal and Marie, connected to broader expectations of the discipline. Returning to Fairclough’s (1995) argument for considering what messages do not get said and whose voices are missing in accounts, what I didn’t observe was also telling. Over months of planning discussions, email exchanges, interviews and classroom observations, I found no evidence or dialogue that content outlined in the standards would be refuted, replaced, or omitted during instruction. Teachers never positioned themselves with the power to make such a decision, and they always clarified how they ensured that mandated content would be provided to students.

While many points of intersection among policy discourses and teachers’ instructional practices emerged, they were quite variable and framed work differently across time and contexts. I found the deepest intertextualities between standards and instructional design in Chris’s work. His rigorous alignment with the standards was explained to students and families at the beginning of the year and maintained throughout the school year through tools like his SOL checklist, PowerPoint lessons, and quick notes. While Renee was less overt in making references to state curriculum, each standard became a unit with a series of independently paced activities designed to cover essential knowledge and skills. Her first routine with new students was to interview them and decide at what point in the state’s sequence to begin work. However, even though both Chris and Renee invoked a tight alignment with the standards in their designs, the power and coordination were framed very differently for each of them. Chris had used

his practices to garner and leverage power and function as a leader in his school. For him, the standards became an organizing frame for the instructional design, a tool for articulating the purpose of instruction, and a rationale for justifying his choices. At no point did he express frustration or constraint; instead he spoke to the success of his students as evidenced by the large percentage of them who were successful on the state assessments. Here, the state carried the power of determining the criteria for measuring success in the classroom. Conversely, Renee framed the standards and their associated assessments with considerable power over her decisions in a way that implied a demand for her compliance, saying that she liked the time after they had passed when she felt free to teach again. Marshall's and Marie's designs reflected the most flexibility in how they positioned the essential knowledge and skills articulated in the state framework.

However, they were still careful to ensure that students had access to the essential knowledge and skills by the time the assessment window arrived in May. In a next phase of inquiry, I would like to have the opportunity to work with informants who teach courses for which standards exist but lie outside the state assessment program in order to study how those teachers navigate the essential knowledge and skills. Doing so would provide even more insight into how instrumental the assessments and public accountability are in leveraging the power of the state in the daily worlds of classrooms.

What were more deeply embedded were threads that reticulated through state, division, and school contexts and into teachers' negotiations, collecting additional fibers as layers of interpretation were shaped and defined beyond the classroom. Insights into how these occur became visible in a wide variety of dialogic moments. When Chris described his role mentoring other teachers in the building into his alignment and

approach, he did so with the confidence and power that his administrator (and division) recognized his instructional success. His planning and teaching decisions achieved additional credibility with the success of his students on state assessments. Because he taught in a school that was once identified by the state for improvement work (overseen by the state) based on school-wide performance on those assessments, other teachers were encouraged by their principal to adopt some of his structures to better serve their students. This kind of legitimation meant that Chris's rigorously aligned instructional model acquired the status of effective practice. At Chris's school, even the school newsletter featured updates on progress with the standards and preparation for the assessments, sometimes authored by the principal and sometimes by the students. When Marshall and Marie presented their project to their professional learning network of school division colleagues, the questions posed to them were telling. A simple question about how much time they spent on the unit triggered a lengthy comment justifying the use of time spent going beyond the essential knowledge. In that public setting, hosted by the division, Marshall and Marie repeated several times how the essential knowledge was provided and how they acknowledged the importance of ensuring that students were prepared for the assessment. Even Renee's conversations revealed such reticulation, as she identified herself as part of a faculty that had a good pass rate that year but who were also creating a culture that made it hard to justify continued instructional work to the students once the assessment window had passed.

The intersection of regulating frames also posed an interesting set of considerations for further inquiry. The standards (together with assessment program) established a regulating frame of a minimum body of essential knowledge and skills. The

school's schedule and calendar established an available period of time for providing those essential skills and knowledge. In the course of managing the intersection of these frames, students and teachers engaged in producing the instruction that teachers had planned – diverting from the regulating frame of the standards only when they augmented them. So, given the defined limits of available time, how much was available for enriching augmentation to the standard? The discussion generated by Marie's and Marshall's presentation revealed that the kind of student-driven and performance-based activity they described carried with it a premium price tag for time. They made it work with a graphic organizer that collected the essential knowledge and then a cumulative review period (a little over a week) at the end of the year. Under these conditions, their students performed adequately on the state assessment and met the benchmarks for accreditation, thus avoiding negative evaluations from the VDOE. While their instructional designs featured the most augmentation to the standards, particularly in the months prior to the assessment window, they could still continue to position their students as successful by the state's measures. However, Chris told the story of students who needed plenty of repetition and practice to remember the facts. Discourses in his school constructed students who didn't like history, needed materials provided for them, and were often confused when asked to take their own notes. Yet, the same stories of success were discursively possible if he consistently provided his students with mnemonic devices for key content, games that hooked their participation, story metaphors of abstract concepts, and just over three weeks of review, all of which were tightly aligned with the state content and provided plenty of opportunity to store what they needed to know to pass the assessment. Meeting the VDOE standard for success was

a priority that proliferated a variety of texts in the school as well, even its newsletters. If the standards and their associated assessments carry the institutional power of a minimum body of knowledge and skill, and adding to the standards is the only viable way to re-shape curriculum, what does that mean for schools in which large percentages of students are positioned further distant from the knowledge and skills privileged by the state curriculum? Does that mean those students have less access to augmented instruction since instructional time is a limited resource?

### **Reflections, Implications, and Possibilities**

**For Myself.** In the course of carrying out this research, both my mistakes and my successes have contributed significantly to my development. First, my skills for “talking with people” have grown. I now ask better questions, better realize when and how to probe for greater clarity, and better understand how the language I use shapes the path of my inquiry. While I still have much to learn about effective dialogues and interviews, I have a much stronger sense of where to begin and how to progress in those skills. Second, my vision is more sophisticated. Before coming to graduate school, I had become unsettled with my experiences in the classroom and knew that I was unable to adequately explain the tensions I was feeling as I tried to implement effective instruction. Now I can often see the invisible threads that shape my work and connect me to broader structures beyond my daily practice. Third, I am more powerful and reflective in my own instructional practice. Because I have better clarity on how various discourses may be intersecting with my work I can plan proactively for successfully negotiating my professional contexts. Given all that I’ve learned about the importance of language and text, I am considerably more reflective about what interactions and negotiations I



constitute through my own writing and conversation. Finally, I continue to be intrigued by the work I initiated in this first project. While I learned a great deal, each discovery has generated new questions about how the work of instruction is discursively and relationally produced and coordinated. Continued research into these questions will allow me to deepen my expertise with the methodological tools of discourse analysis and institutional ethnography. Even with just an opportunity to reproduce this study, I would be much more effective in data collection and analysis. I have only taken a first step on what could be a long path of inquiry.

**For Practice.** Positioning instruction (versus teachers) as the focus of inquiry led me to a deeply layered and complex understanding of how planning and teaching activities emerge through discursive negotiation. By studying the processes and interactions that produced lessons and units, I was able to learn a great deal about how instructional choices emerged from layers of interaction and experience. By complicating the conceptualization of teachers as powerful gatekeepers, controlling what practices are mediated into classroom life, we can approach changing and improving instruction with a much more sophisticated lens. We open the gaze to what relational factors, interactions, and discourses facilitate or obstruct those processes. Learning more about the patterns of interaction that constitute instruction will generate new possibilities for attending to and reflecting on whose voices are empowered, marginalized, or missing in efforts to produce instructional work that serves children (and adults) best.

Professional learning opportunities that move beyond the twin goals of growing pedagogical content knowledge and advancing what happens inside teachers' minds to include overt dialogue about what barriers or interactions will hinder or support change

will likely increase the probability of growth. As new visions for professional learning are designed in the future, teachers can be represented and understood as threads in dense nets of interaction rather than as discretely bound individuals. Attention could shift from improving people to improving those nets of interactions.

In the field, there is a strong emphasis on school improvement through more intensive data collection and analysis. Administrators and teachers are encouraged to align curriculum and assessment and rigorously monitor progress and make adjustments based on what the data reveal. Rubrics and scoring from student to state have been developed. Emerging literature on extending systems thinking into education (Fixsen, Blase, Metz, & van Dyke, 2013) opens up for consideration how leaders might systematically address such factors, but even it has yet to leverage the power of discourse, focusing attention on things like alignment of resources and the importance of leadership without careful reflection on the myriad ways that language (in policy and practice) impacts how those factors are implemented. How could members at all levels of implementation analyze and transform the interactions and negotiations they put into motion? Even more concerning is the way this body of literature also renders structures and relations of power largely invisible. What are the implications if schools, communities, divisions, or even states are positioned differently to accommodate the regulating frames imposed by policy?

