ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: EXPLORING TWO SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL DECISION MAKING IN CONSTRAINED AND FLEXIBLE CURRICULAR CONTEXTS

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With current trends in K-12 education toward curriculum centralization and high-stakes test-based accountability, teachers are in a position of increasingly adapting their practices to demands that originate beyond the classroom. A synthesis of literature on the relationship between these external influences and secondary social studies teaching suggests that indirect accountability echoes and direct school-institutional pressures reinforce pedagogical practices that are not well aligned with empirical evidence of how adolescents learn, particularly in the well-researched discipline of history. Not surprisingly, variations abound in how teachers filter external controls into the curricular and pedagogical decisions that manifest in the classroom.

What follows is an examination of how an early-career and an experienced social studies teacher engage in pedagogical reasoning and activity under two concurrent yet distinct sets of curricular conditions: one in which the external controls of mandated curricula, instructional tools, and summative high-stakes tests are present, and another in which they are not. Two overarching questions are central to this study. First, what

patterns of pedagogical reasoning and action manifest in each curricular context? Second, how do the teachers negotiate the various personal and external influences on their pedagogies as they work within and across the two markedly different contexts?

I chose an instrumental case study methodology as a means of vicariously representing the experiences of the two participants and generating small-scale theories about factors that impact teachers' mediation of different curricular structures within the current political-institutional context. Via this research, I posit two key arguments: 1) that teachers' epistemic stances and school-political positions are consequential to their ways of reasoning and acting pedagogically amidst the rising tide of test-based accountability; and 2) that teaching within flexible curricular contexts can provide a framework for critiquing the effects of, and tools for adapting to, tightly controlled contexts. Positing a link between the development of teaching expertise and an adaptive, pragmatic approach to pedagogical reasoning and action, this study's findings make a meaningful contribution to current conversations about the roles of social studies teachers as curriculum arbiters and how, why, and to what extent their decisional capital ought to be cultivated.

EXPLORING TWO SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL DECISION MAKING IN CONSTRAINED AND FLEXIBLE CURRICULAR CONTEXTS

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2012

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This work is dedicated to my wife, Jamie; to my daughters, Sophie and Paige; and to the courageous, innovative teachers we need to help them and their peers realize their full potential as active democratic citizens in school and society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing a doctoral program can be an effective way to affirm one's friends in the world. Certainly this was true in my case. Many made notable sacrifices of time and energy on my behalf to ensure that I had whatever resources and support I needed to get started and keep going. Some couldn't understand why anyone would choose to be in college for more than a decade, yet they encouraged me nonetheless. Others pushed me to more thoughtful places, investing their headspaces in lengthy and often inconclusive discussions with me about teaching, learning, and schooling. A few provided a bit of perspective and levity when it all seemed like it was getting too heavy. A firm believer in the power of the collective to influence what an individual can accomplish, I'm incredibly thankful for these friends and humbled by their care.

First, to my wife, Jamie, without whom this never would have been possible, thank you for believing in and motivating me. Every day, it is a privilege to be your partner. To my lovely girls, Sophie and Paige, you inspire me to try hard, to make good decisions, and do the right things. I hope the feeling is mutual as you grow, learn, and become accomplished young women in your own rights. To my supportive extended family – my parents, siblings, in-laws, and other Meuwissens, Fergusons, Cotters, and Sleves – you've helped me in countless ways to be an aspirant family man, friend, citizen, scholar, and teacher.

During my first year at the University of Maryland, Dr. Patricia Alexander used the term "academic family" to characterize the community of scholars that push folks in my position to grow as thinkers, critics, and collaborators, and eventually to contribute meaningful ideas to their fields. I find her metaphor to be wholly appropriate. To my scholarly patriarch, Dr. Bruce VanSledright, I am enormously grateful for your invaluable guidance and friendship. Thank you for your advocacy in bringing me to Maryland, and for all of the opportunities you've afforded me since. To my academic brother, Tim Kelly, and sister, Jennifer Hauver James, I am glad to have shared this journey with such thoughtful, convivial individuals and educators. My other scholarly siblings, who substantiated my belief that we develop most effectively within supportive networks of social deliberation and regeneration, include Saroja Barnes, Grace Benigno, Thurman Bridges, Chris Budano, Julia Deitering, Rona Frederick, Simone Gibson, Kristen Harris, Paul Hutchison, Lisa Katz, Matty Lau, Dan Levin, Liliana Maggioni, Anne Marie Marshall, Heidi Oliver-O'Gilvie, Gloria Park, Kim Reddy, Carol Rinke, David Rosenstein, Jordan and Heather Schugar, Jeff Shaw, A.Dee Williams, and Jack Wooden. You all made the University of Maryland an exciting and enriching place to be; thank you.

I also want to thank the members of my dissertation advisory committee, all of whom I selected out of deep respect for their work as scholars and teachers. As it turns out, they're fantastic people, too. To Drs. Peter Afflerbach, Patricia Alexander, Janet Coffey, Lisa Eaker, and Chauncey Monte-Sano, I am indebted to your counsel and patience and

appreciate the doors you've opened for me, figuratively and literally. I also wish to acknowledge Drs. Steve Koziol and Linda Valli for their extensive support.

Certainly I need thank my pseudonymous participants, Mr. Noah Andres and Ms. Elizabeth Sutton. Your stories and ideas, your hopes and concerns, and your teaching practices all make for powerful lessons that I hope are well-represented in this document. May the experiences and conclusions conveyed here contribute to others' questions and notions about teaching and learning as much as you have contributed to mine.

Finally, I wish to commemorate my late father-in-law, Michael Cotter, who was a man of unwavering love and principle, a believer in the power of education, and one of my most enthusiastic supporters during this journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of figures viii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY 1
- The aim of this dissertation 4
- Rationale for the study 6
- Research questions 12
- Research method 14
- The researcher's experience 16
- Foreshadowing 21

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE 25
- What is social studies education, and what are the purposes for learning it? 27
  - *Links to learning theory* 29
- How do social studies educators teach and assess students' learning? 31
- How do social studies educators interact with their social and political contexts? 35
  - *Cases of teaching* 38
- How do social studies teachers develop pedagogical expertise? 41
  - *Representations of expertise* 42
  - *Questions about the nature of expertise* 47
- Summary and caveats 49

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD 51
- A brief explanation of my methodological grounding 53
- Research questions and their rationales 56
- What kind of case study? 60
- Selecting and soliciting the participants 65
- Noah Andres and his teaching context 66
- Elizabeth Sutton and her teaching context 72
- The context of the participants' teaching during the study 76
- Data collection 80
  - *Observations of participants' practices* 83
  - *Participant interviews* 85
  - *Curricular and instructional artifacts* 88
  - *Participants' "dilemmas of teaching" journals* 88
- Analytical framework, process, and caveats 90
  - *Challenges of this research approach* 93

CHAPTER FOUR: PEDAGOGICAL REASONING AND ACTION WITHIN THE EXTERNALLY CONTROLLED CURRICULUM 95
Noah Andres: Dilemmas in teaching "a politicized curriculum" 97
A snapshot of practice: "How important to democracy is political tolerance?" 97
Noah's pedagogical reasoning in the AP Government context 102
The interaction of contextual factors with Noah's teaching in AP Government 107
Noah's mediation of pedagogical reasoning and contextual factors in practice 111
Elizabeth Sutton: Dilemmas in "doing right by my kids" 113
A snapshot of practice: "What are your constitutional rights, as students?" 113
Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning in the NSL Government context 120
The interaction of contextual factors with Elizabeth's teaching in NSL Government 125
Elizabeth's mediation of pedagogical reasoning and contextual factors in practice 129
Summary 132

CHAPTER FIVE: PEDAGOGICAL REASONING AND ACTION WITHIN THE ELECTIVE CURRICULUM 134
Noah Andres: Dilemmas in "doing justice" to the subject matter and students 136
A snapshot of practice: "What was the international community's responsibility toward Rwanda in 1994?" 136
Noah's pedagogical reasoning in the Peace Studies context ... 145
The interaction of contextual factors with Noah's teaching in Peace Studies 149
Elizabeth Sutton: Dilemmas in "helping students accept other people's ideas as valid" 153
A snapshot of practice: "To what extent do popular conceptions of Islam actually reflect the principles and practices of the faith?" 153
Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning in the Comparative Religions context 160
The interaction of contextual factors with Elizabeth's teaching in Comparative Religions 164
Knowledge heterarchy as a source of pedagogical dilemmas 166

CHAPTER SIX: PEDAGOGICAL REASONING AND ACTION ACROSS CURRICULAR CONTEXTS 170
High stakes, different status: Comparing the AP- and state-tested contexts 171
Central claims of this dissertation 174
Teachers' epistemic stances and political positions as factors in mediating curricular and instructional constraints 179
Epistemic stances 179
Political positions 183
Synthesis and implications: Contextually consistent and principle-driven social studies teaching amidst institutional constraints 187
Navigating the accountability tide: The migration of pedagogical reasoning and action across curricular contexts 192
Reluctant compliance in the heavily constrained context 193
Negotiation and harmonization in the flexible context and their contribution to pragmatic divergence in the constrained context 196
Synthesis and implications: What promoted the migration of pedagogical reasoning and action across the teachers' curricular contexts? 200
Further discussion and conclusions 204
The typicality of Noah's and Elizabeth's teaching 204
Implications for research and practice 206

APPENDICES 210
Appendix A: Informed consent for participating teachers 211
Appendix B: Sample information letter for affected students and guardians 213
Appendix C: Classroom observation protocol 214
Appendix D: Semi-structured interview protocols 215
Appendix E: Assessment think-aloud interview prompt 217

REFERENCES 218

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: A rough comparison of the links between different epistemic stances and research traditions 54
Figure 3.2: An illustration of the research questions and their interactions 60
Figure 3.3. Research participants and their teaching contexts 80
Figure 3.4. Data collection matrix 90
Figure 6.1. Participants' representations of knowledge and learning across curricula 181
Figure 6.2. A typology of Noah and Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning and action in flexible and heavily constrained curricular contexts 193
Figure 6.3. Factors that influence teacher agency relative to Noah's and Elizabeth's cases 202

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The "educational crisis" discourse and demands for broad-brush modifications to policy and practice in American public schooling are pervasive and multidirectional. Since *A Nation at Risk* broadly declared schools in the United States to be havens for mediocrity nearly thirty years ago (National Commission of Excellence in Education, 1983), political figures, educational leaders and practitioners, and researchers have engaged in spirited dialogues about the need for changes. But there is widespread disagreement on the rationales for and intended outcomes of those changes, and the means by which they should be implemented. Currently echoing the loudest, perhaps, among policy makers and the general public, is the notion that the educational quality of American schools is diminishing, and that improvement should be driven by common standards and high-stakes assessments that arguably compel schools to develop solutions to performance deficiencies. Amidst the effects of those echoes, some scholars warn against potentially perilous outcomes of a high-stakes test-based accountability movement, including curricular and instructional depreciation, fallacious judgments of teacher performance, a general mistrust among educators and educational leaders, and other professionally stifling impacts (e.g., Au, 2007; Rothstein et al, 2010).

The shelves in the marketplace of educational change ideas are well stocked with contentions about curriculum, teaching practice, policy and leadership, and teacher education and professional development. Curriculum deliberations, for instance, have centered on its scope and specificity, its messages about what kinds of knowledge and activity ought to be represented within schooled domains, and its broader social, political,

and economic purposes (e.g., Thornton, 2008). On instruction, arguments for tightly structured routines (e.g., Lemov, 2010), prescribed beyond the classroom to be implemented by teachers-as-technicians, currently are made alongside cases for flexible, inquiry-based pedagogies that accommodate disciplinary dilemmas and cultural-contextual circumstances (e.g., Donovan & Bransford, 2005; Lampert, 2001). On policy and leadership, speculations abound regarding what promotes sustainable, high-quality teaching, from investments in teachers' knowledge through professional learning communities to reforms of teacher evaluation criteria, certification, and compensation (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). And teacher education and professional development initiatives simultaneously are lauded as pathways to epistemological and dispositional change and high-leverage instructional practices, and condemned as unaccountable and out-of-touch with the particular needs and demands of those served by schools (e.g, Ball & Forzani, 2009; Berliner, 2000)

These messages – some competing and some complementary, some in the foreground and some less prominent – permeate teachers' ideas, discourses, and practices, both overtly and covertly. It is hardly revolutionary to suggest that the products of various educational reform initiatives coalesce to affect the ways that teachers define their pedagogical aims, manage their instructional resources, evaluate what students know and are able to do, and judge the effectiveness of their work. Indeed as Valli and Beuse (2007) note, "changes in expectations for teachers' roles have been particularly striking over the two decades of educational reform that led to the high-stakes accountability climate teachers now experience with the ratification of… No Child Left Behind" (p. 520).

But how these messages manifest in teaching practice is far less clear. Consider, for instance, Cohen's seminal case of Mrs. Oublier, a math teacher caught in the swirl of entrenched personal theories of teaching and learning and policies designed to promote systematic instructional change, who presents what Cohen calls "a remarkable mélange of novel and traditional material" (Cohen, 1990, p. 311). According to Tyack and Cuban (1995), certain educational aims, beliefs, and instructional activities can be remarkably stable over time, despite the pace and power of efforts proposed and policies adopted to change them. In other words, the relationship between political-institutional forces and teachers' professional knowledge and practices are complex and uncertain. Twenty years after Cohen's study, Valli and Beuse (2007), Cornbleth (2008), and Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) describe an educational context in which powerful echoes of orderliness and objectivity within public discourse about standards and testing increasingly seem to hold sway over educational policies and teaching practices.

A mythical upshot of these echoes is the assumption that removing decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment from the classroom, aligning them externally through policy, and then reintroducing them as a prescriptive set of tools and practices for teachers to implement will generate measurable changes in student performance and conclusive evidence of teachers' effectiveness. As research repeatedly affirms, however, many forces affect teachers' instructional decisions, from their pedagogical aims, subject-matter knowledge, and personal learning theories to their relationships with students and their status in the school community (e.g., Grossman et al, 2001; Shulman, 1987). Nonetheless, as the accountability echoes grow louder, teachers

are in a position of increasingly adapting their practices to demands originating from outside the classroom.

The aim of this dissertation

The central aim of this dissertation is to explore: 1) how, under what circumstances, and to what ends teachers adapt to intensifying accountability controls in their practices; and 2) and how those practices compare to, and could be informed by, teaching under less constrained curricular and instructional conditions. What follows is an investigation, to use Shulman's (1987) phrase, of the pedagogical reasoning and activity of two secondary social studies teachers – Noah Andres, a second-year teacher, and Elizabeth Sutton, a sixteenth-year teacher – who concurrently practiced within two very different curricular contexts. One context, a National, State, and Local (NSL) Government course, was underpinned by multiple external authorities, including local curriculum guidelines, state and district-level high-stakes tests, and in Noah's case, the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) guidelines and assessments. (Herein, I refer to Noah's AP U.S. Government and Politics curriculum simply as AP Government.) It was a context in which the teachers' key roles were implementing a jam-packed, structures-of-government curriculum and preparing students for summative standardized assessments, despite more varied pedagogical aims.

By contrast, the other curricular contexts – Noah's Peace Studies course and Elizabeth's Comparative Religions course – were electives largely designed and implemented at the teachers' discretions. These courses featured no externally controlled curriculum guidelines, pacing calendars, or mandatory assessments. Consequently, the

teachers demonstrated the highest possible degrees of pedagogical autonomy within them. Noah and Elizabeth were wholly responsible for establishing the courses' curricular visions, designing instruction and assessment tools to align with those visions, evaluating the impacts of the courses, and mitigating pedagogical dilemmas that emerged therein. They also had to generate interest and participation in the courses among students with openings for electives in their schedules.

This study elucidates one novice and one experienced teacher's pedagogical practices within distinctively different curricular contexts and explores key influences on those practices. My research method produced a substantial amount of observation, interview, and artifact data related to the participants' teaching activities and processes of mediating various personal, cultural, and political influences as they made curricular and pedagogical decisions. Using evidence gleaned from my research, I posit that adopting a critically pragmatic teaching stance – or, one that is contextually consistent and draws from multiple conceivable pedagogical aims and pathways as sources for mediating restrictive curriculum controls and teaching in intellectually honest ways – is a potentially important facet of practice in current school climates. In Noah's and Elizabeth's cases, the complex pedagogical reasoning and activity they demonstrated in their elective courses: 1) enabled analysis and critique of the effects of accountability controls in their Government courses; and 2) provided them with a decision-making framework for adapting their Government teaching to emergent needs in spite of those controls.

This dissertation challenges the suggestion that the capacity to proficiently make complex, purposeful pedagogical judgments amidst what Cornbleth (2008) calls the "echo effects" of curriculum control and standardized testing develops largely through

years of classroom experience. Such a notion is perpetuated in literature suggesting that teachers inevitably progress through phases of development, from a relatively inflexible stage of acclimating to the school institution and surviving the cognitive and physical demands of teaching to making more conscious and complex curricular and instructional choices (e.g., Chubbuck et al, 2001; Kagan, 1992; Kauffman et al, 2002). Certainly in this study, the teachers' degrees of experiences impacted their social and political positions within their professional communities. Yet I also found that these two teachers' beliefs about the nature and purposes of knowledge in their domains were highly consequential in mediating their pedagogical reasoning and activity.

These cases provide a forum for reconsidering teaching expertise as an evolving process of negotiating epistemic and political positions to design and implement instruction within an increasingly restrictive school-institutional culture. Given their atypicality, it would be problematic to use Noah's and Elizabeth's cases to generalize about the experiences of early- and mid-career teachers in discrepant curricular contexts. Instead, I conceptualize them as a vehicle for raising and pursuing broader questions about pedagogical reasoning and action within social studies and teacher education amidst the current accountability climate. Throughout the rest of this chapter, I explain the rationale for investigating my research questions in the contexts I chose and provide a roadmap for the remainder of the dissertation.

Rationale for the study

A key assumption underlying this study is that social studies teachers' autonomy to modify curriculum and instruction in light of stringent guidelines and standardized

assessments is both necessary and beneficial. Thus, my rationale begins with an explanation of why this is the case.

Over the last two decades, a wealth of empirical literature on adolescents' learning and teachers' practices in the social studies domain has emerged in support of the following assertions:

1) that students' efforts to ask historical questions and interrogate sources of evidence are strengthened when first-order substance, second-order concepts (e.g., causality, significance, historical context), and investigative procedures are taught in concert (e.g., Bain, 2006; Lee, 2005);
2) that adolescents use higher-order thinking strategies toward a variety of historical and civic learning ends, from seeking to better understand their personal and community histories, to identifying and attempting to empathize with others' perspectives on a contested political question, to pulling apart truth claims and assessing their warrants (e.g., Barton & Levstik, 2004; Hess, 2009); and
3) that both of the above depend on the explicit teaching of historical reasoning and civic discourse practices, lest learners confuse history, heritage, and folklore, define the social studies domain as a collection of fixed narratives to be consumed, and miss out on the generative potential of analyzing evidence and constructing arguments through writing and discussion (e.g., Monte-Sano, 2008; VanSledright, 2011).

One might look discouragingly at the current prospects for this kind of thinking and discourse in social studies education, since it seems they are not as well supported by state policies, standards, and standardized tests, school curricula, and predominant

teaching practices as they are by the research literature (Kelly, Meuwissen, & VanSledright, 2007; VanSledright, 2008).

Put differently, educators who wish to turn to the research base on learning and teaching social studies (or primarily history, given its prominence in the literature) for pedagogical inspiration typically do so via personal accomplishments and professional networks, without the support of school-institutional guidelines and resources. Such activity could have political ramifications if teachers practice in ways that evade curricular and assessment mandates, or if their activities chafe against a restrictive or conservative school climate (Cornbleth, 2009). To complicate matters, the social studies, as a knowledge domain, have not been particularly high priorities in the policy climate of late, bearing negative consequences for the attention and resources granted to curricular and instructional development in the domain (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Gaudelli, 2006; Ravitch, 2010).

Teachers who wish to represent historical and political reasoning and discourse in intellectually honest ways face some powerful constraints in doing so. One of these constraints is policy activity. Several years ago, for instance, Florida legislators declared American history to be "factual, not constructed" and supported a collective-memory curriculum "defined [by] the creation of a new nation based largely on the universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence" (Florida House of Representatives, 2007, p. 44). As VanSledright (2008) reports, seemingly in response to a trend epitomized by this piece of legislation:

> Classrooms in which collective memory is the preoccupation turn on the 'everyday' view of history, with heavy reliance on learning to repeat a simplified

> national narrative. This leaves little room for making sense of multiple historical sources, considering and working from evidence, asking questions, developing one's own interpretation, or writing interpretive arguments" (p. 129).

Dramatic as it sounds, adapting the American history curriculum and how it is taught to facilitate student inquiry, strategic thinking, and the development of students' own interpretations is akin to breaking the law in Florida. In 2010, the Texas State Board of Education pushed through a series of standards reforms that served to downplay the interpretive nature of history and excise the Jeffersonian perspective on separating church and state (Stearns, 2010). That policymakers are so concerned about the substance of the history curriculum that they perceive a need to legislate and rewrite it serves as powerful evidence that selecting and representing the subject matter is a political act.

Social studies teaching that is adaptive to research findings on historical and political thinking requires some expertise in what Thornton (2005) calls "gatekeeping". He explains:

> Teacher gatekeeping takes place in a fluid and uncertain environment. Teachers interpret what a curriculum means and shape instruction to illuminate somehow those meanings for their students… Questions such as the following need to be asked: What topics do we want to study and how are they connected to our main aims and other topics? (Thornton, 2005, pp. 104-106)

The teacher who wishes to prioritize historical and political inquiry and discourse strategies in depth, through structured investigation of complex historigraphic dilemmas (Bain, 2006) or perpetually contested problems (Parker, 2003), will need to take some interpretive license in doing so, as those aims are not particularly congruent with the

more persistent core-knowledge survey typically found in secondary schools. Furthermore, "a fluid and uncertain environment" implies that the interactions among teachers, students, and subject matter likely will not fit with the predictable, linear pathway toward objective learning outcomes around which so many curricula and high-stakes assessments are framed.

Such gatekeeping requires adeptness and adaptability in establishing curricular and pedagogical goals, setting a course to meet those goals, and making adjustments in the face of emergent dilemmas. According to some who have studied the trajectory of teaching over the career span, this kind of practice comes with many years of experience in the classroom (Chubbuck et al, 2001; Kagan, 1992; Kauffman et al, 2004; Huberman, 1989; Veenman, 1984). By contrast, early-career teachers generally are thought to fall in line with established routines and policies as a means of coping with cognitive overload and avoiding controversy in the face of competing demands within the school. This does not imply that such teachers lack the capacity to think innovatively and adaptively; instead, they often face great difficulty in problem-solving the epistemic and school-cultural circumstances that challenge that innovation.

My initial intent to study Noah Andres's pedagogical reasoning and action evolved from the argument that early-career teachers typically do not, and perhaps cannot, evince such adaptive, contextualized practice; that their professional energies are spent acclimating to and merely surviving the demands of the school environment rather than thinking deeply and making complex choices about curricular and instructional aims, how the process of learning the subject matter should be represented, how to assess what students know, and how to learn from their pedagogical choices. The suggestion

that those practices are the special province of mid- and late-career teachers has at least two problematic implications: 1) that the tough decisions about what to teach, how, and why necessarily must be made beyond early-career teachers' classrooms by others who do not work directly with their students; and 2) that experienced educators generally profit cumulatively from their time in the classroom. Other perspectives on expertise, however, characterize it as a dynamic evolution of interests and knowledge into strategic activity through individual and collective inquiry, on-the-ground experience, and reflection (e.g., Alexander, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Shulman, 1987). Bell and Linn (2002), for example, suggest that teachers who maintain relatively naïve, objectivist epistemic stances – in other words, they see knowledge as a cache of settled facts rather than a product of warranted interpretation – may never reach a point of effectively facilitating higher-order thinking, regardless of their years in the classroom.

Noah Andres's case presented a compelling opportunity to look in greater depth at theories and practices related to early-career teachers' pedagogical reasoning and action. In the Peace Studies context, he bore full responsibility for the kinds of decision making often reserved for and thought to be the special province of experienced teachers, while in AP Government, his charge generally was to implement a curriculum that had been created externally and was framed by the pressures of a high-stakes test. My decision to study Elizabeth Sutton's teaching alongside Noah's evolved from an interest in comparatively investigating how the affordances, constraints, and influences behind the practices of an experienced teacher, working in similar curricular contexts, compared to those of a novice.

Research questions

Thus far, I have suggested that teachers' practices are steered by dominant traditions in teaching the subject matter and the political and cultural conditions that support those traditions. What happens, though, when some of those conditions are lifted and the prevailing traditions are blurred? How would teachers at different experience levels adapt to altered influence landscapes, with few district guidelines and curricular precedents and no high-stakes tests? One might expect that within the context of a more flexible curriculum, teachers' practices could vary considerably from those in a highly structured, standardized-tested curriculum. But how specifically would those practices compare and contrast, and what would be the teachers' grounds for curricular and instructional decision making in each context? This thread of inquiry, which largely remains unexplored in the literature on social studies teachers' decision making, has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to our understanding of how teachers mediate and adapt to different teaching contexts at a time when policies increasingly are designed to reduce the variability of curriculum and instruction. Again, this mediation and adaptation are important phenomena to understand if research on students' historical and political reasoning is to penetrate teachers' pedagogical reasoning and action. This study is rooted in two overarching research questions:

1) What kinds of pedagogical decisions do an early-career and experienced social studies teacher make as they navigate two distinct curricular contexts (i.e., one highly structured and standardized-tested, and the other more autonomous and elective), and on what grounds do they make those decisions; and

2) How are the discrepancies between the standardized-tested and elective contexts consequential to the participants' teaching practices?

An existing portrait of social studies instruction in such divergent circumstances is Gerwin and Visone's (2006) case study of two experienced teachers charged with implementing state-tested and elective courses in New York State. Here, the authors suggest that the very presence of curricular guidelines and high-stakes tests prompts discordant teaching: "the sorting principle that determined which courses opted for breadth over depth, open-ended discussions, and evidence-based argumentation – as opposed to rote learning – was not ability, but rather state testing in a course with a mandated curriculum guide" (p. 278). However, their study focuses almost exclusively on how the presence of standardized tests affects the degree of test-preparatory instruction in the teachers' classrooms, and it relies entirely on participants' self-reports. Consequently, the reader is left with little understanding of how the participants mediate the complex influences on their practices and transform what Shulman (1987) calls pedagogical reasoning into action.

By contrast, one of the central purposes of my study is to challenge our tendencies to think and speak dichotomously about teaching in an age of test-driven accountability: teachers are either experienced or novice, their practices are ambitious and ethically defensible or rote and intellectually impoverished, and the contexts in which they work are emancipatory or oppressive. Instead, this dissertation serves to illuminate the sometimes anticipated and sometimes surprising nuances of two teachers' practices, pointing the reader toward questions about expertise and challenging some of the assumptions that have come to dominate how teachers' work is characterized. To help the

reader make sense of my rationale for conducting this study, I believe it is important to make transparent how my own positionalities and experiences led me to pursue these questions. First, I briefly describe and justify my research methodology.

Research method

Stake (2000) describes three rationales for engaging in case-study research. An intrinsic case study illuminates the distinctions of a specific subject at a unique place and time, while an instrumental case study serves to enrich the way a problem or situation is examined and understood. By contrast, comparative case studies typically are designed to construct new theories or generalizations across many cases. This study best fits the second definition. Like intrinsic cases, instrumental cases "still [are] looked at in depth, [their] contexts scrutinized, [their] ordinary activities detailed, but all because this helps the researcher to pursue the external interest" (Stake, 2000, p. 437). Here, the external interest is the commingling of curricular structure with pedagogical reasoning and classroom practice.

I chose to investigate the two participants' decision making and teaching practice using a case study approach for two key reasons, both of which Yin (1994) clearly articulates as valid rationales for the methodology. First, the circumstances of Noah Andres's and Elizabeth Sutton's decisions and practices are unique when juxtaposed with the current literature on social studies teachers' work. Specifically lacking are detailed portraits of teachers in diverse academic environments concurrently navigating a high-stakes, formalized curriculum like NSL and AP Government and designing a complex and potentially controversial curriculum like Peace Studies or Comparative Religions.

Second, these cases are revelatory in that they offer access to the dilemmas of curriculum arbitration in a political climate that increasingly privileges steadfast curriculum implementation. As the cases in Yeager and Davis's (2005) and Grant's (2006) edited volumes suggest, social studies teachers variably make curricular and instructional decisions in direct accordance with, independent of, and/or in spite of high-stakes assessments. This research complements these existing portraits, but instead of focusing primarily on the relationship between teaching practices and state tests, it looks in greater depth at the ways in which different curricular structures and professional roles interact with the transformation of pedagogical reasoning into action. In other words, the cases of Noah and Elizabeth are significant because they speak to current theoretical and practical problems in social studies teaching and lend new complexity to an ongoing discussion about what social studies teaching ought to accomplish and how in the present climate of test-based accountability.

As a result of the skepticism with which some view case studies – an issue I will address in greater depth later – a central aim in this study's design was to offer a thorough, transparent account, rooted in multiple sources of evidence. I define "thorough" by the extent to which further data collection would have produced diminishing analytical returns. Regarding evidence, Yin (1994) notes, "The overall goal… is to convince the reader that very little evidence remained untouched by the investigator, given the boundaries of the case study" (p. 148). In Chapter 3, I follow Yin's suggestion by describing how interview and verbal-reporting data, classroom observations and documents, and the participants' planning and teaching journal coalesced to facilitate a grounded-theoretical approach to analysis and, thus, necessitated

careful negotiation of the researcher's and participants' voices in composing the case study. The following section provides some background related to how the researcher's interests and voice evolved relative to this study. Such background related to the participants is found in Chapter Three.

The researcher's experience

It is folklore that those who are raised by educators are destined to teach in one form or another. In my case, this bit of folklore holds true. My mother, lost in an automobile accident when I was eight, was an elementary teacher in my school district, a K-12 building in the southern Adirondack Mountains that graduated between 40 and 60 students per year. My step-mother, whose family joined mine when I was ten, was the principal at the high school. My father, a forester by trade, taught a variety of courses, from cooking to stained glasswork, through an evening adult education program. And after I finished my undergraduate work, I began my career in social studies education in central New York State, in a rural, racially homogeneous but socioeconomically heterogeneous community that also housed an agricultural and technical college.

That is not to say that I always wanted to teach, and certainly I never sought to emulate some proverbial "great social studies teacher" who instilled within me the values of participatory democracy and historical inquiry. In fact, very little of my high school social studies education was memorable; I would characterize most of it as miseducative, to borrow a term from Dewey (Dewey, 1997/1938). Consider the following "bonus question" on one of my tenth-grade Global Studies unit tests: "How long is a Chinaman?" (The correct answer was "True.") In another course, we copied notes from an overhead

projector, took daily recall quizzes on obscure snippets from the textbook, and when we did poorly on those quizzes, were berated for failing to be as competent and motivated as our counterparts in Japan, whose intellects and work ethics, we were told, were far superior to those of American students. These kinds of experiences commingled into a composite sketch of the teacher who I eventually vowed never to become.

As an undergraduate Political Science major, I felt the pull of teaching during my sophomore year, when I began to wonder why the very interesting, complex deliberations that took place in my university courses were wholly absent from my high school social studies education. I concurrently began to wonder how and why teachers make decisions about what to teach and took a couple of courses that opened the pathway toward secondary social studies teaching certification. As I began teaching, I remained captivated by that question – on what grounds do we decide how and what to teach? – particularly when adolescents generated compelling, controversial questions and ideas that did not fall within the bounds of my textbooks, curriculum guides, and New York State Regents exams.

I was appointed to my first position on the condition that I teach Economics – a state-required, half-year, senior-level course with no high-stakes testing mandates. The assignment was significantly challenging for me as a first-year teacher with little background in economics as a discipline, and my school district was small enough that no local curricular guidelines for economics had been developed. To paraphrase my building principal's advice at the beginning of my first year, as long as I could demonstrate some sort of connection to the New York State Social Studies Standards in my lesson plans and during observations, administrators cared little about what I did in Economics. He added

that I would be "flying solo," though, since my predecessor – who had taught Economics for more than 20 years – left no resources for his successor.

Simultaneously, I taught the second half of a two-year World History and Geography curriculum, culminating in a New York State Regents Examination, which all students needed to pass before graduation. In that course, administrators evaluated my performance on several criteria: 1) the number of "Regents-style" quiz and test grades I counted per quarter, students' results on those quizzes and tests, and my intervention strategies for students with low scores; 2) the alignment of my lesson plans with New York State Standards; 3) observations of my teaching; 4) written post-observation self-assessments that focused on how I monitored student learning and used the results to modify my teaching; and 5) the percentage of students who passed the Regents exam at different proficiency levels at the end of the year. The only tenth-grade World History and Geography teacher in the school, I was advised by my department chair to use the school textbook as tool for organizing the course and to make test-readiness my primary pedagogical aim. While my department chair and principal encouraged experimentation in Economics, coverage and control were preeminent priorities in Global History and Geography; my and my school district's effectiveness would be judged on passing rates and averages.

Rushing through material and pleading with students to perform for the sake of the Regents exam, I recalled my own forgettable experiences as a high school student and posed an ethical question that would guide my teaching therein: "How can I acknowledge standards and prepare students to do well on the state assessment while deemphasizing the testing imperative, preserving a spirit of inquiry and relevance, and looking beyond

the scope and sequence established by the Regents exam and textbook?" In essence, I thought, how can I not become my high school social studies teachers?

I began by pulling substance and strategies out of the National Standards for History and analyzed several years of Regents tests to find that the items and essays were very basic and bore striking similarities over time, in both content and requisite skills. It would be possible, I concluded, to supplant the coverage imperative with deeper investigations of compelling questions (e.g., "How did Europeans square the ethical dilemmas associated with their treatment of Black Africans during the imperialist period?") using primary source texts, and then spend the last several weeks of the course dissecting the test's structure and content with students as a means of preparing for it. By test time, I informed my students, they would see the exam through the eyes of the test designers and evaluators, not simply as test takers.

Meanwhile, I sought to build my Economics curriculum around perennial problems related to the tensions between public and private goods, global interdependence, and socioeconomic stratification. My first two runs through the course were characterized by rough segues from topic to topic, bouts of confusion among students as I made modifications on the fly, and parental scorn on account of the curriculum being "too difficult." As one father noted, "Want to make your class useful? Talk about running a farm. That's what [my son's] going to do after he graduates." My third attempt at Economics followed a substantial curricular overhaul: before discussing broader social dilemmas, I thought, perhaps students should spend more time focused on individual decision making. But after one run-through of squeakily practical consumer economics, I regretted that the deliberation of socioeconomic issues largely had moved to

the periphery. My insecurity was exacerbated by the lack of subject-specific professional development within my school district and other networks.

As a doctoral student at the University of Maryland, one of the first courses in which I enrolled was a seminar addressing current theory and research related to social studies education. A foundation of the course was that historical investigation and metacognition, if explicitly taught, offer students particularly effective strategies for interrogating discrepant narratives and diverse perspectives and using evidence to construct and validate their own accounts of the past. Much of what I came to know about thinking, learning, and teaching through that course seemed well matched with my aspirations as a high school teacher. Not long into that semester, several classmates – all practicing elementary school teachers in Maryland – lamented that inquiry-based, interpretive approaches to history were "nice ideas," but impractical due to the constraints of district curricula and assessments. I responded heatedly to their critique, which seemed like a rejection of the tools and supports that I wished I had greater access to as a new teacher. What followed was a discussion of the social and political contexts of our teaching and how those contexts affected our curricular and instructional aims and decisions. Only then did I realize the significant discrepancies between my own situation – a small-school environment with little district-level oversight – and those of teachers working in one of Maryland's large, bureaucratic school systems.

Several semesters later, I was teaching again, as a secondary social studies methods instructor. In my syllabus and throughout the course, I argued that prospective teachers inevitably have to negotiate two competing metaphors of teaching: 1) the skilled occupation, where teachers' primarily manage classrooms and implement externally

designed curricula; and 2) the profession, where teachers themselves investigate the ambiguities of learning and teaching and use what they find to choose among various curricular and instructional aims and solutions. I strongly favored the second conception; and upon soliciting participants for this dissertation study, I learned that Noah Andres and Elizabeth Sutton shared that conception.

Foreshadowing

As described in Chapter One, this study serves two primary objectives. The first is to explore how a novice and experienced teacher's pedagogical reasoning and action compare and contrast across two very different curricular contexts: one that is directly impacted by external accountability controls, and one that is not. The second is to examine the relative power of different influences on those teachers as they plan and deliver instruction, assess students, and reflect upon their teaching and its consequences. Underpinning these objectives is the overarching aim of engaging a conversation about how expertise in teaching (and the development thereof) interacts with the pattern of increasingly restricting or policing teachers' curricular and instructional decision making in the present accountability climate. How are teachers like Noah and Elizabeth to respond as gatekeepers when state and district curriculum and assessment policies are, at best, haphazardly aligned with research on learning and teaching their subject matters? And what happens in circumstances when curricular and instructional pathways are not so clearly marked, thus compelling teachers to act more autonomously as Noah and Elizabeth did in their elective contexts?

In Chapter Two, I use Schwab's (1978) commonplaces of teaching to organize several strands of literature that are relevant to the aforementioned aims. I begin by exploring how knowing and learning are portrayed in research on social studies education, the academic domain in which Noah's and Elizabeth's curricula were situated, with a particular emphasis on history, which has received the most scholarly attention among the social studies disciplines. From there, I attend to the concept of expertise in teaching, emphasizing adaptability, the negotiation of curricular and pedagogical tensions, and reflective practice as teachers transform their subject matters into meaningful designs, instructional strategies, and assessments. My literature review concludes with an analysis of the milieu, or the institutional factors that shape how social studies teachers transform curricular and instructional decisions into actions, and an argument for the significance of this study.

