

THE IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONAL CONTROLS ON TEACHING AS PHRONESIS IN  
SOCIAL STUDIES: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF ALABAMA  
SECONDARY TEACHERS

by

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of institutional job requirements upon particular practices and understandings of teaching among select secondary social studies teachers in Alabama. Through in-depth qualitative data analysis, findings from participant interviews, classroom observations, and documents were compared to assess how these requirements affected participants' abilities to engage in teaching as *phronesis*. This philosophical concept is translated as "practical wisdom" and is distinguished from *episteme*, meaning scientific knowledge, and *techne*, meaning skill. It is argued that *phronesis*, with its practical consideration of human values, corresponds to the nature of the social studies content area. However, this study illustrates that institutional job requirements controlled participant teaching practices so that socially valuable aspects of education, in line with *phronesis*, were limited to ensure production toward institutional objectives. This study also examines how this relationship differed between urban and rural learning environments and between novice and expert teachers. Finally, this study evaluates the case findings in the context of social studies education and broader issues of contemporary educational policy.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to everyone who supported me during the long process of completing this manuscript and my doctoral studies as a whole. In particular, I dedicate it to my family and friends who have encouraged me and instilled within me the value of education.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALCOS	Alabama Course of Study
CCSS	Common Core State Standards
RtI	Response to Intervention
STM	Strategic Teaching Model

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background**

The nature of the teaching profession continues to be a contested issue within the world of education. Central to this issue is the question of whether teaching can be reduced to a set of theoretical principles or technical skills. Answers to this question reveal different conceptions about teaching and the ends to which it should be directed. On one hand, some advocate a view that attempts to reduce understandings of teaching to its productive capacities for measurable learning outcomes. Federal education policies have endorsed this view for the past several decades (Barrett, 2009), which has led to bureaucratic control that reduces teaching to a process of technical skill application (Apple, 1986). On the other hand, some scholars have criticized this view and advocated an understanding of teaching that emphasizes the experiential knowledge and moral judgments of the teacher (Birmingham, 2004; Dewey, 1929; Dunne, 1993; Eisner, 2002). According to this view, teachers must utilize their contextual insights and consider the ends to which their teaching is directed rather than simply implement generalized techniques to produce learning outcomes.

Scholars whose pedagogical insights align with the latter approach have returned to the thoughts of Aristotle (2000) because they provide a philosophical framework that is useful for understanding contemporary notions of teaching and for providing valuable alternatives. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle differentiates between distinct intellectual states which the virtuous person possesses. He defines and characterizes the states of *episteme*, *techne*, and *phronesis* in rich detail. *Episteme* is the state concerned with scientific knowledge and is closely associated with theory and laws. *Techne* is concerned with production and implies a certain craft

knowledge in which the person possesses the appropriate skills to carry toward a given end.

*Phronesis*, on the other hand, is concerned with practical knowledge about moral questions. The person possessing *phronesis* has an understanding of what is good and bad for themselves and others in a particular context.

Numerous scholars (Dunne, 1993; Eisner, 2002; Birmingham, 2004) have emphasized *phronesis*, with its focus on contextual judgments and the consideration of ends, as an intellectual framework which appropriately characterizes the act of teaching. This study uses an Aristotelian framework to understand contemporary notions of teaching in the educational literature and to analyze data generated from the study participants. The particular problem with which this study engages is the impact of institutional job requirements on the understandings and practices of social studies teachers. Specifically, this study considers how institutional controls constrain phronetic teaching possibilities among cases of social studies teachers. Additionally, this study attempts to ascertain if and how this dynamic varies between diverse learning environments and between teachers at different levels of expertise. Finally, this study critically examines the desirability of teaching approaches characterized by the case findings. Next, I discuss in further detail the Aristotelian intellectual states and how they relate to the major research questions.

**Episteme.** The first of these intellectual states of reason is *episteme*, which can be translated as scientific knowledge. Aristotle (2000) describes the nature of scientific knowledge as that which “cannot be otherwise” (p. 105). He goes on to explain that scientific knowledge is eternal and does not come into being or cease to be. Due to the eternal essence of scientific knowledge, Aristotle contends that it is teachable and its object learnable and concerned with universal principles, either through induction or deduction. He closes his discussion of scientific

knowledge by saying that it “is a state by which we demonstrate” (p. 106). In summary, *episteme* is a state of reason dealing with universal principles or laws that one can teach or demonstrate. It seems that this intellectual state corresponds to the first view of teaching discussed previously. I stated that some argue for a context-independent set of rules that govern the practice of teaching. Proponents of this view might argue that there are characteristics of quality teaching that are generalizable and that these qualities can then be demonstrated to practitioners. There seems to be a clear connection between Aristotle’s description of *episteme* and an applied science model of teaching that attempts to formulate demonstrable principles. Next, I discuss *techne* and its distinguishing characteristics, along with how this intellectual state connects with and breaks from an applied science model.

**Techne.** The intellectual state of *techne* is often translated into the word “skill”. Aristotle (2000) first distinguishes skill by describing it as a “productive state involving true reason” (p. 106). It is a rational state concerning production or bringing things into being. *Techne* differs from *episteme* because it is not concerned with things that come into being by necessity and is “concerned with what can be otherwise” (p. 107). Skill carries with it a connotation of context-dependent knowledge. Whereas scientific knowledge is concerned with demonstrable universal principles, skill is concerned with practical knowledge about how best to achieve certain ends. It might be said that *episteme* is a kind of “know that” while *techne* is a kind of “know how”. Thus, *techne* breaks from an applied science model of teaching in that it emphasizes the practical knowledge and expertise of the teacher. Using the translated terminology from Aristotle, some may argue that teaching is a skill and not a science. However, the intellectual state of *techne* can also be used in a way in which it is a simple outgrowth of an applied science model of teaching. Though skill is concerned with things which can be otherwise, and the practical knowledge

needed to bring them into being, it is also concerned with producing things distinct from itself. The means are separated from the ends. If, for example, institutional policy determines educational objectives, such as measurable outcomes or standards benchmarks, this may reduce teacher “know how” to a “know that” of applying context-independent techniques. Much like an expert engineer knows the appropriate theories of physics which apply to building a bridge, an expert teacher would be one that knows the appropriate theories of learning and psychology that will most effectively produce predetermined learning outcomes. The technical rationality of separating means from ends has led some educational theorists to speak pejoratively of the teacher as a technician (Apple, 1987; Barrett, 2009). These scholars imply that educational policy and institutional requirements should not simply reduce the practice of teaching to a set of theories or context-independent techniques. Rather, teaching should incorporate the experiential knowledge and the evaluative judgments of both means and ends from practitioners. Some theorists have pointed back to Aristotle’s next intellectual state as a useful framework for this interpretation of teaching.

**Phronesis.** The intellectual state of *phronesis* is often translated into the phrase “practical wisdom”. Aristotle (2000) begins his discussion of *phronesis* by considering the characteristics of those society calls practically wise. According to Aristotle, the practically wise person can “deliberate nobly about what is good and beneficial for himself” and can see “what is good for themselves and what is good for people in general” (p. 108). The concept of deliberation already distinguishes practical wisdom from scientific knowledge because deliberation is not involved in things which are universal. Aristotle further distinguishes it from scientific knowledge by stating that practical wisdom requires an understanding of particulars and not universals only (p. 110). Thus, practical wisdom, like skill, is concerned with practical knowledge of what can be

otherwise. However, Aristotle makes a clear distinction between *phronesis* and *techne* as well. Whereas skill is associated with production, practical wisdom is associated with action. Aristotle writes, “For while production has an end distinct from itself, this could not be so with action, since the end here is acting well itself.” (p. 107). Thus, *phronesis* is an intellectual state of practical knowledge concerning values, or as Aristotle describes it, concerning “what is good and bad for a human being” (p. 107). A view of teaching through the lens of *phronesis* rejects the reduction of teaching to demonstrable universals. It also rejects the notion that teaching is a simple technical practice of utilizing means to produce predetermined ends. Rather, it supports a conception where practitioners use practical knowledge within specific contexts to determine the means and the ends of teaching. In the next section, I discuss contemporary educational policy and situate it within this Aristotelian framework.

**Contemporary educational policy.** The educational policies endorsed at the federal level over the past several decades align closely with epistemic and technical understandings of teaching, while marginalizing understandings of teaching corresponding to *phronesis*. For example, Barrett (2009) discusses the impact of neoliberal educational policies which he traces back to the 1983 release of *A Nation at Risk*. This educational report, which called for improved standards to combat a decline in America’s status in global industry, formed the roots of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001. Barrett describes NCLB as the “widest ranging and most penetrative incursion by the federal government into local and state educational policies in American history” (p. 1019). Federal education reports and legislation such as these are part of a larger trend in which the United States has deliberately moved toward a performance model of pedagogic discourse. According to Barrett, the state and its agents have shaped this discourse while significantly constraining the status and agency of teachers (p. 1018).



The National Research Council's 2002 report *Scientific Research in Education* (SRE) provides evidence illustrating the shaping and constraint of teaching by educational policies seeking after measurable performance standards. Answering the call in NCLB for scientifically-based research on education, the SRE report provided six guiding principles for educational research which emphasized replicability and generalization across studies (p. 2-5). The report also explicitly stated that it was generated out of a public and policy-driven enthusiasm for a consensus on "what works" in regard to "performance goals inherent in standards-based reforms" (p. 22). This report illustrates the federal endorsement of "scientifically-based" knowledge meant to be generalized across contexts and implemented to achieve the predetermined ends of standards-based performance goals. This implies an understanding of teaching as a simple technical process of applying scientific knowledge in particular classrooms to achieve policy standards.

More recently, Mandinach and Gummer (2013) have called for educators to increase their capacity for data-driven decision making. These authors cite education secretary Arne Duncan's extensive calls for educators to use data to inform their practices to note that the clear message regarding education in terms of federal policy is that "data-driven decision making is a fundamental process that will bring about continuous improvement within the education system" (p. 31). In direct contrast to phronetic understandings of teaching, the authors write of an apparent awareness "that all educators must understand how to use tangible evidence to inform their decisions rather than use anecdotes, intuitions, and personal preferences" (p. 30). These calls for scientific modes of teaching and data-driven practices speak to a larger trend in educational policy at the federal level. This trend characterizes teaching as a means to achieve

the economic goals of the state and emphasizes the reduction of teaching knowledge to generalized methods.

The federal government's endorsement of these educational policies has brought mandates for local educational institutions leading to many negative effects for teachers. Institutional controls following the course of federal policy have constrained teachers' creative capacities, practical knowledge, and views on what is best for their own students. Critics of this approach have identified AYP goals, curriculum mandates, and high-stakes testing as controls which reduce teaching possibilities, narrow the curriculum, and direct pedagogy in undesirable ways (Au, 2007; Valli & Buese, 2007). This discussion illustrates that local educational institutions, which implement policies modeled on a theoretical and technical understanding of teaching, can function to control the way teachers understand and implement their practice. Next, I consider that this trend of institutional control of teaching may have a particularly damaging impact on the content area of social studies.

**Institutional control and social studies.** The previous discussion of institutional control in education illustrates that federal education policy for the past few decades has emphasized a technical, "what works" understanding of teaching for the purpose of procuring measurable performance standards. This view does not align with phronetic understandings of teaching which emphasize the practical, experiential knowledge of the teacher and his contextually-based moral judgments. The content area of social studies may represent a unique case in this issue. One of the major effects of the standardization reforms under neoliberal education policies is the reduction of content knowledge into formulas, procedures, and rote facts. Though this is problematic for all content areas, Au (2009) contends that it is particularly damaging for social

studies. Quality teaching in disciplines such as History resists the trivialization of knowledge into mere facts that results from high-stakes testing and curriculum narrowing.

This is because the disciplines of social studies engage with moral questions, or to use Aristotle's (2000) words, with "what is good and bad for a human being" (p. 107). Social studies scholars cite inherently value-laden themes, such as social justice, multiculturalism, and teaching for democracy, as the overarching objectives for this content area (Au, 2009; Marker & Ross, 2009). Moral ideals such as these naturally resist being taught according to a uniform procedure. Again returning to Aristotle, because of the contested nature of these ideals and that one cannot simply demonstrate their universal principles, they do not correspond to *episteme*, or things which cannot be otherwise. Teaching themes such as social justice or democracy takes into account contextual considerations such as how these issues resonate with particular audiences and how best to convey these themes in a socially appropriate way. This naturally resists a model of teaching that emphasizes generalized techniques which strive toward measurable performance standards. In short, the content area of social studies focuses on value-laden questions that cannot be taught according to strict formulas. The practical knowledge and engagement with moral themes which are characteristic of teaching in social studies correspond to phronetic modes of teaching. Consequently, institutional controls promoting epistemic or technical approaches to teaching may harm social studies to a greater degree than other content areas. Next, I articulate the specific problem with which this study engages, the purpose of the study, its significance, and the particular research questions that the study attempts to answer.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study engages with the problem of institutional control of teaching. I contend that current educational policies require institutions to control teaching in a way that constrains

certain understandings and practices. Specifically, institutions may emphasize teaching that is understood in a theoretical and technical lens. Consequently, institutional requirements may constrain teaching that is characterized by the core notions of Aristotle's articulation of *phronesis*. If this occurs, it can create a significant problem for social studies because teaching in this content area relies upon phronetic understandings. The content area of social studies naturally engages with moral questions and issues about humans and larger society. Teaching that incorporates this consideration of social values would resist the tendency to reduce it to formulaic or fact-based technical approaches. Thus, I argue that quality social studies teaching is more conducive to the core elements of *phronesis*. This study considers if and how institutional controls function in particular cases to endorse certain understandings and practices of teaching while excluding others. Specifically, this study explores the relationship between institutional controls and social studies teachers' ability to understand and practice their teaching as *phronesis*.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The specific purpose of this study is to understand how institutional controls operate in the context of teaching as *phronesis* in social studies. I also intend to illustrate how this relationship occurs across diverse learning environments and between teachers at differing levels of expertise. Informed by Dreyfus's (1986) theory of human intelligence and Apple's (1986) conception of the "teacher as technician", this study attempts to explain how the relationship between institutional controls and teaching as *phronesis* varies between "novice" and "expert" teachers. The study also attempts to answer if and how the relationship between institutional control and teaching as *phronesis* varies across urban and rural learning environments. Scholarly literature suggesting that institutional control of teaching has had a stronger impact in low-

income, high minority urban environments informs this consideration. I allow a broad definition for the term “institutional control”. In this study, I understand this term as any policy or artifact endorsed by the institution which affects the teachers’ practices or conception of their job.

Examples of this include requirements related to testing or learning objectives, meeting specific expectations of the school administration, or incorporating specific teaching strategies.

Additionally, I analyze documents, such as textbooks, worksheets, classroom assessments, and lesson plans to determine their reflection of institutional controls.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it contributes to the field of education in a number of ways. It is valuable because it adds to the literature about the effects of federal policy and standardization upon teaching. It also supplements literature about the nature of teaching and the purposes of social studies teaching. However, the most significant feature of this study is its contribution to the idea of teaching as *phronesis*. Though there has been a significant amount of attention paid to understanding teaching through the lens of *phronesis* (Dunne, 1993; Eisner, 2002; Field & Latta, 2001), a scant amount of attention has been paid to the specific impact of institutional controls upon this conceptualization. The academic literature discusses the application of phronetic conceptions of teaching to social studies, and how institutional controls particularly impact this content area, even less. This study aims at this gap in scholarly work.

### **Research Questions**

The primary research question that this study engages with is the following:

1. How do local institutional controls affect social studies teachers’ ability to engage in phronetic teaching and phronetic understandings of teaching?

The following are a list of secondary questions which this study also considers:

1. What framework of expertise did each teacher dyad represent?
2. How did the relationship between institutional controls and phronetic social studies teaching differ between urban and rural learning environments?
3. What do these cases indicate about how institutional controls function in social studies education? What mechanisms of power exist? Who wins and who loses by these mechanisms of power? Does this contribute to quality Social Studies education? Are there other possibilities?

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the Aristotelian intellectual states of *episteme*, *techne*, and *phronesis* and explained their relation to different understandings of teaching. I explained that current educational policies that emphasize theoretical and technical approaches to teaching may drive institutions to constrain phronetic conceptualizations. I also argued that social studies teaching may be of particular consideration in the relationship between institutional control and phronetic teaching because this content area is more conducive to the core elements of *phronesis*. Finally, I articulated the problem with which this study engages, the purpose of the study, its significance, and the central research questions. Chapter II provides a broader articulation of the theoretical framework for the study and reviews the relevant academic literature within which this study creates a new space. Chapter III discusses the methodology and methods that I utilized in carrying out the study. Chapter IV explains the major findings that resulted from qualitative analysis of each case. Finally, chapter V discusses the implications of the findings within the context of the study's theoretical framework, the limitations of the study, and possibilities for future research related to this topic.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

This study incorporates various theories about knowledge, research, and teaching as a framework for investigating the research questions. In this chapter, I articulate a theoretical framework describing the ideas of numerous theorists that have informed the unit of analysis and how the study has been carried out methodologically. From a methodological standpoint, broader theories about social science research and its particular strengths informed the type of study that was utilized. The unit of analysis was affected by different theories of knowledge, human intelligence, and education. In addition to describing the theoretical framework, I also explain how this study is situated within broader themes in the educational literature. I discuss the following topics: institutional controls and teaching, institutional controls and social studies teaching, and teaching as *phronesis*. In this discussion, I attempt to weave these themes together to show how each is interrelated. Finally, I address gaps in this literature which leave open a space for my study.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

**Methodology.** I discussed Aristotle's (2000) notion of *phronesis* and how it differs from *episteme* and *techne* in the introduction. This concept forms the basis for the theoretical framework in this study in multiple ways. First, teaching understood and acted as *phronesis* is considered as an object of analysis. However, *phronesis* is also an important theoretical concept for the methodological orientation of this project. In recent years, various theorists have pointed back to *phronesis*, not only in regard to teaching, but also as a more appropriate framework for conducting social science research. Flyvbjerg (2001), for example, articulates this argument in

his book *Making Social Science Matter*. According to Flyvbjerg, the social sciences continue to occupy a marginalized position in the academy because they have not been able to contribute to explanatory and predictive theory in the same manner as the natural sciences. Though some social scientists persist in what he understands as a vain attempt to emulate the natural sciences, Flyvbjerg argues that meaningful research in the social sciences should evoke the natural strengths of these disciplines. These strengths are found in a theoretical grounding in Aristotelian *phronesis*. The practical knowledge and value rationality of *phronesis* would produce “input to the ongoing social dialogue and praxis in a society, rather than...generate ultimate, unequivocally verified knowledge” (p. 139). Thus, Flyvbjerg proposes several methodological guidelines for what he considers “phronetic” research. Among these are the following: “focusing on values”, “placing power at the core of analysis”, “getting close to reality”, “emphasizing little things”, “looking at practice before discourse”, “studying cases and contexts”, and “dialoguing with a polyphony of voices” (p. 129-139). In addition, Flyvbjerg provides the following questions that a researcher guided by *phronesis* should consider: Where are we going? Is this desirable? What should be done? (p. 60).

The emphasis on practical knowledge and questions of value inherent in *phronesis* are clearly evident in these methodological guidelines and questions. Guidelines such as “getting close to reality”, “emphasizing little things”, and “studying cases and contexts” illustrate the practical, contextual knowledge that is at the heart of phronetic understanding. In addition, guidelines such as “focusing on values” and “placing power at the core of analysis”, along with each of the questions Flyvbjerg (2001) suggests, illustrate the consideration of values that ultimately contribute to social praxis in a phronetic orientation. These features guided the methodological choices I made for this study. To get an understanding of the practical,



contextual knowledge of social studies teaching and how institutional controls affect this, I focused on the everyday practices of the teachers in my study. However, the purpose of this is not solely to describe if a relationship exists between institutional control and phronetic teaching in social studies and how it functions, but also to evaluate the merits of such a relationship. Keeping with the value rationality of *phronesis* and the questions proposed by Flyvbjerg, I attempted to understand the effects of institutional controls upon social studies teaching, whose purposes these serve, and whether this is desirable within the broader context of public education. Here, I described how the notion of *phronesis* and Flyvbjerg's articulation of it for the social sciences provided a methodological lens for this study. *Phronesis* also occupied a central place in the unit of analysis for the study in that I attempted to ascertain how institutional controls affected participants' phronetic conceptualizations of teaching. Next, I link *phronesis* with several theories that informed the unit of analysis in this study.

**Unit of analysis.** The goal of this study was to examine how institutional requirements affected social studies teachers' understandings and practices of teaching as *phronesis*, and to do so following the phronetic orientation articulated by Flyvbjerg (2001). It might be said that I attempted to study teaching as *phronesis* phronetically through this study. Thus, *phronesis* acts as a methodological orientation and an object of analysis. If teaching is conceptualized through the Aristotelian theoretical framework, it might be described according to the distinct intellectual states. Teaching as *episteme*, or scientific knowledge, might be thought of as teaching which conforms to scientific principles. Proponents of this approach might hold that there are context-independent laws about teaching which simply have to be discovered and subsequently applied in practice. Teaching as *techne*, or skill, might be thought of as teaching according to technical approaches. This understanding might be informed by *episteme* in that teaching would be the

knowledge of how to apply theories in practice. It might also be understood as the ability of a teacher to apply practical, contextual knowledge in a way that produces something outside of itself. For example, a teacher might be exhibiting technical teaching if they know from experience what methods to use in order to raise an individual student's achievement scores. Lastly, teaching as *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, might be thought of as teaching which relies upon practical, contextual knowledge for action which is concerned with values. Phronetic teaching would entail a teacher's ability to engage in moral judgments about their practice. Whereas *episteme* and *techne* employ an instrumental approach where means are manipulated to achieve given ends, *phronesis* openly questions the ends based upon their attainability and value. This concept acted as an object of analysis, then, because I wanted to examine where *phronesis* manifested or was suppressed within teaching and how institutional controls affected this. Next, I explain how broader theories about education connect with understanding teaching through Aristotle's intellectual states.

**The technicization of teaching.** Apple (1986) provides a critical examination of the structure of education viewed through the lens of patriarchal and class dynamics. He explains that the techniques that were instituted in American education during the 1980s are part of a long history of the control of state employees to bring about efficient teaching (p. 40). Apple argues that because schools are state apparatuses, the state has continually attempted to deskill the educational labor force and introduce managerial techniques so that institutions will achieve the desired ends of the state. I discuss this understanding of the educational structure and its impact on the institutional control of teachers in greater detail later. For now, it is interesting to note that Apple describes this control of the teaching force as a "technicization of the teaching act" (p. 45). He notes that school curricula have often been "teacher-proofed" and that teacher labor has been

subject to “intensification” (p. 41-45). This entails teachers having such a heavy workload that they are forced to implement managerial techniques in order to accomplish the objectives of the institution. This critical view of teaching touches upon the technical rationality that is implicit in Aristotle’s (2000) notions of *episteme* and *techne*. The state’s impact on teaching that Apple describes results in a teaching force which utilizes techniques to produce ends outside of itself. Such an understanding of teaching invokes some of the basic tenets of Aristotle’s articulation of *techne*. The very terms used by Apple to describe this phenomenon, such as “managerial techniques” and “technicization” hint at this connection. Apple also explains that while elements of curricular control have been effective in structuring teacher practice, teachers have also responded with resistance. Interestingly, he writes that teachers “subtly changed the pre-specified objectives because they couldn’t see their relevance” (p. 44). This implies a judgment made by teachers about the value of the educational ends they are expected to achieve. For me, this constitutes the moral judgment that is characteristic of *phronesis*.

Apple’s (1986) description of teaching controlled by the state and its educational apparatuses depicts teachers as deskilled and deprofessionalized agents who implement techniques to achieve pre-determined objectives. This understanding of teaching corresponds to *episteme* and *techne*. Research about teaching would be that which verifies the context-independent methods which most effectively and efficiently bring about the desired results. The role of the teacher would be that of a technician who simply implements the strategies that have proven to be efficient in this regard. An alternative view of teaching that corresponds to *phronesis* would depict teachers as autonomous professionals who use their experiential expertise to make moral judgments. Teachers would make contextual determinations about the value of educational ends and the means that might be implemented to achieve them. In my

understanding, the various insights offered by John Dewey provide such an alternative conceptualization of teaching.

**Dewey and *phronesis*.** John Dewey directly addressed the question of whether there could be a science of education. Discussing this issue, Dewey (1929) notes that the word science has a wide range of meaning, describing it as “the existence of systematic methods of inquiry, which, when they are brought to bear on a range of facts, enable us to understand them better and to control them more intelligently” (p. 8). In this sense, Dewey did not reject the notion of a science of education but said that the question genuinely applies to any means that may increase intelligence and understanding of education. What he did reject was the transformation of educational findings into a universal norm for practice. He writes that when a practitioner “reduces his findings to a rule which is to be uniformly adopted, then, only, is there a result which is objectionable and destructive of the free play of education as an art” (p. 14).

Relating these thoughts to Aristotle’s intellectual states, it seems that Dewey objected to a view of teaching which corresponds to the notion of *episteme*. It might also be said that Dewey rejected certain notions of teaching as *techne*. For example, he criticized pre-service teachers that came to normal schools seeking “recipes” for success (1929, p. 15). Dewey was also critical of an educational system in which practitioners simply utilized the most effective means to reach unquestioned ends. He writes, “it is assumed that certain ends have an inherent value so unquestionable that they regulate and validate the means employed, instead of ends being determined on the basis of existing conditions” (1973, p. 412). The connection of value rationality and practical knowledge is evident here. Aristotle (2000) described *techne* as a matter of production, not action, and that production has an end distinct from itself (p. 106-107). This implies a separation of means and ends. Dewey, however, employed a “means-end” or “ends-in-

view” approach to social inquiry where “propositions cannot be determined short of the consequences to which its functional use gives rise” (1973, p. 400). Thus, what should be done cannot be considered apart from the value of the end, and the end cannot be considered apart from practical understandings of the context. This connects with the contextual moral judgments characterized by *phronesis*.

Aristotle (2000) considers the *phronimos*, or the person who is practically wise, in order to explain the concept of *phronesis*. He writes that people are called practically wise “whenever they calculate well to promote some good end that lies outside the ambit of a skill” (p. 107). In *The Child and the Curriculum*, Dewey (1973) argues that an intrinsic understanding of the objective of a lesson carries the student toward its accomplishment. By contrast, he writes, “But when material is directly supplied in the form of a lesson to be learned as a lesson, the connecting links of need and aim are conspicuous for their absence” (p. 480). Here, Dewey argues that the child has a natural motivation for learning if the content of the curriculum has some connection to their experiences. He writes that “his experience already contains within itself elements...of just the same sort as those entering into the formulated study” (p. 472). Thus, the teacher in Dewey’s view might be an individual who promotes the natural end of learning because it is personally relevant rather than one who compels students to learn through the acquisition of skills to achieve educational outcomes. This seems to connect with Aristotle’s illustration of the *phronimos*, or the one who is practically wise.

The educational situations described by Apple and Dewey should present a stark contrast. Apple depicts educational institutions as state apparatuses that reduce teaching to sets of techniques that are efficient in producing pre-determined outcomes. This corresponds to the universalism and context-independent laws of *episteme* and the productive, instrumental

rationality of *techne*. Dewey argues for an educational environment in which the teacher uses their practical knowledge to determine the best methods for instruction. These means, however, cannot be implemented without a consideration of the value of their consequences given the particular context. Therefore, the teacher must make contextual judgments incorporating value-rational questions. Dewey's ideas correspond to the practical knowledge and value rationality of *phronesis*. These theories have shaped my understanding of teaching and how it relates to Aristotle's intellectual states. Another aspect of this study concerns how understandings and practices of teaching vary across teachers at different levels of expertise. In the situation described by Apple, it would seem to follow that an expert teacher would be one who has mastered the formal techniques that are most efficient in producing results. In Dewey's view, an expert teacher might be one that can use contextual knowledge to make appropriate judgments for their own particular classroom. These considerations relate to the Dreyfus model of expertise which I discuss next.

**Dreyfus model of expertise.** Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus (1986) discuss the unique way in which humans acquire knowledge in their book *Mind over Machine*. The authors wrote this book during a time of expansive research on artificial intelligence and the creation of expert computer systems. The common refrain in the scientific community during this time was that computer scientists were making great strides toward creating machines capable of simulating human intellect. Dreyfus and Dreyfus explain that these conclusions were hyperbolic and that in reality scientists were continually hitting major stumbling blocks. The authors make a convincing argument as to why this was the case. They explain that proponents of the artificial intelligence movement based their understandings of intelligence on the information-processing model of the mind. This model assumes that there are formal, procedural rules that the mind follows in its

thought. If one could deduce those rules and write them into a computer program, then, in theory, expert systems could simulate human intellect. However, Dreyfus and Dreyfus explain that this is an incorrect understanding of human intelligence. They claim that humans actually operate along a continuum where beginners and novices perform based on formal rules, while experts perform based on intuitive, experiential understanding. Their common illustration is chess in which a grand master has a holistic understanding of the positions of the pieces on the board and has an intuitive understanding based on his prior experiences. The authors illustrate that the expert chess player exceeds because of his contextual knowledge and experience, while the player that masters analytical context-independent rules generally cannot achieve the level of the grand master.

The Dreyfus model of expertise relates to this study because it places expert human understanding firmly in the realm of context-based, experiential knowledge. It emphasizes that the mind cannot be reduced to a set of formal and teachable universal rules. This would be the realm of *episteme* consequently leading to *techne* in practice. Such an understanding of expertise is evident in the view of the “teacher as technician” described by Apple (1986). Expert knowledge, however, often denotes a wisdom that is closer to the practical realities of *phronesis*. This is why Flyvbjerg (2001) begins his discussion of phronetic social science by explaining the importance of context through a detailed description of the Dreyfus model (p. 9-24).

The Dreyfus model of expertise and Apple’s (1986) notion of the teacher as technician represent two distinct conceptualizations of teaching that I use to evaluate how each of the teacher dyads in this study represented teacher expertise. There is a tension in using this comparison that should be addressed. While what Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) offer is a formal model of human expertise, Apple’s description of the “technicization of teaching” is a critical

appraisal of teacher deprofessionalism in the context of governmental regulation. Thus, I am not necessarily comparing two distinct psychological or pedagogical models. However, I feel that both of these theoretical insights align with the larger Aristotelian framework. What Apple describes connects with epistemic and technical understandings of teaching in an applied science model of teaching. On the other hand, the contextualism offered by the Dreyfus model aligns with the practical rationality of *phronesis*. Thus, the findings from each case, and more particularly, the differences in practices and attitudes represented between the “novice” and “expert” participant within each dyad were interpreted through these lenses. Progressions of technical competence between the “novice” and “expert” participants within a dyad represented a divergence from the Dreyfus model, while being reflective of Apple’s considerations. The opposite was true if there was a progression of contextual understanding and intuition represented between “novice” and “expert” within a dyad. In chapter V, I address these findings more clearly and how I used the theoretical guidance of Apple and Dreyfus and Dreyfus to understand how expertise was being represented. I also address the very notion and terminology of “expertise” in the final implications section of chapter V.

By explaining this theoretical framework, I have attempted to show how the thoughts offered by Flyvbjerg (2001), Apple (1986), Dewey (1929, 1973), and Dreyfus (1986) shape this study relative to the overarching Aristotelian framework discussed in chapter I. Flyvbjerg offers a distinct orientation for conducting research in the social sciences that is rooted in *phronesis*. I attempted to adopt a methodological stance guided by Flyvbjerg’s “phronetic social science” in this study by analyzing the everyday practices of teachers and deliberating about value-rational questions. The theoretical insights offered by Apple, Dewey, and Dreyfus influence the object of analysis in this study, namely conceptions and practices of teaching within local educational



institutions. Apple argues that the state has increasingly controlled the teaching profession for economic, rather than social, purposes which has resulted in a technical management of teaching within contemporary educational policy. On the other hand, Dewey presents a view of teaching that emphasizes the contextual judgment of the teacher and their consideration of the ends of teaching, a view that I argued aligns with *phronesis*. Additionally, the Dreyfus model indicates that an applied science model of teaching, relying upon universal rules and techniques, actually represents practices corresponding to beginning levels of intelligence rather than expert levels. Informed by these theoretical insights, I analyzed “novice” and “expert” teachers, in terms of years of experience, to determine which model of teaching their practices and understandings followed. The various thoughts offered by these authors each reflect aspects of the Aristotelian intellectual states that frame this study. They allowed for interpretations of cases within distinct theoretical discussions about teaching and knowledge. Next, I provide a broad overview of the academic literature related to the major considerations of the study.

### **Institutional Controls and Teaching**

The academic literature is replete with criticism of the contemporary structuring of the educational system and its negative effects on the teaching profession. As discussed previously, Apple (1986) illustrates how educational institutions in America have functioned as state apparatuses which operate under the dynamics of patriarchal and class power to promote economic ends. This touches upon the notion of neoliberal conceptions of education. Neoliberal approaches view education not from the standpoint of promoting social democratic ends, but as a means to provide workers for a globalized economy. These policy-oriented educational goals have had a direct impact on institutions and how those institutions control teaching

understandings and practices. In this section, I review various scholars who have discussed contemporary neoliberal educational policies and how they have adversely affected teaching.

Many scholars point to the release of the 1983 educational report *A Nation at Risk* as a catalyst for advocating neoliberal reforms. This report warned that American public education was falling behind and that systematic change in accountability would be necessary to produce students that were competitive with other nations. Consequently, presidential administrations since the release of this report have all focused on raising educational achievement within American public schools (Barrett, 2009). This age of accountability culminated with the passage of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) in 2001, which ushered in a new age of testing and curricular control in American education. According to Barrett (2009), NCLB represented the “most penetrative incursion by the federal government into local and state educational policies in American history” (p. 1018). The law tied education to strict accountability standards, including student academic achievement on statewide tests, a comparison of students at basic, proficient, and advanced levels of academic achievement, and meeting “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) goals. Penalties for failing on these achievement benchmarks included the restructuring of a school, replacing the staff, and hiring a private management contractor (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p. 9).

Hursh (2007) identifies NCLB and its overwhelming support and passage through Congress as part of a larger shift from social democratic to neoliberal policies. He examines the law for how it exemplified a transformation in the dominant discourse on education where “societal institutions are recast as markets rather than deliberatively democratic systems” (p. 493-494). This understanding of institutions as markets implies the tying of education to economic endeavors. Barrett (2009) supplements this idea with his assertion that NCLB passed

within a context which the government perceived as one of “increased global economic competition coupled with decreasing levels of performance by American students compared to their international counterparts” (p. 1018). These interpretations of neoliberal educational reforms connect with the view posited by Apple (1986) in which the educational structure resembles that of a corporation where teachers occupy a low-level labor force.

Weiner (2007) and Leaton Gray (2007) affirm that neoliberal reforms have resulted in institutional controls that produce a deskilled teaching force. Weiner points out that, while NCLB required more highly-qualified teachers, the law actually functioned to deskill teachers in many ways. In light of acquiring teachers that can produce achievement on mandated content knowledge standards, educational institutions have devalued pedagogical training. According to Weiner, in this context of strict accountability, extended teacher education programs emphasizing pedagogy become “irrelevant-even deleterious-because otherwise capable people are being kept out of teaching because they lack training in education and teachers waste time and money on spurious degrees” (p. 278). Meanwhile, Leaton Gray illustrates that the impact of neoliberal reforms extends beyond the United States. In Britain, educational policy has subjected the work of teachers to increased surveillance based on commercial management techniques since the 1988 Education Reform Act. The result has been a teaching force that is governable, rather than autonomous. Leaton Gray draws upon Apple’s (1986) notion of the “technicization of teaching”, describing a teaching force that executes plans designed by managers. She contends that such an educational system could inevitably lead to the alienation of teachers because they are forced to implement a model that has little or no bearing on the students in their charge (Leaton Gray, p. 201).

Scholars have identified high-stakes testing as a major institutional control brought about through neoliberal reforms which have had adverse effects for teaching. For example, a study by Valli and Buese (2007) illustrates how the role of the teacher has been inextricably linked to testing benchmarks under contemporary educational policies. Teachers in this study noted that their pedagogy deteriorated into “drive-by” or “hit or miss” teaching. The authors write that their participants were “swept up in a flow of mandates that consumed their thinking, their energy, and, for some, even their love of teaching” (p. 545). Further evidence of the negative effects of testing is put forward by Au (2007). In a metasynthesis of 49 qualitative studies, he found a significant relationship between the implementation of high-stakes testing and changes in the content of the curriculum, the structure of knowledge within the content, and the types of pedagogy used to communicate the content. In a large majority of the studies, the specific changes in curriculum and instruction included the narrowing of curriculum, the fragmentation of knowledge, and an increase in teacher-centered instruction associated with the direct transmission of test-related facts (p. 262-263).

The curriculum itself, often working in conjunction with testing, is also identified as an institutional control which negatively affects teaching. Au (2011) has written more specifically about contemporary neoliberal approaches to curriculum. He argues that current curriculum policies in American education represent a form of “New Taylorism”, referring to the curricular legacy of scientific management from the early 1900s. An extended quote from this piece exemplifies the top-down managerial approach to education that such curriculum reforms represent:

The movement for school accountability is essentially a movement for more effective top-down control of the schools. The idea is that, if public authorities want to promote student achievement, they need to adopt organizational control mechanisms—tests, school report cards, rewards and sanctions, and the like—designed to get district officials,

principals, teachers, and students to change their behaviour in productive ways... Virtually all organizations need to engage in top-down control, because the people at the top have goals they want the people at the bottom to pursue, and something has to be done to bring about the desired behaviours. (from Moe, 2003; quoted in Au, p. 38).

These scholars argue that institutional controls, such as high-stakes testing and curriculum mandates, function as mechanisms which regulate teacher practice. As part of their job requirements, teachers must adhere to the required curriculum and produce the behavioral outcomes desired by their managers.

These institutional controls of the teaching profession speak to an underlying assumption about the nature of teaching. According to the Dreyfus model of expertise, expert teachers would be those that operate less upon formal rules and procedures than their novice counterparts. However, such a notion of teaching expertise seems to contradict contemporary understandings of the teacher as technician. For example, NCLB indicates that the law helps educators because it funds and emphasizes scientifically-based research. The testing of educational practices under the law follows a medical model in which a scientifically controlled study, much like a clinical trial, determines the worth of an educational intervention. Educators are expected to consider the results of such scientifically-based research before making instructional decisions. The reliance on these scientific data results in a special focus on “doing what works” or selecting instructional approaches which have a proven track record (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p. 18-20).

The promised funding of scientifically-based research on education by NCLB resulted in the National Research Council publication of “Scientific Research in Education” (SRE) in 2002. The report claims that, at its core, “scientific inquiry is the same in all fields” and provides six guiding principles that guide all scientific inquiry, including replicability and generalization across studies (p. 2-5). It also explicitly states that the report was generated out of a public and

policy-driven enthusiasm for a consensus on “what works” in regard to “performance goals inherent in standards-based reforms” (p. 22). Scholars from the field of research methods were quick to criticize the report for its narrow view of methodology and its implications for knowledge about education. For example, Lincoln and Cannella (2004) claimed that the SRE report exemplified a “methodological fundamentalism” that promised “to be the ‘gold standard’ for producing scientific knowledge or what is argued to be the only knowledge worth having” (p. 7). Lather (2004) also criticized the emphasis on design, experiment, and prediction in the SRE report as a regulatory system that excluded other perspectives. She writes, “Values and politics, human volition and program variability, cultural diversity, multiple disciplinary perspectives...all are swept away in a unified theory of scientific advancement with its mantra of “science is science is science” (p. 19). Lastly, Howe (2005) equated the SRE report with a new form of *experimentism* that constructed methodology as “standing above science and providing an epistemic guarantee if properly executed” (p. 316). The implications of the SRE report and its criticisms reflect the endorsement of an epistemic view of teaching knowledge. The federal government, representing the top level of educational policy, advocated knowledge about teaching that could be scientifically verified and applied through techniques across various contexts. Again, this indicates that an expert teacher is one who has a broad knowledge of the “science” of teaching and the application of techniques to achieve results.

Various states have recently attempted to wean themselves off some of the stricter aspects of NCLB. However, several basic tenets of neoliberal reforms remain in place. First, there is the unquestionable demand for standards and achievement outcomes. Second, an understanding of teachers as individuals who simply apply or test procedures to reach these ends persists. Articles from some of the most recent issues of *Educational Researcher* clearly

illustrate this. McClarty, et al. (2013) write that the dominant federal and state education reform continues to be standards-based (p. 85). Considering that standards-based reforms have shifted to an emphasis on college and career-readiness, the authors of this article argue that an approach is needed that establishes the validity of standards-based tests in predicting college and career-readiness. This indicates the emphasis on predetermined ends and the need to create quality means that are productive of those ends. Additionally, Mandinach and Gummer (2013) argue that educators need to increase their data literacy, which they define as the ability to use data effectively to inform decisions. The authors write, “It is composed of a specific skill set and knowledge base that enables educators to transform data into information and ultimately into actionable knowledge” (p. 30). The implication here is that the skills and knowledge that teachers must possess are those that allow them to translate data, or scientific knowledge, into practice. The authors seem to exclude the contextual, experiential knowledge that educators might possess to teach successfully when they write of a growing awareness that tangible evidence trumps personal preferences and intuitions (p. 30). Interestingly, the authors base their claims on the emphasis on data literacy at the federal level. They quote Education Secretary Arne Duncan (2009), who said:

Our best teachers today are using real time data in ways that would have been unimaginable just five years ago. They need to know how well their students are performing. They want to know exactly what they need to do to teach and how to teach it. (in Mandinach and Gummer, p. 31)

Such a sentiment brings to mind the exact approach expressed by normal school teachers that Dewey (1929) rejected. The recent national push for Common Core state standards informs the continued emphasis on economic purposes and standardization of education as well as the potential damaging effects for teachers. In 2009, the Council of Chief State School Officers and

the National Governors Association coordinated a state-led effort to develop common standards in math and literacy that would prepare students for college and future careers. Currently, forty-three states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have voluntarily adopted the Common Core standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014). Though Common Core is a state-led effort and can be incorporated voluntarily, federal education policies endorsed these standards and incentivized their adoption. The Obama administration required states to adopt Common Core in order to receive federal funding through the Race to the Top program (Au, 2013). Mirra and Morrell (2011) explain that the federal emphasis on Common Core illustrates the continued emphasis upon economic goals of education by “focusing explicitly on college and career readiness, to the near exclusion of preparation for democratic citizenship” (p. 409). The adoption of these uniform standards comes with dangers to teacher professionalism. Kohn (2001) argues that standards which are not formed by teachers within their own classrooms naturally control educational practices, contradicting the claims made by policymakers that teachers still remain autonomous over instructional decisions. Additionally, Au (2013) speculates that the adoption of these standards will inevitably lead to a new regimen of high-stakes testing in order to assess achievement on these standards.

Many scholars have illustrated that the era of standardization and accountability has had particularly damaging effects in urban educational environments, especially those with high minority populations. Mirra and Morrell (2011) explain that part of the reason for sweeping bipartisan support of NCLB was its promise of educational equality. They write that “the rhetoric introduced by the Bush administration about NCLB likened the legislation to a civil rights initiative that promised to challenge low expectations and bring traditionally marginalized students to academic proficiency” (p. 409). Pauline Lipman (2004) also hints at the rhetoric of



racial equality undergirding standardization and accountability reforms. Speaking of the accountability reforms in Chicago Public Schools in the 1990s, she writes,

In part, the policies make sense because finally school leaders are taking decisive action against a status quo that has failed to educate the majority of students...Chicago Public Schools would teach all children, and students, teachers, and administrators alike would be held to the same high standards of performance...As a result, there is a new sense of urgency and a press to focus on instruction, planning, and curriculum coherence. (p. 39).

Thus, the promotion of standards and accountability in urban educational contexts deemed “failing” made sense to many people concerned with educational equality. However, Lipman shows that within Chicago Public Schools, accountability was promoted as the only choice against failed policies of the past, which resulted in heavy institutional controls of mostly Black and Latino schools that were “failing”.

The promise of educational equality through accountability and standardization has gone unfulfilled, as these measures have negatively affected urban schools with high minority populations. The pressures of high-stakes testing have disproportionately affected high-poverty urban schools, through curriculum narrowing and the adoption of scripted programs (Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Milner, 2013). As Au (2009a) points out, “Contrary to the explicitly stated policy goal of leaving no child behind, the research body suggests that educational policies constructed around high-stakes, standardized testing increase achievement gaps...and thus contribute to increased educational inequality” (p. 65). Considering this impact, a key consideration of this study is comparing teachers in low-income, high-minority urban environments with teachers in environments with average levels of poverty and a mostly White population.

The neoliberal reforms in education over the past several decades have resulted in the control of teacher understandings and practices informed by Apple’s (1986) notion of the “technicization of teaching”. These reforms have reduced knowledge about teaching to

scientifically validated procedures that are efficient in bringing about pre-determined economic ends. Such a view promotes the notion of the expert teacher as one who knows which techniques are most efficient in producing outcomes. As a result, educational institutions often control teaching by advocating this view through such measures as scripted curricula and standards with rhetoric of accountability. Additionally, these phenomena are more prevalent in urban educational environments with high minority populations. High-stakes testing, curriculum requirements, and strict standards benchmarks function as institutional controls that exclude teacher knowledge based on contextual judgments and a consideration of values. In the next section, I discuss institutional controls and how they present unique dangers in the context of social studies education.

### **Institutional Controls and Social Studies**

The literature discussed thus far indicates that educational institutions, operating under the management of neoliberal reforms, can control how teaching is understood and practiced. Looking through the Aristotelian lens of intellectual states, it seems that educational policies view knowledge about teaching as *episteme* that can be applied in practice through *techne*. Institutional controls, such as testing and curriculum mandates, constrain teaching by requiring teachers to utilize techniques which are most efficient in bringing about desired outcomes. Standards-based reforms marginalize other teaching approaches which rely upon contextual knowledge and include moral judgments about the ends being served. A question emerges in regard to this issue: Are certain content areas negatively affected to a greater degree than others by institutional controls? An argument can be made that institutional controls negatively affect the content area of social studies more than other content areas. This is because the inherent strengths of social studies disciplines are incompatible with the aims of contemporary

educational policy. In this section, I discuss literature that illustrates the emphasis on values in the social studies and how institutional controls often strip this content area of its power or push it out altogether.

The major strength of social studies education is its emphasis on values and advocating learning which is socially responsive. To keep up with the recent shift to Common Core Standards, the *National Council for the Social Studies* (NCSS) recently published a revised version of their standards for the social studies. In this publication, NCSS explains that the purpose of social studies is to “help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (Herczog, 2010, p. 218). Additionally, NCSS claims that, while civic competency is a goal of an entire school curriculum, it is more central to the nature of social studies (p. 217). Numerous scholars of social studies education echo the themes of social values mentioned by NCSS, such as “public good” within a “culturally diverse” and “democratic society”.

The goal of teaching for democracy is a popular sentiment expressed by scholars of social studies education. In 2009, a special issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly* dealt specifically with how social studies educators can and should teach for democracy, despite the difficulties of doing so in the contemporary age of accountability (Ross and Marker, 2009). Seltzer-Kelly (2009) discusses her experiences in student teaching as a graduate student, her difficulties in trying to adhere to standards while teaching democratic principles, and her present occupation in mentoring future teachers. Though faculty members appealed to democratic ends to justify state standards and curriculum, the author notes that she often had to subvert the standards in order to teach for democracy. She writes:

We had all come to believe that the Jeffersonian vision of education for democracy has given way to an educational system that accomplishes precisely the opposite...We chose,

however, to explicitly reject the faculty members who advised us; we believed we could effect change...from within. (p. 159)

Similarly, Kovacs (2009) contends that teaching for democracy must occur in public schools and especially within social studies. This allows students to engage with their communities and for all community members to have a shared voice in educational agenda setting (p. 10). The author maintains that such a conception of social studies education entails a difficult process involving the participation of community members, scholars, and activists due to neoliberal reforms that have created undemocratic schools that negate critical engagement with diverse voices (p. 12).