The preparation of future teachers is also implicated in conversations like these. As students prepare to enter the field, equipping them with tools to see the relations to which they are connected empowers them to make sense of their professional landscapes and contribute to their shaping. To sustain their creative practices and reflective thinking,

they will need to be able to leverage their own discourses when institutional relations of power might try to subvert them. While such ruling relations will likely require compliance, sometimes even without our realization, teachers such as my participants still find ways to bring good experiences to students. Teaching is a long series of moments, and prospective teachers will benefit from embracing their careers with the recognition that no one belief, skill set, or decision needs to define the moment coming next. In spite of Atwell's (2015) ruminations on the difficult constraints facing teachers today, my work allows me to hope and work for ways to prepare new teachers to negotiate well with the institution and perhaps even change how we produce it.

At the most significant and practical level, returning the findings of results like mine to informants working every day in classrooms might open reflective dialogues on managing the pressures brought to bear on planning processes by regulating frames. As Dorothy Smith (2005) maintained, "What for the institutional ethnographer may be a technical and sometimes difficult enterprise can, once completed, be translated into the language of the everyday world so that institutional participants can integrate it into their everyday work knowledge" (p. 221). As we grow in our understanding of how relations of power are functioning through and around us, we may discover possibilities and power for navigating them more comfortably, shaping them to our own priorities or pushing back against them. We may even find additional opportunities to impact how those frames are constructed. Taking these conversations back to the field could generate new lines of inquiry as informants make sense of findings and explore the ways that institutional relations connect them across contexts. What I find most exciting about my

investigation are the new questions and directions I can pursue in the future, which leads me to possibilities for scholarship.

**For Scholarship.** Discourse analysis and institutional ethnography are useful frames for analyzing the work that occurs in schools in order to move beyond dispositional accounts that can reduce or render invisible the power structures at work. Moving outside of teachers' beliefs and cognitive work reveals relational mechanisms that both coordinate and regulate actions and decisions, even as teachers push and move in their own different directions. Throughout the discussion, I have embedded new and additional questions for further investigation, any of which would add to the existing knowledge on how the work of instruction is produced, adding to conversations opened by other researchers who have explored context and interaction in other ways (Cornbleth, 2002; McLaughlin & Talbert; McNeil, 1986, Nesper, 1997). One power of institutional ethnography as method is that researchers can carry out small studies across a variety of contexts, and each one reveals more about how work is coordinated beyond the local context (Smith, 2005).

My glimpse into institutional relations was a small one, but the data it yielded were rich and complex. They have convinced me that moving research on teaching out of teachers' heads and into the dense and reticulating threads of interactions, opening inquiry into relations of power, and finding ways to see the mechanisms (like texts) that reproduce the work of instruction are pivotal shifts for future scholarship. By doing so, we introduce complicating discourses that create new lenses on constructs like pedagogical content knowledge and gatekeeping. Gates suggest boundaries, but the work of teaching is necessarily caught up in a wide variety of negotiations and interactions that

creep into neighboring classrooms, the main office, school district offices, communities, and even newspapers and governing bodies. Those interactions are threads that cannot be severed entirely or shut out by a gate. While that classroom door may sometimes function as a gate, we have to work diligently to understand what threads are knocking on it, pushing on it, tugging on it, or sliding under or over it to catch up teacher and students in the work of teaching and learning.

Creating effective research designs that can confront and manage this level of complexity is daunting. In the time I was buried under piles of data, I empathized with Grant's and Gradwell's (2010) argument that "any examination of teachers' practices' that puts every possible factor into play can result in analytical mush" (p. 9). However, what do we risk never knowing if we don't attempt to discover and capture the various moving parts that make up teaching? I have much to learn about using these methods more effectively and my investigation was often messy and sometimes flawed. Yet, I am grateful to have discovered tools for conducting research that make room for uncovering the institution and the invisible relations of power that often cast teachers and teacher quality as the root of educational ills or the heart of academic success.