In Chapter Three, I explain and support the use of qualitative case study methodology and describe the means by which I collected and analyzed data in these two cases. The chapter begins with my research questions, grounded in a deeper explanation of my overarching aims for this dissertation. I then articulate why what Stake (2000) calls "instrumental case study" was an appropriate methodology for conducting my research. I also explain why I selected Noah Andres and Elizabeth Sutton as study participants and offer some background information about both teachers to help the reader contextualize my findings. The remainder of Chapter Three largely is technical; that is, I describe each of my data collection tools and the reasons I chose to use them before concluding with a discussion of my analytical framework and the limitations of my research.

Chapters Four and Five consist of in-depth descriptions of the teachers' pedagogical reasoning and action in their two curricular contexts: the heavily structured Government courses and the Peace Studies and Comparative Religions electives. As Shulman (1987) indicates, "teaching… is concerned with both means and ends. Processes of reasoning underlie both" (p. 13). In accordance, I divide each chapter into two sections – one for Noah and one for Elizabeth – and begin each section with narrative vignettes of activity that illustrate the intersections of I (the teacher), thou (the learner), and it (the subject matter) (Hawkins, 1974). I then transition to discussions about means, or the various internal and external influences that I observed relative to the teachers' pedagogical reasoning.

In the sixth and final chapter, I look across the participants' pedagogical reasoning and action in both curricular contexts to infer three key themes:

- First, the factors that facilitated teachers' efforts toward socially and cognitively rich social studies learning included: 1) analyzing the consequences of curriculum and instruction for adolescents' learning; 2) adapting their teaching spaces and practices in order to create room for activities perceived conducive to rich learning; and 3) resisting curricular and instructional controls that restricted such learning.
- Second, the teachers' less constrained curricular contexts (i.e., the elective courses) were effective spaces for the teachers to actively study the consequences of curricular and instructional decisions, and to generate and refine teaching practices that could be adapted to more constrained contexts (i.e., the Government courses) in the interest of their student learning goals.

- Third, the teachers' epistemic positions and political positions in the school mattered in terms of how the factors in the first theme manifested, and in terms of how their pedagogical practices migrate across different curricular contexts, as suggested in the second theme.

From these inferences, I turn to their conceivable consequences for teaching and teacher education, complicating dichotomies associated with teaching in more and less controlled curricular contexts and engaging a dialogue about how teaching expertise might be reconsidered through a critically pragmatic lens.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how secondary social studies teachers' pedagogical reasoning and activity and the factors that play into them are represented in relevant literature. In Chapter One, I argued that teachers who wish to align their pedagogies with current research on disciplinary learning often must make substantial adaptations to do so, as their curricula typically privilege the acquisition of fixed narratives over inquiry and interpretation. I also briefly foreshadowed this dissertation's central arguments: 1) that teachers' epistemic and political stances can influence how they mediate and adapt to different curricula; and 2) that working within flexible curricular contexts can illuminate the consequences of more constrained contexts and provide teachers with tools for navigating them.

Within these arguments are numerous assumptions and assertions, grounded in two and a half decades of theory and research on learning and teaching social studies. I bracket my literature review within the last 25 years specifically because that period represents the evolution of a knowledge-base paradigm of research on teaching, through which researchers turned from questions like, "What instructional procedures produce which behavioral outcomes?" to "What do teachers need to know and be able to do to leverage powerful learning within a complex social system?" (Porter & Brophy, 1988; Shulman, 1987)

In thinking about how to organize this literature review, I turned first to two related frameworks that capture the complex interactions within Noah's and Elizabeth's cases: 1) Schwab's (1973) commonplaces of teaching, and Hawkins's (1974) I-thou-it

framework. Both converge around common elements: in Hawkins's framework, "I" represents Schwab's teacher; "thou" for Hawkins is the learner for Schwab; and what Hawkins calls "it," Schwab calls the subject matter. Schwab posits a fourth commonplace, the milieu, which he defines as the environment or context of learning and teaching, encompassing physical, social, cultural, and political spaces. Hawkins does not specifically define a contextual element in his representation, though he implies one in the example he uses to illustrate his framework. Drawing from an experience sitting uncomfortably in a hospital waiting room with a child he did not know well, Hawkins describes a dramatic shift in their interactions upon his suggestion that, together, they look at and talk about a painting on the wall. That suggestion, claims Hawkins, generated a teaching and learning experience for both because it brought I, thou, and it into "balance," whereas before he pointed to and asked the child a question about the painting, there was no "it."

Hawkins and Schwab digress in their representations of the context or milieu. While Schwab acknowledges that the milieu plays an equally powerful role as the other elements of learning and teaching, Hawkins suggests that the hospital waiting room in which he and the child sat, and their reasons for being there, all but evaporated into the moment of balance among I, thou, and it. Like Schwab, I agree that context matters a great deal; in fact, the grounds for this study are predicated on that perspective. But like Hawkins, I believe that learning and teaching are most powerful when I, thou, and it are in balance, without any particular element dominating or in deference to another.

Initially, I intended to use these frameworks simply as a means of organizing this literature review around the aforementioned commonplaces. However, given their

synthesis in actual teaching and learning environments, I will attempt to demonstrate how particular commonplaces are emphasized in the literature while simultaneously representing them as inextricably linked and consequential to the others. I have chosen to organize this review around a series of questions that envelop these commonplaces: 1) What is social studies education, and what are the purposes for learning it; 2) How do social studies educators teach and assess students' learning; 3) How do social studies educators interact with their social and political contexts; and 4) How do social studies educators develop pedagogical expertise? From there, I briefly articulate, via the literature reviewed, a justification for my study.

What is social studies education, and what are the purposes for learning it?

As Jenness (1990) reports in his history of the schooled domain, these are decades-old questions. Generally, the social studies encompass the humanities and social sciences, including history, geography, political science, and economics, with some (e.g., history) better represented in the school curriculum than others (Goodlad, 2004). While the disciplines typically thought to make up the social studies share some characteristics (e.g., drawing from multiple sources of evidence to explain patterns of human behavior), they maintain distinctions that complicate efforts to lump them together into a single academic domain or course of study. For instance, the attempt to establish an empathic link with historical actors (Lee & Shemilt, 2011; Wineburg, 2001) is quite different from the act of speculating the impact of human activities on physical spaces by layering complex geographic models (Gould, 1999). Despite distinctions like these, some argue that studying social phenomena like racial injustice and environmental degradation in

"the real world" requires interdisciplinary examinations of complex problems using overlapping toolsets, and is not particularly well served by any one discipline (Evans, 2004; Thornton, 2008).

The purposes of social studies – or alternatively, history, geography, or political science – education also are relatively unsettled. Variations abound in terms of what the central aims of the schooled domain ought to be, from engaging in participatory democratic deliberation (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Hess, 2009) to developing systematic methods of investigating historical and contemporary complexities (Bain, 2006; VanSledright, 2011); from illuminating social injustices and promoting political activism (Bickmore, 2008; Crocco, 2008) to cultivating cultural awareness and tolerance (Merryfield & Wilson, 2005) or, alternatively, building a collective memory and a nationalistic worldview (Rodriguez et al, 2003). Some of these aims complement each other; many trace their philosophical roots back to Dewey (1944, 1990).

Wesley acknowledged a distinction between the schooled domain and the disciplines in 1937, noting that the social studies are "social sciences simplified for pedagogical purposes" (Wesley, 1937, p. 6). This distinction is meaningful because it helps to contextualize the existence of secondary school courses like Global History and Geography, or United States History and Government – or in the case of my research, Peace Studies and Comparative Religions. It also foreshadows the myriad competing influences that have come to bear on the social studies curriculum since 1937. What social studies, as a schooled domain, should consist of is a long-standing subject of debate in the field (Cuban, 1991; Marker & Mehlinger, 1992).

Links to learning theory

This is not to say that there is no consensus among scholars, even those who draw from different disciplinary traditions, about the shape of the curriculum. Parker (2003) asserts that the social studies curriculum should be constructed around "perpetually contested questions" that integrate history, policy, and social-democratic practices. He notes that the curriculum should serve as a tool for teachers and students to think about how to "distinguish the common good from the common bad, that we distinguish fair from unfair laws, that we… not only refrain from acting unjustly ourselves, but take action against injustice" (Parker, 2003, p. 69). Also from a democratic education perspective, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) extol the virtues of a "justice-oriented" curriculum that portrays citizenship as a process of collectively investigating and critiquing injustices, and then taking action in their communities to address them. These visions implies a flexible curriculum, bound less by specific pieces of content than a set of communal aims, discourse norms, and criteria for demonstrating the outcomes of students' understandings and decision-making practices.

From a historical-disciplinary perspective, Bain (2005) argues for a similarly flexible curriculum on the grounds of investigating "historiographic problems." He suggests that the curriculum ought to be a device for posing and deliberating on such problems, which often take the form of epistemological dilemmas (e.g., "How do we know what we know in history?") and mythologies that go unquestioned, and oftentimes are perpetuated, in many early and middle school experiences. VanSledright (2011) strikes a common chord, suggesting that the curriculum incorporate pedagogically powerful questions that cultivate the co-activation of what VanSledright and Limon

(2006) call first-order (substantive), second-order (conceptual), and procedural knowledge. To elaborate, first-order knowledge represents the "stuff" of history in the form of narratives and interpretations; second-order knowledge represents the conceptual glue, like evidence and causality, that holds the stuff of history together; and procedural knowledge represents the set of practices – assessing the credibility of sources or warranting an argument, for example – that inquirers use to make sense of contested questions.

Though folks like Parker, Westheimer and Kahne, Bain, and VanSledright differ in terms of how they ultimately bracket and define the rationales for subject matter knowledge, the similarities within their curricular goal frameworks may be attributable to an important, shared theoretical position: as Dewey eloquently maintains, that knowledge comes from participating "inside the natural and social scene" and that "the true object of knowledge resides in the consequences of directed action" (Dewey, 1960, p. 196). The notion that the learner necessarily is active in constructing, evaluating, and reconstructing knowledge is a widely accepted tenet among social studies and disciplinary researchers, from cognitive constructivist (Wineburg, 2001) to sociocultural (Barton, 2001) perspectives.

Another factor that unites many social studies education scholars who draw from constructivist and sociocultural learning theories is a lament about how little traction their constructs of social studies education have found within curricula and classrooms (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Gaudelli, 2006; VanSledright, 2008). This lack of traction is thought to be a consequence of numerous factors, including the dominance of cultural literacy as a school-social aim, teachers' predilections toward curriculum coverage and student control

as pedagogical goals, and weak practice-based theorizing about how students learn among school practitioners. In the history curriculum specifically, the hegemony of conservative epistemic tradition is exemplified via state policies and standards that define knowledge as the substance of collective memory, to be recorded and played back, and increasingly prescribe monolithic narrative over critical inquiry and analysis (Kelly, Meuwissen, & VanSledright, 2007). The ways teachers recognize and react to the distinctions between prescribed narratives and more interpretive approaches to history education run the gamut from resistance to acceptance to ignorance (Grant et al, 2001; Meuwissen, 2005, van Hover, 2006).

How do social studies educators teach and assess students' learning?

Recent scholarship in social studies education suggests that teachers are most effective when their modes of instruction clearly match up with their learning goals, and when those goals are rooted in developing and applying strategic, analytical thinking to dialogue via contested questions, texts, and tools (Barton, 2001; Bain, 2000; Donovan & Bransford, 2005; Holt, 1990; Newmann et al, 1996). The popular dichotomy of active/student-centered versus passive/teacher-centered instruction fails to represent the many potentially effective forms of instruction than ultimately could serve those goals.

For instance, Bain (2005) and Wineburg (2001) argue that the much maligned lecture can be an effective approach when it is used to synthesize complicated historical studies into vehicles for organizing ideas and asking new questions, provided the lecture is treated as a secondary source and the evidence behind that lecture is made transparent. From another angle, Hess (2005), Larson (2000), and Parker (2003) strongly advocate

discussion as a curricular aim and an instructional strategy, provided teachers address *how* to discuss alongside *what* to discuss and build their discussion models (e.g., seminar, Structured Academic Controversy) around appropriate outcomes of those discussions (e.g., deeper understanding, shared problem solving). Many scholars argue that controversial questions and issues should be central to social studies teaching on account of their pedagogical power – and thus, potential for analytical discourse and political engagement – and as representations of the sorts of social discourse that takes place outside of school (Avery et al, 1992; Hahn, 1996; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Onosko, 1991). It is common, however, for social studies teachers to use uncontroversial texts and resources, or to actively wash controversy out of learning and teaching due to concerns about inefficient content coverage, student and community sensitivities, and seeming partiality (Kelly, 1986; Miller-Lane et al, 2006; Niemi & Niemi, 2007).

Current thinking about assessment in the social studies suggests that teachers should: 1) clearly set classroom-based learning targets and establish grounds for determining the extent to which those targets have been met; 2) build assessment tools that target complex thinking rather than seemingly objective knowledge; and 3) incorporate student self-assessment practices and conversations about the strengths and drawbacks of different forms of assessment (Alexander, 2006; Erickan, 2006; Leipzig & Afflerbach, 2000; Pellegrino et al, 2001). Among these suggestions, an underlying assumption is that classroom assessments and standardized, high-stakes tests are different tools with different consequences, the first primarily formative and valuable for informing instructional decisions and the second primarily summative and designed to sort students and evaluate school performance (Grant & Salinas, 2008).

Research supports classroom assessment that incorporates the use of interpretive and argumentative writing frameworks (e.g., Monte-Sano, 2008), oral discussion protocols (e.g., Harris, 2002), map-making strategies (e.g., Gregg & Leinhardt, 1994), and other performance supports. In other words, assessment should be conceptualized as a form of instruction rather than simply a means of evaluating students' knowledge. In studies by Monte-Sano (2008) and VanSledright (2002), teachers built interpretive scaffolds into their assessments to support students' uses of evidence in written arguments, and they used assessment feedback to model the process of asking effective historical questions.

Conversely, teachers responsible for preparing their students for high-stakes tests often are pressured to use assessment tools that are congruent with those tests, which typically feature a limited number of selected-response items and expository writing prompts (Pedulla et al, 2003; Vogler, 2006). And though some standardized testing programs appear better aligned with historical investigation and interpretation via tools like document-based questions, such tools typically provide very brief, decontextualized document excerpts, maintain "right" and "wrong" ways to interpret the documents, and fail to provide students with space to engage in complex argumentation and evidence use (Grant et al, 2002). Grant and Salinas (2008) report, "there is no evidence that teachers are universally abandoning alternative forms of assessment in favor of state test practice" (p. 225), yet VanSledright (2011) contends that disciplinarily sound assessment approaches tend to be idiosyncratic, given the long-standing grammar that defines learning as the acquisition of core historical narratives and assessment as a process of evaluating students' recitations of those narratives (Tyack & Tobin, 1994).

As standardized tests in history tend to emphasize the acquisition of discrete bits of narrative over interpretive dialogue, so too do standardized government assessments focus on the identification of structures and institutions over political discourse (Niemi & Junn, 1998). This emphasis exists despite other conceptions of what constitutes civic learning – for instance, constructing evidence-based political arguments, discussing controversial public issues with empathy toward other positions, or participating in public service or political advocacy initiatives (Hess, 2009; Parker, 2003; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). While the nature of standardized history tests and their impacts on classroom instruction and assessment are relatively well documented (Grant, 2006), little work has been done in the area of assessing students' political knowledge. Scholars who examined National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) and AP exams in government found that these measures generally privilege the identification of broad political structures and processes and citizens' legal rights and responsibilities (Niemi & Sanders, 2004; Niemi & Smith, 2001). However, through their innovative study of an alternative, problem-based approach to the AP US Government and Politics course, Parker, Mosborg, Bransford, Vye, Wilkerson, and Abbott (2011) offer some hope for mitigating the constraints associated with "packing so much curriculum into a single, time-bound course, and then capping it with a high-stakes, breadth-oriented exam" (p. 555).

Parker and colleagues conducted a design experiment through which the AP test was retained as a summative, high-stakes measure, but the course was constructed in a way that "features active project-based learning at its 'spine' alongside quasi-repetitive cycling and sustained inquiry on a well-chosen master course question" (p. 557). While many of the assessments used in the experimental course did not match with the form and

function of the standardized test, students in that course performed as well or better on the AP exam than their counterparts in the control course. Yet the negotiation of assessment methods among students and educators in the experimental course was an overt and, at times, troublesome process through which students called into question the credibility of the problem-based learning approach on account of the AP program's orientation toward more efficient practices like "hearing lectures and reading texts, memorizing information, and then taking a test" (p. 555). Parker and colleagues' study serves as a compelling demonstration that assessment – as a process of selecting modes of observation and interpreting their results to draw inferences about what learning is taking place and to what ends – is a situated social activity, framed by rules dictating what counts for knowledge and performance in a particular context (Bernstein, 2000).

How do social studies educators interact with their social and political contexts?

Because the curriculum is a social construction, with decisions about what to include and what to omit made at various levels, shaping and gatekeeping the curriculum inevitably are political acts, like teaching on the whole. By that, I mean that teachers are front-line participants in political activity – schooling – drawn up by provisional partnerships of actors who use particular strategies to seek particular ends (Mouffe, 2000; Reid, McCallum, & Dobbins, 1998). Within the same institution, for instance, teachers participating in a multi-year, federally-funded professional development program might use a lesson-study approach to develop a cache of shared tools to facilitate adolescents' historical thinking, while simultaneously, administrators strategize a reduction of local social studies instructional resources in order to accommodate mandated increases in

reading and mathematics instruction. In a different context, those administrators and teachers might work together to persuade district officials not to discontinue a popular and effective after-school program in the face of budget constraints. Teachers are in a unique position within this political milieu: generally, they are students' first advocates, acting as gatekeepers who mediate the impacts on children and adolescents of policies and practices that originate beyond the classroom (Thornton, 2005).

Cornbleth (2008) suggests that the relationship between teachers' pedagogical activities and the school-political milieu is a complicated matrix of innumerable interactions. She uses *echoes* as a metaphor to capture the complexity of this phenomenon. Echoes are the collective message systems that reverberate within the social spaces that teachers occupy. They effectively can reinforce or undermine teachers' participation in particular activities by calling attention to certain priorities over others. Examples might be the buzz among administrators and teachers about a new state-level teacher evaluation policy and its potential consequences for instruction, or the public framing of a controversial issue in a way that privileges a certain approach to addressing it. By extension, *echo effects* are the felt ramifications of these collective reverberations. Cornbleth (2008) argues, "for various reasons, teachers (and other educators and policy makers) cannot attend directly to all or even most events, conditions, issues, movements, or policies relevant to their work" (p. 2167). Thus, the loudest echoes and the strongest echo effects tend to end up in the foreground.

At present, one of the loudest echoes is that of using standardized tests to hold teachers and schools accountable for students' educational outcomes (Rothstein et al, 2010). Specifically, the confluence of pressure on teachers to generate higher test scores

and the increasing centralization of curricula and assessments – the intent of which is to ensure that specific student learning objectives are met in a timely fashion – is thought to create a surveillance culture in schools, generally reduce teacher agency, and shift teachers' discourse away from student learning and toward satisfying mandates (Hargreaves, 2003; Valli & Beuse, 2007). Generally, those who support these pressures and controls argue that academic freedom is wholly subordinate to the assurance that teachers and school districts are held accountable for gains in student test performance (Shanker, 1995; US Department of Education, 2002).

Scholars like Kumashiro (2010), and Sleeter (2008) situate these echoes and echo effects within a broader trend of deprofessionalization, characterized by top-down policies and resource pressures at the federal, state, and district levels and a public discourse that paints teachers and teacher educators as reckless defenders of mediocrity. In social studies education, this deprofessionalization manifests in the reduction of instructional space at the elementary and middle levels to make way for standardized-tested subjects; acquiescence among secondary teachers to narrow curricula and rote, test-preparatory instruction; and waning institutional support for professional development around discipline-specific instructional dilemmas and complexities (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Grant & Salinas, 2008; Hess, 2009; Levstik, 2008; McNeil, 2000; Vogler, 2006).

However, at least two factors temper the assumption that devices like state tests and standards have dramatic impacts on practice: 1) curricular and instructional decision-making is a complex and highly context-dependent endeavor, and thus, discrepancies exist in the ways standards are used and interpreted from school to school and classroom

to classroom (Grant & Salinas, 2008); and 2) attempts by various interest groups and organizations to influence school-institutional tools and practices sometimes produce points of contradiction, leaving school districts and teachers to sort out the inconsistencies (Hess, 2009). Still, researchers have hurled strong challenges into the test-based accountability discourse on the grounds of questionable validity and detrimental effects on learning, teaching, and the curriculum (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Popham, 2007; Rothstein et al, 2010). Yet the policy structures and echoes persist.

Cases of teaching

In a qualitative metasynthesis of 49 studies investigating changes induced by curricular centralization and high-stakes testing, Au found that, in most cases, teachers were pressured to narrow the curriculum to topics explicitly covered by tests, and to do so by introducing disconnected pieces of factual information in didactic fashion (Au, 2007). One of these studies – Gerwin and Visone's (2006) portrait of two social studies teachers also working concurrently within elective and state-tested contexts – suggests that the very presence of high-stakes tests prompts discordant teaching: "The sorting principle that determined which courses opted for breadth over depth, open-ended discussions, and evidence-based argumentation – as opposed to rote learning – was not ability, but rather state testing in a course with a mandated curriculum guide" (p. 278).

Several chapters in Grant's (2006b) edited volume of cases of teaching and testing in the United States profile educators who are impacted by the influence of compulsory curricula and tests. Segall (2006), for instance, describes a group of teachers at an unenviable crossroads between following state social studies standards that are not

closely aligned with periodic high-stakes tests and preparing students for the tests but neglecting their curriculum benchmarks in the process. The consequences, argues Segall, are teachers' perceptions of inevitable failure to achieve state-established goals, and thus, defensive, disjointed instruction. But Barton (2006), Gradwell (2006), and Yeager and Pinder (2006) contrastingly depict teachers who seem to work in spite or independent of the pressures associated with high-stakes assessments. What unites them in their capacity to do so is a strong, learning-centered sense of purpose, dexterity in interpreting mandates to match their own goals and instructional approaches, and a certain degree of comfort with the incongruities among their chosen methods and materials and those geared toward test preparation.

In Gradwell's (2006) study, Sara Cooper, a third-year history teacher, seems to privilege the intersections of her own epistemic stance on history (which leans postmodern, by Seixas's (2000) definition) and her students' interests over traditional narratives and standardized test preparation. Cooper culls original source materials from beyond the curriculum when she perceives the curriculum to exclude important (and often silenced) perspectives, and she openly critiques how her state tests' document-based questions oversimplify historical reasoning and writing by asking closed-ended questions around short, decontextualized document excerpts (Gradwell, 2006). In Barton's (2005) case, Leslie King, with ten years of classroom experience, perceives herself a curriculum gatekeeper, rather than simply a curriculum implementer, and builds pedagogical decisions around systematic studies of how her students learn. She interprets curriculum standards and mandates via her broad pedagogical aims and knowledge of student learning, not the other way around (Barton, 2005).

Yeager and Pinder (2006) profile two teachers who, despite different degrees of experience, have prioritized teaching the reading and writing skills associated with effective standardized-test performance within the context of complex, multidimensional subjects. Furthermore, they seek out professional development opportunities that specifically help them with that aim. Barton offers an effective summary of these cases: "There is no necessary connection between content standards and high-stakes tests on the one hand, and low-level, rote instruction on the other. Teachers play a crucial role in mediating educational policy, and their intentions and interpretations have at least as much influence on classroom practice as does the content of standards and high-stakes tests" (p. 29).

How can we reconcile these cases with Gerwin and Visone's (2006) and Segall's (2006) more dour accounts? As Grant (2003) and van Hover and Heinecke (2005) suggest via their own case studies of teaching, the capacity for social studies educators to exercise their expertise is highly contextual. The relationships among structured curricula, standardized tests, and pedagogical decision making are idiosyncratic depending on the relative power, functions, and compatibility of teachers' knowledge and aims, curriculum policies, and localized demands and conditions (Cohen & Spillane, 1992; Pedulla et al, 2002). Grant (2006a) explains in a recent review of research on history tests that "while researchers detect some influence of tests on the content teachers choose to teach…, far less evidence shows profound influences on teachers' instructional practices" (p. 42). This seems to corroborate with studies suggesting that teachers' broad educational aims and instructional methods can be resistant to reform efforts, even those

implying serious consequences via the language of standards and accountability (e.g., Cohen, 1990).

How do social studies teachers develop pedagogical expertise?

To address this question, it is important, first, to define what I mean by pedagogy and, second, to look at how expertise is characterized in the research literature. In a seminal article that advanced questions of what knowledge of and knowledge for teaching look like, Shulman (1987) explains that pedagogy is a process of reasoning through and acting upon different kinds of knowledge. That includes knowledge of content, curriculum, learners, educational aims and contexts, and the process of transforming a complex discipline into texts, tools, and practices that are meaningful to novice learners (i.e., pedagogical content knowledge). Acting upon this process – what Shulman calls pedagogical reasoning and action – involves a number of practices, including first understanding the discipline, then transforming and teaching it, evaluating the results of that process, and finally, reflecting on those results to generate new activity. This dissertation is framed around the investigation of Noah Andres's and Elizabeth Sutton's pedagogical reasoning and action in two discrepant curricular contexts.

Shulman's model, however, does not extensively name the effects of these knowledge bases (i.e., expertise), or the grounds on which those effects are interpreted. Since Shulman's article was published, various representations of expertise in teaching have evolved, including, more vaguely, "wise practice" (Davis, 1997) and "ambitious teaching" (Grant, 2003), and more concretely, "adaptive expertise" (Bransford et al, 2005) and "high-leverage practice" (Ball et al, 2009; Hatch & Grossman, 2009).

Representations of expertise

As Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) suggest, teachers build professional knowledge via numerous pathways, including formal teacher education, their own classroom-based inquiry, and critical interactions with other teachers. Certainly classroom experiences are invaluable facets of expertise, but without frameworks for making sense of those experiences and affecting future curricular and instructional decisions through them, the learning potential of day-in and day-out teaching activity is limited. How, then, do teachers construct (and reconstruct) these frameworks and use them to learn build upon their expertise?

That teachers are planful and reflective as they help students make meaning of the subject matter, rather than thinking of teaching as a process of selecting "best practices" off the shelf, is articulated via Davis's (1997) conception of wise practice. Similar to Shulman's (1987) notion of pedagogical content knowledge, wise practice rests not in the idolatry of universal, decontextualized instructional methods and resources, but in flexible, intentional curricular and instructional decision making. This flexibility and intentionality is implied in what Grant (2003) calls ambitious teaching: that is, what happens "when smart teachers, curious students, and powerful ideas come together" (p. 187). Like Davis, Grant asserts that such teaching is not a static point, where teachers eventually achieve ambitious or wise practice and then remain there. Instead, teachers continuously move toward or away from such practice based on variations in subject-matter knowledge, their relationships with students and the curriculum, and how they think about learning within a changing society and diverse classrooms. Wisdom is

something that develops over time. And ambition implies that teachers are remarkably dedicated to positive, sustainable change, which requires strategic thinking and action, particularly in the face of various institutional constraints (Cornbleth, 2002).

"Wise practice" and "ambitious teaching," as pedagogical metaphors, enjoyed a fair amount of press in the social studies education literature for several years. Numerous case studies of teaching built around these metaphors feature common characteristics: the use of open-ended essential questions or big ideas; pedagogical emphases on substantive inquiry, analytical reading and writing, and discussion; and attempts to adapt externally imposed curricular standards, texts, and assessments to a more learning-centered classroom culture (Grant & Gradwell, 2010; Yeager & Davis, 2005). Taken together, these characteristics imply that making curricular and pedagogical decisions wisely or ambitiously involves agency, the locus of control lying primarily with the teacher who chooses among discrepant interpretations of what wisdom and ambition look like. For example, den Heyer (2005) suggests that teaching is ambitious when it pushes K-12 students to critique the school curriculum, its origins, and its purposes, and to adapt those critiques to social institutions beyond the classroom. And Banks (2002) sees wisdom in classrooms in which students are empowered to openly and cooperatively critique cultural simplifications. Others might cast den Heyer's and Banks's conceptions of ambitious teaching as subversive, potentially dangerous, and thus, unwise (Hadden, 2000). This exposes a limitation of wise practice and ambitious teaching as representations of expertise: the possibility that a focus on semantics might distract from the practices they are intended to represent.

The two constructs of expertise from which I draw more extensively in my theoretical framing are adaptive expertise and high-leverage practice. These constructs can be used to articulate how pedagogical reasoning and action might manifest, what aims are served by them, and to what degrees. Ball, Sleep, Boerst, and Bass (2009) define high-leverage practice as teaching that generates "large advances" in student learning and what teachers can learn from students in comparison to other practices (p. 460). Hatch and Grossman (2009) add that "high-leverage practices are approaches to teaching that can be used to address common problems of practice" (p. 76) and enable teachers' professional learning. They define leverage by the potentially ample dividends (e.g., better understanding of students' discussion and problem-solving strategies) generated through investment in particular teaching practices (e.g., promoting thinking aloud, or metacognition, during discussions).

Bransford and colleagues (2005), drawing from Hatano and Oura (2003), offer us a way to think about how high-leverage practices might evolve within teachers; it involves necessarily reconstructing knowledge and practice under new circumstances and developing the flexibility to work creatively within emergent problem spaces. Such adaptive expertise, as it applies to teaching, is based in part on teachers' wherewithal to recognize when routines fall short, when deeper inquiry into a problem is necessary, and when innovative strategies for addressing that problem are in order. In some cases, moving toward adaptive expertise prompts changes in teachers' broader pedagogical aims. In others, that expertise grows as teachers work to preserve their aims in the face of opposition. Either way, adaptive experts likely navigate the entwined variables of the school and classroom more effectively than those whose professional knowledge and

practice are "functionally fixed… The argument [for adaptive expertise] is not to eliminate efficiency but to complement it" with strategic, contextualized thinking in different curricular and instructional circumstances (Bransford et al, 2005, pp. 50-51).

Adaptive expertise contrasts with routine practice in several critical ways. The former is based on recognizing the relationship between problem solving and the contextual factors that contribute to its effectiveness. Specifically, as adaptive teachers observe the limitations of particular problem-solving strategies in the face of change, they willingly open those strategies and their underlying rationales up to reconsideration and innovation. Conversely, as Bransford and colleagues note, routine practice is more about "problem elimination rather than… in-depth, sustained problem solving" (Bransford et al, 2005, p. 50). That is, instructional routines – relying on a particular mode of assessment, for example, or distilling a unit into a review document for repeated use across multiple iterations of a course – are adopted in the interest of efficient practice.

At their core, the aforementioned models of expertise theorize around three common referents: 1) deep domain knowledge (again, see Shulman's (1987) categories); 2) teachers' creativity in identifying and systematically addressing problems of practice; and 3) using that problem-solving process to change their teaching in ways that are positively consequential to learners. I believe that expertise is both socially and individually constructed. My underlying perspective on teachers' learning and development assumes that they build their pedagogical stances primarily through social interactions – with children, colleagues, and teacher educators, among others – and then negotiate and refine those conceptions in the face of various mediating circumstances and tools (Wertsch, 1991). As Ball and Freedman (2004) argue, "with whom, in what ways,

and in what contexts we interact will determine what we stand to learn" (p. 4). Prospective educators' aims and interpretations of learning, teaching, the subject matter, and the social institution of schooling transmute and flex around the discourse communities they inhabit, from their teacher education cohorts to their academic-disciplinary communities to classrooms, schools, and broader public dialogues about educational practice and policy. Those aims and perspectives may be called upon variably to shape teachers' work, depending on the relative authority and weight of other influences. In other words, individuals construct and reconstruct pedagogy through participation in multiple discourse communities (Sfard, 1998).

By discourse community, I mean a network of people who negotiate and pursue a set of common goals, and who are situated with tools and norms for doing that work (Gee, 1998; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001). Hammerness and colleagues (2005) argue that teachers develop most powerfully through activities and discourse that challenge their preconceptions about learning, introduce complex new pedagogical ideas and decisions, and encourage self-monitoring in their thinking and goal pursuits. Of course, challenge and complexity also can have detrimental effects. Stillman (2011) suggests that for the tensions associated with negotiating new teaching conditions to be productive, teachers need to be well supported by their institutional leadership and identify with a community of "critical colleagues" (Lord, 1994) committed to collective professional growth.

Questions about the nature of expertise

Myriad perspectives exist on what makes for powerful, intellectually honest social studies teaching at the secondary level. Social studies teachers who wish to prioritize disciplinary inquiry strategies, approach a few complex, controversial themes in depth, or work toward informed, respectful democratic discourse in the classroom face some powerful constraints in doing so, as those aims are not particularly congruent with the dominant core-knowledge imperative (Cornbleth, 2001; Kelly et al, 2007; van Hover & Heinecke, 2005; VanSledright, 2008). Thus, there is a need for strategic, contextualized thinking in secondary social studies teaching.

Little is known about how secondary social studies teachers do this in different curricular and political contexts. Some scholars suggest that teachers generally lack this kind of thinking, no matter the context, until they accrue several years of classroom experience and move beyond the technocratic stages of attempting to survive the cognitive demands of teaching and acclimate peaceably to the school environment (Chubbuck et al, 2001; Kagan, 1992; Huberman, 1989; Veenman, 1984). Others vehemently disagree (Grossman, 1992). In practice, surviving and acclimating may translate to rote implementation of formal, traditional curricula or an emphasis on high-stakes test preparation, rather than a more critical look at curriculum and pedagogy. This does not imply that such teachers lack innovative ideas, but instead, that they face great difficulty and frustration in problem-solving the barriers to being both innovative and efficient (Bransford et al, 2005).

Experts generally are thought to be more automatic in attending to repetitive, technical classroom tasks and better than novices at recognizing and learning from

classroom-interactional patterns (Berliner, 2001). In his synthesis, Berliner suggests that expertise develops in stages, citing as a standard Glaser's (1996) somewhat ambiguously defined phases of external support, transition, and self-regulation. This model suggests that novices require a great deal of external scaffolding and essential skills definition, while those in transition increasingly move toward the self-regulation phase, characterized by higher levels of control over learning environments and subtler, more complex moves within them (Glaser, 1996).

Regarding the time required to develop such expertise, Berliner notes, "a reasonable estimate for expertise to develop in teaching, if it ever does, appears to be five or more years" (Berliner, 2001, p. 479). But the evidence supporting Berliner's claim, including teachers' anecdotes and self-perception data and a study of changes in students' standardized test scores during the first several years of teaching, is limited. Indeed, what criteria are used to determine expertise in teaching is a hotly contested question. Grant (2003) warns us against tying standardized test results too closely to definitions of effectiveness and expertise in teaching. Interestingly, Berliner, himself, does the same in another essay, considering that high-stakes tests are poor metrics for the complex interactions that make up knowing, learning, and teaching (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). Alexander (2003) points us in a different direction, suggesting that expertise evolves through a complex interplay of deepening subject matter knowledge, problem-solving strategies, and interest in the core dilemmas of the domain. For teachers, then, the development of expertise would not necessarily follow a series of stages over time, but flex and evolve organically as they strengthen their knowledge for teaching (again, see Shulman's (1987) categories), learn to problem-solve persistent disciplinary and

pedagogical dilemmas, and invest in the advancement of knowledge and problem-solving in their field.

All told, the idea that teachers progress in stages from survival and acclimation to expertise seems problematic, reinforcing the fallacy that more experienced educators inherently are more thoughtful and possess better decision-making strategies than those with fewer years in the classroom. Within a stage-based notion of expertise, it would stand to reason that high-level curricular and instructional decisions might be "beyond" early-career teachers and thus, ought to be made outside their classrooms by other "experts" (e.g., at curricular-administrative levels), despite how little those experts know about the interactions among teacher, students, and subject matter within specific classrooms. Furthermore, a stage-based model of expertise contrasts with Bransford and colleagues' (2005) construct, which posits a more flexible continuum of change in automaticity (or "efficiency") and problem solving (or "innovation").

Summary and caveats

Several points of synthesis can be distilled from the preceding review of literature: 1) that curriculum standards and standardized tests can have stifling effects on how the social studies domain and its component disciplines are represented; 2) that teachers, as gatekeepers, contend with those effects alongside numerous other influences and echoes as they engage in pedagogical reasoning and action; and 3) that expertise in teaching involves creatively and systematically addressing problems of practice, including those effects, to leverage powerful learning outcomes for students. Through Noah Andres's and Elizabeth Sutton's cases, I intended to look at how these patterns

manifest in discrepant curricular contexts, and what personal and external factors interact with them. For instance, I expected that where the teachers were located in their career trajectories would be consequential to their pedagogical reasoning and actions. But beyond that, how would other conditions intersect with Noah's and Elizabeth's interactions with their diverse curricula and groups of students? And what might these intersections and their practical outcomes say about expertise in teaching?