Another common theme of social studies education is teaching for social justice. Bender-Slack and Raupach (2008) conducted a qualitative study of four social studies teachers to address how they negotiated teaching for social justice in a standards-based environment. Though the authors acknowledge the marginalization of social justice within the curriculum due to standards-based reforms, they also contend that social justice and standards are not mutually exclusive. Data generated from their subjects indicated that using non-traditional teaching approaches and moving away from the centrality of the textbook allowed for teachers to promote social justice while meeting the requirements of standards. McCall (2004) also acknowledges the negative impact of reforms, such as NCLB, upon social studies instruction. She suggests using poetry because poems can teach issues of social justice through increasing students' understanding and awareness of the world, while meeting the literacy requirements emphasized by state standards (p. 174). This scholarship introduces several key themes. First, there is a clear emphasis on the need to teach for social justice in the social studies curriculum. Second, this is often difficult or impossible given the institutional control of standards-based reforms. Lastly, teachers have to

utilize strategies to teach for social justice because, in the current educational climate, social justice is not a natural outcome of social studies teaching.

Social studies scholars and educators have also emphasized multiculturalism as a key aspect of the curriculum. Multiculturalism has been advocated as a broader educational reform not exclusive to social studies. Banks (1994), for example, is a leading multicultural education scholar and advocate who has argued that multicultural education allows students to understand their communities and acquire knowledge that will help them make society more just. Likewise, Sleeter and Grant (1999) have argued for a multicultural orientation to education that affirms diversity, fosters equal opportunity, and challenges social stratification. Zong, Garcia, and Wilson (2002) maintain this orientation in their approach to teaching social studies. These authors defend the multicultural aspects of NCSS standards against critics who have referred to it as “mushy nonsense” (p. 447). They argue that multiculturalism allows for students to be culturally aware and to engage in a thoughtful, rather than blind, patriotism that seeks to improve communities.

The overarching goal of citizenship education is implicit in all of the themes of social studies education mentioned thus far. Through teaching issues involved with democracy, social justice, and multiculturalism, social studies educators believe that students may become socially responsive citizens who contribute to public good. Gibson (2012) discusses citizenship education as the key purpose of social studies. She conducted a study of a new social studies curriculum in Alberta, Canada due to her astonishment that pre-service teachers commonly did not recognize citizenship education as a central tenet of social studies. Despite the expression of citizenship ideals in the new curriculum, the author found that teachers frequently saw social studies as a mere exercise in content knowledge rather than a forum for promoting an engaged citizenry. She

concludes by stating that citizenship education should be taught as the primary purpose of social studies and that teachers must engage in the purposes of education rather than merely content (p. 56).

Themes of democracy, social justice, multiculturalism, and citizenship education expressed by various scholars and teachers illustrate the inherent connection with questions of value in social studies. The major purpose of social studies expressed by NCSS is to allow for contribution to the public good. Consequently, social studies educators must engage in a consideration of educational purposes. According to Thornton (2005), they must engage in “aims talk”. He writes that many practitioners may avoid questions of ends, claiming that their job is to deliver instruction. This view of teaching in social studies disciplines, however, is untenable for Thornton (p. 6). Discussing this concept of “aims talk”, Thornton explains that many teachers do not feel professionally responsible for questioning the educational purposes of their curriculum and instruction. He writes, “After all, persons with authority usually formulate aims in distant places. Who is the classroom teacher to question this?” (p. 46). Likewise, Misco and Shively (2010) contend that teachers must foster unique qualities that give attention to the dispositional aims of social studies, rather than seeing themselves as content masters. This challenges the contemporary notion of the teacher as technician, or one who simply has knowledge of techniques that are efficient in producing the desired outcomes of the state. Teachers must actively involve their practice with the consideration of educational ends. This directly connects with the value-rationality of key social studies aspects like democracy, social justice, multiculturalism, and citizenship education.

There is consensus among the scholars cited here that social studies engages with value-laden topics and issues that concern the public good. Despite this, most of these scholars

acknowledge the difficulty in teaching to the inherent strengths of the social studies disciplines due to current educational policy. What about these policies makes teaching for multiculturalism or social justice so difficult? Institutional requirements control teaching to such an extent that social studies disciplines are trivialized or pushed out from the curriculum altogether. Au (2009) explains this relationship by stating that institutional controls like testing and curriculum mandates are often incompatible with the salient features of social studies. He states that high-stakes tests function to reduce content knowledge in the social studies to a teacher-centered routine of instilling rote facts. Additionally, he argues that value-oriented themes, such as multiculturalism and social justice, have been removed from the curriculum in order to focus on the content of standardized tests (p. 48). In addition to testing and curriculum, Ross (2006) argues that textbooks control teaching and maintain social and economic hierarchies and that these values should be challenged within social studies education (p. 12-14). He maintains that current educational policy has created a distinction between ends and means, or curriculum and instruction, which negatively affects social studies possibilities and teachers' roles. He writes:

Social studies teaching should not be reduced to an exercise in implementing a set of activities predefined by policy makers, textbook authors, or a high-stakes test. Rather teachers should be actively engaged in considering the perennial curriculum question—what knowledge is of most worth? (Ross, 2006, p. 5).

The question presented by Ross (2006) leads back to the Aristotelian intellectual states that frame this study. The knowledge that seems to be of most worth for current educational policy is that which is in keeping with the pre-determined ends of the state. Consequently, knowledge about teaching is reduced to that which most efficiently brings about these ends. This corresponds with the scientific knowledge of *episteme* and the productive knowledge of *techne*. This is the point of departure for many scholars and practitioners of social studies education. As

Ross (2006) and Thornton (2005) contend, social studies teachers must actively engage in the ends of education rather than mindlessly utilizing means to achieve the ends of policy.

Additionally, scholars, practitioners, and professional organizations of social studies recognize the unique place of this content area for considering topics about values. To view this through the Aristotelian lens, they recognize that social studies disciplines are concerned with questions of good and bad for people. This type of knowledge is connected with *phronesis*. Perhaps, then, *phronesis* offers a more appropriate framework with which to understand social studies teaching. In the next section, I examine literature that discusses the concept of *phronesis* and its application to teaching.

### **Teaching as *Phronesis***

Scholars in various academic disciplines have returned to the concept of *phronesis* to challenge applied theory or technical models of practice. Most notably, perhaps, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1976) engages with *phronesis* as a central idea in his conception of a human science based upon philosophical hermeneutics in his book *Truth and Method*. More recently, scholars in various fields have pointed to the contributions that a phronetic understanding can provide in professional practice (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Flyvbjerg, Landman, & Schram, 2012; Kinsella & Pitman, 2012). Proponents of a phronetic orientation argue that professional practitioners are not those that simply apply general truths to concrete situations. Rather, professionals must contain within themselves the ability to make practical judgments given the complexities of each particular situation. The concept of teaching as *phronesis* may be understood within this broader context of *phronesis* in the professions.

Donald A. Schön's (1983) seminal work, *The Reflective Practitioner*, articulates a conception of professional practice that breaks from technical rationality. According to Schön,



technical rationality represents the view of professional knowledge “which has most powerfully shaped both our thinking about the professions and the institutional relations of research, education, and practice” (p. 21). This instrumental adjustment of means to ends is held as the most principal form of knowledge which a practitioner can acquire, with practical skills representing a less important, informal kind of knowledge (p. 27-28). Schön traces the dominance of technical rationality to the principal doctrines of positivism expressed by Auguste Comte in the first half of the 19th century. These doctrines championed empirical science as the only source of positive knowledge, sought to cleanse people’s minds of mysticism and superstition, and extended scientific knowledge and technical control to society with the hope of making technology moral and political (p. 32). Schön argues that between 1963 and 1982 the general public and the professions became increasingly aware of the limitations of the professions and of the importance of actual practice. He contends that, where technical rationality conceives of practice as problem *solving*, real practice is also concerned with problem *setting*, or “the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved” (p. 39-40). Using a powerful example of building roads, Schön writes that problem solving by the application of techniques occurs when one decides upon the kind of road to build. However, this is not the only consideration because “when the road they have built leads unexpectedly to the destruction of a neighborhood, they may find themselves again in a situation of uncertainty” (p. 40).

Though Schön never engages with the terminology of Aristotle’s intellectual states, their relevance is clearly evident in his work. He criticizes a model which holds professional practice to be primarily concerned with the first principles of theory, or epistemic knowledge. Also, Schön criticizes the model of technical rationality in professional practice because it is solely

concerned with the manipulation of means to achieve given ends. Such a model emphasizes the application of knowledge that is productive in achieving an end outside of the production, one of the core elements of *techne*. Reflective practitioners, however, must engage in problem *setting*. They must determine the ends to be achieved and whether or not they are desirable. Though it may be unwise to assume that Schön would readily identify his thought with *phronesis*, his example of building a road that could destroy a neighborhood illustrates that the question of ends must engage with things which are good and bad for humans, one of the core elements of *phronesis*. Consequently, Schön (1987) wrote a companion book entitled *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* that argues for a new design of teaching and learning aimed at reflective practice. Introducing this book, Schön contrasts the high ground of theory and technique, the problems of which are relatively unimportant to society, with the swampy lowland of practice in which lie the greatest problems of human concern that defy technical solution (p. 3).

It is this swampy lowland of practice which Joseph Dunne (1993) considers in his book *Back to the Rough Ground*. Dunne engages with a diverse set of philosophical thought from religion, art, and politics to show how philosophers in these disciplines have explicitly or implicitly discussed facets of *phronesis* and *techne* in their work. He engages with these philosophers to show how their tackling of the problem of rationalism in a more contemporary time points back to Aristotle's (2000) discussion of intellectual states in the *Ethics*, namely his distinction between *techne* and *phronesis*. The goal of Dunne's analysis is to understand practical philosophical thought which breaks with the technical rationality so common in the professions. He uses Schön's (1983) question, regarding why the "application of scientific theory and technique to the instrumental problems of practice" (p. 30) is the dominant view of professional knowledge, as his initial point of engagement (p. xiii). The practical issue that spurred Dunne's

interest in this book is of particular importance for this study. He explains that, while working in the college of education in the late 1970s, he was introduced to the behavioral objectives model. This model required teachers to base their instruction on pre-specified learning outcomes and success would be solely dependent on achieving said objectives. This rationality contradicted the practical knowledge that Dunne had observed among successful classroom teachers in his experiences. Thus, his book attempts to sketch out the “nature of rationality in teaching—and indeed, beyond this, the nature of any rational practice” (p. 3). The concept of *phronesis* forms a major part of this practical rationality.

The insights offered by Schön (1983, 1987) and Dunne (1993) illustrate that professional practice is often at odds with the technical rationality which dominates it. Dunne specifically experienced this problem arising in the practice of teaching. Many scholars in the field of education have applied the general discussion of *phronesis* in the professions to the discipline of teaching. Noel (1999), for example, discusses three different interpretations of *phronesis* that can give rise to different conceptions of teaching and that a combination of these interpretations makes up the concept of *phronesis* for teaching. The first interpretation is the rationality interpretation, which requires teachers to actively examine their beliefs, desires, and actions when deliberating about what to do in the classroom. The second is the situational perception and insight interpretation. Drawing upon Dunne (1993), Noel writes that this interpretation is concerned with the momentary insights that arise within experience. Dunne posits that those guided by *phronesis* may have insights that others in the same situation do not because they have an “eye” for it (p. 282). Lastly, the moral interpretation inextricably links practice with one’s character. Noel again draws upon Dunne for clarification of this interpretation, who writes that

there is no *phronesis* without virtuous character and no virtuous character without *phronesis* (p. 284).

Not all educational scholars consider *phronesis* an appropriate guide for understanding teaching like Dunne (1993) or Noel (1999). Kristjansson (2005) offers several criticisms of what is termed the “phronesis-praxis perspective” (PPP) on education. One criticism is that advocates of PPP in education hold to an outdated distinction between *techne* and *phronesis*. Kristjansson argues that Aristotle’s examples of those who engage in *techne*, such as medical practitioners, obviously would not engage in a strict procedural, rule-following method of practice. Rather, they engage in the same kind of practical, experiential knowledge which *phronesis* encompasses. Kristjansson points out that Dunne makes the distinction between a sort of technical, or rule-following, *techne* and a non-technical *techne*, requiring deliberation about practical situations (p. 464). Because Aristotle (2000) allowed for the same reflective knowledge within his account of *techne* that is found in *phronesis*, Kristjansson sees contemporary distinctions between *techne* and *phronesis* as somewhat misguided. Another major criticism offered by Kristjansson is that teaching is not an intrinsically moral act. Aristotle’s major distinction between *techne* and *phronesis* is that *techne* is about producing ends outside of the skill itself, while *phronesis* is about action that is good itself. Kristjansson denies that teaching can be considered an act that is good itself, writing, “the goods of teaching are only understandable independent of the practice since the end of that practice is ‘a practice beyond the activity’”(p. 470). Thus, Kristjansson rejects scholarship that has harkened back to *phronesis* as a more appropriate framework for understanding teaching.

Two questions emerge from Kristjansson’s (2005) criticism that are important for this study. First, is the technical understanding of *techne* appropriate? Second, is teaching itself a

moral act, thus distinguishing it from *techne*, and aligning it with *phronesis*? Undoubtedly, the answers to these questions cannot be given as an unqualified yes or no. In regard to the first question, it seems that most advocates of *phronesis* as a guide for teaching are responding to a technical understanding of *techne* in their practice. Schön (1983; 1987), Dunne (1993), and others criticize the top-down, managerial control of education for reducing teaching to a process of implementing uniform procedures. Perhaps, however, these scholars' appeals to reflective practice or situational judgments are really an appeal to a non-technical form of *techne*, rather than actual *phronesis*. This seems to be Kristjansson's assessment of PPP advocates. Central to the conclusion here is answering the second question raised by Kristjansson's criticism. The main distinction between *techne* and *phronesis* in Aristotle (2000) is between production and action. Aristotle writes, "For while production has an end distinct from itself, this could not be so with action, since the end here is acting well itself" (p. 107). Kristjansson denies that teaching can be considered an "end...acting well itself" because "the goods of teaching are only understandable independent of the practice" (p. 470). This quote may act as a key text in raising a defense of teaching as *phronesis*. Is teaching itself a moral act? Several scholars answer affirmatively because the goods of teaching are not only understandable independent of the practice.

Max van Manen (1991; 1994) provides a key defense of teaching as a moral act with his development of the concept of pedagogical tact. Van Manen returns to a more classical interpretation of pedagogy, rescuing it from contemporary notions of teaching technique. Pedagogy, rather, is connected with child-rearing and concerns leading the child to maturity. Though van Manen does not use the terminology, several aspects of his explanation of pedagogical tact clearly reveal elements of *phronesis*. First, he states that pedagogy requires

practical rather than intellectualized forms of knowledge. He writes that pedagogical tact is “unlearnable as mere behavioral principles, techniques, or methods...Pedagogy is primarily neither a science nor a technology. Yet it is often treated and researched in an empirically scientific way” (1991, p. 8-9). Again, to work from Kristjansson’s (2005) critique, perhaps van Manen is simply appealing to a non-technical form of *techne*. However, this interpretation seems to be untenable considering van Manen’s appeal to the moral virtue of teaching. For example, he writes that a pedagogue is “an educator...who understands children in a caring way, and who has a personal commitment and interest in children’s education and their growth toward mature adulthood” (1994, p. 139). Rather than appealing to *phronesis*, van Manen returns to Aristotle by describing pedagogy as a “virtue” (1991, p. 32). Recall that Dunne (1993) describes virtuous character and *phronesis* as being intimately connected, one not being able to exist without the other. Van Manen’s conception of pedagogy as virtue, then, must encapsulate some element of *phronesis*. To make this point more clear, van Manen writes, “By definition pedagogy is always concerned with the ability to distinguish between what is good and what is not good for children” (p. 10). Such discernment about what is good and bad for people is the key distinguishing characteristic of *phronesis*.

Several other scholars have written in defense of teaching as a moral act. Tom (1984) describes teaching as a “moral craft” by describing that teachers are daily involved with moral questions, such as: “What really matters during one’s life? During one’s career? During the next day or two? To what end does one pursue a particular activity” (p. 78). Tom writes that the answers to these questions emerge by coming to terms with countless moral situations in a lifetime (p. 79). Birmingham (2004) further connects teaching and morality, like van Manen (1991), by connecting *phronesis* with Aristotle’s (2000) broader concept of virtue. She argues

that teachers must continually seek out the virtuous mean between extremes in educational contexts. She uses the example of wholeheartedness as an educational virtue which teachers must possess. Deficiency in wholeheartedness results in apathy, whereas excess in wholeheartedness results in obsession. Possessing *phronesis* is central in finding the virtuous mean, or appropriate moral character, in between these two extremes. She writes, “Phronesis enables a teacher to find the means of wholeheartedness, avoiding a fall into apathy and, at the same time, maintaining a healthy and realistic perspective on one’s vocation and importance” (p. 320).

These perspectives indicate that teaching is a moral act because it is inherently concerned with the well-being of students and because teachers must possess moral virtues in order to successfully teach. Higgins (2003) provides a different perspective on teaching as a moral act by arguing that the “ethics of teaching” cannot only be concerned with the well-being of children or maintaining moral characteristics in the act of teaching, which he describes as “moral professionalism” (p. 134). He writes, “The ethics of teaching...must be that domain of inquiry concerned with whether and why the activity of teaching is worthwhile *to the teacher*” (p. 134). Higgins continues by arguing that teaching promotes the growth of the teacher in addition to the student, thereby defining it as a moral action concerned with living well. He writes that because education is a deeply ethical project intended for student growth, “it is easy to forget that the practice of teaching is itself a project for the teacher, part of the teacher’s quest to lead a good life” (p. 135). The argument made by Higgins and the other scholars cited here is that teaching is itself a moral act. When pedagogy is viewed from a strict understanding of content knowledge and teaching technique, an interpretation rejected by van Manen (1991), it is easy to come to the conclusion that Kristjansson (2005) does. Teaching is simply the mean that produces some end. These ends may have moral implications, such as when a student applies historical knowledge to

their life in a way that makes them more socially responsible, but the act of teaching itself is not moral. Therefore, it cannot be associated with *phronesis*. When pedagogy is understood as the direct guiding of students for their own welfare, however, connections with *phronesis* seem unavoidable. As stated by the various scholars cited here, teaching is itself a moral act because it is inherently tied to what is good and bad for both students and teachers. Additionally, teaching requires the acquisition of virtuous characteristics. It is these considerations on the morality of teaching that distinguish it as an act guided by *phronesis*.

The previous discussion explained how teaching has been understood as a phronetic act from a philosophical perspective. Now, I examine how the concept of teaching as *phronesis* has been applied in actual educational practices. In this study, I posit that institutional controls limit teachers' ability to understand and practice their teaching as *phronesis*. Melville, et al. (2012), however, offer an alternative to this approach. In a mixed-methods study, the authors examined how a science department script functioned in the teaching and learning of science as inquiry. They found that the script provided an opportunity for engagement and conversation "into the episteme, techne, and phronesis of science teaching" (p. 849). The script did not act as the mode of teaching. Rather, teacher conversations about the script articulated the "script" for teaching science as inquiry. To explain this point, they draw upon Halverson (2004), who writes that "the adaptation and use of an artifact are guided by the phronesis of the practitioner" (p. 844 in Melville, et al.).

The study by Melville, et al. (2012) raises important points. First, it provides an alternative point of consideration for this study. Institutional controls may actually serve as a catalyst for phronetic understandings of teaching through teachers' negotiations with such controls. Second, it raises the possibility that *phronesis* does not necessarily exclude epistemic or



technical modes of knowledge. The authors point out that a teaching script, a decidedly technical form of teaching, is still guided by *phronesis* when the practitioner uses their judgment on how best to implement it. This harkens back to the assertion made by Dewey (1929) that educational findings should contribute to the judgment of the teacher rather than to confine teaching to a uniform procedure. A more integrative approach to teaching is discussed by Amobi (2006), who argues that a framework which connects the procedural knowledge of *episteme* with the situation-specific knowledge of *phronesis* can allow for teachers to be more reflective about their practice. Eisner (2002), meanwhile, makes connections between *phronesis* and *techne*. He uses *phronesis* as a more appropriate guide for teaching than an applied science model of *episteme*. However, Eisner also considers that *phronesis* is not enough for achieving excellence in teaching. *Phronesis* must be accompanied by craft or the artistry of execution that must be exhibited by successful teachers. These authors speak to the fact that *phronesis* can encapsulate epistemic and technical forms of knowledge within its overall framework.

Other scholars have chosen to focus solely on the merits of *phronesis* and its application to teaching. Phelan (2005) gives particular attention to *phronesis* in a qualitative study of a student teacher in an inquiry-based teacher education program. Phelan connects the notion of inquiry-based teaching with *phronesis* because it “rejects the notion of a predetermined set of competencies or a discrete set of teaching strategies that can be delivered to teachers in anticipation of practice” (p. 342). Burdened by the messiness of particular experiences in her classroom, with no readily apparent “textbook” solution, the teacher in the study began to “let go of her faith in the viability of abstract knowledge as a source of teaching excellence” (p. 345). Phelan describes that in actual pedagogical situations, the participant took recourse in the abstract knowledge of subject matter or educational theory. However, this recourse seemed to

prevent the teacher from being open to her classroom experience (p. 353). In one powerful example, a student on a field trip refused to join the rest of the class at the park. The teacher responded to the student by saying, “Well I’m going to the park myself. I like to play outside,” and walking away. Despite tentativeness at this method, the teacher had a sense that it would be effective in the particular case, which it was. Phelan suggests that this might not be considered expert pedagogy on an abstract level, but that it should not be dismissed, because it rests on the practical wisdom that beginning teachers need to cultivate (p. 353-355).

A study by Field and Latta (2001) with second-year student teachers also emphasizes *phronesis* and its application to classroom experience. In the estimation of these authors, questions about becoming experienced as a teacher amongst their students and colleagues would be dominated by *techne* and *episteme*, with *phronesis* “neglected or negated all together” (p. 886). They contend that an exclusive focus on *techne* silences the “who” of teaching for the “what”, sacrificing later growth of the teacher for “the quick blush of technical competence” (p. 886). Likewise, they argue that the abstract theories provided by *episteme* are “worldless” and lack the embodied experiential knowledge provided by *phronesis*. To illustrate their philosophical assertions about teaching, Field and Latta recount a story about one of their student teachers in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade art lesson about the Renaissance. They describe how the student teacher engaged her students in an imaginative, thought-provoking discussion of the time period and its artistic characteristics. However, at the end of the lesson, the student teacher had students return to their desks to copy down notes, which garnered a negative response by the students. The authors contend that this mixing of teaching strategies might actually be commendable from an evaluation checklist standpoint. However, they point out that such a reliance on preconceived techniques stunted the student teacher’s ability to see and judge within the given situation. Field

and Latta state that the practical judgment of *phronesis* alleviates this problem by attuning the practitioner to what is at stake in a given situation (p. 892). They conclude that this phronetic approach to teaching encapsulates what it is to become experienced as a teacher.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I articulated both the theories which frame this study and where this study lies within the established literature. From a methodological standpoint, Flyvbjerg's (2001) notion of "phronetic social science" guides the design and analysis of the study. I not only seek to describe how institutional controls impact teaching as *phronesis*, but I also intentionally evaluate the desirability of the educational consequences that exist from such a relationship. Thus, the study considers key issues of value in addition to explanation. Such a methodological approach carries with it many implications for research practices which will be discussed in the next chapter. Several theories inform the unit of analysis in the study. Apple's (1986) notion of the "technicization of teaching", Dewey's (1929; 1973) numerous educational theories, and Dreyfus and Dreyfus's (1986) theory of human expertise all frame the interpretations of the cases in this study. Apple describes how education institutions function as state apparatuses which produce the ends of the state. Dewey contributes many ideas about teaching and education which depart from contemporary educational policies and which align it closely with the concept of *phronesis*. Lastly, Dreyfus and Dreyfus show that experts are those that do not operate according to formulaic procedures, but that use contextual experience to make worthwhile judgments. These theories inform the study because I inquired into the notions of teaching and expertise that seem to be represented in the case data that I analyzed.

The present study is situated within four major themes in the literature. First, the idea of institutional control of teaching is clearly evident in the literature. Numerous scholars have

discussed the impact of neoliberal educational reforms of the past several decades and their negative impact on teaching. Some have even described testing and curricular mandates as requirements which transform teaching into a process reflecting epistemic or technical modes of knowledge. Second, institutional control of teaching may vary across learning environments. Scholars have suggested that the managerial control of teaching has exhibited more strongly in urban environments with high minority populations. Third, I discussed conceptualizations of the purposes and practices of social studies teaching. Value-laden concepts, such as teaching for democracy, social justice, multiculturalism, and citizenship are shown to pervade the thought of many scholars and practitioners of social studies education. The literature also points to the notion that contemporary institutional controls have a greater negative impact on social studies than other content areas because of the incongruence between educational policies and the purposes of social studies. Lastly, I examined the concept of teaching as *phronesis*. Clearly, the literature reflects a call for attention to *phronesis* in professional practice and numerous scholars have applied this call to education in general and teaching in particular. Understanding teaching as a moral act, concerned with the practical knowledge of contextual experience, relates to the central characteristics of *phronesis*. The present study seeks to incorporate each of these themes into a comprehensive analysis of how institutional controls affect teaching as *phronesis* in social studies.

I intend to address a specific gap in the literature through my analysis in this study. Namely, there does not appear to be much analysis illustrating how institutional controls operate relative to phronetic conceptualizations in social studies education. This is the contribution that the present study intends to provide. In the next chapter, I discuss the particular methods used to conduct this study. I begin this discussion with a review of the particular methodological

framework and its implications for methods, and follow this with a description of the study participants, the research process, and the qualitative analysis I implemented.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### **Introduction**

This study provides an in-depth case examination of how institutional controls impact social studies teachers' ability to understand and practice their teaching as *phronesis*. As discussed previously, *phronesis* informs the theoretical framework which guides this study in two important ways. First, the scholarly literature extensively covers the notion of teaching understood and practiced as *phronesis* and this acts as the unit of analysis. Second, Flyvbjerg (2001) offers *phronesis* as a methodological guide for conducting social science research, and I maintain this research orientation in this study. I stated previously that, in a way, I intend to study *phronesis* phronetically. This particular methodological approach has several implications which I discuss in this chapter. First, I examine the major purposes and strengths of conducting a phronetic study. Then, I discuss the particular research design and methods utilized, which I believe are appropriate for carrying out a study guided by *phronesis*. Lastly, I describe the participants who acted as cases in this study, the data collection procedures, and the methods of analysis.

#### **Methodological Implications**

In the literature review, I explained that there has been a general call for attention to the concept of *phronesis* in the professional sphere. In this study, I attempt to understand *phronesis* in the teaching profession. However, Flyvbjerg (2001) has also retrieved the concept of *phronesis* for application in the social sciences. Flyvbjerg maintains that approaches to the social sciences have been misguided because they have attempted to emulate the explanatory and predictive power of the natural sciences. He writes, however, that the “social sciences are

strongest where the natural sciences are weakest” (p. 3). The major strength of the social sciences is their contribution to reflexive analysis and discussion of values and interests, “which is at the core of *phronesis*” (p. 3). According to Flyvbjerg, it is this reconceptualization of a “phronetic social science” which will allow the social sciences to flourish.

There are several methodological implications which emanate from the notion of “phronetic social science”. Flyvbjerg (2001) returns to Aristotle’s (2000) articulation of *phronesis* in the *Ethics* to explain these methodological implications for social science research. First, he explains that *phronesis* places emphasis on particulars. Thus, research which is phronetic must take into account context and the individual experiences and practices of those under investigation. Second, he notes that *phronesis* is concerned with values, or with what is good and bad for humans. Lastly, Flyvbjerg notes that neither Aristotle, nor contemporary scholars of *phronesis*, have given due attention to power. Flyvbjerg discusses the implications of power for *phronesis* and includes considerations of power in the value-rational questions which phronetic studies should seek to answer. He provides several methodological guidelines consistent with the practical aspects of *phronesis*. These include “getting close to reality”, “emphasizing little things”, “looking at practice before discourse”, “studying cases and contexts”, and “dialoguing with a polyphony of voices” (p. 132-140). Additionally, there are numerous methodological guidelines and questions provided that emphasize the consideration of values inherent in *phronesis*. Flyvbjerg suggests the following value-rational questions in which social science researchers should engage: 1) Where are we going? 2) Is this desirable? 3) What should be done? 4) Who gains and who loses; by which mechanisms of power? (p. 60). Also, “focusing on values” and “placing power at the core of analysis” are methodological guidelines which might be followed to answer these questions (p. 130-132).

The methodological orientation of this study is based in Flyvbjerg's (2001) notion of "phronetic social science". This entails focusing on context, power, and values. The research questions that guide this study each reflect these aspects of phronetic social science. The major research question is the following: How do local institutional controls affect social studies teachers' ability to engage in phronetic teaching and phronetic understandings of teaching? This question implies both context and power. It focuses on the particular practices of teachers and how they understand their daily practice. Additionally, it seeks to understand how institutional requirements affect these daily practices. Recalling Apple's (1986) assertion that educational institutions function as apparatuses of the state, the question clearly gives attention to power and how it operates within the context of social studies education. Though this question is primarily descriptive, aiming at explaining the particular impact of institutional controls upon *phronesis* in specific contexts, another consideration of the research questions focuses on values. The goal of phronetic social science is to contribute to the "ongoing social dialogue and praxis in a society" by engaging in value-rational questions (Flyvbjerg, p. 139). The following questions encompass Flyvbjerg's value-rational questions by evaluating the relationship between institutional controls and *phronesis*: What do these cases indicate about how institutional controls function in social studies education? Who wins and who loses; by which mechanisms of power? Does this contribute to quality social studies education, is this desirable, and are there other possibilities? The research questions exemplify some of the core elements of a methodological orientation grounded in *phronesis*. Next, I discuss how this orientation affects the study's design and methods.

**Research design.** One of the key elements of *phronesis* and, consequently, Flyvbjerg's (2001) articulation of "phronetic social science" is its emphasis on context and practice.



“Studying cases and contexts” is one of the methodological guidelines suggested by Flyvbjerg for conducting phronetic research. Naturally, case study design fits well with the research goal of capturing the concrete experiences of teachers and how institutional controls affect their practice. This is the design used to answer the research questions in the present study. In this section, I discuss the strengths of case study, and its relation to the methodological framework I have discussed, before explaining the particular design I utilized.

The case study as a research design or strategy has carried a wide range of definitions among scholars. According to Yin (2003), the most frequent definitions focus on the kinds of topics to which case studies are applied. He mentions decisions, organizations, processes, programs, neighborhoods, institutions, and events as topics which have been the major focus of case studies. Yin, however, argues that such approaches focusing on topics fail to take into account the technical features of the case study strategy. He defines case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 11). He adds a second part to this definition, explaining that case study inquiry will include more variables of interest than data points and, thus, will rely upon multiple sources of evidence and benefit from the prior development of theoretical positions (p. 12). After the discussion of case studies and their characteristics, Yin continues to explore the different possible designs of case studies, which can be conducted quantitatively or qualitatively.

Some scholars have pointed to the case study as being naturally fitted to qualitative methods. Stake (1978), for example, mentions that, though case study has often been used to generate theories and test hypotheses, the major purpose of the case study is to generate a deep understanding of the case itself. He explains that case studies can often be highly statistical, but

that the salient features of case study are not for building theory or explaining laws. Rather, he writes that the case study “proliferates rather than narrows. One is left with more to pay attention to rather than less. The case study attends to the idiosyncratic more than to the pervasive” (p. 7). Stake concludes that the critical features of case study connect more with qualitative methods than quantitative.

Additionally, Dyson and Genishi (2005) focus on the case study as a means to investigate the particulars of experience. They write that “it is the messy complexity of human experience that leads researchers to case studies in the qualitative or interpretive tradition” (p. 3). The representations and interactions with experience foster the meaning that may be of concern in qualitative approaches. This is dependent on the “contexts...that people bring to those experiences” (p. 5). The thoughts offered by these scholars illustrate that case studies focus on particular phenomena within particular contexts and that deep knowledge of the case is more important than generalized knowledge aiming at prediction or theory. These features of case study connect well with Flyvbjerg’s (2001) “phronetic social science”, which also places particular emphasis on practices, context, and local meaning. Stake’s assertion that theory building and hypothesis testing are subordinate to case understanding resounds with Flyvbjerg’s (2001) statement that the goal of phronetic research is to produce particular knowledge contributing to social praxis “rather than to generate ultimate, unequivocally verified knowledge” (p. 139).

Several criticisms of case study as a legitimate scientific research strategy have been levied against its proponents. Yin (2003) explains that some critics view case study as only appropriate for exploratory phases of investigation and, therefore, they occupy a low status in a hierarchy of research strategies (p. 3). Not surprisingly, Flyvbjerg (2006) has defended case

study research by examining several of its misconceptions. By investigating the role of case knowledge in producing general scientific knowledge, and not just knowledge in the social sciences, Flyvbjerg breaks down some of the conventional wisdom about the value of case study. Contrary to popular belief, he argues that concrete, context-dependent knowledge is more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals (p. 224). In regard to the charge that single cases are not generalizable, Flyvbjerg argues that single cases can generalize in terms of falsification, and that formal generalization is overvalued while the “force of example” is undervalued (p. 228). He also argues that, based on this reinterpretation of generalizability, case study is not only limited to generating hypotheses or hypothesis testing (p. 229). Another charge against case study is that it contains an internal bias toward verification of the researcher’s preconceived notions. Flyvbjerg, however, argues that the intimate knowledge of the case actually leads researchers to cast off their preconceived notions more often than those who apply statistics to large groups (p. 236). Finally, Flyvbjerg addresses the notion that case studies are difficult to summarize. He argues that this is somewhat correct, but that case studies naturally resist brief summaries. Good case studies, rather, should saturate themselves in the phenomena of the particular experience without concern for theory-driven considerations. Flyvbjerg cites Labov and Waletzky (1966), who write that when a good narrative is finished, “it should be unthinkable for a bystander to say, ‘So what?’ (p. 240 in Flyvbjerg).

The connections between phronetic social science and case study should already be somewhat evident in these thoughts. Case study focuses on the particulars of experience and the context-dependent knowledge that a focus on daily practice generates, which are key elements of *phronesis*. Thomas (2010) makes this connection more explicit, however. He explains that arguments against case study because of generalization fail to recognize the limits of induction in

the social sciences. Research into the social world should focus rather on abduction, or “conclusions drawn from everyday generalizations” that are “unpretentious in their assumptions of fallibility and provisionality” (p. 577). The contingency, or “messiness” as Dyson and Genishi (2005) phrase it, of the social world described by Thomas resists assumptions of theoretical validation. He connects abduction with the practical knowledge offered by *phronesis*, which is about “understanding and behavior in particular situations” (p. 578). Thomas argues that there is a need to move away from generalizable knowledge to exemplary knowledge. Drawing upon Gadamer’s (1975) notion of the “fusion of horizons”, Thomas explains that exemplary knowledge is “example viewed and heard in the context of another’s experience...but used in the context of one’s own.” It is not typical, representative, or a model to follow, but is “a particular representation given in context” that is “interpretable only in the context of one’s own experience—in the context, in other words, of one’s *phronesis*, rather than theory” (p. 578).

Based on the considerations offered by these scholars, it seems that case study offers an appropriate design for conducting a study guided by *phronesis*. In this study, I examine how institutional controls affect social studies teachers’ ability to practice and understand their teaching as *phronesis*. Another feature of this study is examining how this relationship may vary according to teachers at different levels of expertise and within different learning environments. Thus, the study employed a comparative case study design. Social studies teachers at characteristically different schools and at different levels of experience were treated as cases. This provided the opportunity for multiple case comparisons. I compared the impact of institutional controls upon teaching as *phronesis* between cases of inexperienced and experienced teachers and between cases of teachers in urban and rural contexts. In the next section, I discuss the various methods used in the case study design.

**Methods.** It is important to note that case study is a particular strategy or design and not a particular method. Additionally, case studies can be carried out both quantitatively or qualitatively. However, as Stake (1978) argues, the primary purpose of understanding the case makes case study design more conducive to qualitative approaches. Furthermore, qualitative methods are more attuned to many of the methodological guidelines offered by Flyvbjerg (2001). Based on these considerations, I utilized three specific qualitative methods of data collection in this study: classroom observation, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews.

Classroom observations acted as somewhat of a baseline for data collection. Each observation generated in-depth knowledge about the actual practices that teachers engaged in on a regular basis and provided details to explore during interviews. Marshall and Rossman (2011) describe observation as “the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors, and artifacts” (p. 139). In this study, systematic recording of classroom teaching through field notes was used in each observation. Classroom observations allowed for particular emphasis on each participant’s practices and remained consistent with some of the key themes of phronetic social science. Several of Flyvbjerg’s (2001) methodological guidelines emphasize the practical aspects of *phronesis*. These include “getting close to reality”, “emphasizing little things”, “looking at practice before discourse”, and “studying cases and contexts”. Thus, classroom observations acted as a core method in carrying out a study guided by *phronesis*.

Another method that I used for this study was document analysis. As Marshall and Rossman (2011) note, observation includes artifacts in addition to events and behaviors. Therefore, both formal and informal documents acted as a source of data that individually informed findings and generated spaces for inquiry during interviews. Recall that curriculum mandates and textbooks were posited as institutional controls that have negatively affected social

studies teaching (Au, 2009; Ross, 2006). Official documents, such as courses of study, documents listing district standards, textbooks, lesson plans, and institutional publications, provided sources of data. Informal documents that participants utilized in their classes provided additional sources of data. These primarily consisted of worksheets, tests, class activities, novels, and other documents that participants assigned to students. Analysis of official documents allowed for an understanding of possible institutional controls, while analysis of classroom documents allowed for an understanding of how teachers' practices aligned with or broke from institutional norms and requirements.

The last qualitative method implemented for this study was semi-structured interviews. Marshall and Rossman (2011) note that researchers often seek insights from participants because of the difficulty in interpreting actions (p. 139). This was particularly true in this study. At times, institutional controls were somewhat obvious, such as when a teacher took away from instructional time to write specific curriculum objectives or Common Core standards on the board. However, institutional controls more often acted in indirect and discreet ways. Thus, it was difficult to see solely from observation or document analysis when and how institutional requirements controlled teaching. Additionally, *phronesis* is a philosophical concept that is difficult for an observer to identify. In most instances, observation alone was insufficient for determining when a participant used practical wisdom. Therefore, because of the difficulty in interpreting actions, semi-structured interviews allowed for respondents to address aspects of their practices and key elements pertaining to documents. For the most part, observations and document analysis acted as an initial source of data, while interviews provided deeper meaning to the practices and ideas reflected in observations and documents. The data collection procedure outlined later reflects this process. Another aspect of the study addressed teacher understandings

concerning practice, institutional controls, and the purpose of social studies education. Interviews were especially necessary for generating knowledge about what teachers personally thought about these topics.

## **Participants**

The participants in this comparative case study were comprised of four social studies teachers. The design of the study was intended to investigate how institutional controls affected teaching as *phronesis* between “expert” and “novice” teachers and between “rural” and “urban” teachers. Recall from the literature review that scholars have suggested that institutional controls related to testing and the curriculum have historically marginalized schools in poor urban environments with high minority populations to a greater degree than other areas. Thus, when incorporating “urban” and “rural” in the study, I wanted to compare a high poverty, mostly Black or African-American school in an urban environment with a mostly White school, with lower levels of poverty, in a rural environment. After obtaining appropriate permission from school districts, administrators, and the university Institutional Review Board, I purposively sampled two teacher dyads from schools that met these qualifications. The “rural” teachers were selected from two separate middle schools in the Alabama County School System. Both of these schools were located in areas with a population of less than 3,000 people. Additionally, these schools had a high majority of White students with average levels of poverty relative to state and county statistics. The “urban” teachers were selected from the same school in the Alabama City School System. This school was located in a city with a population of approximately 90,000 people. Additionally, the school had a 99% Black or African-American population with a high level of poverty relative to state and county statistics. Thus, the participants occupied two

characteristically different learning environments in regard to location, race, and poverty level, allowing a comparison between the two.

I also sampled participants purposively according to differing levels of experience. According to the Dreyfus (1986) model of expertise, beginners are more likely to operate according to formal rules and theories, while experts are more likely to operate according to contextual judgments and experiential knowledge. Apple's (1986) considerations of state-controlled educational institutions, however, suggest that notions of expertise within contemporary education are the opposite. Institutional controls may regulate teaching to such an extent that expert teachers are understood as master technicians who know how to effectively implement institutional norms of practice. To form the two teacher dyads for the study, I selected one participant to represent the "novice" teacher and one to represent the "expert" teacher. For purposes of this study, I made these determinations based upon years of experience. "Novice" teachers were those with five years or less teaching experience and "expert" teachers were those with more than five years of teaching experience. Ideally, I wanted to have a teacher dyad with a tenured faculty member and a pre-service teacher. This was possible for the "urban" dyad but not in the "rural" dyad. Thus, there was a smaller difference in years of experience between the teachers in the "rural" dyad. However, because Dreyfus actually incorporates five different levels of expertise, this variety allowed for a better identification of individual participants according to this model. Primarily, for this sub-topic, I used the two teacher dyads as cases rather than the individual participants. By comparing these dyads, I identified which model of expertise, the Dreyfus model or the "teacher as technician" concept described by Apple, seemed evident in the progression of years of experience between the two teachers.



## **Data Collection**

The data collection did not operate according to a strict formulaic process, in keeping with the basic tenets of phronetic social science. The circumstances of conducting the study constantly called for situational decisions. Macklin and Whiteford (2012) have recently argued for such a phronetic orientation among qualitative researchers. They write, “Qualitative research demands of the researcher the ability to adjust to the changing circumstances of a situation and a capacity to combine knowledge, judgment, understanding, emotion, and intuition to act appropriately” (p. 93). However, I can provide a general overview of the data collection process which incorporated each of the qualitative methods articulated previously.

The majority of data collection occurred over the course of a ten-week period. I initially intended to devote two weeks to collecting and analyzing documents, four weeks to observations, and four weeks to interviews. However, the dynamics of the visits and participant schedules made this structure difficult. I visited schools simultaneously, but the first five weeks of data collection were primarily devoted to participants 1A and 2A, while the latter five weeks were given to participants 1B and 2B. The general format of data collection went as follows: I generated field notes from ten total observations for each participant, with the exception of participant 2B. As a student intern, participant 2B had limited teaching opportunities, and therefore, I only conducted three total observations. After five classroom observations, I conducted my first interview with each participant, which focused on questions generated from observations and documents. My second interviews with each participant focused on the next five classroom observations and document materials. For participant 2B, the first and second interviews focused more narrowly on the activities and practices observed during his limited observations. Though I did not have as much observational data from participant 2B, I was also

able to focus more attention on specific practices that I did not have time for with other participants. Also, because of his status as an intern, these observations comprised the majority of his total teaching experiences, where the observations for other participants represented only a snapshot. At the completion of observations, I conducted a more structured third interview with each participant that focused more on their beliefs about teaching and social studies than the observations or class documents. Though it followed a general structure and touched upon similar topics, I also allowed flexibility to follow the respondents' lead during these interviews. Rather than collecting documents up front, I asked for class documents on the days that teachers implemented them. Additionally, I asked for documents or references to documents at convenient times for the participants, typically before or after class time. Finally, after the primary ten-week data collection period and my first cycle of analysis, I generated a "member check" interview for each participant to establish legitimacy for my interpretations. I inquired about data that I did not understand and asked if participants felt certain interpretations represented their attitudes and experiences accurately. I then used this data to confirm or disconfirm any codes or categories that I had generated. This speaks to the methods of analysis I utilized for the interpretation of findings, which I discuss next.

## **Analysis**

I generated the major findings for this study from a thematic analysis of the collected data. In this section, I outline the analytical structure followed to generate these findings. Primarily, I utilized three cycles of coding to generate the final themes. The first cycle of coding utilized both descriptive and "in vivo" codes, as described by Saldaña (2009). Descriptive coding was used to summarize the basic topic of passages of data into a word or short phrase (p. 70), while "in vivo" coding summarized data using verbatim terminology from participants (p. 74).

For the second cycle of coding, I implemented what Saldaña refers to as focused coding. This coding technique searches for the most frequent or important initial codes to develop the most salient categories in the data corpus (p. 155). Thus, I analyzed the first cycle codes for patterns and developed those into broader categories. The third and final cycle of coding developed the categories into overarching themes. During this cycle, I implemented elements of the constant comparative method articulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Though I did not engage in Grounded Theory, as I analyzed my data through a specifically articulated theoretical lens, I felt that the basis of the constant comparative method worked well with a comparative case study. As I analyzed participants' categories for the development of themes, I compared them to previous themes of other participants to see if these connected. If I judged that certain categories pointed to a new pattern that distinguished it from previous themes, I created a new theme. Finally, for purposes of reporting these themes in narrative format, I decided to incorporate an analytical structure outlining the topics represented by the major themes. In the context of analysis, I began to decipher the key topics which my broader categories and themes addressed. These five areas of investigation addressed the following topics: 1) evidence of institutional controls 2) evidence of judgment/autonomy 3) pedagogy 4) attitudes toward institutional controls 5) attitudes about social studies. I placed the major themes into the appropriate area of investigation which allowed for an easier reporting of findings in chapter IV. Next, I provide a rationale for how each area of investigation helped answer the research questions.

Though all of these areas inform each research question to an extent, I discuss particular connections between areas and questions here. The first two areas address the major research question of how institutional controls impact teaching as *phronesis*. In order to establish the existence and level of institutional control working within each case, I examined the data for

clear evidence of institutional controls, such as when a teacher said that they were required to teach the course of study objectives. Considering that practical judgment and freedom from strict rule-following are key features of *phronesis*, I also examined the data for evidence of judgment and autonomy. This allowed for understandings of how and to what degree each participant exhibited judgment and autonomy in relation to institutional controls. I also felt that pedagogy would be a key area to investigate because the specific approaches and practices of each teacher might reveal elements of conforming to or breaking from institutional controls. This helped answer the sub-question regarding expertise as it illustrated which teachers acted according to institutional “rules” and which did not. Finally, I also analyzed the data according to teacher attitudes about institutional controls and social studies. Attitudes about institutional norms determined if each teacher felt affected by the mandates of their institution and how they reacted to them, which informed both the overarching question and the sub-question on expertise. Attitudes about social studies illustrated if and how each participant understood social studies as a value-oriented discipline aligned with *phronesis*. It also showed how institutional objectives reflected in their attitudes, thus informing the overarching research question. Comparisons of all these areas helped determine any differences in the degree of institutional impact between learning environments.

## **Summary**

This chapter summarized the framework which guided this study and discussed the methodological implications of such an orientation. I argued that the emphasis placed on context and daily practices by Flyvbjerg’s (2001) notion of phronetic social science made it conducive to particular research designs and methods. I then provided an overview of the purposes and strengths of case study to argue for its validity in conducting a phronetic study. Additionally, I

provided a rationale for the particular case study design and qualitative research methods that I implemented. Lastly, I provided an overview of the participants, data collection, and analytical techniques. In the next chapter, I report the major findings that emerged from analysis of each case. For each participant, I provide a short background followed by a case narrative that follows the analytical structure of the five areas of investigation.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### **Introduction**

This chapter features the major findings that emerged from analysis of each participant in the study. I begin by providing an overview of each participant including the features which are relevant for this study, namely the demographic context and the years of experience for each teacher. Then, I present the findings in two dyads, the first representing the rural setting and the second the urban setting. Each dyad includes presentation of individual findings for the “novice” and “expert” representatives. Participant 1A was the rural novice teacher, participant 1B was the rural expert, participant 2A was the urban expert, and participant 2B was the urban novice. This allowed for easier comparison between the two dyads in the final chapter. After presenting the findings from each case, I conclude by briefly discussing common and divergent themes across the cases.