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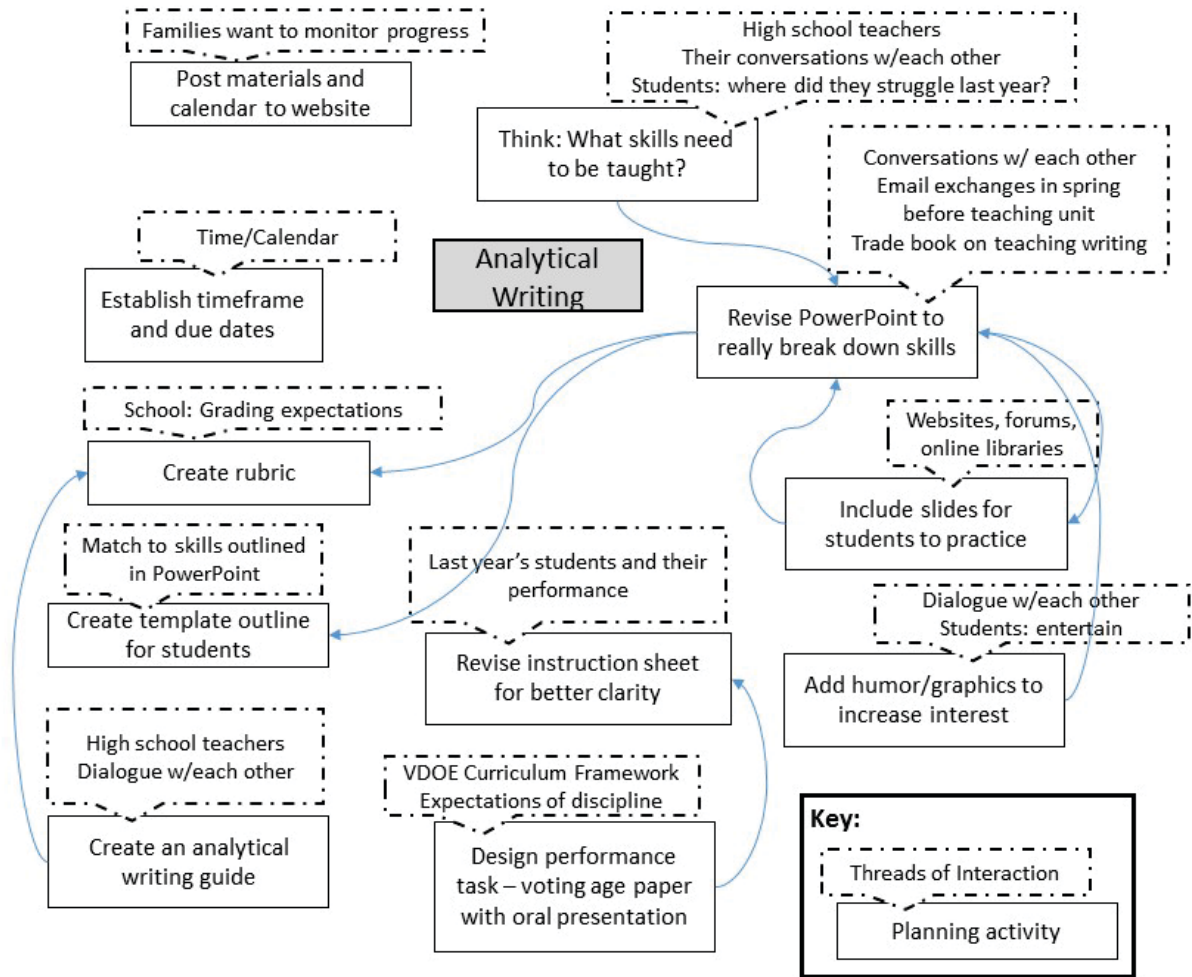
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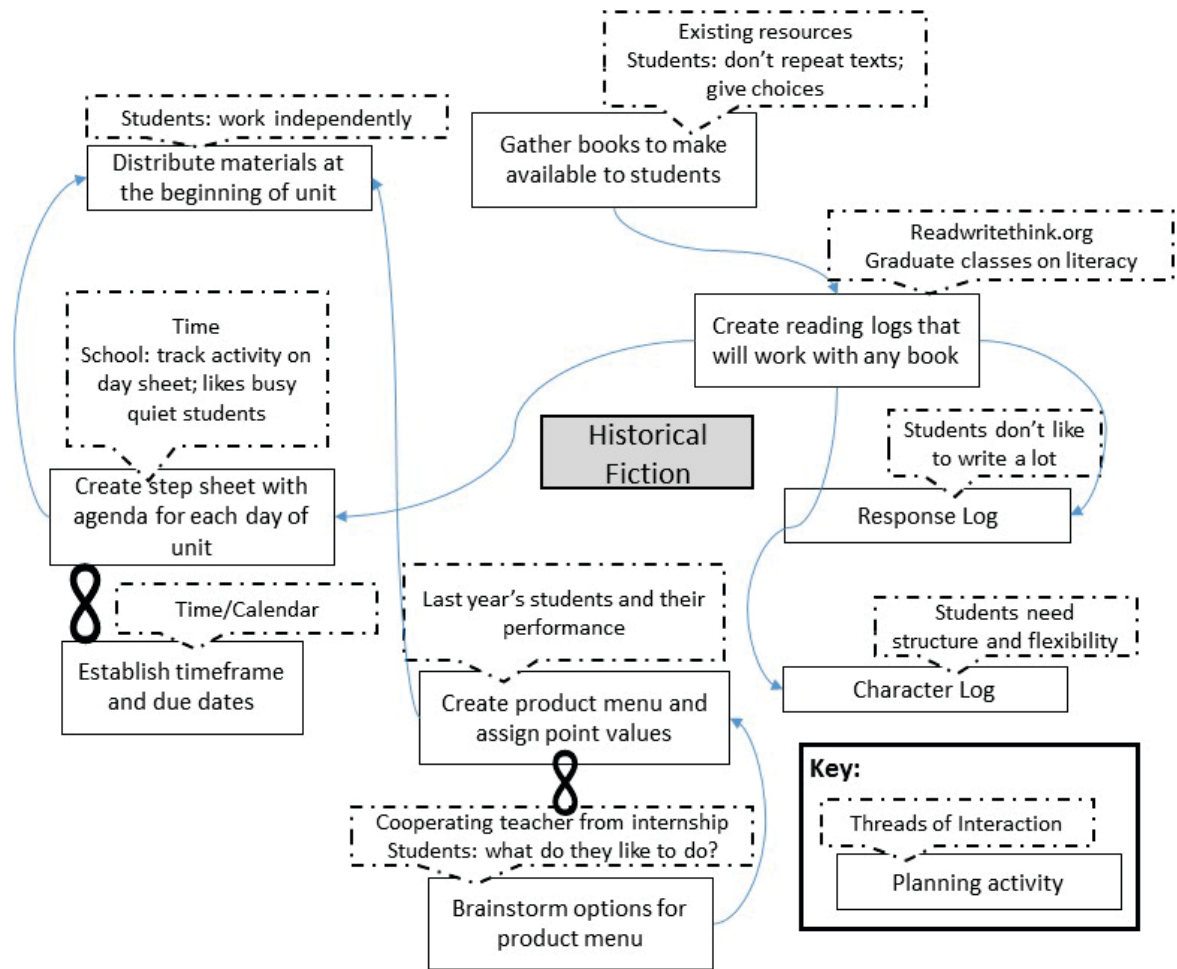
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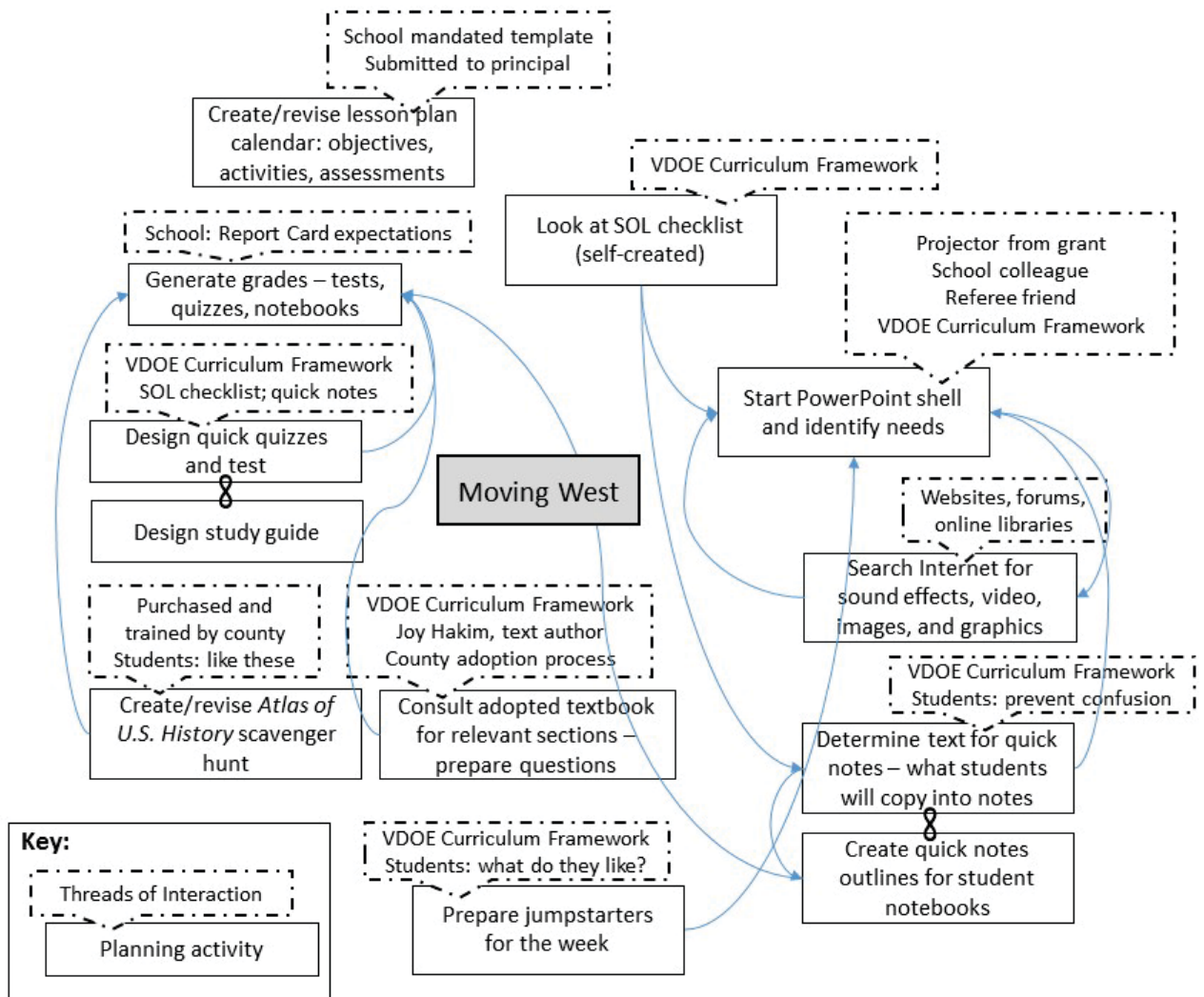
## Appendix A: Examples of Unit Mapping

In institutional ethnography, texts and processes are mapped so that activities and threads of coordination begin to appear across contexts. Three maps are included here that represent units from all participants.









## Appendix B: "The What" – Chris's SOL Checklist

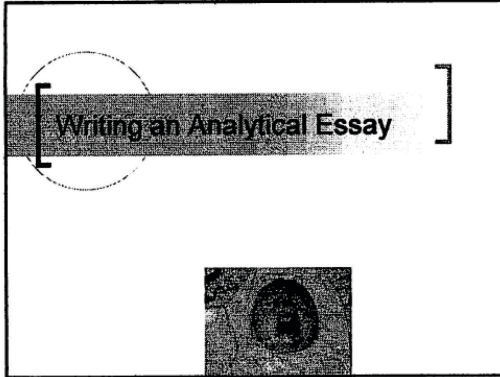
Geography (USII.2a,b,c)		
Region	States	Cities
<b>Northeast</b>	Maine Vermont N. Hampshire Connecticut Massachus. R. Island New York New Jersey Pennsylvania	New York Boston Pittsburgh Philadelphia
<b>Southeast</b>	Maryland Delaware W. Virginia Virginia Kentucky Tennessee N. Carolina S. Carolina Georgia Florida Alabama Mississippi Louisiana Arkansas	Wash. DC Atlanta New Orleans
<b>Midwest</b>	Ohio Indiana Iowa Illinois Michigan Wisconsin Minnesota Missouri Kansas Nebraska S. Dakota N. Dakota	Chicago St. Louis Detroit
<b>Rocky Mtn.</b>	Colorado Utah Nevada Montana Wyoming Idaho	Denver Salt Lake City
<b>Southwest</b>	Texas Oklahoma New Mexico Arizona	San Antonio Santa Fe
<b>Pacific</b>	Washington Oregon California	Los Angeles San Francisco Seattle
<b>Noncontiguous</b>	Alaska Hawaii	Juneau Honolulu
<b>Geography</b>	<b>Great Plains:</b> Plains features Dust Storms Low Rainfall <b>Plains inventions:</b> Barbed Wire Steel Plows Dry Farming Sod Houses Windmills Beef  Latitude Longitude	<b>Industry:</b> Textiles-New England Automobile- Detroit Steel-Pittsburgh  <b>Transportation:</b> Moving Resourc Moving Iron Ore Natl. Markets