Before I move on to the remaining chapters, I should mention two caveats. First, as I explain in Chapter Three, I draw from grounded theory as a central tenet of my methodology for this study. Charmaz (1995) notes that grounded theorists typically review relevant literature before and after conducting their research because the process of situating analytical categories and small-scale theorizing in the data typically produces new directions that initial reviews of literature do not anticipate. Second, because of the amount of time elapsed over the course of this research, some of the conditions articulated in this review of literature have changed alongside changes in education and educational scholarship. With both of these caveats in mind, to make sense of the narratives and findings I present in Chapters Four and Five, I integrate literature in Chapter Six that is not represented in the preceding review.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

At the risk of taking too much poetic license, I begin Chapter Three with a methodological metaphor: photography. One way to emphasize a subject is to zoom in on it and create what is known as a shallow field of vision. That is, the figure and ground appear distinctive, with the subject – often a singular focal point – crisp in the fore, while the remainder appears soft and blurry behind it. Conversely, a deeper field of vision complements a landscape photograph, with many objects at different focal lengths – people, trees, buildings, and mountains, perhaps – all clear and commanding attention. While one may look at such a wide-angle image and particularly notice the tree varieties or the architecture of the buildings, viewing the picture holistically likely would prompt different feelings about the characteristics of that place than would focusing on one or two of its component parts.

Yin's (1994) and Merriam's (1998) descriptions of qualitative case study methodologies are consistent with this metaphor. They note that case studies incorporate subunits of analysis to inform a more global unit; in this study, that global unit is the participants' transformation of pedagogical reasoning into action within different curricular contexts. To elaborate, as my research does not focus chiefly on the cultural-institutional factors of teachers' work, it seems inappropriate to label it ethnographic, though social practices within their institutions, as a subunit, played a significant role in how the participants mediated their curricula and made pedagogical decisions. For this study, I borrow from numerous research traditions, or methodological focal points. Of central importance, however, is what Stake (2000) calls a "bounded system" of

relationships among teacher knowledge, social-institutional context, tools, and professional practices. Metaphorically, this bounded system is everything within the frame of the wide-angle photograph.

Instrumental case studies like this one might be characterized as "zoomed-in" research processes and products, focusing on the illumination of nuanced, often concealed phenomena rather than generalizable patterns. This is not to say, however, that case studies necessarily are akin to shallow-field images. This study in particular represents a wide-angle view of teaching practice, with a deep base of evidence constructed around numerous focal points that corroborate to produce a sort of landscape image. These focal points include the teachers' interactions with students, the subject matter, their professional networks, and the political milieu of the school institution, as well as their knowledge, beliefs, and rationales for pedagogical action. While these separate focal points may be worthy of study in and of themselves, my interest here is the broader frame that contains all of those points (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Methodology, according to Bogdan and Biklin (2003), represents a conceptual position on research, framed by theories about what ought to be studied and conveyed, how, and why. A photographer's methodology, for instance, might consist of representing humans' struggle with nature in a particular context or through a largely unexplored perspective. Methods, on the other hand, are the specific tools and procedures chosen by the researcher to implement that methodology. For a photographer, methods include selecting what goes into and stays out of the frame and manipulating the image through lighting, shutter speed, and filtration. What follows this introduction is a brief description of my methodology, followed by a more extensive explanation of method.

Throughout the rest of this chapter, I articulate my research questions and their rationales and explain the various phases of design, from selecting participants to choosing and implementing specific methods of data collection. I also describe the participants' backgrounds and teaching contexts in some depth. Finally, I conclude the chapter with my analytical framework and an acknowledgement of the limitations of my design.

A brief explanation of my methodological grounding

Again, methodology, as opposed to method, implies a conversation about how researchers define knowledge and look to participate in its construction. Already, in the first sentence of this paragraph, I betrayed some assumptions that underpin my methodology: first, that knowledge is constructed and not simply "found," and second, that its construction involves the active negotiation of truth claims among researchers, participants, and consumers (Crotty, 2003). The qualitative methodology that I chose for this study is inextricably linked to two positional factors: 1) a critically pragmatic epistemology; 2) an interpretivist stance on knowledge construction.

I define critically pragmatic epistemology similarly to the way Kuhn and Weinstock (2002) define evaluativist epistemology. That is, knowledge is constructed and, thus, can be idiosyncratic. But what prevents it from being completely relativistic, with all claims simply a matter of ideological position and perspective, is the use of a set of criteria that the discourse community deems valid and consequential to judging some claims as more credible and powerful than others. Concerning research, critically pragmatic epistemology acknowledges that the discursive products of inquiry will resonate more with some communities than others; and even within a particular discourse

community, members will grapple to define what the potential implications of new knowledge are for their social practices (Mouffe, 1988). Simply put, critically pragmatic researchers ultimately deliberate on: 1) the conceivable consequences of knowledge for particular communities of people in specific places and times; and 2) the warranting criteria that give that knowledge its power within those communities.

This epistemic stance links closely to interpretivism as a research tradition. A rough comparison of the links between the two is represented in the figure below:

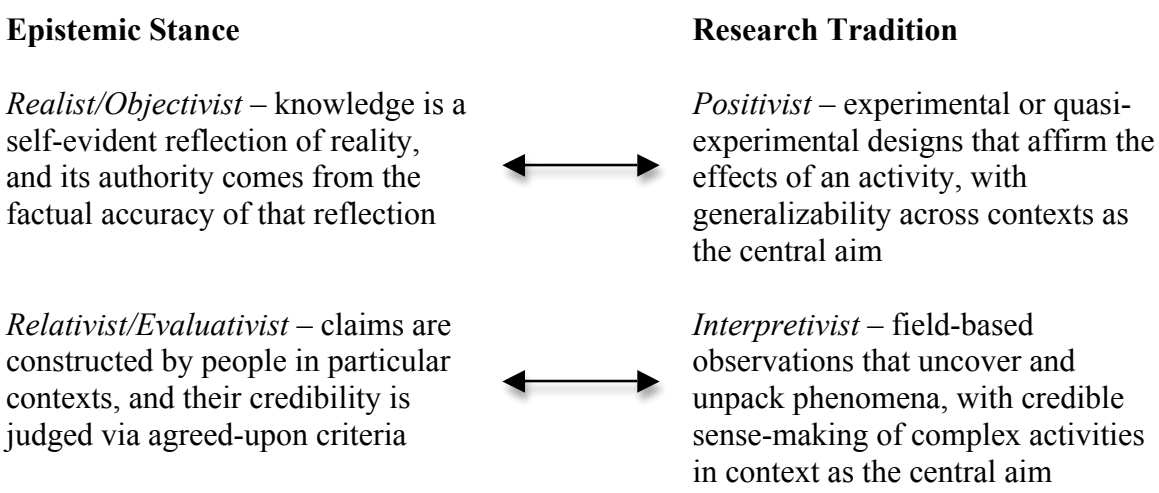


Figure 3.1: A rough comparison of the links between different epistemic stances and research traditions.

Wolcott (1990) explains that interpretivist research breaks from the positivist tradition by seeking to illuminate concealed or confounding phenomena rather than generalizing knowledge from smaller to larger scales. An interpretivist might argue that, while generalizeability has its place, it ultimately is susceptible to contextual and historical shifts and ambiguities associated with the ways we characterize and describe the phenomena in question. Put differently, seeking to generalize a particular phenomenon

must be preceded by the interpretive process of defining, deliberating on, and deeply understanding it. Within the interpretivist research tradition, the power and credibility of claims are judged on the grounds of their relevance to our social circumstances and propensities to act a consequence (Erikson, 1985; Wolcott, 1990). Erikson argues that local-contextual conditions have a strong impact on the activities studied and the meanings that are made through that process, "given the unique exigencies of practical action in the moment" (Erikson, 1985, p. 130).

Relatedly, my conception of how people learn – or alternatively, how our knowledge and the ways in which we use it changes – also frames my research positionality. I contend that learning is a process of using social and cognitive tools (e.g., discourse rules, analytical strategies) to mediate our environments and interact with the people in them; and as our toolsets and the ways we employ them change over time, so changes what we know and how we act (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998).

Donovan and Bransford (2005) articulate three practice-based principles that align with this theoretical perspective: 1) that "new understandings are constructed on a foundation of existing understandings and experiences" (p. 4); 2) that data must be organized by a conceptual framework, and likewise, conceptual frameworks develop and change as new evidence comes to bear on them; and 3) that learning is facilitated when we acknowledge and monitor how and why our social and cognitive tools facilitate changes in understanding. How did these principles frame my thinking about research? Primarily, I believe inquiry is most consequential when it generates new knowledge that affirms, challenges, or builds upon our conceptual frameworks. My intent is for this work

to serve as a tool for advancing a conversation about particular kinds and circumstances of knowledge and practice in teaching.

Research questions and their rationales

This study originally was conceptualized around the following exploratory research question: how do an early-career and an experienced secondary social studies teacher engage in pedagogical reasoning and action within concurrent tightly controlled and relatively autonomous curricular contexts? As indicated previously, three conditions led me to pursue this question. First, the trend toward externally controlling teachers' curricular and pedagogical decisions through standardized curricula, high-stakes tests, and other accountability measures challenges their roles as curricular vision-setters, designers, and arbiters. Second, given that formalized curricula rarely reflect the disciplinary learning advocated in the research literature, teachers who opt to pursue investigative and interpretive pedagogies often must look beyond those curricula to do so. I wondered if less constrained curricular contexts might provide educators with spaces for learning to engage in those kinds of pursuits. Finally, given that investigative approaches to learning and teaching are rife with the potential for ambiguity and divergence – two facets of teaching that novices are thought to struggle with – the suggestion that the problem-solving and self-monitoring needed to support those approaches are the special province of experienced teachers troubles the prospects of their appearance in social studies classrooms. With these conditions in mind, I began to wonder about the personal and contextual factors that would lead the two participants in this study to pursue similar or different courses of action across their tightly structured and elective curricula. This

wondering led me to a second research question: what are the consequences for the participants' broader pedagogical reasoning and action of the ways in which they mediate internal and external influences in these two discrepant curricular contexts?

These two questions imply the spatial and temporal limits of the study. Noah Andres and Elizabeth Sutton each implemented their elective and NSL Government curricula over the course of one semester, from January 2007 through June 2007 in Noah's case, and from September 2007 through January 2008 in Elizabeth's. Consequently, most of the data for this study were collected between January 2007 and January 2008. However, because I also sought to learn about their pre-course planning and retrospective reflections and revisions after their elective courses were complete, I collected and analyzed some interview, participant journaling, and artifact data in the months prior to and following course implementation.

These research questions are expansive, and thus, it was important to articulate more manageable sub-questions. The first emerged from Shulman's (1987) model of pedagogical reasoning and action: what patterns are evident in how the participants select and adapt curricular materials and methods, implement instruction with students, assess and evaluate student work, and reflect on and revise their practices via those elements of teaching? This question is based on a definition of teaching as the transformation of knowledge and beliefs about the subject matter, student learning, and pedagogy into decisions about what to teach and how to teach it. Even when teachers opt to act simply as conduits of other people's curricula, they are active decision makers in the process, choosing that pathway over others for particular reasons. In this study, I examined how Noah and Elizabeth rationalized their pedagogical decisions and observed how their

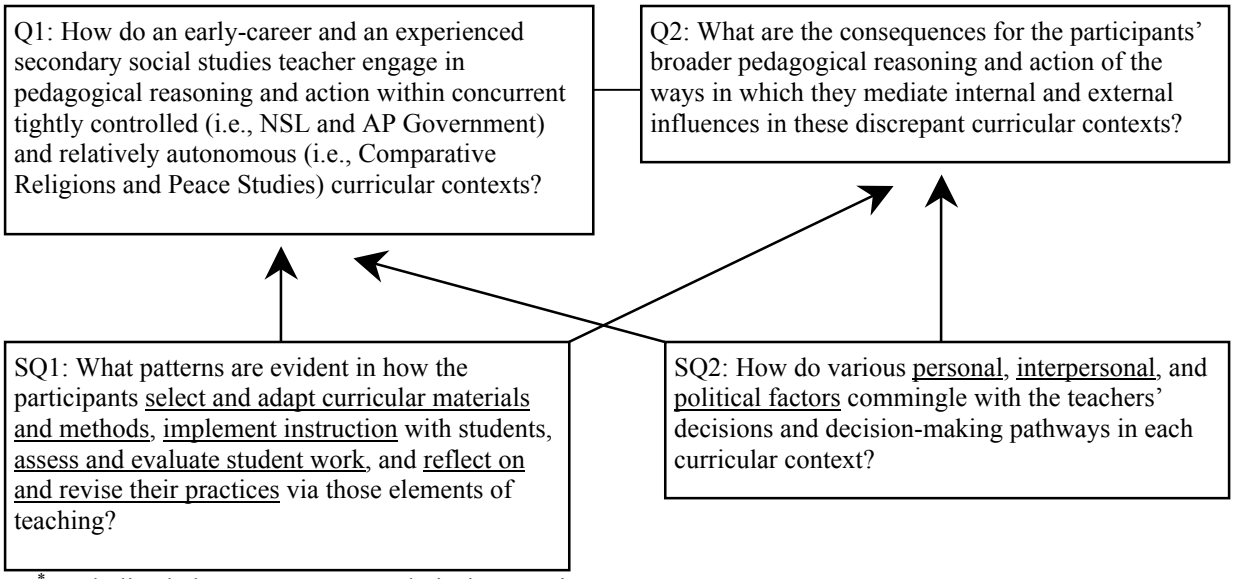
instructional practices matched up with those rationalizations. I asked them to interpret curricular materials and assessment tools and discuss their instructional utility. And I documented their interactions with students and colleagues, and their perceptions of the cohesion of those interactions with their pedagogical and professional stances.

Dewey (1938) suggests that our social interactions are at once continuous and bound by time and space. The knowledge and experiences of those with whom we interact impact our current interests and ideas, which in turn lead us to pursue new experiences that inevitably will change us in the future. I derived my second sub-question from this experience-knowledge reciprocity: how do various personal, interpersonal, and political factors commingle with the teachers' decisions and decision-making pathways in each curricular context? Here, personal factors include pedagogical beliefs and subject-matter knowledge, while interpersonal factors include the participants' relationships with students and colleagues and their interactions with the social pressures of the school institution. Political factors include accountability measures, such as formal curricular guidelines or standardized tests, school and departmental hierarchy, and other influences that may be externally imposed.

This sub-question also is a product of what I consider to be a scant element of Shulman's (1987) model of pedagogical reasoning and action: the capacity to arbitrate the political controls that serve to complicate the model. Shulman notes, "as we have come to view teaching, it begins with an act of reason, continues with a process of reasoning, culminates in performances of imparting, eliciting, involving, or enticing, and is then thought about some more until the process can begin again" (Shulman, 1987, p. 13). Here, "reason" implies that the transformation of teachers' knowledge into

instruction primarily rests on disciplinary activity, what ideas students bring to the classroom, and how students interact with the subject matter, the teacher, and each other, as evinced by assessment practices. I would argue that teachers cannot fully realize such reason in action unless they mitigate the consequences of factors that might be considered "unreasonable" by Shulman's (1987) definition. That is, if pedagogical reasoning is based on aims that prioritize students' capacities to investigate systematically, interpret critically, and cultivate first-order, second-order, and procedural knowledge through problem solving, then pedagogical action must incorporate strategies for circumnavigating authorities that prioritize contradictory or oppositional aims, such as rapid curriculum coverage and controversy avoidance.

What follows is an illustration of the research questions in this case:



* Underlined phrases represent analytical categories

Figure 3.2: An illustration of the research questions and their interactions.*

What kind of case study?

Stake (2000) describes three different types of case study and their rationales. An intrinsic case illuminates the distinctions of a specific subject at a unique place and time, while an instrumental case enriches the way a problem or situation is examined and understood. Their differences are more a matter of focus than method. Comparative case studies, which involve looking across many cases, often are designed to construct or reconsider broader theories or generalizations. The inquiry described herein best matches the description of an instrumental case study. Like intrinsic cases, instrumental cases "still [are] looked at in depth, [their] contexts scrutinized, [their] ordinary activities detailed, but all because this helps the researcher to pursue the external interest" (Stake, 2000, p. 437). In this circumstance, the external interest is the commingling of curricular-structural control with pedagogical reasoning and action.

That said, there is no universal construct of case study methodology in educational (and other social-scientific) research. Generally, case study research is considered appropriate when the researcher seeks to explore or describe in depth how or why something happens within a naturalistic setting (Bogdan & Biklin, 2003; Yin, 1994). This may sound lax, but as Guba and Lincoln (2000) argue, it is more appropriate for qualitative researchers to explain how their inquiries engage particular paradigms, advance particular conversations and social practices, and represent the intersections of researcher and researched than to follow a rigid set of methodological prescriptions. Merriam seems to concur: "qualitative case studies share with other forms of qualitative research the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, an inductive investigative strategy, and the end product being richly descriptive" (Merriam, 2009, p. 39).

Methodologists generally agree that the techniques of studying a case can vary widely and are subservient to the specific phenomena one wishes to study (Ragin, 1992; Stake, 2000). Someone exploring the unique cultural rules and traditions of Gullah people, for example, would choose different means of inquiry than someone tracing United States Supreme Court justices' uses of documentary evidence and precedence to support their opinions. Beyond that general point of agreement, however, discrepancies abound in terms of how case studies are defined, conducted, and interpreted. For instance, Donmoyer (1990) suggests that single cases can be "generalizable" if they point to a novel direction that widely compels scholars to ask new questions or use new approaches to address them, while Schofield (1990) reserves the term to describe synthesized findings across aggregates of similar cases. Some assert that cases are most

defensible as descriptive objects, chiefly illuminating and organizing phenomena that the researcher finds "out there", while others – myself included – argue that cases are inevitably interpretive, existing at the intersection of evidence from the field and researchers' own experiences and theories (Ragin & Becker, 1992). And as Patton (2002) suggests, scholars disagree about the extent to which case studies can explain causality convincingly. Such discrepancies, I believe, necessitate a clear description of the aims and perspectives that underlie the case study described herein.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit an alternative to traditional generalizability that they describe as "fittingness" or transferability. Specifically, they argue that case studies produce working hypotheses about phenomena that scholars inevitably consider as they come across new circumstances. Their conception implies a shift from describing what is "typical" toward considering how well research findings transfer across complex situations. Wolcott (1990) also eschews a traditional view of generalizability in qualitative research, noting that there can be "no exact set of circumstances, no single 'correct' interpretation" within complicated relationships among actors and environments (p. 144). These notions are appropriate to this case study. It is not intended to describe the "typical practices" – which I find to be a somewhat problematic, usually oversimplified construct – of early- and mid-career high school social studies teachers. Rather, its function, as Stake (2000) articulates, is exploration, providing the author and reader with a new means to evaluate and reconsider existing knowledge and practice. This is part of the theory-building process, though I use that term loosely, in accordance with Strauss and Corbin's (1998) definition: "theorizing is work that entails not only conceiving or

intuiting ideas (concepts) but also formulating them into a logical, systematic, and explanatory scheme" (p. 21).

My case study meets these criteria. It involves systematically organizing evidence of teachers' knowledge and practices into themes and distilling a scheme of findings and implications from those themes. One then can compare and contrast the case with others as a means of better understanding the nuanced interplay of experience, context, and knowledge. What distinguishes case studies as facilitators of this process, claims Donmoyer (1990), is the extent to which access to and interaction with others' unique experiences and perspectives expands "the range of interpretations available to the research consumer" (p. 194).

Simply put, this instrumental case study serves the community of scholars interested in questions about curriculum mediation and arbitration among teachers in different career trajectories with a new tool for understanding and critique. It illuminates phenomena that remain underexplored or overgeneralized in the research literature. For example, I found no research that characterized novice practices as survivalistic, short-term-oriented, and heavily influenced by external scripts to also include accounts of early-career teachers designing and implementing elective courses like Noah's, with little oversight (e.g., Livingston & Borko, 1989; van Hover & Yeager, 2004). Furthermore, while teachers' relationships with high-stakes state tests has received a great deal of attention as a unit of analysis (e.g., Cimbricz, 2002; Grant, 2006; Grant et al, 2002; Pedulla et al, 2003; van Hover & Heinecke, 2005; Vogler, 2008), there are few cases in which those units are examined comprehensively with personal and political factors, like teachers' epistemological stances and positions of power within their school institutions.

One example is Grant's (2003) case study of two secondary history teachers whose different pedagogical stances serve as key bases for comparison. Nonetheless, both of Grant's participants would be considered "experienced" in comparison to Noah Andres, and neither teacher was in a position of concurrently negotiating such patently different curricular contexts.

Given these contrasts, my research holds a unique position in the literature to date and reveals contextual and practical nuances that might strengthen our understanding of the factors involved in teachers' pedagogical reasoning and action. In fact, "contextual nuance" is an important reason why I chose to conduct this research as a case study. Yin (1994) explains: "You would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study" (p. 13). Such a definition challenges the tendency to equate case study with field-based observation, which may be a component but is not often the entirety of case study.

Capturing context is a complicated endeavor. Here, it involves analyzing both overt and covert interactions among the participants, students, the curriculum, their institutional cultures, and policies that impact those interactions. Certainly, field-based observation is an essential means of obtaining evidence in this case, but so are classroom and curricular documents and participants' verbal reports about their subject matters, learning, teaching, and the milieus of their schools. A comprehensive case requires a comprehensive data collection and analysis system. Before I explain those methods, I attend first to the solicitation of Noah's and Elizabeth's participation in the study and a brief description of their teaching contexts.

Selecting and soliciting the participants

I solicited potential participants using four criteria: 1) current service as a high school social studies teacher, working within a reasonable geographic radius; 2) an assignment to concurrently teach a flexible, elective curriculum and an externally controlled, standardized-tested course; 3) years of classroom experience; and 4) a willingness to take part in an intensive, partial-year study of her or his teaching. The second criterion proved most elusive. In the mid-Atlantic state in which I conducted this study, only one secondary social studies course – NSL Government – carried a standardized test as a graduation requirement. Thus, I initially decided that any potential participants had to teach a version of that course, plus an elective of their own design. (After beginning my work with Noah, I reconsidered my position, recognizing that Advanced Placement courses also fit the definition of externally controlled and standardized-tested.) As well, my interest in including an early-career teacher in this study was complicated by the fact that, historically, few early-career teachers have the opportunity to design and implement their own elective courses.

To amass a list of potential participants, I solicited administrators (e.g., social studies department chairs and principals) and teachers within regional schools using a technique akin to what Bogdan and Biklen (2003) refer to as "snowball sampling." Beginning with a network built through the university, I asked those who responded to my requests to recommend other teachers who fit my research criteria. This yielded five possible participants. The credibility of this study rests in part on the richness of the data collected and analyzed, and thus, on working with individuals who voluntarily provide deep access to their knowledge, beliefs, and practices (Donmoyer, 1990; Merriam, 1998).

To ensure a successful study in this regard, I conducted initial interviews with the potential participants to clarify their willingness open their practices to scrutiny and invest in the project, to read their discourse styles, and to speculate on the likelihood that their curricular contexts would remain stable. From the initial five, I narrowed my list to three and eventually selected Noah and Elizabeth for reasons articulated below, which included their unique backgrounds and propensities to speak self-critically and at length about their teaching practices.

As per Yin's (1994) recommendation, I conducted a brief pilot study of Noah's planning and teaching during the semester prior to this study's inception. I implemented several data collection procedures, including observations in the AP Government classroom, interviews, and document analysis, in order to gauge whether or not the participant would find further study invasive or detrimental to his professional responsibilities. As well, I used the pilot study as a way to refine my research questions and clarify what data collection and analysis tools would best crystallize an accurate portrait of participants' pedagogical reasoning and action. After completing the pilot study and confirming Noah's continued interest and viability as a participant, I wrote up the pilot case as a research memorandum and integrated it into this study's data set.

Noah Andres and his teaching context

> Growing up, I always loved history, and I loved politics. I couldn't get enough of it. I was always reading whatever I could get my hands on; even reading ahead in my textbooks; which is funny given my current view of textbooks… I think [I was attracted to and eventually went into politics] because I saw it as living history. There

> are very few ways to be able to sit in the front row like that. I mean, I was there to see the Democratic leader of the House's reaction on September 11. I was there for President Bush's first State of the Union address. Doing those kinds of things, working on campaigns, those were amazing opportunities to actually be right there where things were happening.

Noah Andres was a secondary social studies teacher in his late twenties. He began his teaching career full-time in the fall of 2005. For several years prior, he worked as a US congressional staffer and campaign advisor, having successfully completed an undergraduate political science degree in a prestigious program in the mid-Atlantic region. "I eventually left politics," he noted, "because I got frustrated with it… I was at the point where I needed to either commit for good or go find something else entirely. Plus I realized that the only people I knew in politics were either divorced or not married; well… they're married to their jobs." Noah chose to pursue education for several reasons. First, he believed it to be an ideal milieu for pursuing a key professional goal: promoting the civic value of tolerance in democratic discourse. Having seen complex historical and political problems recast in unsophisticated, ideological ways, Noah envisioned teaching as an opportunity to "have a direct impact" on how people explore and evaluate different perspectives on policy. Also, teaching is a career with which Noah considered himself keenly familiar, though he chose it only after clarifying his sense of purpose through other experiences:

> I come from a family of teachers. And that's actually one of the reasons why I didn't become a teacher in the first place; it was just like, let's try something else… I [only came back to teaching] when I realized that the element of politics I liked most was

being able to have some really good, thoughtful conversations with people about some pretty complex problems. I thought, you know, if I can have these kinds of conversations with kids, and help them learn to think about things as not all black and white, then I'll be doing something right. A lot of these kids, they just repeat the kinds of things they're hearing at home or on Fox News or whatever. Teaching history and government, it's a way to do something about that. Hopefully.

Concepts like "multiple perspectives" and "not all black and white" permeated Noah's characterizations of himself, his aims and experiences, and the world around him. He was born in San Jose, California and lived there until he was ten, when he moved to Florida with his mother and stepfather following his parents' divorce. He described life within two different families – his mother's in Florida and his father's in southern California – as a process of code shifting: "When I was going to my White, pretty much upper-class Catholic high school, you know, that's who I was. But when I was with my dad, I would try to disassociate myself from that White kid image, because I would be spending all of my time with my dad and his family, his friends, his community – which is predominantly Hispanic." In other words, his upbringing was framed by a recognition of different perspectives and competing ideals, "even within one individual." A film buff, he compared himself to "Leonardo DiCaprio's character in *The Departed*, going back and forth" between two very different sets of social norms. During a conversation about his background, Noah found humor in a question about his Hispanic roots:

There's this stereotype where people ask, you know, when did your family get here? My family lived in the area that's now Arizona and New Mexico; it didn't used to be the United States, but it kind of got co-opted, you know? There wasn't really a

> crossing over so much as the line crossed over; like, whoop, you're in the United States now. [Laughs] And so I kind of laugh about it inside, and roll my eyes, when people are like, oh, so you're from a Latino immigrant family.

Throughout Noah's youth, both parents stressed the value of education, though he reported that his deep interest in history and politics was otherwise driven. "I wouldn't say that my parents are especially active, politically speaking," he noted. "I mean, we watched the news; they voted." But being politically active, from Noah's perspective, involves a legion of other elements, such as volunteering for campaigns and public service projects, associating oneself with and donating resources to important organizations and causes, and being informed enough about controversial issues to publicly challenge flawed or unsubstantiated arguments. Noah's examples of what constitutes political action seemed to rest on contributing something to the social milieu.

In 2004, at the age of 26, Noah enrolled in a selective, intensive teacher education program, culminating in a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction and a state teaching credential. Immediately following his participation in that program, Noah accepted a secondary social studies teaching position at Western High School. In retrospect, he reported, "I'm glad I wasn't offered a position right away [at the school where I completed my internship], because I probably would've taken it. By comparison, [Western] is a much better place for me." He found departmental colleagueship and administrative support for teachers to be much stronger at Western than at his internship location, which he indicated were key factors in being offered the opportunity to design and implement his own elective course as an early-career teacher. This perceived support seemed congruent with Western's position as a high performing, highly reputable

suburban school with remarkably few problems characteristic of what Cornbleth (2009) describes as climates of law and order, censorship, and pathology and pessimism.

Western High School was nestled within a sprawling commercial district and business park just outside a major metropolitan area in the mid-Atlantic region. Demographically, students mostly came from middle- to upper-class backgrounds. Slightly more than half were White. African-American, Asian, and Latino/a students comprised the rest, nearly evenly divided. Upon entering the school, one would have noticed an announcement about the award-winning status of the school newspaper and a banner proclaiming that students in a particular AP program achieved the highest average score on that program's examinations nationwide. Inside, meeting announcements for various organizations, campaign posters for student leadership positions, and messages about human rights violations in Darfur mottled the halls, minus one corridor near Noah's classroom reserved for a painted display of stars commemorating the number of fallen Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan. The student exhibition added, "If this display included the number of Iraqi and Afghani civilians killed, all of the hallways in the school would be filled with stars!"

Noah lived within walking distance of Western, in an apartment with his spouse – a lawyer who works for the Federal government – and their dog. He and his wife enjoyed living within Western's boundaries but were not optimistic about being able to afford to buy a home and start a family there. "Even with both of our incomes," he reported, "it takes a lot of equity to put a down payment on a house around here, and we'd probably be just scraping by with a mortgage." Consequently, Noah and his wife had considered leaving the region for a lower cost of living, despite his fondness for Western.

During his two first years in the classroom, Noah had taught American History, AP US Government, and the elective course, Peace Studies. He also had discussed the possibility of teaching AP World History with his department chair. "I'm more drawn to world history than US history," he explained:

> I always felt like there's just too much familiarity with what you typically get in US history, whereas world history tends to jar me a lot more… I enjoy history most when I come across something that's like, 'Really? Well, that doesn't fit with my understanding.' With world history, there's just so much difference from place to place around the world.

Noah was an assertive member of his school community. Many of our conversations took place in his classroom, after the end of the school day. It was not uncommon to be interrupted there by friendly visits from senior-class officers, former or current students, other faculty members, and administrators. Alongside his duties as senior-class advisor, Noah supervised the activities of the anime and video-gaming clubs. As Noah explained, "I don't really have a special interest in anime or video games; it's just that the clubs needed an advisor and a classroom for meetings, so I volunteered."

Noah maintained a relatively casual appearance as a teacher, typically wearing khaki pants or jeans and a polo or button-down shirt, without a tie. He was an unfailingly convivial personality and a thoughtful conversationalist. A single question about a decision he made in class might have produced four or five minutes of carefully nuanced response, dotted with brief, somewhat relevant anecdotes and laughter. When I first solicited Noah to participate in this study, he agreed enthusiastically, noting that it would offer him an opportunity to reflect upon his teaching. He was uninhibited in stating his

political viewpoints and their warrants during interviews, though in the classroom, he sought more to challenge students' faulty or unsophisticated assertions, whatever their perspective, than foreground his own. In line with his personality, such questions and critiques were more cautionary than corrective, more light-hearted than confrontational. This approach, he argued, encourages students to feel comfortable participating in classroom discussion and, in the process, to focus on the ideas in exchange rather than the status or character of whoever is exchanging them.

Elizabeth Sutton and her teaching context

> Why did I become a teacher? Because I loved history, and I wanted kids to love it, too… That seems like a pretty naïve reason, in retrospect, but in many ways, it's still true. The difference now is that I know most of the kids in my classroom don't just inherently love the subject like I did. There's a step before that, which is helping them see relevance and meaning in what they're learning.

Elizabeth was a secondary social studies teacher in her early forties. During her sixteen years in the classroom, she had taught numerous courses, including NSL Government, Global and United States History, and her elective, Comparative Religions. Elizabeth also came to teaching after exploring another field; her primary interest, like that of her parents and siblings, was law. She completed an undergraduate degree in 1987 from an elite private institution in New England with strong foci on international relations and public service. Later, while enrolled in a Master of Arts program in History at a large, mid-Atlantic university, she discovered the university's budding M.Ed. program, created to provide a rapid pathway to teaching for individuals with degrees in

their subject areas. In fact, Elizabeth was an inaugural student in the same graduate program that Noah completed 14 years later. The M.Ed. program, noted Elizabeth, cemented her interest in teaching: "The classroom was calling me. So in order to combine my two interests, I went into teaching and married a lawyer." Elizabeth and her husband had two early-adolescent children. While Elizabeth's family lived in the same district in which she taught, their home was several miles away from Eastern High School, and thus, her children were scheduled to attend a neighboring high school.

The eldest of three children, Elizabeth grew up near Syracuse, New York, in what she described as a "strictly Jewish" upbringing. She and her family maintained their faith in the Conservative Jewish tradition: "That means we try to preserve customs, we have a deep respect for Jewish law, we keep strictly kosher, that sort of thing. But that doesn't mean we're politically conservative." She cited her dedication to social equity and participation in organizations designed to advance gay marriage as evidence of that. She also advised Eastern High School's Gay-Straight Alliance student organization.

Elizabeth was an animated woman, with long, wavy black hair, an upbeat personality, and strong opinions about most topics of conversation. Her rapport with students was quick in tempo and casual in nature, sometimes concurrently sarcastic and self-deprecating. "Taking yourself too seriously, not having a sense of humor in your teaching – those are recipes for disaster," she noted. "My students never doubt that I really love my job." Amongst her students, particularly those in her Comparative Religions elective, Elizabeth openly discussed her faith and her family, displaying photos of her children, nieces, nephews, husband, and siblings on the cart

she used to carry materials from classroom to classroom. She knew a great deal about her students' extracurricular activities and tried to attend them when she could.

As a school-wide "master teacher" and professional development coordinator, Elizabeth occupied an office in the school, where many of our conversations took place, rather than her own classroom, and she traveled around to different rooms to teach her two courses. About half of her workload involved classroom instruction; the other half included mentoring and conducting workshops for teachers and connecting educators to external professional development opportunities and resources. She also managed her school's faculty websites. Inevitably, those responsibilities required Elizabeth to arbitrate the professional development goals and benchmarks established by school and district administrators and the practical needs and interests of her teaching colleagues. Because she enjoyed a good reputation with both, Elizabeth acknowledged that she had a great degree of "political capital" within the school. Yet she consistently worked to strengthen her reputation by "staying focused on what's most important to me: that's continuing to push myself as a teacher, push my students to learn, and push my colleagues to help their students learn as well."

Elizabeth recognized how her conceptions of teaching and her place within the social and political contexts of the school institution have changed over time. She talked at length about her interests in history as an undergraduate and graduate student, exploring feminist perspectives and researching the changing tide of historical inquiry and narrative in a postmodern age. Initially believing that she could export those ideas from the university to the high school setting, she recognized, once in the classroom, the difficulties of such an endeavor:

> I started my career at [Southeastern High School], which was even more racially and socioeconomically diverse than [Eastern]. I thought, these kids are hungry for something that has some relevance to them, some new perspectives, you know? But it was clear to me that what was ingrained in them was these really simple, typical history class stories, and only bits and pieces of them. So I had to take a step back and think, you know, how do I meet them where they are and go from there?

Elizabeth accepted a teaching position at Eastern High School when the building opened in 1998 and has taught there since. Along with the opportunity it offered her to "get in on the ground floor" of a new institution that was focused on the humanities and fine arts, Eastern was closer to her home than Southeastern and had openings in United States History and Government – two courses that juxtaposed nicely with her subject matter interests and expertise.

While Elizabeth's and Noah's schools were located in the same district, their communities and demographics varied considerably. Eastern, a large, labyrinthine building, was what Elizabeth's principal called "a perfect school for a research study – very diverse student body, innovative teaching staff, slightly above average in terms of performance, but not without its problems." Eastern featured a national-award-winning, student-run television station and a renowned debate team, yet also struggled to deal with an increasing Latino gang presence. Some students lived in three-million-dollar homes, while others were homeless or lived in transitional housing. The community was suburban, though there was a notable amount of farmland, and recently developed former farmland, within its boundaries. Several housing developments served by Eastern High

School were constructed in a matter of months and were fewer than five years old, evidencing sprawl from the large metropolitan area nearby. Within two miles of the high school, there was a cluster of Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, and Jewish houses of worship.

The purpose of the preceding sections was to provide the reader with a snapshot of the participants' identities and foreshadow some of the potential influences on their teaching practices. Sfard and Prusak (2004) explain that discussions of identity are most consequential when they link individuals' conceptions or beliefs, their social activities, and the "significant narrators" that push people to act in one way or another on their conceptions or beliefs. The narratives above, and those that appear throughout this dissertation, offer the reader a sense of how Noah's and Elizabeth's experiences shaped their beliefs, who or what the significant narrators within those experiences were, and how they contributed to the social practices that constituted the participants' teaching.

The contexts of the participants' teaching during the study

During this study, Noah Andres taught his Peace Studies elective and three section of the Advanced Placement adaptation of his school's mandatory tenth-grade NSL Government course. Elizabeth Sutton taught one section each of honors NSL Government and Comparative Religions. Comfortable with a rigorous data collection schema that included multiple interviews, classroom observations, document analyses, and journaling, both participants volunteered to participate in this study almost immediately after being asked to do so. Furthermore, their colleagues and administrators recommended both as thoughtful, effective teachers.

Noah's social studies department chair was confident enough in Noah's teaching to offer him the Peace Studies curriculum shortly after joining the Western High School

faculty. Initially, Noah was hired to teach the state-tested NSL Government course and United States History, but unforeseen scheduling conflicts led the chair to replace Noah's spring-semester U.S. History course with the Peace Studies elective. Prior to 2006, Noah's chair had spent several years teaching Peace Studies, and while he made himself and his instructional resources available for consultation, Noah was "explicitly told, several times, that the course was mine to change and run as I saw fit." Consequently, he rebuilt the course almost entirely during the semester prior to teaching it, and then continuously tuned it throughout his first teaching attempt. Elizabeth designed and began teaching Comparative Religions in 2000. Since then, she enjoyed high rates of enrollment due to word-of-mouth and her efforts to recruit students who she imagined would be interested in the course. Only one social studies teacher at Eastern had worked at the school longer than Elizabeth, and her colleagues and school administrators regarded her work highly.