Recall that I generated the major findings according to the five areas of investigation of 1) evidence of institutional controls, 2) evidence of judgment/autonomy, 3) pedagogy, 4) attitudes toward institutional controls, and 5) attitudes about social studies. At the end of chapter III, I discussed why I implemented these distinct categorizations of major themes and how they connect with the study’s research questions. To give a sense of the major themes that I will present and explain in this chapter, I summarize them here. For area of investigation 1, analysis generated themes of *curricular controls*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills* for each participant, while themes of *testing policies* and *teaching policies* emerged from analysis of 2A and the additional theme of *external university control* emerged from analysis of 2B. For area of investigation 2, there were more diverse themes, though, as I explain in chapter V, these

ultimately were very similar in nature. Themes of *institutional leeway*, *situational judgments*, and *limited judgment of ends* emerged from participant 1A, themes of judgment related to *classroom materials* and *extra-curricular content/non-traditional pedagogy* emerged from participant 1B, themes of *institutional leeway*, *instructional decisions*, and *limited judgment about ends* emerged from participant 2A, and themes of *daily classroom issues* and *autonomy of instructional decisions* emerged from participant 2B. For area of investigation 3, participants were categorized according to the themes of *teacher-centered/traditional* and *student-centered/non-traditional* pedagogy. Participants 1A and 2B exhibited shifts between *teacher-centered/traditional* and *student-centered/non-traditional* pedagogy, while 1B was characterized primarily by *teacher-centered/traditional* pedagogy and 2A was characterized by *student-centered/non-traditional* pedagogy. For area of investigation 4, I categorized participants according to themes of *conforming/non-critical* and *non-conforming/critical* attitudes toward institutional controls. 1A and 1B exhibited differing levels of shifting between these attitudes, while 2A expressed primarily *critical/non-conforming attitudes* and 2B expressed primarily *conforming/non-critical attitudes*. Finally, for area of investigation 5, each participant expressed themes of *institutional objectives* and *societal goals* in their attitudes about social studies. For a visual representation of the major findings of the study, refer to table 5 on page 192.

These are the major findings that I present and explain in this chapter and that I engage with in chapter V. Ultimately, I used these findings to answer the research questions at the heart of this study: 1) How do local institutional controls affect social studies teachers' ability to engage in phronetic teaching and phronetic understandings of teaching?, 2) What frameworks of expertise did each case and each teacher dyad represent?, 3) How did the relationship between institutional control and phronetic social studies teaching differ between urban and rural learning

environments?, and 4) What do these cases indicate about how institutional controls function in social studies education? What mechanisms of power exist? Who wins and who loses by these mechanisms of power? Does this contribute to quality Social Studies education? Next, I provide an overview of the participants in the study, paying specific attention to the designation of their learning environments and their categorization as an “expert” or “novice” teacher.

### **Dyad I-Rural**

**Participant A.** Mr. Smith is a 7<sup>th</sup> grade Civics and 8<sup>th</sup> grade World History teacher at County Middle School in the town of Pinehill, AL.<sup>1</sup> According to the 2010 census, this location had a population of less than 1,000 people. The following are the racial demographics of the town: approximately 84% White, 15% Black or African American, and <1% of a different race (United States Census Bureau, 2010). The middle school where Mr. Smith teaches reflected this rural population and demography. According to the latest information available, the school had an average of 440 students in attendance per day. It must also be stated that this school is a joint elementary and middle school, meaning that the number of students at the secondary level is far less than the 440 students reported. The exact number cannot be determined as the official reports do not include a distinction. Additionally, 57.1% of students were reported as being eligible for free or reduced meals in this school, which was slightly greater than the state average of 52.7%, but slightly less than the county average of 58.1% in the most recent year the state released data (Alabama State Department of Education, 2009a). Based upon the classes that I observed, Mr. Smith’s average class size was 26 students, with approximately 90% White students and 10% Black or African-American students. These features characterize the environment in which Mr. Smith teaches as a rural, mostly White school with a relatively average poverty level.

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<sup>1</sup> All names of individuals, cities, and schools are pseudonyms to protect identity.



For purposes of the study, I sought out two teacher participants for each dyad, with one representing a “novice” teacher and one representing an “expert” teacher solely in terms of years of experience. For the “rural” dyad, Mr. Smith represented the “novice” teacher as he met the qualification of having five years or less experience as a classroom teacher. Of course, the terms “novice” and “expert” are general and mainly used for engagement with the frameworks of expertise that I articulated in the literature review. I say this because Mr. Smith has five years of teaching experience and thus is on the high end of what I classify for my purposes as a “novice” teacher. Additionally, Mr. Smith has class A teaching certification in the state of Alabama with a Master’s degree in Secondary Education from an accredited institution of higher education. However, for purposes of this study, Mr. Smith represented the “novice” teacher for comparison with the other teacher participants in this study and especially with the “expert” representative in this particular dyad, which I discuss next.

**Participant B.** Ms. Happ is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade World History teacher at County Middle School in the town of Valleytown, AL. According to the 2010 census, this location had a population of approximately 2,500 people. This included approximately a 97% White population, 3% Black of African American population, and <1% population of another race (United State Census Bureau, 2010). Just like Mr. Smith, Ms. Happ teaches at a joint elementary and middle school in the same school system. This school had an average of 807 students in attendance per day with 53.9% of students eligible for free or reduced meals, according to the most recent data available (Alabama State Department of Education, 2009a). The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced meals in this school was slightly higher than the state average of 52.7% and slightly lower than the county average of 58.1%. Based upon class observations, Ms. Happ’s average class size was 21 students, with approximately 91% White students, 7% Black or African-American students,

and 2% Hispanic students. These features characterized Ms. Happ's school environment as a rural, predominantly White school with a relatively average poverty level. Thus, Ms. Happ fulfilled the study's requirements for a teacher in a rural community.

Ms. Happ also represented the "expert" teacher of the rural dyad according to the study design. Again, for the purposes of this study, this characterization was made solely in terms of years of teaching experience. Ms. Happ has seven years of teaching experience and, therefore, met the study's qualifications of more than five years of experience to be considered an "expert" teacher. This allowed for comparison of Ms. Happ's practices and attitudes with those of Mr. Smith and the teacher participants from the "urban" dyad. Now that I have established Ms. Happ as the "rural expert" teacher in this study, I turn my attention to the participants in the urban dyad.

## **Dyad II-Urban**

**Participant A.** Mr. Henley is a social studies teacher at City High School in New Falls, AL. According to the 2010 census, this location had a population of 90,468 people, which met the U.S. Census Bureau's classification of an "urbanized area" with more than 50,000 people. The racial demographics of the city included approximately a 54% White population, 42% Black or African American population, and <2% population of another race (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Recall from the literature review that the impetus for comparing urban and rural environments was due to research suggesting that institutional controls have had particularly negative effects for urban schooling environments in poor communities with a high minority population. Thus, it was important to study teachers, not only at a school in an urban area, but also at a school with a high minority population and poverty level. City Middle School had an average of 744 students in attendance per day, with a 99% African-American student population

and 82.4% of students eligible for free or reduced meals, according to the most recent data available (Alabama Department of Education, 2009a). This percentage was significantly higher than the state average of 52.7% and the system average of 65%. These features characterize Mr. Henley's school environment as an urban, predominately African-American school with a relatively high level of poverty. Thus, Mr. Henley fit the criteria for a teacher working in the "urban" environment.

Mr. Henley also represented the "expert" teacher of the urban dyad according to the study design. In terms of years of experience, Mr. Henley had twelve years teaching in the system and, therefore, met the study's qualifications of an "expert" teacher. It is also important to consider that Mr. Henley had greater "expertise" relative to the other participants in terms of education, as he was enrolled in a doctoral program in education at the time of data collection, and peer recognition, as he had received numerous school awards for teacher of the year. Additionally, he was the head of the school's International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Unlike the participants in the rural dyad, Mr. Henley taught five different courses in social studies, including 9<sup>th</sup> grade World History, 11<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History, and several elective courses in psychology and philosophy. Thus, in addition to the explicit criteria for "expert" designation in the study, Mr. Henley was also a highly educated and acclaimed teacher that the school trusted with a heavy load of coursework and administrative responsibilities. Mr. Henley's status as an "expert" teacher contrasted sharply with his teaching intern, who acted as the final participant in the study.

**Participant B.** Mr. Gwynn is a pre-service social studies teacher that acted as Mr. Henley's student intern for the Fall 2013 semester. I will not restate the statistical and demographic information for City High School since all of the information described in Mr.

Henley's case also applies here. Mr. Gwynn was an ideal candidate to act as the "novice" teacher for the urban dyad. At the time of the study, he was completing his Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education-Social Science and fulfilling the "methods" portion of this degree in Mr. Henley's classroom. This required Mr. Gwynn to spend multiple days per week assisting Mr. Henley to complete the clinical hours portion of his degree before moving on to the full student internship in the Spring semester. His teaching experience was minimal as he had only taught one formal lesson before entering Mr. Henley's classroom. Thus, in terms of overall experience, Mr. Gwynn clearly met the criteria of a "novice" teacher under the terms of the study. He also represented a unique case within the study due to his position relative to institutional controls. Because Mr. Gwynn was a student intern, he was not held to the same institutional responsibilities as other participants who were full-time employees of these schools. On the other hand, Mr. Gwynn was also subject to the objectives and requirements of his university teaching program. Now that I have provided a sense of the participants that comprised this comparative case study, I present and explain each of the major findings that emerged from analysis in the rest of this chapter. I begin with the participants in the rural dyad.

### **Rural Dyad-Mr. Smith (1A)**

Recall that Mr. Smith represented the "novice" teacher in the rural dyad because he had five years or less of teaching experience. In the following section, I present the major themes that emerged from analysis of Mr. Smith as a case of a rural novice teacher. I begin with evidence of institutional controls that exhibited throughout collected data and then move through the other areas of investigation. Table 1 represents the major themes that emerged from analysis according to the areas of investigation and which I explain in this section. I provide similar tables for each of the remaining cases to represent visually the major findings.

Table 1

*Major Themes for Mr. Smith, Participant 1A-Rural Novice*

Areas of Investigation	
1- Evidence of institutional controls	-curricular controls -time constraints -emphasis on skills
2-Evidence of judgment/autonomy	-institutional leeway -situational judgments -limited judgment of ends
3-Pedagogy	-student-centered/non-traditional -teacher-centered/traditional
4-Attitudes toward institutional controls	-non-conforming/critical -conforming/non-critical
5-Attitudes about social studies	-institutional objectives -societal goals

**1. Evidence of institutional control.** Analysis of the data revealed the following three major themes related to evidence of institutional controls: *curricular controls*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills*. These themes are obviously interrelated, and though it can be argued that they could be included into one theme, I felt that the prevalence of each of these elements in the data merited inclusion of separate themes and discussion. In the following section, I draw out evidence from the data which supports the conclusion that institutional requirements exerted forms of control for Mr. Smith related to each of these themes.

***Curricular controls.*** One of the primary ways that institutional requirements controlled aspects of Mr. Smith’s teaching was through the curriculum. The Alabama Course of Study (ALCOS) explicated all the curricular objectives that Mr. Smith was required to cover. I describe data that illustrate how these curricular requirements constrained elements of Mr. Smith’s teaching in this section. Specifically, ALCOS objectives limited particular educational possibilities by narrowing both the content and pedagogy in Mr. Smith’s classrooms.

It was clear from interview statements and classroom observations that the state-mandated curriculum operated as a form of institutional control for Mr. Smith. Like all public

school teachers, Mr. Smith was required to follow and cover objectives written in the Alabama Course of Study (ALCOS) for each course he taught. That these content objectives were an expected requirement from the institution was evident in several ways. In each classroom observation, Mr. Smith wrote the specific ALCOS objective(s) that he covered that day. Additionally, the school administration required lesson plans that noted each ALCOS objective covered. Though these practices were not strictly enforced, nor are they irregular in the context of education, they demonstrated an institutional expectation and emphasis on curriculum adherence. Several statements Mr. Smith made during interviews supported this point. First, Mr. Smith noted that his school district emphasized a “before, during, and after” course structure which required teachers to map out how they accomplished each ALCOS objective. According to Mr. Smith, this structure was “pulled straight from the course of study” and was intended to “drive the lesson”. Additionally, there was a clear emphasis on curriculum content coverage when Mr. Smith discussed some of the pressures involved when classes got behind schedule. He noted that “there’s some pressure there where...you’ve got to cover that material and you’ve got to keep your classes on pace...” Thus, ALCOS objectives functioned as explicit and implicit institutional norms that placed pressure on Mr. Smith.

However, this only establishes that adherence to the mandated curriculum was an institutional expectation for Mr. Smith. His statements about ALCOS objectives demonstrated that this institutional norm functioned as a constraint. For example, he noted that ALCOS was somewhat helpful for 8<sup>th</sup> grade History because of its order and structure, but ultimately that the curriculum was a hindrance because it forced him to “fit into these little boxes”. This was a particularly salient idea as it emphasized that the mandated curriculum requirements were limiting. Mr. Smith explained how this limiting feature of the curriculum operated in specific

ways. For example, in a class about ancient Greece, he wanted to compare and contrast the city-states of Athens and Sparta and describe how they came together to fight against the Persians. He felt limited in his ability to do this, however, because it did not meet the explicit construct of the curriculum objective. Additionally, Mr. Smith explained his feelings that ALCOS was too broad, as it included too many topics to cover in the span of only one semester or even one year. Mr. Smith also noted the particular effects of ALCOS objectives on his teaching possibilities. He expressed a desire to include hands-on activities and lessons outside the classroom, but explained this was not possible because he had to “get through the curriculum”. This illustrates that the institutional requirement of adhering to the curriculum affected Mr. Smith’s teaching practices. The institutional ends naturally had an impact on his instructional means.

Though it was clear that ALCOS requirements controlled Mr. Smith’s teaching in particular ways, he was able to deviate from those requirements at times. For example, in both 7<sup>th</sup> grade Civics and 8<sup>th</sup> grade History, Mr. Smith often implemented a self-created activity designed to teach personal finance, which was much more student-centered and personally relatable to student experiences. However, personal finance was not a specific content objective for 8<sup>th</sup> grade World History. Regardless, Mr. Smith was able to gain support from his administrator for this particular activity. Though this appeared to represent institutional support for non-curricular material and teacher judgment, further discussion illustrated that the clear institutional emphasis remained upon coverage of ALCOS objectives. First, this activity was subject to administrative approval and Mr. Smith noted that his administrator offered support “if anybody asks”. Thus, while allowable in certain circumstances, this kind of non-curricular material was still deviant relative to the institutional norm of strict adherence to ALCOS objectives. To emphasize the clear institutional preference for curricular objectives, Mr. Smith explained that “one day a

month I can afford to spend on something that I think [the students] really need”. This illustrates that mandated curriculum coverage limited Mr. Smith’s personal judgment of student needs.

This manifested in observations of practices in several instances. For example, during numerous classroom observations, students began to engage with the content by asking questions and trying to engage in discussion. Mr. Smith often limited student inquiry, however, to get back to more efficient ways of covering objectives, such as note-taking and worksheets. A more specific example illustrates this clearly. In a class about the ancient Israelites, students asked content-related and more personal questions that presented opportunities for critical discussions about science and religion or religion and government. Students asked, “How did the walls (of Jericho) fall down just because of walking around and blowing trumpets?” and “What would you do if your students said they believed in many gods?”. I learned that Mr. Smith was a Christian during conversations, so it is possible that students asked this latter question because they knew of his religious beliefs. In each of these instances, the teacher gave rushed responses in order to get back to the worksheet activity which covered the curricular objective. These data illustrate that ALCOS was an institutional expectation for Mr. Smith, that it controlled what and how he taught, and that it was particularly limiting of his professional judgment and student inquiry.

***Time constraints.*** Several of the points of evidence offered for curricular controls indicated that time was a significant barrier for Mr. Smith. He explained that he did not have time to cover all of the curriculum objectives and that he could only spend one day a month on non-curricular content that he deemed important. This points to the next major theme related to evidence of institutional controls: *time constraints*. Time worked together with other institutional controls to narrow the focus of Mr. Smith’s teaching toward institutional objectives. Here, I describe how this occurred in both long-term and short-term elements of time.



I previously noted that Mr. Smith criticized ALCOS for its scope, claiming that there simply was not enough time in the school year to fully cover all of the objectives mandated in his 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade curricula. Interestingly, this led to a narrowing of the curriculum with the intended purpose of preparation for the next level of education. An extended response from Mr. Smith emphasizes this point. When I asked him about the impact of time, Mr. Smith responded:

We have vertical meetings with the History teachers at the high school and I sit down with them and I say, ok, what do you guys need for these incoming 9th graders to know for History. And they basically said, ok you know, we need to know Western Civ stuff. We don't need to know about really about Medieval Japan or Medieval China or something like that, you know, so some of those lessons, if I don't see that I have time, I just cut those out even though they're technically part of the course of study, I cut those out because I'm trying to get Western Civilization progressing. And, it's kinda the same thing with Civics, with uh citizenship...ummm...I'm supposed to cover everything, I'm supposed to hit all those objectives but I know practically it's just not gonna happen.

Ironically, in this instance, one institutional control made it impractical to accomplish another. The incongruence of the amount of time given to Mr. Smith with what he was required to accomplish in that time concluded with a narrowing of the curriculum which deferred to the next level of education. The result of this was neglect for the history of other cultures and a more Eurocentric perspective of World History.

Narrowing of the curriculum was not the only effect of time upon Mr. Smith. Time also limited content and certain kinds of instruction. Cutting content due to time constraints operated from a long-term understanding of time, namely the practicality of covering all ALCOS objectives in a given school term. Time also functioned on a short-term basis for Mr. Smith as school policy limited periods to approximately 45 minute segments. This had particular effects upon pedagogy. For example, Mr. Smith stated that in previous years, with block scheduling, he had time to accomplish the “before, during, after” structure of his classes, but with 45 minute classes he did not have time to complete the “after” part. He stated that this was important

because it “helped the kids reflect”. Mr. Smith also stated that a lack of time, mixed with his ALCOS requirements, prevented him from going deeper into content and from making connections to citizenship education. Elaborating further on the idea of making socially relevant connections from the content, Mr. Smith explained:

I think I can touch on socially relevant, like...you spend ten minutes getting the kids settled down and twenty minutes explaining Athens and Sparta and you spend five minutes talking about socially relevant things...I think I can just hit the tip of the iceberg.

This illustrates that school policy limited daily classroom time and, due to the emphasis on ALCOS objectives, constrained student reflection and social application.

As time constraints functioned to limit certain content and pedagogy, they also functioned to produce other content and pedagogy. Mr. Smith stated that “I have to teach in this certain way because of the element of time” and often he viewed that way of teaching in terms of efficiency. He explained that if he did not have time constraints he would teach differently, “but because of efficiency it’s like, ok, I need to teach about the three branches of government and these other things, I’m going to teach it this way”. Thus, Mr. Smith’s daily classroom time was limited to practices which most efficiently met institutional requirements. This was evident in several observations. In five different observations, Mr. Smith encouraged students to hurry to finish assignments so that they could move on and cover everything for the day in the 45 minute time frame. For example, a worksheet covering vocabulary in the Constitution was handed out on a particular day and Mr. Smith immediately instructed students, “You have 3 minutes”, continually updating students on the time left. Even in more socially connected and student-centered practices, the element of time was always evident. During an observation where the class was asked to role-play as members of Congress to vote on a certain issue and make arguments for their voting, Mr. Smith occasionally cut discussion short to hurry the completion

of the activity. As students began to defend their rationale for voting, Mr. Smith asked students to quiet down and write down their vote on a worksheet. This was followed by Mr. Smith asking, “Who’s still working? Hurry!”. These data illustrate that time constraints were a critical limiting factor for Mr. Smith, which produced rote technical practices and limited student involvement. First, he and other teachers considered the breadth of ALCOS objectives incongruent with the timeframe the institution provided to cover them. This led to a narrowing of the curriculum that emphasized Eurocentric historical representation. Additionally, daily time constraints limited student reflection and social application. Lastly, the combination of daily classroom time with institutional requirements resulted in pedagogies which efficiently accomplished institutional objectives.

*Emphasis on skills.* In addition to *curricular controls* and *time constraints*, the data collected from Mr. Smith also provided evidence of another aspect of institutional control: *emphasis on skills*. The institutional endorsement of Common Core standards represented the most obvious example of the emphasis on skills. As part of these standards, Mr. Smith instilled reading and writing skills within the curriculum of his social studies courses. I provide data here that show how this emphasis on skills actually de-emphasized the unique content of social studies and limited more socially applicable educational objectives.

Mr. Smith noted on several occasions how Common Core had become a heavy focus in his district. For example, he stated that in his district, “there’s a major push for the Common Core, because it’s new, because it’s what they’re being pushed to do by the state”. Additionally, he noted that the district’s focus centered on teachers’ ability to produce these skills. He stated that the focus “has really become...what kind of content literacy are you teaching? How are you teaching the kids to use informational texts? How are you teaching the students to break down

information?” As part of the district emphasis on Common Core standards, Mr. Smith explained that he attended department meetings with other History teachers to discuss different strategies for teaching the reading and writing standards. Thus, there was a clear institutional emphasis on the Common Core standards which the school expected Mr. Smith to initiate.

A district document outlined the particular aspects of Common Core standards for Mr. Smith. The standards focused on specific skills of reading comprehension including the following: citing textual evidence in sources, summarizing central ideas in sources, identifying key steps in a text’s description of a process, determining the meaning of words and phrases in texts, how information is presented in a text, integrating visual information, distinguishing between fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment, and analyzing the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic. Mr. Smith noted how he tried to incorporate these standards into his assessments. Reflecting upon what he wanted to see from students on assessments, he stated, “going back to Common Core...we don’t want this to be opinion based...but more, how can you support what you said in the text?” Thus, Mr. Smith was expected to teach certain goals of reading comprehension and incorporate those skills into his assessments. Additionally, Mr. Smith noted that the emphasis on writing skills as a key feature of the social studies curriculum was for future test preparation. He explained that as the district phased out the current testing format, a new ACT-based assessment would be ushered in with an emphasis on writing. He stated:

each one is going to [be] more ACT based which has these writing components and things like that. So, there’s more requirements from us trying to help them create coherent paragraphs and reach your conclusions based on evidence and things like that.

The previous evidence shows that the institution placed an emphasis on Common Core standards, that these formed another institutional expectation for Mr. Smith, and that they

emphasized particular reading and writing skills. Additional data show that this requirement acted not only as another institutional mandate, but also as a controlling and limiting mechanism for social studies content and pedagogy. First, Mr. Smith noted that the emphasis on the skills represented in Common Core resulted in the de-emphasis of social studies content. He stated, “there’s been less of push about History” in the district in order to focus on Common Core standards. Additionally, during a classroom observation where Mr. Smith conducted an online assessment requiring students to answer questions about a text, he told me he felt like a “glorified reading specialist”. An extended quote illustrates his meaning. He stated:

Well, just from district meetings, from things that have been said in some of the leadership teams that I’ve been on it seems like it is...we need to help these kids learn how to achieve these reading goals and if part of that means pulling them from History then we’re going to pull them from social studies classrooms. Or, hey this kid is really struggling in this reading strategy, how can you as the History teacher help us achieve? Help us make this kid better? So, I guess it’s sort of...less focus on let’s learn about History and let’s focus on learning how to read History.

Thus, the institutional endorsement of skills through Common Core actually limited understandings of social studies. History, for example, became unimportant as an independent discipline and held worth only within the context of producing skills.

Following from this institutional emphasis on skills is a constraint on other views and purposes of social studies education. For example, the district’s Common Core standards document explicitly rejected student opinion and prior knowledge. Standard 2 requires students to provide accurate summaries of historical sources “distinct from prior knowledge or opinions”. It seems that the emphasis is on a basic comprehension of a text rather than how the student feels this is socially important or personally relevant. Additionally, Mr. Smith explained that he felt his role as a social studies teacher was to make content relevant to students’ lives, but that the emphasis on skills prevented this. He stated:

I think that's kind of my role, by kind of opening their eyes to some things...How does that relate to me? What's going on in real life that's happening? But there's not always time for that when you're teaching this reading strategy, this writing strategy..."

He also stated that the institution valued Common Core standards over more socially relevant purposes of social studies. When asked to describe the balance between these two goals of education in his school, he said, "There's never been a lot of discussion about the more socially relevant [goals]...I'd say it's more like 80%-20% or 85%-15% directed toward Common Core." The data provided in this section illustrate that Mr. Smith had an additional institutional mandate to teach reading and writing skills, and that this mandate functioned as a control because it limited how he understood and practiced social studies education.

The three themes of *curricular controls*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills* all constituted evidence of institutional controls. Recall that institutional controls constituted any policy from the school which affected teaching practice. It was clear from interviews, observations, and select documents that Mr. Smith felt required to emphasize ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards due to explicit policies to cover them. Additionally, these requirements operated within both long-term and short-term time constraints. These requirements controlled aspects of Mr. Smith's teaching through both content and pedagogy. In the next section, I turn my attention to the findings related to evidence of judgment and autonomy.

**2. Evidence of judgment/autonomy.** Analysis of the data revealed three themes related to evidence of judgment and autonomy. These were *institutional leeway*, *situational judgments*, and *limited judgment about ends*. In this section, I discuss evidence which supports each of these themes. I also tie these themes back into some of the aspects discussed with institutional controls, as teacher judgment/autonomy and institutional controls are inherently related. As part

of this, for each theme of judgment and autonomy, I discuss the level of freedom relative to institutional controls.

*Institutional leeway.* Despite the existence of institutional requirements which controlled aspects of teaching for Mr. Smith, there also existed a certain level of leeway due to the lack of explicit mandates in certain areas of instruction. This was evident both in Mr. Smith's interview responses and classroom observations. First, Mr. Smith noted that there was little direct administrative involvement in his job. He said that the administration was not "super involved, saying you have to do it this way, you have to teach it this way..." As such, Mr. Smith explained that he had control over elements of daily planning. He stated that he often rearranged submitted lesson plans in the actual classroom based upon how students learned. This included Mr. Smith being able to use his judgment about his classroom resources. For example, he explained that because he did not like aspects of the school textbook, he did not use it very often and would commonly bring in external sources. These sources ranged from a web-based education project known as iCivics, used to teach civics education, to occasionally incorporating passages from Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* to challenge textbook renderings of History. Mr. Smith noted that his freedom to bring in these sources was due to the administration viewing the textbook as "just another tool in your handbag". In addition to the level of administrative involvement and freedom to bring in external sources, Mr. Smith also explained that a current lack of standardized testing allowed him certain freedoms. When I asked him if his job requirements were conducive to more student-centered activities, he responded:

there's no high-stakes testing specific for History or Civics and so that...allows me to kind of teach it the way I want. If there were a high-stakes test, I would probably teach it differently than, let's build a project about the ancient Egyptians.

Thus, the lack of institutional controls in terms of administrative control, textbook reliance, and testing allowed greater freedom for Mr. Smith. He was free to use judgment about sources and to include certain activities due to a lack of these forces.

*Situational judgments.* Another theme related to judgment/autonomy was Mr. Smith's use of situational judgments. This manifested in several ways. First, Mr. Smith had to address contextual factors in many of his classes which he could not anticipate. He utilized judgment in these instances and explained that understanding what to do tied directly to experience. Second, Mr. Smith exhibited judgment in his management of time and decisions related to covering content. This illustrates that Mr. Smith's judgment and freedom were largely confined to determinations of how best to accomplish institutional objectives.

Some of the institutional freedoms discussed previously point to elements of Mr. Smith's situational judgments. For example, Mr. Smith used his judgment of the particular classroom situation to determine when to strictly follow his lesson plans and when to rearrange them. In interviews and observations, Mr. Smith exhibited elements of utilizing situational judgments to deal with daily classroom issues. During one observation, the classroom took place in a computer lab where students worked on an online program. Mr. Smith had to handle situational issues such as computers freezing and what to do with students who had not turned in permission slips to use the Internet. This prompted inquiry during interviews about how he handled such daily classroom issues. He stated, "I usually think on my feet in that situation. I don't really have a plan in place." Mr. Smith also noted his feeling that preparation for these kinds of contextual factors came with experience. The following quote is illustrative of this feeling:

I think it's more you have to find your own way and that's part of just, you know, being a teacher and experiencing. Somebody said once, somebody I was talking to the other day, said you learn more your first year teaching than four years of college because when you get in here...you've got to make that decision. It's, you know, you've got to think on your



feet a lot and you just kind of go with it and they can have professional development all they want to but every situation is going to be different. You're going to have to think on your feet.

This shows that Mr. Smith understood experiential judgment as more valuable than academic knowledge when dealing with daily classroom issues.

The previous elements of situational judgments largely concerned issues of classroom management. However, Mr. Smith also utilized situational judgments when determining the content to emphasize in both long-term and short-term timeframes. As discussed with themes of institutional controls, Mr. Smith explained how he had to use his judgment about what elements of the curriculum to cut in order to maximize coverage of “important” content. At the short-term level, Mr. Smith also utilized judgment when he determined that he could not engage in student inquiry because it would prevent completion of the daily activity. Additionally, Mr. Smith explained that many situational judgments dealt with how to most efficiently cover required content. While discussing an example where professional development cut a period short, he said:

I had to decide at that moment...was yesterday's lesson, is it something that I don't need to just say...we must accomplish this?...or can I say ok let's cram that lesson that took 30 minutes in those other classes into 8 and then adjust it?

This notion of adjustment consistently emerged throughout classroom observations. Typically, these classroom adjustments functioned to help students complete pre-determined assignments and to limit student inquiry and discussion. For example, one activity asked students to label specific attributes of Greek soldiers by what an Athenian or Spartan soldier would “always do, sometimes do, or never do”. This activity generated student discussion, but Mr. Smith had to cut this discussion short to focus on students that did not understand the worksheet portion of the activity. This illustrates that many situational judgments concerning content dealt with how to

complete assignments rather than with how to engage students or make content relevant. Again, this shows that judgments were primarily about means, and those that were efficient for meeting institutional requirements, rather than the value of educational objectives. This points to the last theme of evidence of judgment/autonomy.

*Limited judgment about ends.* The final theme that emerged from analysis of judgment/autonomy was limited judgment about ends. In the previous theme, I described that Mr. Smith's judgment and autonomy primarily concerned how best to accomplish institutional objectives. At times, however, Mr. Smith did incorporate content into his courses that he believed students needed. Additionally, he explained that he utilized class materials that he believed to be beneficial. Though Mr. Smith was able to include these elements, I also show how his judgment about educational goals was limited by institutional objectives. I also indicate how his decision to include materials worked as a means to accomplish institutional ends.

At times, Mr. Smith was able to utilize judgment to include content that he believed was important for students. This was most evident in the lesson on personal finance that was not part of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade World History curriculum. Mr. Smith noted that he wanted to include this even in his 8<sup>th</sup> grade class because "the kids respond well to it, they enjoy it." Observations of this activity supported Mr. Smith's sentiment. The activity gave students "money" for completing classroom assignments and extracurricular activities. Students were required to maintain a certain amount of money in their account to keep their desired seat in the class. Money would be credited to their account for bonus points and extra-curricular activities, while money would be paid if they failed to complete assignments. Students were actively engaged in this activity, as it evoked discussion and learning about personal finance. Mr. Smith explained that when he first used this activity, he was able to obtain administrative support for it because he and the

administrator both felt that “kids need this”. This clearly illustrates an example where Mr. Smith used his judgment not just about educational means (i.e. how to best accomplish a task), but about educational ends (i.e. what is important to accomplish). As stated previously, however, judgment of ends was limited for Mr. Smith. Though he deemed this activity important for all students, and it was something that students related to, Mr. Smith explained that “one day a month I can afford to spend on something that I think they really need.” So, while Mr. Smith could at times use judgment about educational objectives, time and curriculum controls severely limited it.

The institutional emphasis on skills also limited Mr. Smith’s judgment of ends. As discussed earlier, he expressed freedom from the institution regarding class resources. This meant he did not have to confine his teaching to the textbook and could utilize external sources such as the web-based iCivics program. However, these sources often took the form of worksheets directly tied to the district endorsed Common Core standards for reading and writing. Mr. Smith explained that the reason he used iCivics worksheets often was for:

getting that good information...the heart of what we’re talking about, make notes, so I do that so that they’ve got something to write on. Sometimes I’ll do it that way I feel like because that has been a really big push with our district about content literacy, Common Core, and learning how to use informational texts.

Thus, even though there was freedom for Mr. Smith to bring in his own sources, these judgments were more about how best to accomplish the institutional objectives. This was particularly evident in one classroom observation which used an iCivics worksheet. Mr. Smith divided students into two “houses” of Congress to debate about their school’s policy on cell phone use. Students formed committees, made arguments, and ultimately passed a “bill” about school cell phones, with the goal of teaching about representative legislature. However, as this activity

progressed, it became more about understanding the instructions of the assignment, comprehending the passages about Congress, and completing the accompanying worksheet. Thus, Mr. Smith emphasized reading skills and accomplishing tasks over student inquiry and meaningful applications.

In this section, I detailed themes that emerged from the data related to evidence of judgment/autonomy. It was clear that there was a certain level of autonomy and judgment for Mr. Smith. However, institutional controls related to the curriculum, time, and skills always limited this. While Mr. Smith noted his freedom from direct administrative control, thus allowing him to utilize sources other than state textbooks, he also explained that the institution expected him to use these sources for accomplishing institutional objectives. In the context of saying that the administration was not overly involved, he stated that they did not give specific directives for how to teach. However, the administration did hold training about Common Core with the objective of discussing multiple strategies that might accomplish explicit reading and writing skills. Additionally, while Mr. Smith expressed freedom from not having to teach to a standardized test, it also seemed that the Common Core standards acted as a placeholder for future test preparation. He explained that History teachers received more requirements related to reading and writing skills because of an expectation that ACT-based tests were on the horizon. Finally, it was also clear that while Mr. Smith did utilize situational judgments, these judgments were primarily concerned with how to best achieve the institutional objectives. Only rarely was Mr. Smith able to include content simply because he judged it to be important. In the next section, I turn my attention to the specific pedagogy Mr. Smith incorporated. This will be important for drawing connections between the institutional controls discussed thus far and actual teaching practices.

**3. Pedagogy.** As stated previously, I believed pedagogy was an important area for investigation as it provided connections between institutional controls and actual teaching practices. By examining teacher pedagogy, I assessed how institutional controls actually affected teacher practices and how teachers conformed to or reacted against these norms. In this section, I examine specific pedagogical approaches used by Mr. Smith that were primarily evident through classroom observations. I also connect this observational evidence with interview responses that informed these practices. Included in pedagogy is an evaluation of what Mr. Smith emphasized in his assessments, primarily pulled from document analysis. This allowed for a broader picture of pedagogy that was inclusive of teaching approaches and teaching objectives, as both are important in the larger discussion of institutional controls. Analysis of the data related to pedagogy yielded two major themes: *student-centered/non-traditional pedagogy* and *teacher-centered/traditional pedagogy*. In this section, I discuss evidence for each of these themes and relate them to institutional controls.

***Student-centered/non-traditional.*** Mr. Smith incorporated student-centered/non-traditional pedagogy into his classes on multiple occasions. In these instances, he allowed students to be actively involved in activities through dialogue, inquiry, and role-playing, rather than passively involved in rote practices of knowledge reception. In this section, I discuss some of the activities Mr. Smith utilized that reflected this approach and tie them to interview excerpts where this style was also represented. I also show that Mr. Smith believed these practices to be non-traditional because they deviated from the norm of practice within his school.

Throughout classroom observations, Mr. Smith attempted to include student-centered activities. The activity on personal finance that he included in each class regardless of its curricular content was one of the best examples of this. As described previously, this activity

assigned roles to students, allowed them to take ownership of the activity, opened the class for greater student inquiry, and created connections between content and students' personal experiences. Mr. Smith incorporated other student-centered activities that opened up these same educational possibilities. For example, one of the iCivics assignments that Mr. Smith used was labeled "Why Do We Have a House & Senate, Anyway?" In this assignment, students were given the role of "student" or "teacher" and had to vote on the level of cell phone use at the school according to how someone in their role would vote. After an initial vote, students had to conduct compromise plans between the "student" and "teacher" groups and then submit each plan to a vote until a "bill" was passed. This activity allowed for student inquiry and debate, while also connecting content about the U.S. Congress to students' lives.

Another student-centered assignment included by Mr. Smith was a student project which counted as an exam. Many students built 3-D pyramids and discussed their connection to ancient Egypt. According to the assignment document, students also had the opportunity to present "archaeological findings" from a dig in Egypt, perform a rap song about Mesopotamia, design a poster about the story of David and Goliath from the Bible, create a comic book describing laws from Hammurabi's Code, and write a travel brochure for a ten day tour of Mesopotamia. These activities gave students ownership of the activity, promoted student inquiry, reflection, and inquiry, made content relevant, and resisted rote practices of answer production.

These activities were in line with many of the statements Mr. Smith made about his personal pedagogy. For example, he stated that one of the reasons he incorporated the student projects into his classes was for "differentiating instruction so that they have to think about it and then make it apply to them". Additionally, Mr. Smith expressed his hope that students would reflect and make applications from the content. He tried to incorporate this by providing open-

ended walkaway questions to students. In the observations of student projects, all the students were asked to respond to the question, “What is something you learned by studying this unit?” Mr. Smith explained that this was for student reflection on questions like “how does it affect you or what do you think could happen because of this?” So, Mr. Smith clearly valued elements of student reflection, critical thinking, and personal application. These values were incorporated in his classes through student-centered activities that promoted student ownership, inquiry, and dialogue.

Mr. Smith defined these activities as non-traditional because they went against institutional norms. When I asked if student-centered, experiential learning was common practice in his school, he responded, “I think it deviates from the norm altogether” because curriculum adherence was the major focus. He stated that typical pedagogical attitudes were “Let’s follow the course of study. Let’s not deviate from that...if we are going to deviate, let’s make sure we get back to that and really hit these few things.” Thus, student-centered approaches were not common in the school system, according to Mr. Smith, and this was directly tied to a narrow focus on ALCOS content. As illustrated earlier, this affected Mr. Smith as well. In regard to his personal finance lesson, he stated that he could spend “one day a month” on non-curricular material that he deemed important. Additionally, when I asked him about the prevalence of interactive activities such as the iCivics school cell phone assignment, he stated that this was included “once every two weeks”. So, it seemed that while student-centered pedagogies were possible, they were infrequent and deviant relative to institutional norms. It was also noteworthy that these student-centered pedagogies did not always operate separately from institutional objectives. Mr. Smith explained that he felt the administration was supportive of student-centered pedagogy because “with all of the different strategies that they’re trying to get us to use,

it's really, ok, you've got to hook the kids...and then you've got to teach them these strategies for reading for writing..." So, while in some ways the institution was supportive of non-traditional pedagogy, this was not for an intrinsic educational objective, but for the extrinsic goals that the district had endorsed.

***Teacher-centered/traditional.*** Though Mr. Smith made specific efforts to include student-centered pedagogy, his classes were mostly dominated by teacher-centered/traditional pedagogy. In this section, I describe some of the specific practices that reflected this. Often, these activities produced rote learning in students as they passively engaged in receiving and regurgitating knowledge. I also illustrate how these activities limited student inquiry, reflection, and application. Lastly, I indicate that this teaching style directly connected with institutional controls related to the curriculum and Common Core.

In half of the classroom observations, Mr. Smith conducted the lesson primarily through worksheets or assessments where students quietly produced answers in response to textual information. On a few occasions, this resulted in rote fill-in-the-blank worksheets. For example, one of the worksheets asked students to match vocabulary about Congress into appropriate fill-in-the-blank statements. Other assignments were conducted as a class but they remained primarily teacher-centered. For example, Mr. Smith projected a graphic organizer on the board to assign characteristics of ancient Athens and Sparta during one observation. This activity was completely teacher-led and student responses were limited to one word responses or short phrases to help complete the chart. During two observations, the class was held in the school computer lab. Though students had access to a wealth of resources on the Internet, they primarily conducted online assessments which required them to read a text and answer comprehension questions about them.



Whereas student-centered activities opened the door for student inquiry, reflection, and application, the teacher-centered/traditional activities closed this door. Student inquiry was limited on several occasions in order to focus on completing worksheet assignments. Additionally, Mr. Smith placed emphasis on the production of correct answers on assessments rather than engaging in critical inquiry about important historical concepts. For example, during a lesson on the United States Constitution, he prompted students to determine the definition of Federalism by looking at a list of definitions and using the process of elimination. Additionally, Mr. Smith emphasized a matching technique for students to be able to produce the correct response to the meaning of “Supreme law of the Land”. He connected the term “supreme” with “federal” so that students would recognize this match on an assessment. This limited possible critical discussion about the relationship between federal and state law and its historical manifestations. Lastly, the assessments that Mr. Smith assigned were primarily concerned with producing basic content information rather than asking students to discuss the significance of content or to make social applications. This was evident in the exam and classroom activity documents that students completed during observations. For example, several of the daily worksheets required students to fill in blanks with basic factual information, complete charts based upon reading passages, or match vocabulary with appropriate statements. Exams were also primarily concerned with defining terms, identifying people and concepts, completing graphic organizers about people and concepts, matching terms with definitions, and identifying places on a map. Thus, the overall effects of teacher-centered/traditional pedagogy were efficient coverage of content and producing skills related to reading and test-taking.

Mr. Smith tied his use of teacher-centered/traditional pedagogy to institutional norms in several statements. He noted that his frequent use of classroom worksheets was about “trying to

get that good information”, which connected with specific Common Core standards about learning how to use informational texts. He also explained that his typical pedagogy of lecture and worksheets was something that fitted to institutional preferences. He said that when he started at the school, the reading coach “took all the teachers and said let’s learn how to do this strategic teaching...set these goals, use strategic teaching and it was things that I’d already been doing”. Additionally, he developed assessments by looking back at objectives. He explained that he created assessments from iCivics objectives, “which [are] based on the state standards, the Common Core standards.” Finally, an interesting discussion from the interviews highlights that Mr. Smith’s assessments were more about basic content knowledge than student discussion or application, and that this was directly tied to institutional norms. When I asked what he wanted to see reflected from students on his assessments, he replied with the following statement:

More, more content knowledge. I used to ask a lot of questions like, you know, what do you think or, if you were this, what would you do? And, I still ask those occasionally, but not as a part of assessment because a big part of, again going back to Common Core, but a big deal of Common Core is it's not, we don't want this to be opinion based, not what would you do if it you were...but more, how can you support what you said in the text.

This shows that institutional norms, such as Common Core standards, affected Mr. Smith’s pedagogy by privileging a basic comprehension of textual information over student engagement and application of content. The teacher-centered/traditional pedagogy that was most common in Mr. Smith’s classes naturally fitted with this institutional privilege.

In this section, I highlighted the pedagogical approaches that Mr. Smith exhibited. He shifted between student-centered/non-traditional pedagogy and teacher-centered/traditional pedagogy, but it became clear that teacher-centered/traditional pedagogy was the most prevalent approach. This allowed for efficient content coverage and an emphasis on basic content reproduction on assessments in addition to producing institutionally endorsed skills. This was

often at the expense of more student-centered educational effects such as student inquiry, reflection, and application. However, Mr. Smith was able to negotiate student-centered/non-traditional approaches when he deemed them necessary and important. Institutional controls consistently limited these approaches, though. In the next section, I present findings related to Mr. Smith's attitudes towards institutional controls.

**4. Attitudes toward institutional controls.** Just as Mr. Smith shifted his pedagogy between teacher-centered and student-centered approaches, he also expressed shifting attitudes toward the institutional norms that affected his teaching. Analysis of his statements concerning institutional controls revealed themes of *non-conforming/critical* attitudes and *conforming/non-critical* attitudes. In this section, I present evidence that supports each of these themes.

*Non-conforming/critical.* Mr. Smith expressed dissatisfaction with elements of institutional controls on several occasions. He directed this criticism at elements of ALCOS requirements, which he viewed as constraining and unnecessary. He also indicated that, at times, he would not conform to these controls by stepping away from standards to teach content that he valued. In this section, I provide evidence that illustrates these points.

The first clear representation of criticism about institutional controls came when Mr. Smith discussed his requirements related to ALCOS. He stated his feeling that the curriculum was sometimes a hindrance because it limited his teaching. He said, "I have to make things fit into these little boxes...fit into this course of study, when sometimes [the lesson] may cover one or two or touch on this but not completely..." According to Mr. Smith, this framing of each lesson around curricular objectives was "annoying" at times because it made him less able to teach things he deemed important, but that did not necessarily "capture the standard". Though he recognized these curricular objectives as part of his job requirements, he also noted that he did

not feel they were necessary for him as a professional educator. When I asked about his level of comfort in his expertise, he replied:

I think if they said, “You’ve got to get us through World Civ from earliest man to say the age of exploration”, yeah, I feel like I can do it. I would not need someone to tell me, hit these standards.

So, Mr. Smith expressed some criticism over the limiting aspect of ALCOS objectives and a lack of support for them by stating that he did not feel they were necessary for his practice.

Mr. Smith also noted that he would not always conform to what he perceived as the norms of practice in his school system. Discussing his inclusion of non-traditional activities which “deviate[d] from the norm[s] altogether”, he stated that there were more practical things, such as personal finance, that he would rather teach. In his estimation, this was “a more responsible way to handle the curriculum” than strictly adhering to the content objectives, which he felt was normal institutional practice. This meant not only deviating from ALCOS objectives at times, but also deviating from the district focus on Common Core reading and writing standards. Discussing these standards, Mr. Smith explained, “at some point you have to walk away from it and let me teach...a value that I think is important to draw from that, not just how do we read this or how do we write about it”. The implied criticism in these statements is that both ALCOS objectives and Common Core skills did not allow for inclusion of social studies goals that Mr. Smith judged to be important. This led to occasional non-support of these institutional objectives by deviating from them in practice.

***Conforming/non-critical.*** Though Mr. Smith expressed criticism and an occasional lack of support for institutional norms, he also acknowledged that they were part of his requirements. Many of his interview discussions reflected an attitude of responsibility to meet institutional objectives. Thus, Mr. Smith’s attitudes represented conformity on several occasions. He also

exhibited occasional support for institutional controls. He noted that the curriculum offered guidance and expressed a desire to have greater institutional evaluation of his teaching practices. In this section, I provide evidence that supports these points.

Mr. Smith initially explained that he felt his job requirements as a social studies teacher were to “create an educated citizenry”. Responding to a similar question about his role as a social studies teacher, Mr. Smith re-evaluated his original statement and gave primacy to institutional objectives. He explained, “going back to that first question...I’ve got to figure out a way to teach these standards, but also to teach writing and reading, but also teach some life lesson”. Here, Mr. Smith included the institutional objectives of ALCOS and Common Core with life applications and the democratic goals of an educated citizenry. He continued by stating that even though he wanted to spend more time on making History applicable to students, the requirements of teaching standards did not allow time for this. Though he expressed deviating from standards at times to teach what he deemed important, he also expressed that he enacted many practices to conform to these standards. For example, he explained that the iCivics worksheets that he independently brought into his Civics classes were incorporated to meet the Common Core reading and writing standards. Additionally, when discussing the assessments he created, Mr. Smith noted that he was “really trying to get into this Common Core thing and really get into the text.” This resulted in tests based on Common Core standards which were primarily text-based reading comprehension questions.

Not only did Mr. Smith express attitudes of conforming to institutional norms, he also was at times non-critical of their dilution of his own content area. He stated that the Common Core objectives were to focus less on social studies content and to focus more on using social studies to teach reading and writing skills. However, when asked for his feelings about this, Mr.

Smith responded that it was “just part of the job” and it was “not that big of a deal.”

Additionally, he also expressed some support for institutional controls such as the curriculum and a desire for greater administrative oversight. Though the curriculum was “slightly annoying”, Mr. Smith also stated that it was helpful because “it kind of gives you a guide to kind of lay out where you are supposed to be”. Though he had noted that the administration was not greatly involved in giving teaching directives, he also explained that he would “love to have someone in the leadership role come into my classroom and say good/bad, way to go on that, need improvement in this area”.

Mr. Smith had shifting attitudes toward the institutional norms that controlled aspects of his teaching. It was certainly evident that he was critical of the limiting nature of both ALCOS and Common Core standards. He expressed that he would occasionally deviate from these standards to teach what he felt was important for students. On the other hand, he also recognized that these institutional norms were requirements and that he conformed to them. At times, he even expressed support for institutional controls such as the curriculum and administrative oversight. He also was not overly critical of the inherent de-emphasis of social studies content by Common Core as he stated that it was simply “part of the job”. In the final area of investigation for Mr. Smith, I examine findings related to his attitudes about social studies.