Moving West (USII.3a)	
Reasons to move	
Transcontinental RR	
Gold/Silver	
New Beginning	
Indian Policies	
Reservations	
Little Bighorn	
Chief Joseph	
Discrimination	
Chinese	
Irish	
<b>Growing Cities:</b>	
<b>Immigration (USII.3b)</b>	
Reasons to Immigrate	
1. Religion	
2. Government	
3. Adventure	
Ellis Island	
Tenements	
Ghettos	
Political Machines	
Settlement Houses	
Jane Addams	
Hull House	
<b>Industry (USII.3b,d)</b>	
Steel-Pittsburgh	
Packing-Chicago	
Urbanization	
Rockefeller-oil	
Carnegie-steel	
Ford-cars	
Advertising	
Low cost production	
Materials	
Energy	
Inventions	
Finance	
Mechanization	
Mail Order	
<b>Progressive Era (USII.3b,c,e)</b>	
Child Labor	
Work Hours	
Work Safety	
Unions (AFL)	
Samuel Gompers	
Strikes (Homestead)	
Suffrage	
Susan B Anthony	
19th Amendment	
Temperance Movement	
18th Amendment	
Segregation	
Jim Crow Laws	
Booker T Washington	
WEB Dubois	
<b>Imperialism (USII.4a)</b>	
Spanish American War	
Cuba & Spain	
American Support	
USS Maine	
Yellow Journalism	
Results of War	
Cuban Independence	
US Possessions	
Guam	
Philippines	
Puerto Rico	

World War I (USII.4b)	
Allied Powers	
Central Powers	
Reasons for War	
Reasons for US entry	
Sub Warfare	
Lusitania	
US & Great Britain	
Isolationism	
US World Power	
League of Nations	
Woodrow Wilson	
US did not join L.O.N.	
<b>The Roaring 20's (USII.5a,b,c)</b>	
Technology	
Rural Life	
Transportation	
Assembly Line-cars	
Industries (oil, coal, steel)	
Suburbs	
Wright Brothers	
Henry Ford	
Telephones	
Alexander G Bell	
Radio	
Guglielmo Marconi	
David Sarnoff	
Movies	
Electrification	
Labor Saving Products	
Lighting	
Entertainment	
Prohibition	
18th, 21st Amendments	
Speakeasies	
Bootleggers/Crime	
Great Migration	
Jobs	
Discrimination	
KKK-violence	
Harlem Renaissance	
Jacob Lawrence-Art	
Langston Hughes-Lit	
Georgia O'Keefe	
F Scott Fitzgerald	
"Jazz Age"	
John Steinbeck	
"Grapes of Wrath"	
Aaron Copland	
George Gershwin	
Music-Jazz	
Louis Armstrong	
Duke Ellington	
Besie Smith	
<b>Great Depression (USII.5d)</b>	
Causes	
Bank Failures	
Federal Reserve	
High Tariffs	
Life in 20's (Stocks)	
Stock Market Crash	
25% Unemployment	
Homeless	
Farmers	
Dust Bowl	
Franklin Roosevelt	
New Deal Programs	
Federal Work Programs	
Environment Programs	
Farm Assistance Prog's	
Labor	

## Appendix C: “The How” – Giving Information To Students

Marshall and Marie’s PowerPoint on Analytical Writing



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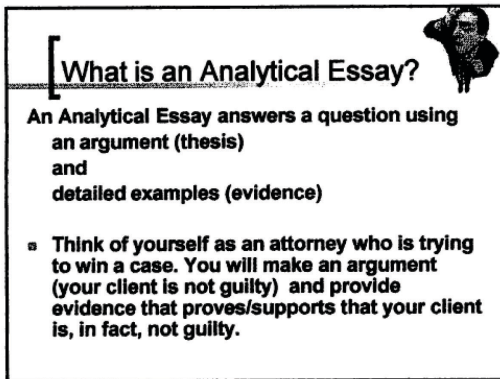
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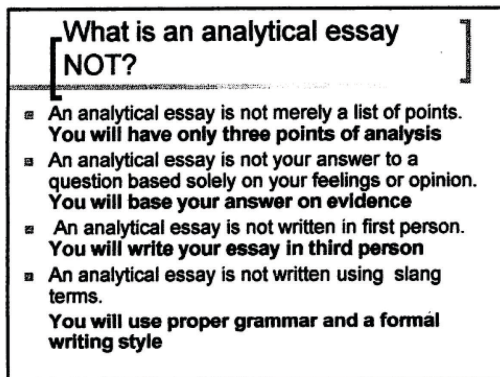
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[ Example analytical essay assignment ]

**Discuss whether or not 8th graders should have their curfew hours extended.**

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[ Step One: Writing your First Paragraph ]

- Your first paragraph must include two things:
  - An introduction
  - A thesis statement
- The introduction consists of the first four or five sentences of your first paragraph
- The introduction gets the reader's head in the game- you inform your reader what your essay topic is
- Your thesis statement is the last sentence of the first paragraph in which you answer the essay prompt

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[ Here is an example of how NOT to write an introduction: ]

- Mommy and Daddy, I've been thinking a lot about curfews lately. Many of my friends are now allowed to stay out later and I think it's time you thought about extending my curfew.

**Where has this writer gone wrong?**



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**[ Analytical Version-Intro ]**

- Middle school children are often thinking of their curfew and possibly extending it. This is especially true when these children are comparing their curfew to those of their peers.
- **What did this write do better here?**

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**[ Right after the introduction in the first paragraph- Thesis Statement ]**

- A thesis statement is map to tell the reader where you two are going. It tells the reader how you answer the question posed in the writing prompt.
- Your thesis statement must have what are called points of analysis. You have to have three points of analysis- reasons for why you are answering the question the way you are.

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**[ Analytical Version-Thesis ]**

- Adults should extend their 8<sup>th</sup> grade child's curfew from 10 to 11pm if that child has exhibited responsibility, and because the child is getting older. Finally, extending an 8<sup>th</sup> graders curfew will lead to less time rushing to get home and less accidents while out.
- **What is the thesis statement?**
- **What are the three points of analysis?**



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**The Body of the Essay:  
Evidence and Explanation**

Each body paragraph must include evidence that supports your thesis and an explanation for how it supports your thesis

**Topic Sentence:**

If their child has exhibited responsibility, adults should extend the curfew of their 8th grader from 10 to 11pm

**Evidence that supports this point:**

Showing responsibility indicates that a youth is maturing.

**Explanation for how this point supports thesis:**

As youth mature, it is a natural progression that they will stay out longer with friends. This is part of growing up. If the youth is exhibiting responsibility, this is a good indicator that he or she is maturing and should thus be allowed to stay out one hour longer.

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**The Body of the Essay:  
Paragraph Conclusions**

- Each paragraph must be ended with a summing up of what you just discussed
- Wrap up what you have just said by reminding the reader that your thesis is correct based on the point of analysis you just presented in that particular paragraph

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**Step 3:  
Last Paragraph of Essay: Conclusion**

- End your essay with a conclusion. The conclusion takes what your essay has argued and briefly summarizes each of your three points of analysis, emphasizing the validity of your thesis statement
- DO NOT WRITE, "MY THESIS IS CORRECT BECAUSE..."
- You may also take this opportunity to make it personal with a short story of your own.

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## Public Speaking:



- Your presentation must be memorized
  - Your presentation must be at least one minute long
- 1st- Introduce the topic in an interesting way  
2nd- State your thesis  
3rd- Present your three points of analysis and explain how they support your thesis  
4th- Conclude your presentation

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## Public Speaking Tips:



- Know what you are going to say
- Make eye contact with audience
- Move your hands in a way that lets the audience know when you are moving on to a new point
- Practice standing and holding your hands so that you don't look awkward
- Speak up! Project your voice so that your audience is engaged
- Practice your presentation in front of friends, family, on the bus, at practice... in your sleep....

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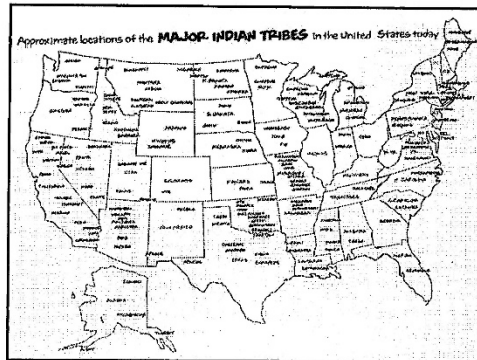
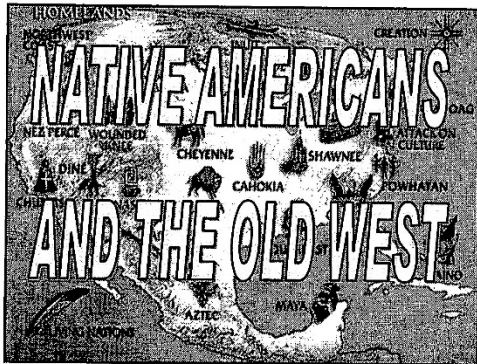
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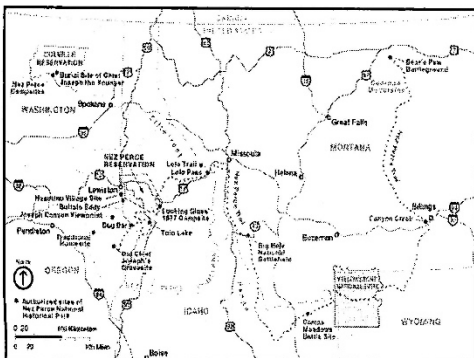
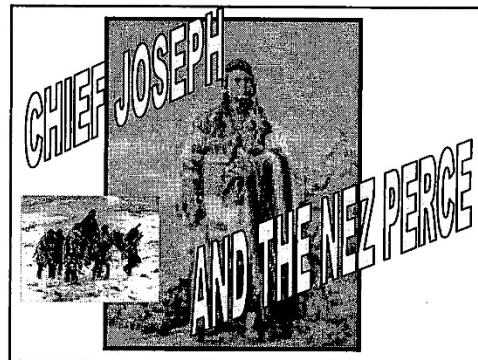


Chris's PowerPoint on Moving West



## QUICK NOTES

**"Indians":** Native American people. Named "indians" by Christopher Columbus.



## "I will fight no more forever"

# QUICK NOTES

**Chief Joseph:** Tried to lead his tribe to safety in Canada.

He finally surrendered saying, "I will fight no more forever."