Western and Eastern High Schools both were located within the Stark County Public School (SCPS) system, a large, suburban district located in the mid-Atlantic states. Stark County schools enrolled over 135,000 students across more than 200 buildings and maintain an annual operating budget of almost $2 billion, spending more than $12,500 per student each year (SCPS, 2008). Not surprisingly, a school system as large as SCPS, sitting adjacent to a major metropolitan area, served a diverse population of students, racially, culturally, and socioeconomically. One high school, for instance, was primarily White, featured an honors and AP enrollment rate of 88 percent and a dropout rate of 0.7 percent, and granted free or reduced-price meals to only 1.2 percent of its students. Another only a few miles away was primarily Latino and African-American, graduated

78 percent of its students, and granted free or reduced-price meals to more than half (SCPS, 2008).

Western High School, one of more than 25 secondary schools in the district, was more like the former than the latter. Nearly 2000 students were enrolled there, and with a free and reduced-price meals (FARMs) rate of only 6.4 percent and a graduation rate of nearly 97 percent, Western was one of the more affluent and high-performing schools in the district. Its students performed above the district averages on the SATs and in Advanced Placement courses, and the number of students that sat for AP exams contributed to the school's place on Newsweek Magazine's 2008 list of 100 top high schools nationwide (Mathews, 2008). Approximately 65 percent of students were White, with the remaining 35 percent nearly evenly split among Asian, black, and Latino students. Eastern was a more diverse high school, racially and socioeconomically. Thirty-six percent of students qualified for FARMs, and the populations of White and Black students were nearly split, with an increasing number of Latino/a students in attendance. It also was slightly less crowded than Western, with approximately 1800 students.

In his first two years at Western, Noah taught U.S. History, AP and non-AP NSL Government, and Peace Studies to students in grades nine through twelve. He was one of 18 in the social studies department and counted among approximately 93 percent of teachers at Western classified as "highly qualified" by federal and state standards. I focused my research efforts on the Peace Studies course, in which 19 students were enrolled, and one section of AP Government, with 27 students. I selected the Government section based on Noah's recommendation and the time at which the class met. Noah indicated that the section I chose likely "would be the most interesting to observe – not

necessarily the best students, grade-wise, but definitely the most diverse and the most interesting in terms of personalities and conversations."

Elizabeth had taught numerous social studies courses during her time at Eastern High School. Two years prior to this study, she began serving in a school-based professional development role and, thus, obtained releases from two sections of her NSL Government course. I focused my research on the only courses she taught – one section of honors NSL Government and one section of Comparative Religions, the latter of which she opened to interested students in grades 11 and 12. Thirty students were enrolled in her Comparative Religions course, while her NSL Government course housed 28. Elizabeth was one of fifteen teachers in her social studies department, and only one of two who were certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. She was one of 89 percent in her building deemed "highly qualified." A summary of notable demographic information about the participants and their school contexts is found below, in Figure 3.3:

Name and School	Background	Course Load*	School Demographics
Noah Andres, Western High School	● White-Latino male, two years in the classroom ● B.A. in political science (2000), M.Ed. in curriculum and instruction (2005)	● AP Government (3 sections, 3 summative tests: AP, state, district) ● Peace Studies (1 section)	● Metro-suburban ● 64% White, 10% African-American, 12% Latino/a, 13% Asian ● 6% FARMS rate ● Stud/teach ratio: 12/1 ● 97% graduation rate ● 93% HQ teachers
Elizabeth Sutton, Eastern High School	● White female, sixteen years in the classroom ● B.A. in history (1987), MA in history (1991), M.Ed. in curriculum and instruction (1992), NBPTS Certification (2003)	● Honors-level National, State, and Local (NSL) Government (1 section, 2 summative tests: state, district) ● Comparative Religions (1 section)	● Suburban ● 41% White, 36% African-American, 13% Latino/a, 9% Asian ● 36% FARMS rate ● Stud/teach ratio: 14/1 ● 93% graduation rate ● 89% HQ teachers

* Reflects the courses taught at the time of the study

Figure 3.3. Research participants and their teaching contexts.

Data collection

As Miles and Huberman (1990) note, the most valid accounts of naturalistic circumstances like teaching derive from "the use of a variety of descriptive and analytic tools, and the attempt to find their intersections" (p. 345). Of course, researchers' tools vary according to their purposes, so the idea that more defensible outcomes materialize simply from amassing a larger toolbox of methods and means, without considering which tools are suited to which intents, is problematic. As well, the tendency to focus dogmatically on one particular set of tools – what Janesick (2000) calls "methodolatry" ("a combination of method and idolatry") (p. 390) – sometimes obscures the actual

substance of the intersections that Miles and Huberman (1990) identify. Erikson (1986) seems to concur, arguing that the worth of interpretive research lies not in the strict application of rules of data collection and analysis, but in the thorough illumination of everyday events and the ways in which participants interact with and find significance in those events. In this case, it is through narratives of the participant's experiences that broader themes related to pedagogical reasoning and action emerged. And it is the responsibility of the researcher to forge clear, valid connections among the evidence on which those narratives are grounded, the narratives themselves, the patterns that manifest in those narratives, and the consequences of those patterns.

I return for a moment to the photography metaphor for researching pedagogical reasoning and action. Classroom observations and teachers' self-reports (via interviews and reflective writing) comprise the lens, allowing the researcher to examine the phenomena at hand and compare and contrast what is articulated and what is enacted. Even so, the lens glass may be clouded or streaked substantially by contextual norms unfamiliar to the researcher (Schweber, 2006), or perhaps by teachers' own misrepresentations (intentional or not) of how their ideas translate into practice (VanSledright, Kelly, & Meuwissen, 2006). To clear up the glass, it behooves the researcher to substantiate what is learned from interviews and observations through other means of inquiry and elicitation techniques, such as instructional document analyses and task-based think-aloud exercises. At times, when corroborating multiple sources of evidence, the researcher may notice flaring or a glare – points of confusion or contradiction that must be addressed (and thus, the lens adjusted) while analyzing the data. But even when the lens is clean, and the researcher is looking straight through it

toward his or her subject, there exists a reflection of the researcher's eye in the viewfinder or LCD screen.

Habitually, we look beyond that reflection toward the images on the other side of the lens, and while we may change focus to ignore it, there the reflection remains, subtly coloring the objects of our attention. Hence, as I draw inferences about my participant's pedagogical knowledge and practices, I recognize that I am a key instrument in the process, with unique stances and experiences (explained throughout these first three chapters) that impact how I envision and evaluate those of others. Researchers must be aware of how their stances are reflected in the design and utilization of data collection tools and the modes of analysis that lead them to their conclusions. Rather than acting as if the reflection does not exist or carelessly ignoring it, researchers should acknowledge it and examine its effects through tools such as research journals and analytic memos. In this case, such tools were particularly important, given my proximity to the subject matter at hand and the study participants.

Again, my intent was to crystallize coherent, comprehensive themes via narratives about the participants' reasoning and classroom practices across their two curricular contexts. To do this, I analyzed several different sources of data: 1) detailed field notes gleaned from observations of the participants' teaching; 2) interview transcripts, including verbal-reporting protocols on assessment products and instructional materials; 3) participants' "dilemmas of teaching" journals, which they maintained for the purpose of reflecting upon problems or ideas that emerged when I was not present to collect data; and 4) artifacts relevant to the participants' pedagogical reasoning and teaching practices. Rather than approach these methods as separate, mutually exclusive research events, I

conceptualized them as concomitant and synergistic in accordance with their places in a naturalistic setting. For example, I often contextualized classroom documents through observation data from the class sessions in which those documents were used. Additionally, the relationship between classroom observations and interviews was particularly fluid, in that the outcomes of some interviews prompted me to look at specific aspects of classroom practice (e.g., types of student-teacher interactions, intended learning outcomes of writing assignments), while many observations led to conversations in which I asked Noah and Elizabeth to explain their thoughts on phenomena seen in the classroom.

Observations of participants' practices

The role of the observer can vary substantially from the proverbial "fly on the wall" to full participant in the social practices of the researched (Bogdan & Biklin, 1998). In light of my epistemological and interpretive stances, I acknowledge that my own background as a teacher and teacher educator and my presence at the research sites impacted the nature of the phenomena that I looked at and looked for and, potentially, the interactions among teachers, students, and subject matters within those sites. My strategy, which lined up with what Tedlock (2000) defines as the "observation of participation," began with thick description of the aforementioned interactions (i.e., "looking at"). From there, I drilled into some that seemed particularly consequential to my emerging analytical categories (i.e., "looking for"). In doing so, I attempted to strike a productive balance between voyeurism, or the act of a non-participant whose efforts to appear

invisible introduce a palpable tension to the research site, and participant-observer, whose activities within the site can overtly transform the interactions that take place there.

In each of the teachers' four courses, I conducted from 22 (in Elizabeth's NSL Government course) to 28 (in Noah's Peace Studies course) full-session observations, for a total of 98 across fourteen weeks of in-class data collection. The observations' primary function was to build an understanding of how the participants' pedagogical decision making strategies translated into classroom practice. During these visits, I used unstructured field notes and, as time went on, a more structured observation protocol (see Appendix C) to document the physical characteristics of the classroom, the teachers' pedagogical moves and instructional materials, and verbal exchanges among students and teachers. I also attended one of Noah's AP teaching team meetings, one social studies department meeting, and one Western High School faculty meeting, and in Elizabeth's case, one social studies department meeting, one Eastern High School faculty meeting, and one professional development seminar that she facilitated. Furthermore, I observed several of Noah's and Elizabeth's conversations with colleagues and administrators during non-instructional hours, but those opportunities were spontaneous and sporadic, and thus, I largely documented them after they had taken place.

With 26 to 30 students, Noah's AP Government classroom and both of Elizabeth's classrooms were crowded; Noah's Peace Studies classroom was less so, with 19. Due to space constraints, I typically sat at the teacher's desk during Noah's and Elizabeth's Government classes and at a counter on the side of the room during Comparative Religions, while more open desks in the Peace Studies classroom afforded me the opportunity to move about the room from one session to the next. During

classroom observations, I found a quiet location on the periphery of the classroom and maintained a record of field notes throughout the duration of each class session. Occasionally, the teachers and students solicited my participation in classroom activities, either to respond to a question on the floor or assist with a managerial task. I obliged those solicitations. Alongside my field notes, I maintained an analytical log, where I documented perceived links between observed data and other sources of evidence, experimented with emerging and metamorphosizing themes, "dialogued" with the assumptions on which my judgments about observed phenomena were based, and suggested directions for future inquiry (Adler & Adler, 1994; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Typically, I added to and reviewed this document immediately following my observations, in order to maintain fresh perspectives on what I had seen.

Participant interviews

Interviews provide the researcher with access to phenomena that often remain elusive or unexplored via other data collection methods. As Fontana and Frey (2000) suggest, interviews create forums for participants to construct rich, contextualized narratives where thoughts and experiences intersect. However, Fontana and Frey and Seidman (2006) urge researchers to proceed cautiously with interviews; specifically, to listen carefully and maintain the flow of conversation strategically toward the researcher's purpose, yet avoid dominating their interactions with participants. During interviews, researchers with some expertise in the topics of conversation can at once demonstrate familiarity with participants' ideas and plead ignorance to how particular phenomena manifest in their unique circumstances. According to Fontana and Frey

(2000, p. 655), "once the interviewer's presentational self is 'cast,' it leaves a profound impression on the respondents and has great influence over the success (or lack of it) of the study." Interviews, then, are perhaps the most reciprocal of qualitative data collection tools; for better and worse, they allow participants to interpret who the researcher is and what his or her aims and perspectives are, and vice versa.

Interview formats range from unstructured discussions, where the researcher asks an open-ended question and allows the respondent to steer the exchange, to heavily structured protocols, where no questions or comments beyond what is specified are uttered during the conversation. I conducted three kinds of interview during this research: 1) short, unstructured post-lesson interviews, designed to get participants to briefly unpack a preceding instructional period's student, teacher, and subject matter interactions (approximately one each week per teacher, for a total of 23 records); 2) 45-minute, semi-structured interviews, designed to gather data on the participants' negotiation of personal and external influences on their pedagogical reasoning (four per teacher; see Appendix D); and 3) think-aloud (or verbal-reporting) protocols, designed to prompt the participants to respond to dilemmas of planning and assessment while engaging with relevant tools *in situ* (two per teacher; see Appendix E). All of the semi-structured interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, as were most of the post-lesson interviews; the remaining informal interviews involved hand-typing the participants' commentaries in real time or paraphrasing retrospectively. All except two of Noah's interviews were held in his classroom after school hours; the rest took place at his home. My interviews with Elizabeth took place in her office – the one she shared with Eastern High School's other master teacher – either during or after the school day.

To deepen my understanding of how Noah and Elizabeth chose among pedagogical moves and resources and used assessment to evaluate student learning and reflect on their teaching, I used verbal-reporting, or think-aloud, protocols to document how they read and responded to various curriculum artifacts and assessment products (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). Specific to assessment, I aimed to draw out the alignment of their subject matter knowledge, instructional objectives, and assessment strategies, as well as examine how the teachers defined effective and exemplary performance and searched for meaning within the students' work (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). To accomplish this, I selected examples of students' writing from each of the participants' courses, rather than other types of assessment with a limited feedback loop between the teacher and students (e.g., multiple-choice tests). Selected examples ran the gamut from short-answer responses (or "brief constructed responses") to lengthier essays, emphasizing competencies from recollection and summary to interpretation and argumentation.

With regard to curricular documents, I asked the teachers to read through an example each, per course, of three different kinds of texts: 1) resources they had used in their classroom teaching; 2) resources that might be relevant to and appropriate for their curricula, but with which they were unfamiliar; and 3) curricular guidelines or scripts, like the district NSL Government curriculum and national standards documents. Like other interviews, the verbal reports were tape-recorded and transcribed. They consisted of two distinct segments: one in which the participants read the documents aloud and stopped at designated points to explain their thoughts at the time, and one in which the teachers responded retrospectively to several questions about their pedagogical reasoning.

Curricular and instructional artifacts

During my time in Noah's and Elizabeth's classrooms, I collected more than 130 documents related to their planning and teaching. These curricular and instructional artifacts included electronic and paper copies of syllabi, curriculum guides, planning notes, assessment tools, lecture slides, writing and discussion prompts, content review sheets, and graphic organizers. Most of these materials were participant-generated. They helped to clarify Noah's and Elizabeth's pedagogical priorities in each course context and provided me with grounds on which to base interview questions about their instructional design and assessment approaches. Rather than serving as focal points, the participants' curricular and instructional artifacts were most valuable as links to or corroborating evidence for other sources of data.

Aside from what the participants provided directly, I sought out other publicly accessible material evidence, like school- and district-wide publications, state learning standards, and AP program resources, using the Internet. These resources deepened my understanding of the cultural and political contexts in which Noah and Elizabeth taught and, again, served to corroborate the assertions both participants made about the policy pressures on their practices.

Participants' "dilemmas of teaching" journals

To borrow a phrase from Cunningham (2006), interviews, observations, and document analyses still can be limited in their capacity to "capture candor;" that is, to elicit teachers' frank insights and assumptions about their work. Toward that goal, I

asked Noah and Elizabeth to maintain ad-hoc reflective journals. The journals served two objectives: 1) to document on-the-spot responses to memorable events in the classroom; and 2) to collect the participants' "reflections-on-action" (Schön, 1983) beyond the fray of classroom teaching. To meet the first objective, Noah and Elizabeth sporadically wrote in their journals during lunch periods, during plan periods, or at the end of the day, on the heels particularly revelatory or vexing class sessions. They constructed more deliberative responses to the second objective on a bi-weekly basis, at home or after students had left school for the day, using the following framing questions: "What has you excited about teaching [names of courses] right now, and what has you feeling tentative? What challenges are you grappling with in your teaching, and how are you responding to them?" Noah submitted a total of seven journal entries by the end of the study; Elizabeth submitted nine.

The following matrix illustrates this study's research questions and the data collection methods that I used to address those questions:

Research Question	Means of Data Collection				
	Observ	Interv	Documt	Vrb Rpt	Journal
Q1: How do an early-career and an experienced secondary social studies teacher engage in pedagogical reasoning and action within concurrent tightly controlled (i.e., NSL and AP Government) and relatively autonomous (i.e., Comparative Religions and Peace Studies) curricular contexts?	X	X	X	X	X
Q2: What are the consequences for the participants' broader pedagogical reasoning and action of the ways in which they mediate internal and external influences in these discrepant curricular contexts?	X	X		X	X
SQ1: What patterns are evident in how the participants select and adapt curricular materials and methods, implement instruction with students, assess and evaluate student work, and reflect on and revise their practices via those elements of teaching?	X	X	X	X	X
SQ2: How do various personal, interpersonal, and political factors commingle with the teachers' decisions and decision-making pathways in each curricular context?	X	X			X

Figure 3.4. Data collection matrix.

Analytical framework, process, and caveats

To frame this section, I return to the methodological stance I laid out at the beginning of this chapter: that knowledge is constructed and contextual, with its credibility to be judged via warranting criteria that a community agrees to uphold; and that creating knowledge begins with naturalistic observations that uncover and unpack phenomena. The acts of "uncovering" and "unpacking" are central to this study. Grounded theorists suggest that the process of theorizing – or analyzing evidence to illuminate patterns and eventually explain why those patterns exist – rests on "[providing] a language for otherwise unnamed and unobserved elements" (Nespor, 2006, p. 299).

I am drawn to grounded theory, both as a methodological argument and a strategy for making sense of this research study. According to Charmaz (1995), grounded theory is distinguished by the following characteristics: "1) simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis phases of research; 2) creation of analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived hypotheses; 3) the development of middle-range theories to explain behaviour and processes; [and] 4) memo-making; that is, writing analytic notes to explicate and fill out categories, the crucial intermediate step between coding data and writing first drafts of papers" (p. 28). This is not to say that the theoretical perspectives like those aforementioned played no role in the questions I asked about and the ways I looked at my data. Yet grounded theory is a quintessentially pragmatic analytical approach: because small-scale theories materialize with and through data, those resultant theories are directly consequential to the kinds of social practices to which they are connected. What follows is an explanation of how the characteristics of grounded theory apply to this study.

I analyzed my data in several phases. First, I used an open coding approach (with a place for codes and notes embedded in the electronic versions of my transcribed data) to construct initial categories based on patterns found through close readings of field notes, transcripts, and other documentary evidence. My initial coding was the first step of a process that Corbin and Strauss (1998) call the constant comparative method. That method involves laying new data over codes derived from existing data to infer the viability of those codes. If the new data produce dissonance, the researcher must reconsider the codes to account for the data, or scrutinize the data itself for errors or confounding variability. Early in the analytical process, I drew primarily from the

participants' language to define my codes, but multiple passes through burgeoning data generated new patterns or categories that were more illustrative and credible.

By the time I began restructuring coded evidence into narrative themes, I had started to look back at some key categories of analysis from relevant research, like those represented in Shulman's (1987) model of pedagogical reasoning and action. Though Charmaz (2006) argues that axial coding is optional – and used incorrectly, can have a limiting effect on findings and understandings – I began to wrap codes and patterns from my study around broader analytical categories found in the research literature, and to crystallize new narratives via that process. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Stake, 2000). As I generated those narratives, I returned them to the participants in this study, Noah Andres and Elizabeth Sutton, to member-check for the sake of credibility (Lincon & Guba, 1985).

The reasons for member checking and constructing research memos, as self-assessment efforts, were twofold. First, I aimed to determine the extent to which my interpretations of the data corroborated Noah's and Elizabeth's perceptions of their work. This is not to say that I expected my findings to mirror their experiences; we bring different lenses to the classroom and thus cannot expect to interpret identically what happens there. Nonetheless, it is important for researchers to address substantial discrepancies to ensure that their explanations derive from accurate descriptions of phenomena (Wolcott, 1994). Second, via the journal, I thought through the potential impacts of my perspectives on teaching and teacher education and sought to maintain awareness of, and sometimes rein in, my own pedagogical predilections. To aid me in that effort, I developed a self-assessment heuristic and used my research memos as a

space for engaging it. Questions included the following: 1) Am I wishfully thinking that this code, pattern, or finding is credible, relevant, and a good fit for the data? If so, why, and if not, why not? and 2) What viable alternative explanations can I think of?

Challenges of this research approach

What follows in the next three chapters is my attempt to represent the participants' pedagogical reasoning and action relative to my research questions in ways that give the reader "a sense of being in the scene," but also validate the small-scale theorizing about teachers' knowledge and social practices that I present in Chapter Six. This is not a simple balance to strike. The abundance of data and intimate portraits of practice that this study produced pulled this researcher more toward revelatory description than analysis and theory-building. I am told that excessively descriptive dissertations are common among novice researchers; and admittedly, Chapters Four and Five are thickly descriptive. But those descriptions are intentional, illuminating the kinds of vicarious experiences that Donmoyer (1990) and Wolcott (1990) suggest deserve to be heard and are required for more nuanced analysis.

Case study methodology long has been criticized on the basis of rigor and more positivistic research criteria, like low sample sizes, bias errors, and a lack of generalizability (Yin, 2003). But qualitative methodologists have offered various reconceptualizations of validity, reliability, and generalizability, as suggested earlier in this chapter. Lincoln and Guba (1985), for instance, replace generalizability with the concept of "fittingness," or transferability in qualitative research. It is the responsibility of the researcher, they argue, to scrutinize how the contexts and phenomena in question

harmonize with other situations that warrant interest. Stake (2000) makes a similar point when discussing the broader applicability of case study methods specifically.

The issue of validity is particularly complex, as demonstrated by the myriad ways it is identified and discussed. Janesick (2000), for example, characterizes it simply as a test of whether or not an explanation is congruent with descriptors from which it originates, while Wolcott (1990) argues that the concept itself is problematic because "there is no exact set of circumstances, no single 'correct' interpretation" within complicated multi-actor relationships (p. 144). Wolcott argues that we can best represent those relationships by listening intently and recording accurately, reflecting on our data immediately, seeking balance, fairness, and completeness in our accounting, and corroborating our accounts with feedback from participants and members of our discourse communities. Despite the distinctions among the aforementioned perspectives on qualitative and case study methodology, none suggest that the transferability of meaning and small-scale theorizing across different contexts is feasible without well-triangulated (or crystallized) evidence and clear, in-depth descriptions of the conditions at hand.

CHAPTER FOUR: PEDAGOGICAL REASONING AND ACTION WITHIN THE EXTERNALLY CONTROLLED CURRICULUM

> These mandatory quarterly assessments – they're insulting; and hypocritical. Saying on one hand that students learn differently, that we need to diversify our teaching, that we want students to be critical thinkers, and on the other hand, that every teacher needs to hurry up and be at the exact same point in the curriculum at the exact same time – it's ridiculous… We're being told what to teach, how to teach it, when to teach it, how to assess it, by people who have never set foot in our classrooms and taught our students.
>
> Elizabeth Sutton

Chapter Four explores Noah's and Elizabeth's teaching within the context of National, State, and Local (NSL) Government, a tenth-grade social studies course with strong external controls. In Elizabeth's honors course, these controls consisted of state and district curriculum guidelines and standardized assessments. In Noah's case, the College Board, which administers AP programs, generated the curriculum framework and summative exam. As Goodlad (2004) notes, American history and government generally are the two central domains of knowledge in the secondary social studies curriculum. Thus, they often are affixed with a status of greater significance than other social studies subject areas, like geography and economics. Despite Grant's (2001) characterization of standardized tests as "uncertain levers" for instructional effectiveness, it is noteworthy that NSL Government is the only secondary social studies curriculum in Noah's and

Elizabeth's state linked with a test that students must pass to qualify for high school graduation. Given the status of those assessments as performance indicators, the NSL Government curriculum is subject to greater oversight than other social studies curricula in Noah's and Elizabeth's schools. This oversight and its consequences for teaching and learning are captured in part by Elizabeth's chapter-opening quotation.

Chapter Four and its successor begin with vignettes of practice that help to elucidate several broad analytical categories: 1) participants' pedagogical reasoning, or their frameworks for transforming the subject matter into instruction and assessment; 2) contextual factors that interacted with the teachers' pedagogical reasoning; and 3) the teachers' mediation of pedagogical reasoning and contextual factors to generate classroom instructional activity. As explained in Chapter Three, Chapters Four and Five are thickly descriptive, drawing synthetically from the data sources to generate narratives of practice that bring credibility to the conclusions in Chapter Six.

Each of the vignettes that anchor this and the following chapter were chosen because they effectively illustrate the amalgam of conceptual, pedagogical, cultural, and political dilemmas that interacted with the teachers' reasoning and teaching practices (Windschitl, 2002). Returning to Thornton's (2005) gatekeeping metaphor, while Noah and Elizabeth made different decisions under different conditions, their gatekeeping practices both were framed pragmatically, in light of the authorities to which each felt responsible. Returning to Elizabeth's opening quotation, for example, the authority of students' learning needs sometimes belied the authorities of curriculum pacing and the assessment measures used to reinforce that pacing. The narratives in this chapter provide the reader with an opportunity to engage with, among other things, questions of authority,

agency, and the importance of flexibility and adaptation as facets of pedagogical competence.

Noah Andres: Dilemmas in teaching "a politicized curriculum"

A snapshot of practice: "How important to democracy is political tolerance?"

Just over a month into the AP Government curriculum, Noah began his second unit, "[Political] Participation and the Electoral Process" (SCPS, 2004), by asking students to brainstorm the question, "Is political tolerance important to a representative democracy?" Noah's students – 27 in all, 16 male and 11 female, with racial/ethnic demographics very similar to those of Western High School as a whole – quickly began writing as Noah moved to the center of the room, following up with, "Yes? No? Maybe so? What do you think, and why?" The classroom nearly was filled to capacity. It held 32 tightly packed desks, only five of which were empty, in two groups of 16 that faced each other. Noah paced in the aisle between those two groups, watching students quietly compose their thoughts, the class session's introductory question displayed on the overhead. Noah mentioned to me after class that "answers to questions like that tend to be more thoughtful when [students are] given time to flesh them out on paper" before discussion.

Raising their hands and reading from their notebooks, students directed their responses to the question toward Noah, one after another, six or seven in succession. Noah acknowledged each student who wished to respond. Their comments included the following:

- "I think that sometimes being tolerant can get in the way of getting things done. Like if people are just sitting around, listening to everyone else's point of view… Sometimes people can be just plain wrong about something."
- "Well, when there isn't tolerance, you don't get all of the opinions out there; especially unpopular opinions. People get pushed out… But [unpopular opinions] can still be valid, even if a lot of people don't like them."

Noah posed a follow-up question: "I hear many of you talking sort of broadly about, you know, people as a group needing to be tolerant. What about you as individuals? What would you say is your level of tolerance for political positions that are different from yours?" Noah's students perceived themselves to be relatively tolerant, based on initial responses. Several indicated that they would support others' right to speak their minds, even if they disagreed with their positions, and hoped that others would respectfully reciprocate. One student, who described herself as a pacifist, argued that political intolerance is the primary cause of violence and conflict in the world. Another challenged and built on that response, noting:

> I don't think violence is good… [But] how do you say, you know, everyone should just be tolerant of everyone else, when that's not realistic, and a lot of times, things don't change unless people get angry and there's some kind of revolt?

Increasingly, Noah's probing questions pushed students to evaluate and respond to each others' comments on the definition, importance, and limits of political tolerance. After eight minutes of conversation, he structured small-group discussions around the following prompt: "Suppose you were a local leader with the authority to determine who

could organize public rallies and meetings in your community. Which groups would you grant permission to organize, and which ones would you say no to? I want each group to have written explanations for each situation, with clear reasons why or why not." Prompts for the activity included: 1) a right-to-life group opposing abortion rights; 2) environmentalists protesting the construction of a nuclear power plant; 3) atheists speaking against the existence of God; 4) a racial supremacy rally; and 5) gay-rights activists organizing to promote marriage equality.

After fifteen minutes of spirited small-group discussion, during which he briefly joined several groups in conversation, Noah asked students to consider which organizations' activities were impermissible and how they drew the line between them and the remainder. One noted that his group "couldn't allow something that violates people's rights and who they are; like a White supremacist group." Without pause, Noah asked the class, as a whole, how they would determine when people's rights are being violated or not. Students' perspectives on this question differed, leading Noah to point out rhetorically, "So one thing we can take from this, then, is that oppressing people and violating their rights: it's situational? It's complicated?" Another student offered that an easier criterion for judging the acceptability of these activities is "whether or not they're legal… You might not like them, but I think all of these things are protected by the First Amendment." This statement drew a critique from Noah: "You know the First Amendment is limited, though; people can't incite illegal activity, and as a local leader here, you have to keep the potential for that in mind." Two students (Kristina and Leslie, below) in another group, opposed the right-to-life and racial supremacist rallies "on principle":

Noah: So as long as people aren't breaking the law, does political tolerance really just come down to personal preference? [Chatter; many affirming.] …Where do those personal preferences come from? Where does that come from?

Ming [Asian-American female]: Your values. Experiences with a lot of things and different people.

[Noah calls on another student whose hand is raised.]

Carson [White male]: I don't personally agree with the right-to-life people, but I'd still let them do that because people are entitled to their opinions… So as long as it's safe –

Kristina [White female]: [Interrupting] Opinions can be wrong, and they can be threatening. Like, if someone has a threatening opinion; like if they're trying to intimidate or scare people, that could be considered assault, right?

Noah: Well – but opinions don't assault people. People who – someone might act inappropriately on something they feel strongly about and commit assault. But that's something different from simply stating a position, right?

Kristina: Yeah, but, what's behind all of that can still be wrong.

Noah: So there are some political positions that are just wrong? Obviously just wrong?

Leslie [White female]: Oh yeah, definitely.

Carson: That's not very tolerant. [Laughter]

Noah continued soliciting from the class additional commentary on where to "draw the line" in terms of what modes of speech should be allowed or disallowed. He distributed two short primary source texts – one related to the National Socialist Party of

America's proposed neo-Nazi rally in Skokie, Illinois in 1977, and the other related to Athens, Georgia officials' decision to revoke permission for the Ku Klux Klan to demonstrate on the heels of racial violence in Los Angeles, Miami, and other cities in early 1992 – and asked students to apply their positions to those cases. He also directed students to a short section in their AP NSL Government textbooks that addressed political tolerance and asked them to evaluate its claims and examples via their class discussion.

Noah closed the lesson by asking whether or not "what we should be tolerant of changes," and if it is possible to be too politically tolerant. Students generally responded to his second question in the affirmative, under two conditions: if that which is being advocated is widely considered to be ethically wrong, or if it endangers or harms the physical welfare of others. Noah urged students to "keep thinking about this question… Anytime you strongly dislike a message or even hate a position, think about, you know, what should be the limits, here? You call something hate speech; okay, so what? What should a democratic society do about that?" From there, Noah segued roughly into a multiple-choice question that was displayed on the overhead projector:

> All of the following are important elements in the American view of the political system except:
>
> A) Americans should be able to generally do as they please
>
> B) Americans think government officials should be accountable to the people
>
> C) Americans believe individuals are responsible for their own actions
>
> D) Government should try to equalize the property and living conditions of citizens
>
> E) Americans feel people ought to help out in their communities

Noah read the question and potential responses aloud, and then asked students to give what they thought was the correct answer. Nearly in unison, a majority of students shouted, "D!" at which point, Noah read the answer again and affirmed the students' selection. Shortly thereafter, Noah's students packed up their materials and left the classroom.

Noah's pedagogical reasoning in the AP Government context

The preceding example epitomizes Noah's approach to curricular gatekeeping in the AP Government course. On one hand, Noah pushed students to consider and reconsider their political self-concepts and the origins and limits of their positions. He encouraged student dialogue and seemed to have some effect in using thoughtful, open-ended questions to shift the tenor of conversation when it devolved into sterility or boorishness. And he directed students to evaluate the textbook's claims about political tolerance via other sources of evidence, a process that resembled Martin and Monte-Sano's (2008) "Opening Up the Textbook" strategy.

On the other hand, he concluded with a broad-brush, selected-response question that seemed to go against the grain of what preceded it, both functionally and epistemically. When I pointed out this seemingly glaring contradiction, Noah indicated that the question was a nod to "where I was supposed to be in the curriculum, right along with all of the other AP teachers." Smiling, he suggested that because the students answered the question correctly, he must have achieved that day's primary instructional objective. This vignette illuminates a condition of Noah's pedagogical reasoning in AP Government: clearly there were curricular and instructional aims set beyond Noah's

sphere of influence, and his charge was to ensure that those objectives were met. Recognizing, however, that some learning outcomes "are more obvious" or simpler to convey than others, Noah looked for places in the curriculum to make space for what he practices aligned with his pedagogical aims, like exploring the affordances and limitations of the First Amendment in the context of a discussion about political tolerance.

Noah maintained a rather chilly relationship with the AP Government curriculum. He suggested that his aspirations for teaching an Advanced Placement course were different from those of many other early-career teachers:

> I was interested in teaching AP Government, but – I think sometimes teachers think of their courses as part of a hierarchy, and AP is way up on that hierarchy. People think it's a more prestigious place to be; new teachers are like, 'Oooh, he's got the good classes and the good kids. That's where I want to be…' But that was never something I really cared about. I just wanted to teach government because I have an interest in public policy and I have experience in politics.

Noah's articulation of what it means to teach AP Government changed over the course of a semester's worth of interviews and observations. At the outset, he perceived that the course would be "a little more in depth, a little harder, but probably [with] better discussions" than the non-AP NSL Government course, and that the AP assessment at the end of the course would reflect those characteristics. To Noah, "harder" meant that the curriculum would integrate more complex concepts, more opportunities to engage in analytical thinking, writing, and discussion, and finer-grain detail. The course would give him chances to explore with students what he considered to be the two most appropriate

organizing principles of a government course: 1) to what extent should acts of governing affect the lives of citizens; and 2) what and how should citizens contribute to acts of governing?

At the end of the course, he saw the process of teaching students to analyze and evaluate policy as a technical puzzle of identifying and capitalizing on teacher-created space in the AP curriculum. Over time and under the influence of his school's team of AP Government teachers, Noah came to recognize that the drive to cover material quickly and teach AP test-taking strategies meant that he would have to think strategically about what degrees of student comprehension were exemplary and what degrees were "good enough," and what subject matter representations would provide the most powerful returns when going beyond the scope of the curriculum. In fact, Noah often informed students from one class session to the next which priority would be emphasized and even apologized occasionally when rapid coverage dominated. Consider the following exchange between Noah and two of his students, which took place as Noah solicited perceptions of the course at mid-point:

> Asanti [African-American female]: I liked the thing we did where we tried to come up with different ways to increase voter turnout… I thought that was really interesting… We should do more stuff like that.
>
> Noah: Okay, great. Yeah, that reminds me – I think it's important that we spend at least some time looking at why… certain policies exist, how all of that affects you; you know, how things are working or what it would mean to change [policy]. That sort of thing. Then other times, it's like, hey, I'm sorry, but what we're going

to do today, it's all about getting through a lot of material really quickly. Or maybe we need to work on essay writing skills to get you ready for the AP…

Mitch [White male]: Yeah, I mean – that's good, though, 'cause… one of the big reasons we're all here is for the AP credit, right? So it's not so bad when we have to cover a lot of stuff sometimes, because we all know why we have to do that.

Noah used the metaphor of "live highlighter for students' textbooks" to characterize what he perceived to be his primary role in AP Government. His rejection of that role evidenced another point of tension: the messages teachers and the curriculum communicate to students about the nature and ends of learning. He noted:

> Learning about government isn't all about the factual minutiae; it's about learning how to participate… If their sense of government is, you know, I vote, I follow the law, I pay my taxes, and I know some stuff I learned in high school – I think that's a bunch of crap.

During a think-aloud exercise that implored Noah to articulate how he might use various Supreme Court cases as instructional tools, he expressed an interest in teaching students to evaluate whether court decisions were "good, bad, revolutionary, or god-awful," based on their warrants and "whose interests were served [by them]." Yet he recognized the imperative within the curriculum and the textbook to identify key cases, explain why those cases are important, and demonstrate how they link to precedents or set precedents for other cases. He added:

> Sometimes the Supreme Court makes terrible decisions, just like everyone else. Justices are not totally objective; I mean, just look at some of Scalia's opinions… I think we need to spend time talking about why [bad decisions are rendered]…

> And there's usually disagreement within the court, which gets lost when you focus mostly on just knowing what the decision was. We're training kids to learn the wrong things.

Early in the course, Noah suggested a strong link between his two aforementioned big ideas and his intent to foster what he called "rational, democratic discussion" around policy problems and controversial issues and concepts, like the notion of political tolerance evidenced in the preceding vignette. But the AP curriculum, structured around rote knowledge of political institutions and procedures, often obscured that kind of discussion. In fact, while the political tolerance vignette offers a look at how Noah encouraged students to think and talk about contested political issues, 12 of the 26 class sessions I observed were comprised almost entirely of either lectures and note-taking or test review strategies, including writing techniques and analyses of missed selected-response items.

This evidence suggests that Noah's pedagogical reasoning in AP Government involved a struggle to find instructional space to help students unpack and wrestle with different political ideas. Recognizing inconsistencies between his instruction and overarching pedagogical aims, Noah made small-scale and large-scale adjustments to bring his teaching more in line with his stances on the subject matter and learning. For instance, he increasingly focused on his representations, or the analogies and examples he brought to bear on the substantive and conceptual fabric of the course, and his framing and scaffolding of cooperative learning activities as places to subtly assert his aims. He also established a large-scale goal for his AP Government teaching: to learn how to more effectively, more strategically select less powerful subject matter out of the curriculum to

make room for instruction that aligns better with his domain expertise and personal theories of student learning.