**5. Attitudes about social studies.** The final area of investigation deals with participant attitudes about social studies. This allowed for an understanding of what teachers saw as the purposes of social studies, their role as educators, and whether these attitudes corresponded or deviated from institutional norms. Mr. Smith expressed attitudes that reflected institutional and non-institutional objectives. He commonly noted that his job was to meet standards and to instill skills, but he also explained that social studies was for promoting socially applicable goals. Thus,

*institutional objectives* and *societal goals* emerged as the two major themes for this area of investigation.

***Institutional objectives.*** I presented evidence in the previous section which showed that Mr. Smith understood his role as a social studies teacher to be about accomplishing institutional goals. He claimed that his role as a social studies teacher was not only to teach life lessons, but also to “figure out a way to teach these standards, but also to teach writing and reading”.

Additionally, he explained that the institutional emphasis on skills was not problematic because he was already fulfilling that function as a social studies educator. He said:

When they came down and said, “We need you teaching these reading strategies and writing strategies and reach[ing] this goal and teach[ing] them how to write and read”, I was kind of like, well, I already do some of those things, so it’s really not that big of a deal for me.

Thus, at times, Mr. Smith understood social studies education in terms of accomplishing the objectives of the institution.

***Societal goals.*** However, Mr. Smith also consistently explained that he needed to accomplish societal goals and that these did not always conform to institutional objectives. For example, Mr. Smith stated that he had to “walk away” from the reading and writing goals to teach a principle or value that he felt was important for students. Additionally, Mr. Smith noted that as a social studies educator he should “teach some type of value. There has to be an element of value to what I’m teaching and not just the content.” The social studies values that Mr. Smith articulated were socially oriented. When asked about the purposes of social studies, he stated that it was not just about isolated facts, but about:

preparing the students to be able to function in society...understanding how groups interact with each other...why people do certain things because of their past or what has cause[d] someone to view something in this way. I think it’s all about helping them interact with each other.”

He also explained that his job was for creating an “educated citizenry”, which incorporated teaching political processes, human interaction, and students becoming “smarter about general life things than they were before they came to my class.” Mr. Smith understood the purpose of social studies and his role as a social studies educator both inside and outside of the institutional framework. At times, he explained that his role was to accomplish institutional objectives, specifically covering ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards. At other times, he expressed the need to move away from those institutional objectives in order to teach social studies values that he believed were important. He expressed this understanding in terms of societal goals, such as improving social interaction and creating an educated citizenry. Lastly, these different views seemed to be in a state of constant limitation. He explained that he had to teach institutional objectives but break away from them. At the same time, he expressed a desire to teach for social goals, but also explained that institutional objectives limited this.

**Summary.** I compare and contrast Mr. Smith’s case with the other cases in greater detail in chapter V. For now, I provide a summary of the major findings revealed from the analysis according to the five areas of investigation. First, there was evidence that Mr. Smith experienced institutional requirements which controlled his teaching in the form of *curricular controls*, *time constraints*, and an *emphasis on skills*. Second, there was evidence that Mr. Smith also had a certain level of judgment/autonomy related to *institutional leeway*, *situational judgments*, and *limited judgment of ends*. Third, Mr. Smith’s pedagogy shifted between *student-centered/non-traditional* and *teacher-centered/traditional* approaches, with the latter being predominant. Fourth, Mr. Smith’s statements concerning institutional controls shifted between *non-conforming/critical* and *conforming/non-critical* attitudes. Finally, Mr. Smith expressed different



attitudes about social studies and his role as a social studies teacher in terms of *institutional objectives* and *societal goals*.

### **Rural Dyad-Ms. Happ (1B)**

Recall that Ms. Happ represented the “expert” teacher in the rural dyad because she had more than five years of experience teaching. In the following section, I present the major themes that emerged from analysis of Ms. Happ as a case of a rural expert teacher. I begin with evidence of institutional controls that exhibited throughout collected data and then move through the other areas of investigation. Table 2 shows all of the major themes that emerged from analysis according to the areas of investigation and which I explain in this section.

Table 2

*Major Themes for Ms. Happ, Participant 1B-Rural Expert*

Areas of Investigation	
1- Evidence of institutional controls	-curricular controls -time constraints -emphasis on skills/preparation
2-Evidence of judgment/autonomy	-classroom materials -extra-curricular content/non-traditional pedagogy
3-Pedagogy	-teacher-centered/traditional
4-Attitudes toward institutional controls	-non-conforming/critical -conforming/non-critical
5-Attitudes about social studies	-institutional objectives -societal goals

**1. Evidence of institutional controls.** Analysis of Ms. Happ’s data also revealed the three major themes of *curricular control*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills/preparation*. Though these themes cannot be understood separately, as one naturally informs and affects the other, just as with Mr. Smith’s case, I will try to examine how each of these institutional factors controlled aspects of Ms. Happ’s teaching. In this section, I utilize evidence from interview responses, classroom observations, and class documents to illustrate not only the existence of these controls, but also how they manifested in Ms. Happ’s context.

*Curricular controls.* Meeting curricular objectives acted as a major institutional control for Ms. Happ. In this section, I illustrate how curricular objectives consistently guided Ms. Happ's teaching. This was also illustrated when she articulated the purposes for specific educational activities in her classes. I also show that curriculum objectives marginalized other educational possibilities. Inclusion of student-centered activities and socially applicable goals were often limited by efforts to efficiently cover content and gather information.

The dominance of the curriculum was particularly evident in Ms. Happ's classroom as she displayed ALCOS objectives, along with Common Core and WIDA standards that I discuss later, on the class white board. In every classroom observation, I noted that Ms. Happ had each daily objective written on the board, referencing the particular standard that the lesson covered. On several occasions in the interviews, Ms. Happ explained that these curricular objectives were not just requirements, but that they guided her teaching. For example, while discussing some of her student-centered activities, Ms. Happ noted that these were either exceptions to the norm or that content objectives still governed them. She stated that the class covered "core curriculum" on a regular basis and that, even for more open-ended, creative activities such as student journals, she always referred back to curricular objectives. Concerning student journals, she explained, "I try to make it standards-based. One of their standards is that they need to know about the geography, so we...put that in there." Additionally, Ms. Happ mentioned that in her daily decision-making she often had to "go back to the basics", which meant referring to the objectives and teaching in a way that could cover each required standard. She also explained that she would use the "homeroom" time just before school ended for the day to get students "caught back up on what it is that they're failing on the standard."

The prevalence of the curricular objectives had particular effects on the purposes of Ms. Happ's teaching. Interview responses and observational evidence indicated that content coverage was the main objective for Ms. Happ and that basic content knowledge was the primary focus of student assessment. For example, she often mentioned trying to ensure that students were getting information or "pulling information". Discussing different note-taking activities she used in the class, she explained that she would have students work in groups to find information in the textbook. After this, she wrote on the white board what students had found from the textbook to "make sure they've got everything" and to "make sure they're pulling the information". The focus seemed to remain on information gathering even when Ms. Happ utilized teaching approaches she deemed as more engaging, such as storytelling. An extended quote is illustrative:

It's more engaging because...you just keep going at them and going at them until they really start pulling that information, and it's more theatrical, but they tend to really get excited about that kind of stuff and they're seeing all this information, they're hearing you say all this information, it's really staying with them more than you think.

Corresponding to this, assessments tended to focus on regurgitating information that covered curriculum objectives. Ms. Happ explained that covering information multiple times helped prepare students for testing. She explained that "you write it down a lot...so the time that it comes for the test, you should know the test because you interfaced with it, you've handwritten it so much". Additionally, she designed final exams to be "more like a standardized test" in that they were strictly content-based, multiple choice exams.

At the same time that the curriculum objectives privileged content coverage and information gathering, they also marginalized more student-centered and socially applicable teaching. For example, during the first classroom observation, Ms. Happ's classes engaged in an activity called "Greek Day". During the entire school day, students dressed up as Greek

characters that they had individually researched and participated in hands-on activities, such as creating Greek sculptures out of bars of soap. When I asked Ms. Happ about this, she noted that this kind of activity was a “showcase” or a “show off day” and that it was very different than their normal focus on core curriculum. Additionally, the student journals, which Ms. Happ initiated in the class to allow students to “create their own history book”, suffered from the focus on curricular objectives. Ms. Happ explained that she had intended to allow students to work in their journals, but that time did not allow it. She said, “We just didn’t have time for it this time, so we just kind of have to cut the fluff and just do the skinny.” This “cutting of the fluff” was done to focus on the content objectives, often to the detriment of more socially valuable lessons. For example, doing “the skinny” or “getting skinny” with the curriculum meant covering curricular objectives in an efficient manner. In classroom observations, this was evident when the teacher engaged in activities such as “quick draw” and PowerPoint notes. “Quick draw” consisted of the teacher asking an isolated question about content and calling on the students that raised their hands fastest, while PowerPoint notes simply displayed content information while students filled in blanks on a corresponding handout. These activities efficiently covered content in the course of study, but often to the detriment of student inquiry, and even multicultural curriculum content. For example, during the PowerPoint notes, Ms. Happ explained that students were not allowed to talk while she read through the slides. Also, during another observation, she commented to me that she would not give as much attention to units on India and China because she needed to focus on content that was more relevant to United States History. Observations of these classes corroborated this attitude, as Ms. Happ dictated information to students through rote note-taking activities.

The ALCOS objectives were a central focus and control for Ms. Happ's teaching. She clearly followed them in her daily instruction and noted that they formed the basis of what she did regularly. This resulted in a very content-driven instruction that privileged information gathering and covering content efficiently. At the same time, this focus on curriculum objectives clearly marginalized student-centered instruction and inquiry. The breadth of the objectives also led to cutting multicultural content and emphasizing a Eurocentric historical perspective. This last feature of curriculum control points to the element of time. In the next section, I describe the ways in which time also controlled elements of Ms. Happ's teaching.

***Time constraints.*** The next theme that emerged during analysis of institutional controls was time constraints. Like Mr. Smith, time limitations for Ms. Happ manifested in both short-term and long-term spaces. Also, time constraints worked in conjunction with institutional controls to produce certain educational activities and limit others. Here, I describe data that illustrate both of these features of time constraints. From a short-term perspective, Ms. Happ focused on time efficiency given the amount of time for class periods. From a long-term perspective, Ms. Happ focused on narrowing content in order to cover material that would be emphasized on testing.

The element of time worked in conjunction with the controls of the curriculum to produce certain kinds of teaching and limit others. Just as with Mr. Smith's classes, Ms. Happ referenced time as being a major factor when considering teaching decisions, both in content and pedagogy. This was clearly evident in several classroom observations. For example, Ms. Happ strictly planned activities according to time. When students engaged in taking notes from their textbooks, Ms. Happ diligently walked around to ensure that students were not only completing the activity, but that they were doing it in a time efficient manner. She would encourage students

to do as much as they could as quickly as they could. Time also controlled Ms. Happ during teacher-led activities, such as delivering PowerPoint notes. During one observation, she discouraged student inquiry so that she could efficiently cover all of the material in the notes. When a student raised their hand to ask Ms. Happ to slow down, she responded, “What do you need? I’ve got to move on.” Also, when a student made a comment connecting part of the content with a movie he had seen, Ms. Happ responded, “Guys, we’ve got to hurry because we’ve got something going on at the end of class. We’ve got to push through this.” When some students continually made comments that Ms. Happ considered unrelated, Ms. Happ responded, “Guys, random has got to stop. I love you, but we’ve got to get through this.” These examples illustrate that the control of time privileged the control of the curriculum. When time became short, Ms. Happ limited student inquiry and discussion and favored a teacher-centered pedagogy that would efficiently cover curricular objectives.

The previous examples illustrated the short-term, day-to-day effects of time. There were also long-term considerations of time, such as preparing for testing and planning to cover the entire course of study. There were two elements of testing which placed time constraints on Ms. Happ: final exams and standardized tests. Whereas Mr. Smith mentioned that he did not have end of course assessments, Ms. Happ noted that she did have to prepare for final exams at her school. During one observation, she told me that they would be going at a “rapid fire” pace for several weeks in order to prepare for final exams. She explained that this was part of a long-term plan of covering certain material. She stated, “I always know where I want to end, so if I have to hurry up, then we will plunge through it and get the information...I am trying to cut the information so I can get there faster.” Ms. Happ also mentioned that in the past she had “shut down” class as much as five weeks prior to exams to prepare for them. Speaking about this, she

noted, “I shut down so it really cuts into my curriculum, so I have to really get skinny with a lot of things and that makes it very, very hard on me and it’s not fair to [the students].” This shows that there was a long-term goal to get through all the information that would be covered on tests. Often, this meant narrowing the curriculum by placing emphasis only on certain material. As Ms. Happ described it, because of the lack of time to cover everything, “you just have to cherry pick which ones you’re going to get that deep in.”

This illustrates that time controlled not only how Ms. Happ taught the objectives, but also the objectives themselves. In the previous theme, it was revealed that Ms. Happ would cut aspects of her World History curriculum that she deemed less relevant for United States History. In interview responses, it became clear that this connected to the element of time. An extended quote illustrates this. She explained:

The things that I see because I came from high school, things that I know [are] in the course of study for high school and how it affects the United States, those are the things that I focus on the most. I probably spend more time on it, that’s why I spend more time on the Greeks and I spend time with Rome, but India, I probably wouldn’t spend as much time with and it’s not that, it’s just we’ll get just the basics of what that standard asked for there in order to make up the time so that when we go into second semester we’re able to get to, you know, that pertinent information already.

Thus, the purpose of emphasizing certain content was to “make up time”, which had the effect of producing a narrower, more Eurocentric coverage of World History.

Time constraints were clearly a major controlling factor for Ms. Happ that inextricably linked with curriculum objectives. These time constraints worked in both the short-term and long-term. On a short-term basis, time constrained Ms. Happ’s ability to include student dialogue and inquiry due to the emphasis on efficient coverage of ALCOS objectives. On a long-term basis, Ms. Happ had to “shut down” class in order to get through all of the content that would be tested, whether on final exams or standardized testing. Additionally, due to long-term time

considerations, Ms. Happ felt the need to narrow the curriculum in a way that marginalized multicultural content. In the next section, I discuss how the elements of time and curricular control also connected to the institutional emphasis on skill acquisition and future preparation.

***Emphasis on skills/preparation.*** Another prevalent theme related to institutional controls was the emphasis placed on producing skills and preparation for the next level of education. This differs somewhat from Mr. Smith, in that Ms. Happ commonly mentioned skills in the context of future education, and not only Common Core standards. Here, I outline the specific skills that Ms. Happ emphasized as they related to students' future education. I also indicate that these skills directly tied to the purposes of Common Core standards and that they limited student-centered activities and personal relevance.

Preparation for this next level of education pervaded Ms. Happ's understanding of her teaching. She noted that her emphasis on certain content was related to what students would encounter in high school. For example, she noted that her "Greek Day" activities provided students with a "good ground knowledge" of high school curriculum and that she emphasized the content that she knew the high school emphasized. Corresponding to this was a particular skill set that students needed for the next level. For instance, during one observation, she explained to me that some of the activities she conducted were to teach students skills they would need when they "crossed the street", referring to the local high school. She explained, "I'm trying to give them skills so that when they get across the road, when they get to high school, they'll be able to kind of be interdependent and take care of themselves." This referred to their ability to work individually and in groups to produce content information. The classroom observation in which Ms. Happ first mentioned "crossing the street" consisted of students engaged in the "student notes" activity. The student notes activity differed from the PowerPoint notes in that students



worked individually and in groups to find information from their textbooks instead of Ms. Happ reading notes verbatim from the PowerPoint slide. Developing note-taking skills was something heavily emphasized by Ms. Happ as being critical for student success in high school. She explained that the student notes allowed students to “make decisions themselves” about what content to produce and what they thought was historically significant. Ms. Happ stated that students:

need to be able to focus on what the meat is, the heart of why they are important to history and be able to write those notes on it. That’s a skill set they’re going to need when they cross over to high school.

Ms. Happ also heavily emphasized instilling test-taking skills. At times, these skills took the form of testing strategies that simply allowed students to produce correct answers on an assessment. For example, a few of the documents collected from Ms. Happ were geography tests where students had to match the name of a country with its appropriate location on a map. To prepare students for this, Ms. Happ had students utilize mnemonic devices for memorization. During three different classroom observations, she reviewed the particular mnemonic device with students minutes before they took the geography test. Interview responses revealed that Ms. Happ also needed to teach reading and writing skills in conjunction with testing. Referring to her responsibilities related to preparing for school wide testing, she noted:

mine’s the reading, so when they get in there, they need to be able to read through something and break it down...I have to teach them those skills where they can use Venn diagrams...and take that and turn that around into either answering their questions or some kind of writing.

She also discussed these skills in the context of preparing for future education. For example, Ms. Happ explained that the current ARMT standardized test was being phased out in order to eventually usher in ACT Aspire, which “looks a lot like the ACT test that you take when you’re

doing entry into college.” In addition to standardized testing, Ms. Happ used her course assessments to focus on testing that would occur at future stages of education. During one classroom observation, she explained to students that they needed to learn the content they were covering that day because it would be tested at least three more times before they graduated high school. Additionally, she noted that she emphasized writing because “when they get to college...you’ve got those blue books and they give you an essay question and you’ve got to go to town on it.” Lastly, Ms. Happ suggested that she wanted to eventually prepare students to write a research paper “because I know that they have to do it when they get to college.”

This preparation for future education tied directly into the institutionally endorsed reading and writing standards. The foundation of the Common Core initiative is college and career preparation, illustrated by the fact that Ms. Happ’s reading and writing objectives were referred to as CCR (College and Career Readiness). She explained that these standards had “more reading and writing that we’re getting into and I really have to slow [down]...make them read the text, think about what they have read, and then write me something”. These standards resulted in an emphasis on particular skills for Ms. Happ. For example, she explained that she needed to stress social studies related vocabulary to meet the standards of Common Core and to prepare for future ACT Aspire testing. She stated, “I have to teach them vocabulary...what the word means that they summarize...so that when they get in [to testing], their brain’s not going to fry out when they see the big vocabulary”. In regard to her own assessments, Ms. Happ explained that she wanted them to align with standards, that she wanted students to “pull stuff out” from texts, and that she wanted students to demonstrate writing skills, such as building a paragraph, developing thesis statements, and summarizing information. The emphasis on vocabulary, reading comprehension, textual analysis, and summarizing textual information were

all explicit standards written in the district's CCR standards for literacy in History/Social Studies.

It is important to note that this overall emphasis on skills limited other aspects of education within Ms. Happ's classrooms. For example, this emphasis gave primacy to skill development over student-centered, personally relevant activities such as "Greek Day". An extended quote provides evidence of this. Referring to "Greek Day", Ms. Happ explained,

You've got to read, you've got to write and that's what the kids have to do when they come into my classroom...But, if they will do these things, then I will find some activity where they can get their hands into it and kind of be non-traditional...so it's kind of a 'kickback' day.

This indicates that such student-centered activities, which students found personally relevant, were ancillary to the primary educational objective of teaching skills. Additionally, in multiple classroom observations, the emphasis on testing strategies and note-taking skills resulted in passive educational activities where Ms. Happ either eliminated or confined student inquiry and dialogue.

Analysis of Ms. Happ's data revealed similar themes related to institutional controls. *Curriculum controls, time constraints, and an emphasis on skills/preparation* worked in concert to affect aspects of Ms. Happ's teaching. The focus on ALCOS objectives guided her teaching and often produced rote, teacher-centered instruction. Short-term and long-term time considerations compelled Ms. Happ to focus strict attention on the institutional educational objectives. This meant focusing on institutionally endorsed reading and writing skills, as specified in Common Core standards, in addition to ALCOS objectives. Ms. Happ also felt the need to develop skills for future educational preparation in addition to explicit Common Core standards. Each of these institutional controls limited other educational possibilities, such as

student-centered instruction, student inquiry, and social application, in order to focus on institutionally mandated objectives. In the next section, I turn my attention to elements of judgment and autonomy that emerged from the analysis of Ms. Happ's case.

**2. Evidence of judgment/autonomy.** Though the predominance of institutional controls affected Ms. Happ's teaching, there was evidence that she also had some level of judgment and autonomy in her classes. Analysis of the data revealed the following themes related to judgment/autonomy: *autonomy over classroom materials* and *extracurricular content/non-traditional pedagogy*. In the following section, I use data from interviews and classroom observations that provide support for these themes. I also examine the extent to which Ms. Happ had judgment/autonomy in relation to the institutional controls that I articulated previously.

***Autonomy over classroom materials.*** Ms. Happ consistently expressed that the use of classroom materials fell under her judgment. Interestingly, she explained that bringing in external, non-textbook materials was something supported by the institution. In her estimation, it was the school board that provided more leeway for social studies teachers to utilize sources other than textbooks. She explained:

I think really it used to be more of a pressure to use the textbook, but from the board, since we're at this college career ready, it's really giving us some leeway now to be able to pull texts from anywhere.

Thus, the institutional requirement to teach reading and writing standards of Common Core resulted in a wider usage of texts that the teacher chose. For Ms. Happ, this was an exciting new development that represented increased teacher freedom. She noted that pulling in more texts was "more exciting especially for us History people because that's kind of telling us we don't have to teach to a test anymore...we just have more leeway and I'm really enjoying that." Thus,

according to Ms. Happ, certain elements of her Common Core requirements allowed for exciting new educational content to be brought into her classes.

The newfound “leeway” regarding texts and classroom materials was evident in both interviews and observations. She explained that because the class textbook was at times insufficient, she incorporated primary documents in classes. This sometimes meant taking class time to utilize online resources. Ms. Happ mentioned taking her classes to the school computer lab on a monthly basis in order to “pull primary and secondary sources”. In addition to utilizing individual resources and documents, Ms. Happ also mentioned using visual/media sources that she deemed important. For example, during several classroom observations, Ms. Happ showed episodes from the WWII miniseries *Band of Brothers*. Additionally, she noted that she showed students the news when important world events took place, and that during the anniversary of 9/11, she showed her classes the film *Flight 93*. Utilization of these external materials exhibited an element of autonomy for Ms. Happ, especially considering that some of them, such as *Band of Brothers* or news about current events, included material that ALCOS for World History did not directly cover. This points to the next theme related to evidence of judgment and autonomy.

***Extra-curricular content/non-traditional pedagogy.*** Another theme that emerged from analysis of judgment/autonomy was Ms. Happ’s ability to include extracurricular content and non-traditional pedagogy. Here, I show that Ms. Happ did not always teach content that was explicitly stated in the required curriculum. She took time to include content and materials that she felt students needed. As part of this, she also included pedagogy which broke from institutional norms and her common teaching approach. Despite the inclusion of this content and pedagogy, I also illustrate that this freedom either served institutional purposes or was severely limited by institutional controls.

The previous discussion exhibited that Ms. Happ held a certain level of autonomy over classroom materials. At times, this meant utilizing materials to teach about content that was not a direct objective of the course of study for her World History classes. Thus, there was also a level of judgment and autonomy regarding the inclusion of content that she deemed important. For example, when I asked her about *Band of Brothers* and media sources for current events, she explained that “it means that you might have to cut something else out, the student notes or whatever, but you have to learn what is important...what’s truly important to affect them”. This was an important quote as it showed that Ms. Happ broke from her institutional requirements at times, even cutting some of the required material in order to teach that which she deemed important for students. In addition to including non-curricular material, Ms. Happ also showed evidence of using non-traditional pedagogy to teach course objectives. The best example of this came in the form of “Greek Day”. As explained previously, several classroom visits consisted of observing this day-long activity, in which students and teachers assumed roles of ancient Greek figures. This was a very non-traditional classroom experience as it included hands-on activities, such as students constructing sculptures out of soap bars, and interdisciplinary lessons that incorporated Greek History in the English, Math, and Science classes. When I asked Ms. Happ about this, she explained that this was a teacher-led activity where she and others were “trying to find some days for the kids to really involve them into the curriculum and try to do across the curriculum.” These examples and excerpts indicate that Ms. Happ was at times able to use her professional judgment about content and pedagogy. She incorporated extracurricular material that she judged to be “truly important” and collaborated with other teachers to engage students in curricular material using non-traditional pedagogy.

Though this demonstrates Ms. Happ's judgment and autonomy, it was also clear that institutional controls strictly governed and limited these elements. First, she understood her autonomy over classroom materials as freedom over the means to achieve institutional objectives. For example, the "leeway" offered by the board encouraging diverse texts and class resources was simply a strategy to achieve the desired ends of Common Core. As Ms. Happ explained, "it's really giving us some leeway now to be able to pull texts from anywhere as long as it is dealing with our standard and getting our standard covered". Additionally, utilizing online resources and primary documents in the computer lab was also directly tied to the reading and writing skills of the Common Core standards. Speaking of online primary document resources, Ms. Happ stated, "I'll pull primary or secondary sources and let them see how they're supposed to pull that information. Know how to pull that information to...write, to do their notes or whatever they need it for..." Thus, in these instances, the perceived freedom regarding classroom materials was only related to the means of achieving institutional objectives. It was also a limited freedom as the materials Ms. Happ utilized came with the condition of "as long as it is dealing with our standard and getting our standard covered".

However, other examples clearly illustrated that Ms. Happ utilized her judgment regarding educational ends. In fact, she noted that she would sometimes cut covering curriculum objectives in order to teach non-curricular material that she deemed "truly important". Despite the existence of these judgments, it became clear that these were exceptions to the norm and that institutional controls severely limited them. For example, Ms. Happ described her teaching of important, but non-curricular material, as "teaching moments" confined to days where "you hit that teacher moment pretty big". Additionally, she described her inclusion of non-curricular material, such as *Band of Brothers*, and non-traditional pedagogies, such as "Greek Day", as

activities that were given clear secondary status to institutional objectives and traditional teaching methods. She described including *Band of Brothers* as an incentive for completing notes on curricular objectives, explaining, “if you push for me, then you can get to see this.” Similarly, speaking of “Greek Day” activities, Ms. Happ stated:

You’ve got to read, you’ve got to write, you’ve got to do research...But, if they will do these things, then I will find some activity where they can get their hands into it and be non-traditional, so it’s kind of a kickback day.

The implication from both of these excerpts is that non-curricular material and student-centered activities could only be done after students first accomplished institutional objectives. This illustrates that, though Ms. Happ did have elements of judgment and autonomy, it was always limited and constructed within contexts of institutional controls. As a result, primacy was given to meeting institutional objectives and utilizing pedagogy that efficiently reached these goals.

**3. Pedagogy.** Perhaps the most striking feature of Ms. Happ’s teaching was the pedagogical approach that she consistently implemented. It is true that she displayed some elements of non-traditional and/or student-centered approaches. The “Greek Day” activities represented the most exemplary form of this. However, these activities were confined to one day of classroom observations and, according to Ms. Happ, were clear exceptions to the norm. They were “kickback days” or a “showcase” that she granted only after students completed traditional activities. Overwhelmingly, Ms. Happ followed a traditional pedagogical approach in observed classes. Interview discussions corroborated an emphasis on traditional pedagogy and document analysis illustrated that the major objectives of classroom assessments were institutional rather than social. Thus, one overarching theme emerged from analysis related to pedagogy: *traditional/teacher-centered pedagogy.*



***Traditional/teacher-centered.*** Ms. Happ's teaching approaches were consistently characterized by traditional practices where she controlled instruction and students passively received knowledge. This was evident in particular ways. First, Ms. Happ followed very technical procedures. She adhered to lesson plans strictly and incorporated activities that produced rote learning. Second, most of her activities centered on content coverage. The activities she implemented focused on the efficient reception of content objectives and the regurgitation of content knowledge. Third, Ms. Happ's pedagogy limited other educational possibilities. Student-centered learning was incorporated at times, but as an afterthought to accomplishing traditional activities. Also, student inquiry, dialogue, and application were often cut short in order to maintain a teacher-centered structure. In this space, I provide evidence that illustrates each of these points.

The first way that Ms. Happ reflected traditional/teacher-centered pedagogy was through her technical approach to teaching. In this context, I mean that she followed very detailed, scripted techniques in her classes and that she emphasized some of the more rote forms of learning the content, such as memorization and repetition. Several interview excerpts and observations provided evidence of this. In regard to the objectives that she posted on the board daily, she noted, "it helps me during the day because if I've got it up on the board, I have something that I can point to and say, ok, this is what's going on." Regarding her lesson plans, Ms. Happ explained, "I strictly adhere to mine. I use mine every day...Somebody can come in and look at them, but I'll come in and print myself a copy and one for my administrator". This strict, procedural teaching approach was evident in several classroom observations. Ms. Happ noticeably followed the agenda of activities written on the board very closely across each of her classes. Additionally, during activities such as PowerPoint notes, she used the same prodding

questions, attempting to connect the content to student experiences, that she used in previous classes. For example, in both classes that I observed on ancient China, Ms. Happ connected content with the Disney movie *Mulan* at the same exact point in the PowerPoint notes. This was evident of a very detailed, procedural approach to teaching and Ms. Happ seemed to corroborate this. She stated, “I try to have a plan every week, to know what I’m going to do and on it is everything. I drive my administrator crazy because you can look at it, it’s pretty detailed.”

While these examples demonstrate the procedural nature of Ms. Happ’s planning, additional observational data illustrated that she also emphasized technical aspects of learning. By this, I mean that she stressed memorization and repetition of content. In terms of memorization, on several occasions when students were about to take a geography test, Ms. Happ had students memorize a mnemonic device that allowed them to memorize the first letters of various nations that they would then fill in on the test. On one occasion, Ms. Happ went over this strategy minutes before the test took place, having students call out the nations that corresponded to the letters of the mnemonic (e.g. R=Russia, NK=North Korea), encouraging, “We learn by our mnemonic”. Another prominent example of the emphasis on memorization came when the class was preparing for a chapter test. During preparation, Ms. Happ stressed repetition of vocabulary words, calling out definitions and having students repeat the word (e.g. T: “To ease pain”, S: “Acupuncture”, T: “Again”, S: “Acupuncture”, T: “Say it again”, S: “Acupuncture”). In terms of repetition, Ms. Happ constantly referred to her strategy of having students learn curriculum objectives by seeing information over and over again. For example, during a classroom observation where students were again about to take a test, several students expressed uneasiness about how they would fare. To quell these fears, Ms. Happ referred to the repetition of content coverage, stating:

How many times do you have to re-do things in here? I give it to you, you put it in your notes, you put it in your journals, you put it in your study guide, so by the test you've done this three times.

She explained in an interview that even the activities intended to be more student-oriented, such as journals, were just another way of repeating content information. She stated:

some of the kids will make statements...I knew it because you make me write it all the time. Well, yeah, you write in here. They do their student notes, PowerPoint notes, and then we'll put it in the journals...so you try to trick them into another way of learning the content.

Another way that Ms. Happ reflected traditional/teacher-centered pedagogy was through the objectives of her activities. These primarily focused on efficient content coverage and thus resulted in traditional activities where she controlled the lesson or asked students to passively regurgitate information. One of the main ways that this was evident was through the emphasis on note-taking. Some form of note-taking took place in 80% (8/10) of the classroom observations. Primarily, these were in the form of activities labeled "student notes" and "PowerPoint notes". Analysis of the documents used for these activities illustrated their purpose. For student notes, Ms. Happ provided a handout with dates, places, key terms, and figures with a corresponding blank column, often with numbers and note prompts (e.g. Athens → Type of gov't:). She also gave students textbook references and expected them to first work individually to take notes on these topics and then share their notes with a group of students. For PowerPoint notes, Ms. Happ gave students a handout of bullet point statements related to various topics from the textbook. For each of these statements, one to three blanks were left where students could fill in a word or short phrase that Ms. Happ read verbatim from a PowerPoint slide. The clear emphasis for these activities was efficient coverage of content information. Examination of assessments also illustrated Ms. Happ's emphasis on content objectives. Vocabulary comprised class activity

documents and matching/multiple choice questions comprised the test documents I acquired. This indicated a preference for regurgitating content information and seemed especially conducive to more technical methods of memorization and repetition. When I asked Ms. Happ about what she wanted to see from students on assessments, she responded:

I want to see that they've grasped the content...I want them to be able to give that back to me, so we do have some components that are strictly content, like a standardized testing, you know, that kind of regurgitation.

Finally, Ms. Happ exhibited traditional/teacher-centered pedagogy by limiting student-centered approaches and student involvement. Ms. Happ indicated in numerous interviews that she placed primacy on traditional, teacher-centered pedagogical approaches. For example, while she noted the need for student-centered approaches, she seemed to indicate that these should happen only after she accomplished traditional activities, such as note-taking and content coverage. She stated that "once we get through with the student notes, I'll come back with another sheet because I want to get them engaged and thinking about how does this affect us here". When she explained that "Greek Day" was a "kickback day" that students could enjoy only after they accomplished traditional tasks, I asked about the focus of her teaching. She replied, "I think...they've got to have some knowledge before they can see a visual and apply it...I think it's a balance and the visuals have to be limited, but they're necessary". Interestingly, at times, Ms. Happ criticized Common Core standards for being too student-centered. Discussing the implications of Common Core, she stated:

I don't mind doing what you're asking me to do with the Common Core, but in the end there's going to have to be a cleanup, and the end is going to have to be a lecture of some sort because they're not getting enough of the details.

Expounding upon this description, she explained that Common Core was “supposed to be student-driven and I am just supposed to be a facilitator. That is a hindrance because it needs to be a balance. There needs to be lecture that balances that out.” These excerpts indicate that Ms. Happ valued traditional pedagogy over student-centered pedagogy.

This pedagogical emphasis limited certain educational aspects. On several occasions during classroom observations, Ms. Happ limited student inquiry and dialogue to focus on teacher-centered coverage of content. For example, during the PowerPoint notes, Ms. Happ explained that fine china, referring to dishware, originated from trade with China on the Silk Road. Students were interested in this connection and became inquisitive, but Ms. Happ quickly cut off student discussion to return to the PowerPoint notes. In addition to eliminating or severely limiting student inquiry, social applications of content became equally marginalized. One prominent example of this occurred when Ms. Happ discussed tenant farming in ancient China. She discussed the landowner-farmer relationship in ancient China and made brief connections to serfdom in the Middle Ages and sharecropping in the United States. Instead of using this content to make social applications about labor relations, wealth disparity, or general socioeconomic issues, Ms. Happ spent only 10-20 seconds making these connections and then moved back to reading the PowerPoint notes. This illustrates the general pedagogical trend in Ms. Happ’s class, which emphasized traditional approaches that efficiently covered content at the expense of student dialogue, inquiry, and social application.

In this section, I outlined evidence which supports the overarching theme of traditional/teacher-centered pedagogy. What is difficult to ascertain is whether this pedagogy was the result of institutional controls or whether they were simply the personal teaching preferences of Ms. Happ. I discuss the implications of this question in greater detail later. For

now, I turn my attention to areas of investigation that inform this question, namely attitudes toward institutional controls and attitudes about social studies.

**4. Attitudes toward institutional controls.** Ms. Happ's attitudes toward institutional controls shifted in much the same way as Mr. Smith's attitudes. At times, she criticized certain aspects of her job requirements and even explained that she subverted them at key moments. At other times, however, her attitudes revealed elements of conformity and support for institutional controls. Interestingly, she also seemed prone to refrain from criticism of the institution, claiming that she accepted certain annoyances as the nature of her job. Analysis of the data related to her attitudes toward institutional controls revealed the following themes: *non-conforming/critical* and *conforming/non-critical attitudes*.

*Non-conforming/critical.* Ms. Happ exhibited critical and non-conforming attitudes toward institutional controls on several occasions. She explained that she would at times resist emphasizing institutional objectives to focus on "teaching moments". She also expressed her desire to utilize all educational resources that she thought might improve her practice regardless of what her school endorsed. Ms. Happ also criticized aspects of institutional controls for different reasons that were common and unique. In this space, I provide data that illustrate these points.

The best evidence that Ms. Happ was at times non-conforming toward institutional controls was when she expressed that she would cut out or water down requirements related to standards in order to focus on "teaching moments" that she deemed "truly important". She stated that she might have to cut out student notes, a content coverage based activity, to teach things that students need and that might "affect them as a citizen". In terms of standards, this meant Ms. Happ might "hit what the standard tells me I've got to hit, but I might not put as much time into

it.” This commentary on her practice fit with several other attitudes about emphasizing aspects of teaching outside of her job requirements. For example, she explained that one of the resources she preferred was an inquiry-based social studies program entitled “Justice for All”. Even though the district de-emphasized this program in favor of CCR standards and eventual ACT aspire testing, she explained that because she “saw how it works for us...if I can use it somewhere, I’m going to try to use it.” In addition to classroom resources, Ms. Happ also noted that she felt that she could not reduce her teaching to simply covering content objectives and standards. She explained that even though standards drove her teaching, “I have to look at what [the students] go through and...I have to meet them on a social level. I have to meet them on a more nurturing level...They need a lot more than content. They need love.” This implies that Ms. Happ understood that her job as a teacher was not only irreducible to objectives, but that it included caring for students and connecting with them on a personal level. Though these examples present a veiled criticism of what institutional requirements could not encapsulate, Ms. Happ also had more direct criticism of her requirements related to testing. When discussing her responsibilities related to preparing her students for reading portions of standardized testing, she simply stated, “it bites, it hurts.”

There was another aspect of Ms. Happ’s criticism of institutional controls that was unexpected and unique. I discussed this in the themes related to pedagogy and it perhaps sheds light on Ms. Happ’s pedagogical preferences. While most participants criticized institutional controls for limiting opportunities for student-centered instruction, in-depth analysis of content, or making social applications, Ms. Happ was also critical of Common Core because it took away from traditional pedagogy that she thought was necessary. She explained her feeling that Common Core emphasized student-driven instruction where the teacher assumed the role of a

facilitator. In her estimation, this disregarded a balance that needed to exist which included teacher-centered styles such as lecturing. Ms. Happ claimed that lecture was a “fail-safe” that students needed because they had to receive basic content information before they could move on to critical thinking. She explained that lecturing was necessary in the end because “they’re not getting enough of the details and, therefore, you cannot pull critical thinking from nothing”. Though this was certainly a critical attitude toward institutional controls, it was distinct from her other criticisms and those of other participants. I discuss this in greater detail in chapter V.

*Conforming/non-critical.* Though Ms. Happ expressed certain criticisms and non-conformity to institutional controls, her attitudes were more often characterized by conformity and refraining from criticism. She often explained that she would adhere to institutional controls and that many of her teaching practices were designed to meet standards. Additionally, rather than criticizing or challenging institutional norms, she often expressed that difficulties presented by institutional requirements were simply a part of her job. I explore data that represent this theme in the following section.

Ms. Happ expressed attitudes of adhering to institutional requirements much more commonly than breaking from them. For example, she kept a consistent record of each ALCOS and CCR standard she covered each day on the board. She also explained that she kept clear records of lesson plans that the administration required and that she “strictly adhere[d] “ to them. Many of her classroom activities and assessments were aligned to institutional objectives of covering content and aligning with standards. For student journaling, she noted, “I try to make it something that is standards-based.” For class assessments, she stated, “I tried to go through on my test and make sure that the questions lined up with what the standard is asking me to have accomplished.” In numerous interview discussions, she explained that notes activities,



journaling, and primary document activities were for repeating content coverage or for “pulling information”. Additionally, despite her criticism of aspects of Common Core, Ms. Happ also clearly articulated efforts to accomplish its objectives. She stated that she initiated the student notes activity to conform to the teacher-as-facilitator aspect of college and career ready standards. She also expressed that Common Core’s emphasis on text analysis gave students a valuable skill set for high school. As a result, Ms. Happ explained, “I always try to get the Common Core, when we’re doing the before, during, after, we’re making sure that we’re getting the reading, writing, thinking, listening, all of that is done.” At times, Ms. Happ was even proactive in assuring her accomplishment of institutional objectives. She explained that the district’s reading coach was primarily for service of elementary and high school teachers, but that she would “run her down anyway” to “make sure...that I’m on target as far as the kids learning what they need to learn.”

It was also interesting to see that Ms. Happ often refrained from criticism of the institution or the requirements placed upon her. For example, when she criticized her responsibilities toward test preparation, saying that “it bites, it hurts”, she also expressed, “I’m not going to complain because our literature teacher needs help.” At other times, she accepted burdening requirements as the nature of her job rather than criticizing the institution itself. Discussing the narrowing of her curriculum for test preparation, she explained that “we have to live with it, and we growl about it all the time, but it’s not going to change. It’s just the nature of the beast and...we have to deal with it.” Echoing this sentiment in another conversation, Ms. Happ noted that her assessments were “all consuming” because they focused on both content regurgitation and developing writing skills for college. Speaking of student reaction to these

assessments, she explained, “they need to be able to realize that they’ve got to do it. It’s not easy. It’s painful. Get over it and do it.”

In this section, I presented evidence that Ms. Happ held shifting attitudes toward institutional controls. She was sometimes critical of institutional controls and even explained that she subverted them at opportune moments. While there was some evidence of non-conformity and criticism, there was much more evidence of conformity to institutional controls. Ms. Happ took efforts to ensure that her practices and student outcomes aligned with the objectives of the curriculum and the Common Core standards. She was also much more prone to accept negative aspects of institutional controls as the nature of her job rather than to criticize or subvert them. In the next section, I conclude the findings for Ms. Happ by exploring her attitudes toward social studies.

**5. Attitudes about social studies.** Ms. Happ’s attitudes about social studies followed the same pattern as those expressed by Mr. Smith. When she articulated her thoughts about the overall content area, its purposes, and her teaching responsibilities toward it, they generally fell into the major themes of *institutional objectives* and *societal goals*. After I examine each of these themes individually, I also discuss some key elements of Ms. Happ’s attitudes that will be pertinent for comparison and discussion in chapter V. First, despite an emphasis on teaching for social goals in social studies, Ms. Happ seemed to indicate that these could not be achieved before an emphasis on institutional objectives. Second, Ms. Happ believed she accomplished these societal goals through the course of her traditional teaching approaches.

***Institutional objectives.*** Ms. Happ framed some of her attitudes about social studies education around institutional objectives. These typically accentuated the acquisition of skills but also highlighted providing a basic content knowledge of History. When I first asked her what she

believed her requirements were as a social studies teacher, she emphasized content and critical thinking skills. The critical thinking skills that she mentioned went beyond a basic understanding of historical facts and included understanding historical processes and how they affected current societal issues. However, she also indicated that this critical orientation to social studies was only possible through the acquisition of skills emphasized by the institution. She explained, “We should be teaching critical thinking skills...but what we fall into is that we’re pickup up fail-safes that happen below us, so we’re picking up having to teach them reading skills...writing skills.” Additionally, when we discussed the unique pedagogy that social studies might require, Ms. Happ again emphasized a learning process where students needed to first learn basic content, skills, and personal discipline. An extended quote is illustrative of this point. She said:

You need to find a balance between being student-driven and lecture because it would be great if it would all be student-driven and hands-on, but the kids at this level, the first level that they’re really getting into History and they need more guidance...And, in order to get to that point [student-centered/hands-on learning], you’ve got to immerse them somewhere...They need to have some lecture. They need to understand what it’s like to sit there and be quiet and listen to an adult and to get the learning and when they’re not writing as much, then they can do more of this thinking process and we can have discussion...but it needs to be a balance.

Thus, it seemed that Ms. Happ’s understanding of the learning process needed for social studies was to build toward critical thinking and social application after she engrained basic skills and content in students.

***Societal goals.*** Ms. Happ also clearly emphasized personal application and social connection in her attitudes about social studies. In terms of the direct purposes of History, she commonly cited connecting lessons from the past to the present, explaining, “We’re supposed to teach about the past and how it connects to the future.” Flowing from this connection of past to present, Ms. Happ also expressed more indirect results of social studies such as solving social

problems and becoming better citizens. She stated, “I want them to find the origin of things...If we know more about what that origin is, can we fix the future? Is there something there that we can do to fix the next outcome?” Additionally, she explained, “I want them to understand what will make them a productive citizen, not just [in] their responsibilities to the government, but also to their community.” When I explored these more socially oriented goals of social studies with Ms. Happ, she expressed her understanding that part of her role was to teach for social values. She connected this to living well and communicating with others. She said, “They need to know how to make life, you know, we don’t live in a perfect world. There’s always going to be problems. We need to learn how to get along with others.” Thus, Ms. Happ expressed attitudes revealing her belief that social studies was about making present applications from the past and applying those lessons for solving social problems, becoming community-oriented citizens, and improving relations with others.

There were two unique features of Ms. Happ’s attitudes about social studies. First, while she heavily emphasized the social benefits of social studies education, it became clear that she thought institutional objectives were fundamental and necessary before students could ever graduate to more critically oriented learning. It was clear that this preferred learning process privileged institutional objectives and limited more socially-oriented goals. Ms. Happ explained that students could not think critically “when you don’t know [the content]...you’ve got to know something about it in order to be able to get to that level and there’s really not enough time to get them that immersed into something”. This illustrates the attitude that basic content coverage received primacy and socially-oriented critical thinking became limited when time was a factor. Secondly, Ms. Happ believed that she accomplished socially-oriented goals through her traditional pedagogy. When I asked if she ever felt unable to make social applications, she stated,

“I don’t feel like I have any of that...it’s just not a problem.” She explained that she expressed these broader social applications to students “with the text itself” and by bringing in “a graphic organizer and...a chart that goes up on the board”. These unique features of Ms. Happ’s attitudes about the societal goals of social studies education will be integral for the discussion and comparison of the case findings in chapter V.

**Summary.** Analysis of Ms. Happ’s data revealed some similar and unique themes relative to the five areas of investigation. I categorized evidence of institutional controls according to the same three themes that emerged from Mr. Smith’s case: *curricular controls*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills/preparation*. However, Ms. Happ included preparation for future education more commonly when discussing themes related to skill production. In terms of evidence of judgment/autonomy, I felt emerging patterns pointed to elements of judgment and autonomy in *classroom materials* and *inclusion of extracurricular content/non-traditional pedagogy*. Similar to Mr. Smith, I found these elements constantly limited and constructed in the context of institutional controls. Ms. Happ’s most distinguishing feature was her reliance upon and preference for *traditional/teacher-centered pedagogy*. Technical modes of teaching, content-related objectives, and limited student-centered teaching and social application characterized this approach. In terms of attitudes, I categorized Ms. Happ’s perspectives according to the same themes as Mr. Smith. However, Ms. Happ was different because she articulated *conforming/non-critical* attitudes much more than *non-conforming/critical attitudes*. Lastly, though she emphasized *societal goals* more than her *institutional objectives*, Ms. Happ perceived that institutional objectives aided social goals rather than hindered them. Next, I turn my attention to the teacher dyad from the urban school environment.

## Urban Dyad-Mr. Henley (2A)

Recall that Mr. Henley represented the “expert” teacher in the urban dyad because he had more than five years of experience teaching. In the following section, I present the major themes that emerged from analysis of Mr. Smith as a case of an urban expert teacher. I begin with evidence of institutional controls that exhibited throughout collected data and then move through the other areas of investigation. In the table below are all of the major themes that emerged from analysis according to the areas of investigation and which I explain in this section.

Table 3

### *Major Themes for Mr. Henley, Participant 2A-Urban Expert*

Areas of Investigation	
1-Evidence of institutional controls	-testing policies -instructional policies -curricular controls -time constraints -emphasis on skills
2-Evidence of judgment/autonomy	-institutional leeway -instructional decisions -limited judgment of ends
3-Pedagogy	-student-centered pedagogy
4-Attitudes toward institutional controls	-non-conforming/critical
5-Attitudes about social studies	-institutional objectives -societal goals

**1. Evidence of institutional controls.** Analysis of data related to evidence of institutional controls revealed some similarities and differences between Mr. Henley and the other participants. Like Mr. Smith and Ms. Happ, there were clear themes of *curricular controls*, *emphasis on skill production*, and *time constraints*. However, unlike the other participants, Mr. Henley commonly discussed other institutional factors that affected his teaching. Though these were not as pervasive as the common themes related to the curriculum and skills, they constituted unique perspectives of institutional controls relative to the other participants, and were therefore deemed worthy of inclusion as major themes. These additional themes were

*testing policies* and *teaching policies*. I begin by discussing these unique themes and then move on to the common themes related to the curriculum, time, and skills.