**Nez Perce:** Chief Joseph's people

# THE BATTLE OF LITTLE BIGHORN

Or "Custer's Last Stand"

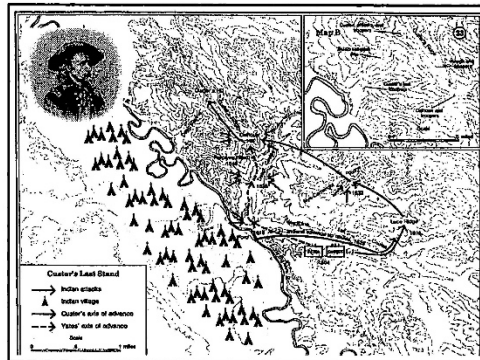
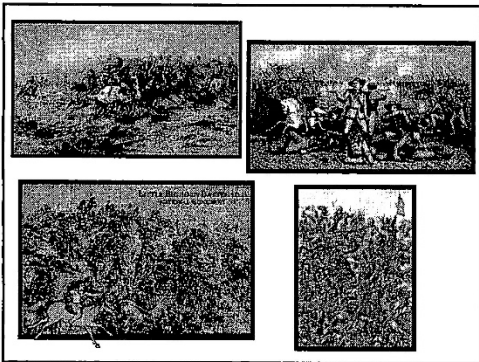
Starring...

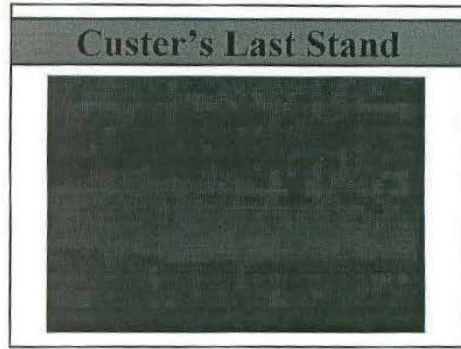
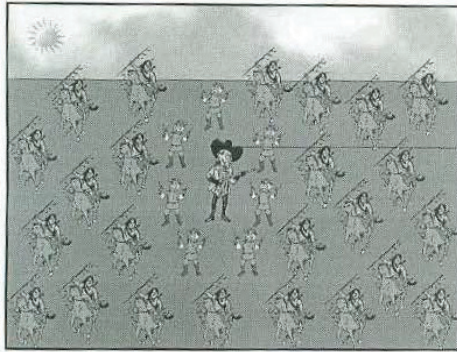


# QUICK NOTES

**George Custer:** Colonel who was responsible for "controlling the Indians"

**Sitting Bull & Crazy Horse:** Indian Chiefs who fought Custer and his men.

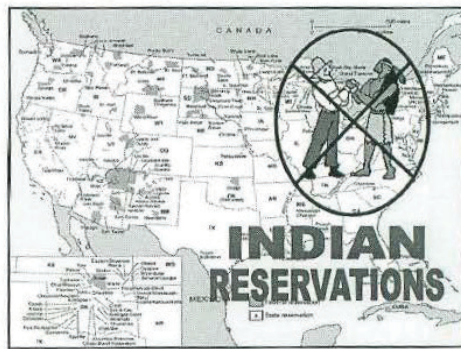




## QUICK NOTES

**Little Bighorn:** River in Montana where Custer and his men were killed.

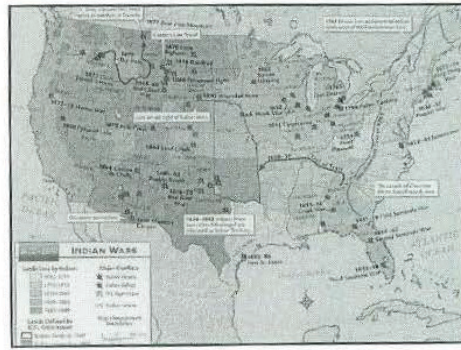
**“Custer’s Last Stand:** Important battle because it was the last victory for the Indians against the “white man”

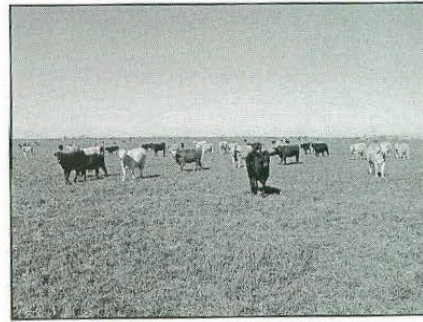
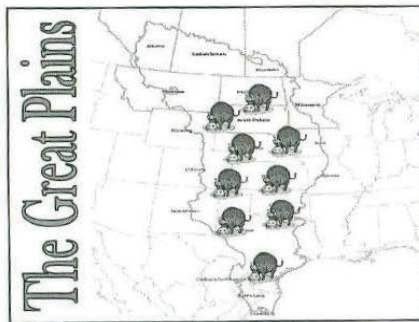
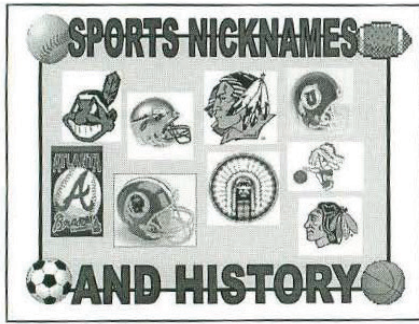


## QUICK NOTES

**Reservations:** Land white men set aside for Native Americans to live.

The Indians did not like being “forced” to live here.










## QUICK NOTES

**The Great Plains:** The area in the Central United States used for farming.

1. Flat, Grassy Land
2. Low Rainfall
3. Frequent Dust Storms

Windmill	Used to pump water from deep wells. Used to water crops.	
Steel Plow	Used to break up the ground easier.	
Barbed Wire	Used to fence in property. Wood would rot.	
Sod Houses	Better in hot, windy conditions. These were sturdier.	
Dry Farming	sgf	

**Appendix D: “The How” – Supplemental Opportunities to Process**

Renee’s Reading Log

	<b>Beginning of Story</b>	
<b>Setting</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>Plot (Storyline)</b>
<p>This is the part of historical fiction that you shouldn’t change: the time and place tell about the history. Describe <b>where</b> the story begins using a lot of detail and sensory words (imagery).</p> <p><b>When</b> is the story taking place? What year, season, time of day, etc.?</p>	<p>Start with only two characters. Who is the character? What is their personality like? How do they dress? Help your audience know this person.</p> <p><b>Character 1</b></p> <p><b>Character 2</b></p>	<p>What is happening as your story gets started? What is going on between the characters? Remember, it’s only about the beginning, not the whole story!</p>

## Marie's and Marshall's Analytical Writing Guide



### The 3 Laws of Analytical Writing

You will write a lot in this wonderful and exciting course (insert moans and groans of pain here). Your writing in civics and other social science courses will be primarily analytical. To get you ready to write analytically, Teller and Levinson will lay out the 3 laws for doing so below.

#### 1. THOU SHALT NOT WRITE IN FIRST OR SECOND PERSON

- a. Sentences **SHOULD NOT** contain the following words: *I, me, we, you, our*
- b. Sentences **SHOULD BE** written in THIRD PERSON containing words such as: *they, he, she, it, one*

Example of a **non-analytical** sentence written in **first person**:

Example of an **analytical** sentence written in **third person**:

#### 2. THOU SHALT NOT WRITE AN OPINION

- a. Analytical writing contains arguments based on information that you have discovered. When writing an analytical essay NEVER begin a sentence by stating, "I believe..." or "In my opinion..." or "I think..."  
Rather, state your point as fact and then back it up with evidence!