The interaction of contextual factors with Noah's teaching in AP Government

Two factors primarily led Noah to privilege the coverage imperative in AP Government, even when his own pedagogical aims might have led him down a different pathway. First, the course had considerable exchange value to the students, parents, administrators, and teachers in Noah's school community. As noted, Western is a school in which the majority of students are enrolled in AP courses. Most Western graduates go on to four-year colleges, and to many of them, AP credits are one means to advance and compete for enrollment in prestigious, selective universities. As Noah mentioned, "For the price of the test, this course is literally worth the cost of three credits of college coursework. And then there's the competitive advantage of having AP credits. So that's huge. [Pause] No pressure, right? [Laughs]"

That said, it is reasonable to consider AP exams high-stakes for students, their school communities, and teachers, particularly when the two other summative assessments students took in Noah's NSL Government course – the state- and district-level tests – were afforded little preparation time and attention. In fact, while Noah spent approximately three weeks reviewing for the AP exam, only one day of instructional time was used to prepare students for the state assessment, which was required for graduation. Noah spent no additional time reviewing for the district test.

Noah explained the rationale for compelling students to sit for three separate standardized exams as follows. Because all students across the state must pass the NSL

Government test to graduate, the exam represents a basic level of competency, rooted in relatively simplistic bits of information about the mechanics of government. In an attempt to demonstrate that its students surpass that level of competency and ensure that its teachers adhere to a more rigorous district-wide curriculum, Noah's school district developed its own summative NSL Government exam. In other words, the district exam is a means to quantify a higher level of student (and teacher) performance than that required by the state. Finally, falling within a separate academic program, with its own unique goals, contents, requirements, and rewards, is the College Board's AP examination. As suggested, the AP curriculum and examination were the levers that had the greatest impact on Noah's teaching, with the state- and district-level tests having almost none.

Second, Noah was the newest member of a team of four teachers responsible for concurrently implementing the AP Government curriculum in their classrooms. Though this study was conducted during his second year of employment, it was Noah's first year teaching AP Government. Before Noah's time with the course, the other AP Government instructors undertook a systematic effort – spearheaded by the team's senior member, who had achieved strong test scores in the past – to standardize much of the curriculum, including the scope and sequence, course texts, assessments, and other instructional materials. That effort was an affordance and a constraint for Noah. On the plus side, he suggested that the standardized curriculum helped circumvent parents' and students' demands for placement in the most experienced AP Government teachers' classrooms. Furthermore, despite his junior status and lack of classroom experience, Noah's input as a team member generally was well received by his colleagues. He noted, "Because of my

experiences working on [Capitol] Hill, they seem to value the perspectives on government that I bring in." However, Noah's was small-scale input; the course's central topics and themes, curriculum pacing, key objectives and texts, and summative assessment tools generally were not up for negotiation. Noah explained this phenomenon as follows:

> The test scores are pretty good here, which… shows that, you know, I guess we need to keep doing the things we're doing. Plus, we're on semesters, and AP is a yearlong course. So if a student needs to switch teachers halfway through the year because of scheduling, which happens a lot, the idea is that they pick up with the new teacher right where they left off… As a rationale, I guess that seems justifiable – more than, you know, this is what we've always done, and the test scores are still pretty good, so you know, whatever.

For Noah, one upshot of the commoditization of AP and the high degree of curriculum standardization was some uncertainty about – and in turn, frustration relative to – his place as a subject matter expert and school professional. On one hand, because of collegial encouragement and the fact that he was "still learning about the AP culture," Noah reported feeling less pressure than some teachers "who seem to get really stressed about AP test results. I guess I'm more relaxed because I don't really know what to expect at the end of the year yet." Not only did Noah perceive his AP team members to express confidence in his efforts to teach the course, but he also enjoyed positive working relationships with his social studies department chair and building principal, both of whom explicitly encouraged teachers to think creatively about how to adapt curricula to their particular expertise and their students' needs. His department chair perceived that

AP Government would be a good fit because of Noah's expertise in politics and policy analysis, and thus, his unique capacity to make the subject matter relevant for students. Thus, during the summer before Noah began teaching AP Government, he started planning to integrate his experience into the course by developing big ideas, topic questions, and instructional resources.

During the first AP team meeting of the school year, however, the team leader opened discussion by describing the central learning goals and trajectory of the course and explaining how the teachers would go about fulfilling them, rather than soliciting teammates' ideas about curricular design and instructional strategies. Noah indicated:

> The message was pretty clear about what the course was supposed to do, and what we were supposed to do. I thought, well, I guess I don't have to think about how to talk to my colleagues about my goals, because apparently, that's all decided… At first, I was pretty bitter about it, but after a while, I started thinking about it from the perspective of, you know, I'm not going to get myself all worked up. I guess I'm just going to try to figure out… how to give my goals a place in this course despite the fact that, you know – it is what it is.

In sum, Noah lamented the pressure to conform strictly to the AP NSL Government curriculum materials as written, and the corresponding lack of pedagogical autonomy. He maintained that the restrictive culture of implementing a settled AP curriculum was more immediate than any messages suggesting that he think adaptively about his teaching. Over time, however, Noah adopted an increasingly pragmatic pedagogical approach as a means of negotiating the mixed messages about what kind of AP NSL Government teacher he ought to be. And as he learned about the political nature

of teaching within the AP program, Noah became more effective at developing solutions to pedagogical problems that he could effectively and variously justify to different stakeholders – his students, his administrators, his AP team, parents, and himself – based on their unique interests.

Noah's mediation of pedagogical reasoning and contextual factors in practice

I return now to Noah's practice, with two brief accounts that illuminate the intersections of his pedagogical reasoning and negotiation of contextual factors. These accounts substantiate Noah's pragmatic stance toward adapting the AP Government curriculum: that his, he looked first to the potential implications of different instructional pathways for students' learning outcomes and classroom discourse before deciding if, and how, to diverge from the AP team's curriculum.

During a lesson on civil rights legislation, several assertive students posited the argument that the civil rights movement "solved" the problem of widespread racism in the United States and equalized political conditions for Blacks and Whites. Noah began his pedagogical response – in all, a two-day break from the AP curriculum – by asking students to write about how the construct of race affects their daily lives. With students' responses serving as a springboard for discussion and pre-assessment data about their perceptions of race and racism, Noah culled together a documentary video on "have a nice day" racism, prison sentencing data from several states, and two Washington Post articles on regional immigration policy, and he juxtaposed them with a textbook section on civil rights legislation. He then used a Structured Academic Controversy (Parker, 2003) format to organize a discussion, first in small groups and then as a whole class,

around the questions, "What evidence supports the argument that institutionalized racism died with civil rights legislation, and what evidence supports the opposite? Can racism really be legislated? If so, how, and if not, why not?"

These lessons epitomized what I call pragmatic divergences in Noah's AP Government course: typically, they were somewhat spontaneous but purposeful responses to emergent dilemmas that, if left alone, could be negatively consequential to classroom discourse and students' political argumentation. (I explain the concept of pragmatic divergence in greater depth in Chapter Six.) Noah explained as follows:

> Don't bother looking for this lesson in the curriculum or on the AP test; it's not there. I'm supposed to be talking about fair housing laws right now… But with the whole racism-is-dead myth coming out, I was pretty sure any discussion about fair housing wasn't going to work until we dealt with that idea first; or at least it was going to be very one-sided.

In this situation, Noah derived the authority to diverge from the curriculum from what he considered to be a key misconception among students, a dilemma within the classroom community trumping the influences of curriculum conformity and test preparation. When asked how he might justify the deviation, Noah suggested that his colleagues would value the argument that he was quickly addressing an impediment to covering the rest of the unit in a smooth and timely fashion. Granted, his teaching did not always take a similar path as the racism diversion: "There are plenty of times when I've made the opposite decision; when I've got ten days to teach three chapters, and that seems more pressing than having them really get into a messy issue."

In general, the structures-of-government bedrock remained in the foreground of Noah's AP Government course, while applications of those structures to contemporary problems entered and exited intermittently, but visibly were part of the curricular landscape. For example, while reviewing the concept of "judicial activism" prior to the AP exam, Noah juxtaposed 2007's *Morse v. Frederick* – a First-Amendment case in which a student was suspended from school for displaying a banner reading "BONG HiTS 4 JESUS" across the street from a school-sanctioned event – alongside oft-cited (and oft-assessed) U.S. Supreme Court cases *Griswold v. Connecticut* and *Mapp v. Ohio*. Believing *Morse v. Frederick* to be potentially appealing due to its currency and relevance to students, Noah augmented the review with small-group discussions around the question, "Based on your understanding of judicial activism, what sort of finding in the *Morse* case would constitute judicial activism, and why?" Groups of students variously debated: 1) how they would decide the *Morse* case based on Constitutional language, judicial precedent, and, as one student noted, "what just seems logical;" and 2) whether reducing students' First Amendment rights or restricting schools' capacities to regulate certain kinds of speech would represent judicial activism.

Elizabeth Sutton: Dilemmas in "doing right by my kids"

A snapshot of practice: "What are your constitutional rights, as students?"

Three months into Elizabeth's honors-level NSL Government course, she concluded her fourth unit, "Attaining Justice and Protecting Rights" (SCPS, 2004), with three lessons on high school students' due process rights. According to the district

curriculum, a series on the due process rights of the criminally accused, the limitations on students' due process rights established by *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, and the expansion of rights for the accused by *Miranda v. Arizona* and *Gideon v. Wainwright* was to require one week of instruction. Prior to beginning the lesson series, Elizabeth noted, based on her experience teaching the course, that "kids are most interested in the part about students' due process rights, because that applies directly to them." Consequently, Elizabeth allocated two and a half days of instruction to the subject.

On the first day, Elizabeth welcomed all but three of her 28 students to class with a brief on *Goss v. Lopez*, a U.S. Supreme Court case from Ohio, which previously had declared education a fundamental state right, yet allowed for the revocation of that right via arbitrary school suspension without due process. Elizabeth asked students to follow along as she read aloud a briefing sheet she had prepared, after which she asked several clarifying questions:

> Elizabeth: So what was the due process right that Lopez and the other students who were suspended – what right were they denied, according to them? [Carter?]
>
> Carter [Black male]: A trial?
>
> Elizabeth: Well, it wouldn't be called a trial in school –
>
> Carter: [Interrupting] Oh, like – a hearing.
>
> Elizabeth: Right, a disciplinary hearing. Why did they think they should've gotten a hearing? [Isabel?]
>
> Isabel [Latina]: Because they didn't get to explain themselves before being suspended.

Elizabeth: Good, they didn't have a chance to talk about the offense, the punishment, whether or not it was fair… And what was the court's position on this? [Gwen?]

Gwen [White female]: That [they] had a right to a hearing.

Elizabeth: And how close was the decision?

Gwen: Five to four.

Elizabeth: Five to four. So it was close, right? One vote. Definitely not a unanimous decision. Keep that in mind.

After reading the brief, Elizabeth asked students to speculate what they supposed the consequences of the decision might be. One student imagined that "every school probably has to do hearings now" for students facing suspension, while another found it interesting that the Supreme Court defined the right to education as an issue of ownership, "like owning a car or a house or something."

From there, Elizabeth posed the question, "What exactly are your due process rights [at Eastern High School]?" and explained that an assistant principal would serve as a guest instructor to help address that question. She used the scenario of a teacher who accuses a student of stealing property to set up the idea that "there are procedures involved – both ways; if a student is accused of doing something wrong, or if a student thinks something wrong has been done [to her or him]." During the remainder of the class session, Elizabeth and her administrative colleague described students' due process rights and fielded questions about them, with Elizabeth linking elements of the conversation to the *Goss v. Lopez* case and other aforetaught subject matter. Elizabeth largely deferred to the assistant principal to discuss specific procedures associated with investigating

offenses, making accusations, contacting parents, holding hearings, and issuing suspensions, though she intermittently asked questions alongside students (e.g., "Do students get to face their accusers, like they do outside of school?"). Students' questions during the lesson generally focused on disciplinary procedure and context; for instance, "Do you take into consideration if someone's never done anything wrong before?" and "What if you're looking in somebody's backpack for a knife, but you find pot instead?" Couched within the lesson were the assistant principal's and Elizabeth's recommendations for avoiding disciplinary problems in school.

Elizabeth began the next class session again with the focus question, "What are your due process rights at [Eastern] High School?" and students' names on the whiteboard in groups of three. She explained that students would conduct a "mock trial" in their groups, with two serving as opposing attorneys and one serving as a judge. The case to be argued – *New Jersey v. T.L.O.* – was a U.S. Supreme Court case that addressed the constitutionality of school officials searching students' belongings and seizing contraband without a warrant. Upon Elizabeth's introduction to the case, one student asked, "What does T.L.O. stand for?" Elizabeth noted that the letters were the initials of the defendant in the case, a female youth whose name could not be revealed legally because of her age. Another student responded, "Did this happen at our school?" Elizabeth paused for a moment, smiled, then replied, "Um, *New Jersey* versus T.L.O.? Hello!" which brought laughter from the inquiring student and several others.

Elizabeth distributed a briefing sheet on the case, similar to that constructed for *Goss v. Lopez* the day before, but without a decision, and read the introduction aloud, concluding with the question, "Does the Fourth Amendment protection against

unreasonable search and seizure apply in schools? That's what you're going to have to argue and decide here today, using the facts from the case." Before splitting the students into their groups, she fielded several questions about *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, including one that led to the following exchange:

> Diaz [Latino]: Can principals basically search a student anytime, as long as a teacher says the student has something illegal?
>
> Elizabeth: Good question. So in this case, the principal conducted the search because a teacher said the student was smoking. But the student is saying, basically, that the teacher's word is not enough… What did you learn yesterday about the difference between your due process rights in school and your rights outside of school? [Gwen?]
>
> Gwen: That we have fewer rights in school?
>
> Elizabeth: Right. So without giving away the outcome of *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, remember that there are different standards – there's *probable cause* in society and *reasonable suspicion* in school. One of the things you're doing today is thinking about what reasonable suspicion means, and how to figure out when there's reasonable suspicion or not…

After that exchange, Elizabeth asked the students to decide how roles would be allocated in their groups of three, and once those roles were determined, to break into three larger groups – New Jersey, T.L.O., and judges – with each group occupying different parts of the classroom and hallway. These large groups, she explained, would give students the opportunity to build arguments together before returning to their small groups to present their cases:

> Attorneys, your job will be to present the best argument you can with the evidence from the case; and you need to anticipate what the other side might argue… Judges, you're going to run the trial and determine who made the best argument; and you need to be able to explain why.

Elizabeth gave these three groups 20 minutes to develop their cases, reminding attorneys to construct persuasive arguments around the facts of the case and proposing warrants that "the other side might use." She spent the most time with the judges' group, offering guidance on how to structure their trials and evaluate arguments, and modeling what she considered to be effective and weak examples.

Elizabeth then reconvened the small groups and provided approximately 10 minutes for the case to be argued. The classroom was a cacophony of chatter, with Elizabeth moving swiftly from group to group to monitor students' progress (e.g., "Are you finding that you have enough material to make good arguments?") and answer questions (e.g., "Are closing arguments supposed to say something different than opening arguments?") Some groups spent their time reading excerpts aloud from the provided brief, while others discussed the meaning of reasonable suspicion using examples from and beyond the case. Still others discussed at length whether or not they were "doing this right."

Elizabeth posted a chart on the board with the judges' names, T.L.O., and New Jersey written at the top of three columns. She brought the class back together as a whole group, and the judges advanced to the front of the room, placing a check mark in either the T.L.O. or New Jersey space next to their names. "Don't let any of the other judges' decisions sway yours," Elizabeth implored. After all judges had unanimously found in

favor of New Jersey and against T.L.O., Elizabeth exclaimed, seemingly surprised, "This has never happened before – everyone ruling against T.L.O. What do you think about this result?" One judge vaguely noted that "the facts just worked against T.L.O.," while another young woman explained that searching a student for cigarettes after a teacher reported her smoking in the bathroom "seems pretty cut-and-dried." She went on to invoke in loco parentis, arguing that "the teacher's word over a student is like the parent's word over a kid. The kid's not going to win." Elizabeth retorted, suggesting that the teacher may not have been a reliable source. The student responded, "We couldn't find anything to support that in the brief." Still other judges claimed that the attorneys for New Jersey simply "did a better job" arguing their cases.

Elizabeth closed the lesson with a question: what did the class think of the argument that, in most cases, an adult's word is assumed to be more credible than a student's? While most seemed unsurprised by the idea, one student replied, "But that just makes things harder and more unfair for the times when the student is actually right. So you really have to try to treat both sides equally, to be fair." Another noted, "I don't think you can assume that, you know, teachers are always clear when they're remembering something and kids are always mixed up or trying to lie their way out of it." Elizabeth responded by acknowledging those students' comments, yet reminding the class that "teachers are charged with helping kids learn; that's the bottom line. And we have our own lives and lots of other students to worry about besides you, so trust me when I say that we don't spend time thinking about ways to get kids in trouble." As the class session ended, she asked for a show of hands from students who thought T.L.O. prevailed in the actual case (six hands went up) and another display from students who thought New

Jersey won (most of the remainder raised their hands). Elizabeth responded, "Those of you who thought New Jersey won, you're right."

Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning in the NSL Government context

One of Elizabeth's most profound assertions about teachers' roles as curriculum gatekeepers came in response to an interview question about the broader social purposes of the Government curriculum. After she argued that public education, on the whole, should "teach children to be good citizens, and to be productive members of society," I asked Elizabeth how she defines good citizenship, what it means, and what practices it entails for the students in her NSL Government course. She noted:

> I'm not sure I get to do that… I don't know if it's up to me to decide what a good citizen is and what a good citizen should do. I'm here to provide information for them, not tell them what decisions they should make in their lives. Let me back up; I do suggest to them that they not break the law, and I try to make sure they know what those laws are, but I see my job as empowering them to be adults and make their own decisions as adults. So I give them as much information as I can, so they can do that.

According to Elizabeth, rather than defining the practice of effective citizenship and building pedagogy around it, teachers should encourage students to define what citizenship means to them based on the substance they proffer.

Bound up in Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning was a view that the teacher's role is to provide the raw material for any number of informed civic decisions and actions. She reinforced that point repeatedly during class sessions, suggesting that her job is not to

tell students *what* to think, but to tell them *that* they should think, and to provide them with a substantive foundation with which to think. That foundation, according to Elizabeth, includes: 1) how different governments are organized and why they are organized in such ways; 2) how political institutions and processes work, particularly those of interest to her students; and 3) the names and positions of key actors in government, both currently and historically, and what policies they affected. The preceding vignette on students' due process rights demonstrates, in part, Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning.

Given Elizabeth's emphasis on "providing information" across the course, lessons that involved more or less higher-order thinking seemed relatively cohesive because the common central learning objective was identifying structures, procedures, and outcomes of government. The *New Jersey v. T.L.O.* role-play, for instance, emphasized students' identification of the arguments, decisions, and due process conflicts in the case. During another class session, Elizabeth asked students, in pairs, to create and share their own graphic organizers of Federal executive agencies, with information pulled from various resources, including their textbooks, the Internet, and lecture notes. She suggested several categories for the organizer, including leadership, agency responsibilities, and issue areas, and asked students to consider some common characteristics of all agencies while creating the document. Again, the central focus of the activity and subsequent initiation-response-evaluation exchange was ordering and reciting factual information about structures, procedures, and actors in government.

According to Elizabeth, a strong base of substantive knowledge is prerequisite to making informed judgments about the effectiveness of government. When she saw

evidence of that knowledge base in classroom conversation and on assessment tools, she perceived that she was "doing right by my kids." Despite her acknowledgements during interviews that "policy is sometimes objective, but politics never is," and "people need to know the difference between a valid position and an invalid position [on an issue]," the curriculum, she noted, is minimally conducive to a more interpretive instructional framework:

> In the government course, I have to approach everything in the context of what's actually in place. And so it's not just, you can interpret this how you want. You know, you can choose to believe… that the Constitution grants you free exercise of religion whenever and wherever, but that doesn't make it true… Of course I show them that there are different opinions about government. I try to present, you know, this is what proponents think, this is what critics think. This is why the policy exists, and here's why people think we should keep it or change it.

Elizabeth explained in the classroom and during interviews that her overarching aim in NSL Government was for students to understand what they see, hear, and read in the news; for instance, "not just that Congress is trying to pass a budget, but what that process looks like, what kind of decision-making happens in order to get there, why certain things get in the way." This goal was unwavering throughout the duration of this study.

Specifically, she demonstrated to students how their arguments in the *New Jersey v. T.L.O.* role-play compared and contrasted with actual arguments from the Supreme Court case. She used a initiation-response-evaluation approach with clips from the film, *Gideon's Trumpet* – "a Hollywood film, not a documentary" – to help students identify

the circumstances of *Gideon v. Wainwright* and define key legal vocabulary, like "habeas corpus" and "writ of certiorari" in the context of the film. And she asked students to write a brief editorial-style essay about a 2007 Prince William County, Virginia law requiring police to check the legal status of any suspected undocumented immigrants, using the questions, "How does this issue demonstrate the tension between individual rights and the common good?" and "Explain how this law might be challenged or supported by the Constitution." The latter activity evolved from a collective interest among her students in the current issue of illegal immigration:

> I have, like, eight Hispanic students in this class, and the issue is constantly in the news. It's national news, but it's also very local. So you put those factors together, and it makes for a hot topic this year… So this was a new activity; I wasn't sure exactly what they would do with it. But sometimes you've got to just throw it at them and see how they respond. That comes from experience, by the way; you won't find that kind of responsiveness in the curriculum because curriculum writers aren't in the classroom to hear what students want to talk about.

This statement foreshadows Elizabeth's interactions with curricular-context factors, which I elucidate in the next section of this chapter. Before doing so, however, I posit the following about her pedagogical reasoning. First, Elizabeth conveyed strongly that learning in the NSL Government course is a process of building substantive knowledge that students can use to engage with and develop positions on governing beyond the classroom. The charge of the teacher, then, is to transform that raw material into various representations to make it as tangible and useful as possible to the greatest number of learners. Second, while Elizabeth advocated a position that resembles what

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) call the personally responsible citizen – that is, one who characterizes civic activity as being "honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the community" (p. 240) – she hedged on the appropriateness of the NSL Government course as a forum for advocating civic participation. Instead, she hoped that students would use the substance of her course as a toolset for deciding what citizenship meant to them.

This contrasts notably with Noah's position. Recall that he labeled civic participation as merely voting, paying taxes, and following laws to be "crap." Instead, Noah aimed to demonstrate to students the positive consequences of his construct of citizenship – a sort of critically pragmatic, participatory approach in which citizens critique democratic society's dilemmas and their root causes, assess how and why groups take different positions on those dilemmas and causes, and then participate in groups whose responses they see as most credible, and in activities they see as most consequential. The reason I bring Noah back into the conversation here is because the challenges associated with finding traction in the AP Government course for his positions on knowing and participating in political discourse did not similarly plague Elizabeth. Instead, her epistemic stance and pedagogical reasoning aligned much more closely with what the curriculum was designed to support. This is somewhat ironic, given Elizabeth's vehement opposition to the curricular controls that the district had begun implementing to standardize teachers' practices in NSL Government.

The interaction of contextual factors with Elizabeth's teaching in NSL Government

Elizabeth challenged the district curriculum office's decisions about what substance to include in NSL Government, when it should be taught, and how significant it was relative to other subject matter. Such a challenge evidenced a curricular gatekeeping tension for Elizabeth: on one hand, it is the charge of the state and school district to establish broad curriculum goals and structure; but on the other hand, curriculum decision makers outside the classroom may be too removed from the regular interactions of students, teachers, and subject matter to facilitate relevant, meaningful learning. Elizabeth sometimes acknowledged this tension with students, indicating that certain curricular and assessment decisions were outside of her realm of control, and that she might make other choices under different circumstances. For instance, after concluding a short, technical lecture on veto power, Elizabeth explained to her students:

> There are some things I teach because curriculum writers say I have to teach those things. They may seem… overly complicated, or maybe they don't seem that important to you, or even to me. And I think it's totally valid for you to think that way. I really do. But I don't get to say, you know, this is kind of stupid, so I'm just going to skip all of this and do something else; because, I don't have the final word… So, me making that decision is not in your best interest.

Elizabeth's statement about not having "the final word" suggested that teaching in a way that does not adequately prepare students to take the NSL Government exam potentially would jeopardize their academic success and, thus, be irresponsible.

When deciding what content to foreground, Elizabeth chose that which was prevalent in state- and district-level tests and met her definition of useful beyond the NSL

Government classroom. For instance, she spent about one minute of instructional time explaining to students the differences between torts and wrongful acts, subsequently noting that, although both terms are in the district curriculum and on the assessment review documents, "honestly, they're never going to make you distinguish between them on a test." Likewise, she indicated during an interview that, while substantive and procedural due process are defined in the curriculum, she had never seen an assessment or assessment review document that asks students to distinguish between the two terms, nor did she perceive that knowing those differences "is useful to anyone who isn't pursuing a law degree… So I don't even teach [about those specific principles] because the potential for confusion is too great."

Elizabeth did not find appropriate what she perceived to be the school district's effort to strong-arm teachers into scripted instruction via district-level quarterly assessments that were closely aligned in scope and sequence with tightly structured lesson plans in the curriculum. Drawing upon her privileged position as a veteran teacher and professional development coordinator in her building, she made that case with colleagues and argued against the tests in writing and at district-level meetings. Elizabeth recognized that the recent advent and implementation of the tests meant that she had scant data to support her critiques against them, aside from anecdotal evidence from her classroom. Nonetheless, she passionately asserted that the quarterly assessments: 1) imposed a single way of organizing content on teachers and reduced their professional flexibility to adapt to on-the-spot learning needs; 2) pressured teachers away from formatively assessing their students and re-teaching troublesome concepts in different

ways; and 3) harmed students by increasing their anxiety over externally-imposed assessments that offered them no real instructional value:

> The way the quarterly assessments work is just fundamentally wrong to me… Assessment should be aligned with instruction… [So I ask district administrators] what's going to be on the tests, so there's alignment between the test and what I'm teaching. And they say, no, we're not telling you; if you're following the curriculum and preparing them to do well on the [state test], they'll do well on the quarterly exams… To the kids, it's another test that comes from somewhere on high, so they have all of this anxiety, even though it's not really about them. So that's exactly what I say to them: don't worry; this isn't about you. It's infuriating to me. It's not right.

Despite such critiques, Elizabeth characterized herself as a "team player" rather than a "rogue or a detractor." In her school building, Elizabeth enjoyed a favored place among teaching and administrative colleagues on account of her professional development work and years of experience at Eastern. She was well regarded by her department members for her efforts to improve subject-specific literacy, and by other teachers for her mentorship through various pedagogical challenges. Her principal noted that Elizabeth "is a true superstar among teachers in this school" and cited her test scores and parents' positive perceptions of Elizabeth's teaching as factors. The support of colleagues, administrators, students, and parents in her school community offered Elizabeth a great deal of what she called "political capital". When asked about the exchange value of that capital, Elizabeth indicated that it provides her with a strong voice in setting the tone for Eastern teachers' responses to district-level mandates. Furthermore,

because her principal and department chair regarded Elizabeth as a peer and leader among teachers, they looked to her as a source of instructional innovation rather than someone whose practice required oversight.

Consequently, she enjoyed a relatively high degree of pedagogical autonomy in her classroom and exerted some influence over Eastern teachers' interpretation and implementation of the NSL Government curriculum. In one circumstance, Elizabeth spearheaded an effort by her department to modify a district-designed, ten-page text on federal executives' responses to national crises. Perceiving that the text was too lengthy to use in class, and that its density would impede students' independent reading, Elizabeth and her colleagues reduced the text to two pages. She explained the implications of their efforts:

> [The curriculum office] caught wind of what we did, which they were not happy about. The word came down; use the original text. It's long, but that's why we gave you a graphic organizer; to help kids go through it… We did what we wanted to do anyway because we all agreed that it was better for the kids… There was really strong [district-level] push-back to what we did, and then, miraculously a year later, our changes were put out to the whole district as, you know, here's what [Eastern teachers] did with this.

In sum, Elizabeth generally assumed a maternalistic stance with her NSL Government students, a collegial-advocate stance with colleagues and administrators in her school, and a skeptical-critic stance toward district-level curriculum policies. When asked to define what she meant by "doing right" by her students, Elizabeth explained:

> I need to be honest with them about the different expectations people have for them in this course… I tell them, you know, I promised you that you'll be able to engage with what's on the news when you watch it. So one of the things I want you to learn how to do is form an opinion and support it with facts. But you need to know your stuff and be able to write, too, because the other goal is to have you succeed in terms of your grades and the darned test.

Relative to classroom practice, she nurtured extracurricular relationships with students and their families to support their academic development, and she provided learners with organizational tools for monitoring their performance in her course. She also worked to ameliorate students' anxieties associated with district- and state-level assessments and learning goals. Often, such work came in the form of counseling and tutoring sessions, where she would meet with individuals or small groups of students to address particular learning difficulties. Relative to her and her colleagues' decisional capital, she lobbied for teachers' flexibility to include more in-depth, locally controlled learning experiences in their teaching, and against district-level impositions that, as she noted, "are all about administrators keeping an eye on teachers and not at all about the kids and what's good for them."

Elizabeth's mediation of pedagogical reasoning and contextual factors in practice

My conversations with and observations of Elizabeth revealed an articulate, assertive educator who was openly critical of her school district's march toward scripted instruction and increasingly intensive test preparation. Her points of contention with the NSL Government curriculum were not born of a misalignment between its ends and her

own learning aims; both were rooted in the notion that knowing and participating in government means identifying political structures and processes, and voting, following rules, and engaging in public debate, respectively. Instead, she was critical of the district's constraint of teachers' pedagogical choices in service of those ends.

Through Elizabeth's mentor-teacher lens, the curriculum was a double-edged sword: it offered a strong crutch for early-career teachers who were unfamiliar with the NSL Government scope and sequence, yet it communicated a rigid instructional pathway: "Sure, it provides support," she noted, "but not for creative teaching." Elizabeth indicated that her years of experience across different manifestations of curriculum and assessment and her political capital at Eastern helped her find fissures and create work-arounds.

Elizabeth's mock Congress was an example of such efforts. She reported that the district's NSL Government curriculum once had included a brief mock Congress exercise, but that curriculum administrators had stricken it "because it took too much time away from other things that were supposedly more essential." Yet Elizabeth maintained, and even expanded, mock Congress in her classroom, facilitating a weeklong process of students writing bills, arguing them in committee and on the floor, voting on them, and then retrospectively evaluating their work. During this series of lessons, students engaged ardently in proposing and justifying laws, defending and questioning their consequences, and discussing various strategies for pushing bills through or defeating them. Some, for instance, negotiated with others to attach their proposals to more popular bills in exchange for votes, while one student attempted to defeat a bill that was supported by a scant majority with a lengthy, emotional, personalized account describing its potential negative implications. Elizabeth noted:

> Compare mock Congress to a one-day activity on how a bill becomes a law. Actually, there is no comparison. I've done both… With mock Congress, the kids are excited; they're talking about how complex and challenging the process is. And they're also talking about real issues and different ways of looking at them… [With the lesson in the curriculum], they're only trying to memorize the steps involved in a bill becoming a law… That's a much less powerful way to learn.

Central to Elizabeth's evaluation of the learning benefits of the mock Congress, and thus, her decision to continue teaching with it, was the comparative advantage of having taught through and reflected on the consequences of multiple curricular iterations.

Elizabeth also designed and utilized an open-ended content review method that she called "muddy waters," where she specified themes (e.g., the Electoral College, redistricting and gerrymandering), asked students to write down related questions or "concepts that are unclear in your mind," and used various instructional strategies to encourage student interaction around those questions and concepts. During one session, Elizabeth had each individual identify a concept that "kept getting stuck in the mud," look up its definition, and write both on an index card. Then, students formed an inner and an outer circle, facing each other, and rotated from one student to the next, each pair discussing the muddy concept while Elizabeth offered feedback. During most reviews, students' posed brief identification questions with relatively short, simple answers, such as, "Can you remind me what the elastic clause is, again?" and "What are all of the requirements to be able to run for President?" This was not surprising, given Elizabeth's and the NSL Government curriculum's emphasis on substantive knowledge about government structures and procedures.

Summary

My primary intent in Chapter Four was to provide, in Erikson's (1986) words, "a sense of being there in the scene" (p. 163), but also to offer up a landscape view that includes Noah's and Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning processes and their negotiations of curriculum context. Regarding Noah, I found that he demonstrated a complex understanding of the subject matter and an ambitious set of aims, both grounded in his epistemic stance and pre-teaching government experience, but that the social pressures within his AP teaching team, political pressures associated with the AP test's high exchange value, and misalignment of his aims with the AP curriculum challenged his teaching. Regarding Elizabeth, I found alignment with regard to her pedagogical aims and the purposes of the NSL Government curriculum, and misalignment between her conception of teachers as curricular and instructional interpreters and the district's efforts to rein in that interpretive role. That she took a stand for her and her colleagues' decisional capital in light of that discrepancy was a testimony to the political implications of her professional experience.

High-stakes tests and their correspondent curricular constraints matter to teachers like Elizabeth because they imply limits to the repertoire of potentially beneficial instructional choices they can make, and to the learning goals those choices might serve. But I believe they matter more when teachers' epistemic positions are similar to Noah's; that is, when the teacher aims to engage students with multiple historical interpretations and political perspectives and help them negotiate the ambiguities of knowledge, while curricula and standardized tests posit knowledge as largely singular and devoid of

complexity. In Chapter Five, I describe these participants' experiences in their elective courses, where the external influences of high-stakes tests and tight curricular controls are removed. In light of that, the next chapter provides a means for the reader to examine the consistency of Noah's and Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning and action across different curricular contexts. I address the implications of that consistency in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER FIVE: PEDAGOGICAL REASONING AND ACTION WITHIN THE ELECTIVE CURRICULUM

> In Peace Studies, I want to be a guide rather than an authority. I want to be able to show them different perspectives on conflict resolution, and give them space to honestly explore things in ways they can't do in other classes for one reason or another… But I also feel like – when I ask students what they think Peace Studies should be, or what it means to them, a lot of them talk about balance; balanced perspectives. I'm not concerned about balance. I think this class should be unbalanced, actually. They don't need me to present the argument that, you know, if there's a threat to the United States, we need to defend ourselves by military force. That's the default. This class is about alternatives to that.
>
> Noah Andres

Chapter Five addresses Noah's and Elizabeth's work within their two elective courses, Peace Studies and Comparative Religions. It follows a similar trajectory and set of objectives as the preceding chapter, drawing from participants' teaching practices, pedagogical reasoning, and contextual factors as analytical categories. The elective courses differed from the AP and NSL Government course in numerous ways: they included self-selected students from different grade levels; they were subject to almost no curricular oversight from outside of the classroom; and, as both participants suggested, their subject matters were cross-disciplinary by design (incorporating history, political

science, geography, and philosophy) and highly adaptable to the interests of students and teacher.

While generally perceived as a benefit, curricular flexibility also bears challenges, as illustrated in the quote that opens this chapter. In the Peace Studies course, Noah struggled to establish an appropriate instructional role, suggesting in one breath that the teacher ought to be on the periphery, gently steering discourse in productive directions, while in another, striving to curtail positions that were detrimental to his pedagogical mission. Likewise, in Elizabeth's Comparative Religions course, her efforts to give students a voice in the curriculum sometimes generated circumstances in which the students' curiosities were at odds with her instructional plans and the big ideas underlying them.

These sorts of dilemmas were not unique to the elective context, though they seemed more prevalent there in light of the teachers' higher degrees of pedagogical autonomy. As articulated in Chapter Four, the fusion of standardized curricula, instructional uniformity, and multiple high-stakes assessments somewhat mitigated participants' gatekeeping dilemmas, for better and worse. Recall Elizabeth's suggestion that it was "not my place" to decide what the social aims of a government curriculum ought to be, or Noah's frustration with the AP program's overemphasis on structural and procedural minutiae and the resultant pains to find traction for a policy analysis framework within his course. By contrast, Elizabeth noted that "a blessing and a curse" of the Comparative Religions course was the responsibility she assumed to modify the curriculum around contemporary social problems linked to religion. And while Noah appreciated the opportunity to "build the [Peace Studies] course around exploring…

some really heavy issues in depth" and "seeing beyond [students'] own safe, self-centered perspectives," he also acknowledged that such a goal was more complicated to enact than one grounded in acquiring and recalling bits of discrete knowledge.

Noah Andres: Dilemmas in "doing justice" to the subject matter and students

A snapshot of practice: "What was the international community's responsibility toward Rwanda in 1994?"

With a month remaining in Noah's semester-long Peace Studies course, he introduced his 19 students to a two-week unit on international responsibility toward regional conflict resolution with *Hotel Rwanda*, an historical-dramatic film about an hotelier's efforts to shelter and arrange passage for refugees during the mass killing of Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda in 1994. His course roster included 11 females and 8 males; nearly half were racial and ethnic minorities, African American, Caribbean, Asian, Latino/a, and North African students included. Thus, the Peace Studies course was a bit more ethnically diverse than the general school population. Noah indicated that he actively recruited students of different backgrounds who had demonstrated an interest in history and politics in his other courses, or who had approached him or his department chair to inquire about Peace Studies. As in AP Government, students sat in two clusters, each facing the other to optimize whole-class cross talk. Small groups regularly were formed for specific discussions and projects and then dissolved to discourage students from working solely with others in their social cliques or with those seated around them.