***Testing policies.*** Testing occupied an interesting place in the analysis of data for all participants. No specific social studies component for standardized testing existed for the participants in the rural dyad, though they both mentioned preparing for reading components of the ARMT test. Additionally, though both rural participants seemed to teach to their own assessments, there was no explicit testing policy which affected this. In Mr. Hensley's case, however, there were two specific testing policies which affected aspects of his daily practice. The first policy related to the state graduation exam which included a specific social studies component. This resulted in a school period, known as "0" period, that presented difficulties for Mr. Henley. The second was a grading policy which placed great emphasis on testing in Mr. Henley's classes. Here, I discuss both of these policies and how they controlled aspects of Mr. Henley's teaching.

The state graduation exam was in its final year at the time of this study. Despite its being phased out, vestiges of this testing structure remained a part of daily school functions. When the state first implemented this exam, Mr. Henley's school adopted an extra class period specifically for testing remediation, known as "0" period. Under the current dynamics of the graduation exam, however, this class period became "almost kind of meaningless" in Mr. Henley's eyes. This was because students now only had to pass two subject areas on the graduation exam and many students felt they did not need to pass social studies. Therefore, Mr. Henley explained, the entire period became a *de facto* study hall where students "[came] in and [didn't] really have a lot to do." Also, because of its designation as a non-academic course, there were no grades for "0" period. Mr. Henley noted that students' reaction to this was, "Hey, if I'm not getting a grade

on it, I don't need to do it', and they didn't, they just sat in class..." Ironically, the phasing out of a standardized test, which called for institutionally mandated remediation, led to a meaningless school period where Mr. Henley had no content to teach. As a result, most students came into "0" period and were completely disengaged from any educational activities, based upon my classroom observations.

Another testing policy affecting Mr. Henley was a new school-wide policy which had been implemented that year. During the end of one classroom observation, he reminded students of an exam the next day and that this would be the final chance to increase their class averages before report cards. When I asked about this occurrence in the context of intrinsic and extrinsic learning motivation, Mr. Henley explained that his emphasis on grading was tied to the new policy. He said:

I want them to value what we're doing in class, but I also know to a lot of the kids, the grade is important and we just have a new grading policy this year where 55% of the students' overall grade comes from formalized assessments like tests...so I really want them to know where their grades are coming from in addition to making the content as meaningful as I can.

As a result of this new policy, individual class assessments constructed by Mr. Henley turned into *de facto* "high stakes" testing.

***Instructional policies.*** Mr. Henley also pointed to specific institutional policies related to teaching that affected his daily practice. In addition to explicit responsibilities related to ALCOS and Common Core, he explained that there were certain instructional "filters" that he was required to incorporate. These were the response to intervention (RtI) program and the strategic teaching model (STM). In this section, I describe each of these programs and how they affected Mr. Henley's teaching.



Mr. Henley described RtI as a statewide initiative focused on intervening with students that struggled both academically and behaviorally. He explained that if he went through several steps working with a student, the RtI team would “come up with several instructional suggestions for teachers to modify instruction”. According to the Alabama Department of Education’s publication about RtI, the implementation of this program is to “identify and monitor students at risk, use problem-solving and data-based decision making to provide research-based interventions and adjust the intensity of interventions based on student’s response” (Alabama State Department of Education, 2009). The program uses a universal screening process, based on grade level standards, to identify students at-risk of not meeting benchmarks. It also outlines a three-tiered intervention process which teachers and educational specialists may follow to bring targeted students back to content mastery. The final step for students that do not reach benchmarks after receiving the three-tiered response is initiation of special education referral.

In addition to requirements related to RtI, Mr. Henley explained that the school expected him to incorporate the strategic teaching model (STM) which “has been a part of our official practice and policy.” This required Mr. Henley to format lessons according to a “before, during, and after” structure and to refer to research-based “best practices”. A publication covering STM from a nearby county sheds some light on the dynamics of this program. According to the publication, STM “is not something your principal came up with to torture you”, but is rather “based on scientific research about adolescent learning”. The components of this scientifically-based teaching model include the following: 1) one or more standards-based outcomes, 2) two everyday instructional practices, 3) use of before, during, and after literacy strategies, 4) four steps of explicit instruction (“I do”, “We do”, “Y’all do”, and “You do”), and 5) use of reading,

writing, talking, listening, and investigating-T.W.I.R.L (Shelby County Schools, 2010, p.2-3). Though Mr. Henley acknowledged this model as “solid” and research-based, he also believed that it impeded his creativity because “what it does essentially is it says here [are] the best methods of teaching, the best practices that are used, so therefore you are inclined to use those”. The published material about STM perhaps supports Mr. Henley’s feelings, as it includes a step-by-step guide for developing “strategic lessons”, with the final step being a checklist review of whether the teacher followed the components of the model (p.3-7). RtI and STM are both based upon data-driven, research-based instructional approaches to increase student achievement relative to state standards. Mr. Henley recognized these as official policies that the school required him to incorporate and which had an impact on his instruction. These policies controlled instruction, but the institution also employed these means to reach their own desired ends, namely ALCOS and Common Core standards.

*Curricular controls.* Though the themes of *testing policies* and *teaching policies* were unique to Mr. Henley, they also pointed to the common theme of curriculum control. The design of the graduation exam and the instructional programs the school adopted were for meeting ALCOS objectives. Like the participants in the rural dyad, Mr. Henley commonly cited covering state curriculum objectives as one of his fundamental requirements as a teacher. Also like the other participants, the emphasis on coverage of these objectives limited certain content and student involvement.

Mr. Henley stated that ALCOS, along with Common Core which I describe later, formed his standards-based instruction. He stated, “That’s my primary...overarching type of objective.” Additionally, he explained that teachers at his school were “duty bound to teach the course of study. I’m obligated...to teach the entire course of study as a teacher.” Mr. Henley was clear that

following the course of study formed the basis of his instructional decisions and that this was an institutional expectation. For example, in several observations of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade American History class, Mr. Henley used outside novels that he selected to teach about themes of immigration and progressivism. When I asked him about his decision to include such materials, he noted that curriculum coverage formed his primary focus. He explained, “The reason why I choose certain outside sources is to mirror what content we’re covering.” During another observation of a unit covering progressivism, Mr. Henley generated classroom discussion about current issues related to the federal budget and taxation. When I asked Mr. Henley about his ability to discuss social issues, he implied that institutional expectations still remained focused on basic coverage of explicit objectives. He said that “the only discouragement would be...does this relate to the course of study? And [the administrators] would probably want to cite, where does it say specifically that you need to cover this issue of modern day taxation here?”

This latter example points to the notion that Mr. Henley’s requirements related to the curriculum were limiting. Discussing potential limitations of the course of study, Mr. Henley suggested that student inquiry and discussion of social issues often suffered from the requirement to cover curricular objectives. He described his desire to make content relevant and meaningful for students, but also noted that “there are times we have to cut off the conversation and be able to move on because we have to cover the class content.” This cutting off of student dialogue was evident at times during classroom observations. For example, when students took notes about John Locke and Thomas Hobbes during a 9<sup>th</sup> grade World History class, Mr. Henley made connections between these figures’ distinct political philosophies and present-day laws related to gun regulation. When students began to discuss these issues, Mr. Henley moved back to a

PowerPoint presentation that covered the rest of the class material, even instructing a few students that came to class late to get notes from classmates.

In addition to limiting student dialogue and social application, the breadth of the course of study and a focus on covering all pertinent information resulted in narrowing of the curriculum. Mr. Henley described a situation with the most recent ALCOS publication where district committee members decided to remove portions of Native American History from the curriculum. He expressed his dissatisfaction with this narrowing of the curriculum by stating that “when you eliminate certain things, you eliminate culture, you eliminate concepts, you eliminate people.” When I asked what the basis was for this removal, Mr. Henley explained that it “had to do with the length of the curriculum, trying to cram a huge amount of content into one grade level...and so because of that it was better to just eliminate it”. Thus, from Mr. Henley’s perspective, the institutional focus on efficient coverage of content objectives in a given time frame limited diversity and inclusion of other cultures.

***Time constraints.*** The previous example suggests long-term time constraints, as the decision to cut Native American History was made in the context of curricular coverage over the course of an academic year. Mr. Henley pointed more explicitly to short-term time constraints that directly affected his teaching. He described that the move from block scheduling to shorter class periods completely changed the dynamic of his daily practice. Additionally, Mr. Henley noted that the intensification of job responsibilities created difficulties for teachers in his school because it left less time for them to focus on instruction. I describe data that show how intensification affected Mr. Henley at times as well.

Mr. Henley noted that the decision to move from 1.5 hour to 45 minute class periods hurt his instruction because it did not allow for “a lot of in-depth time” and limited his ability to

engage in student-oriented activities such as project-based learning. He also mentioned that he could not accomplish many of his preferred writing activities in the class timespan, so he had to focus on “paragraph style writing...picking out topics” in class and assign lengthier historical essays for homework. Speaking about the change of pace regarding class length, Mr. Henley described it as going “from a marathon to a sprint...it’s very quick, it’s very fast paced and you’re trying to do multiple things very quickly”. This was evident in several observations, including the examples previously discussed, where Mr. Henley limited dialogue about social issues. This manifested in vocal ways as well, as on several occasions, Mr. Henley regulated student writing activities by time, adamantly using phrases like “You have three minutes left” or “Time’s ticking away, you only have a few minutes.”

In addition to the actual constraint of time, Mr. Henley discussed shortening of instructional time due to intensification, the process by which external requirements limited direct instruction or planning. When we discussed this, Mr. Henley described several adverse effects of intensification due to various institutional requirements. He explained, “I do see [intensification] because we have departmental meetings...data meetings...strategic teaching meetings...professional development. We’re doing pre and post-assessment data on every class [which] doesn’t give us the opportunity to...build toward a more meaningful practice.”

Interestingly, Mr. Henley stated that he felt this was a school-wide issue but that it did not impact his instruction. However, during an observation of 11<sup>th</sup> grade American History, an administrator called Mr. Henley from his room only minutes after the beginning of class. Mr. Henley’s original lesson instructed students to write responses to the National Urban League, answer how it was progressive, and prepare for discussion. After Mr. Henley was called away, however, students quietly focused on completing the original assignment without any broader discussion.

Additionally, the school principal came to sit in during Mr. Henley's absence and focused on keeping students seated and quiet. Mr. Henley never returned and the student intern asked students to turn in their assignment at the end of class. During interviews, Mr. Henley attributed his absence to attending a department meeting. Thus, it seemed that Mr. Henley was not completely immune to the effects of intensification, as this observation exemplified the impact of external job requirements on instruction. In the next section, I discuss the final theme that emerged related to the evidence of institutional controls, focusing on the emphasis on skills.

*Emphasis on skills.* An institutional emphasis on skill production also pervaded Mr. Henley's practices and thoughts. These skills primarily related to reading and writing outcomes within the context of Common Core standards. Mr. Henley noted that his school had placed emphasis on these standards because they would form the basis for future testing. He also explained how these standards informed his daily instructional decisions. The focus on reading and writing in Common Core fit with Mr. Henley's personal philosophy of teaching in many ways, but he also recognized the limitations that a narrow focus on these standards produced. In this section, I discuss evidence which elaborates on these ideas.

Mr. Henley made clear that adhering to and meeting Common Core standards were one of his primary job responsibilities. He stated that both ALCOS and Common Core were the basis for the school's "standards-based instruction". Common Core standards, in addition to ALCOS objectives, were the outcomes to which he directed his instruction. Several interview responses illustrated that the school endorsed Common Core standards and made them a teaching requirement. Mr. Henley expressed that the school board expected teachers to "implement the standards we have" from ALCOS and Common Core. Even though Common Core had no direct social studies standards, Mr. Henley was still expected to meet the reading and writing aspects of

the initiative. He explained that “there’s not a social studies section for Common Core per se, [but] there is a section on the back of language that requires us to emphasize writing.”

Additionally, he noted that, while the phasing out of the graduation exam meant some freedom from testing-based instruction, teachers were still expected to instill reading and writing skills as outlined by Common Core to prepare for future testing packages. He stated:

There’s still an emphasis on other things...reading still plays a major role...using reading strategies and things like that are really big...writing is really big...and that’s to prepare mainly for the ACT because that’s going to be the new testing component.

The reading and writing skills implicit in Common Core were well-represented in classes and course documents. In nearly all classroom observations, Mr. Henley assigned writing activities, such as quick paragraph responses to open-ended questions to introduce a lesson. I mentioned previously that Mr. Henley incorporated outside novels such as Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*. Part of his rationale for including these materials was to incorporate “reading strategies that provide that reading implementation.” Additionally, copies of course assessments illustrated that Mr. Henley’s tests were writing intensive. Documents of unit tests required students to write paragraph responses to identify key events, people, and concepts and to construct larger essays to answer open-ended questions. In many ways, the specific requirements related to Common Core fit with Mr. Henley’s concept of teaching his subject. On several occasions, he mentioned his personal goals of instilling reading comprehension and writing in History. He explained that he was a “big believer” in research, writing, and reading, and that he wanted students to “think on a higher level” through evaluation of primary documents and writing constructively. Mr. Henley interpreted the value of reading and writing skills within the Common Core’s framing of college and career preparation. For example, he stated that students needed to understand writing “if we’re really going to prepare them for post-secondary” and “if we’re really going to be able to

prepare students for either post-secondary education or for the workforce, they have to be writing in such a style that prepares them for that.” This was not just an institutional imposition, but was part of Mr. Henley’s personal educational values. Reflecting upon his own education, he noted, “I implemented writing even before we had Common Core...I didn’t have a lot of that experience in high school, therefore when I got to post-secondary it was about being able to develop as a writer”.

Though Mr. Henley’s personal teaching philosophy corresponded to elements of Common Core in some ways, he also recognized that its narrow focus on standards limited other educational possibilities. As mentioned previously, he insinuated that the institutional focus on Common Core reading and writing standards was to prepare for the next phase of ACT-based standardized testing. He also articulated that the focus on standards took away from socially valuable educational goals. For example, Mr. Henley explained that institutional objectives focused on meeting reading and writing benchmarks of Common Core and that this de-emphasized active citizenship. He stated:

as far as the Common Core goes, it’s definitely more towards those kinds of things [skills] and that’s really I think what they’re looking for as administrators...they’re looking at what is the academic points to meet testing...to better these parts of the school...and we are completely missing a certain component for that active citizenship part.

Making the point more clearly, responding to what he felt his school emphasized, Mr. Henley replied, “Common Core by a landslide.” This illustrates that, even though Mr. Henley’s personal educational goals aligned with aspects of Common Core, the institutional requirements related to Common Core still controlled his teaching and limited his ability to teach toward social values.

Analysis of Mr. Henley’s teaching practices and reflections revealed some new and common themes related to institutional controls. New themes of *testing policies* and *teaching*



*policies* emerged. Specific requirements related to testing, such as “0” period and the 55% rule, and instruction, namely the RtI and STM, controlled Mr. Henley’s teaching. Common themes of *curricular controls*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills* were also evident from analysis. The school required Mr. Henley to teach ALCOS objectives and emphasize Common Core reading/writing skills within both short-term and long-term time considerations. These limited socially valuable educational means and ends, such as student dialogue, inquiry, and active citizenship. In the next section, I turn my attention to the level of judgment and autonomy reflected in Mr. Henley’s data.

**2. Evidence of judgment/autonomy.** There were many facets of Mr. Henley’s teaching that represented a level of judgment and autonomy. Analysis of this area of investigation revealed themes similar to other participants. First, Mr. Henley held certain *institutional leeway*, meaning that the lack of institutional control over certain features of his teaching allowed for the expression of his judgment. Second, the major effect of this institutional leeway was its result in greater authority over *instructional decisions*. Despite the prevalence of institutional controls, Mr. Henley continually expressed his feeling that he had autonomy over the instructional choices he made. Lastly, Mr. Henley exhibited *limited judgment about ends*. Similar to Mr. Smith, Mr. Henley was at times able to use his judgment about what he wanted to teach regardless of its connection to institutional objectives. In this section, I describe evidence that supports these themes and discuss the level of judgment/autonomy reflected in the context of institutional controls.

***Institutional leeway.*** Similar to Mr. Smith, Mr. Henley expressed that he had a certain amount of leeway in different aspects of his job due to a lack of institutional mandates. There were two major areas in which Mr. Henley experienced leeway relative to institutional controls:

classroom materials and testing. In terms of classroom materials, Mr. Henley commonly used non-textbook sources to teach course content. He also felt that he had freedom to decide which sources to incorporate. Though I previously discussed that testing policies controlled Mr. Henley's teaching, he also explained that a gap in standardized testing policy would provide certain freedoms. I discuss both of these elements of institutional freedoms in this section.

Classroom observations illustrated that Mr. Henley did not confine his teaching to textbook materials. In half of the classroom observations, he incorporated sources such as novels or primary documents pulled from an online database. When I inquired about his use of school-sanctioned materials like the course textbook, Mr. Henley expressed that the textbook was simply a "supplementary guide" and not "the end all be all." He noted that teachers had the individual freedom to "decide on how much they want to use the textbook." Mr. Henley often decided to disregard the textbook because, in his estimation, it "lack[ed] the adequacy of content." He continued, "It misses certain components and so I can't rely on it as being the main component". As a result, Mr. Henley utilized many non-textbook resources in his class. During three observations, he incorporated readings from historical novels that he had personally chosen. In two other observations, he showed a film which covered events during the women's suffrage movement. Lastly, in one observation, he even allowed students to consult their smartphones to research course content and referred to his own smartphone to answer a question asked by a student.

Mr. Henley also expressed certain elements of freedom related to testing. In many ways, testing policies were a controlling feature of the institution for Mr. Henley. The graduation exam resulted in "0" period which provided Mr. Henley with little to no educational opportunities, while the "55% rule" forced Mr. Henley to focus on course assessments. In other instances,

however, Mr. Henley explained that the coming lack of standardized testing would allow certain freedoms. At the time of the study, the state graduation exam was in its final year. Since the graduation exam was only for graduating seniors, this meant that Mr. Henley did not have to direct instruction toward the exam for his current underclassmen. Mr. Henley discussed that this produced positive changes for his instruction. He noted that “it will give us a lot more latitude as far as what is important and so we teachers can interpret the course of study and slow down or speed up as we feel.” The lack of institutional controls for class materials and testing points to freedoms related to the next two themes of judgment and autonomy.

***Instructional decisions.*** Implicit in both of these institutional freedoms is the idea that teachers could utilize their judgment and autonomy over instructional decisions. In the context of the school’s policy regarding use of the textbook, Mr. Henley expressed that “we have autonomy to decide to make those instructional decisions.” Autonomy over instructional decisions was a common refrain from Mr. Henley. He felt strongly that he was autonomous over instructional decisions and that he would continue to implement his desired approaches “until the principal says you just can’t do that...until that happens I’m going to continue to exercise my teacher autonomy as much as I can.” One of the ways that Mr. Henley described judgment and autonomy over instructional decisions was relative to the course of study. He noted that the lack of standardized testing would result in teachers being able to interpret the course of study more broadly. For example, he stated that he was required to teach ALCOS objectives, but “how I do that is pretty much dictated by me”. As a result, he noted that he would include instruction tied to his overall teaching philosophy. Primarily, Mr. Henley expressed that this meant being able to include research, reading, and writing. He explained, “I’m a big believer in research...in writing...and also to be a reader...so those kinds of things I think holistically are very much tied

in my teaching philosophy and things I would like to accomplish”. Thus, in this instance, Mr. Henley appealed to his personal teaching philosophy rather than an institutional directive for the type of instruction he utilized in class. Within the context of instructional decisions, Mr. Henley also hinted at reaching outcomes that he deemed important. This points to the last theme related to judgment and autonomy.

***Judgment about ends.*** Though Mr. Henley was more direct about his autonomy over instructional decisions, he also noted utilizing these means for objectives that he personally wanted students to accomplish. At times, these connected with institutional objectives, as his personal teaching philosophy of incorporating reading and writing skills meshed with Common Core standards. At other times, his personal objectives went beyond institutional frames and focused on socially applicable goals. For example, Mr. Henley felt personally responsible for making social applications from course content, though this was not an explicit directive. He explained:

If you look at the course content, our standards in ALCOS, there are no examples of how you really relate those things today, so you as an educator have to be able to challenge yourself and the students and say, “Ok, we’re studying progressivism, how can you put that in today’s terminology?”

Making social applications out of course content was evident throughout Mr. Henley’s observations. For example, during the unit on progressivism in his American History course, Mr. Henley discussed the objective related to the 16<sup>th</sup> Amendment and its levying of income taxes. Many students in this class had afterschool jobs and began to inquire about why certain taxes were taken out of their paychecks. This led to a larger class discussion about what tax revenues funded, with Mr. Henley discussing military expenditures and social programs. Relating this discussion to the budget crisis, Mr. Henley asked the class, “What are you going to cut?” This

dialogue moved beyond the ALCOS objective related to the 16<sup>th</sup> Amendment and allowed students to make personal and social applications from the content. It also created critical engagement among students related to their opinions of what programs federal and state governments should fund. Interviews indicated that Mr. Henley acted upon his judgment in cases such as these to allow students to apply historical content personally rather than simply gaining a broad understanding of historical facts. He explained, “I think it is important for us to be able to stop [from ALCOS objectives] and talk about contemporary things...that are going on today, for the kids to make it relevant and make it meaningful to them.” Thus, in some cases, Mr. Henley exhibited judgment, not only about instruction, but also about educational objectives.

Though it was clear that Mr. Henley had some level of judgment and autonomy, like the other participants, institutional controls consistently limited this. Institutional objectives always guided Mr. Henley’s instructional decisions. In terms of classroom materials, Mr. Henley mentioned not “being a fan” of the textbook. However, this was because it lacked adequacy of content. He stated that if he only used the textbook, he would “miss specific things that are content related that I have to cover.” In terms of testing, Mr. Henley did express his feeling that the lack of an official standardized test would allow greater leeway for teachers, especially relative to ALCOS. Despite this, Mr. Henley stated that “we are still bound by it [ALCOS], we still have to teach it”. Additionally, as already covered in the *emphasis on skills*, the lack of testing created a space where teachers had to emphasize Common Core standards. Though the school provided teaching objectives, Mr. Henley commonly expressed his autonomy over the instructional decisions used to reach those objectives. However, institutional controls always governed those decisions. For example, he mentioned that there were certain “filters” to his instructional autonomy, those being the STM and RtI. Also, the objectives that he wanted

students to achieve based on his teaching philosophy were “within the framework of the course of study”. As pointed out, there were times when Mr. Henley felt he needed to emphasize components that were not explicit in ALCOS. This was especially evident when Mr. Henley would engage students in discussion that made content “relevant” and “meaningful”. But, even when including this, Mr. Henley recognized that this was an aside to institutional goals. He mentioned that it was “important for us to stop” from the main objective of covering ALCOS standards to include “contemporary things”, and even then he said, “there are times we have to cut off the conversation and...move on because we have to cover the class material.” Thus, like the other participants, Mr. Henley had a certain level of judgment and autonomy, but this seemed to be only to the degree allotted by institutional controls. In the section related to attitudes, I show that Mr. Henley’s reaction to these controls showed that he was more hostile and willing to break from institutional norms than other participants. For now, I turn my attention to an area of investigation which informs those attitudes: pedagogy.

**3. Pedagogy.** Mr. Henley’s pedagogical style was one of his more notable features just as it was with Ms. Happ. However, where an overwhelming emphasis on teacher-centered/traditional pedagogy characterized Ms. Happ, student-centered pedagogy primarily characterized Mr. Henley. Relative to other participants, Mr. Henley included student-centered pedagogy more regularly and naturally. Mr. Henley did still incorporate many traditional teacher-centered practices. In fact, he described himself as “old school”, preferring more traditional activities over technologically literate pedagogical strategies developed at universities. However, a less rigid classroom structure and an ability to engage students, even within traditional practices, distinguished Mr. Henley from other participants. Whereas they seemed unable or unwilling to break from institutional controls and traditional ways of teaching, Mr.

Henley was more apt to create spaces for student inquiry, dialogue, opinion, and application. In this section, I illustrate the salient features of Mr. Henley's pedagogy that culminated in the development of this theme.

*Student-centered/non-traditional.* Mr. Henley exhibited student-centered pedagogy to a much greater degree than the other participants in this study. This was evident in a few specific ways that I discuss in this section. First, Mr. Henley followed a less rigid structure of classroom management than other teachers. Instead of strictly following his lesson plan or daily agenda, he left room for reacting to student inquiry. Second, this corresponded to a teaching philosophy that was experimental and less dependent on context-independent strategies. Such a philosophy allowed for responsiveness to students. Third, and following from the first two points, Mr. Henley included student inquiry, dialogue, opinion, and application much more often in his classes. Thus, even through traditional activities, Mr. Henley allowed students a more active role in his classes than other teachers.

One of the primary features of Mr. Henley's student-centered pedagogy was his class management. First, he was less tied to lesson planning and agenda setting. Recall that Ms. Happ strictly adhered to lesson plans and consistently had an organized agenda written out and followed for each class. This was not the case for Mr. Henley. I noted in my observations that he maintained the same agenda on the board for multiple days in a row and often would not follow its format. Responding to this, Mr. Henley explained:

We're required to put an agenda up but it only serves as a framework...because of the number of classes I teach, they change. I put kind of a brief outline of what we could do that day, but not necessarily what we will do that day.

This resulted in a very flexible class structure. For example, during numerous class observations, Mr. Henley reacted to situations in the class over following a set agenda. In American History,

he allowed students to have discussions about their readings while they completed assignments. Some of these conversations drifted from course material, but Mr. Henley participated in this, such as when he discussed places he would like to go on vacation during class time. It also resulted in more open student inquiry about their readings, to which Mr. Henley readily responded. For example, during a class discussion of the book *Letters from Rifka*, a particular student asked about typhus when she had encountered it in a passage. Instead of hurrying back to the planned assignment, Mr. Henley used his smartphone to search for information to answer the student's question. Additionally, during an activity where students read and responded to a primary document, a student asked a question about Jane Addams. Mr. Henley conversed with this student individually for several minutes, explaining Jane Addams' historical significance and her founding of Hull House. This was a continual theme in observations, as Mr. Henley consistently reacted to individual student inquiry and interest during class activities.

These observations corresponded to several statements made by Mr. Henley about his teaching beliefs and philosophy. For example, he noted that when trying to create student discussion and application of content, he did not use any "specific formula". Rather, it was much more contextually-based. He explained that "sometimes it's just a reaction of what the kids are doing, so sometimes they'll bring contemporary issues and want me to explain them and so I'll try to connect that to what content I'm covering". This context-based approach revolved around student interest in the curriculum. Consequently, Mr. Henley criticized elements of institutional controls that deemphasized experimental approaches. He stated that administrative emphasis on ALCOS objectives and instructional strategies, such as STM, were "restrictive in nature" because they locked out teacher creativity. His personal assessment was that "good teaching practice is...somewhat experimental." Furthermore, he stated that such experimentation was



always based upon how students reacted to instruction. An extended quote illustrates Mr.

Henley's emphasis on context-based reactions to student engagement. He said:

I follow a lesson plan that I develop but that lesson plan goes through...what I have done effectively in the past and then it also offers a lot of latitude. Usually I try to do multiple activities within my class but if I see something is not working then I try to switch gears and let's just move on to the next one. But, I want to be able to see what's effective for the kids. It is a pre-done plan, however...it could range depending on the class and how things are going that day.

These examples and excerpts highlight Mr. Henley's attempts to manage his classes in ways that were flexible to students and not rigidly set to routine procedures.

This student-oriented class structure resulted in specific activities and assessments that were also student-centered. Mr. Henley frequently included student inquiry, dialogue, opinion, and application in class activities. This was evident in other participants' classrooms, but to a far greater extent in Mr. Henley's. For other participants, student dialogue was very brief and not conducive to the overall activity, such as Ms. Happ's PowerPoint notes activity. In Mr. Henley's classes, student dialogue and inquiry was much more prevalent and welcome. Mr. Henley would more fluidly build questions for discussion into traditional activities such as PowerPoint lectures. Instead of limiting student discussion in order to cover material, he would attempt to tie content, such as the 16<sup>th</sup> Amendment, to contemporary issues and allow students to generate their own inquiry and discussion. On other occasions, Mr. Henley would take the time to directly respond to student inquiry during traditional activities. For example, during a note-taking activity in World History, a student inquired into the class structure of Medieval Europe, asking, "If you were born poor, would you stay poor?" Again, instead of limiting this discussion or cutting it altogether, Mr. Henley used this question to discuss social mobility and student's ideas about absolutism.

Soliciting student opinion was also prevalent in Mr. Henley's class activities. In the context of the previous example, Mr. Henley asked students about absolutism and why, in their own opinion, it might be a positive or negative form of government. During discussion of novels in the American History course, Mr. Henley asked students their opinion of the book and what they learned instead of emphasizing strict reading comprehension. This is noteworthy, especially considering that Common Core standards emphasized "accurate" summaries of texts without student opinion or prior knowledge. At times, Mr. Henley even directly discouraged simple content regurgitation. During the unit on progressivism, he asked students, "What does the term progressive mean?" When a student gave a definition from the textbook, Mr. Henley responded by asking students to give their own explanation and to put it in their own words. Mr. Henley also incorporated student opinion and argumentation into his formal assessments. Analysis of testing documents revealed open-ended essay questions where students had to give opinions and provide argumentation for those opinions. For example, an essay question from the American History course was "What problems did immigrants have entering the U.S.? How did immigrants deal with being in a strange place? What does assimilation mean?" A clearer example came from a World History test where two essay questions asked students the following: 1) Who was the greatest monarch in the western world during this period? Why were they so great? 2) Who was the greatest person to impact either the Scientific Revolution or the Enlightenment? How did they impact society? Part of Mr. Henley's rationale for having students complete these kinds of writing activities was to have students engage in the craft of History. He stated:

A lot of those questions that I ask [are] very open-ended questions, so it asks for them to make an argument and I'm looking for an argumentative kind of, here's the reason why I chose this, because that's what real historians do...I want to get my kids to think like historians.

In these examples, Mr. Henley clearly encouraged student inquiry, dialogue, and opinion through class activities. Part of encouraging this more student-directed approach was to have students engage in discipline-specific practices, as exemplified by Mr. Henley's statement about wanting students to "think like historians". However, another aspect of this student-centered pedagogy was its promotion of personal application. Mr. Henley explained that he wanted students to make meaningful connections from the content by engaging in student-centered activities. An extended quote illustrates this. He explained:

I think if I'm doing some kind of discussion, I want the kids to be able to think in modern day terms about how things apply, so I'll use more practical examples and more contemporary examples from today to elaborate on content...so they can make that rich connection between the two. Because I want them to think in today's terms of how this applies and why it applies and why we as a society are dealing with certain issues and look at it in a historical context, but also apply it in today's terms.

Thus, student-centered pedagogy was not simply a means for achieving institutional objectives but was also a means for achieving more socially valuable goals that Mr. Henley deemed important.

In this section, I described the key features of Mr. Henley's pedagogy. On the whole, it was characterized as student-centered, especially in comparison to other participants. Though Mr. Henley still engaged in many teacher-centered approaches, he was more willing to break from those approaches and encourage student involvement as the situation dictated. He followed a class structure that was flexible and conducive to opening up spaces for student inquiry, dialogue, and individualized instruction. Also, his class activities and assessments solicited student opinion and application of content in order to make History both personally and socially meaningful for students. This student-centered pedagogy often represented a break from institutional controls. Pedagogy which catered to student inquiry and dialogue was at times

valued over efficient coverage of content standards. Additionally, approaches which called for student opinion and argumentation from texts contrasted with the analytical reading skills emphasized by Common Core. In the next section, I illustrate how Mr. Henley's attitudes reflected a similar divergence from the command of institutional controls.

**4. Attitudes toward institutional controls.** Mr. Henley's attitudes toward institutional controls reflected the intellectual rationale behind his pedagogical approach. His teaching style was much more student-centered than other participants, as he was more prone to emphasize student engagement and application rather than efficiently cover institutional standards. Here, I outline attitudes that may provide insight into why Mr. Henley was apt to break from institutional controls more readily than his counterparts in this study. Overwhelmingly, Mr. Henley exhibited attitudes that challenged and criticized aspects of institutional controls. As with all of these themes, this was not an exclusive attitude. There were times when he expressed support for institutional policies, especially when they meshed with his preferred teaching methods. For example, as stated previously, he was at times complimentary of the emphasis on reading and writing in Common Core because this fit with his underlying teaching philosophy of promoting reading and writing of History. Also, he explained that he liked the "before", or introductory, portion of STM because it was a "quick way to get prior knowledge established". However, for the most part, Mr. Henley discussed institutional policies in a context of limitation and constraint. He even outlined ways that he went beyond institutional objectives or challenged them altogether. Thus, the major theme revealed from analysis of Mr. Henley's attitudes toward institutional controls was *non-conforming/critical*.

***Non-conforming/critical.*** In this section, I examine two aspects of Mr. Henley's attitudes: his criticism of explicit institutional requirements and his criticism of the lack of other

educational possibilities due to institutional controls. On several occasions, Mr. Henley criticized specific institutional controls, such as ALCOS, “0” period, and the school’s teaching policies. He also explained ways that he directly challenged these norms. He was also critical of the lack of other educational possibilities that resulted from institutional controls. He believed that institutional teaching policies did not allow spaces for teacher professionalism or creativity. Lastly, he explained that ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards did not allow for an explicit component of social application.

Mr. Henley directed much of his criticism toward specific institutional requirements. The first of these was his ALCOS requirements. I mentioned previously how Mr. Henley viewed covering ALCOS objectives as limiting, as he noted that dialogic activities would have to be cut short “to cover the class content”. He also explained that institutional expectations emphasized efficient content coverage over making social applications. Discussing obstacles to making social connections from course content, Mr. Henley explained:

I think probably the only discouragement would be...does this relate to the course of study? And [administrators] would probably want to cite, where does it say specifically that you need to cover this issue...because there is nothing in 11<sup>th</sup> grade in progressivism that says you need to adapt this to modern-day taxation.

Additionally, he stated that most teachers would follow pacing guides to conform to covering content efficiently. He said that most teachers would literally count the number of standards, divide them by two for each academic semester to know “I have to cover that amount between August and December and the other between January and May and so we are at a pace.” Mr. Henley explained that this institutional emphasis on efficient curriculum coverage left out historical content that he felt was important. For example, he stated that he would only view the course of study as “kind of a framework” because “there are some additional things I would add

because there are some things that I think historically that it misses”. Mr. Henley’s attitude toward historical content left out of ALCOS resulted in an explicit challenging of the curriculum in one instance. He described his disagreement with the last publication of the course of study because it attempted to remove parts that “had been there for a long time”, such as Native American studies. He said that part of the rationale behind this was for efficient content coverage, as “they were...trying to cram a huge amount of content into one grade level”. Expressing his dismay at this, Mr. Henley stated that he organized a department meeting to draft a letter to the governor and to the state board, which led to contact with state officials. He explained that “there was enough pressure to augment and make some significant changes to where we would really approve it.” These examples show that Mr. Henley interpreted the institutional control of the curriculum, and especially an emphasis on its efficient coverage, as limiting. They also show that Mr. Henley both covertly and overtly challenged this institutional norming.

Mr. Henley also directed criticism toward other institutional policies. For example, he described the current formation of “0” period as having a “very poor delivery”. This was primarily because it lacked any educational structure or purpose because of its incompatibility with the current testing program. As a result, Mr. Henley stated that the period “just became almost kind of meaningless.” He was also very critical of institutional teaching policies related to STM. He argued that some of the reading strategies endorsed through STM were strategies that his own daughter was using in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Discussing this further, he said, “And I thought there has to be some kind of maturation between 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade...I think some of those basic reading strategies are really good for your basic level learners and basic comprehension.” Additionally, Mr. Henley criticized STM for being too heavily favored by the institution.

Echoing Mr. Smith's sentiments, Mr. Henley explained that administrators would want to see specific methodologies and strategies related to STM if they observed classes and that this "put teaching in a box". Challenging this institutional framing, he stated, "I'm the kind of teacher that I'm going to do what I think is best for my kids and also, with my experience and background educationally, I think I can justify why I'm doing this."

These examples illustrate that Mr. Henley consistently criticized specific institutional requirements. Flowing from this, he also criticized institutional controls because they limited other educational possibilities. He explained that because of the institutional emphasis on "research-based" programs, such as STM, the school did not support teacher creativity, reflection, professionalism, or development. There are several enlightening excerpts that bear out this thought. For example, he criticized these programs because "when you say here is the expectation of teaching and you list very specific things...you're asking teachers to conform to that and it locks out their creativity and ingenuity." In Mr. Henley's estimation, this emphasis on research-based instruction also limited teacher reflection. He explained that STM was:

not a very good practitioner-ship model because...it says here are the best methods of teaching...so you are inclined to use those...now you would not have teachers come in and be reflective and say I need to change this up or do this better...instead they would say, I use this strategy so it must work...it is simply checking in line.

Lastly, he suggested that such an institutional approach did not foster teacher professionalism and conditioned new teachers to simply follow institutional directives. An extended quote expressed this feeling. He claimed:

I think novice teachers or first-year teachers that are new to the profession that are not tenured I think are more willing to be conformative to what's expected of them, for example, reading strategies or just strictly cooperative learning and nothing else, and not to say that those aren't good methods of teaching, but it doesn't enhance their practice. It's a method more to me of not treating us as professionals, but treating us as if we are to conform just like the kids are.

Thus, in terms of instructional practice, Mr. Henley criticized institutional controls for their lack of support of teacher professionalism. He suggested that the emphasis on instructional models fostered a technical approach to teaching that did not connect with his personal philosophy.

Finally, Mr. Henley criticized institutional controls for lacking specific social components. On several occasions, Mr. Henley noted that there were no explicit components in ALCOS to make social connections or applications. Speaking of this, he explained there were “connective pieces” that he would bring into classes which allowed students to make personal and social applications of content. He stated that this was missing from current constructions of ALCOS and that the state needed to encourage it more. Additionally, he criticized the institutional emphasis on Common Core strategies because they were not inclusive of social application. While he aligned with some of the reading and writing emphasis of Common Core philosophically, he also recognized that the administration was more concerned with the academic benchmarks of the standards and this led to “missing a certain component for that active citizenship part.” In his estimation, “a school-wide approach to active citizenship is something we completely missed the boat on.”

In this section, I illustrated that Mr. Henley was often critical of institutional controls and, as a result, exhibited non-conforming attitudes. He challenged specific institutional policies, especially related to the institutional emphasis on efficient curriculum coverage and instructional strategies. This led him to challenge these controls both covertly, in his daily teaching practice, and overtly, in calling for changes to ALCOS objectives. He also criticized institutional controls for their undergirding philosophy about the teaching profession and the purpose of social studies. Mr. Henley felt that the institutional endorsement of research-based instruction left out elements



of teacher creativity and reflection. This created a lack of support of teacher professionalism in his mind. He also explained that the emphasis on both curriculum and Common Core objectives left out social goals of social studies, such as fostering active citizenship and making explicit social applications of course content. The examination of this last element of Mr. Henley's attitudes toward institutional controls also revealed certain attitudes about social studies in general. It is to this area of investigation that I turn to next.

**5. Attitudes about social studies.** Mr. Henley's attitudes about social studies education were interesting because they shifted between ideals that connected with institutional objectives and those that broke from them. Overwhelmingly, Mr. Henley was more critical than other participants of institutional requirements. However, in a few instances, he was supportive of certain institutional objectives because they fit with his overall philosophy regarding the teaching of History. At other times, he recognized that the institutional emphasis on those objectives limited socially valuable goals of social studies. It became evident that Mr. Henley interpreted social studies as both a way to accomplish institutional objectives related to skills and post-secondary preparation and a way to create critical social engagement. On this basis, the themes that emerged from analysis of Mr. Henley's attitudes about social studies were *institutional objectives* and *societal goals*.

***Institutional objectives.*** As I discussed previously, Mr. Henley clearly emphasized reading and writing skills through his personal philosophy of teaching social studies. For example, he said, "The activities tie into my philosophy and what I believe as an educator. I'm a real big believer in research and writing and evaluation." Additionally, when I asked him what he felt his purpose was as a social studies educator, he replied, "I think my purpose falls back into my overarching teaching philosophy which is what I believe as a teacher...I'm a big

believer in research...I'm a big believer in writing...and also to be a reader". Part of this emphasis on skills was to instill discipline-specific characteristics. He noted that he assigned open-ended essay questions on assessments so that students could become skilled at argumentative writing, "because, naturally, that's what real historians do." While these attitudes about the goals of social studies were largely personal, Mr. Henley also recognized that they connected with institutional objectives. This connection between his personal philosophy and institutional outcomes generated some of the only support that he gave toward institutional controls. Responding to possible limitations of Common Core standards, Mr. Henley said that they were not detrimental "because I think kids need to know how to write. If we're really going to prepare them for post-secondary, they need to know how to write constructively...cite textual evidence, those kinds of things." During one discussion, Mr. Henley noted that Common Core objectives should be emphasized over lower level reading and writing strategies to better prepare students for college. He explained that "if we're really going to prepare students for either post-secondary education or the workforce, they have to be writing in such a style that prepares them for that." For Mr. Henley, part of this preparation would entail bringing in post-secondary educators to inform K-12 educators of the expectations of college work. This led to further support of Common Core over what he saw as some "immature" reading strategies exemplified by STM. He said:

Common Core has adjusted a lot of that because there are some parts in Common Core that are now requiring students to write at [post-secondary] level. So, sometimes I have to remind [administrators] that this reading strategy may be great, but does it really follow what Common Core expects us to do.

These excerpts illustrate that Mr. Henley understood social studies as a discipline for developing skills to accomplish the institutional goal of college and career preparation.

***Societal goals.*** Mr. Henley also expressed his feeling that social studies included creating social application and engagement. I have cited numerous examples from classroom observations where Mr. Henley chose to generate dialogue and make social applications with students instead of efficiently covering course objectives. During interviews, he emphasized that making these personal applications from historical content was crucial and part of his responsibility as a social studies educator. Discussing his inclusion of social application, Mr. Henley said:

It's desperately needed...I want them to be developers of a stance on critical civic issues and to be able to know what they stand for...to understand things like tax revenue...where's money spent, what is national debt...they're going to be the kids that end up having to make those decisions as active citizens.

This was not simply an abstract exercise for Mr. Henley, as he recognized the practical implications of developing social understandings. Speaking about his assigning of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, he explained, "I also want them to think about what progressivism is and conceptualize that...how do we solve common problems and things that we have in our own communities? You can take that and use that in today's world". Mr. Henley explained that he had a responsibility as a social studies educator to connect course content to these socially valuable goals. He also argued that the responsibility for developing this social engagement was solely on teachers because institutional mandates did not incorporate these goals. For example, he stated:

We really need more of a contemporary component in our curriculum to be making more active citizens...involving our local government, state government, and how to get people active, how to get people to join organizations within the community. That's something that we're missing from the curriculum.

At other times, Mr. Henley suggested that it was not simply that the curriculum missed the social component, but that an emphasis on institutional objectives actually created the situation for this

aspect of the curriculum to be neglected. He explained that his district emphasized Common Core standards “by a landslide” relative to societal goals. Elaborating on this point, he noted:

I think what they’re looking for as administrators...they’re looking at what is the academic points to either meet testing, what is the academic points to better these parts of the school...But, as far as us taking a school-wide approach to active citizenship, [it] is something we completely missed the boat on.

Mr. Henley’s attitudes toward social studies reflected ideals that both connected with and broke from the institutional framing of social studies. According to his personal philosophy, Mr. Henley emphasized reading and writing skills because these were integral parts of engaging in historical investigation. Mr. Henley also framed social studies within an institutional lens when he supported Common Core goals because of the need to prepare students for college and career expectations. Coinciding with this attitude was an emphasis on socially valuable goals of social studies education. Mr. Henley expressed that creating social applications and active citizenship from social studies content was “desperately needed” and part of his charge as a social studies educator. Finally, he explained that the institutional emphasis on skills had the effect of marginalizing socially applicable goals within the curriculum.

**Summary.** Analysis of Mr. Henley’s data revealed convergence and divergence from themes exhibited by other participants. In terms of institutional controls, themes of *curricular control*, *time constraints*, and the *emphasis on skills* were again evident. In addition to these controls, themes of *testing policies* and *teaching policies* emerged. Themes related to judgment/autonomy were similar, as Mr. Henley had elements of judgment and autonomy through *institutional leeway*, *instructional decisions*, and *judgment about ends*. Though these are slightly different than the themes generated for other participants, they speak to the common point that Mr. Henley had a certain level of autonomy that institutional controls consistently

limited. The next two areas of investigation illustrated that Mr. Henley was unique relative to his teaching counterparts. He exhibited a *student-centered pedagogy* much more than other participants. Additionally, he exhibited *critical/non-conforming attitudes* toward institutional controls at a much greater level than others. Lastly, Mr. Henley expressed attitudes about social studies that shifted between representing *institutional objectives* and *societal goals*. Next, I turn my attention to the final participant in the study, the “novice” teacher in the urban dyad.

**Urban Dyad-Mr. Gwynn (2B)**

Recall that Mr. Gwynn represented the “novice” teacher in the urban dyad because he had less than five years of teaching experience. In the following section, I present the major themes that emerged from analysis of Mr. Gwynn as a case of an urban novice teacher. I begin with evidence of institutional controls that exhibited throughout collected data and then move through the other areas of investigation. In the table below are all of the major themes that emerged from analysis according to the areas of investigation and which I explain in this section.

Table 4

*Major Themes for Mr. Gwynn, Participant 2B-Urban Novice*

Areas of Investigation	
1-Evidence of institutional controls	-external university control -curricular controls -time constraints -emphasis on skills/preparation
2-Evidence of judgment/autonomy	-daily classroom issues -instructional decisions
3-Pedagogy	-student-centered/non-traditional -teacher-centered/traditional
4-Attitudes toward institutional controls	-conforming/non-critical (supportive)
5-Attitudes about social studies	-institutional objectives -societal goals

**1. Evidence of institutional controls.** Analysis of Mr. Gwynn’s data was compelling because of his unique position as a student teacher. First, despite the fact that he did not experience institutional controls to the same degree as other participants because he was not an

employee, the common themes of *curricular control*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills* were still clearly evident. Some of these themes functioned in direct ways, such as time constraints, as he still directly experienced fitting course material into allotted class periods. Others functioned in a more indirect way, as objectives and standards that his supervising teacher, Mr. Henley, had to accomplish still guided him. Additionally, Mr. Gwynn experienced the unique aspect of *external university control*. The university teacher program included specific objectives and evaluations that Mr. Gwynn had to adhere to in addition to the direct and indirect controls of City High School. As a result, Mr. Gwynn occupied a space in which he had to negotiate the institutional objectives of the school, the explicit requirements of his teacher program, and his preferences as a beginning teacher. In this space, I outline the unique theme of *external university control* first and then move on the common themes related to the curriculum, time, and skills.

***External university control.*** The university teacher preparation program brought many different requirements for Mr. Gwynn while he acted as the student intern for Mr. Henley. He had to construct detailed lesson plans for potential teaching opportunities and have those lessons approved through a rigorous process. Those lessons were subject to observations from university personnel. Additionally, the program required him to incorporate specific strategies and tasks during his lessons. In this space, I describe many of Mr. Gwynn's university requirements and illustrate how these presented difficulties for him.

Mr. Gwynn had several specific university requirements that he had to accomplish as part of his internship. The first required Mr. Gwynn to develop approved lesson plans and then implement those lessons under observation from a university supervisor. Interview discussions

revealed that approval of these lessons was an extensive process that included multiple levels.

An extended quote bears out this process. He explained:

I have a supervisor from [the university] and then I have my professor from one of my classes and the professor will approve the lesson, we'll meet with her in her office and she'll approve it, then we'll send it to our supervisor, our lesson, 48 hours in advance and they'll, then they'll approve it or tell us if we need to change anything and if not we'll teach it two days later. And, obviously, before you do any of that, Mr. Henley has to approve it.

Mr. Gwynn had to construct lesson plans that met the approval of Mr. Henley, a university professor, and a university supervisor. I show later that these lesson plans directly connected with institutional objectives.