Example of **non-analytical** writing- **your opinion**:

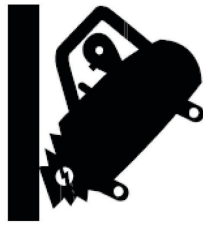
Example of **analytical** writing- **state your point**:

#### 3. THOU SHALT NOT USE SLANGE

- a. You don't want people who read your writing believing that you had an opinion that was clouding your judgment or ability to use facts or evidence.
- b. Analytical writing is very formal. You are not writing a note to a friend. Rather, you are trying to convince your civics teacher that your position is viable. You can't convince a reader of anything if you use slang – it takes away your credibility and makes you seem unreliable.

Example of **non-analytical** writing- **use of slang**:

Example of **analytical sentence**- **use of proper language**



## Writing an Impact Analysis

### Definitions:

Impact: The power of an event to produce changes

Analysis:

### Different ways a current event may impact society:

*Political-*

*Economic-*

*Social-*

*Technological-*

*Intellectual-*

### Practice writing an analysis of impact of event on society:

## Appendix E: “The How” – Additional Opportunities to Practice/Process

### Chris’s Textbook Questions

#### Book 7, Chapter 22 “Immigrants Speak”

1. Who are *Immigrants*?
2. Why did Carl Shurz move to America? How did he find success in America?
3. Why did so many Irish people move to America before the Civil War?
4. Why did other immigrants come to America?
5. Using the graph on page 114, in what year did the most immigrants arrive in America?
6. What problems did immigrants have in America? (Describe at least 2)
7. Describe how most immigrants traveled to America. Where did most Immigrants arrive when they got here?

#### Book 7, Chapter 27 “Are You a Citizen If You Can’t Vote?”

1. What does the term *suffrage* mean?
2. Who got the right to vote first-African Americans or Women?
3. What does the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment say about who is allowed to vote?
4. What was the first territory to allow women to vote in the United States?
5. Who was Carry Nation? How did she fight against drinking alcohol?
6. What were some arguments Susan B. Anthony used after she was arrested for voting? How did the judge react to these arguments?
7. Many women also fought for the right to vote. From this chapter, find and list as many of these women as you can!



# Historical Fiction

## Day One: Today's Date is \_\_\_\_\_

- Create a prediction log
- Read the title and the first two pages.
- Predict what the book will be about.
- Create a response log.
- Read for the rest of class.

## Day Two: Today is \_\_\_\_\_

- Get the "Beginning of story" worksheet.
- Read for 15 minutes.
- Answer the "Setting" section on the worksheet.
- Answer the "Characters" section on the worksheet.
- Answer the "Plot" section on the worksheet.

## Day Three: Today is \_\_\_\_\_

- Read for 20 minutes.
- Record any new characters on your character log.
- Ask one question you have on your response log.
- Underneath the question, brainstorm ideas on how you can find the answer.
- Find the answer if you are able.

## Day Four: Today is \_\_\_\_\_

- Read for 20 minutes.
- Record any new characters on your character log.
- Sketch the setting OR a character
- Find a quote to support your drawing and write it on your sketch.

## Day Five: Today is \_\_\_\_\_

- Drop everything and read day!
- On your response log, make a connection. (Text to text: Text to self: Text to world)

## Day Six: Today is \_\_\_\_\_

- Find three words or terms you do not know or understand.
- Complete a vocabulary four square on one term. Use the template below.

NAME	Definition/Information
Sentence	Picture

### **Day Seven: Today is \_\_\_\_\_**

- Read for 25 minutes.
- Predict what will happen next on the prediction log.
- On your response log, write and discuss one problem from the story. Who is involved? How did the problem begin? Is the problem resolved?

### **Day Eight: Today is \_\_\_\_\_**

- Discuss with Miss Underwood where you are in the book. Develop a strategy for finishing the story.
- Read for the rest of the period.

### **After Reading Activities**

- Complete “Historical Fiction Reflection Questions” on your response log.
- Complete “End of Story” worksheet.
- Create a detailed plot diagram of your story. Get template from Miss Underwood.
- Place your mark on the Graffiti Wall.
- Complete the final project. (Get rubric and details from Miss Underwood).

## Appendix F: “The How” – Creating Materials for Students

### Chris’s Atlas Scavenger Hunt

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Industry and Immigration Atlas Scavenger Hunt

**Industry:** Use pages 78 and 79 in the Atlas to answer these questions. You may also need your region maps to answer some questions.

1. What percentage of Americans lived in urban areas in 1900?
2. What regions of the United States had the most Coal deposits?
3. In what year did the United States become the leading producer of coal in the world?
4. What things was steel used to build?
5. In what year did Samuel Gompers found the American Federation of Labor?
6. How many new states were added to the United States between 1864 and 1900?
7. What kinds of dangers did coal miners face in the mines?
8. Why was coal useful? What was it used to power?

**Immigration:** Use pages 82 and 83 in the Atlas to answer these questions. You may also need your region maps to answer some questions.

1. How many immigrants entered the United States between 1895 and 1914?
2. Where did the largest group of immigrants come from between 1895 and 1929?
3. About how many Italian immigrants came to the USA in 1920?
4. How were Settlement Houses helpful to new immigrants?
5. How many different groups of immigrants lived in the Chicago neighborhood pictured on page 82?
6. In which region of the USA were the biggest cities located in 1890?
7. In what year was the peak of Polish immigration?
8. In what year did literacy tests cut immigrants from coming to this country?

# Historical Fictione Final Project Menu

You must complete 100 points total using any variation of points below.

Type of Project	Explanation	Point Value
Brochure	Create a travel brochure to the setting of the story. Must include colorful pictures, restaurants, things to do and hotels.	30
Newspaper Article	Create a newspaper article of a major event in your story. Must include a picture and the 5 W's of the event.	30
Song List	Create a list of ten songs you feel reflect events in your story. They can be songs from the time period and/or songs you feel could be representative of the book. You MUST include detailed explanations for why you chose each song.	15
Clothing Design	Design outfits for two characters in the story.	30
Essay	Write a 2-3 page essay on one of the following: characterization, historical accuracy, themes, plot analysis or any other approved topic.	70
Job Description	Create a detailed job description for a character in your story. It must have duties, wage and hours needed.	15

Unwritten Chapter	Write another ending to your story. Must be 3-5 pages double spaced.	70
Review	Create a review of your story. Must include what you liked and disliked. At the bottom should be a rating scale.	15
Reflective Poem(s)	Write a poem reflective of your story OR find five poems which accurately represent your story. If you choose the second option, you must include a detailed description of why you chose those particular poems.	30
Diorama	Construct a scene from your story using a box and items to go into it.	85
Poster	Create a poster showing characters, settings, climax, and a historical description.	85
Lesson Plan	Create a 40 minute lesson plan to use with your story.	70
Fact or Fiction?	Make a list of eight events from your story. Research the historical accuracy of each and create game cards for each.	30
Game	Create a game to be associated with your story.	85

I Choose \_\_\_\_\_

## Marie's and Marshall's Document Based Question Project (Sampling of Pages)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### DBQ: Voting in America

#### **Historical Context:**

The United States is based on the principle of representative democracy in which power is held by all citizens who elect representatives to govern on their behalf. Additionally, the United States is based on federalism, a form of government in which power is divided between the national government and the states. The national government, however, is supreme. Throughout American history, citizens have had to struggle against state laws that either blocked or limited their right to vote. Due to these actions taken by citizens, and the subsequent response of the federal government, voting rights have expanded slowly throughout the country's history.

- **Directions:** The following question is based on accompanying documents in Part A. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of the document and the author's point of view. Be sure to:
  1. Carefully read the document-based question. Consider what you already know about this topic from information discussed in class. How would you answer the document with the information discussed in class?
  2. Now, read each document carefully, underlining key phrases and words that address the document-based question. You may also wish to use the margin to make brief notes. Answer the questions that follow the document.
  3. Based on your own knowledge and on the information found in the documents, formulate a thesis that directly answers the question.
  4. Organize supportive and relevant information into a brief outline.
  5. Write a well organized essay proving your thesis. The essay should be logically presented and should include information both from the documents and from information presented in class outside of these documents. Remember to internally cite each document in your essay.

**Question:** *Discuss how American citizens have addressed the challenges of representative democracy, and what steps the United States government has taken to meet these challenges. What is currently the biggest challenge to maintaining that representative democracy?*

**\*Discuss:** *To make observations about something using facts, reasoning and argument. To present in some detail*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**DBQ: Voting in America (continued)**

**Part A: The following documents will help you understand voting in the United States. Examine each document carefully, and answer the question or questions that follow.**

**Document 1**

These excerpts are from the Constitution of the United States:

**15<sup>th</sup> Amendment: (Ratified 1870)**

*The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.*

**19<sup>th</sup> Amendment: (Ratified 1920)**

*The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.*

**24<sup>th</sup> Amendment: (Ratified 1964)**

*The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.*

Taken together, what actions has the government taken to change voting rights in America? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Taken together, how do these amendments address representation in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why do you think government has taken this action? Has this action been successful?