Noah and his students spent nearly two class sessions watching *Hotel Rwanda* in its entirety. Beforehand, Noah lectured briefly about the colonial history of Rwanda,

illustrating specific characteristics of Western dominance in the region with original source texts. One text offered instructions to Belgians for keeping natives under control through physical violence and by trading kidnapped tribe members for goods and services. Another strongly implied Belgian responsibility for tribal strife beginning in the 1930s, when Hutus and Tutsis were formally categorized, with the typically wealthier, more European-looking Tutsis strongly favored by the Belgians for land allocation and educational opportunities. After a brief check for basic comprehension of the texts, Noah indicated:

> This all provides some context for watching *Hotel Rwanda*… When you're watching, I want you to focus on two questions. Number one, why is this happening? What evidence do you see in the film [of factors] that led to the genocide? And think about how it meshes with what else we've read and talked about. Number two, what do you notice about the perspectives among different groups represented in the film?

One student asked if the movie is an accurate representation of what happened in Rwanda. Noah responded by suggesting that the question be revisited after the film, reminding students that, like any source, the movie offers a unique take on the event: "It tells a particular story about one person and the people around him… That's why I also want you to pay attention to other perspectives." Prior to each class session in which the movie was shown and at several points during the film, Noah advised the students to maintain a record of their ideas, relative to the aforementioned questions, in their reflective journals.

Noah began the session after the film by asking volunteers to read what they had written in their journals, and then soliciting verbal responses to those passages. They included the following:

- "There was a lot of tension [between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes] over time, and when the president was assassinated, things just blew up."
- "At first, I thought the whole 'blame the west' argument was a kind of a stretch. But it makes more sense now… I think people in Rwanda were treated like they didn't matter; like, whatever happens, it's not going to make a difference to us. That actually made me really pissed off."
- "I don't know – at what point do we have to just say, look, some bad stuff happened a long time ago. We realize that. But sooner or later, you're going to have to figure out how to take care of things for yourselves… And let's say we do get involved; then we get blamed for that, right? You can't win. It's a lose-lose."

Comments like those shifted the tenor of discussion toward whether or not the United States (or alternatively, the United Nations or "the West") should have intervened in Rwandan violence. In the meantime, Noah bullet-pointed students' ideas on the whiteboard, occasionally asking about the sources from which they drew to frame their thoughts.

Approximately 10 minutes into class, Noah introduced several new documentary excerpts related to the causes and consequences of Rwandan genocide, concurrently displaying the following quotation on the overhead:

> Rwanda was tribalism. The black Africans, they simplified it. So let them do that, and when they are finished, we'll pick up the pieces. *General Romeo Dallaire, leader of UN peacekeeping forces in Rwanda, 1994.*

Other excerpts' themes included long-standing notions of Black/African inferiority, the financial and ethical implications of intervention or abstention, and the failure of journalists to communicate the scope and context of the violence. Noah then divided the class into groups of three. He asked each group to read through all of the documents, to create two columns on paper – 1) factors contributing to the outcome in Rwanda; and 2) consequences of those factors – and to use the documents, the film, and other relevant resources and ideas to fill in the columns.

To make the process more concrete, he and his students talked through an example using two of the texts that argued against international intervention:

> Noah: So, there's a case against getting involved here, right? What do you see – when you look at these sources, where do you see people thinking, you know, other countries shouldn't get involved?
>
> Wyatt [White male]: According to this [source], public opinion was against it. It says, like, why would people want to get involved – you know, put themselves in danger, maybe get killed over something that has nothing to do with us? It doesn't really give them anything in return, so they just lose.
>
> Noah: Okay, so one factor is that maybe some are thinking, you know, what resources can Rwanda offer, economically or politically? Nothing? Okay, then why get involved?

Adair [White female]: Or maybe people think, like this General, Romeo, said, let's not get involved in the fighting itself because it's not our fight… but when they settle down, then we can help them figure out what to do next. It's like we'd be meddling in someone else's business…

Noah: Okay, so what are the possible consequences of this kind of position?

Adair: Well, probably a lot more people died because of it… You could tell in the movie that the UN people were frustrated trying to do their jobs because the rest of the world was sitting around debating whether this was genocide; while people were getting killed.

Noah: Mmm hmm. [Pedro]?

Pedro [Latino]: When you start hearing about Tutsi babies getting thrown against walls or thrown in the river to drown, it looks pretty bad not to be involved.

Noah: Okay, keep talking through the documents like this. Keep going. I want to see you citing [evidence] as you're reading about different factors that led to the genocide.

As the groups read and discussed the documents, Noah moved around and sat with each for several minutes. For one group struggling with the arcane language of a text from the early 1900s, he suggested that students stop at the end of every phrase or two to identify troublesome vocabulary, talk through the text's meaning, and articulate any questions they have about it. Another group called Noah over to solicit his thoughts on an argument that troubled them:

Alex [White female]: This one guy who's blaming the press for what happened… I don't really get that. It seems like there's a lot of other people who should be blamed more. The press is just trying to show people what's happening.

Noah: Okay, so the guy who's blaming the press; what's his argument?

Crista [Latina]: That they focused too much on the violence [between the Hutus and the Tutsis]… But that's what was going on, though, right? I don't think they should lie about it.

Noah: But – okay, as we've said, though, the underlying historical and political factors aren't getting much coverage in the press. So, if most of the stories coming out are about two tribes slaughtering each other with machetes – what do you think happens when the press portrays the conflict as just a fight between tribes?

Alex: Maybe people think that it doesn't concern the rest of the world? Because it's just two tribes fighting?

Noah used this opportunity to remind the group of the importance of considering how the press shapes our interpretations of international conflicts by emphasizing different facets.

This pattern of conversation and feedback continued for approximately 30 minutes. Then, Noah reconvened the whole class and asked each small group to articulate a thesis statement about the roots of genocide in Rwanda. Two different themes emerged: 1) political and military instability amidst a breakdown of sovereign authority; and 2) a colonial legacy that laid the groundwork for violence. A few students who articulated the first theme generally perceived colonialism to be "an old issue" or something that happened "back in the day." Others, particularly Amira and Crista, two female students from Algeria and Honduras respectively, vehemently disagreed, suggesting that the

effects of colonialism remain long after the colonial power abdicates. As more students entered an increasingly contentious conversation, Noah assumed a moderator's role, working primarily to maintain a respectful climate and prevent three or four especially vocal students from dominating. The class session expired amidst that discussion. Afterward, Noah noted to me his discomfort with some students' insistence that colonialism is part of the past:

> You could tell [Amira] and [Crista] were kind of offended… Some people are getting hung up on the idea that the colonial period – you know, *White Man's Burden* and all that stuff – that was the eighteen- and nineteen-hundreds. It's over… I need to deal with that.

Noah began the next session with a text excerpt, projected on the overhead:

> Those who are conquered always want to imitate the conqueror in his main characteristics – in his clothing, his crafts, in all his distinctive customs. *Ibn Khaldun, 14th-century Muslim philosopher*

After reading the passage aloud, he asked students to pause and imagine why those who are conquered would want to imitate their conquerors, wondered if Ibn Khaldun's argument still applies today, and gave them a minute with the questions before soliciting responses. One student perceived that the conquerors' customs might represent "better ways" of doing things, while Amira, the Algerian female, suggested, "You'd want to fit in with the people you fear. You don't want to stick out as being different; it's a means of survival. And yes, of course it still applies." Noah explained that he wanted to spend more time with the concepts of colonialism and imperialism in light of the previous day's conversation. He used Venn diagrams to help individuals brainstorm the characteristics of

either colonialism or imperialism, then asked students to form colonialism-imperialism pairs and compare and contrast ideas.

Ten minutes elapsed, and Noah reconvened the class and asked students to volunteer their work. One pair generally found no difference between the two concepts, while another, Trevor [White male] and Kurt [White male], suggested that imperialism "is just more of a modernish idea." When asked by Noah to explain further, Trevor noted:

> We don't have colonies anymore… But countries still go into other areas for their resources. The motivations are pretty much the same; like when we invaded Iraq because they have a lot of oil – uh, I mean, because they had weapons or something. [Laughter] So yeah, we're there, but we don't – technically, the land doesn't belong to us.

Noah continued calling on pairs, one by one. Two students who had previously declared colonialism to be "an old issue" defined it as the use of military force to extract economic gains, while imperialism involves cultural influence, "like religion." Amira and Crista, who worked together, responded, as Amira shook her head back and forth:

> Amira [Algerian female]: It all becomes so ingrained that it's impossible to separate them like that… I came from that kind of environment. So, like, Africa was cut up into colonies more than a hundred years ago, and now it's all independent countries, but – Algeria was a French colony… Our schools were based on French language and a French curriculum, and people still hold Europe up on a pedestal… People from my country still try to immigrate to France, but there are major issues with discrimination and police brutality against Algerians

there. Algerians are treated as lower class than the French, but they still look at France as better and more developed.

Crista [Honduran female]: That's like coming to America from Honduras.

Noah thanked the two students for their comments and invited others to contribute, encouraging them to explain how their conceptual understandings had been clarified or challenged by the conversation thus far. One noted:

Terrorizing natives to show them who's boss, I mean, that's really obviously bad. But I think what [Amira] and [Crista] are talking about, that's less, you know, obvious; but it's still there… It still affects people.

Over the next three class sessions, Noah used similar methods to refocus on international responsibility toward the violence in Rwanda: 1) he asked open-ended questions that recounted past discussion and anticipated future reading (e.g., "What do you think would have been an ethical response from the United States, in response to violence in Rwanda?"); 2) he displayed or distributed texts and excerpts related to those questions (e.g., the UN Genocide Convention of 1948; an interview with Philip Gourevich, author of *We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families*); and 3) he implored students to read, write about, and discuss in small- or whole-group settings their perceptions of those texts. The unit's culminating assessment was a peer-critiqued essay addressing the challenges of reconciliation after a tragedy of Rwanda's magnitude, through which Noah asked students to "draw from Gandhi's ideas from earlier in the course about cycles of violence." Rather than present students with a single essay prompt, Noah offered a bullet-pointed list of several "questions that you could consider when writing." These questions pertained to the locus of responsibility for

reconciliation and the complications associated with granting forgiveness while also ensuring that offenders are brought to justice.

Noah's pedagogical reasoning in the Peace Studies context

The above vignette demonstrates what Noah meant when he suggested that he wanted to be "more of a guide than an authority" in the classroom. To Noah, a guide punctuates students' perplexities and challenges presumptions by selecting various relevant texts and creating discussion questions around those texts. In Peace Studies, Noah often asked students to write individually and talk in small-groups about his guiding questions, and then facilitated whole-class extensions of small-group conversations about conflict and resolution. This cornerstone of Noah's instruction served two broad, intersecting curricular aims: 1) "doing justice," as Noah indicated repeatedly, to the complexity of the subject matter; and 2) cultivating rational democratic discourse in the classroom. These aims seemed to converge, for instance, when Noah seized upon and problematized a simplistic concept of colonialism as a past event.

Noah's guide-versus-authority dichotomy was troubled, however, by the conviction underlying the second half of this chapter's opening quotation: that the Peace Studies course "should be unbalanced." Noah recalled a student who wrote staunchly against Gandhi's rationales for nonviolent noncooperation, instead favoring military force as a policy and noting that the Peace Studies class had only strengthened his determination in that regard. Up to that point in the course, Noah had taught squarely and regularly in favor of nonviolent means of conflict resolution and was not sure how to

address a circumstance in which none of that seemed to take hold. Regarding his feedback on the student's writing, Noah indicated:

> It really bothered me; I remember reading it, and thinking to myself, wow, what did I do wrong? I also remember thinking that, in terms of structure and grammar, it was well written, and it seemed very genuine… So I tried to emphasize those things that I thought were good, but also point out where there were inconsistencies in what he wrote, based on stuff we'd done. I didn't want to seem like I was attacking him, because I'm sure he thought that turning in this paper, you know, it was something I probably don't agree with, so he's taking a risk… But I don't know how I could have any integrity in teaching this class if I was a strong believer in the use of violence or the use of force as a policy.

Here, Noah demonstrated that his role as guide inevitably involved negotiating and establishing knowledge authority, even as he prompted students to consider alternative positions on conflict resolution.

Noah recognized the delicacy of advancing a curriculum oriented to favor nonviolent conflict resolution via pedagogy rooted in equitable discussion and tolerance toward divergent positions. When Noah solicited mid-course feedback on students' perceptions of Peace Studies, one student noted, "There's always going to be differences of opinion, which is one of the things I like about this class… There are no right or wrong answers." Noah expressed his discomfort with that comment after the lesson:

> There may not be absolute right and wrong answers in this class, but there are better answers than others… I don't really want students thinking that anything goes when they're dealing with stuff like genocide in Rwanda; you know, like it's

all relative. If that's the message kids are getting, then I'm failing miserably at teaching this course.

Despite Noah's uneasiness and self-doubt, he declined to make that point in front of the class, apprehensive of alienating students who, to then, had taken risks by expressing unpopular positions. Pragmatically, Noah placed a high premium on student participation in general, and the encouragement of discrepant points of view in particular, yet he maintained the hope that students would come to follow his pathway in considering the ethics and nuances of conflict resolution. At the same time, he feared that students might simply parrot his perspectives in their writing and class discussions rather than thinking for themselves. Noah used a provocative metaphor when discussing how he mitigated these dimensions of teaching:

> I feel like a Supreme Court justice, working the lawyers [on a case]. Basically, the justices use the lawyers to elicit certain responses to make points. I mean, it's not like the lawyers are puppets or anything; they're still making these really good, complex arguments about how the law should be interpreted. But the justices have their interpretations, too, and they know how to get the lawyers to raise the points they want to raise. And so I feel like a lot of times, that's what I'm trying to do – to elicit a certain kind of response, rather than saying, "Hey, you should think about things this way."

Given the frequency with which Noah spoke of the intent to "do justice" to the subject matter, I asked him to articulate what that meant and how he would know if he had succeeded in that regard. His explanation bore three characteristics: 1) authentic representations of the depth and shading of the subject matter in question; 2)

opportunities to bring those representations into a discursive space in the classroom; and 3) explicit connections to students' lives and interests. He synthesized the first and third characteristics when describing a unique dilemma associated with teaching about youth in global conflict, one of his key curricular priorities:

> They're dealing with stories from children who grew up in different conflict situations. One girl was kidnapped and sold into slavery; another grew up having to run back and forth between Catholic and Protestant areas in Ireland. Another was a child soldier. So the question comes up, do they have shared experiences with these kids, or can they imagine that kind of life? And it's like, well, of course not; they're suburban American teenagers! So we have to deal with, you know, how can we do justice to something that's outside their realm of experiences, but where there's still a sense of empathy… I don't want it to be like, you know, asking a student what it's like to be an ex-slave during Reconstruction. I mean, come on; you're not going to be able to read a textbook excerpt or a document and answer that. It's a cheap question.

Doing justice to the subject matter in Peace Studies required Noah to be opportunistic in selecting course content. Recall that Noah struck off in the direction of exploring the concepts of colonialism and imperialism, yet he never returned to a discussion on the validity of *Hotel Rwanda* as a source of historical evidence, as he indicated he would. This example is characteristic of Noah's approach to curriculum design in Peace Studies: in the evolving fabric of the course, some threads were woven together into fairly complex patterns, while others were inserted and then abandoned before they took hold. In comparison to the AP Government course, on-the-spot curricular modification

occurred with more much frequency in Peace Studies, where, according to Noah, he felt accountable almost wholly to his students, himself, and to a lesser extent, his department chair, who had taught Peace Studies previously and tapped Noah to take over the course.

The interaction of contextual factors with Noah's teaching in Peace Studies

When Noah's department chair, Ted Hawthorne, initially approached him with the offer to teach Peace Studies, Noah assumed that his role was to "keep the course warm" until scheduling adjustments permitted Mr. Hawthorne to reclaim the course. Toward the end of Noah's first iteration, Mr. Hawthorne proposed a more permanent assignment, given positive feedback from students, his own observations of Noah's teaching, and persistent scheduling problems in the social studies department. Noah accepted the proposal and sought to rebuild the course on three grounds, prior to his second offering: 1) how did his goals and subject matter knowledge differ from Mr. Hawthorne's, and what kind of rebuilding made sense, based on those differences? 2) what might students at Eastern High School want from a Peace Studies elective? and 3) what sorts of Peace Studies curricula and instructional resources exist outside the Eastern community, at both secondary and collegiate levels, and how might Noah adapt those resources to his circumstances?

Regarding the first of the three aforementioned questions, Noah replaced much of Ted Hawthorne's syllabus, texts, and lesson plans once he learned that he would continue to teach Peace Studies. During an interview toward the end of the course, Noah indicated, "I don't think you've seen a single lesson in here that's the same as something I did last

time." Noah set out to make changes based primarily on different aims and subject matter expertise:

> There's a Peace Studies course at [a nearby high school] that's been in the news; kids were protesting that it's biased toward a pacifist perspective. Actually, [Ted] talked to [that course's instructor] before he developed Peace Studies here a few years ago, and he decided he wasn't comfortable with that bent at all. He wanted a more objective lens… I think I'm kind of in the middle. I'm a bit too pragmatic for the whole radical pacifism thing, but I also think [Ted] was a little more concerned with trying to be balanced. I think he was just trying to avoid a lot of controversy… I knew I wanted students to take a firm stance against violent conflict, but there's a lot of different ways to think about what that means.

Noah perceived that Mr. Hawthorne's emphasis on objectivity and balance aligned closely with students' attitudes, as this chapter's opening quotation suggests. By contrast, Noah believed that Peace Studies should push students away from the tendency to fit new content into latent ontology. Still, Noah preserved some characteristics of Mr. Hawthorne's course during his second iteration, including the unit structure – 1) theories of conflict and conflict resolution; 2) conflict in contemporary America; and 3) conflict in the global arena – and emphases on reflective writing, discussion, and original research as forms of assessment.

Noah found the unit structure "pretty broad and pretty consistent among most of the Peace Studies programs I checked out while I was planning." Within those units, Noah made substantial changes from his first to his second year, based on his subject matter expertise. For instance, he largely abandoned extensive lessons on Henry David

Thoreau during the first unit – "it was apparent that I knew only slightly more than the kids; so not much, in other words" – and chose to ground his instruction on the principles of resistance in examples with which he was more familiar: the American Civil Rights Movement and the work of Mohandas Gandhi.

Given Ted Hawthorne's dual role as Noah's department chair and former Peace Studies teacher, he availed himself to Noah as a resource, yet explained carefully that Noah should redesign the course as he saw fit. During Noah's initial experience with the course, he and Mr. Hawthorne met at least once each week to discuss emergent curricular and pedagogical dilemmas. Those co-planning meetings were infrequent and informal during the second iteration and usually happened after Noah invited Mr. Hawthorne to "come in and see what's going on. Not like an evaluation, but as a colleague who taught the course before and might be able to see things I'm missing."

Noah had what he called "almost complete autonomy" within the Peace Studies context. During this study, an assistant principal formally observed him teach the course once, but because no district-level curriculum standards or guidelines existed for Peace Studies, she made only a few technical suggestions before endorsing his work. Furthermore, Noah's district-assigned mentor, who occasionally supervised and provided formative feedback on his teaching, suggested that the AP Government course was a more appropriate venue for his observations than Peace Studies, given the comparatively higher stakes.

Noah perceived that the pedagogical freedom that came with the Peace Studies course was an unusual privilege for a second-year teacher. Maintaining that freedom

meant maintaining enrollment in the course, a point of concern for Noah before he first taught Peace Studies, and again during his redesign:

> Right before I taught the course for the first time, I found out that some of the kids who had signed up were dropping. And other kids who said they were going to take it were signing up for other electives. And I thought, well, this is great; I'm going to kill [Ted's] course. But I recruited a few more kids, and we started with some conversations as a class about what they wanted to get out of it. About a third of them said, you know, they just enjoyed their other courses with [Ted] and wanted to take Peace Studies with him, so I knew I had to get past that. It was a little awkward at first; I felt like I was being judged against his teaching… I asked them to help set the goals and the agenda. I said, you know, teaching a course like this is one of the reasons I became a teacher, and I'm really excited to do this with you guys. Things got better.

While Noah rationalized the act of sharing curricular decision making with students as part of his educational philosophy, he spoke more frequently and forcefully about the practice as a way to maintain students' investment in and positive perceptions of the course.

Several patterns emerged across the dataset with regard to contextual influences on Noah's teaching in Peace Studies. First, he made new efforts to establish a curricular vision by expanding his community of peace educators and reflecting on his aims and teaching strategies via other models when he assumed long-term control of the course. Second, he sought feedback from students about their goals, interests, and perspectives as an influence on his practice, yet he struggled with the power dynamic when his aims and

stances conflicted with theirs. Ultimately, he considered decisions about what is worth knowing and what should be censored, how to maintain cohesion across the course, and the place of "balance" in an intentionally unbalanced curriculum to be his province. Finally, there was virtually no school-institutional oversight with regard to Noah's Peace Studies curriculum and instruction, and he used few school-institutional resources to help him achieve his goals. On the latter point, he spoke on occasion with Ted Hawthorne and other colleagues about pedagogical dilemmas and strategies but did not solicit the assistance of the school's professional development mentors, or anyone in the district's office of curriculum and instruction during this study. And whereas accountability in the AP Government context came primarily in the forms of Noah's AP teaching team and the exchange value of the test, he was "kept alert" in Peace Studies by students' feedback, the process of monitoring his pedagogical goals, his department chair's interests in the course, and the shadow of potential controversy associated with an overtly political curriculum.

Elizabeth Sutton: Dilemmas in "helping students accept other people's ideas as valid"

A snapshot of practice: "To what extent do popular conceptions of Islam actually reflect the principles and practices of the faith?"

Islam is the last of the "five major religions" that Elizabeth addressed in her Comparative Religions curriculum, having already taught units on Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, and Christianity, as well as an introductory unit that attended to what religion is and why it exists. The Islam unit immediately preceded students' final projects, which involved selecting and presenting information on a religion previously unrepresented in

the course, such as Taoism, Sikhism, Jainism, or Rastafarianism. Elizabeth's class roster was full with 30 students, 18 of whom were female. The demographic makeup in Comparative Religions generally matched that of the school as a whole. As noted previously, Elizabeth did not have her own classroom, given her reduced course load and professional development duties. Instead, she used a cart to transport her instructional materials back and forth from her office to the math classroom she used for Comparative Religions.

During class, students crowded the room in rows, with Elizabeth either in the front of the room or milling about during small-group work. Like Noah, Elizabeth also recruited students from past courses, though many were seniors who needed an elective or simply were interested in exploring different belief systems. The latter characteristic was a source of tension for Elizabeth. During our interviews and in class, she explicitly indicated that Comparative Religions was not meant to help students find a religion or advocate any particular faith: "That's why I have everyone write me a letter at the beginning of the course about their interests and expectations, so I know where they're coming from; and I can tell them where I'm coming from." She recognized that students variously enrolled in her course questioning their faith, deeply invested in it, or without any religious background at all and sought to ensure that Comparative Religions respected each of those positions.

While teaching the Judaism unit, Elizabeth drew heavily upon her own religious background. Likewise, the Christianity unit was peppered with perspectives and experiences shared by her students, the vast majority of whom were Christian. During the Islam unit, by contrast, Elizabeth relied more heavily on the course packet – an

assemblage of readings she built from web sites, news articles, and textbooks – and documentary videos on Muslim customs and contemporary issues. Like the other units' text packets, Islam's featured narratives on the origins of the faith; key figures, literature, symbols, and holidays; customs of practice; and divisions within the faith (e.g., Shi'a and Sunni), as well as articles on contemporary religious issues. Elizabeth opened the Islam unit by explaining that one of her key course objectives was to spend time carefully examining the principles and practices of Islam and dispelling misconceptions about the faith that emerged after September 11, 2001.

During the first two sessions of the unit, Elizabeth asked students to read aloud from the course text, write down and pose questions about it as they read, and respond to a series of comprehension questions at designated stopping points. The following exchange, which took place amidst a passage on Shahada (a pillar of Islam that involves declaring faith in Allah), is an example of the kind of classroom dialogue that intermingled with read-aloud activity:

> Jill [White female]: Arabic kind of looks and sounds like Hebrew.
>
> Elizabeth: Yeah, well, they're in the same family of languages, so there are some similarities. Like shalom and salaam, [and] reading right to left. But they're definitely not the same language…
>
> Shawna [Black female]: So Muslims are supposed to say this every day? Like, they get up in the morning, say it, and get on with their day?
>
> Elizabeth: A lot of faiths have a daily prayer component. Some of them are more structured than others. Like in Islam, you're supposed to pray five times daily, which is the next pillar that we'll be talking about, Salat.

Jill: Is it like, if you say salaam, that makes you Muslim, just like if you speak Hebrew, that makes you Jewish?

Elizabeth: No, Arabic doesn't imply that you're Muslim in the same way. Though most Muslims in that part of the world [points to the Middle East on a PowerPoint slide of Arabic-speaking regions] speak Arabic…

Janette [Black female]: So with the five-times-a-day thing, I know there's a schedule. So let's say you're out shopping, and it's noon or whatever… Do you just stop what you're doing and find a place to go [pray]?

Elizabeth: I don't know how many people are quite that exact about it, but yes, somewhere around that time, you need to find an appropriate place. [Shuffles to a PowerPoint slide with photographs of "Muslim prayer in mosques around the world"] This prayer position – the bowing positions are called rakahs – that's part of the ritual as well. The idea is that you're supposed to establish the closest connection possible with the earth as a sign of reverence to God…

Luke [White male]: When my brother was in Istanbul during Ramadan, he said that a bell would ring, and people would just stop where they are – even if they were on the street or in their cars – and begin praying.

Elizabeth: That's interesting. In places where Islam is the majority religion, you're definitely more likely to see an impact on daily life like that.

Amidst a description of Sawm, which dictates that Muslims fast during Ramadan, Elizabeth displayed the Muslim calendar and explained that, "like the Hebrew calendar, the Muslim calendar isn't a twelve-month calendar. But the Muslim calendar doesn't reset like the Hebrew calendar does, so Ramadan shifts every year." Elizabeth cued a

PowerPoint presentation that explained the customs of Ramadan, noting, "This presentation was given to teachers at Eastern so they know what their Muslim students are doing during Ramadan." Alongside the slides, she described the fasting process and its exceptions, what Muslims believe they gain from the experience, and what a typical day in the life of a Muslim teenager looks like during Ramadan. One student added, "Did you see on the news about that kid from Southern [High School] who ran cross country the whole time, even though he was fasting?" Elizabeth noted that Muslim teenagers deal with fasting in different ways:

> Sometimes they sit together for support during lunch. I know that it's easier when the days are shorter. Imagine if you couldn't eat or drink between dawn and dusk in the summertime, when it's hot, or in a desert country… [I think it's important to] be aware of what fasting during Ramadan entails and to be sensitive and supportive toward other students who are going through it.

Elizabeth introduced the following class session by explaining that students would watch a documentary about people going on Hajj (i.e., pilgrimage) for the first time. She chose the video primarily to illustrate diversity within Islam; it featured the experiences of a White Texan female, a wealthy Malaysian couple, and a Black South African male. Before starting the DVD, Elizabeth distributed a sheet of "video notes" questions to accompany the film, indicating, "This is not one of those situations where you're answering questions every ten seconds to make sure you're paying attention. I just want you to anticipate what we're going to discuss during and after the video." Questions on the video notes sheet included the following:

- "What is the significance of the Ka'bah, and how do people pay tribute to it?"

- "What is the state of ihram, and how do the people in the video achieve it?"
- "Why do many people cut their hair near the end of the Hajj?"

The next class began with a question: "Ladies and gentlemen, when you hear the word jihad, what sorts of ideas or images come to mind? Don't answer right away. I want you to think about this for a minute." After a short pause, Elizabeth called on students to articulate their thoughts:

Shawna: Extremists. 9/11. The kind of people who would blow up buildings.

Elizabeth: Okay. [Eddie]?

Eddie [Latino male]: Yeah, I was going to say suicide bombers. You know, someone who would martyr himself to make a statement.

Elizabeth: Alright. [Clayton], what do you think of when you hear the word jihad?

Clayton [Black male]: I think of, like, a holy war. Like a crusade.

Elizabeth: Sure, because in the media… anytime there's violence in the Muslim world, you hear the word jihadist; they're jihadists. Which is a made-up word that Muslims don't use, actually. So we take a concept within Islam, we oversimplify it and recast it in a very specific way, and we lose the real meaning… Some would say, you know, my jihad is to defend Islam, and I'm going to attack those who attack Islam. But for most, a jihad is a personal struggle to do the right thing, to better themselves, to better the world. That's a lot different from holy war, which portrays Muslims as violent in a way that's really unfair and inaccurate.

Elizabeth then asked her students to turn to a reading in their text packets entitled, "Jihad Explained," published online by the Institute of Islamic Information and Education (IIIE), a Muslim advocacy group that works to promote a positive image of Islam in North

America. She assigned students to read the text, prepare to explain their "big take-aways," and generate a question about the text as if the author was present in class to respond. After several minutes of quiet reading, Elizabeth solicited students' explanations and questions.

Shawna, one of the more vocal class participants, posed the following question: "There's a section here about defending Islam by removing treacherous people from power, which kind of sounds like violence to me. So does that mean that jihad *can be* violent, and Muslims have to accept that as a fact?" Elizabeth responded by noting that, as in any religion, there are disagreements among Muslims about how to interpret religious doctrines, and that most Muslims interpret jihad as a personal struggle. To substantiate her assertion, Elizabeth broke from the take-aways and questions to show students a video clip depicting two individuals' jihads: a teenage girl in the Midwest who, despite her father's protests, wanted to wear a traditional Muslim head covering called hijab, and a New York City firefighter (who responded to rescue calls on September 11, 2001) working to overcome a fear of public speaking in order to condemn violent jihad as a criminal misinterpretation of Islamic law. During the video, Elizabeth twice cued back and repeated the firefighter's explanation that terror violence is wrong, and afterward, she summarized the clip:

> Notice the firefighter's disappointment that Muslims were responsible for 9/11; that the people who are attacking others represent one percent of the Muslim population that gives the other 99 percent a bad rap. Ninety-nine percent of Muslims around the world believe that this kind of activity is a total misinterpretation of the Koran.

Throughout the remainder of the unit, I observed similar instructional and interactional patterns. Elizabeth and her students read expository texts and watched video segments on gender dynamics, food preparation, and Muslims' relationships with Christians and Jews; and while reading and watching, she asked comprehension questions and encouraged students to ask questions in return, particularly in cases of dissonance between their knowledge or beliefs and new information. Elizabeth chose an essay, which she called the "women in Islam" essay, as the unit's culminating assessment. Using the Koran, the course text packet, and class discussion material, students chose five social conventions that Muslim women are expected to observe, and described how their own beliefs about gender intersected with the social conventions they chose to address. Elizabeth articulated only one criterion for completing the essay: "Be sure to write a multi-paragraph essay in the first person, including an introduction and conclusion."

Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning in the Comparative Religions context

This vignette offers a look at the pedagogical reasoning underlying Elizabeth's instruction in Comparative Religions. Three aims framed her curricular decision making: 1) to demonstrate the commonalities of experience among people from different religious backgrounds; 2) to validate individual religions' particular beliefs and customs; and 3) to build students' tolerance toward religion and religious practice via substantive knowledge aligned with the first two aims. Again I use the term substantive knowledge because, as the vignette demonstrates, the thrust of her instruction was comprehending religious practices and structures, rather than questioning and analyzing contestable religious issues and concepts. While Noah compared himself to Supreme Court justices in trying to

generate particular kinds of interactions in Peace Studies, Elizabeth used the following metaphor to describe her role in Comparative Religions:

> I really see myself as kind of a librarian, bringing resources to students, helping them make connections they wouldn't otherwise make… but leaving it up to them to decide how those resources matter. So I'm a facilitator more than anything else… A lot of the information that I put in the packets, it's not required, but if they're interested, and they want to read more, they can. I mean, I'll be the one to say, you know, this is bedrock; I need everybody to know this. But here's some more, in case you want to go further.

Elizabeth's explanation of the librarian metaphor also implied a certain dispassion or impartiality toward the subject matter. That kind of dispassion seemed important to Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning because "religious belief is such a sensitive issue; it's so emotional. And when that's the case, you need someone at the front of the room… who can stay grounded in the content." Like a librarian connecting scholars with resources that match their learning needs, Elizabeth fashioned her units around what she perceived students' relationships with the five major religions to be, based on several years of experience with the course. For instance, she supposed that many of her majority-Christian students took debates within the faith for granted. She also suspected that students would think monolithically about Islam, imagining it to be dominated by anti-western fundamentalists and caricaturing "typical Muslims" via pervasive images in the media.

Consequently, the Islam unit, designed primarily to humanize Muslims and combat the fundamentalist image, included lessons intended to demonstrate the diversity

of adherents' backgrounds and practices in Islam. And the Christianity unit included a documentary video that demonstrated vastly different conceptions among religious leaders about the form, function, and appropriateness of evangelism. During these activities, she reiterated to students a phrase often spoken in the Comparative Religions classroom:

> Keep in mind, I'm not trying to tell you that what you believe is wrong, or that you personally should be questioning your faith. But I do think it's important for you to know that religion is diverse, and the ways people think about it is diverse… It's important for you have a fuller understanding of religion so you can make up your own minds about what to think and what not to think.

This comment hints at one of Elizabeth's central pedagogical reasoning dilemmas in Comparative Religions: the discrepancy between individual thinking practices and community learning outcomes. Individually, she acknowledged, students come into and leave the course with different religious convictions, many of which are unchanged by the course: "Students will believe all the way through that their religion is the truth, and there's no other truth, and they're free to believe that; I'm not going to tell them they're wrong about that." Elizabeth also contended, however, that learning and discourse are contingent upon listening to and investing in the validity of others' perspectives. She elaborated as follows:

> I've had kids who are baffled when they learn that Jews don't believe Jesus was the messiah. They just can't understand the concept of Jesus *not* being the messiah. That's where different perspectives are important and where the classroom community comes in… I think the easiest way to break down

> overgeneralizations and those kinds of assumptions is to hear people talk about other beliefs and experiences and understand why they have them… I do hope they leave my classroom without harmful overgeneralizations and assumptions about other religions. But I think they can do that and still believe their own religion is right for them. They can be mutually exclusive.

There were notable similarities between Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning in Comparative Religions and NSL Government. One was the tight relationship between her conception of knowing and her instructional goals and approaches. As demonstrated, most of the interactions that took place among teacher and students in Comparative Religions centered on the acquisition of discrete bits of substantive knowledge about religious tenets and practices. In only a few circumstances over the course of the semester did a student challenge an apparent inconsistency, as Shawna did when she pointed out what she saw as a contradiction between characterizing jihad as non-violent and calling for "the removal of treacherous people." In such cases, Elizabeth acknowledged that religious practice necessarily involves the interpretation of doctrine but spent little or no time with students in that interpretive space. Instead, she saw her charge as "providing background knowledge" and "showing students diversity within religion" so they could "think for themselves."

This segues to another facet of Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning that spanned both curricula: the notion that there is rich interpretive potential within the subject matter, but that the secondary social studies classroom may not be the appropriate place for it. In Comparative Religions, she declared much of that interpretive space "potentially very dangerous," given that "it's impossible to know what all of these kids believe in their

hearts, and I don't want to encourage conversations that make them uncomfortable in my classroom or turn them off to learning." Consequently, she refused to address the confluence of religion and politics in Comparative Religions – as I discovered during her curricular materials think-aloud interview – because of the controversy that could invite.

The interaction of contextual factors with Elizabeth's teaching in Comparative Religions

One aspect of Elizabeth's teaching in Comparative Religions that the preceding vignette does not reveal is the extent to which she integrated religious institutions from the local community. For each of the units in her course, Elizabeth planned and implemented field visits to regional houses of worship or brought in religious leaders to discuss practices and address students' questions. Doing so required clear communication with those leaders about the purposes and intended outcomes of the course, the demographics of the student body, and the kinds of questions students were likely to ask. To elaborate, early in her experience with the course, Elizabeth discovered that some ministers did not share her perspective that students need to see contrasting religious points of view as valid in order for the course to work: "Despite what I told them, they seemed bent on trying to convince students that there was only one correct way to think [about religion]… I don't work with them anymore. I've got some really great people now."

Just as Noah had begun to build a community of scholars and other Peace Studies educators to support his pedagogical efforts, Elizabeth had spent several years working to establish a network of local religious leaders who understood her pedagogical aims and could support them in ways that she deemed beneficial to her students. Elizabeth also

took a similar stance as Noah on the place of state- and district-level curriculum resources in the design and implementation of her elective course: she did not use them. "Others care about state standards way more than I do," Elizabeth suggested, "and unlike NSL, the district has no position on a course like mine. I don't even know what kinds of resources [the district curriculum office] would have for me."

Instead, she drew from a mélange of organizations, programs, and other resources to construct her own "Frankenstein's monster of a textbook" and set of instructional resources. "It's taken me six years so far," she indicated, "and I'm finally feeling like I've got it together." This statement reveals what she considered a major source of effectiveness in terms of navigating the context of teaching Comparative Religions: experience. During interviews, for instance, she largely drew from examples of past practice when discussing how she would address potentially challenging scenarios, like a student who came to her for advice in identifying with a belief system or a religious community, a parent who accused her of taking a position for or against a particular religion, or conversation that uncomfortably singled out "token" Jews, Muslims, or Hindus in the classroom.