Additionally, the university required Mr. Gwynn to teach three observed lessons that incorporated specific components. He stated, "We have to have three observations...one of those lessons had to have [a university strategy] and then I had to teach another lesson [where] I had to use technology." These university components were evident in my observations of Mr. Gwynn's teaching. During one observation, he used a brainstorming activity that he learned from university coursework called "list group label". The activity asked students to list all words they associated with WWI, group them according to similarities, and label them according to categories for the purposes of establishing prior knowledge. In another observation, Mr. Gwynn evaluated student presentations of various World History topics using Prezi technology. He notified me later that, in addition to incorporating technology, this fulfilled the university requirement to incorporate a student performance task into his teaching. All of these university requirements were relative to a particular time constraint. As Mr. Gwynn explained, he rushed through some of the student presentations because he had to meet university deadlines that fell right after Thanksgiving holidays. These examples clearly illustrate that Mr. Gwynn did not

simply follow Mr. Henley or his own preferences, but that the university presented external requirements that he had to fulfill.

Mr. Gwynn exhibited on several occasions that his university requirements created difficulties for him. For example, he continually expressed discomfort with the technology requirement of the program. He stated that “they’re trying to make us technologically literate, so we’re required to use it and I usually get tripped up with things that require the use of technology.” This was particularly evident during observations of the student presentation activity. Mr. Henley was out of the classroom during these presentations and Mr. Gwynn had consistent difficulty getting student PowerPoints or Prezis to load on the computer. He appeared flustered with this obstacle and did not attempt to engage students while he tried to fix the technology. During interview discussions of this observation, he suggested that he might have handled the situation differently during a formal observation. He explained that “if I were being formally observed...I would’ve definitely been under more pressure. I wouldn’t have [allowed] near as much small talk with the students”. This illustrates that, in his unique position, Mr. Gwynn was under constant pressure to conform to the preferences of multiple evaluators. He said:

I have had situations where Mr. Henley wants one thing and [university professor] kind of tweaks what he wants and then you take it to my supervisor and they just think it’s unacceptable, not unacceptable, but they think I need to change a few things. So, that’s where I’ve been a little...confused...just trying to do what two or three people, trying to get all their ideas out.

This excerpt illustrates that the university subjected Mr. Gwynn’s teaching and planning to a pre-specified evaluation. For example, he explained that for lesson plan development, university supervisors emphasized specific terminology and procedure. He said that “it boils down to the actual words you’re using...instead of the intended meaning of the words” and that “they pretty



much want you to have everything mapped out”. Mr. Gwynn expressed that observations of his teaching according to this predetermined outline were not conducive to contextual factors. He said, “I guess a downside would be, and I understand they have to have things 48 hours in advance...but I guess there’s just little unforeseen things that can happen in that 48 hours.”

These examples illustrate that Mr. Gwynn’s unique position as a student teacher included external controls from his university teaching program. This program required him to construct lesson plans according to predetermined criteria, have them approved by Mr. Henley and multiple university personnel, implement lessons under observation and evaluation, and incorporate strategies from university coursework. At times, Mr. Gwynn understood these requirements as controlling. They forced him to implement strategies with which he did not feel comfortable and created a pressure to conform to the expectations of multiple supervisors, which sometimes took away from reactions to contextual factors. Though these controls were unique to Mr. Gwynn, they were not separate from the themes of institutional control common to other participants. In the following passages, I illustrate the connection between university controls and the school’s institutional objectives.

***Curricular controls.*** The common themes of institutional controls that emerged from other participants also emerged with Mr. Gwynn. Though he was not an official employee of the school, Mr. Gwynn still felt the direct and indirect control of institutional norms. This was prevalent in terms of the curriculum. First, Mr. Gwynn noted that he was still subject to teaching toward ALCOS standards because he had to implement the curriculum and content of his supervising teacher, Mr. Henley. In a more direct way, his university requirements connected with these curricular controls by requiring adherence to curricular standards for lesson approval. Thus, Mr. Gwynn commonly expressed the need to accomplish content coverage during his

lessons. Observations and interview discussions also illustrated that, like other participants, this focus on curricular objectives limited aspects of active student engagement.

The external university requirements that controlled Mr. Gwynn's teaching were not isolated from the institutional controls common to the employed teachers in the study. For example, curricular objectives still governed Mr. Gwynn's lessons even though he developed them on his own. Discussing his relationship with Mr. Henley, Mr. Gwynn stated that "the only requirement I have with him would be the content and he would tell me what we would be covering and I would make a lesson for it and he would approve it". Thus, while Mr. Gwynn constructed his own lessons, these directly connected with Mr. Henley's institutional requirements toward ALCOS. Not only was Mr. Gwynn's teaching indirectly tied to curricular objectives, but his university requirements reinforced planning teaching toward these ends. When I asked Mr. Gwynn about his experiences with the school's administrative expectations, he noted that the university emphasis on "backwards mapping" alleviated any potential concerns. He explained:

[The university] teach us the backwards mapping. Obviously, the first thing you do is consider the standard and...with the standards and all the emphasis on that, and how you have to make sure that your assignment meets the standards, I think it...takes a lot of that worry out.

This illustrates that university controls worked in concert with institutional controls to reinforce objectives related to ALCOS.

Mr. Gwynn's understandings and practices of teaching clearly reflected this emphasis on curriculum objectives. For example, he stated that he was relieved to see that Mr. Henley utilized many traditional methods, such as lecture and PowerPoint notes, because it allowed for content coverage. He described lecturing as bland, but necessary, because "they have to get the meat of

the lesson and the content from somewhere.” Observations of Mr. Gwynn’s lessons reflected an emphasis on covering required content. For example, Mr. Gwynn introduced the unit on WWI by using the “list group label” brainstorming activity. He explained to me that this was diagnostic in a sense because it allowed him to “see what they already know and kind of tweak lessons.” The point of the activity was to diagnose the curricular objectives he needed to emphasize through the course of the unit. Observations of student presentations also illustrated the emphasis on regurgitation of content knowledge. Students spent three to five minutes making presentations to the class on topics such as the French and Haitian Revolutions. Most students simply read notes verbatim from the PowerPoint slides related to their topic. When I asked what the main priority was for evaluating these presentations, Mr. Gwynn stated that it was “content knowledge”. Additionally, Mr. Gwynn incorporated lectures that covered the ALCOS objectives in an efficient manner. At times, these had the effect of limiting student inquiry. Like other participants, Mr. Gwynn cut off student discussion to get through his coverage of material. During an observation on WWI, a student inquired into American isolationism, asking, “If the U.S. didn’t enter WWI, would we have been ok? Would the war have stayed in Europe?” Mr. Gwynn quickly answered “probably not because American ships were being sunk” and returned his focus to the PowerPoint slides.

These examples show that Mr. Gwynn focused on covering curricular objectives and that this focus limited other educational possibilities. Several excerpts from interview discussions supported this. During one observation, Mr. Gwynn engaged students in a discussion about the Selective Service Act because the first period class had been extended by thirty minutes.

Discussing his feelings about this dialogic style, Mr. Gwynn stated:

I think it’s awesome. I think most teachers, if they could get away with discussion, and maybe there’s plenty who do and know how to facilitate it, but it just boils down to how

do you test that? You have your standards that you have to test...you just have the standards that you have to teach, you have to cover certain material.

Though recognizing his inexperience in facilitating discussion, Mr. Gwynn also understood the difficulties in including student dialogue relative to content coverage. He stated that “if I could find a way to teach like that [discussion-oriented] and cover all the information I needed to, that would be great because you saw how interested [the students] were.” This illustrates that the narrow focus on covering curricular content diminished opportunities for student engagement and dialogue.

Though Mr. Gwynn was not an official employee of the institution, requirements related to the curriculum still controlled his teaching. At times, his university requirements worked to reinforce these broader institutional objectives by emphasizing lesson planning according to ALCOS standards. Classroom observations and interview discussions clearly showed that these institutional objectives limited student engagement and dialogue. Mr. Gwynn tended to see the inclusion of student dialogue in his teaching only as it related to covering required content. Next, I explore data expressing that this focus on curricular coverage naturally connected with issues of time.

*Time constraints.* Controls related to time also affected Mr. Gwynn in direct ways. Though he did not have the same long-term time management issues with the school as other participants, he did have his own long-term time controls regarding university requirements. He was required to meet certain university deadlines before his placement ended and this affected how he conducted some of his teaching activities. He also directly felt the short-term time constraints of the daily classroom. Short class periods and a focus on covering content resulted in

the limitation of more student-centered teaching possibilities. In this space, I discuss data that illustrate these ideas.

The external university controls and curricular controls that Mr. Gwynn faced each worked within the context of time constraints. Though not a school employee, and therefore not subject to the long-term objectives that other participants strove toward, Mr. Gwynn had his own long-term time constraints with the university. His teaching program required him to complete the specified number of clinical hours in Mr. Henley's classes and complete the series of assignments that I articulated previously. Mr. Gwynn noted that meeting university deadlines affected how he conducted activities, especially the student presentations that fulfilled the performance task of his program. During observations, he informed the class, "I'm trying to get this done fast this morning, so y'all hurry up." He conducted student presentations one after another with little to no discussion or engagement with the rest of the class. During interviews, he explained that he felt pressure to get through this activity quickly to meet university deadlines. He stated, "I was trying to get them all done before Thanksgiving and I have to turn this information in by midnight on December 2...and I have one more class period to try to get through some presentations."

Mr. Gwynn discussed the short-term time constraints of class periods more frequently than long-term time constraints. For example, discussing school policies that affected his teaching, he noted, "I think their class periods are a little short with only 47 minutes...I think that [longer periods] would definitely have an impact on how you teach, just more time." As with other participants, the control of time was inseparable from other institutional controls. For example, Mr. Gwynn often discussed the necessity of covering curricular objectives within the context of time constraints. Speaking of engaging students in discussion, he said, "I love that

open-ended kind of discussion, but as always time is the biggest issue. And you just have the standards that you have to teach, you have to cover certain material.” This shows that the time allotted was used primarily for institutional objectives. Thus, curricular controls and time constraints functioned together to limit other educational possibilities. In the previous section, I described a situation where a student asked an engaging question about American isolationism during a class on WWI. Mr. Gwynn provided a quick response and moved back to his PowerPoint activity without attempting to engage the student or the class further. Discussing this scenario in interviews, Mr. Gwynn provided an extended response that highlighted both the control of time and the place of educational activities that did not connect with efficient content coverage. He explained:

Well, they just taught us about teachable moments, but most questions like that can be answered in a pretty short amount of time, so I just try and answer their question, if it’s relevant, I’ll try to answer the questions to the best of my ability and honestly I’m sitting there just checking my watch [because] if you spend thirty seconds answering a question that they have, that’s a pretty long time.

This illustrates that the goal for Mr. Gwynn in these situations was to keep student inquiry to as minimal a level as possible so that it would not impede upon the time he had for getting through material. As a result, time constraints, together with the charge to cover curricular objectives, functioned to relegate student inquiry and discussion to “moments” where even a small devotion of time (“thirty seconds”) could present a problem within the larger context of institutional objectives.

Time clearly acted as a controlling feature for Mr. Gwynn even though he was not an official employee of the school. His unique position within the institution, as an intern of a school employee, and outside of it, as a university student, actually led to multiple levels of time constraints. He felt pressure to achieve all of his teaching requirements within Mr. Henley’s

classroom by university deadlines. This affected his teaching by limiting what could be done with student presentation activities. Additionally, he experienced the same short-term time constraints that other participants felt within the context of meeting institutional objectives. He felt the need to relegate student inquiry and dialogue to “moments” so that he could cover required material. This further illustrates that Mr. Gwynn experienced some of the same institutional controls as other participants despite his position as a student intern. Next, I show that this was also true regarding the emphasis on skills.

*Emphasis on skills/preparation.* Mr. Gwynn routinely emphasized the importance of developing skills through his teaching. In addition to reading and writing skills, he also explained that he wanted to develop note-taking skills and presentation/speaking skills through class activities. Mr. Gwynn consistently framed the need for developing these skills within the context of college/career preparation. Though this connected with the overarching framework of Common Core standards, he rarely mentioned these standards explicitly. I discuss the implications of this in greater detail in the final chapter. For now, I discuss data that support Mr. Gwynn’s emphasis on the acquisition of a variety of skills.

There were two specific skills that Mr. Gwynn’s class activities emphasized and which he discussed at length. These were note-taking skills and presentation/speaking skills. He did also place importance upon the broader skills of reading and writing, at one point claiming that speaking skills “are right under writing”. Also, note-taking incorporated both reading and writing and corresponded with the institutional emphasis on these skills, as it required the comprehension and articulation of textual information integral to Common Core standards. However, Mr. Gwynn specifically discussed note-taking and presentation/speaking skills in detail. Like other participants, Mr. Gwynn incorporated PowerPoint slides to cover curriculum

material and asked students to generate notes during these presentations. He explained that part of the rationale for relying on note-taking was to instill content knowledge. He said, “I think [there is] this pretty big trend to abandon the textbook these days...so note-taking skills are a great way to tie in all that information”. In addition to content knowledge, he wanted students to develop their own individualized technique of note-taking. He explained that “you’re teaching them how to take notes and teaching them how to organize...they’re still learning what style of note-taking works for them...that when you do exercises like that or just note-taking, that’s a skill in itself.” Thus, Mr. Gwynn exhibited a clear preference for developing note-taking because he believed it to be an important skill.

Mr. Gwynn also heavily emphasized presentation/speaking skills in his teaching. The most obvious example of this during observations was his assignment of student presentations. Though Mr. Gwynn stated in interviews that content knowledge was his primary focus for evaluation of these assignments, he also stated that part of the development of this activity was due to a lack of presentation/speaking skills. He described a presentation activity he observed in the first few weeks of his placement as follows: “I just noticed that...they were standing up...a foot away from the screen staring at it the entire time...I just don’t think they’ve ever been in a situation where they’ve been assessed on those skills”. Though he emphasized students’ presentation of content knowledge, in classroom observations of these activities, he notified me that he would primarily assess presentation/speaking skills and retrospectively assess content knowledge. Analysis of the handout he gave to students covering the activity supported an emphasis on these skills. For example, the document stated:

You will be showing your presentation to the class, and your presentation skills (clarity of voice and speech, eye contact with the audience, organization of your presentation, minimal reading directly from your presentation, etc.) will also be evaluated and included in your grade.



The rubric used for grading included four different areas where students could gain a total of fifteen points each. These areas were slides, content, organization, and presentation skills. It seemed from the document and class observations that Mr. Gwynn elevated these skills over the significance that the student placed upon the topic they presented. The rubric contained an element that expected students to explain the significance of the event, but this was one minor component within the overall topic of content. Only one student out of seven that I observed made any mention of the importance of the event. Additionally, Mr. Gwynn notified students during their presentations that he would primarily be evaluating their “delivery”.

Mr. Gwynn explained on several occasions that he viewed the development of these skills through the lens of preparation for college and future careers. Speaking about note-taking, he said, “I think it’s a great way to keep track of all those different sources of information, and also into college. I don’t know anyone who could have made it through without some degree of note-taking skills.” In the context of developing presentation/speaking skills, Mr. Gwynn noted, “I think you can really put someone ahead in life if they know how to speak well and make eye contact”. Elaborating on this, he stated, “I think learning how to speak...can make or break you in life, job interviews, something like that...so I was trying to get them used to learning how to speak to a large group of people.” Discussing the student presentations, Mr. Gwynn explained that he “wanted to see them grow in presentation skills” more than their articulation of the event’s significance. Mr. Gwynn also expressed that he emphasized evaluation of reading and writing skills. Responding to the skills he deemed most important, he said, “I would say following instructions for activities or with projects, that’d be reading, and I always try, in their responses you automatically find yourself correcting their writing, so writing is the biggest”.

These examples illustrate that Mr. Gwynn clearly emphasized skills and preparation for students' futures in college or the workforce. Interestingly, he did not discuss these within the context of explicit institutional controls, such as Common Core. Though he clearly articulated reasons that connected with the rationale behind Common Core standards, Mr. Gwynn rarely referred to these standards as commanding his emphasis upon skills. Similar to Ms. Happ, his emphasis upon these skills seemed to generate from his own personal beliefs. As stated previously, I discuss these implications in greater detail in chapter V. For now, I examine elements of judgment and autonomy that Mr. Gwynn exhibited.

**2. Evidence of judgment/autonomy.** Evaluation of Mr. Gwynn's judgment and autonomy came with some difficulty as there were a limited number of classroom observations where he implemented his own designed lessons. However, the fact that he occupied a space where he negotiated his teaching preferences with Mr. Henley's institutional requirements and the expectations of his university program made examination of his judgment and autonomy of particular interest. Therefore, I primarily utilized interview data to determine the level of judgment and autonomy that Mr. Gwynn experienced, though observational data also informed this. Analysis revealed two major themes related to judgment and autonomy: *daily classroom issues* and *instructional decisions*. I examine data that support these themes in the following section.

***Daily classroom issues.*** Mr. Gwynn exercised elements of judgment in his teaching despite the pull of institutional controls from his university program and the school's required objectives. One of the ways that he exhibited this judgment was in managing the classroom in the face of daily issues. Though his university program expected him to accomplish certain objectives and construct well-articulated lesson plans, Mr. Gwynn noted that there were

contextual factors for which he could not plan. For example, he stated that there were “little unforeseen things” that could happen in the 48 hours between lesson approval and teaching. During observations, these contextual factors included time management and technology issues. In terms of time management, Mr. Gwynn stated that he was constantly “checking his watch” to determine how long he could allow for class discussion before he had to move back to content coverage. Additionally, in one observation, the school extended 1<sup>st</sup> period by thirty minutes due to a school function. Mr. Gwynn had to determine in that situation how to conduct class and, in this instance, he engaged students in a larger discussion about the Selective Service Act. He also dealt with technology issues numerous times during the student presentations activity. Much like Mr. Smith’s classes in the computer lab, Mr. Gwynn had to utilize judgment to determine how to proceed when technology failed. Interestingly, he noted that his uncertainty in how to handle this situation was due to a lack of experience. He said that developing his own techniques for similar situations would come from “further experience, just teaching, dealing with days like that.” Furthermore, Mr. Gwynn explained that his university program could not prepare him for “going with the flow” of daily classroom situations. Referring to relating to students, managing time, and behavioral issues, he said, “I don’t want to say that they don’t prepare you, but it’s just kind of unforeseen...so I think it’s a little bit more than just, here’s your list of stuff and do it”. Thus, Mr. Gwynn exhibited judgment related to various contextual factors that daily classroom situations offered.

***Instructional decisions.*** Mr. Gwynn also expressed that he had autonomy over instructional decisions. This was perhaps most evident in discussions about the student presentations activity. Though this fulfilled a requirement for his university program and Mr. Henley provided a description of the assignment, Mr. Gwynn had freedom to carry out the

activity. He explained, “I had to come up with all that on my own...he [Mr. Henley] pretty much gave me a description and I came up with the rubric and the actual assignment.” Discussing grading the projects, he added that “assigning it and grading it, it’s pretty much all me.” This speaks to a larger point that Mr. Gwynn clearly articulated. He felt he had control over instructional decisions, but the ultimate objectives were decided upon elsewhere. On multiple occasions, he stated that his focus was on “how” he taught and not “what” he taught. For example, he stated, “I don’t have to spend very much time wondering about, you know, I think about how I’m going to teach it as opposed to what I’m going to teach.” Reflecting upon the institutional objectives of ALCOS and Common Core, he added that “they allow me to spend more time teaching or thinking about how I’m going to teach something as opposed to what I’m going to teach”. Thus, in Mr. Gwynn’s estimation, though he did not have control over the ends to which he directed his teaching, he did have control over how he achieved those ends.

These examples illustrate the level of judgment and autonomy that Mr. Gwynn exhibited in his teaching. Though his university program subjected him to strict lesson planning, he expressed that particular classroom situations presented complex factors for which he had to exercise judgment and in which he needed further experience. Additionally, though he had to comply with Mr. Henley’s requirements, Mr. Gwynn exercised autonomy over instructional means. His chief concern was focusing on instructional decisions rather than instructional objectives. Next, I discuss the major findings related to Mr. Gwynn’s pedagogy.

**3. Pedagogy.** Mr. Gwynn’s pedagogy revealed elements of different approaches. He seemed to shift between both *student-centered/non-traditional* and *teacher-centered/traditional* pedagogy. Each of these styles was evident during classroom observations. However, interview discussions also revealed that Mr. Gwynn was much more inclined toward teacher-centered

pedagogy. Various excerpts show that he preferred “traditional” teaching methods and that he felt too inexperienced to move beyond them. These interview discussions inform Mr. Gwynn’s observational data and his status as the “novice” teacher in this dyad. In this section, I provide evidence supporting each of the themes I generated. I conclude by explaining that, though Mr. Gwynn most often shifted between student and teacher-centered pedagogy, he heavily favored the latter.

*Student-centered/non-traditional.* Mr. Gwynn exhibited elements of student-centered instruction on several occasions during classroom observations. First, he used strategies from his university coursework that allowed students to actively involve themselves in discussing prior knowledge. Second, he assigned a presentation activity which allowed students to present their own research before the class. Like Mr. Henley, at times, he was also able to engage student inquiry and dialogue through traditional activities. I describe the examples indicative of Mr. Gwynn’s student-centered pedagogy here.

Mr. Gwynn incorporated several activities during his lessons that were student-centered in nature. During his first observation, he assigned an activity called “list group label”. As I discussed previously, this activity asked students to create a list of words that they associated with WWI, separate the words into groups, and attach labels to the groups they created. This activity was very open-ended and required students to work together in groups to actively generate labels. The document provided no direct instructions and included only empty boxes in which students could write their words and labels. I categorized this as student-centered in nature because it asked students to utilize their own knowledge rather than receive it externally from the teacher or textbook. Additionally, Mr. Gwynn assigned students to groups, meaning that students actively constructed knowledge through a collaborative process.

Mr. Gwynn also incorporated student-centered pedagogy through the student presentations activity. As discussed previously, this required students to select an event, such as the Stamp Act or the French Revolution, conduct research, and make a presentation about the event to the class. Mr. Gwynn understood this activity as student-centered because it allowed students to take an active role and to learn from their classmates. He stated, “I guess it’s a little more student involved obviously because they are going out and finding the information and making the presentations.” He added, “I see benefits because they’re going to do more extensive research than they would on a project like this...and during presentations they’ll be able to, I hope, learn a lot from just listening to other people.” For both assignments, Mr. Gwynn expressed that they differed from traditional activities because they were “very flexible” and “more student involved”.

Traditional activities also incorporated aspects of student-centered pedagogy at times. Like Mr. Henley, Mr. Gwynn could utilize a teacher-centered instructional method to build toward student-centered learning. He used PowerPoint slides to cover the majority of content for a given lesson, providing supplementary information through lecture. While using this activity for a lesson on WWI, Mr. Gwynn included a slide entitled “Immediate Effects on America”. The slide listed several effects of the United States’ entry into the war including the authorization of the Selective Service Act. When Mr. Gwynn explained the concept of conscription and that the Selective Service still requires registration for 18 year olds, many students began to inquire about this. For the rest of the period, Mr. Gwynn used this opportunity to engage student discussion. This differed from examples where he and other teachers limited student discussion to maintain pace with content coverage. These examples show that Mr. Gwynn incorporated student-centered pedagogy in his teaching. He incorporated assignments which allowed students to take

an active role and to learn collaboratively. He also included time for student inquiry even through more traditional activities.

*Teacher-centered/traditional.* Though Mr. Gwynn incorporated student-centered pedagogy, he also exhibited teacher-centered pedagogy often and expressed a preference for traditional approaches. He used lecture as his main instructional method and limited student dialogue when he felt the constraint of time. Additionally, some of the student-centered activities that Mr. Gwynn implemented were to fulfill university requirements. At times, these student-centered activities supported more teacher-centered approaches and traditional objectives of maintaining efficient content coverage. I illustrate these points with several observations and interview excerpts in this section.

Traditional activities that were teacher-centered in nature were also prevalent in Mr. Gwynn's teaching. Though he took some time for engaging student inquiry, covering content through lecture functioned as a primary activity. As discussed previously, even though Mr. Gwynn allowed for some student engagement, he was also prone to limiting discussion in order to complete covering the lesson. For example, he admitted to "checking his watch" when students would ask questions or discuss content. Limiting student inquiry manifested during teaching, such as when Mr. Gwynn provided a short and rushed answer to a student response about American isolationism during WWI. There were also other elements which implied that covering content and ensuring that students passively received content was of primary importance. For example, Mr. Gwynn primarily read listed notes as they appeared on the PowerPoint screen and was not as apt to engage students in supplementary questions or applications as his supervising teacher, Mr. Henley. He also emphasized the rote note-taking practices of students. Often, Mr. Gwynn would ask "Y'all done?" when he completed a slide.

When students responded with, “Wait, not done yet” or “What does the last thing say?”, he would allow time for students to finish taking notes on the slide. This illustrates that Mr. Gwynn incorporated practices where he controlled the classroom and engaged students only in traditional, passive activities.

Interview discussions provided evidence that Mr. Gwynn favored traditional pedagogy. He stated that he favored “tried and true” methods and that he was “relieved to know that the PowerPoint and lecture notes [were] still the main meat of the lesson” when he began assisting in Mr. Henley’s class. Additionally, Mr. Gwynn incorporated student-centered activities as a requirement and often to build toward more traditional methods and objectives. He explained that the “list group label” and student presentation activities each fulfilled requirements for his university program, which mandated that he incorporate a strategy learned from coursework and a “student performance task”. Though the “list group label” activity was student-centered in nature, Mr. Gwynn also stated that its purpose was to diagnose what ALCOS objectives he needed to cover more extensively during his lessons. The presentations allowed for students to express their own knowledge about a given topic, but Mr. Gwynn also noted that the priority for evaluation of these assignments was “definitely the content knowledge”, which largely came from the textbook and teacher-directed notes. Regarding the inclusion of student inquiry, Mr. Gwynn explained that he often limited it due to time constraints and the need to cover content objectives. As a result, student inquiry was marginalized, as Mr. Gwynn only included student discussion, such as the Selective Service Act episode, during an extended period. Before he knew the school extended this period, Mr. Gwynn limited or responded briefly to student questions. Finally, Mr. Gwynn expressed his preference for traditional pedagogy because of a lack of knowledge of other approaches and a lack of experience in student-centered instruction.



He explained that lecturing was a “necessary evil” because “that information has to come from somewhere” and “I don’t see anyone having any better approaches”. Regarding incorporating student discussion into his classes, Mr. Gwynn stated that it “would be great” if he could “find a way to teach like that and cover all the information I needed to...That’s a skill that I’m sure a lot of experienced teachers do have.”

Analysis of Mr. Gwynn’s pedagogy revealed that he incorporated both student-centered and teacher-centered approaches. However, it became clear from interviews that he preferred traditional, teacher-centered practices and that student-centered activities fulfilled a specific requirement in his program. Additionally, student-centered approaches seemed permissible only when circumstances allowed. Under normal circumstances, Mr. Gwynn emphasized teacher-centered practices and attempted to limit student-centered activities that might impact efficient content coverage. Lastly, Mr. Gwynn showed an interest in student-centered practices, but noted that he did not know of alternative approaches to traditional methods or that he did not have the experience to implement student-centered pedagogy effectively. In the next section, I explore themes related to Mr. Gwynn’s attitudes toward institutional controls.

**4. Attitudes toward institutional controls.** Mr. Gwynn consistently expressed attitudes of conformity and even support for institutional controls. He noted that he constructed his planning and practices in view of institutional objectives. He also explained that institutional requirements were helpful because they provided guidance. At the same time, Mr. Gwynn recognized certain limitations that came from both the school’s requirements and the requirements of his university program. However, whereas Mr. Henley was often openly critical and even challenging toward institutional controls, Mr. Gwynn mostly refrained from direct criticism. He often expressed viewpoints from the perspectives of institutional personnel.

Considering these attitudes, the major theme that emerged regarding this area of investigation was *conforming/non-critical*.

***Conforming/non-critical.*** Conforming to institutional objectives was evident through discussions with Mr. Gwynn. He stressed that he was taught to always consider standards in the construction of lesson plans. He also mentioned that this alleviated any worries about how his teaching might be viewed by school administration, illustrating an attitude of conformity. Interviews also revealed that Mr. Gwynn acknowledged the limitations of several institutional controls, related to both university requirements and school policies. However, he frequently tried to understand these difficulties from the perspective of the institution. In addition to his reticence toward criticism, Mr. Gwynn openly expressed support for institutional controls. He explained that he viewed standards and objectives positively because they provided guidance and established validity for his lessons. In this section, I present data which speak to these points.

Several interview excerpts illustrated that Mr. Gwynn conformed his teaching practices to institutional requirements. On multiple occasions, he noted that he referred to “backwards mapping”, the process by which his university coursework taught him to construct lesson plans. An extended quote shows that Mr. Gwynn used this process to conform to the institutional controls of meeting state standards. He stated:

They’ve taught us to be really heavy on the backwards mapping and first consider the standard. You consider the standard and then our objective and we plan it...we start with those two things in mind, or they’ve taught us to start with those two things in mind and build from there and so that’s pretty much, that’s the way I’ve done it each time.

The development of lessons around institutional objectives was not simply a requirement for Mr. Gwynn. He explained that it alleviated any anxiety that came from possible administrative expectations regarding adherence to standards. During a classroom observation, an administrator

came into the classroom to talk with Mr. Henley while Mr. Gwynn taught. I wondered if these occasions added any pressure for Mr. Gwynn, especially if he wanted to include teaching that was more non-traditional. Responding to this, he explained that there was little pressure “as long as I’m teaching to the standard”. He also expressed that backwards mapping “takes a lot of that worry out” because it ensured conformity with institutional objectives. These examples show that Mr. Gwynn’s attitudes reflected conformity to institutional requirements and that he did not emphasize attitudes which challenged them.

Mr. Gwynn also expressed attitudes that were non-critical of institutional controls. Though he recognized difficulties related to his university teaching requirements and the requirements of the school, he refrained from criticizing them. For example, on several occasions, he indicated that he was uncomfortable with requirements to incorporate technology into lessons. When asked if this requirement limited his teaching possibilities, he replied, “I wouldn’t, no, because I understand where they’re coming from. I understand that part of their job is to give us those technological skills”. Additionally, after recognizing that the university requirement for pre-approved lesson plans did not account for daily classroom issues, Mr. Gwynn stated, “I just can’t think of a better way to do it though because I understand that they are dealing with novice teachers, so they need to know the things that we’re going to be bringing to the table”. Mr. Gwynn also recognized that controls related to time and ALCOS objectives limited the ability to engage in dialogic learning. However, rather than criticizing these institutional controls, he viewed this problem through an institutional lens. He stated:

It just boils down to how do you test that? You know, you have your standards that you have to test to, so if we spend all day talking about one specific thing, obviously you’re going to not have time to discuss all the other things.

The previous examples illustrate that Mr. Gwynn refrained from criticizing institutional controls even though he recognized that they presented difficulties for both what and how he taught. In addition to withholding criticism, Mr. Gwynn often expressed support for institutional requirements. He stated, “I think they’re a help because I wouldn’t, you know, it’d be difficult to know where to, especially being a new teacher, it’d be difficult to know where to start without standards”. Speaking of his attitudes specifically toward ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards, Mr. Gwynn expressed that he did not take issue with them. An extended quote reflects this attitude well. He said:

I’m still very amateur when it comes to teaching, so it’s all I’ve ever known, so I don’t really have problem with it and like I just said, as an amateur, they allow me to spend more time teaching or thinking about how I’m going to teach something as opposed to what I’m going to teach, so I really don’t have a problem with it. I like it. And it’s so easy to prove that what you’re teaching, you’re teaching, you know, like valid lessons to when you will be in that position to have to do that. So, I don’t really have a problem with them.

These excerpts highlight several important points. First, Mr. Gwynn expressed his support for institutional controls, claiming that they provided guidance and a greater focus on instructional decisions. Second, he tied this support to his inexperience as a teacher and to the role of the teacher within the institutional framework. He supported ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards because, as a “novice” or “amateur”, he would not know what to teach without them. He also supported them because they established validity for situations when he might have to “prove” his teaching. I consider these points in greater detail in chapter V.

Analysis of Mr. Gwynn’s attitudes toward institutional controls revealed the theme of *conforming/non-critical* attitudes. Though Mr. Henley stated that he had to adhere to institutional requirements, he also expressed ways that he would subvert and challenge these norms. By contrast, Mr. Gwynn only discussed ways that he conformed to the institutional controls of the

university program and the school. Additionally, he withheld criticism of these controls at the same time that he acknowledged the problems they presented. Mr. Gwynn also expressed support for institutional requirements because they provided guidance and credibility to his teaching. In the next section, I explore the final area of investigation for Mr. Gwynn, concerning his attitudes about social studies.

**5. Attitudes about social studies.** Mr. Gwynn's statements about social studies reflected a dual perspective of the content area and its purposes. Like the other participants, he viewed social studies through both an institutional lens and a social lens. Thus, analysis revealed the same themes regarding Mr. Gwynn's attitudes about social studies: *institutional objectives* and *societal goals*. In this section, I provide data that support these themes.

***Institutional objectives.*** Mr. Gwynn consistently expressed attitudes about social studies that connected with the institutional objectives of covering mandated content and producing skills. As shown previously, his planning and classroom teaching often mirrored institutional objectives. For example, he incorporated backwards mapping to ensure that his lessons complied with standards, limited student discussion to ensure content coverage, and emphasized the evaluation of skills over meaningful application during student presentations. Mr. Gwynn's attitudes showed that he believed these objectives to be related to the purposes of social studies education. For example, discussing the role of social studies in the high school curriculum, he mentioned the ability to foster skills. He stated, "There's reading and writing skills that you have to foster. In my project, I critiqued them on their speech delivery, but there's just, you can do a lot with it. You can foster all kinds of skills". In addition to reading and writing skills, recall that Mr. Gwynn expressed his belief that note-taking and speaking skills were a necessary learning objective. He tied these objectives to preparation for college and future employment. He said, "I

don't know anyone who could have made it through [college] without some degree of note-taking skills" and that learning how to speak was "a big skill...I think it can make or break you in life, job interviews, something like that". Mr. Gwynn also indicated the primacy of content coverage as an objective for social studies. Discussing the example of engaging students in dialogue about the Selective Service Act, he noted the need to make meaningful applications to students' lives. However, he also indicated that this should be done after he accomplished institutional objectives. He stated:

I got to be pretty flexible with that lesson, but usually, you do have to check your watch and watch out to make sure, but I would say that...once you do talk about the content of your lesson, you do need to go back and connect those kinds of values.

This implies that Mr. Gwynn viewed social applications as secondary to the fundamentals of content knowledge. These examples show that Mr. Gwynn expressed attitudes about social studies which connected with larger institutional objectives.

***Societal goals.*** Though he viewed social studies as a means to accomplish goals related to content and skills, Mr. Gwynn also articulated socially valuable goals of social studies education. For example, he stated that "you learn a lot more in social sciences than just the content" or memorizing "a bunch of facts". In addition to content and producing skills, Mr. Gwynn expressed that the purpose of social studies was to accomplish socially applicable goals. He said, "I think that gives you a better idea of how you're going to make a lot of decisions in your life...obviously with things like voting, which is I think one of the biggest things." In addition to practical applications for citizenship, Mr. Gwynn also explained that social studies allowed for personal connections and development. He explained, "I want them to be able to...analyze how something that happened in a country...hundreds of years ago is affecting...why they're sitting in class right now...I think it'll just make them more well-

rounded people, too.” Mr. Gwynn also discussed that social studies had the unique quality of being a content area open for debate. He acknowledged that social studies was an area in which people could deliberate about how to improve society, rather than a series of disciplines which applied universal laws. He noted that this unique feature allowed for the development of understanding difference, stating that “another role [of social studies] is just having a more open-minded society and being able to debate with people who have different ideas or talk and discuss and live with people that have different ideals than you, but respect them”. These excerpts indicate that Mr. Gwynn understood social studies as an avenue for social application and not just simple content retention or skill production. He believed social studies existed for social goals related to citizenship, personal connections, and fostering diversity.

Analysis of data related to Mr. Gwynn’s attitudes about social studies revealed the same themes as other participants. He explained that instilling skills that students would need for college and future careers was a major purpose of social studies education. He also implied that historical content knowledge was fundamental before moving to social application. Mr. Gwynn also articulated many ways that he felt social studies education contributed to socially oriented goals. He explained that quality social studies education developed “well-rounded” persons, informed citizens, and personal connections. Lastly, he acknowledged the openness of social studies as a content area and its ability to foster open-mindedness and diversity.

**Summary.** Analysis of Mr. Gwynn’s data revealed both similar and unique themes. Mr. Gwynn’s unique feature was his position between the institutional structures of the school and his university. As a student intern, he worked within the requirements of his university teaching program. Despite not being an employee of City High School, the institutional requirements placed upon Mr. Gwynn’s supervising teacher ensured that these norms would also control him.

Thus, in terms of institutional requirements, data revealed the unique theme of *external university control* in addition to the common themes of *curricular controls*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills/preparation*. Themes related to judgment/autonomy were *daily issues* and *autonomy of instructional decisions*. These themes represented the common notion that Mr. Gwynn had elements of judgment and autonomy, but they were relegated primarily to means rather than ends, and highly regulated by institutional controls. Mr. Gwynn's pedagogy shifted between *student-centered/non-traditional* and *teacher-centered/traditional* approaches. Though both of these styles were evident in his teaching, Mr. Gwynn also expressed preferences for traditional pedagogy. In terms of attitudes toward institutional controls, Mr. Gwynn clearly expressed *conforming/non-critical* sentiments. He consistently expressed attitudes of support for institutional controls rather than attitudes that challenged them. Finally, analysis of data related to attitudes about social studies revealed the similar themes of *institutional objectives* and *societal norms*. Like the other participants, he explained that social studies should accomplish content knowledge, skill production, and social application. This completes the reporting of findings from each participant in the study. I conclude this chapter with a brief summary of the common and dissimilar themes reported between the participants and with a setup of the final chapter.

## **Conclusion**

The findings that I presented in this chapter reflect many common themes across the cases. Each participant experienced institutional controls related to curriculum, time, and skill emphasis. Mr. Henley also expressed controls related to explicit testing and teaching policies within his school, while Mr. Gwynn experienced the unique control of his university requirements. Though they manifested differently, each participant also exhibited some degree of



judgment and autonomy. This manifested in freedom from certain institutional directives and freedom to incorporate certain content and pedagogy. Common to all participants, however, was the limited nature of their judgment and autonomy relative to institutional controls. Common themes also emerged in participants' attitudes about social studies education. Each participant understood social studies and their role as a social studies educator in terms of accomplishing the stated objectives of their educational institution and contributing to socially valuable goals. Dissimilar themes emerged in the distinct pedagogies that participants employed and in their reactions to institutional controls. In terms of pedagogy, Mr. Smith and Mr. Gwynn shifted between student-centered and teacher-centered approaches. Meanwhile, Ms. Happ's pedagogy was overwhelmingly teacher-centered, while a student-centered philosophy primarily characterized Mr. Henley's. Finally, in terms of attitudes toward institutional controls, Ms. Happ and Mr. Gwynn expressed mostly conforming/non-critical attitudes. Mr. Smith's attitudes shifted between being non-conforming/critical and conforming/non-critical, while Mr. Henley overwhelmingly expressed critical/non-conforming attitudes.

This provides a brief summation of the major findings from chapter IV and how they connected and diverged across cases. In the next chapter, I begin by providing a more in-depth case-by-case comparison of findings according to the five areas of investigation. I discuss some of the nuances and spaces of inquiry developed from the major findings as I present this case comparison. I then use the major findings, their connections, and divergences across cases to answer the study's research questions and connect to the theoretical framework. Finally, I discuss the findings in terms of the evaluative questions inspired by Flyvbjerg (2001) that I articulated in the introduction before addressing the study's limitations, possibilities for future research, and implications.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The final chapter begins with a more extensive comparison of the case findings that I presented in the previous chapter. I conduct this comparison through the areas of investigation that I used to present the findings with a view toward the original research questions. For each area of investigation, I summarize the common and divergent themes, address nuances of these themes as they displayed in each participant, and provide commentary. This case analysis acts a springboard for answering the research questions, as I connect these findings within the study's theoretical framework and the relevant literature. After I address each of the research questions, I conclude with a discussion of the study's limitations, possibilities for future research, and implications of the study.

#### **Case Comparison**

I briefly summarized the major findings according to the five areas of investigation at the conclusion of chapter IV. Following the same format, I attempt to contribute a much broader examination of these findings in this chapter. I begin by discussing the implications of the common themes in each area of investigation and then do the same with differing themes. Recall that there were several issues that arose during analysis that I noted in chapter IV. I provide a more in-depth discussion of these particularities in this chapter. Not only does this allow for a deeper understanding of the particularities of each participant's themes, even within common themes, but it also points toward the study's overarching questions. I address these nuances and the overall interpretation of case findings in view of answering the research questions. The commentary I provide acts as a foundation for answering each research question directly in the subsequent section. Table 5 brings together visually the major themes from each case.

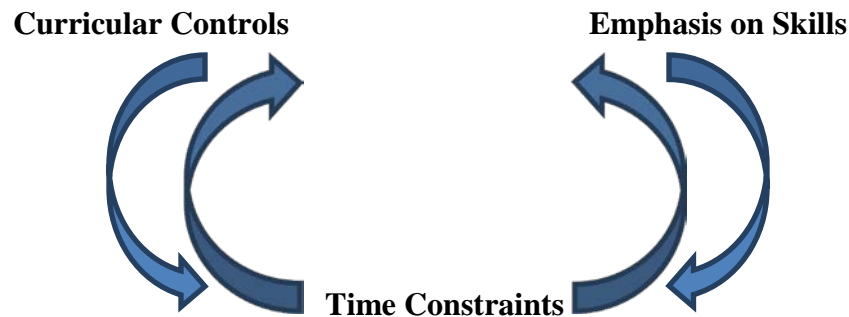
Table 5

*Total Major Themes from Areas of Investigation*

Mr. Smith	Ms. Happ	Mr. Henley	Mr. Gwynn
1-curricular controls -time constraints -emphasis on skills	-curricular controls -time constraints -skills/preparation	-curricular controls -time constraints -emphasis on skills -testing policies -instructional policies	-curricular controls -time constraints -skills/preparation -university control
2-institutional leeway -situational judgments -judgment of ends	-classroom materials -extra-curricular content/ non-traditional pedagogy	-institutional leeway -instructional decisions -judgment of ends	-daily classroom issues -instructional decisions
3-student-centered/ non-traditional -teacher-centered/traditional	-teacher-centered/traditional	-student-centered/ non-traditional	-student-centered/ non-traditional -teacher-centered/ traditional
4-non-conforming/critical critical -conforming/non-critical	-conforming/non-critical -non/conforming/critical	-non-conforming/critical	-conforming/non-critical
5-institutional objectives -societal goals	-institutional objectives -societal goals	-institutional objectives -societal goals	-institutional objectives -societal goals

**1. Evidence of institutional controls**

*Common themes.* The table indicates that there were several common themes regarding institutional controls. Analysis revealed the themes of *curricular control*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills/preparation*. In this section, I discuss each element of institutional controls that were common among participants. As I discuss these elements, I indicate how each of these themes connects with one another and comment on what they mean within the context of the research study. Figure 1 on the next page illustrates the interrelationship between these common themes related to institutional controls. For this area of investigation specifically, it was clear that each theme was connected. The control of ALCOS and Common Core standards on teaching practices was exacerbated by both long-term and short-term time constraints. The existence of these objectives limited the time left for other educational objectives and, at the same time, the considerations of short-term and long-term time constraints naturally limited the focus of teaching to institutional requirements.



*Figure 1.* Relationalty of common institutional controls. This figure illustrates that time constraints limited content controls and, conversely, institutional standards conversely limited time.

All of the participants in the study indicated that ALCOS objectives were an explicit requirement from their school. They were direct requirements for Mr. Smith, Ms. Happ, and Mr. Henley as they were in charge of ensuring that their teaching aligned with stated curricular objectives. ALCOS objectives were an indirect requirement for Mr. Gwynn. He was not primarily responsible for maintaining pace with the course of study, but as an assistant to Mr. Henley, he had to construct lessons in alignment with curriculum objectives in order to gain approval. As illustrated by the data in chapter IV, these curriculum requirements were also controlling because they limited educational possibilities. Each participant noted through interviews or illustrated in class observations that they had to limit active student learning in favor of efficient content coverage. Though the degree to which this occurred varied, Mr. Smith, Ms. Happ, and Mr. Gwynn all eliminated or severely limited student inquiry and discussion during classroom observations to continue activities that efficiently covered content. These primarily took the form of rote note-taking or worksheet activities. While this was not as prevalent with Mr. Henley, he still noted that there were times when he had to simply limit student discussion in order to get through curricular material. As a result, student involvement and social application suffered in the face of maintaining pace with ALCOS objectives.

Engaging students and making social applications were relegated to asides within the broader context of curricular goals. This was exemplified by phrases such as “teaching moments” and “kickback days” when participants discussed activities that evoked student involvement and personal application of content.

The theme of *time constraints* also emerged as a common theme among the participants. Each participant discussed both long-term and short-term limitations related to time. Mr. Smith, Ms. Happ, and Mr. Henley all indicated that they had to constantly keep in mind the long-term objective of completing the ALCOS objectives. Mr. Henley noted his obligation as a school employee to teach the entire curriculum. Mr. Smith and Ms. Happ both noted that this long-term view resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum when they felt the overall objectives were too many. This led Mr. Smith to focus on material emphasized in high school, while Ms. Happ emphasized material in view of both high school and what she would cover on assessments. The effect of this narrowing of the curriculum due to long-term time constraints was a more Eurocentric curriculum. Mr. Gwynn, though not charged with the long-term maintenance of ALCOS, had long-term responsibilities toward his university requirements. These were also limiting, as Mr. Gwynn rushed through student presentations in order to meet his university deadlines. In terms of short-term constraints, each participant illustrated controls related to the length of class periods. Mr. Smith and Ms. Happ visibly rushed lessons, even vocally encouraging student to hurry activities, to ensure that they could complete the day’s lesson. Mr. Henley and Mr. Gwynn both stated that the shorter class periods, relative to longer periods that had previously existed, presented difficulties for their teaching. The result of both long-term and short-term time constraints was a heavier focus on efficient content coverage and limitations of active student learning and social application. The control of time also illustrated the emphasis

on institutional objectives. In most instances, when time was an issue, participants focused more heavily on completing institutional objectives to the detriment of student involvement or their personal judgment about content and pedagogy. Recall that Mr. Smith said he could spend “one day a month” on something he felt students needed, and that Mr. Gwynn was constantly “checking his watch” when students asked questions during his lectures. These examples illustrate that time and requirements related to the curriculum worked in concert to promote content coverage and to marginalize teacher judgment, student involvement, and social application.

Lastly, an emphasis on skills emerged as a major theme within each case. These skills primarily existed in the form of reading and writing skills emphasized by Common Core standards. On the other hand, participants also noted that they emphasized skills that they personally valued. In either case, the rationale behind the emphasis upon skills was for the institutional objective of college and career preparation. This is the underlying purpose of the Common Core initiative and participants that expressed their personal preference for certain skills articulated them within the same context. Ms. Happ explained that she instilled note-taking skills for when students “crossed the street” to high school. Mr. Henley expressed that he emphasized reading, writing, and research because of its implications for college readiness. Lastly, Mr. Gwynn noted that his focus on note-taking and speaking skills was in view of both college and career preparation. This illustrates that participants discussed skills in terms of their personal values and in terms of institutional limitations. For example, Mr. Smith stated that his district’s emphasis on Common Core reading and writing standards had the effect of diminishing the importance of historical content within the curriculum. He explained that the institutional view of social studies was as a content area which could help promote the achievement of

reading and writing standards. He even bemoaned that he sometimes felt like a “glorified reading specialist”. Mr. Henley also explained that there was a heavy institutional emphasis upon Common Core to the detriment of social application of social studies content. He explained that administrators focused more heavily on academic points and benchmarks rather than how students personally applied social studies content. Like the other institutional controls, the focus on skills resulted in a limitation of other educational possibilities related to active student learning and social application.

The themes of *curricular controls*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills* were common to all the participants in this study. The underlying thread of these themes is that they limited educational possibilities not related to institutional objectives. Requirements related to ALCOS and Common Core, and the charge to meet these objectives within given timeframes, relegated inefficient instructional approaches and socially valuable goals to secondary status. At the conclusion of this section, I summarize the interpretation of these controls in view of the research questions. For now, I give attention to the unique themes that emerged according evidence of institutional controls.