---

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**DBQ: Voting in America (continued)**

**Document 2**

**Conclusions from the 2004 Presidential Elections**

**Who Votes:** According to the U.S. Census Report, the following statements describe the citizens who make it to the polls.

Non-Hispanic whites constitute most of the voting-age citizen population.	Native citizens are more likely to register and vote than naturalized citizens.
Women are more likely to vote.	The peak age group for voting was between 65-74 years of age.
Married people are more likely to vote.	People with more education, higher incomes and jobs are more likely to vote.
Homeowners and longtime residents are more likely to vote.	People in the Midwest are most likely to register and vote.
Most people vote in person instead of using absentee ballots.	Voting rates are higher in states with same-day registration.

What broad, general assumption can be made about who votes in American can be made from this document?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Figure out by reading the chart which groups have the lowest voter turnout? \_\_\_\_\_

What conclusions based on voter turn-out can you make about our representative democracy?

\_\_\_\_\_




Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**DBQ: Voting in America (continued)**

**Document 4**

This excerpt discusses Section 2 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act



**Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act**

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits voting practices or procedures that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or membership in one of the language minority groups identified in Section 4(f)(2) of the Act. Most of the cases arising under Section 2 since its enactment involved challenges to at-large election schemes, but the section's prohibition against discrimination in voting applies nationwide to any voting standard, practice, or procedure that results in the denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group. Section 2 is permanent and has no expiration date as do certain other provisions of the Voting Rights Act.

Source: US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, [http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/sec\\_2/about\\_sec2.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/sec_2/about_sec2.html)

What challenge to a true representative democracy is addressed by passing this legislation? (Think about what was happening on the state level in the southern states)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why was this act necessary? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

As a result of this document, whose right to vote is protected? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does this act strengthen the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment? \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

DBQ: Voting in America (continued)

Document 8

This excerpt discusses apathy and low voter turnout. (From K. O'Connor & L. Sabato, *American Government*, 2006, pp. 499-500.)

**Does Low Voter Turnout Matter?**

Some political observers have argued that nonvoting is not a critical problem. For example, some believe that the preferences of nonvoters are not much different from those who do vote. If this is true, the results would be about the same if everyone voted. Others contend that because laws forbid the denial of the vote to previously disfranchised groups---African Americans, women, Hispanics---nonvoting is voluntary.

We should not be too quick to accept these arguments. First, voters do not represent nonvoters; the social make-up and attitudes of present day nonvoters are significantly different from those of voters. Nonvoters tend to be low income, younger, blue collar, less educated, and more heavily minority. A political system that actively seeks to include and mobilize these people might well produce broader-based policies that differ from those we have today.

How do the authors argue that non-voting is a problem in a representative democracy?

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---

How do the authors suggest voter apathy be addressed? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

DBQ: Voting in America (continued)

Putting it all together:

1. Historically, what have been the challenges of achieving a true representative democracy?
2. How have American citizens addressed these challenges?
3. How has the federal government addressed these challenges?
4. What level of government had the laws that disenfranchised citizens?
5. Why is it necessary for the federal government to take final action in addressing these challenges?
  
6. Let's review how an the US Constitution is amended so that you don't misinterpret the actions taken by the USG in your paper.
7. Make a list of oppressive laws faced by women as a result of their lack of voting rights:
8. Make a list of oppressive laws faced by African Americans as a result of their lack of voting rights:

## Appendix G: “The How” – Creating Materials Collaboratively

Marie and Marshall exchanged emails like these, passing materials back and forth as they refined their plans. (Images have been altered to remove all identifying information.)

**From:**  
**To:**  
**Cc:** [mlisanti@vt.edu](mailto:mlisanti@vt.edu)  
**Subject:** RE: Impact Lesson  
**Date:** Thursday, May 21, 2009 6:04:47 AM  
**Attachments:** [Impact Lesson.doc](#)

---

Okay, I added a blurb about impact. The best way I could explain it to myself was:  
To interpret the meaning and implications of the data you have gathered.

No way they would know what the hell I was talking about. I watered that down quite a bit and maybe too much to:  
To make meaning of the information you have discussed.

Again, that may be too simple but it might be simple enough for them to grasp. I added that to the sheet in red so we can play with it and I'm attaching it here.

-----Original Message-----

**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 20, 2009 3:05 PM  
**To:** [mlisanti@vt.edu](mailto:mlisanti@vt.edu)  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Re: Impact Lesson

I'm going to look it over this evening. This looks awesome and will be helpful to our sanity and maybe, just maybe the students will use it.

>>> 5/20/2009 12:11 PM >>>

I am going to slowly work on this thang. If you have anything to add, put it in red. I have some stuff at home to add. I think that this will be a really good way to start current events next year- we will get better second paragraphs.

**From:**  
**To:**  
**Cc:** [Melissa Lisanti](#)  
**Subject:** very rough work on impact  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 26, 2009 6:42:12 AM  
**Attachments:** [Impact Analysis.doc](#)  
[Impact Lesson.doc](#)

---

Okay, I have to get to morning bus duty- and I forget which one I am working on. The one with the red and an explanation of impacts is the latest. Just toss the other one- I have no idea what the heck I am doing!!!!!!

**From:**  
**To:** [.mlisanti@vt.edu](mailto:.mlisanti@vt.edu)  
**Subject:** the right one  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 26, 2009 8:43:36 AM  
**Attachments:** [Impact Lesson.doc](#)

---

Disregard the first one I sent. This is what I got so far but it is very very very rough. I can't find a good def. for analysis. But I think I am getting there-  
What do you think so far?  
I am hoping that if we open strong on this portion of the assignment it will reap a better crop of current events and essays.

## Appendix H: “The How” – Rubrics and Assessments

### DBQ Scoring Rubric

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Task:	Points:	Teacher Evaluation:
<b>Thesis:</b> Clearly stated thesis statement is underlined and has 3 distinct points that answer the question.	10	
<b>Documents:</b> Essay uses all 7 documents, grouped appropriately to support thesis.	10	
<b>Documents:</b> Essay includes contents of documents as supporting evidence.	15	
<b>Documents:</b> Essay supports thesis with appropriate explanation of all of the documents.	15	
<b>Topic Sentences:</b> Each paragraph has topic sentences that links back to thesis statement	5	
<b>Concluding Sentences:</b> Each paragraph has a concluding sentence that relates to the thesis and topic sentence of each paragraph.	5	
<b>Conclusion:</b> Essay has a conclusion that reflects thought and analysis of essay question.	5	
<b>Essay is analytically written with close attention paid to grammar and documents are cited properly</b>	10	
<b>Point Total</b>	75	

Collected Separately For Homework Grade:

- Rough Draft
- Outline
- Documents with answers

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

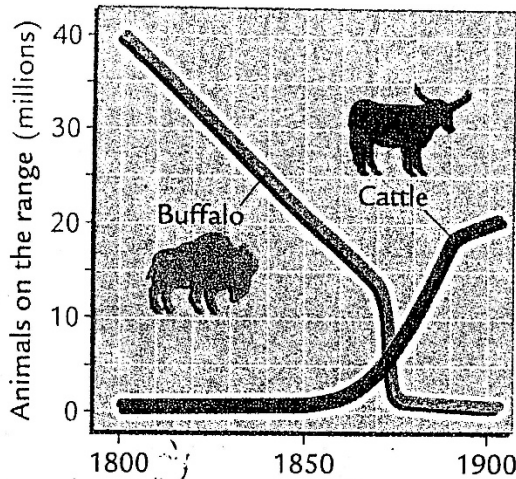
### The WEST Test

#### I. Multiple Choice

1. When did the Gold Rush begin?
  - A. 1800
  - B. 1849
  - C. 1900
  - D.
  
2. What did the Homestead Act do?
  - A. Gave out free Gold in the west
  - B. Gave out free Cattle in the west
  - C.
  - D. Gave out free Land in the west
  
3. The Transcontinental Railroad was built to
  - A. Connect the East and West
  - B. Connect the North and South
  - C. Connect Europe and Asia
  - D.
  
4. White settlers broke treaties with Native Americans. What is a **treaty**?
  - A. A slang term for food
  - B. An agreement
  - C. A reservation
  - D.
  
5. What event occurred at the Little Big Horn River?
  - A.
  - B. The Transcontinental Railroad was connected
  - C. Gold was discovered
  - D. The last victory for Native Americans
  
6. What was a result of the Transcontinental Railroad being built?
  - A. Western settlers could travel easier
  - B.
  - C. Indians were being pushed onto reservations
  - D. All of these were results
  
7. What is a **reservation**?
  - A. Land for Miners
  - B.
  - C. Land for Homesteaders
  - D. Land for Indians

## II. Using a Graph

Using the information from the graph, answer the following questions:



- How many buffalo were on the range in the United States in the year 1800?
  - E.
  - F. 40 thousand
  - G. 30 million
  - H. 40 million
- In what year were there more cattle than buffalo?
  - F.
  - G. 1820
  - H. 1850
  - J. 1880
- What do you think caused such a DECREASE in buffalo?
  - A. Indians killed all the animals
  - B. Settlers killed all the animals
  - C. Storms killed all the animals
  - D.