Teaching exclusively about religion requires the trust of students, parents, and administrators, claimed Elizabeth, and thus, she prioritized the construction and maintenance of a trusting and transparent classroom culture. In Chapter Four, I explained how Elizabeth cultivated what she called "political capital" in her school building, and why that capital was consequential to her teaching. The same claims largely apply in her Comparative Religions context, though she took additional steps to nurture trust in the elective on account of its potentially contentious subject matter. Elizabeth began the

course with a request that students write her a letter to explain why they wanted to take the course and what they expected to get out of it. In return, Elizabeth wrote a response that she distributed to students and parents, explaining her roles and instructional goals and strategies, and committing to remain responsive to their feedback throughout the course. She also created newsletters, which she posted in the school and sent home, that described and included photographs of course activities.

Her initial letter and subsequent newsletters communicated several important messages: 1) that knowledge of religion is important to people's participation in civil society and can have a profoundly positive, demystifying effect; 2) that she recognized the different places religion holds in people's lives, and that her teaching would treat all of them as valid; 3) that she would cultivate an environment of mutual respect in the classroom; 4) that students would have fun learning in her course; and 5) that her years of experience teaching Comparative Religions validated those messages. Elizabeth also claimed that overtly "appearing objective" granted her validity in teaching the course and was "the only ground to stand on, legally speaking." Conveniently, it also squared with her epistemic position and beliefs about learning.

Knowledge heterarchy as a source of pedagogical dilemmas

Taken together, Chapters Four and Five provide a relatively comprehensive look at how Noah's and Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning and mediation of context manifested as they taught within markedly different curricula. Though my descriptions of their teaching may seem exhaustive – perhaps at the risk of obscuring the forest for the trees – they provide a narrative base for engaging in Chapter Six's conversation about

how teachers adapt, and what they draw from to adapt, to different curricular and institutional contexts. First, I will summarize Chapter Five's findings and begin speaking to the patterns I found across the teachers' discrepant curricula.

In Noah's case, Peace Studies was the curriculum that seemed most congruent with his identity as a teacher. It was discourse-driven; it was conducive to representing knowledge as complex, tentative, and heterarchical; its flexibility accommodated conscientious diversions based on student feedback; and it gave him the opportunity to align his assessment strategies with his personal learning theories and monitor the results. It also was daunting and replete with pedagogical dilemmas that "cleaner" curricula might mitigate. Examples of those pedagogical dilemmas included managing discussions of regularly controversial topics, deciding when and how to change course in the middle of instructional trajectories that were not meeting Noah's goals, and finding a general lack of movement in some students' thinking about conflict resolution. Furthermore, Noah still was inexperienced at generating and implementing a set of curricular aims and learning experiences that were well aligned from the beginning to the end of a course, as he suggested during an interview: "It's really bizarre to have a good sense of what I want the whole course to accomplish, but still not really know exactly what I'm looking for from day to day."

Elizabeth's dilemmas in Comparative Religions were not as stark as Noah's. While different degrees of experience teaching the electives (i.e., seven previous attempts as opposed to one) certainly played a role, the teachers' representations of knowledge for teaching also were consequential. Elizabeth consistently seemed to construct knowledge as hierarchical – in other words, more and less ambiguous, controversial, and complex.

At the bottom of the hierarchy sits what she called "background" knowledge or "basic" knowledge: simple, unambiguous, and necessarily acquired as a prerequisite to students "thinking for themselves." On more than one occasion, I asked Elizabeth to unpack what she meant by thinking for oneself. Consistently, it involved assembling information into an interpretation or argument, judging the accuracy of one's and others' arguments, and using those strategies of judgment and argumentation to "take a stand for things that you believe in." A good example might be the kind of dialogue in which Elizabeth engaged her colleagues and district administrators about the detrimental effects of the quarterly assessments in NSL Government.

However, in her Comparative Religions course, the knowledge proffered and the thinking required were relatively low on the hierarchy. Recall Elizabeth's suggestions that students needed basic or fundamental knowledge of different religions before they go out into the world, lest they make erroneous assumptions about others' beliefs and practices. As substantiated in this chapter, that fundamental knowledge consisted of the religious principles, structures, and practices that dominated the Comparative Religions curriculum. Anything more ambiguous, controversial, and complex might have been "too dangerous," according to Elizabeth, and perhaps rightfully so. In comparison to the kinds of dilemmas that Noah faced, however – dilemmas associated with objectivist versus relativist positions on peace and conflict, or ill-defined and heavily loaded concepts like ethnic cleansing and reconciliation – Elizabeth's pedagogical dilemmas were less complex and relatively easily dispatched via her instructional expertise and broad appeal among students.

Evidence from Noah's case suggests that he conceived of knowledge in a heterarchical way – that is, recognizing that complex, simple, controversial, and uncontested knowledge all are used concurrently, to build up and break down, in the swirl of subject matter discourse. VanSledright (2011) discusses this kind of thinking in his case of Thomas Becker, who "often hears his colleagues complain that their students possess such little prior knowledge about the history they want them to know" (p. 160) and "imagines that his colleagues are working from an old idea" about the relationship between knowledge and learning. It is telling that Noah never mentioned the importance of "basic" or "fundamental" knowledge as a requisite for learning in Peace Studies, and when he talked about "background" knowledge, he did so in the context of teaching with content that students likely had seen before, but could stand to rethink. What he did talk about was helping students to "construct well-supported arguments" and to "understand why different perspectives on peace and conflict exist."

CHAPTER SIX: PEDAGOGICAL REASONING AND ACTION ACROSS CURRICULAR CONTEXTS

Chapters Four and Five offer compelling evidence that the locus of curricular control and presence of a high-stakes test-centric accountability climate played consequential roles in Noah's and Elizabeth's teaching practices. Not only did their learning goals, instructional strategies, and assessment designs vary notably across the Government and elective courses, but so did their collegial and classroom discourses around learning and assessment and their strategies for mitigating political and pedagogical tensions in their work.

Elizabeth's vocal opposition to district curriculum and assessment policies was less an upshot of their centralization than a product of the surveillance effect of the district's quarterly exams and what she considered to be questionable warrants behind some curricular content decisions. Elizabeth perceived that the pacing tests and prescriptive curricula aligned with them evinced a distrust of teachers and weakened their professional capacities to adapt instruction to emergent student needs and unique educative opportunities, as she did in the vignette that anchors Chapter Four. Consequently, she used the pulpit of her position as an experienced teacher and professional development leader to argue among school colleagues and administrators that the district's pacing exams were "not in teachers' and kids' best interests." Simultaneously, she explained to her students the distinctions between classroom assessment, "which is about you and your learning," and the quarterly assessments, "[which are] about people in the district office who care about raising school-wide

passing rates." Such critiques were grounded wholly within Elizabeth's Government teaching practices.

Without tenure or the political capital of a teacher-leadership position, Noah's public responses to the centrality of high-stakes testing to the AP Government curriculum, and the restrictive impacts of those tests, were tempered in comparison to Elizabeth's, despite his professional judgments about them. Primarily, his critiques took the form of explicit rationales for alternative pedagogical moves aligned with learning goals that, Noah argued, simply could not be met by teaching and testing the kinds of substantive knowledge that the AP, state, and district exams targeted. As he explained to students during a seminar discussion, "You can't use a multiple choice test or even an essay to figure out how well people carry on a dialogue with each other [about a political problem]." The vignette of Noah's practice in Chapter Four substantiates this claim.

Two other important factors played largely into Noah's more conciliatory tone: 1) the immediacy of curriculum control via a team of more experienced colleagues whose planning revolved primarily around AP test preparation; and 2) the high exchange value that the AP examination held for Noah's students, their parents, and the school. The last point raises an important distinction between Noah's and Elizabeth's Government course contexts, their purposes, and their potential consequences.

High stakes, different status: Comparing the AP- and state-tested contexts

Advanced Placement test performance carries with it competitive advantages for students and parents as a factor in college admissions considerations, and for schools as a widely accepted bellwether of instructional quality (Geiser & Santelices, 2004). Thus, AP

courses and tests serve as de facto criteria that distinguish supposedly rigorous programs and high-performing students from those with lower academic standards. By contrast, the standard established by the state and district Government assessments was a basic one: students who failed to pass those exams could not earn high school diplomas. While the AP, state, and district tests all could be considered "high-stakes," the stakes themselves are markedly different. For example, Elizabeth reasonably expected a large majority of her students to successfully complete the state Government exam, despite the anxieties associated with preparing a handful of low-performing students to do so. Yet the scope and sequence of her curriculum and the quarterly assessments used to enforce them elevated to gold-standard status the basic standard of all students passing the exam, with increasing numbers reaching higher proficiency over time. Conversely, Noah's AP exam was held up to a different academic standard, and therefore, status.

While he occasionally critiqued the ecological validity of the test in conversations with students and colleagues, Noah recognized its role as a device that stakeholders used to distinguish AP students' academic performance from that of non-test-takers. The self-selected nature and potentially lucrative implications of AP course and test enrollment, the AP Government team's past successes in terms of test results, and the school-cultural prominence of AP programming meant that Noah needed to tread carefully in his critiques of the program's limitations on learning and teaching.

The above claims and those made in Chapters Four and Five trouble suggestions that high-stakes tests do not necessarily leverage powerful pedagogical consequences (Grant, 1999; 2003). In fact, in a qualitative metasynthesis of studies addressing the impact of high-stakes testing on curriculum and instruction, Au (2007) found Grant's

(2003) and Gradwell's (2006) profiles of social studies teachers who abated or claimed to abate the effects of state-level standardized testing in their work to be anomalous. In Noah's and Elizabeth's cases, as with the educators described by Valli and colleagues (2007), the presence or lack of such tests clearly affected teachers' interactions with students, colleagues, and the curriculum. One notable discrepancy between the contexts of Grant's and Gradwell's cases and the circumstances of Noah's and Elizabeth's teaching is the mass of externally-controlled matter that the two participants in this study had to mediate.

Specifically, the primary controls that Grant's (2003) and Gradwell's (2006) ambitious teachers faced were single, end-of-year assessments and state learning standards that were relatively open to interpretation and loosely aligned to the substance of the assessments. Under those conditions, it seems feasible that teachers might exercise their pedagogical flexibility by strategically interpreting the standards' relatively light hand and language of analytical thinking to warrant the kinds of diverse teaching that Grant and Gradwell describe, at least for a substantial part of the school year. By contrast, Elizabeth's and Noah's school district used exacting curriculum guides, pacing tests, and a district-wide final exam to police teachers' efforts toward a tightly scripted Government curriculum. And for Noah, de facto curriculum control took the form of his AP Government team's consolidation of unit plans, assessments, classroom texts, and other resources in an effort to achieve high scores across the school on the AP exam, which represented the principal commodity among the three tests his students took. In both cases, accountability controls were closely proximal, taking the forms of curriculum, colleagueship and, in the context of AP testing, community pressure.

Occasionally, Noah's and Elizabeth's Government teaching practices evinced direct links to their particular tests, as when Noah spent several days teaching students how to write an AP essay using the grading rubric and examples of student writing, or when Elizabeth analyzed past state exam content to construct and distribute graphic organizers of commonly tested vocabulary. Most of the time, however, Noah's and Elizabeth's practices in the Government courses were more test-anticipatory than test-preparatory: while they may not have appealed directly to high-stakes testing devices or outcomes in their teaching, the pervasiveness of standardized tests as factors of accountability and determinants of effectiveness in their professional climates was evident throughout the teachers' pedagogical reasoning and practice.

Central claims of this dissertation

This chapter elucidates three themes relative to the evidence presented in Chapters Four and Five. First, in the face of test-driven curricular and instructional constraints, several practices facilitated Noah's and Elizabeth's efforts toward powerful social studies learning in their classrooms: 1) analyzing the consequences of curriculum and instruction for adolescents' learning practices; 2) drawing from those analyses to oppose curricular and instructional controls that restricted powerful social studies learning; and 3) adapting to their teaching contexts in order to make room for alternative practices in environments that were not conducive to them to them. Second, the teachers used their less constrained curricular contexts (e.g., the elective courses) as sites to actively study the consequences of their pedagogical decisions on students' learning practices, and in turn, to generate and refine teaching strategies to be adapted to more

constrained contexts (e.g., the Government courses) in the interest of students' learning. Third, the teachers' epistemic stances and political positions in their schools mattered in terms of how their practices manifested and migrated across different curricular contexts.

Returning to Grant's (1999, 2003) argument that high-stakes tests are not necessarily levers for instructional change, I posit a different metaphor: that the echoes and devices of test-based accountability act more like a tide than a lever, exerting an expansive, and sometimes inconspicuous, force on teachers' pedagogies and discourses as it swells. Other studies reinforce this argument, suggesting that high-stakes testing: 1) narrows curriculum and instruction in a way that fashions learning largely as the acquisition of substantive knowledge; and 2) steers professional discourse toward working within boundaries created by testing (Cimbricz, 2002; Cornbleth, 2008; Madaus et al, 2003; Segall, 2006). Under such circumstances, teachers' pedagogical reasoning criteria – or how they decide to select and represent the subject matter, and on what grounds they evaluate their teaching performance – inevitably are swayed by the culture of high-stakes testing, even if teachers do not target tested skills and subject matter in their day-to-day practice. Noah's and Elizabeth's cases support this claim.

Yet the participants in this study also shared a pragmatic approach to pedagogical reasoning and activity as they navigated their discrepant curricular contexts. Here, "pragmatic" means taking a stance that considers, first and foremost, the conceivable consequences of a position or activity for one's social practices and relationships (Cherryholmes, 1999). I would argue that this stance applies broadly to Noah's and Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning and actions in these ways: 1) they generated and justified their aims and practices by considering their potential implications for students

and their learning; 2) they critiqued curricula and assessments based on perceived congruence between their aims and the conceivable consequences of those tools; and 3) when they found a mismatch via that critique, they considered multiple alternative courses of action, again based on their potential consequences for learning. Pivotal to this pragmatic stance were Noah's and Elizabeth's experiences as curriculum and instructional gatekeepers in their elective contexts – contexts in which they were primarily (and thus, necessarily) responsible for transforming subject matter into curriculum and analyzing and evaluating instruction based on its implications for student learning and the classroom community.

In the next section of this chapter, I discuss two factors that played into the teachers' pedagogical reasoning and action, or the ways in which they navigated and propelled amidst the tide of accountability: their epistemic stances and political positions in their schools. Tabak and Weinstock (2011) suggest that how teachers define the sources and purposes of knowledge plays an important role in how they prioritize classroom goals and practices. Noah's prior experience as a Congressional staffer was pivotal to his framing of political knowledge as sets of assumptions, arguments, and warrants that are regularly negotiated and reconstructed as different interests enter, influence, and exit spheres of political discourse and activity. To Noah, the power of knowledge claims rests on their evidentiary grounds, but also on how they resonate within a particular discourse community. By contrast, Elizabeth largely structured her teaching around a common core of uncontroversial substantive knowledge, like government structures and functions and religious customs – a stance congruent with the school curriculum's definition of knowledge as a thing to acquire. In Elizabeth's case, it

was not the ways knowledge of government and political activity were defined that led her to exercise her political capital in the school. Instead, her critiques were motivated by the district's limits on what she considered the special province of teachers: determining how best to represent and teach the subject matter and assess students in light of learning goals.

I then segue into my argument that the pedagogical reasoning and action that Noah and Elizabeth demonstrated in their elective courses served as a framework for scrutinizing the tide of testing and accountability and provided them with tools for navigating and propelling against it in their Government teaching contexts. This is an important claim, given scholarship suggesting that early-career teachers like Noah largely spend their initial years acclimating to the school institution and complying with directives that originate beyond the classroom (Chubbuck et al, 2001; Flores & Day, 2006; Huberman, 1999; LeMaistre & Pare, 2009; Veenman, 1984). For instance, van Hover (2006) conducted a study of novice Virginia teachers who did not cite the state assessment regime as a major influence on their practices, yet taught their subject matter almost exclusively through state-test-aligned standards and assessment tools. She reports, "whether the beginning teachers recognize the direct link between their planning, instruction, and assessment or not, the curriculum is created by the tests, not the teachers… These beginning teachers are so used to the existence of the [state] tests, the influence has become as undetectable as it is pervasive" (van Hover, 2006, p. 215).

In Noah's and Elizabeth's cases, the process of making curricular and instructional decisions under different sets of accountability demands acutely betrayed the pervasiveness of their Government tests and the impacts of those tests on curriculum

and instruction. While working within multiple curricular contexts as Noah and Elizabeth did might be intensive, particularly for early-career teachers, doing so has the potential to foster curricular vision-setting and pedagogical decision-making practices that can help teachers navigate the controls that marked the Government course contexts. Later in this chapter, I hone in on the teachers' assessment practices as a subset of their pedagogies to illustrate how they mediated those controls.

Finally, I use the aforementioned arguments to speak to pathways that might help teachers come to transform institutional constraints into productive tensions that strengthen their pedagogical reasoning and action. Scholarship contains spirited macro arguments about the deprofessionalization of teaching via relaxed training and certification standards, the regulation of teaching practice by non-professionals, and a dearth of time and opportunity for educators to collaborate around subject-specific curricular and instructional dilemmas (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011). In this chapter, I use Noah's and Elizabeth's cases to acknowledge some of these deprofessionalizing forces on a micro level of practice, but also to explore: 1) how teachers might learn to negotiate and work through contradictory messages about what kinds of aims, knowledge, and activities they ought to pursue; and 2) what roles the different institutions in which teachers learn and grow might play in that regard.

Teachers' epistemic stances and political positions as factors in mediating curricular and instructional constraints

Epistemic stances

Drawing from Sfard's (1998) metaphors for learning – on one hand, acquiring knowledge as a possession, and on the other, participating in dialectic activities – I found Elizabeth's aims and practices largely congruent with the former. Across her teaching, she characterized student ownership of knowledge as an appropriate and desirable learning outcome, and she evaluated the effectiveness of her work via students' demonstrations of what they possess. Most of the instructional resources she created and sought out were expository in nature, and the primary criteria she used to determine their effectiveness were depth of information, perceived readability and appeal to adolescents, and perceived accuracy, based on her knowledge of the subject matter and familiarity with other sources. Consider her use of possessive language (with italics added by me for emphasis) during these assessment think-aloud interview excerpts, gathered while she evaluated summative essays on Buddhist beliefs in Comparative Religions and the roles of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches in NSL Government:

- Darcela has this mistaken idea, right here, about what Buddhists believe meditation is for. And she's not the only one… I need to re-teach that and fix it because I'm finding that *not a lot of kids have a real solid grasp of meditation*. [Comparative Religions]
- I love this essay introduction, because he says right up front, I'm going to do this and this and this. You see here; I'm going to put this idea out there and back it up with these facts. He's saying, hey, *I own this; I know my stuff*. [NSL Government]

Comparatively, while Noah acknowledged the importance of students having "at least enough shared knowledge to be able to talk to each other," his emphasis on rational democratic discourse reflected a belief that common referents are means to participate, not ends in themselves. To Noah, the classroom should be a forum in which inquiry, argumentation, and discussion strategies are taught as tools to make meaning of the subject matter. The instructional materials that Noah created – routinely for Peace Studies and occasionally for AP Government – consisted primarily of raw images and video, news articles and editorials, data and research, legal documents, and other original source texts, bound together by questions or scenarios that required students to use those resources to construct arguments or address dilemmas together. The following examples from Noah's assessment think-aloud interviews – the first related to a Peace Studies essay on preventing youth involvement in violent conflict and the second regarding his grading rubric for seminars in AP Government – illustrate this participatory perspective on learning (again, with italics added for emphasis):

- Okay, so he's not taking a stand on the issue. This is frustrating. He's just saying, you know, you could think this and here's why, or you could think that and here's why… So I'm going to write on his paper, I want to know your standpoint. Please *rewrite this as a convincing argument, with evidence to support it*. I'll tell him, you know, *you're engaging in a conversation with people*. Think of it like an editorial; *your job is to persuade*. [Peace Studies]
- For seminars, it's not enough for the facilitators to say, hey everybody, what did you think of this article? They'll lose points for that… *They have to ask questions about specific points in the article, and the questions are supposed to be open-*

ended and challenging… It was a struggle at first, but they're getting better. [AP Government]

These responses are illustrative of broader connections between the participants' conceptions of the nature and purposes of knowledge in their domains and their instructional practices. The figure below illustrates how the teachers' epistemic stances manifested in their work:

	Context	Foreground	Background
Elizabeth	NSL Government	**Learning**: Acquisition and accumulation **Knowledge**: Substantive – structures, functions, events, and figures	**Learning**: Deliberative participation **Knowledge**: Substantive – how processes of governing work and should work
	Comparative Religions	**Learning**: Acquisition and accumulation **Knowledge**: Substantive – core beliefs, structures, and customs	**Learning**: Deliberative participation **Knowledge**: Substantive – diverse accounts to challenge misconceptions
Noah	AP Government	**Learning**: Acquisition and accumulation **Knowledge**: Substantive – structures, functions, events, and figures	**Learning**: Deliberative participation **Knowledge**: Discursive/procedural – political critique, position-taking, and validation via evidentiary criteria
	Peace Studies	**Learning**: Participation in deliberation **Knowledge**: Discursive/procedural and substantive – argument-building and validation via ethical and evidentiary criteria	**Learning**: Acquisition and accumulation **Knowledge**: Substantive – philosophical foundations, historical narratives and contexts, and geographic information

Figure 6.1. Participants' representations of knowledge and learning across curricula.

As this figure demonstrates and the evidence in Chapters Four and Five conveys, Elizabeth portrayed learning and knowledge more cohesively across her two curricular contexts than did Noah. Elizabeth's teaching generally leaned in an epistemic-realistic

direction; that is, it was grounded in acquiring a common, relatively static core of knowledge. Hofer (2000) explains that one's epistemic position integrates several dimensions: the source of knowledge, how certain one perceives it to be, and how it is justified or authorized. In her teaching, Elizabeth generally portrayed "background knowledge" and "information" as synonymous, taking the form of phenomena and claims generally perceived to be objective, undisputed, and therefore self-evident. Examples included rites and symbols in Comparative Religions and electoral rules and procedures in Government. Notably, how Elizabeth represented knowledge in her teaching contrasted with the more complex, multidimensional position she articulated during interviews when discussing her graduate studies in history, her family's background in law, and her own religious experiences. Two factors seemed to play into Elizabeth's divergent perspectives on knowledge: 1) her characterization of the teacher's role as a school-institutional representative who is responsible for portraying knowledge and learning congruently with the school's curriculum and assessment frameworks; and 2) her allusion that owning and accumulating "background knowledge" is a prerequisite for the kind of complex, divergent thinking that comes later in students' adult lives.

By contrast, Noah largely construed knowledge as criteria- and context-dependent in Peace Studies, while in AP Government, he presented a more dualistic construct grounded in two different aims: knowing for the sake of AP test performance and knowing for participation in informed democratic discourse. As I reported earlier, Noah linked his epistemic stance to his background in politics, defining knowledge as negotiated and tentative, with rational, well-warranted claims occupying the same discursive space as fallacious ones. Ultimately, Noah believed that students should leave

his classroom recognizing that knowledge is interpretive and socially negotiated, but that evidentiary criteria must be used to assert some interpretations as more valid than others. Knowledge serves as a means to assess the power and potential consequences of people's claims about the world. The quotation that opens Chapter Five captures this belief. Noah's more criterialist stance caused him a some stress, particularly in Peace Studies, where he anguished over whether students would develop a sort of relativist "anything goes" perspective, or just as problematic, leave with an unshaken, ideological view of violence or threats thereof as a natural means of conflict resolution. However, he seemed even more chagrinned by what he perceived to be an overprivileging of substantive detail about government institutions and a general inattention to the process of learning how to engage in political analysis, discourse, and position-taking in the AP Government course, noting, "Honestly, I don't know how long I'd be in this career if it amounted mostly to being a live highlighter for [students'] textbooks."

Political positions

Teaching is a political act; within their professional communities, teachers interact regularly with other school-institutional stakeholders who exercise power through policies and practices, from macro-level curriculum standards and testing regimes to micro-level resource demands and choices about what to include in and omit from the curriculum (Apple, 1995; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Reid, McCallum, & Dobbins, 1998; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Windschitl, 2002). Teachers' exercise of power in light of such influences involves what Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) call decisional capital; that is, the capacity to make discretionary judgments in the face of professional

problems. Research suggests that, without strong professional knowledge, pedagogical reasoning strategies, and social networks that join educators together around shared dilemmas, discourses, and activities, that capital often goes underdeveloped and underrealized (Borko, 2004; Curry, 2008; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001; Westheimer, 2008). Alongside their epistemic stances, Noah's and Elizabeth's political positions in their schools also impacted their pedagogical reasoning and actions.

One particular political dilemma was paramount in the teachers' Government contexts: the prioritization of curriculum and assessment controls over potentially more sophisticated learning opportunities and more adaptive curricular and instructional decision making. At the core of this dilemma is trust. In light of homogeneous learning objectives and achievement targets, policy makers largely have looked toward prescribing and policing as ways to mitigate the uncertainties of learning and teaching the subject matter, rather than trusting the adaptive capacities of teachers, both collectively and individually. Notably, Noah's case demonstrates that the trust dilemma is not born of policy alone. The standardization of his AP Government curriculum and its coverage imperative was a product of teacher collaboration at Western High School, framed by the AP team leader's approach – an approach that had generated high AP test scores in the past. Windschitl (2002) characterizes the dilemma of trust as a central source of political tension for teachers, given its profound impact on curriculum, instruction, assessment, and teacher retention and promotion.

In light of the aforementioned dilemma, how did the teachers' political positions matter? Elizabeth's networks were far more established than Noah's on account of her long-term relationships with colleagues and administrators and investments in the school

community, her students' strong standardized test scores over time, and a demonstrated capacity to skillfully design and implement a potentially sensitive curriculum like Comparative Religions. More than a dozen years into teaching at Eastern High School, Elizabeth held an advantaged position within her school as a caring, competent, credible, and rational power broker among teachers, and she used that position to combat the trust dilemma in several ways.

As a professional development leader and mentor teacher, she provided colleagues with resources and strategies for adapting prescriptive curricula like NSL Government, and she drew from her own instructional digressions and evidence of their effectiveness (e.g., student work and assessment results) when articulating potential models of practice. Elizabeth critiqued curriculum control policies directly and publicly, using the district's diversity language to contend that the quarterly Government assessments limited teachers' capacities to differentiate their instruction. Furthermore, her political position empowered Elizabeth to speak as boldly as she did with students about the underlying purposes of the district's assessment regime and its relationship to their learning. As a teacher-leader in her school and department, Elizabeth evinced a particular construct of power: first, teachers should be "team players" (which cultivates trustworthiness within their schools), yet also check administrative mandates that challenge their adaptive capacities; and second, they should actively share resources and strategies, rather than simply exchange anecdotes or talk about their teaching only when asked (Little, 1990).

Noah's decisional capital, by contrast, was limited by his relative newcomer status within the school community. He worked to strengthen it, however, through

practices congruent with what Lord (1994) calls critical colleagueship. Critical colleagueship is generated when educators collaborate purposefully and longitudinally to puzzle out shared problems of practice, recognizing and constructively addressing conflicts and ambiguities generated by a lack of clear solutions and incontrovertible evidence. Trust, implies Westheimer (2008), is a byproduct of critical colleagueship. Noah's approach was to build such colleagueship by identifying potential alliances within the school community, then cultivating trust in his capacities by working more intensively within those alliances. Two examples of this practice were his work with the department chair and former Peace Studies teacher to redesign that course and his collaboration with school administrators, students, and another social studies teacher to establish a new mission, organizational framework, and set of roles for the Student Government Association. He also began to build an extra-institutional network of academics and Peace Studies educators from other schools to generate new pedagogical strategies and anticipate potential challenges to his teaching. Furthermore, Noah maintained professional transparency by extending an open invitation to colleagues and administrators to visit his classroom at any time to observe and discuss his teaching.

Yet within Noah's AP Government teaching team, he took a relatively placid position, deferring to the team leader and more experienced teachers to drive discussion and decision making. That position served three purposes: 1) to communicate humility and respect for the conversations and decisions that preceded Noah's membership on the team; 2) to listen to and get a feel for others' perspectives on learning and teaching relative to his; and 3) to determine where he might find flexibility for curricular modification and where standard practice was a central priority. Noah's differentiated

school-political activities were consistent with a broader pattern in his teaching: the compartmentalization of practices across his discrepant curricular contexts.

Synthesis and implications: Contextually consistent and principle-driven social studies teaching amidst institutional constraints

Looking across the teachers' epistemic stances, political positions in their schools, and pedagogical practices, Elizabeth's teaching was relatively cohesive and stable, while Noah's was more compartmentalized and pliant. Fundamental to Elizabeth was an emphasis on substantive knowledge that would help students "understand and engage with what they see in the news" (in NSL Government) and "understand how everyday people experience religion" (in Comparative Religions). She generally endorsed the school district's overarching curricular aims and coverage imperative while also contending that teachers require pedagogical autonomy to best match their instructional efforts with students' learning needs. Elizabeth advocated for that autonomy by engaging multiple stakeholders in dialogue about the potential consequences of her decisions for student learning, and by cultivating her role as a lobbyist for learners and colleagues. Furthermore, she maintained an open feedback loop with students across her courses, soliciting input on the grounds of what content they found clear or cloudy and what instructional strategies they found effective or confounding.

By contrast, Noah's practice was more compartmentalized. Consider, for instance, his divergent stances on political disclosure across his two courses. Peace Studies was constructed, in part, on Noah's perspective that diplomacy and nonviolence are more ethically defensible means to political ends than force; "the whole course is

built on a political argument," he noted. In AP Government, Noah was more opaque about his political stances on account of the tight curriculum and his teaching team's imperative to control it in the interest of test preparation:

> There's that element of, you know, the teacher filling up empty receptacles – and it's like that because we've got a lot of material and we're all supposed to be covering it the same way, more or less… I know that's my place [in AP Government], so laying [my political positions] out there wouldn't come across the same way as it would in Peace Studies, where a big goal is to practice developing [students'] ideas and arguments.

The evidence presented in Chapter Four also demonstrates that Noah's aims and instructional approaches varied considerably within AP Government. That variability was a consequence of recognizing the difference between the AP exam's exchange value for students, parents, and the school, and the Government course's potential educational value as a forum for wrestling with difficult ideas and developing effective political participatory practices.

To say that Noah compartmentalized his teaching – that is, he adopted different reasoning pathways and practices in different contexts on account of perceived incompatibilities – is not to say that he was pedagogically inconsistent. Rather, across his two curricular contexts, he consistently drew from his evaluations of stakeholders' overlapping and divided interests within those contexts to make and justify pedagogical decisions. Olafson and Schraw (2006) suggest that the links among educators' epistemic positions and teaching practices, including the political act of gatekeeping the curriculum, are not often clear. In Noah's case, however, his diversions across Peace Studies and AP

Government, and within the AP Government curriculum, seemed to align with his stance that what counts for knowledge and what activities are valued within different communities are context-dependent and negotiated. In comparison, Elizabeth's teaching was more consistent around a set of core epistemic, political, and pedagogical principles.

Yet this does not imply that her teaching inherently generated more powerful social studies learning. I argued in Chapter Two that the social studies domain is important because its investigative and interpretive tools and its substantive and conceptual subject matter offer powerful opportunities to: 1) understand how historical and cultural contexts impact our interactions with each other; 2) evaluate the credibility of evidence as we wade through competing explanations of social phenomena; and 3) analyze and potentially affect the conditions of social change. In history, this involves asking questions about the past and addressing those questions and their contemporary implications by producing evidence-based arguments (VanSledright, 2011). In geography, it involves juxtaposing different representations of space to illuminate patterns that might help us understand and address human-environmental problems (Golledge, 2002). And in political science, it involves investigating human agency within power structures, arguably in order to understand how policy affects individuals' and groups' interests, and vice versa, how individuals and groups might promote their interests through policy (Galston, 2001). While these disciplines house distinct investigative and discursive frameworks, they converge within the social studies domain via shared questions like these: how can we better understand various societies, cultures, and political and economic systems around the world; how can we judge the credibility of

claims that make up those understandings; and most expansively, how should humans relate to each other, and to what ends?

These are complex questions, and while research in geographic and political education is scant, the history education scholarship suggests that learning to investigate them effectively commands a great deal of cognitive and discursive support. In turn, teaching that investigative process requires social studies educators to understand how knowledge is constructed, and to transform that understanding into tools and practices that are meaningful to inexperienced investigators (VanSledright, 2011; Weinstock & Roth, 2011). I contend that Noah's epistemic stance was better aligned with what research suggests makes for powerful learning in social studies; however, Elizabeth's stance was more closely associated with what typically counts for social studies knowledge in the school curriculum. The upshot of this contention – and a particularly noteworthy finding in this study – is that curricular constraints like those found in Noah's and Elizabeth's Government contexts potentially have a more conspicuous impact on teachers whose epistemic positions and pedagogical aims resemble Noah's.

Despite Noah's early-career status, I would posit that his criterialist epistemic stance and political pragmatism set him up to analyze, understand, critique, and begin adapting to the consequences of very different curricular contexts and representations of knowledge in his teaching. The compartmentalization of his practice did not seem to be an effect of floundering for routines as he acclimated to the school, as some have suggested novices are prone to do. Rather, it appeared to be born of calculated gatekeeping decisions based on Noah's ideas about how knowledge is generated and used, and what priorities mattered to whom in different contexts.

In Elizabeth's case, her sixteen years in the classroom undoubtedly affected the fluidity and automaticity of her teaching practices and problem-solving strategies. However, I would contend that her epistemic stance, which privileged substantive knowledge, also contributed to the stability of her teaching across curricula by obscuring many of the dilemmas associated with teaching complex and often ambiguous investigative practices. Such a stance implies that questions about the origins of knowledge largely are moot, and that the heavy lifting associated with assessing how knowledge claims are constructed and who benefits from them succeeds some supposedly neutral "background knowledge." Inevitably, however, teaching students to construct historical arguments, political positions, or geographic models is a socially mediated process that compels questions about how knowledge is generated and validated. To address those questions amidst accountability demands like Noah's and Elizabeth's requires adaptive, flexible teaching; and to eliminate those questions proscribes the prospects of robust inquiry and deliberation.

Within the current accountability climate, the notion of teacher as "adaptive" and "flexible" increasingly is out of favor, since the purpose of regulatory policies is to eliminate many of the variations and inefficiencies of education altogether. That purpose is fundamentally flawed: disciplinary practices are complex and inefficient, and people inevitably develop and learn to use them in different ways, and within diverse contexts. While pedagogical discourse in schools increasingly shifts away from how students learn and to what ends, and toward the accommodation of testing pressures into teaching (Cornbleth, 2008; Valli et al, 2007), Noah's and Elizabeth's distinct curricular circumstances offered them spaces to engage in pedagogical reasoning and activity in a

robust, meta-analytical way. The next section of Chapter Six explores this notable benefit of these teachers' unique circumstances.

Navigating the accountability tide: The migration of pedagogical reasoning and action across curricular contexts

One of this study's core findings is that Noah's and Elizabeth's curricular and instructional decision making practices within their elective courses were consequential to their teaching within the more constrained Government contexts. The migration of teaching strategies across their curricula largely was a one-way proposition: that is, Noah and Elizabeth perceived Peace Studies and Comparative Religions to be the more viable spaces to deeply explore what Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2005) call curricular visions for teaching and to "experiment with" different student learning and performance goals. The teachers' uses of metaphors like "testing out" instruction within the "proving grounds" of the elective courses also suggest that they conceived of the electives as a sort of curricular and instructional laboratory. The Government courses, by contrast, were field settings in which the teachers controlled far fewer conditions of their work, from the trajectory of the curriculum to the kinds of assessment tools and outcomes for which they ultimately were accountable.