*Unique themes.* There were three total unique themes that emerged from the analysis of institutional controls. First, the themes of *testing policies* and *teaching policies* emerged for Mr. Henley. He expressed explicit institutional policies related to testing and instructional methods. Second, the theme of *external university control* emerged for Mr. Gwynn. As stated in chapter IV, Mr. Gwynn occupied a unique position in the study as he stood between the institutional requirements of the school and his university teaching program. I discuss Mr. Henley’s themes first before continuing on to Mr. Gwynn’s.

The explicit policies that Mr. Henley mentioned related to testing and teaching were unique because they seemed to be more prevalent in his case. Though Ms. Happ mentioned preparing for ARMT testing, she did not discuss formal policies related to this. Mr. Henley, on the other hand, noted formal policies related to standardized testing and classroom assessments which affected him on a regular basis. Additionally, though other participants mentioned aspects of instructional designs, such as a “before, during, after” structure, Mr. Henley explained that instructional policies were administrative expectations and that his school had explicit protocol for following these designs. In terms of testing, institutional policies affected Mr. Henley in two ways. First, the school’s implementation of “0” period and its incongruence with the current testing format left Mr. Henley with a class period every day where students had little to no educational direction. As the graduation exam was in its final year, many students would not have to take the exam, and those that did knew that they could graduate by passing subjects other than social studies. As a result, Mr. Henley explained that the period became somewhat meaningless and devoid of educational possibilities. Second, the school’s policy requiring that formal assessments would count as 55% of students’ total class grade created a high-stakes testing scenario. Mr. Henley noted the emphasis placed upon his class assessments because of this policy and observations illustrated that he used the extrinsic motivation of test grades to encourage students. In terms of teaching, Mr. Henley explained that, in addition to his requirements toward objectives, the school also expected him to comply with instructional “filters”. The RtI and STM models guided teachers through research-based protocol to most effectively produce student achievement on state standards. Mr. Henley explained that administrators primarily focused on achievement and academic standards, so they emphasized



these instructional designs. He also believed that these “filters” limited his professionalism because they de-emphasized teacher creativity, reflection, and experimentation.

The requirements placed upon Mr. Gwynn from his university teaching program were unique in the study, as well. As a student intern, he was subject to requirements given to him from an institution outside the school where he taught. The element of university controls affected Mr. Gwynn in two ways. First, university requirements controlled his teaching independently. In addition to assisting Mr. Henley and accruing the stipulated number of clinical hours, Mr. Gwynn had to complete tasks by implementing university teaching strategies. In the case of implementing technology, he explained that this forced him to use a strategy with which he had difficulties. He also noted that impending university deadlines led to getting through assignments efficiently rather than focusing on the quality of the task. This was the case with the student presentations activity. Mr. Gwynn also explained that the complex nature of lesson approval created some confusion, as it forced him to meet the satisfaction of three different evaluators. Second, university requirements controlled his teaching dependently in that they relied upon and reinforced the requirements of the school. Initially, I thought that Mr. Gwynn might be the participant that would break from institutional norms most frequently because he did not have direct requirements related to institutional objectives and because he might utilize non-traditional approaches taken from university training. However, the controls of the school largely governed and directed university requirements. Mr. Gwynn commonly mentioned that his university program stressed “backwards mapping” to ensure that lessons adhered to institutional standards. He also noted that his teaching was still directed by the curriculum requirements of his supervising teacher, Mr. Henley. As a result, Mr. Gwynn commonly focused on content coverage to the exclusion of student involvement. Thus, the university program acted as an external

institutional force and as a support for the institutional controls of the school itself. In the following section, I discuss some of the particular questions and issues that arose from my analysis of this area of investigation.

*Analytical questions.* There was one particular issue that arose from my analysis regarding institutional controls, specifically related to the emphasis on skills. Though the school clearly emphasized skill acquisition through Common Core standards, several of the participants noted that they emphasized skills because they personally felt it was important. Ms. Happ explained that students needed note-taking skills for high school, Mr. Henley stated that students needed reading and writing skills for post-secondary education, and Mr. Gwynn stressed note-taking and speaking skills for both college and career preparation. Are these actually “controls” of their teaching if the participants personally valued them, then? Very likely, these participants would have emphasized these skills without the institutional requirements. This is a complex issue, but my interpretation is that the institutional emphasis on skills still heavily controlled teaching. First, in some instances, the personal beliefs about skills differed from the institutional mandate. For example, Mr. Henley expressed his belief in reading and writing, but he also acknowledged that Common Core standards forced him to implement strategies in particular ways that took away from his professionalism. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the emphasis on skills at the institutional level illustrated what aspects of teacher judgment were permissible and which were not. It is true that many of the participants articulated the emphasis on skills in the context of their personal beliefs and not the institutional requirements. However, every participant, to varying degrees, also expressed their personal belief in teaching for social values and taking the time to make rich personal connections from the content. Though activities which emphasized skills were prevalent, activities which emphasized these social values were scarce and most often

limited to asides due to the requirements of the institution. Therefore, teachers could only include the aspects they deemed personally valuable because it corresponded to institutional objectives. I believe participants reflected this when their rationale for teaching these skills mirrored the rationale of the Common Core initiative.

*Commentary.* The thoughts that I presented here provide compelling ideas in view of the overarching research question. Overwhelmingly, participants recognized that the institution dictated objectives to them. These primarily came in the form of ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards. Participants also explained and illustrated through their practices that these objectives controlled their teaching and limited educational possibilities. Thus, the institution presented an end outside of the teachers' command and judgment. Participants consistently directed their teaching at achieving these predetermined ends. When teachers articulated the educational ends that they valued, those that corresponded with institutional ends were prevalent while those that did not remained marginalized. Also, in the case of Mr. Henley, there was some evidence of the direct institutional control of means. City High School more strenuously emphasized explicit instructional programs that were scientifically-based in terms of how efficiently they accomplished institutional objectives. In the case of Mr. Gwynn, the university functioned as an independent and dependent controlling force, as it trained him to accomplish the ends of both the university and the school rather than his own. As I look ahead to directly answering the original research questions later in this chapter, there are a few important points to take from the comparison of findings regarding institutional controls. First, the institution dictated explicit educational ends outside of the teachers' judgment. Second, these ends controlled participants' teaching indirectly and, in some cases, directly. Lastly, these ends limited participants' ability to personally evaluate both what and how they taught. In the next

section, I discuss the findings related to judgment/autonomy. This provides a deeper understanding of the level of freedom that participants possessed and how institutional controls affected this.

## **2. Evidence of judgment/autonomy**

*Common themes.* The themes that emerged from analysis of participants' judgment and autonomy differed mostly in the terminology I used. I wanted to categorize participant data according to the particular aspects of their judgment and autonomy. As a result, some expressed and illustrated judgment/autonomy in broad terms, hence the themes of *instructional decisions* and *institutional leeway*. Others were much more specific and exclusive in the ways that they expressed and described their judgment/autonomy. For example, Ms. Happ noted that she made decisions in regard to *classroom materials*. Mr. Smith and Mr. Gwynn exhibited judgment in their instructional decisions by dealing with contextual factors, resulting in the themes of *situational judgments* and *daily issues*. Though the nuances of each participant's data resulted in slightly different terminology, these themes speak to larger trends. First, most participants experienced some form of leeway relative to institutional controls, meaning that the lack of institutional policies in some area of teaching resulted in autonomy over that area. Second, all participants expressed some form of autonomy and judgment over instructional decisions. Last, most participants exhibited elements of judgment about ends. Additionally, the major trend that emerged for all these themes is that institutional controls limited teacher judgment and autonomy. This was especially true concerning ends, but also proved to be true in terms of means. Mr. Gwynn represented the unique participant in this area because of his status as a student intern. He primarily discussed autonomy and judgment in terms of instructional decisions. Themes related to institutional leeway or judgments about ends were not prevalent. In

this section, I discuss the meaning of these common themes broadly and the unique exclusion of certain themes in Mr. Gwynn's case. I conclude by providing commentary in view of the overarching research questions.

Several participants explained that the lack of explicit school policies allowed them to make decisions in certain areas of teaching. Again, Ms. Happ explained that she decided the specific classroom materials that she used. She noted that she could use the school textbook at her discretion and utilize other resources if she deemed them beneficial. This was evident in observations as she commonly utilized visual resources, such as films, and other textual sources, such as primary documents. Mr. Henley also noted that he had authority over classroom materials. He stated that he rarely used the textbook because it was insufficient in his estimation. Mr. Henley frequently brought in outside texts, such as novels, and utilized electronic resources, such as smartphones. Mr. Henley also explained that he experienced leeway in terms of standardized testing. Though he was still in the last year of the graduation exam, he noted that the phasing out of this standardized test would allow him to make more decisions about how to teach curriculum objectives. Mr. Smith illustrated leeway in relation to institutional controls in the areas of class materials, testing, and administrative control. Like Ms. Happ and Mr. Henley, he chose when and how to use the textbook and often incorporated other sources, some of which challenged the official text, such as Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. He also noted that the lack of a standardized test for social studies allowed him to "teach it the way I want." Lastly, Mr. Smith also explained that he had control over daily planning because of a lack of direct involvement from his administration. In all of these instances, participants noted that the lack of institutional policies, whether they related to class materials, testing, or administrative oversight, resulted in greater personal oversight regarding instructional decisions.

The most common refrain from all the participants in the study was that they had autonomy over instructional decisions. This often was the direct result of a lack of specific institutional policies for certain aspects of their practice. Mr. Smith, for example, noted that he could determine to teach about ancient Egypt through student projects because there was no testing requirement. Ms. Happ explained that she decided what classroom materials to include because the school did not require her to use the textbook. Mr. Henley and Mr. Gwynn both explicitly emphasized their autonomy over instructional decisions. Recall that Mr. Henley stated “we have autonomy to decide to make those instructional decisions”, regarding textbook use, and “how I do that is pretty much dictated by me”, referring to teaching ALCOS objectives. Also referring to institutional objectives, Mr. Gwynn said, “I think about how I’m going to teach it as opposed to what I’m going to teach.” Thus, there was a clear emphasis across the cases on the autonomy of instructional decisions. Participants felt that they had the authority to decide what instruction to incorporate. As part of this instructional autonomy, several participants noted that they used personal judgments to deal with contextual factors. Mr. Smith and Mr. Gwynn both exhibited judgment when dealing with technology issues during some of their classes. Both participants also noted that they based these contextual decisions on experience rather than academic knowledge. Mr. Gwynn even explained that he had difficulty with these day-to-day issues due to a lack of experience. This shows that, despite the existence of institutional controls, participants held a certain degree of judgment/autonomy and that there were certain contextual factors which required teacher judgment rather than institutional protocol. However, even though participants commonly expressed their freedom over instructional decisions, institutional controls still clearly guided them. Mr. Smith noted that he had limited time to use project-based learning in order to cover content efficiently. Mr. Gwynn explained that he wanted to include

student discussion, but that this had to be limited because “you have your standards that you have to test to”. Even Mr. Henley, the most student-oriented participant, noted that eventually he had to limit student involvement in order to cover content efficiently. The phenomenon of limiting active student learning in order to emphasize teaching methods that efficiently covered objectives exhibited in each participant’s classroom observations. Thus, while teachers did exhibit a certain level of judgment over instructional decisions, and commonly cited their autonomy over methods, the evidence indicated that they had a limited freedom over their instructional means, not autonomy. Institutional objectives consistently guided and shaped instruction.

Finally, occasional judgments about educational ends were common to most of the participants. For example, Mr. Smith explained that he included a student-centered activity about personal finance because he felt students needed it, even though it did not correspond to the curriculum in all of his courses. Ms. Happ incorporated “Greek Day” because she and other teachers felt that it was important to involve students and to teach interdisciplinary concepts. She also explained that she occasionally cut out note-taking activities to include “truly important” material that she felt would affect students. Mr. Henley noted that he went beyond curricular objectives at times so that he could teach about contemporary issues that personally connected with students’ lives. However, the evidence indicated that institutional controls largely marginalized teacher judgments concerning educational ends. Recall that Mr. Smith said he had “one day a month” to spend on something he deemed important that broke from the curriculum. Ms. Happ referred to her “Greek Day” activities as “kickback days” that were allowable only after she accomplished traditional activities which focused on curricular coverage. Lastly, Mr. Henley explained that he had to stop from covering ALCOS objectives in order to include

material that connected with students. This illustrates that requirements related to institutional objectives relegated teacher judgments about educational ends to second-class status.

Participants had only limited opportunities to include objectives that they felt were important for students, and when these opportunities emerged, they were largely as asides or breaks from achieving the objectives of the institution.

*Unique themes.* There were no truly unique themes that emerged in terms of evidence of judgment/autonomy. As I stated previously, though the terminology was different in order to encapsulate the particular manifestations of judgment/autonomy, the themes that emerged were quite common. The only unique aspect of this area of investigation was the lack of certain themes in Mr. Gwynn's case. Whereas the other participants exhibited elements of judgment/autonomy in terms of *institutional leeway* and *judgment about ends*, Mr. Gwynn exhibited judgment/autonomy only in terms of *instructional decisions*. I think this is important to note because it speaks to Mr. Gwynn's status as a "novice" teacher. Mr. Gwynn had no direct requirements from the school, and had extremely limited experience teaching at all, so it would make sense that he did not discuss any particular spaces of freedom from the institution. In fact, the only teaching experience he did have was in accomplishing required tasks from his university program. Therefore, in a sense, Mr. Gwynn showed that he did not have any institutional leeway as most of his teaching involved completing university requirements and indirectly accomplishing the school's objectives. Following from this, Mr. Gwynn infrequently discussed elements of judgment about ends. He much more commonly expressed judgment about instructional decisions and even seemed to indicate that he appreciated institutional objectives for relieving his concern over what he should teach. Thus, while other participants had some opportunity for judging educational ends, Mr. Gwynn had little to none and depended upon



institutional objectives to guide his teaching. This is an important consideration for the research question concerning expertise, which I address fully later in this chapter.

*Commentary.* Comparison of the case findings for this area of investigation reinforced the thoughts I discussed about institutional controls. Overwhelmingly, the institution dictated the overarching educational objectives to the participants. Educational ends did not generate from teachers themselves or from the particularities of their classes. For the most part, the objectives of instruction were to accomplish predetermined ends related to ALCOS and Common Core. However, analysis of the findings from this area of investigation also illustrated that teacher judgment remained despite these institutional controls. Participants used judgment especially in dealing with daily classroom issues, such as technological difficulties. It seems difficult to comprehend an institutional directive which would eliminate teacher judgment regarding such day-to-day classroom issues. Participants also incorporated judgment and exhibited freedom in terms of the means of instruction. The institution did not directly require participants to teach in certain ways. As such, participants had the ability to include external class materials, reconstruct lesson plans without administrative oversight, and adjust instructional approaches due to a lack of testing requirements. Despite freedom related to the means of education, the lack of freedom regarding educational ends severely limited teacher judgment/autonomy. Participants rarely included material they judged important for students which deviated or took away from institutional objectives. Because the institution gave specific educational objectives, teachers did not have autonomy over ends or means. Educational objectives did not generate from teachers and instructional means were always directed toward ALCOS or Common Core goals. This privileged certain instructional means over others. Each participant exhibited elements of limiting student involvement in order to efficiently cover content. Teacher-centered pedagogies

limited student-centered approaches that included student dialogue and social application of content. Thus, the institution limited teacher judgment about ends because it dictated ends to teachers. Finally, the perceived autonomy over instructional means was not autonomy, but a limited freedom, as the overarching institutional objectives constrained possible instructional means. I mentioned that this institutional control of teacher judgment/autonomy privileged certain instruction. I turn my attention to this manifestation of institutional control in my discussion of the next area of investigation.

**3. Pedagogy.** The themes for the next two areas of investigation were different because they organized data according to external categories. Instead of generating themes inductively, I categorized data in terms of pre-existing ideas. For pedagogy, I organized participant data according to the themes of *student-centered/non-traditional* and *teacher-centered/traditional*. Thus, participants differed in terms of how their teaching aligned to these pedagogical themes. Since the external categories I used were common to all participants, I refrain from using the same format to discuss these themes that I used in the previous sections. Instead of discussing “common themes” or “unique themes”, I review each participant’s pedagogy, highlighting how it was similar to or different from other participants. After this, I discuss a particular issue that arose in my analysis of pedagogy that mirrored the issue I discussed in terms of institutional controls. Lastly, I provide commentary on this area of investigation in view of the original research questions.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Gwynn were somewhat common in their pedagogy because they both shifted between student-centered/non-traditional and teacher-centered/traditional approaches. Mr. Smith included student presentations and classroom activities where students role-played to learn about both representative legislature and personal finance. Mr. Gwynn also included

activities where students collaboratively brainstormed their prior knowledge about WWI and where they independently researched and presented topics from a unit on world revolutions. These participants also regularly utilized teacher-centered approaches. Mr. Smith commonly utilized graphic organizers and worksheets where he provided information that students passively regurgitated. He also emphasized vocabulary from primary documents and assessments that asked for basic content knowledge. The teacher-centered activities often limited student discussion, inquiry, and social application. Mr. Gwynn also used the traditional approach of lecturing from PowerPoint slides to cover curriculum objectives. Students passively recorded notes on this information during this activity. Additionally, Mr. Gwynn noted a preference for these traditional methods and indicated that he did not know how to more effectively utilize student-centered instruction given his institutional requirements and lack of teaching experience. As a result, Mr. Gwynn also limited student inquiry and discussion in favor of adhering to methods that efficiently covered objectives. Thus, both Mr. Smith and Mr. Gwynn shifted between these distinct pedagogical approaches, but also relied heavily on traditional methods that efficiently met requirements and limited active student learning.

Ms. Happ was unique in her pedagogy because she overwhelmingly relied upon teacher-centered/traditional approaches. As I presented in chapter IV, this was evident in particular ways. She followed technical practices in terms of both her planning and instruction. She explained that she had very detailed lesson plans and that she tried to follow them closely. She also relied heavily on rote instructional practices which emphasized memorization and regurgitation of content. There were memorable sequences in classroom observations where Ms. Happ asked students to recite a mnemonic device, vocabulary word, or vocabulary definition so that they could regurgitate this information on an assessment minutes later. Additionally, her main

classroom activities and assessments focused on content coverage and regurgitation. This was most evident in the note-taking activities that she incorporated on a regular basis. Students passively regurgitated information from either Ms. Happ during PowerPoint notes or from their textbook during student notes. Student inquiry, discussion, and application were noticeably absent or severely limited during these activities. Students very rarely had the opportunity to voice their own opinion or ask questions about the content. Ms. Happ even encouraged students to stop asking questions so that they could cover all the material for the day. Ms. Happ occasionally made social applications from the content, but she commanded these discussions and limited them to very brief asides within the context of covering content. She did include some activities that actively involved students and that connected to broader social values. However, as she indicated in interviews, these were largely confined to a few days, as was the case with the “Greek Day” activities, or a few special moments, such as when she discussed showing the news for important current events. So, whereas Mr. Smith and Mr. Gwynn commonly shifted back and forth between student-centered and teacher-centered activities, Ms. Happ almost exclusively relied upon traditional teacher-centered approaches.

Finally, Mr. Henley was unique in his pedagogy because he was much more inclusive of student-centered aspects than his teaching counterparts. As I stated in chapter IV, I primarily categorized his teaching as student-centered relative to the other participants. I hesitate to say that Mr. Henley was defined by student-centered or non-traditional pedagogy because he primarily utilized traditional methods, such as lecture and note-taking from PowerPoint slides. In a sense, though, Mr. Henley was student-centered and non-traditional, especially relative to the other participants, because he more fluidly included students in the activities. Whereas Mr. Smith, Mr. Gwynn, and Ms. Happ frequently rushed through activities to ensure efficient content

coverage, Mr. Henley frequently took time to elicit student dialogue, opinion, and social application. He commonly stopped from PowerPoint notes to discuss social applications of the content. Sometimes, Mr. Henley did this to directly answer a student question. At other times, he prompted this discussion to include the opinions of students. In many ways, this directly broke from institutional norms. When students recited definitions to terms from the textbook, Mr. Henley asked students to put it in their own words. When students finished reading assigned novels, Mr. Henley asked open-ended questions asking students' opinions and what they learned. This emphasis on student opinion and personal application directly contradicted stated Common Core standards. Thus, Mr. Henley's pedagogy was distinct because it was more frequently student-oriented, relying upon the involvement of student dialogue and opinion, and attempting to create meaningful connections to students' lives.

Though participants included student-centered instruction to varying degrees, a common connection in the investigation of pedagogy was that teacher-centered approaches connected with institutional norms, while student-centered approaches broke from them. This was why I connected teacher-centered with traditional and student-centered with non-traditional in the themes. Each participant noted that student-centered activities, which elicited student inquiry, reflection, dialogue, and social application, broke from the norm. Mr. Smith stated that student-centered learning "deviate[d] from the norm altogether" because typical pedagogical attitudes were "Let's follow the course of study. Let's not deviate from that". Ms. Happ explained her student-centered activities as "kickback days", student showcases, or "teaching moments" that acted as a break from their traditional focus on "core curriculum". Mr. Gwynn expressed difficulty including student dialogue because of "the standards that you have to teach" and because he had not yet found a way to "teach like that and cover all the information". Even Mr.

Henley recognized that ALCOS requirements limited in-depth discussion and that administrators might look unfavorably at heavy student involvement and social application because it was not an explicit requirement of the curriculum. Thus, in many ways, student-centered pedagogy was deviant in the context of institutional norms. Institutional objectives privileged teacher-centered approaches that efficiently covered content and instilled Common Core standards. At the same time, they marginalized active student learning and the potential for a consideration of social values because these activities took time and focus away from the primary objectives.

*Analytical questions.* Just as several participants noted that they focused on skills because they personally found them valuable, many also indicated a personal preference for traditional pedagogy. In fact, to some extent, every participant exhibited a personal preference for traditional methods. On several occasions, Ms. Happ indicated this, as she explained her preference for lectures because students were not “getting enough of the details” and that student involvement could only occur after the completion of traditional tasks. Mr. Gwynn also explained that he preferred traditional methods and that he believed lecturing to be necessary so that students could receive information. He also stated his relief when he saw that Mr. Henley utilized traditional methods in his classroom. Mr. Henley explained that he was somewhat “old school” because he implemented these traditional activities. Lastly, Mr. Smith indicated that the teaching I observed was representative of his personal preferences and that he would likely continue teaching the same way if he had complete autonomy from any institutional control. So, the question arises, were institutional norms truly “controlling” participants’ pedagogy if these were personal preferences and not an institutional imposition? My conclusion is that institutional requirements still largely controlled participant pedagogy for two important reasons. First, despite evidence that illustrated preferences for traditional methods, each participant also noted

that institutional controls essentially forced them into teacher-centered instruction. Mr. Smith acknowledged that he had to teach this way at times due to efficiency, while Ms. Happ explained that she “shut down” class to focus on test material and that this negatively affected students. Mr. Henley explained that specific instructional polices, such as the STM and RtI, “put teaching in a box”. Due to these institutional limitations, he noted that there were times that he had to “cut off” student involvement “to cover the class content”, thus maintaining pace with ALCOS objectives. Mr. Gwynn admitted to “checking his watch” when students asked questions because it took valuable time away from covering content. Second, institutional controls regulated what kinds of teaching were possible and which were not. As expressed earlier, each participant noted that student-centered activities broke from the norm. Mr. Smith and Mr. Henley even discussed the notion of needing administrative approval to include things which deviated from the course of study. So, institutional requirements controlled pedagogy in a strong sense, in which it directly forced participants to utilize teacher-centered approaches. They also controlled pedagogy in a weaker sense, where they regulated what kind of teaching was privileged and what kind was abnormal. Thus, regardless of teachers’ preferences, institutional controls regulated the pedagogy that was most conducive to its ends.

*Commentary.* Comparison of the case findings related to pedagogy reinforce some of my earlier comments and shed new light. The fact that institutional controls created institutional norms related to pedagogy illustrate that the ends directed the means. Recall that participants commonly stated that they held autonomy and judgment over instructional decisions. This is also a common refrain from policy makers responding to challenges that explicit standards will eliminate teacher professionalism. Though the institution dictates the ends, the teacher controls the means of instruction. The analysis in this study shows that, while teachers did have some

freedom over instructional means, the overarching institutional objectives ensured that this was a limited freedom. There was some leeway in terms of instructional decisions, but the charge to maintain pace with ALCOS objectives and to instill Common Core skills preserved a predominant teacher-centered approach. Thus, participants' instructional freedom was "put in a box", to use the terminology of two teachers, where institutional requirements privileged certain types of instruction and marginalized others. In view of the overarching research questions, it is important to note what was privileged and what was marginalized in these classrooms. The privileged form of instruction was teacher-centered, with teachers demonstrating facts and students passively receiving and regurgitating this content knowledge. The marginalized form of instruction was student-centered. This eliminated or severely limited dialogue, reflection, opinion, and social application. Thus, the strictures of institutional norms constrained the possibility of deliberation about social values, as they restricted the elements that make this possible. Rather than supporting an open, dialogic classroom where students and teacher considered social values, institutional controls favored a closed classroom where teachers demonstrated facts and instilled skills. These considerations are extremely important for answering the major research question.

The comparison of case findings regarding pedagogy is also critical for the question related to expertise. In addition to establishing institutional norms related to pedagogy, analysis of this area of investigation also illustrated the participants that adhered to or broke from these norms. In the rural dyad, Mr. Smith and Ms. Happ utilized teacher-centered approaches more frequently than student-centered ones. However, the "expert" teacher, Ms. Happ, aligned much more closely to institutional norms. Her class activities overwhelmingly emphasized technical teaching approaches. These methods allowed her to cover material in an extremely efficient



manner. She rarely included active student involvement in the learning process. When she did, she indicated that these instances were essentially rewards for completing traditional tasks. Though Mr. Smith also emphasized teacher-centered pedagogy, he more fluidly shifted between teacher-centered and student-centered approaches. On the other hand, the urban dyad followed the opposite pattern. The “novice” teacher, Mr. Gwynn, shifted between teacher-centered and student-centered approaches. Despite the inclusion of some student-centered activities, he also indicated reliance upon institutional norms and expressed a preference for traditional activities, in part because he felt ineffective in negotiating student involvement with institutional requirements. By contrast, the “expert” teacher, Mr. Henley, displayed competence in negotiating student involvement and institutional requirements. He broke from institutional norms more often than other participants by eliciting student dialogue and opinion, responding to student inquiry, and taking time to make meaningful social connections from the content. In the next section, I add to these implications about expertise by discussing the findings related to attitudes toward institutional controls.

**4. Attitudes toward institutional controls.** The external categories that I used for themes regarding participant attitudes toward institutional controls were *conforming/non-critical* and *non-conforming/critical*. These categories link to the theoretical framework of expertise guiding the study. Recall that according to the Dreyfus model, a novice actually performs strictly according to norms and rules, while an expert illustrates an intuitive ability to understand situational elements and break from strict rule-following. This contrasts sharply with Apple’s (1986) picture of the teacher as technician, which he argues has been the result of the institutional management of the teaching profession. Findings generated from this area of investigation illustrated which participants aligned with, and at times supported, the rules and

regulations of the institution and which participants challenged them. These findings, along with those presented for pedagogy, inform the research question dealing with the notion of expertise. In this section, I review the findings for each case, comparing similarities and differences. Then, I discuss another interesting issue that arose in the context of Ms. Happ's attitudes, specifically toward Common Core standards. Finally, I make general comments on the findings of this area of investigation which point toward to overall research questions.

In a sense, all of the participants were unique when it came to their attitudes toward institutional controls because they expressed criticism or conformity to different degrees and criticized different aspects of institutional controls. However, Mr. Smith and Ms. Happ were probably the most similar when expressing these attitudes. Both of these participants shifted between having critical/non-conforming and non-critical/conforming attitudes toward institutional controls. For example, both Mr. Smith and Ms. Happ expressed non-conformity to institutional norms at times. Mr. Smith stated that he included student-centered activities which deviated from the norm and that he went beyond the course of study to include content that students found personally relevant. Ms. Happ also stated that she occasionally shifted her focus away from standards to include non-curricular material that she deemed "truly important" and that might "affect [students] as citizens". These participants were also somewhat similar when they expressed non-critical attitudes. Both participants accepted negative aspects of institutional controls rather than directly criticizing or challenging them. For example, though Mr. Smith recognized that Common Core standards diluted the significance of historical content, he also stated that this was "not that big of a deal" and "just a part of the job". Similarly, Ms. Happ described the narrow focus on curriculum material as "just the nature of the beast...we have to deal with it."

Though Mr. Smith and Ms. Happ were similar in that they shifted between attitudes, they also differed in degree. Mr. Smith certainly recognized that he had to conform to institutional norms, stating “I’ve got to figure out a way to teach these standards”, but he also more directly criticized specific institutional controls and expressed non-conformity to them. He criticized ALCOS objectives because they made him “fit into these little boxes”. He challenged this limitation by including his student-centered activities on personal finance, which he felt was “a more responsible way to handle the curriculum”. Ms. Happ was critical of Common Core, but this was because it took away from her ability to lecture and efficiently cover the curriculum. I say more about this later. Despite this criticism, Ms. Happ also explained that she strictly adhered to standards, tried to always incorporate Common Core strategies, and even consulted with an external reading coach to ensure that her students were on target with Common Core benchmarks. Also, though she noted her occasional shift away from focus on institutional objectives, she also explained that an emphasis on literacy skills and content knowledge came before she engaged the class in active student learning. Thus, while Mr. Smith and Ms. Happ similarly shifted between non-conforming/critical attitudes and critical/non-conforming attitudes, Ms. Happ seemed to express attitudes of conformity to institutional norms to a higher degree.

The other two participants were qualitatively different in their attitudes toward institutional controls. First, criticism and non-conformity characterized Mr. Henley’s attitudes. He criticized ALCOS because it was too broad and did not support contemporary connections or social applications. He also explained that the institutional emphasis on efficient coverage of ALCOS objectives removed important historical content. Mr. Henley openly challenged institutional norms when he recalled an episode where he drafted letters to state officials to prevent the removal of Native American history from the curriculum. He also criticized the

school's instructional programs because they limited teacher professionalism. In his estimation, these research-based practices limited teacher judgment, reflection, and experimentation. Lastly, he criticized the school's focus on Common Core because it limited social goals of the social studies curriculum. Mr. Henley explained that administrators were concerned with academic benchmarks of the standards which led to a missing component of active citizenship. He said, "a school-wide approach to active citizenship is something we completely missed the boat on." Throughout interviews, Mr. Henley expressed non-conformity to institutional norms. He acknowledged that he felt it was important to stop from the narrow focus on objectives to include social applications. He stated that he consistently incorporated a discussion of contemporary issues during his coverage of historical content "so [students] can make that rich connection". In terms of pedagogy, he described himself as a "rebel" and that he would "do what I think is best for my kids and, with my experience and my background educationally, I think I can justify why I'm doing this." Thus, Mr. Henley displayed attitudes that broke from institutional norms.

Mr. Gwynn's attitudes toward institutional controls were almost directly opposite those of Mr. Henley. Even though Mr. Gwynn recognized that his university requirements presented difficulties, he refrained from criticism and attempted to understand the institutional perspective, stating "I understand where they're coming from" and "I understand that they are dealing with novice teachers". In terms of the institutional requirements of the school, where Mr. Henley expressed criticism, Mr. Gwynn expressed support. He explained that he liked having standards and a set curriculum because they offered him guidance. There are two extended quotes from Mr. Henley and Mr. Gwynn that I want to present here because they illustrate the contrasting attitudes each had toward institutional controls. Though Mr. Henley's quote referred to RtI and

STM and Mr. Gwynn's referred to ALCOS and Common Core, I believe they both generally touch upon the idea of teacher expertise. Mr. Henley stated:

I think novice teachers or first-year teachers that are new to the profession that are not tenured I think are more willing to be conformative to what's expected of them, for example, reading strategies or just strictly cooperative learning and nothing else, and not to say that those aren't good methods of teaching, but it doesn't enhance their practice, it's a method more to me of not treating us as professionals, but treating us as if we are to conform just like the kids are.

Mr. Gwynn's statement seemed to validate Mr. Henley's understanding of the development of teacher professionalism. He stated:

I'm still very amateur when it comes to teaching, so [standards] are all I've ever known, so I don't really have problem with it and like I just said, as an amateur, they allow me to spend more time teaching or thinking about how I'm going to teach something as opposed to what I'm going to teach, so I really don't have a problem with it. I like it.

These excerpts illustrate that both participants viewed institutional controls as having an impact upon teaching practice. However, whereas Mr. Henley criticized this, Mr. Gwynn expressed support because he felt he could rely upon institutional norms for guidance as an amateur teacher. Corresponding to this attitude, Mr. Gwynn consistently expressed conformity to institutional norms, explaining that he referred to "backwards mapping" in lesson construction and that he emphasized content coverage over student involvement during lessons. Also, recall that Mr. Henley believed he could justify his teaching to school administration by appealing to his "experience" and "background educationally". Interestingly, Mr. Gwynn implied that validation of teaching came from its alignment with standards. Continuing from the previous excerpt about institutional requirements, Mr. Gwynn stated, "And it's so easy to prove that what you're teaching, you're teaching... valid lessons to when you will be in that position to have to

do that.” Thus, Mr. Gwynn appealed to institutional norms themselves to justify his teaching rather than his personal evaluation.

Comparison of participants’ attitudes toward institutional controls revealed very interesting findings. In the rural dyad, Mr. Smith and Ms. Happ both shifted between conforming/non-critical attitudes and non-conforming/critical attitudes. This was not surprising considering that these participants were much closer in terms of years of experience than the participants in the urban dyad. However, it was interesting to see that the more experienced teacher, Ms. Happ, displayed a greater degree of conformity to institutional norms. In the urban dyad, Mr. Henley was openly critical and even challenging toward institutional controls while Mr. Gwynn commonly refrained from criticism and expressed support. These case findings present compelling evidence for understanding the framework of expertise that exhibited within these dyads.

*Analytical questions.* One of the unique issues that arose from analysis of participant attitudes toward institutional controls was Ms. Happ’s criticism of Common Core. Whereas most participants criticized institutional controls for limiting possibilities for student involvement and social connection, Ms. Happ criticized Common Core for being too “student-led”. I initially interpreted this as a counterpoint to my characterization of teacher-centered instruction as corresponding to institutional norms and student-centered instruction as breaking from them. In some sense, it is possible to argue this. Ms. Happ believed that Common Core emphasized more active student involvement and less teacher-controlled instruction. Additionally, Mr. Gwynn noted his belief that there was a general push in education to move away from the traditional practices of lecturing and using the textbook. However, looking at the data from a broader scope,

it still seemed that these institutional norms did not promote active student involvement and, more importantly, they diminished social engagement.

First, Ms. Happ understood student-centered instruction narrowly. It seemed that she understood anything in which students did not receive instruction directly from the teacher as student-centered. This is best illustrated by her definition of her student notes activity as student-centered. She explained that she implemented the student notes activity to comply with Common Core's standards regarding informational texts and the emphasis on teacher-as-facilitator. However, this activity consisted of students looking up and copying information from the textbook to topics that Ms. Happ prompted on a handout. While this differed from PowerPoint notes, because students did not simply fill in blanks from a projector, students still passively regurgitated content knowledge from an external source. Second, other participants noted that Common Core took away from student-centered instruction and social application. Mr. Smith explained that he felt like a "glorified reading specialist" and that Common Core emphasized reading through History rather than the importance of History itself. Mr. Henley argued that the institutional emphasis on Common Core neglected components of active citizenship. Third, district Common Core standards explicitly laid aside active student engagement with texts. Standard 2 of the district benchmarks for middle school required Ms. Happ to teach students to determine "central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or student opinions". The emphasis, then, was on a demonstration of "accurate" information from a text rather than the students' personal engagement with it. This emphasis on a regurgitation of information displayed prominently, as Ms. Happ commonly noted that she wanted students to "pull information". Consequently, Mr. Smith explained that he refrained from asking questions on tests that asked students to make

personal connections from content and which elicited their opinions. Rather, he focused on students citing textual evidence.

These considerations informed my interpretation that institutional controls, including Common Core standards, supported traditional, teacher-centered instruction and limited active student engagement. Though students may have had the opportunity to be less passive by engaging in these reading and writing strategies, they still had limited opportunities to express their opinions and to make personal and social connections from texts. The focus seemed to be on a basic assessment of literacy rather than the social application of texts. Ms. Happ's unique criticism of Common Core was also interesting because it illustrated a distinct irony. She specifically criticized Common Core because it took away from efficient content coverage, stating, "it's supposed to be student-driven and I am just supposed to be a facilitator. That is a hindrance because it needs to be a balance. There needs to be lecture that balances that out." In a different excerpt, she stated, "I don't mind what you're asking me to do with Common Core, but...there's going to have to be a cleanup, and the end is going to have to be a lecture...because they're not getting enough of the details." So, in Ms. Happ's estimation, the influx of Common Core reading and writing standards took away from the most efficient means of covering the curriculum. She stated that she did not have time for the "student-driven" aspects of students learning from texts because "I feel like I am so pushed with my curriculum and the timeframe". Ironically, the additional requirements of Common Core limited not only active student learning and application, but also other institutional requirements, namely the charge to cover the curriculum.

*Commentary.* The analysis of participants' attitudes toward institutional controls primarily provided evidence that informed the research question dealing with expertise. In the



rural dyad, both participants shifted in and out of the institutional framework. However, the senior teacher reflected attitudes that conformed more to the institutional norms of practice. She emphasized strict adherence to standards and, as the findings dealing with pedagogy illustrated, incorporated means to most efficiently reach institutional ends. The junior teacher was more directly critical of specific institutional requirements because they took away from non-traditional pedagogy and more fluidly incorporated teaching activities that deviated from the norm. The urban dyad followed the exact opposite pattern. The junior teacher expressed conformity to institutional requirements of his university program even though he acknowledged the issues they presented for him. He also supported the institutional requirements of the school, citing his lack of teaching experience as a reason for needing the guidance and validity of institutional standards. The senior teacher, on the other hand, criticized and even openly challenged institutional norms because they diminished teacher professionalism. His understanding of expertise included the personal evaluation and experimentation of instruction by the teacher rather than an appeal to external standards or “research-based” methods. I use these considerations later in the chapter to directly answer the research question regarding expertise, showing that these dyads represent distinct cases of the frameworks of expertise I outlined in the literature review. For now, I compare and comment on the findings of the final area of investigation.

**5. Attitudes about social studies.** The final area of investigation examined participants’ attitudes about social studies. I primarily collected data for this area through an interview which asked participants about their understandings of the purpose of social studies and their responsibilities as social studies educators. Though the themes I generated were inductive, through constant comparison, I associated all new data with the overarching themes of

*institutional objectives* and *societal goals*. This allowed for comparison of cases to see how participants understood the nature of social studies education. Was it to accomplish the requirements of the institution or for contributing to social values? The findings illustrated that all participants articulated views of social studies that corresponded to both educational outcomes. I discuss these common themes in this section. Though there were no particularly unique themes, there were unique understandings of these goals by individual participants. An issue with this analysis was whether or not these goals are mutually exclusive. In the section on unique themes, I discuss participant perspectives suggesting that social goals naturally flowed from accomplishing institutional objectives and contrast these with perspectives suggesting that the focus on institutional objectives limited social goals. These are important considerations for answering the research questions and I provide commentary in view of those questions in the conclusion of this section.

***Common themes.*** Each participant in the study expressed purposes of social studies and responsibilities as a social studies educator in the context of institutional objectives. For example, Mr. Smith originally explained that his role as a social studies educator was to connect to social goals. After reflection, he stated that he also had to “figure out a way to teach these standards...to teach writing and reading.” Ms. Happ stressed that she needed to emphasize reading and writing skills in order to make up for a lack of acquisition of skills at lower educational levels. She also focused on providing basic curriculum coverage, claiming that because students were engaging with History for the first time in her class, “you’ve got to immerse them somewhere”. Mr. Henley connected his personal emphasis on reading and writing with Common Core standards and preparing students for college. He said, “If we’re really going to prepare them for post-secondary, they need to know how to write constructively...cite textual

evidence.” Lastly, Mr. Gwynn also explained that he felt his role was to instill skills for future preparation. He stated that, within social studies, “There’s reading and writing skills that you have to foster.” Addressing the skills he personally valued, he said, “I don’t know anyone who could have made it [in college] without some degree of note-taking skills” and learning to speak is “a big skill...I think it can make or break you in life, job interviews, something like that”. This illustrates that all the participants connected their personal appraisal of social studies education to objectives articulated by the institution. At times, these were personal values that happened to connect to the institutional framework and other times they were an expression of job responsibility to conform to institutional mandates. Participants prominently noted the emphasis on skills but also expressed their responsibility to the teach ALCOS objectives. Ms. Happ mentioned immersion in broad historical knowledge to prepare for high school History, Mr. Gwynn noted the requirements of content, and Mr. Henley explained that he was “duty bound to teach the course of study”. Thus, participants clearly appealed to institutional objectives as directing their responsibilities as social studies educators.

Each participant also went beyond the institutional framework when discussing the purposes of social studies and their responsibilities as social studies educators. Though their responses varied, participants noted that social studies was about more than content coverage or meeting Common Core benchmarks. They explained that social studies provided connections to broader social values. For example, Mr. Smith noted that he should “teach some type of value. There has to be an element of value to what I’m teaching and not just the content.” He explained that these values included “preparing students to be able to function in society...understanding how groups interact...why people do certain things because of their past or what has cause[d] someone to view something this way.” Mirroring these sentiments, Ms. Happ stated, “I want

[students] to find the origin of things...If we know more about what that origin is, can we fix the future?" She added, "I want them to understand what will make them a productive citizen, not just [in] their responsibilities to the government, but also to their community." Mr. Henley added to the idea of active citizenship by explaining that students should learn to develop their beliefs on critical social issues through social studies. He said, "I want them to be developers of a stance on critical civic issues and to be able to know what they stand for...they're going to be the kids that end up having to make those decisions as active citizens". Finally, Mr. Gwynn explained that social studies could foster deliberation and diversity. He stated that "another role [of social studies] is just having a more open-minded society and being able to debate with people who have different ideas...and live with people that have different ideals than you, but respect them." Participants represented themes of active citizenship, applying lessons from the past, understanding other viewpoints, solving civic problems, solving community problems, and tolerating diversity in only these select excerpts. Thus, participants also appealed to broad social goals in their articulation of the meaning of social studies education.

*Unique themes.* There were no truly unique themes when it came to attitudes about social studies as I categorized each participant response according to *institutional objectives* or *societal goals*. However, there was an underlying trend that distinguished some participant attitudes from others. The issue with categorizing data according to these themes is the danger of creating a false dichotomy. Perhaps teachers can accomplish both broader social goals and institutional requirements through their practice. Some participants hinted at this more than others. For example, Ms. Happ seemed to emphasize her institutional requirements over the critical thinking involved in a consideration of social values. She stated that "you can't think critically about something when you don't know it...you've got to know something about it in order to get to

that level”. Ms. Happ’s strict reliance upon efficient content coverage informed this statement. However, she explained that making social applications was “not a problem” and that she accomplished this with “the text itself” and through traditional activities. So, Ms. Happ seemed to indicate that making social applications naturally flowed from accomplishing institutional objectives, especially providing broad historical content knowledge. Mr. Gwynn also expressed his feeling that the institutional emphasis on Common Core accounted for significance and not simply literacy skills. He said, “I think they also realize...the significance of the content. It’s not they just need to be reading and writing...I think it’s more than just pushing those skills. I think they...take into account what you’re talking about, too.”

On the other hand, Mr. Smith and Mr. Henley both indicated that accomplishing socially valuable goals were distinct from institutional objectives. For example, Mr. Smith explained that part of his role as a social studies educator was to open students’ eyes to personal connections from History. However, he stated, “But there’s not always time for that when you’re teaching this reading strategy, this writing strategy.” Additionally, Mr. Henley suggested that there was no explicit connection between institutional standards and application to social issues. He said:

If you look at the course content, our standards in ALCOS, there are no examples of how you really relate those things today, so you as an educator have to be able to challenge yourself and the students and say, ok, we’re studying progressivism, how can you put that in today’s terminology?

These excerpts indicate that there was somewhat of a divide between participants in their beliefs about the compatibility of institutional objectives and social goals. As I attempt to answer the initial research questions later in this chapter, I come back to this issue.

*Commentary.* The comparison of attitudes about social studies illustrates that each participant understood social studies education within the context of institutional objectives and

within the context of social goals. However, in terms of practice, the data overwhelmingly indicated that institutional requirements constrained teachers' abilities to directly teach for social values or include aspects of instruction conducive to a deliberation about social values. This is an important distinction between understandings and practices. Participants clearly articulated that the purpose of social studies was, at least in part, for contributing to social goals. They spoke of making connections between past and present, eliciting active citizenship, considering social issues, and even solving community problems through social studies. Analysis of the findings from the other areas of investigation showed if institutional requirements affected these social goals and how. Institutional requirements supported an efficient demonstration of content coverage and literacy skills primarily through teacher-centered instruction which limited teacher judgments about content, classroom dialogue, student engagement, application, reflection, and inquiry.

It is also important to consider the overarching purposes of institutional objectives as opposed to societal goals. As I address the research questions specifically, I show that institutional objectives largely connect with economic goals because they are predicated on preparation for the workforce. The other goals expressed by participants connect with social goals, as they concern improving personal and social well-being. I also address the possibility that this distinction creates a false dichotomy because these goals are compatible. As I discussed previously, some participants indicated this while others viewed them as distinct educational objectives. I reflect on the findings from this study and the thoughts of educational theorists to argue that accomplishing social goals do not naturally flow from content knowledge or instruction in skills. I begin the next section of this chapter by using the discussion from each area of investigation to directly answer each original research question.

## Research Questions

**Research question 1.** The first research question asked: How do local institutional controls affect social studies teachers' ability to engage in phronetic teaching and phronetic understandings of teaching? The purpose of the final section of this chapter is to directly answer the research questions that I articulated in the introduction. I draw upon the findings from chapter IV and the broader analysis of the case comparison that I presented in this chapter to accomplish this task. I answer each of the original research questions by engaging with the literature, particularly the theoretical framework that guides this study. The first question represents the study's overarching research question. As I articulated in the introduction, the major purpose of this study was to examine *phronesis* within the context of institutional controls and social studies education. I wanted to know if and how social studies teachers' institutional requirements affected their phronetic practices and understandings. In this space, I answer this question by analyzing what I learned from the findings through the framework of Aristotelian intellectual states. The findings indicated that institutional requirements largely constrained participants' ability to engage in phronetic teaching practices. Even though phronetic possibilities existed, these were minimal and not directly supported by the institution. Rather, institutional controls primarily supported modes of social studies education aligned with *techne*. Informing this notion is the fact that institutional controls inhibited participants' phronetic understandings to a lesser degree. Though participants articulated institutional objectives in their understandings of social studies education, they also clearly articulated aims aligned with *phronesis*. Thus, there was an understanding and desire to teach for these socially valuable purposes, but these were the exact purposes that institutional controls most constrained. Rather than engaging in a deliberation of these ends, and how to achieve them, participants primarily engaged in deliberation about how to

achieve institutional ends. After I analyze the findings through the Aristotelian framework, I also connect them with thoughts from Dewey and various educational theorists from the literature review. This is to illustrate that institutional controls affected teachers' ability to engage in *phronesis* by supporting a pedagogy of production, rather than one of personal and social engagement with ends.

I first examine what institutional controls constrained and then analyze what institutional controls supported to answer the overarching research question. Overwhelmingly, institutional controls constrained participants' abilities to engage in phronetic practices. Integral to this interpretation is the role of ends. Analysis of the first area of investigation illustrated that the institution determined the ends of education and directed participants to these predetermined ends. The major themes related to institutional controls were *curricular controls*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills*. Thus, each participant had an institutional directive to teach ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards within short-term and long-term time constraints. The institutional emphasis on these objectives limited participants' inclusion of educational ends that they generated on their own. Recall that Mr. Smith explained that he could spend one day a month on non-curricular material that he believed students needed. Ms. Happ relegated her personally and socially engaging activities to "kickback days" and "teaching moments" so that she could maintain her traditional focus on core curriculum. Mr. Henley noted that the institutional focus on standards neglected a socially active component of the social studies curriculum. Lastly, Mr. Gwynn explained that standards allowed him to focus on "how to teach" (i.e. means) rather than on "what to teach" (i.e. ends). These examples indicate that institutional requirements served as the primary educational end to which teachers directed their practice and that this limited personal evaluations of educational ends.