Chris's Quick Quiz (Embedded in PowerPoint Lessons)

<b>Jumpstarter 10/14</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Please have a seat</li><li>2. Write your name on the Quick Quiz paper</li><li>3. Look over your Industry Quick Notes</li><li>4. You will have your Quick Quiz in 3 minutes!</li></ol>

<b>Quick Quiz 10-14</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Andrew Carnegie made his fortune from what business?</li><li>2. What kind of business raises money by selling stocks?</li><li>3. What is it called when 1 company controls the whole business?</li><li>4. Meatpacking was largest in what city?</li><li>5. How did Henry Ford produce cheaper cars?</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Steel</li><li>2. Corporation</li><li>3. Monopoly</li><li>4. Chicago</li><li>5. Assembly lines</li></ol>

Chris's notebook check captures the unit's activities.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Moving West</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Student Grade</b>	<b>Teacher Grade</b>
15-Sep	West Vocabulary (3 Synonyms)	10		
18-Sep	Bk. 7, Chap. 11 Questions	10		
19-Sep	Bk. 7, Chap. 13 Questions	10		
21-Sep	Bk. 7, Chap. 15 Questions	10		
21-Sep	Atlas Scavenger Hunt	10		
25-Sep	Bk. 7, Chap. 18 Questions	10		
25-Sep	Chief Joseph Quick Sketch	10		
27-Sep	Custer's Last Stand Quick Sketch	10		
	West Quick Notes	5		
	Jumpstarters/Brain Pop Quizzes	5		
	Table of Contents (up to date)	5		
	Neatness	5		
	Moving West Cover Page	Bonus +2		
	<b>Total</b>	100		

## Appendix I: IRB Materials



Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497)  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-4991 Fax 540/231-0959  
e-mail moored@vt.edu  
www.irb.vt.edu

FWA00000572( expires 1/20/2010)  
IRB # is IRB00000667

DATE: April 28, 2009

### MEMORANDUM

TO: David Hicks  
Melissa Lisanti

FROM: David M. Moore

Approval date: 4/28/2009  
Continuing Review Due Date: 4/13/2010  
Expiration Date: 4/27/2010

SUBJECT: **IRB Expedited Approval:** "Teaching, Standards, and Institutions", IRB # 09-235

This memo is regarding the above-mentioned protocol. The proposed research is eligible for expedited review according to the specifications authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. As Chair of the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, I have granted approval to the study for a period of 12 months, effective April 28, 2009.

As an investigator of human subjects, your responsibilities include the following:

1. Report promptly proposed changes in previously approved human subject research activities to the IRB, including changes to your study forms, procedures and investigators, regardless of how minor. The proposed changes must not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.
2. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.
3. Report promptly to the IRB of the study's closing (i.e., data collecting and data analysis complete at Virginia Tech). If the study is to continue past the expiration date (listed above), investigators must submit a request for continuing review prior to the continuing review due date (listed above). It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain re-approval from the IRB before the study's expiration date.
4. If re-approval is not obtained (unless the study has been reported to the IRB as closed) prior to the expiration date, all activities involving human subjects and data analysis must cease immediately, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.

**Important:**

If you are conducting **federally funded non-exempt research**, please send the applicable OSP/grant proposal to the IRB office, once available. OSP funds may not be released until the IRB has compared and found consistent the proposal and related IRB applicaton.

cc: File

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*An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution*

#### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 7, 2015  
**TO:** David Hicks, Melissa Wall Lisanti  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Teaching, Standards, and Institutions  
**IRB NUMBER:** 09-235

Effective April 7, 2015, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the Continuing Review request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

#### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6,7**  
Protocol Approval Date: **April 28, 2015**  
Protocol Expiration Date: **April 27, 2016**  
Continuing Review Due Date\*: **April 13, 2016**

\*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

#### FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

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Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

\* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

**VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects**

Project Name: Planning, Teaching, and Institutions in Education

Investigators: Melissa Lisanti, Doctoral Candidate, History and Social Science Education  
Dr. David Hicks, Associate Professor, School of Education

April, 2009

Dear (Teacher's Name),

I am a graduate student at Virginia Tech in Curriculum and Instruction. I would like to invite you to work with me as a participant on a research project which is part of my dissertation. The study's focus is how teachers design instruction in an era of standards-based reform. Furthermore, I am hoping to learn more about how the work of teaching is coordinated, organized, and/or managed across classrooms, schools, and districts. With the county's approval, I hope to work with at two to four teachers responsible for social studies instruction. If you are interested in more information, you may contact me at Virginia Tech. My contact information is included at the end of this letter.

I am interested in capturing the complex acts that go into designing instruction. To that end, I would like to spend time with you as think about and plan instruction. I intend for this research to be collegial and conversational. You may withdraw from the study at any time by telling me that you no longer wish to participate or by contacting any of the people listed at the end of this letter. Withdrawing will not affect your standing in the school district in any way.

If you volunteer to participate we will work together as follows.

- I will visit with you two or more times to discuss lesson planning in a setting and format that is comfortable for you. I can see you more often if you prefer; the visits and schedule will be structured at your discretion. I can visit during planning periods or before or after school. I know that there are many different ways to plan. I can be very flexible, visiting when and where you naturally think about your upcoming instruction. I can also interview you, if that format makes most sense. If you agree, I will audio record these sessions. However, you may participate even if you do not wish to be recorded. I have included a separate consent form for audio recording at the bottom of this form.
- Our conversations could be organized one of several ways. You may opt to allow me to talk with you as you plan some upcoming instruction. You may talk with me about the processes that you used to design instruction in the recent past. Finally, you may choose an interview format about planning instruction. As we talk, I will be interested in finding out about how you juggle the complex demands on your class time to provide instruction to your students. I would like to learn about what documents and resources you use in your planning, how you decide what content to teach, with whom you talk about instruction, policies that you manage, et cetera. It is important to note that I do not expect planning to look a particular way. As a former teacher, I understand how varied those processes are and that they often

happen in fleeting moments and conversations throughout the day. It is this complexity that must be captured in research on teaching.

- I would also like to visit your classroom, should our conversations take place in an alternative location. It is helpful for me to see how spaces are organized, what tools and resources are useful and not, and how all kinds of texts are positioned from books to the white/blackboard. I may ask your permission to photograph spaces when they are empty of people.

As a former teacher, I am sensitive to the intrusion and discomfort posed by my presence. I will make every effort to minimize disruption to your schedule and activities. I will not interrupt instruction or initiate communication with you during classes, nor will I ever interact with your students for research purposes.

Additional risks to you are no greater than those incurred when you share experiences with colleagues and friends. Participating in this research offers no direct benefits to you. However, it is my hope that this kind of research can help our professional community better understand the complex work of teachers.

I will hold recordings, transcripts, and notes in confidence in a locked cabinet in my home. However, I will reference *unidentified* data in my dissertation. I will also likely seek to publish analyses of my data in the future. Given the size of the study and the community in which we work, I cannot promise that others will not recognize you. I will replace your name and school names with code numbers and pseudonyms, making every effort to keep your identity confidential.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or the protection of human research subjects, you may contact:

Melissa Lisanti  
Graduate Assistant  
History and Social Science Education  
220 War Memorial Hall  
Blacksburg, VA 24060  
Phone: (540) 231-5029  
Email: [mlisanti@vt.edu](mailto:mlisanti@vt.edu)

Dr. David Hicks  
Associate Professor  
History and Social Science Education  
225C War Memorial Hall  
Blacksburg, VA 24060  
Phone: (540) 231-8332  
Email: [hicks@vt.edu](mailto:hicks@vt.edu)

Dr. David Moore, Chair  
Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects  
Office of Research Compliance  
2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497)  
Blacksburg, VA 24060  
Phone: (540) 231-4991  
Email: [moored@vt.edu](mailto:moored@vt.edu)

If you would like to volunteer to participate, please write your name and sign below. This indicates that you have read and understand this informed consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please check the box below and sign again if you agree to audio record our conversations about planning and designing instruction. Note: You may participate in the study even if you choose not to be recorded. You may make this decision at a later time or change your mind.

Yes, I agree to audio record conversations about planning instruction. I understand that I may end the conversation or the recording at any time. I understand that I do not have to answer any question that makes me uncomfortable. Audio recordings will be kept secret and stored in a locked box. The investigator will handle all transcriptions. All identifying information will be removed from transcripts. Tapes will be destroyed as soon as transcriptions are complete.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date