In Figure 6.2, I present a typology of the teachers' practices across the two curricula. The x-axis represents the flexibility of the participants' teaching contexts (with the "flexible" pole corresponding to the elective contexts, and the "constrained" pole corresponding to the Government contexts), while the y-axis represents the extent to which the teachers' practices were aligned with their pedagogical stances. Below the

typology, I offer explanations of each of the categories or quadrants using a specific facet of Noah's and Elizabeth's teaching – their assessment practices – to elucidate my claims:

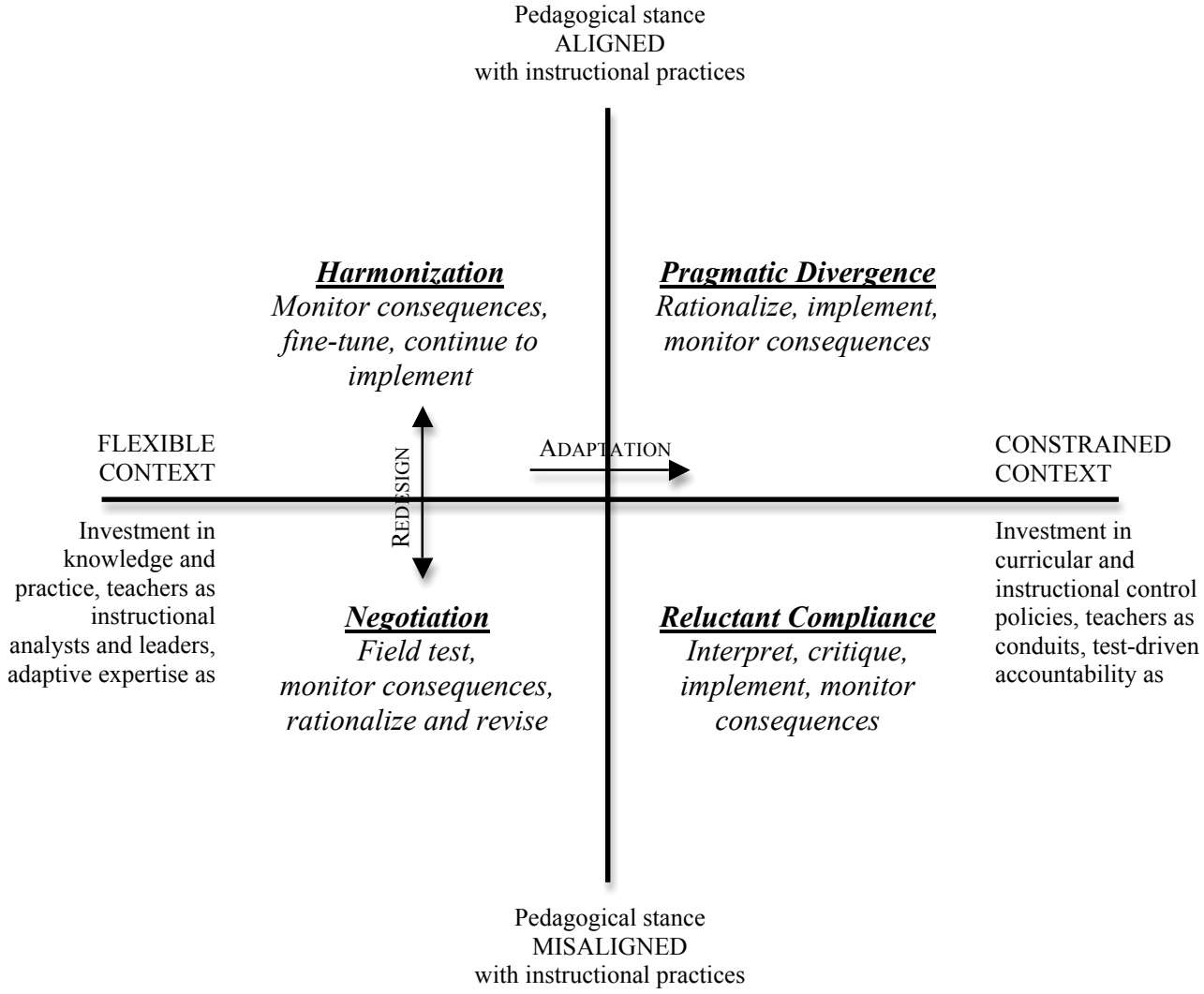


Figure 6.2. A typology of Noah and Elizabeth's pedagogical reasoning and action in flexible and heavily constrained curricular contexts.

Reluctant compliance in the heavily constrained context

Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that "the commoditization of learning engenders a fundamental contradiction between the use and exchange values of the outcomes of learning, which manifests itself in conflicts between learning to know and learning to

display knowledge for evaluation" (p. 112). In other words, exchange value and educational value are not necessarily synonymous. The two participants' teaching experiences illuminated and intensified this contradiction. While Noah and Elizabeth worked in the elective context to align instruction and assessment with their constructs of knowledge and purposes for learning, their Government teaching was marked by commoditized performance indicators, which required them to mediate school-institutional apparatus and rhetoric supporting that commoditization. In Elizabeth's case, the commodities were core knowledge standards and accountability, while in Noah's they were academic exceptionalism and competitive advantage. The foregrounding of social-practical knowledge as ends in the electives and knowledge for evaluation and exchange value in the Government courses played an important role in Noah's and Elizabeth's assessment practices across the two contexts.

Reluctant compliance – relatively common in Noah and Elizabeth's Government courses and absent from their elective courses – manifested when the teachers' assessment decisions were heavily constrained by external tools and practices, and also were misaligned with their pedagogical stances. Examples included Elizabeth's discharge of the aforementioned quarterly assessments and district-wide unit exams, Noah's use of colleague-designed sample AP tests, quizzes, and test review activities, and his subsequent micro-lectures addressing items with relatively high frequencies of incorrect response. Both teachers generally characterized the impacts of such impositions as lost opportunities for what they perceived to be more meaningful forms of assessment and instruction, and then grudgingly implemented the assessment approaches while simultaneously critiquing them. Given Elizabeth's political position in the school, she

broadcast her critiques to students, colleagues, and district administrators, while Noah was more inconspicuous and surgical in his objections.

Noah's dialogue of conflicting ends – or the distinction between learning for the purpose of AP test performance versus learning for the purpose of informed democratic deliberation – was persistent in conversations with his students. For instance, during a lesson in which Noah provided students with a writing scaffold for explaining how the 1973 War Powers Resolution illustrates the separation of powers principle, he explained, "Whether it was constitutional and effective, that's really the important conversation, here… but this [lesson] is more about helping you prepare to write an AP essay, so we won't get too much into that conversation, unfortunately." Noah acknowledged, however, that he rarely proposed alternatives to test-preparatory instruction and assessment during AP Government team meetings and conversations with parents and administrators, suggesting that he needed to get a feel for others' interests and positions over time, and gauge their receptiveness to his, before deciding how to do so in the future. By contrast, Elizabeth asserted in faculty meetings, professional development sessions, and correspondence with district administrators that teaching test-preparatory skills and aligning classroom assessment tools with state tests compromises resources and pedagogical knowledge that might otherwise be allocated to "more useful" and "more authentic" assessment and instruction.

Negotiation and harmonization in the flexible context and their contribution to pragmatic divergence in the constrained context

As Stillman (2011) suggests, when tension is created by dissonance between teachers' stances and test-driven accountability demands, the "reconciliatory process" (p. 165) ultimately can strengthen teachers' roles as curricular and instructional gatekeepers. Whether this tension is productive or not depends, in no small part, on teachers' capacity to shape responses to problematic circumstances by drawing from tools and practices they deem most meaningful and consequential. In these cases, teachers' concurrent work within remarkably flexible and highly constrained contexts illuminated the dissonance generated by the external demands of the AP and NSL Government courses, with the elective courses serving as sites for exploring strategies that might mitigate that dissonance. In other words, flexible curricular and instructional contexts can facilitate what Biesta and Tedder call teacher agency, or the "interplay of individual efforts, available resources, and contextual and structural factors" that support professional discretion (Biesta & Tedder, 2007, p. 137). The teachers' renegotiation and harmonization of assessment practices in Peace Studies and Comparative Religions represent an example of that interplay.

A lack of mandates in the electives and the trust afforded to Noah and Elizabeth by administrators and course participants to deal effectively with emergent curricular and instructional dilemmas offered the teachers opportunities to beta-test assessment strategies in those courses. When assessment practices and outcomes did not harmonize with the teachers' pedagogical stances, they returned to their course goals and subject matter expertise and drew from student feedback to renegotiate those practices. The

staying power of their subsequent redesigns – for example, the warranting criteria that Noah developed to combat relativist position-taking in Peace Studies, and Elizabeth's decision to share evaluations of Comparative Religions presentations with the whole class to foster reflection on their work – rested on the alignment of observable learning outcomes with the teachers' assessment aims.

By contrast, a much higher premium was placed on instructional efficiency and uniformity on account of assessment mandates and curricular oversights in the Government courses. Consequently, the teachers rarely introduced unproven assessment strategies in the heavily constrained context; more often, they adapted approaches that they previously had worked to negotiate and harmonize in their elective courses. This adaptation is the defining characteristic of what I call pragmatic divergence in the more constrained context.

Unlike reluctant compliance, pragmatic divergence involved the alignment of classroom assessment strategies with the teachers' pedagogical stances in spite of external constraints. It typically was accompanied by: 1) rationalizations of students' roles and responsibilities relative to alternative forms of assessment; and 2) exhibitions of the uses and intended consequences of those assessments (Leipzig & Afflerbach, 2000). For example, Elizabeth publicly displayed her students' assessment products, like mock Supreme Court opinions and dissents, from instructional diversions that were discouraged by the district curriculum office. Furthermore, she explained to students that she sometimes sacrificed tested subject matter in order to explore "what government actually looks like, in action," with more complexity than the curriculum decreed.

The criteria that primarily impelled pragmatic divergence were the teachers' judgments that: 1) students' latent conceptions of the subject matter needed to be challenged beyond the confines of their Government curricula; and 2) using alternative activities and tools to challenge those conceptions bore positive repercussions that outweighed the potential costs. Based on what the teachers revealed in their interviews, journals, and classroom practices, this process was aided by their experiences teaching the elective courses, in which they were wholly responsible for building and refining systematic assessment programs that reinforced their curricular aims and were responsive to students' learning needs and processes. For instance, Noah's broad reconsideration of his assessment framework in Peace Studies, prompted by the discomforting relativism that some students perceived to be an appropriate outcome of the course, directly informed the criteria by which he evaluated students' arguments around the "racism is dead" dilemma in AP Government. And Elizabeth's "experiments" in Comparative Religions, like the concept-focused, student response-driven assessment review activity described in Chapter Five, led her to sharpen the rationales for and processes of test review in the Government context. When explaining what I consider to be their pragmatically divergent assessment practices in Government, both teachers evinced the following pattern: 1) they acknowledged possible tensions produced by different assessment decision-making pathways; 2) they provided rationales for one pathway or another based on intended learning processes and outcomes; and 3) they deliberated what evidence they would need, and how they would use that evidence, to infer and demonstrate the effectiveness of their decisions.

Noah's case provides a clear example of, and a compelling metaphor that captures, the adaptation of assessment practices from the elective to the Government course. Because of the contested nature of the subject matter in Peace Studies, Noah used seminar discussions to promote deeper understandings of complex problems without prematurely rushing to conjectures about how to solve them. Repeated iterations of a model drawn from Parker's (2001) work led to clarification of the student facilitators', participants', and teacher's roles and responsibilities; in turn, Noah fine-tuned his assessment rubric and delegated more authority to discussion facilitators over time. Once many of the flaws had been field-tested out of the Peace Studies seminars, Noah began implementing them occasionally, and then more regularly, in the AP Government course, despite his acknowledgement that "there's really no warrant [for the seminars] when it comes to getting students ready for the AP [test]." Instead, he characterized AP Government seminars as opportunities for students to engage in conversations about authentic problems in American government, and he delineated precise criteria for the discussions that were drawn in part from his experiences in Peace Studies. He characterized the process of learning to use and assess seminars in Peace Studies metaphorically as "building a plane while flying it… You need opportunities to constantly reflect on and rework the process." By the time he had begun integrating seminars into the AP Government curriculum, he noted, "the plane was mostly built."

Synthesis and implications: What promoted the migration of pedagogical reasoning and action across the teachers' curricular contexts?

Noah's and Elizabeth's cases and the preceding analysis beseech an important question: what enabled these educators to pursue powerful teaching and learning practices in their elective courses, then adapt some of those practices to their more constrained curricular contexts? Had the participants been less knowledgeable, less reflective, less politically savvy, and less experienced in their domains, it seems conceivable that this study could have produced accounts of teachers who, like van Hover's (2006) participants, unwittingly drew their marching orders from state standards and testing regimes, or perhaps taught their electives as confounding hodgepodges of aims and practices. Instead, Noah's and Elizabeth's accounts portray teachers who strategically (and painstakingly) negotiated and harmonized their teaching practices in the flexible contexts, then drew from those experiences to pragmatically diverge from standard Government teaching practice in the interest of more powerful social studies learning.

Such pedagogical activity requires, and also potentially reinforces, teachers' agency. While some theorize agency as interchangeable with autonomy, I view it more ecologically, as a way to engage with and within the social and political environments teachers inhabit (Priestley, Edwards, & Priestley, 2012; Sloan, 2006). Teachers' agency rests not only on individuals' capacities to solve complex problems of practice under particular constraints, but also on the ways in which they utilize their sources of influence to push thinking and practice within their communities in particular directions.

In Noah's case, the AP Government teachers with whom he regularly worked as a team were less concerned with solving complex problems associated with political analysis, position taking, and deliberation than with eliminating problems and standardizing practice (Bransford et al, 2005). His decisions to "go off-script" and pursue deeper conversations about controversial political issues like racism and the restriction of voting rights were framed by an amalgam of political expertise, useful understandings of how knowledge claims are warranted, and a clear pedagogical purpose. That purpose: shifting classroom discourse away from opinionating and toward persuasive, evidence-driven, consequence-focused argumentation.

In Elizabeth's case, collaborating around problems of practice meant working with department and school colleagues to address the dilemma of shrinking autonomy over the NSL Government curriculum. Together, they developed two solution sets: 1) adapting district curriculum guidelines and tools toward teachers' particular needs and interests; and 2) devising alternatives, to be implemented at teachers' discretion, that gave students opportunities to apply their learning to contested questions about government. Elizabeth's years of experience working with adolescent learners and her expertise with the pitches and shifts of formal Government curriculum and assessments over time facilitated that process and were apparent in her conversations with students and colleagues about what diversions were worthwhile and why.

As suggested above, both personal and contextual factors enabled Noah's and Elizabeth's work across their discrepant curricular contexts. In the figure below, I draw from extant research to synthesize numerous factors that have been shown to influence

teachers' agency, and I highlight in boldface several that were apparent in Noah's and Elizabeth's cases:

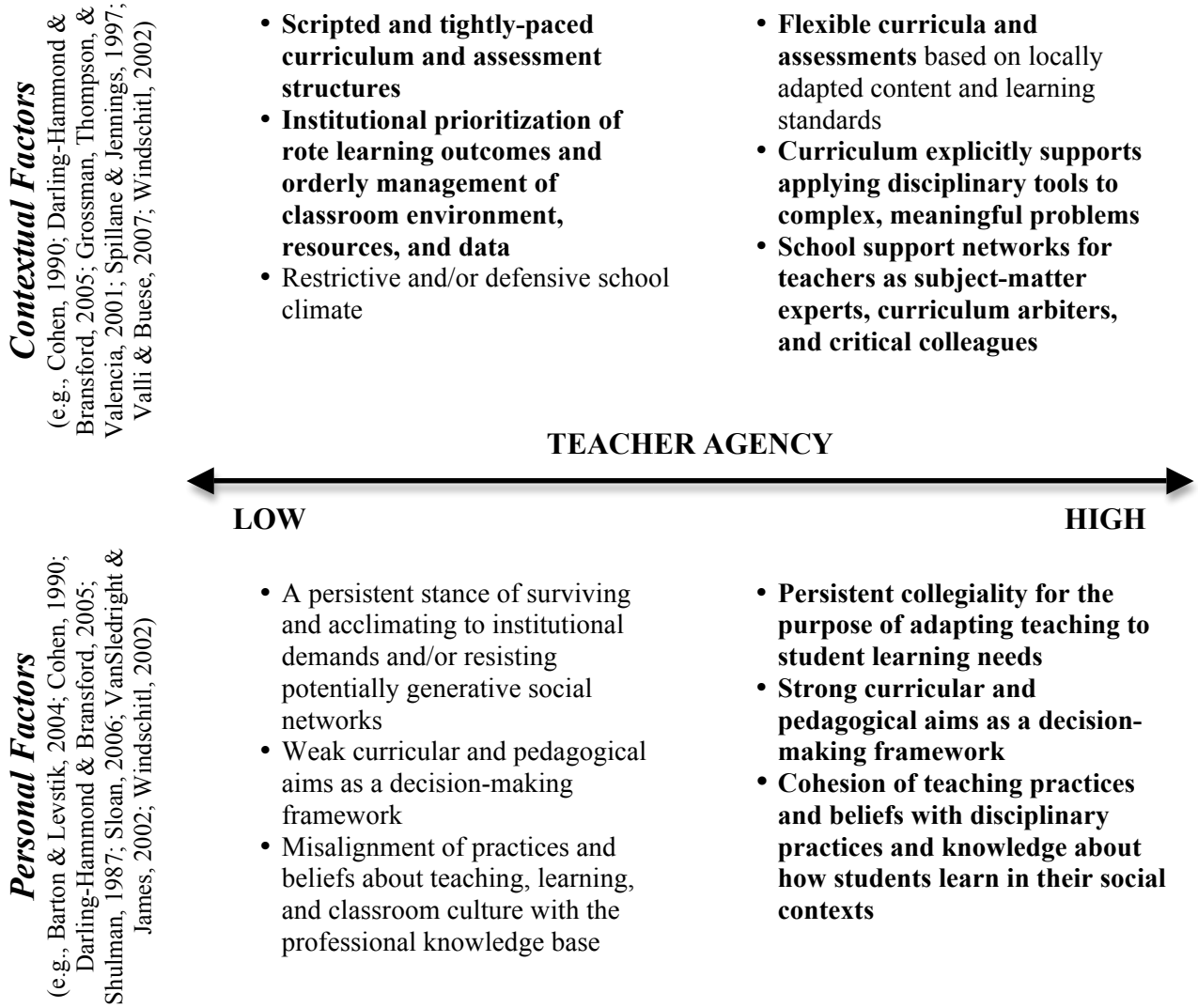


Figure 6.3. Factors that influence teacher agency relative to Noah's and Elizabeth's cases.

During this study, Noah and Elizabeth interacted with some contextual factors that facilitated agentic practice and others that inhibited it. Not surprisingly, the inhibiting factors manifested solely within the AP and NSL Government context. They included scripted, tightly paced, and policed curricula and other institutional pressures toward rote

learning and managerial teaching. Windschitl (2002) suggests that, under such circumstances, adapting curriculum to local needs and interests via teachers' pedagogical, contextual, and subject matter knowledge can be an important professional outlet; that is, teachers can make room for inquiry-based instruction by identifying spaces in the curriculum that are conducive to modification, and then integrating alternative tools and practices as appropriate. While such efforts potentially could take place school-wide, in Elizabeth's and Noah's cases, the district and AP Government team made curricular decisions that had a limiting, rather than liberating, effect.

Yet within their buildings, Noah and Elizabeth perceived that their school and department administrators trusted them to arbitrate, rather than simply implement, their Government curricula, and to design elective courses that potentially dealt with contentious subject matter. I also found that both teachers – one a second-year novice and the other a sixteenth-year veteran – evinced personal characteristics thought to be congruent with high degrees of agency. These included framing their curriculum and instruction around powerful problems and clear learning goals, knowing how students learn in their social contexts, and working to link the latter to the former. In short, Noah and Elizabeth taught compellingly across their two curricular contexts on account of their pragmatic analyses of the consequences of teaching toward different ends, framed by their deep professional knowledge and enabled by productive political activity within supportive school communities.

Further discussion and conclusions

In Chapter One, I indicated that the central aim of this dissertation was to explore how, under what circumstances, and to what ends teachers adapt to intensifying accountability controls, and how those practices compare to, and could be informed by, teaching under less constrained curricular and instructional conditions. Over the last several chapters, I believe I have made a case for claiming that concurrently teaching across flexible and controlled contexts can provide secondary social studies teachers with space to step outside of their sometimes exigent institutional, curricular, and instructional environments and think about the sorts of things that motivate teachers within their profession: establishing a curricular vision, determining how the subject matter ought to be represented and why, and remaining alert to the ways student feedback can be used to balance the I-thou-it relationship.

In closing this dissertation, I respond to two lingering questions. First, how typical are Noah's and Elizabeth's teaching experiences? Based on my read of the research literature on secondary social studies teaching and the challenges associated with finding suitable participants for this study, I would assert that these cases – particularly Noah's – are rather exceptional. This argument begs a second question: what contributions could this study make to the literature on social studies teaching when many educators, particularly novices, do not get to experience these kinds of opportunities?

The typicality of Noah's and Elizabeth's teaching

Not only did Noah enter teaching atypically after spending several years in a career field directly related to his domain, but he was offered an unusual opportunity for a

second-year teacher: the chance to design and implement his own elective course in a subject area about which he was acutely interested and knowledgeable. Elizabeth, too, spent considerable time working in her discipline at the graduate level before deciding to pursue a high school teaching career. Furthermore, she held a privileged position in her school as a senior social studies teacher and professional development mentor, with the latter role occupying half of her time and the other half spent teaching two classes per day. As a mentor teacher, she observed colleagues, helped them address problems of practice, and created professional development resources and workshops for the Eastern High School faculty. Those roles overlapped with her efforts to strengthen teaching and learning in her NSL Government and Comparative Religions courses and provided Elizabeth with reflective space to think in depth about her own practice. Given that most teachers are afforded few resources for reflection, planning, and collegial conversation during the school day, Elizabeth's circumstances also were atypical (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

In light of Alexander's (2003) argument that expertise develops via deep knowledge of, problem-solving within, and personal interest in a domain, it stands to reason that these teachers' atypical experiences represent exceptional opportunities to cultivate pedagogical expertise. However, it also seems plausible that increasingly typical test-driven accountability climates could stifle those exceptional opportunities. From this research and other studies synthesized in Chapter Two, it is clear that the accountability tide limits teachers' pedagogical decisions and acts as a foil to rich, investigative, dialogic social studies learning. Furthermore, by steering teachers toward surface-level skills (i.e., covering content and controlling students) and discouraging investment in

deep disciplinary practices and their inherent epistemic dilemmas, high-stakes tests and test-oriented curricula potentially could defer the development of pedagogical expertise and discourage atypical educators like Noah and Elizabeth from entering or remaining in the profession.

Implications for research and practice

Policies designed to standardize curricula and the practices of those who work within them bear some benefits. They provide a common language for discussing educational aims, activities, and outcomes, and they offer policy makers and the general public some confidence that rogue teachers cannot spend entire courses on their pet projects, or worse, imparting misrepresentations and ethically questionable ideas upon their students. But such policies bear costs as well, many of which are elucidated in this dissertation. They aggravate thoughtful teachers like Noah and Elizabeth, who struggle against them to facilitate high-quality social studies learning in their classrooms; they diminish opportunities for adolescents to see social studies as an investigative, interpretive, and dialogic domain, instead perpetuating the notion that its purpose is to amass trivia for recall; and consequently, they snuff out teachers' and students' domain interest and motivation, reducing the chances that the seeds for robust, disciplined inquiry – and the democratic discourse to which it could contribute – will be fertilized through social studies education. Ultimately, future research must ask if the costs of policies designed to hold schools and teachers accountable for students' substantive knowledge and test performance exceed the benefits, or vice versa. This dissertation certainly offers

no resolution to such a complex question, though it does point to a number of problematic implications of accountability controls for secondary social studies teachers.

What does this work contribute to the extant literature? Ultimately, it complements other claims suggesting that teachers' practices undoubtedly are influenced by high-stakes testing, but under the right circumstances, are not necessarily debased by them. My research offers an inside look at how curriculum and assessment policies can constrain social studies teaching and learning, and it suggests that what teachers know and how pragmatically they act within the political institution of schooling matter in terms of mediating those constraints. This study also begins theorizing, on a very small scale, the nature of adaptive social studies teaching across different curricular contexts. Case studies like these are most effective when they demonstrate the particularities and nuances of what happens in naturalistic settings, and to what ends. They are limited in the contributions they make to grand policies and activity models. However, my hope is that the evidence in these cases proves meaningful for recognizing the consequences of policies in place, and for considering new policies and practices that are better for teachers and learners.

This work also suggests a need for additional research. First, because these cases reveal particular teaching practices under certain conditions, it is important that they be corroborated with new studies that explore other costs and benefits of curriculum and assessment policies that remain concealed by this inquiry. Second, what this study lacks in complexity and richness could be addressed by research around the following questions: 1) how do teachers' mediation of tensions in constrained curricular contexts affect students' learning processes and outcomes; 2) what do the specific practices of

teachers working through controlled contexts look like over time, and what factors are critical to those persistent practices; and broadly 3) what would models of adaptive practice and pragmatic political activity in teaching look like?

Finally, on practice, what factors might promote the normalization of Noah's and Elizabeth's atypically adaptive teaching? All professions, teaching included, rest on specialized knowledge, a shared professional language and standards of practice, and rigorous processes of education and qualification. Looking across school institutions, however, it is clear that some standards of practice and ideas about the utility of specialized knowledge are more disputed (i.e., among teachers and district-level administrators) than shared. Part of the rigorous process of teacher education and qualification, then, might be pointed, systematic work in school-political participation. Ironically, many social studies teacher educators fulminate over the importance of teaching adolescents to be politically active democrats, yet when it comes to the professional-political activities of the pre-service and practicing teachers with whom we work, we exercise our rights to remain silent. Instead, teacher educators might do well by their candidates to develop coursework and field experiences so early-career teachers can see first-hand how social studies teachers' political networks and practices function in authentically diverse contexts.

From another angle, elective courses often are seen as prizes for veteran teachers who have "paid their dues" rather than what they could be: opportunities for novice and experienced teachers to work together around some core challenges of pedagogical reasoning and action. Metaphorically, adaptive teaching within a flexible curriculum could be Hawkins's (1974) painting in the hospital waiting room, serving as a common

referent that lays the groundwork for powerful critical-collegial relationships. Furthermore, flexible teaching contexts beyond the classroom, like Noah's advisement of the Student Government Association and Elizabeth's work with her school's Gay-Straight Alliance, could be treated as spaces for teachers to experiment with curricular and pedagogical visions, negotiate learning activities with group members, assess the outcomes of those activities, and advocate on students' behalves within their institutions and communities. To prepare early-career professionals to teach adaptively, teacher educators should provide opportunities for candidates to engage in curricular vision setting, to plan instruction and assessment around their visions, and to analyze and pragmatically problem-solve the factors that constrain those visions and plans. As this study suggests, such opportunities could impact the development of teachers' competence as curriculum and instructional decision makers.

Ultimately, I believe schools and our democratic society could benefit from more teachers like Noah and Elizabeth. But how do we find and usher them into the profession, and once there, how can we encourage them to remain and remain dedicated to the demands of powerful social studies education amidst the rising tide of accountability? These vexations are of central importance to social studies educators, teacher educators, and policy makers as they work to strengthen learning opportunities for students now and into the future.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed consent for participating teachers 211
Appendix B: Sample information letter for affected students and guardians 213
Appendix C: Classroom observation protocol 214
Appendix D: Semi-structured interview protocols 215
Appendix E: Assessment think-aloud interview prompt 217

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to explore how specific personal and external factors affect teachers' curricular and instructional decision making in two distinct contexts: 1) a state-tested, standardized course; and 2) a more improvised elective course. In general, the researcher's aim is to address what leads teachers to choose similar or disparate courses of action in highly standardized and highly autonomous instructional conditions in social studies/history.

Procedures: This research involves four primary methods of data collection: 1) classroom observations, 2) classroom document analysis; 3) teacher interviews; and 4) a planning and reflection journal.

The researcher will conduct observations of classroom activities during the 2007-2008 school year. The purpose is to collect data that demonstrates how the teachers' decisions about what and how to teach manifest in practice. Data will be collected only in the form of written field notes.

Classroom document analysis means acquiring and examining documents pertaining to the planning, implementation, or evaluation of instruction in the classroom. These documents could include syllabi, textbooks, course notes, assignments, worksheets, and the like. Also, the researcher will collect and analyze a planning and reflection journal, the purpose of which is to document ideas and concerns related to curricular design and instruction. The researcher will return the journal following data analysis. It is expected that the participant will write in the planning journal for a minimum of 10 to 15 minutes at a time, approximately three times per week.

Several semi-structured interviews will be conducted. Questions will attend retrospectively to class activities, and to course content, curricular and instructional decision making, student learning, and school and classroom culture. Depending on the context of the interviews, audio tape recorders and written notes will be used variously. Interviews are the only data collection tools that will be audio taped. Each of approximately six interviews will require 30 to 45 minutes. Along with standard question-and-answer interviews, the researcher will utilize a verbal reporting, or think-aloud, protocol to examine how the participant thinks about and reacts to instructional resources. This method involves reading documents pertaining to classroom instruction (e.g., curriculum guides, potential course texts, and the like) and articulating the participant's reactions to those resources, in the process of reading them.

Confidentiality: Any data maintained for this project serves the specific purposes indicated above and will not be used to assess or evaluate teaching practice. All data collected are confidential, and any names or other identifying characteristics associated with the research will be carefully disguised through pseudonyms and/or number designations. This applies to the data itself and any publications and/or reports that may result from writing up the results of the study. All data containing identifying information initially will be stored by the researcher using locked cabinets and password-encrypted files until the study expires, when it will be destroyed. In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, the researcher will only share information with appropriate individuals and/or authorities if someone is in danger, or if the researcher is required by law to do so.

Risks: Inquiry and evaluation of any kind may prompt performance anxiety and fear of repercussions. As noted, no data will be used for professional evaluative purposes. Furthermore, participating might make the teacher feel uncomfortable about sharing personal/professional information and anxious about committing the necessary time to the study. All necessary precautions will be taken to hold personal information and ideas

in confidence and to ensure, as best as possible, that the study does not interfere with teachers' instruction and other existing commitments.

Benefits: The direct benefits for participating in this research are limited. Nonetheless, this project may help the teacher think deeply about various dilemmas of social studies teaching and learning and offer direction for reflective practice and professional development. This work is designed to aid the investigator in learning more about teacher decision making in different curricular contexts. That said, the researcher hopes this work will benefit the participant and future teachers and students through an improved understanding of how different influences impact teachers' decision making. The researcher agrees to provide the teacher with any reports or publications that stem from this project. Such documents may provide professional development benefits for the teacher and, in turn, future students.

Other Considerations: Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Participants may choose not to take part initially, or they may opt out of the research at any time while it is underway. Should this happen, all data pertaining to those participants will be purged from the researcher's record. Those who decide not to participate or wish to stop participating in this study will not be penalized in any way by the researcher or lose any benefits to which they are entitled. Furthermore, they will not be coerced into participating in, remaining in, or reentering the study. Participants have the right to ask questions about the research process and can refuse to answer questions asked of them at any point. For questions about the research study itself, please contact the researcher:

Kevin Meuwissen, Graduate Researcher
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E-mail: meuwissenk@hotmail.com
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For questions about the rights of research participants or to report a research-related injury, contact:

Institutional Review Board Office
University of Maryland, College Park
E-mail: irb@deans.umd.edu
Phone: 301.405.0678

I have read all of the above information on this research project, and I:

_____ **agree** to participate in this study. _____ **do not agree** to participate in this study.

_____ **agree** to be audiotaped during my participation in this study.

_____ **do not agree** to be audiotaped during my participation in this study.

_____
(signature of participant)

_____
(name of participant, printed)

_____
(date)

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INFORMATION LETTER FOR AFFECTED STUDENTS AND GUARDIANS

My name is Kevin Meuwissen, and I am a graduate researcher in the School of Education at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am working with Ms. [TEACHER] on a research project pertaining to her NSL Government and comparative religions courses and hope that you will support me in doing so. The purpose of my research is to explore how teachers choose what to teach and how to teach it in different types of courses. I have asked Ms. [TEACHER] for permission to work with her on this study and conduct observations in her classroom. As part of this study, I hope to spend the time during the 2007-2008 school year observing Ms. [TEACHER]'s classes and talking to her about her instructional decisions. This requires no data collection from students, though the researcher will be present as an observer within Ms. [TEACHER]'s classroom for several weeks.

Procedures:

I intend to regularly and quietly observe Ms. [TEACHER]'s instruction during the Comparative Religions and NSL Government classes. Written notes will be taken during classroom observations, but only pertaining to what Ms. [TEACHER] does in the classroom. Again, I will not solicit data directly from students. On top of that, I will look at various documents related to planning, teaching, and assessment in the two courses. These include syllabi, textbooks, course notes, assignments, worksheets, and the like. However, I will not collect any of the students' completed assignments or assessments for research purposes. Only instructional resources solicited directly from the participating teacher will be used.

Confidentiality and Associated Risks:

No data pertaining to individual students will be recorded, and no part of this research will serve to assess or evaluate students' work in either course. All personal information will be held confidential. Identifying characteristics, such as the name of the teacher and school, will be carefully disguised through pseudonyms or other methods. This applies to the data itself and any publications and/or reports that may result from writing up the research results. I will carefully store all data using locked cabinets and password-encrypted files until the end of the study, when it will be destroyed.

This study poses few risks for students. At worst, they might feel uncomfortable about participating in class in front of an outside party or concerned that the researcher will serve in some sort of evaluative role. As noted, this will not be the case. As well, I will do everything possible to ensure that my presence in the classroom, and the study, in general, do not interfere with instruction or any other teacher and student interests.

Thank you for your time and consideration. For questions about the research study itself, please use the following contact information:

Kevin Meuwissen, Graduate Researcher
University of Maryland, College Park
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E-mail: kmeuwiss@umd.edu
Phone: 301.405.3324

Dr. Bruce VanSledright, Faculty Advisor
University of Maryland, College Park
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
E-mail: bvansled@umd.edu
Phone: 301.405.3141

Best regards,

Kevin W. Meuwissen
Graduate Researcher
University of Maryland, College Park

APPENDIX C: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Teacher: _____ Course: _____

Day: M T W R F Date: _____ N adult(s): _____ N students: _____

Student demographics (e.g., gender, ethnicity): _____

Information on display for the session (e.g., whiteboard, overhead/LCD projector):

Changes to the classroom environment from prior observations (e.g., new student(s), artifacts added or removed, furniture rearranged):

Classroom activity:			
Time stamp:	Teacher activity and location:	Student activity and location:	Artifacts/ resources employed:

APPENDIX D: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

COURSE DESIGN INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

What are the broader educational aims underlying the [name of course] course? In other words, what, in general, do you hope students will get out of it? *(Follow-up: What, specifically, are you preparing them for through those aims?)*

What resources have you relied on most heavily in designing the [name of course] course, and why? How did you go about obtaining/soliciting and utilizing those resources? *(Follow-up: Do you find yourself using similar or different sorts of design/organizational strategies in the two courses in question?)*

What do you perceive your primary instructional role(s) in the [name of course] course to be? Why do you believe this is/these are your role(s)?

When thinking about designing and implementing instruction in [name of course], to whom or what do you feel particularly obligated, and why?

Do you believe another instructor could teach the [name of course] course, as you've designed it? Why or why not?

POST-LESSON ANALYSIS INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

How successful do you think that lesson was, and why? What factors led to the lesson being successful/unsuccessful?

Were there any particular learning objectives that you felt particularly compelled to accomplish? Do you feel as though you achieved them? If not, is that a problem? *(Follow-up: How might you remedy that problem?)*

What influences were behind your drive to achieve those objectives?

What were the broader educational aims underlying this lesson? Do you feel as though this lesson contributed to achieving those aims? Why or why not?

Throughout the lesson, how did you assess whether or not students were making progress toward your aims and objectives?

Do you feel as though your teaching was well suited to the needs of the students, based on the assessment feedback you received from them? If so, how, and if not, why not?

PEDAGOGICAL REASONING INTERVIEW PROTOCOL EXAMPLES

(These interview protocols include questions that were constructed during data collection to be responsive to phenomena that the researcher documented during observations. Consequently, they varied in content. Two examples are included.)

Noah Andres's pedagogical reasoning in Peace Studies

I noticed that Peace Studies coursework incorporates a lot of reflective journaling, both in class and as homework. What is the purpose of that approach?

How do you decide upon the subject matter and procedures for students' journaling? Are there comparable activities to reflective journaling in the AP Government course?

When you divided the students into pairs to examine several document excerpts related to European imperialism in Africa, what did you intend for the learning process and learning outcomes to be? What student activities were you particularly pleased with, and why?

Were there any student activities that caused you concern? If so, why, and what do you believe are the appropriate responses to those concerns?

Elizabeth Sutton's pedagogical reasoning across curricular contexts

In the Government course, students ask, and are typically allowed, to retake assessments, whereas that practice hasn't come up at all in the Comparative Religions course. Can you talk about the factors behind those differences?

In the Government course, I've heard you explicitly indicate to students that there's subject matter they need to know and subject matter they don't need to know, but that they're learning about anyway. Can you explain your rationale behind that practice? Is there a comparable practice and rationale in Comparative Religions, and why or why not?

You noted previously that one of your aims in Comparative Religions is to help students understand the rationales behind different religious beliefs and practices, with the ultimate goal of being able to accept and empathize with other people. Is this accurate? Can you give me some examples of things you've seen in class or in student work lately that suggest movement toward your goal?

Alternatively, can you give me examples of that goal not being met? What do you believe are the best ways to respond to the challenge of that goal not being met?

APPENDIX E: ASSESSMENT THINK-ALOUD INTERVIEW PROMPT

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANT:

The purpose of this exercise is to capture your immediate perceptions of students' work in the midst of reading and responding to it. We are going to use a research tool called a verbal-report, or think-aloud, protocol, which is designed to bring to light whatever readers are thinking about as they read through texts. In this case, the texts are your students' written work.

I will run a tape recorder as you read each document aloud. Please tell me what you are thinking about as you read, regardless of whether it relates directly to the students' work, more broadly to your teaching and assessment strategies, or something else entirely. This will help me make sense of the way in which you analyze student assessment results and use them in your teaching.

I have pre-examined several written assessments and placed markers at several points throughout each document. They are reminders to stop and explain what you are thinking when you reach them, but you can stop and describe your thoughts more often, if you see fit to do so. You can describe your thoughts at any time while you read. Do you have any questions?

RESEARCHER'S PROCEDURE:

1) Before the primary participant reads and responds to a specific assignment, obtain three to four examples of written student work. Such work likely will include extended essays or short-answer responses.

2) Read through each document and place removable stickers/markers at several points at which the researcher wishes the participant to stop reading and explain his thoughts about the document.

3) Distribute the student work to the participant. Read the above instructions to aid her/him in the process of verbalizing her/his thoughts as s/he reads through the assessment documents. Instruct the participant to read each document and respond to it as s/he typically responds to written assessments.

4) Record the participant's reading of and responses to each of the written assignments.

5) After the think-aloud procedure, conduct a closing interview using these questions:
    - To what extent does the work you just analyzed reflect your expectations and intentions for student learning? Why did you choose to use this particular assessment method? *(Follow-up: Did you intend for this assignment to be more summative or formative? How so? Do you believe it was successful in that regard, based on the student work seen here?)*
    - How, if at all, do you see students' responses to this assessment impacting your instruction? *(Follow-up: If you see it as having an impact, do you think the impact will be more immediate or long-term? How so?)*

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