The consideration of ends, and whether or not they are good, is exactly what distinguishes *phronesis* (practical wisdom) from other intellectual states, according to Aristotle (2000). He explains that people who possess *phronesis* are those that consider ends and whether they are desirable. He writes that “we call people practically wise in some particular respect when they calculate well to promote some good end that lies outside the ambit of a skill; so...the person capable of deliberation will also be practically wise.” (p. 107). Aristotle also connects *phronesis* with action and *techne* with production to emphasize that practical wisdom concerns the end itself. An extended quote bears this out. He writes,

[*Phronesis*] is not scientific knowledge because what is done can be otherwise; and it is not skill (*techne*) because action and production are generically different. It remains therefore that it is a true and practical state involving reason, concerned with what is good and bad for a human being. For while production has an end distinct from itself, this could not be so with action, since the end here is acting well itself. This is why we think Pericles and people like him are practically wise, because they can see what is good for themselves and what is good for people in general. (p. 107)

The point here is that *phronesis* involves a consideration of ends and an evaluation of whether they are good for oneself and others. It is not that which only considers the best means to arrive at some external end. This personal evaluation of ends is exactly what the institutional controls constrained for participants. Because the institution directed educational objectives, participants’ opportunities to incorporate their own ends were consistently limited.

Central to the concept of *phronesis*, with its consideration of ends, is the ability to enact judgment. Analysis of the second area of investigation showed that participants largely lacked elements of judgment and autonomy due to institutional controls. The common thread among each participant was that they had a very limited judgment of educational objectives. They were able to incorporate material that they deemed important on occasion, but this was constantly limited by the required ends of the school. For example, Mr. Smith explained that he could spend

infrequent amounts of time on activities that he deemed personally valuable for students. Even then, he explained that he needed administrative approval because it broke from ALCOS objectives. Ms. Happ explained that she focused on material that she judged “truly important” for students, but that this happened in terms of “teaching moments” generally after she accomplished traditional tasks. Mr. Henley exhibited a greater degree of judgment about educational objectives, frequently incorporating personal and social applications from historical content. However, even he noted that this went against administrative emphases on academic benchmarks, that institutional objectives did not explicitly support this, and that he had to “stop from ALCOS objectives” in order to accomplish the goals that he deemed important. Lastly, Mr. Gwynn noted that he wanted to include greater discussion about personal and social applications of content, but that the charge to teach standards and cover material prevented this. Though participant judgments about ends seemed limited, they commonly referenced their autonomy over the instructional decisions. Participants frequently cited their ability to make judgments about class materials and how best to accomplish objectives in the absence of testing. Some also exhibited judgment in classroom management and dealing with contextual factors. While this illustrates that judgment existed and was necessary, it also showed that institutional controls constrained teacher judgment to a limited consideration of means rather than ends.

The concept of judgment is critical in Aristotle’s (2000) characterization of *phronesis*. He connects judgment with *phronesis* more than any of the other intellectual states. This is because judgment involves deliberation and discernment about that which is good for oneself and others. He writes, “Judgment is concerned not with what is eternal and unchanging, nor with what comes into being, but with what someone might puzzle and deliberate about. For this reason it is

concerned with the same things as practical wisdom” (p. 113). Furthermore, Aristotle connects good judgment with the ability to discern what is of value for others. He writes:

Discernment is correctly discerning judgment of what is equitable...and being a person of judgment, a person of sound discernment, or a discerning person, consists in the capacity to judge in those matters that are of concern to the practically wise person. For what is equitable is the common concern of all good people in their relations with others. (p. 114)

Thus, people of judgment and discernment are those engaged in a practical wisdom of ends, of “what is good and bad for a human being” (p. 107). Institutional requirements clearly limited this kind of judgment for participants as it related to teaching practices. They had very few opportunities to use judgment about the personal or social desirability of their teaching practices. What judgment they did have was primarily given to a consideration of how to achieve the predetermined ends of the institution.

Analysis of the third area of investigation revealed that institutional controls not only limited teacher judgment of ends, but also of means. Though participants had the ability to make judgments about certain elements of their instruction, these judgments were always directed and governed by their institutional requirements. The directives to cover ALCOS objectives and instill the literacy skills of Common Core within time constraints created institutional norms for instruction. Mr. Smith and Mr. Henley both said that institutional controls “put teaching in a box” because it limited teaching possibilities. Ms. Happ consistently implemented passive note-taking activities because they efficiently covered curricular objectives. Additionally, Mr. Gwynn admitted that he focused on efficiently completing student presentations to meet his university requirements, which limited student engagement and personal or social application during these projects. Each participant limited student involvement in the classroom so that they could cover their required objectives in a given time frame. Thus, the focus on efficiency and production

toward standards manifested in norms of instruction, which favored teacher-centered over student-centered approaches. On the other hand, participants explained that student-centered activities deviated from institutional norms because they had the tendency to break from a narrow focus on efficiency. These pedagogies incorporated student inquiry, dialogue, reflection, and application. Again, however, student-centered pedagogy was infrequent and limited by those instructional norms that most efficiently accomplished the school's stated objectives.

Analysis of the elements of pedagogy which institutional controls constrained was important because these elements are integral to phronetic conceptualizations. At times, institutional controls directly limited considerations of practical application that lay at the heart of *phronesis*. For example, Mr. Smith explained a desire to make personal connections from his courses, but noted institutional controls hindered this. He said:

I think that's kind of my role, by kind of opening their eyes to some things, if this is what happened in History, how does that relate to me? What's going on in real life that's happening? But there's not always time for that when you're teaching this reading strategy, this writing strategy.

At other times, institutional controls indirectly constrained *phronesis* by eliminating essential features. The norm of traditional, teacher-centered pedagogy limited student inquiry, dialogue, reflection, and application, and this was evident throughout classroom observations. Aristotle (2000) makes clear that *phronesis* relates to these components. In terms of personal application, he states that practically wise people can "see what is good for themselves". Part of understanding this personal application involves deliberation, or reflection, upon what is good. An extended quote tying deliberation to *phronesis* illustrates this. Aristotle explains,

Practical wisdom...is concerned with human affairs...with what we can deliberate about. For deliberating well...is the characteristic activity of the practically wise person above all; but no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise, or about what has no goal that consists in a good achievable in action. The person unqualifiedly good at deliberation is

the one who tends to aim...at the best of the goods for a human being that are achievable in action. (p. 110)

Furthermore, Aristotle connects deliberation with inquiry. He states, “First, it is not scientific knowledge, since people do not inquire about what they know; but good deliberation is a kind of deliberation, and a person who deliberates is engaged in inquiry and calculation” (p. 112). Thus, *phronesis* necessitates reflection and inquiry about good ends that may apply to oneself.

Throughout my analysis, I made note of the lack of dialogue within participants’ class activities, especially the limitation of student dialogue with the teacher, other students, and the texts they studied. I felt that this was an important point and a concept that connects with *phronesis* even though Aristotle does not specifically discuss dialogue as one of its characteristics. As shown previously, he connects deliberation with discernment about what is equitable, which “is the common concern of all good people in their relations with others” (p. 114). Addressing the notion that the practically wise are those that merely seek out their own good, he says, “Nevertheless, one’s own good will presumably not exist without the management of a household and without a political system” (p. 111). I interpret this to mean that the practically wise must necessarily consider what is good for others in addition to themselves. Presumably, then, dialogue might add an additional component of phronetic engagement, as those who inquire, reflect, and deliberate about what is good for themselves would need to communicate about such solutions. In my view, *phronesis* has an inherently social component in addition to its personal application, and would therefore require dialogue.

The institutional norms of pedagogy constrained phronetic possibilities for education broadly. On one hand, institutional controls limited teachers’ practices in *phronesis*. Institutional controls limited their ability to engage in dialogue, inquiry, and reflection about how social

studies content connected both personally and socially. By extension, students' opportunities for phronetic social studies education were diminished by efficient teacher-centered demonstrations of broad content knowledge and literacy skills which eliminated key components of *phronesis*, specifically students' ability to inquire, reflect, and make application from social studies disciplines. The final area of investigation establishes that these institutional requirements did in fact control teachers' ability to engage in phronetic practices. As I stated previously, though institutional controls constrained participants' abilities to practice phronetically, they constrained participants' understandings of social studies as *phronesis* to a far lesser degree. The final area of investigation clearly showed that all participants understood social studies as a consideration of personal and social values in addition to accomplishing institutional objectives. As I articulated earlier in this chapter, participants stated that the purpose of social studies was for, among other things, making personal connections between past and present, contributing to active citizenship, considering social issues, and solving community problems. These educational goals all connect to the core elements of *phronesis*, involving "human affairs" and "what is good and bad for human beings" (p. 110). However, consistently through observations, and explained by interviews, institutional requirements pushed out these socially valuable goals and teaching approaches inclusive of deliberation, inquiry, and dialogue.

Now that I have established that institutional controls constrained phronetic conceptualizations of social studies education, I can describe what they supported. While institutional controls constrained *phronesis*, they naturally supported teaching as *techne*. There were some elements of institutional norms that supported *episteme*, which I address later, but primarily participants did not follow a universal law of teaching. However, they did primarily direct their considerations toward external objectives. As I articulated in the previous section,

institutional controls limited teacher judgments to the means of education, rather than the ends. For Aristotle (2000), this is the primary distinction between *phronesis* and *techne*. Recall that he connects *techne* with production and *phronesis* with action. Speaking of the difference between the two, Aristotle writes, “For while production has an end distinct from itself, this could not be so with action, since the end here is acting well itself” (p. 107). Thus, *techne* involves the production of bringing some external end into being, rather than deliberating upon the end itself. This is the primary pattern that participants followed in their relation to institutional controls. They determined the best and most efficient ways to accomplish the external ends of ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards.

Recall from the literature review that I referenced Dunne (1993), who makes a distinction between two different elements of *techne*. On one hand, there is a “technical” form or *techne*, that is like an applied science. The universal laws of *episteme* turn into a strict procedure of practice in this form of *techne*. On the other hand, there is a non-technical form in which practitioners make contextual judgments about how to best reach an end. Practitioners emerge as skilled craftsmen rather than those who simply apply rules. Speaking of *techne* (skill), Aristotle (2000) writes, “Every skill is to do with coming into being, and the exercise of the skill lies in considering how something that is capable of either being or not being...may come into being” (p. 106). If “considering” connects with deliberation, then *techne* is not necessarily an applied science, because Aristotle says, “no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise” (p. 110). Participants certainly used elements of judgment and deliberation in their practice. There were situational elements where participants used their judgment and experience rather than following a particular procedure. Additionally, participants had elements of control over instructional decisions, especially regarding the classroom materials they used. However, they rarely had the

ability to judge the value of what they taught in relation to their personal educational ideas. Institutional requirements which dictated educational ends to teachers ensured that judgment remained about the means (i.e. how to accomplish ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards) rather than the ends (i.e. what is most valuable for students to learn).

Though participants' teaching primarily represented the non-technical aspect of *techne*, there was some evidence of institutional controls that supported teaching in the applied science sense. In such instances, participants primarily engaged in a demonstration of isolated knowledge, at times through a uniform procedure. These demonstrations of knowledge were more prevalent than deliberation or inquiry about practical applications of content across the cases. For example, recall that Ms. Happ emphasized a very strict adherence to lesson plans and even indicated a uniform procedure from class to class during observations. Her primary approaches for accomplishing content objectives were a demonstration of historical facts through PowerPoint or student note-taking activities. These approaches limited some of the key features of *phronesis*, such as deliberation, inquiry, and personal application. Second, Mr. Henley explained that, even though he had autonomy over instructional decisions, there were instructional "filters" through the RtI and STM programs. These were scientifically-based programs which laid out step-by-step procedures for teachers to help students achieve on institutional outcomes. Mr. Henley criticized these programs because they emphasized an understanding of teaching restricted to "best practices" and limited teacher practitionership. Lastly, Mr. Gwynn noted that his university teaching program revolved around adhering to institutional norms. He stressed that his university training in "backwards mapping" allowed for him to focus on the means of instruction and relieved anxiety about whether his lessons were "valid". He also noted that he had to implement university strategies, some of which he was not



comfortable with, and pass formal evaluations, which he claimed “boiled down to a checklist”. Perhaps, this is evidence that Mr. Gwynn’s university program conditioned him toward applying strategies and following formal procedures to produce institutionally valid teaching over reflective deliberation about his practice.

These considerations of demonstrations of knowledge and institutionally validated norms of practice are important within the context of Aristotle’s (2000) articulation of *episteme*, or scientific knowledge. First, just as deliberation, judgment, and inquiry are aspects of *phronesis*, Aristotle explains that demonstration is characteristic of *episteme*. He writes that scientific knowledge “is a state by which we demonstrate” (p. 106). Additionally, scientific knowledge concerns universal first principles which involve no deliberation “since people do not inquire about what they know” (p. 112). Thus, the demonstration utilized by participants in many instances, and especially in Ms. Happ’s case, indicated that there are universal principles or facts about History to be demonstrated to students. Also, the institutionally endorsed “best practices” of STM and RtI and the “valid” lessons brought about through backwards mapping imply that there are in fact universal teaching procedures. From the institutional standpoint, quality teaching or “valid” teaching involved following the “science”, so to speak, of instructional policies rather than utilizing deliberation and inquiry about contextual issues. Thus, while participants often reflected a situated judgment of means, representative of *techne*, institutional norms also represented the applied science model of *episteme* in certain instances.

Institutional controls supported teaching aligned with *techne*, and occasionally with *episteme*, while constraining teaching aligned with *phronesis* amongst participants. First and foremost, this is because the institution dictated educational ends to participants. These objectives limited teacher judgment to deliberation about means rather than deliberation about

ends. When teachers included content which they deemed important for students, and which broke from accomplishing institutional objectives, this was confined to limited spaces and was met with difficulty. As I presented in the findings, not everyone strictly followed this institutional framework. However, even Mr. Henley, who most frequently broke from institutional norms, expressed that he had to take breaks from focusing on institutional objectives to incorporate socially valuable goals and that this was his responsibility because the institutional framework did not support this. Additionally, though teacher judgment and consideration over their craft did exist, there was some evidence of teaching which represented an applied science model. The mandated objectives of the school created institutional norms for practice. This often resulted in an efficient demonstration of curriculum content rather than a deliberation about the personal or social values of content. In Mr. Henley's case, the institution more heavily emphasized an applied science model of instruction by incorporating scientifically-based teaching models. Finally, in Mr. Gwynn's case, the external institutional control of the university seemed to reinforce school objectives and condition him to accept adherence to these norms as valid practice over his personal reflection and evaluation. Before I move on to research question 2, I want to connect this discussion with some of the other educational theorists I referenced in the literature review.

In the literature review, I connected some of John Dewey's thoughts to the idea of teaching as *phronesis*. Coming back to these thoughts now in the context of the research findings speaks directly to many of the issues that arose. In *Social Inquiry*, Dewey criticizes the idea of a strict separation of means and ends. He argues that one must have an "ends-in-view" which incorporates evaluative judgments about the desirability of ends and the means available to attain

them within particular situations. Speaking about problematic thought in social inquiry, he writes the following:

The evils in current social judgments of ends and policies arise, as has been said, from importations of judgments of value from outside of inquiry. The evils spring from the fact that the values employed are not determined in and by the process for inquiry: for it is assumed that certain ends have an inherent value so unquestionable that they regulate and validate the means employed, instead of ends being determined on the basis of existing conditions...Social inquiry...must judge certain objective consequences to be the end which is *worth* attaining under the given conditions...it means that ends in their capacity of values can be validly determined only on the basis of the tensions, obstructions and positive potentialities that are found...to exist in the actual situation. (Dewey, 1973, p. 412)

This is not the framework of social inquiry that participants were able to follow in their institutions. The schools “assumed that certain ends”, namely ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards, had value outside of the context of the classroom and, therefore, “regulate[d] and validate[d] the means employed” by teachers. Participants were unable to make evaluative judgments about the “end which is worth attaining” in their classrooms or whether they had the means available to attain it based upon the “tensions, obstructions, and positive potentialities” in their actual situations.

Dewey also explained that teaching subject-matter effectively should have an explicit connection with the personal experiences of students. In *The Child and the Curriculum*, he criticized a procedural demonstration of content knowledge to passive students as a desirable end of education. His description of this process is strikingly similar to the pedagogical norms of practice that exhibited among participants. He writes:

Problems of instruction are problems of procuring texts giving logical parts and sequences, and of presenting these portions in class in a similar definite and graded way. Subject-matter furnishes the end, and it determines method. The child is simply the immature being who is to be matured. It is his to receive, to accept. His part is fulfilled when he is ductile and docile. (Dewey, 1973, p. 471)

Recall that Common Core standards emphasized the comprehension of texts in logical parts and sequences and de-emphasized students' connections to these texts. Additionally, the institution viewed the requirement to cover ALCOS as an end itself. This end often determined the methods of teaching by forcing participants to utilize teacher-centered practices efficient in bringing about this end with the time they had available. These teacher-centered practices most often resulted in passive activities for students where they occupied a "docile" state in the classroom context.

Dewey's issue with such an educational structure of strict subject matter and passive learning is that it does not connect subject matter with the experiences of the student. Dewey contends that the true objective of the teacher is to allow the content to speak to personal experience and application. He writes:

[The teacher's] problem is that of inducing a vital and personal experiencing. Hence, what concerns him, as teacher, is the ways in which that subject may become a part of experience; what there is in the child's present that is usable with reference to it; how such elements are to be used; how his own knowledge of the subject-matter may assist in interpreting the child's needs and doings, and determine the medium in which the child should be placed in order that his growth may be properly directed. He is concerned, not with the subject-matter as such, but with the subject-matter as a related factor in a total and growing experience (Dewey, 1973, p. 479).

The institutional objectives and their direction of educational means seemed to emphasize the "subject-matter for subject-matter's sake" pedagogy that Dewey criticizes here. Teachers did not have the opportunity, given their charge to cover ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards within given time frames, to show how social studies content may apply to student experiences. The institution did not support participants' contextual judgments about what knowledge was of most worth to their particular students and what would contribute to personal application and growth. As a result, institutional controls constrained teachers' *phronesis* and their ability to elicit students' *phronesis*.

In this section, I suggested that institutional controls constrained participants' abilities to engage in phronetic practices of social studies education. The institution dictated educational ends to teachers and limited their judgment to decisions about the means to achieve these external ends. By connecting this with the Aristotelian framework which guides this study, I illustrated that this supported characterizations of *techne* rather than *phronesis*. Though teacher judgment existed, and largely represented a non-technical form of *techne*, there were some elements of institutional norms that emphasized teaching as an applied *episteme*. The overall institutional framework constrained an "ends-in-view" approach to teaching inquiry and supported inquiry about the manipulation of means to reach predetermined ends. As a result, teachers were limited in their evaluations of social studies content and pedagogy that promoted personal and social application. Thinking back to some of the educational theorists from the literature review, institutional controls went contrary to many of the ideas aligned with *phronesis*. Institutional controls constrained Schön's (1983) notion of *problem setting* in favor of *problem solving*. Instead of Thornton's (2005) idea of "aims talk", institutional requirements limited participants primarily to "means talk". The institutional norms of pedagogy reflected technique and method rather than van Manen's (1991) concept of pedagogical tact. Finally, rather than engaging in the perennial curriculum question offered by Ross (2006), "what knowledge is of most worth?", participants were limited to engagement with the question "what means best accomplish the school's objectives?" Thus, institutional controls constrained phronetic practices and possibilities for social studies education and emphasized technical considerations of institutional objectives. In this section, I argued that this was the established institutional framework. However, I also presented findings that suggested some participants broke from this framework and others strictly adhered to it. These findings informed the second

research question dealing with frameworks of expertise. I now turn my attention to answering this research question.

**Research question 2.** The second research question asked: What frameworks of expertise did each case and each teacher dyad represent? I explained two contrasting views of expertise within the theoretical framework of the study that informed research question 2. First, Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus (1986) provide a model of expertise in their book *Mind over Machine*. They present five stages of progression, beginning with the novice stage and completing at the stage of expertise. Speaking of expertise, the authors write that their model entails progression from analytic behavior and abstract rule-following to involved skilled behavior based on a “holistic pairing of new situations” with the successful experiences of similar situations from the past (p. 35). On the other hand, Apple (1986) criticizes what he sees as a view of expertise supported by educational institutions acting as apparatuses of the state. He claims that the economic goals of the state have deprofessionalized teachers by subjecting them to formulaic managerial techniques most efficient in bringing about desired ends. He describes this process as a “technicization of teaching” where the expert teacher would be that of a master technician, appropriately implementing context-free strategies. I wanted to see which of these frameworks of expertise exhibited both within individual cases and, more importantly, within the case dyads. I purposefully selected “novice” and “expert” teachers in terms of years of experience to see if there was a progression in expertise according to the Dreyfus or Apple theoretical framework. In other words, did more experienced teachers rely upon experiential knowledge emphasized by the Dreyfus model or did they act as technicians in the vein of Apple’s claims? In this section, I analyze each individual case and attempt to place them along the five-stage Dreyfus continuum.

This allows for a comparison of cases and a comparison of the progression of expertise within the teacher dyads. I conclude by commenting on the implications of these comparisons.

I attempted to connect each participant with one of the stages of expertise outlined by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) in my analysis. Primarily, this was done by investigating the findings from the third and fourth areas of investigation. Teacher pedagogy and attitudes toward institutional controls exhibited the level to which teachers broke from institutional norms of practice and the attitudes that informed this. Here, I take the findings from these areas of investigation and attempt to place each case along the Dreyfus continuum, which includes the following stages: 1) novice, 2) advanced beginner, 3) competent performer, 4) proficiency, 5) expertise. In this analysis, I directly contrast the notions of expertise represented by the Dreyfus model and the thoughts offered by Apple. Thus, if a teacher dyad did not progress according to the Dreyfus model, then it progressed according to the model of “teacher as technician”. It is important to note that these stages of expertise are not fixed and all participants exhibited evidence of multiple stages. Dreyfus and Dreyfus explain that people at particular stages can imitate the characteristics of other stages (p. 35). However, through my analysis, I made judgments based upon the data which connected participants with the stage that I felt they most represented. In this section, I appeal to the findings of the study to support the identification of each participant’s stage on the Dreyfus model and then compare the progression evident in the teacher dyads.

***Mr. Smith (“Rural Novice”): Stage 3, Competent Performer.*** Mr. Smith represented the “novice” teacher in the rural dyad based upon years of teaching experience. However, according to the Dreyfus model, Mr. Smith most resembled the level of the competent performer. There are several aspects of the model’s description of this stage that connected with data from the areas of

investigation dealing with pedagogy and attitudes toward institutional controls. According to the Dreyfus model, the competent performer is one who has the ability to break free from a strict adherence to context-free formal rules because they realize in a given situation which are the most important elements. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) write, “A competent driver, for example, is no longer merely following rules designed to enable him to operate his vehicle safely and courteously but drives with a goal in mind” (p. 24). So, in this way, the competent performer is involved in the situation because they realize those elements and goals which are important and understand that adhering to context-free rules is insufficient. Recall that Mr. Smith criticized his requirements related to ALCOS because it “put his teaching in a box”. He recognized that this context-free goal created institutional norms of teaching and that this disallowed him to incorporate content or pedagogy that he felt was important. He also broke from the “rules” of teaching because he incorporated activities which he explained “deviate from the norm altogether”. Further breaking from context-free institutional norms was exemplified when, in response to Common Core standards, he said “at some point you have to walk away from it and let me teach...a value that I think is important...not just how do we read this or how do we write about it”. He was able to include student presentations as formal assessments and decided to incorporate non-curricular material, such as his personal finance activity, because he felt it was an important outcome and because students responded well to it. Thus, Mr. Smith was involved in attaining certain valuable outcomes and did not solely rely upon context-free “rules” of practice.

However, Mr. Smith also displayed characteristics of the competent performer because his decisions were analytical. This worked in two ways. First, recall that Mr. Smith shifted between student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogies. Though he incorporated student-



centered approaches, he more often relied upon institutional norms of practice to accomplish the context-free goals of meeting school objectives. Most of his activities involved efficiently teaching content objectives or reading strategies through teacher-led content regurgitation or student completion of worksheets. These often did not take into account contextual factors, such as student inquiry and discussion, as these were limited to focus on completion of the task.

Second, Mr. Smith's inclusion of student-centered pedagogy was calculated and he had difficulty intuitively responding to situational elements even during these activities that broke from the norm. According to the Dreyfus model, this analytical calculation is what distinguishes the competent performer from higher levels of expertise. Speaking of this in the context of chess, Stuart Dreyfus says, "Fast chess was not fun for me, because it didn't give me time to *figure out* what to do." Recall that Mr. Smith said, "I've got to figure out a way to teach these standards, but also to teach writing and reading, but also to teach some life lesson". Mr. Smith also seemed to want to know if he was teaching "correctly", as he explained that he would like more administrative evaluation of his practice and even asked me if I thought his teaching was quality after a completed interview. This perhaps indicates that Mr. Smith was not yet able to fluidly and intuitively incorporate the goals he deemed important within the larger institutional framework. This exhibited in classroom observations. Mr. Smith did include non-curricular material that he deemed important, but this was a planned activity that he approved with his administrator. He also seemed unable to respond to possibilities for active student learning even during activities where this was the goal. During the group activity where students performed a mock Congress about school cell phone policies, Mr. Smith focused more on the textual information of the worksheet, and having students complete the worksheet, than student dialogue and application.

Thus, Mr. Smith still relied upon institutional norms and still tried to “figure out” analytically how to include his goals within the institutional framework.

To summarize, Mr. Smith’s teaching practices resembled the level of a competent performer according to the Dreyfus model. The performer at this stage recognizes situational elements that are important, ceases to rely on a strict application of rules, but ultimately makes decisions in an analytical, calculative way, rather than intuitively. This is what was most evident from Mr. Smith’s data. He did not simply rely upon the institutional norms of teaching technique, but broke from them when he had a goal in mind. However, he also remained analytical in his decision-making. He tried to “figure out” how to incorporate socially valuable goals within the institutional framework of meeting ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards. This is interesting because it speaks not only to Mr. Smith’s stage in the Dreyfus model, but also to the role of institutional controls in forming this stage.

***Ms. Happ (Rural “Expert”): Stage 1&2, Novice-Advanced Beginner.*** The first two stages of the Dreyfus model are novice and advanced beginner. For the most part, I felt that Ms. Happ’s data represented aspects of both of these stages. Speaking of the first stage, Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) write, “Elements of the situation to be treated as relevant are so clearly and objectively defined for the novice that they can be recognized without reference to the overall situation in which they occur” (p. 21). With a context-free goal, the novice then simply implements context-free rules. In many ways, this is that pattern that Ms. Happ represented during classroom observations. Recall that she almost exclusively exhibited teacher-centered pedagogy which conformed to norms of practice and which efficiently adhered to institutional objectives. Whereas other participants were less strictly devoted to lesson plans, Ms. Happ explained, “I strictly adhere to mine. I use mine every day.” She also noted that she followed a

procedural plan throughout her classes, stating, “I try to have a plan every week, to know what I’m going to do and on it is everything.” This clearly showed during observations. She most often adhered to teacher-centered instruction through efficient note-taking activities that covered ALCOS objectives. These included technical instruction, emphasizing memorization techniques and content regurgitation. She followed the same procedure in each class and severely limited situational factors, such as student inquiry and dialogue, in order to complete these procedures. This context-free rule-following is indicative of the novice stage of the Dreyfus model.

Ms. Happ also represented the advanced beginner in some ways. The major distinction between the novice and advanced beginner stage of the Dreyfus model is experience. Speaking of stage 2, the authors write, “Through practical experience in concrete situations with meaningful elements, which neither an instructor nor the learner can define in terms of objectively recognizable context-free features, the advanced beginner starts to recognize those elements when they are present” (p. 22). In terms of decision-making, the advanced beginner follows context-free rules and situational components. Ms. Happ had years of classroom experience and she was able to respond to certain elements of teaching based upon these experiences. For example, she stated that she would occasionally take time away from covering standards when “teaching moments” arose. In terms of classroom resources, she explained that she would utilize external programs, such as “Justice for All”, because she “saw how it works for us...if I can use it somewhere, I’m going to try to use it.” She also explained that she had to go beyond content and meet students on a social level. This shows that Ms. Happ relied upon her experiences and situational elements of teaching, such as the practicality of external teaching sources and the needs of students, at times in addition to context-free rules of teaching.

It is possible to identify Ms. Happ in the competent performer stage due to these situational responses. The competent performer recognizes what is important in the situation and becomes involved in bringing about this goal. Ms. Happ exhibited this when she recognized that students needed more than content and that she would focus on “teaching moments” for things she found “truly important”. However, in comparison to Mr. Smith, Ms. Happ focused more on the institutional norms of teaching and indicated that the process of instruction was more important than responding to students. Recall that Mr. Smith explained that he would rather teach personal finance than strictly adhere to ALCOS objectives because students enjoyed it, learned from it, and needed it. He explained that this was “a more responsible way to handle the curriculum.” By contrast, Ms. Happ seldom deviated from the procedures that efficiently achieved institutional objectives. At times, she indicated that her teaching procedures were more important than the situational elements of responding to students. For example, she explained that the “Greek Day” activities were a program she and other teachers had designed to “involve students in the curriculum”. So, she recognized that these were enjoyable learning opportunities, where students could not only receive active, hands-on instruction, but also make connections to other content areas. However, Ms. Happ consistently relegated these activities as secondary and ancillary to “traditional” learning represented by note-taking and studying curricular content. Ms. Happ said that “Greek Day” was “just something that they need to be able to showcase after they have went through the notes, the study process”. She also indicated a preference for teacher-centered approaches, such as lecturing, because students were not “getting enough of the details”. She added:

They need to have some lecture. They need to understand what it’s like to sit there and be quiet and listen to an adult and to get the learning and when they’re not writing as much, then they can do more of this thinking process and we can have discussion.

Thus, the data indicated that Ms. Happ emphasized the context-free procedure over those situational elements that she also deemed important. This is why I identified Ms. Happ with characteristics of the novice and advanced beginner stages over that of the competent performer.

Ms. Happ displayed elements of teaching that corresponded to stages 1 and 2 of the Dreyfus model. She strictly adhered to the context-free norms of practice throughout her classes. However, she also drew upon past experiences to respond to situational components in addition to context-free norms. These included experiences with instructional sources and the needs of her students. Though some of these reflected the situational judgments of the competent performer, Ms. Happ emphasized the institutional norms of practice that were detached from these situational evaluations of importance. Again, this speaks not only to Ms. Happ's identification along the Dreyfus continuum, but also to the role of the institutional framework. Institutional controls dictated the goals of instruction for Ms. Happ which led to her emphasis on the context-free rules that would efficiently achieve these goals.

***Mr. Henley (Urban "Expert"): Stage 4&5, Proficiency-Expertise.*** The final stages of the Dreyfus model are proficiency and expertise. Mr. Henley represented characteristics of both stages in his teaching and attitudes toward institutional controls. I first provide some of the relevant data before connecting it with the thoughts offered by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986). The proficient or expert performer does not strictly adhere to context-free rules anymore, but rather becomes heavily involved in the situation. Mr. Henley commonly broke from the institutional norms of practice more readily than the other participants. Recall that Mr. Henley's pedagogy was exemplified by student-centered approaches. Though he often utilized non-traditional activities, instead of consistently relying upon teacher-centered instruction to efficiently accomplish institutional objectives, Mr. Henley included features that institutional norms of

practice left out. He frequently welcomed and responded to student inquiry about content. He also intentionally made personal and social applications and encouraged students to give their own opinions. This was grounded in Mr. Henley's judgment that social components of the curriculum were "desperately needed". Additionally, he criticized institutional "filters" on instruction, exemplified by the STM and RtI programs. He explained that administrators came in looking for "a specific methodology or specific strategy". An extended quote shows how Mr. Henley felt about quality teaching. He said:

It does kind of put teaching in a box. It says, 'hey you have to conform because this is what's expected' and I think you have to be very careful with that professionally because when you say here is the expectation of teaching and you list very specific things then what you're doing is you're asking teachers to conform to that and it locks out their creativity and their ingenuity.

Mr. Henley criticized institutional norms because they limited his professionalism and "know-how" of teaching.

Involvement in the situation also characterized Mr. Henley's teaching in addition to his resistance to formal rules. He stated on several occasions that he followed his experiences of what works in response to his particular students. For example, he stated, "I'm the kind of teacher that I'm going to do what I think is best for my kids and...with my experience...I think I can justify why I'm doing this." Instead of following rules, Mr. Henley suggested that quality teaching included a situational evaluation of what works. He explained, "I think good teaching practice is...somewhat experimental. What will work with that class? What's effective? What's not?" Responding to planning lessons, Mr. Henley reiterated the conceptualization of teaching as responding to situational elements. He said:

I follow a lesson plan that I develop, but that lesson goes through...what I have done effectively in the past...I want to be able to see what's effective for the kids. It is a pre-

done plan, however...it could range depending on the class and how things are going that day.

This responsiveness to the situation, based not on efficiency toward institutional objectives but on how students learned, was evident throughout classroom observations. For example, when students inquired about content, Mr. Henley provided individualized instruction. Also, if students asked questions during more formal activities, Mr. Henley responded to these more often than other participants. For example, during a lesson on feudalism in Medieval Europe, a student asked, "If you're born poor, would you stay poor?" Mr. Henley used this opportunity to lead a discussion about social mobility and the lack of it in this time period, rather than limiting student inquiry in order to efficiently cover content.

These examples correspond with many of the characteristics of the proficient and expert performer on the Dreyfus model. An extended quote about proficiency illustrates this connection to Mr. Henley's emphasis on situational judgment and past experience. The authors write the following:

Usually the proficient performer will be deeply involved in his task and will be experiencing it from some specific perspective because of recent events. Because of the performer's perspective, certain features of the situation will stand out as salient and others will recede into the background and be ignored. As events modify the salient features, plans, expectations, and even the relative salience of features will gradually change. No detached choice or deliberation occurs. It just happens, apparently because the proficient performer has experienced similar situations in the past. (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, p. 28).

This was clearly evident when Mr. Henley chose to emphasize student inquiry and discussion over efficient content coverage in his classes. It also informs his statement that he based his planning on "what I have done effectively in the past". The Dreyfus model also describes this as

a characteristic of the expert performer. The authors contend that, under normal circumstances, “experts don’t solve problems and don’t make decisions; they do what normally works” (p. 31).

This speaks to the Dreyfus model’s distinction between proficiency and expertise. The authors write, “The proficient performer, while intuitively organizing and understanding his task, will still find himself thinking analytically about what to do” (1986, p. 29). On the other hand, the expert performer intuitively enacts experiential knowledge in the moment without a detached analysis. The authors write of the expert, “When deeply involved in coping with his environment, he does not see problems in some detached way and work at solving them, nor does he worry about the future and devise plans.” I include this distinction because it explains why I identified Mr. Henley in both categories. Clearly, he did act in a detached way to solve situational elements that he deemed important. He constructed plans that allowed for student involvement. On several occasions during observations, he set aside times to make personal and social connections from content, such as the discussion on the budget crisis in the context of the unit on progressivism. At other times, he seemed to intuitively react to the situation. When students asked questions, he responded to them in a meaningful way, where other participants often treated this as deviant and attempted to return to institutional norms of practice. Based upon his explanation of quality teaching, it is perhaps appropriate to infer that Mr. Henley did this because it was part of his experience of what had worked effectively in the past.

Mr. Henley exhibited characteristics of both proficiency and expertise according to the Dreyfus model. However, it is important to note that Mr. Henley was not always able to break from institutional norms. In fact, the institutional framework of expertise, with its emphasis on standards and context-independent teaching strategies, contrasted with the emphasis upon contextual knowledge in the Dreyfus model and stunted progress along such a continuum. For



example, Mr. Henley explained that he was still “obligated to teach the entire course of study” and to teach Common Core standards. Thus, much of his situational responsiveness to students happened within the context of traditional activities aimed at reaching these objectives. Due to this, he had to cut off conversation at times and resume teaching toward these goals. This was evident in Mr. Henley’s classes, albeit to a far lesser degree than with other participants. Mr. Henley also recognized that the administration supported “academic benchmarks” and “specific methodologies” of teaching rather than teacher creativity. He noted that the explicit standards of the institution did not support student-centered social application of content. All of these institutional norms influenced practices away from context-based judgments and toward standard procedures. Yet, Mr. Henley was able to successfully navigate these contrasting philosophies of teaching. At the end of this study, I discuss what this means in terms of how we understand teaching expertise in the context of institutional controls.

*Mr. Gwynn (Urban “Novice”): Stage 1, Novice.* Mr. Gwynn exhibited characteristics in his teaching and attitudes toward institutional controls corresponding to the novice stage of the Dreyfus model. Though this may seem unsurprising, I initially expected that Mr. Gwynn might occupy a unique position that would allow him to break from institutional norms of practice. As a student intern, he did not have the direct charge to accomplish the institutional objectives that other participants did. Additionally, as Zeichner (2010) points out, pre-service teachers often find themselves in conflict during clinical experiences because they attempt to incorporate university strategies which contrast with institutional norms. In some sense, this was true. Mr. Gwynn incorporated strategies that were student-centered and that differed from institutional practices, such as the “list group label” activity and the student presentations. However, he also indicated that this was part of his broader requirement to accomplish university tasks. Thus, Mr. Gwynn

incorporated context-free strategies rather than developing these strategies to respond to situational elements. In addition to these strategies, Mr. Gwynn also noted that he had to go through a strict process of lesson approval. As interviews indicated, the university approval process reinforced the institutional norms of the school. Mr. Gwynn explained that his program emphasized “backwards mapping” to ensure that lessons were valid in that they accomplished institutional standards. This indicates that Mr. Gwynn followed context-free procedures rather than situational elements based on experience.

The Dreyfus model explains that the novice relies upon context-free rules rather than situational elements. The authors write that a beginning driver learning to drive a stick-shift “is told at what speed (a context-free feature) to shift gears and, at any given speed, at what distance (another such feature) to follow a car preceding him. These rules ignore context” (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, p. 22). This was evident in observations of Mr. Gwynn’s teaching. For example, though the student presentations activity was student-centered, Mr. Gwynn approached it procedurally across classes and seemed unable to respond to situational elements. He explained to students during this activity that he was going to try to get through as many presentations as possible. Students followed one after another with no real connection between student and teacher. When technology failed, Mr. Gwynn only engaged in how to fix the technology so that the procedure could continue. He seemed unable to construct an alternative that would respond to the rest of the class being unengaged while he worked on the technology. Additionally, during his more traditional classroom lectures, Mr. Gwynn primarily followed the institutional norm of efficiently covering content. When a student asked a question about American isolationism during WWI, Mr. Gwynn gave a quick response so that he could get back to the traditional activity. During interviews, he suggested that these instances presented problems, noting that he

constantly was “checking his watch” to make sure he could maintain pace with the content. Though he did incorporate student-centered discussion of the Selective Service Act in response to student inquiry, it is important to note that this occurred during extra time after the period would have normally ended. Under normal circumstances, Mr. Gwynn attempted to limit student discussion in favor of institutional norms.

Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) also contend that the novice evaluates performance on how well they have adhered to context-free rules. They write, “The beginning student wants to do a good job, but lacking any coherent sense of the overall task he judges his performance mainly by how well he follows learned rules” (p. 22). On several occasions, Mr. Gwynn’s attitudes toward institutional controls exhibited an evaluation of teaching based on adherence to context-free rules. He explained that he liked the guidance of institutional requirements and that “it’s so easy to prove that what you’re teaching, you’re teaching...like valid lessons to when you will be in that position to have to do that.” Additionally, he explained that he did not feel any pressure about his teaching “as long as I’m teaching to the standards” because “everything that I need to teach is in the standard.” This illustrates that Mr. Gwynn more regularly evaluated his teaching by how well he followed institutional norms rather than how well he responded to situational elements.

Finally, Mr. Gwynn connected his reliance upon both university procedure and institutional norms to a lack of experience. Recall that the distinction between the novice and the advanced beginner on the Dreyfus model is that the novice has no past experiences from which to draw. The authors state that the advanced beginner begins to recognize situational elements thanks to “a perceived similarity with prior examples” (p. 22). Mr. Gwynn had no such prior examples as he had only taught one formal lesson in clinical experiences before his time as

student intern for Mr. Henley. This exhibited in some of his interview responses. For example, he claimed that if he could figure out how to incorporate student interaction “and cover all the information I needed to that would be great because you saw how interested [the students] were...That’s a skill that I’m sure a lot of experienced teachers do have.” This illustrates that a lack of prior experiences left Mr. Gwynn unsure how to respond to situational elements. As a result of this inexperience, he relied upon the “rules” of practice. He said, “I’m still very amateur when it comes to teaching, so [institutional requirements] are all I’ve ever known”.

Mr. Gwynn exhibited characteristics aligned with the novice stage on the Dreyfus model. His teaching primarily consisted of following context-free rules, either through incorporating university teaching strategies or following institutional norms to accomplish institutional objectives. He primarily evaluated his teaching based on his adherence to these norms rather than his response to situational elements. During observations, Mr. Gwynn seemed unable to intuitively respond to situational elements, such as what to do with the class when technology failed or how to incorporate student discussion and inquiry within his lessons. This stemmed from the fact that he had very little teaching experience. Mr. Gwynn even recognized this and indicated that his lack of experience resulted in a reliance upon institutional norms. Now that I have identified each participant on the Dreyfus model, I conclude by comparing the dyads to investigate the framework of expertise that exhibited within them.

***Comparison of case dyads.*** There are two important quotes from Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) which explain the progression of expertise that exists in their model. First, they explain:

What should stand out is the progression *from* the analytic behavior of a detached subject, consciously decomposing his environment into recognizable elements, and following abstract rules, *to* involved skilled behavior based on holistic pairing of new situations with associated responses produced by successful experiences in similar situations. (p. 35).

Next, they state:

Interpretation, whether conscious, as in the case of the competent performer, or nonconscious and based upon holistic discrimination, as for the more skilled, determines what is seen as important in a situation. That interpretive ability constitutes ‘judgment.’ Thus according to our description of skill acquisition the novice and advanced beginner exercise no judgment, the competent performer judges by means of conscious deliberation, and those who are proficient or expert make judgments based upon their prior concrete experiences in a manner that defies explanation. (p. 36).

So, the general trend in the Dreyfus model is that beginners progress from following abstract rules to eventual expertise where they make situational judgments based upon experiential knowledge. The table below indicates if the rural and urban teacher dyads followed this trend according to participants’ years of experience.

Table 6

*Participant stages according to the Dreyfus model*

Dyad 1-Rural	
<u>Mr. Smith (“Novice”)</u> Stage 3: Competent Performer	<u>Ms. Happ (“Expert”)</u> Stage 1&2: Novice-Advanced Beginner
Dyad 2-Urban	
<u>Mr. Gwynn (“Novice”)</u> Stage 1: Novice	<u>Mr. Henley (“Expert”)</u> Stage 4&5: Proficiency-Expertise

As the table indicates, the urban dyad followed the Dreyfus model while the rural dyad did not. Mr. Gwynn, the novice teacher by years of experience, relied upon abstract rules and was unable to make situational judgments because he lacked prior experience. As a result, he conformed heavily to the institutional standards and norms of practice. Mr. Henley, the expert teacher by years of experience, broke from abstract rules and institutional norms of practice. He determined what to do based upon situational elements and what he found effective in the past. These judgments broke from institutional objectives. On the other hand, the rural dyad followed the opposite pattern. Mr. Smith, the novice teacher by years of experience, followed abstract

rules of practice less strictly than his teaching counterpart. Though he thought analytically, and had difficulty intuitively responding to situational elements, he recognized situational goals that broke from institutional norms of practice. Ms. Happ, the expert teacher by years of experience, prominently relied upon institutional norms and, though she expressed some situational judgments, she most often subjugated these goals to carrying out context-free techniques. Thus, the rural dyad most resembled Apple's (1986) description of the "teacher as technician". The senior teacher employed managerial techniques efficient in carrying out institutional objectives. As years of experience went up between the first and second participant in this dyad, teacher judgment diminished.

There were two distinct frameworks of expertise represented by the case dyads. The rural dyad was representative of the "technicization of teaching" described by Apple (1986). Mr. Smith was not completely given to institutional norms and still attempted to incorporate his own strategies and goals which broke from institutional objectives. Thus, viewed through Apple's framework, he was a novice because he did not yet rely upon the most efficient techniques for accomplishing institutional objectives. Ms. Happ, on the other hand, did rely upon the most efficient means to accomplish institutional objectives. Thus, she might be viewed as an expert from the eyes of the institution. The urban dyad was representative of the Dreyfus model. Mr. Gwynn conformed to techniques of practice both from the university and within the institutional framework. He did not rely upon his personal evaluation of teaching but rather assessed how he adhered to institutional objectives. Though this might represent an expert in the "teacher as technician" model, it represents a novice in the Dreyfus model. Mr. Henley broke from institutional controls more often than other participants. He relied upon previous experiences to determine what was most effective in view of situational judgments rather than institutional

objectives. While this might represent a novice in the “teacher as technician” model, it represents proficiency and expertise in the Dreyfus model. This divergence in frameworks of expertise between learning environments perhaps informs research question 3, which looks at how the relationship between institutional controls and *phronesis* differed between urban and rural environments. I now turn my attention to this research question.

**Research question 3.** The third research question asked the following: How did the relationship between institutional controls and phronetic social studies teaching differ between urban and rural learning environments? Another aspect of this study examined how the impact of institutional controls upon phronetic conceptualizations of teaching differed between learning environments. Where research question 2 provided the impetus for purposefully selecting “novice” and “expert” teachers, research question 3 provided the impetus for purposefully selecting participants from rural and urban environments. In the literature review, I introduced several authors that illustrate how the age of accountability in educational discourse has disproportionately harmed educators and students in high-poverty urban schools with a high population of minorities. Part of the rationale behind national education policies has been to reduce achievement disparities between low-income minority students and more affluent White students. Mirra and Morrell (2011) explain, “Much of the rhetoric introduced by the Bush administration about NCLB likened the legislation to a civil rights initiative that promised to challenge low expectations and bring traditionally marginalized students to academic proficiency” (p. 409). Narrowing of the curriculum and the adoption of scripted programs, which severely limit professional judgment, have become commonplace in low-income urban schools as a result of this narrow focus on achievement (Milner, 2013). In my study, I wanted to see if institutional controls manifested in urban settings disproportionately as represented in the

literature. Thus, I selected participants from a high-poverty, urban school with mostly Black or African-American students and from a rural, mostly White school with poverty levels close to the state and district average. This allowed me to qualitatively compare themes of institutional controls to determine if there were differences and how these differences manifested to constrain phronetic teaching.

The findings related to this research question led to mostly inconclusive results. There was some evidence suggesting that institutional controls manifested more stringently in the rural setting and some suggesting they were stronger in the urban setting. Here, I discuss this evidence and argue that institutional controls seemed to operate similarly between learning environments. First, recall from the previous research question that the urban dyad followed the Dreyfus model, as it exhibited a progression of contextual judgments, while the rural dyad followed the “teacher as technician” model, as it exhibited a progression of technical approaches. This is perhaps evidence that institutional controls were stronger in the rural setting. In fact, Ms. Happ noted that before she could move on to higher levels of education, she had to fix a fundamental lack of proficiency in skills. She said, “We should be teaching critical thinking skills...but what we fall into is we’re picking up fail-safes that happen below us, so we’re picking up having to teach them reading skills. We’re having to teach them writing skills.” This connects with phenomena that commentators suggest is representative of low-income urban settings. Mirra and Morrell (2011), speaking of low-income communities of color, write, “much of the discourse that has emerged...has focused on how to ‘improve’ or ‘fix’ students from these communities” (p. 411). Perhaps, then, the push to instill literacy skills was stronger in the rural setting. However, in this context, I believe Ms. Happ referred more to a personal evaluation of her students rather than an



institutional policy controlling her teaching. Ms. Happ did not have any firmer directives to teach reading and writing standards than her rural counterpart or the participants in the urban setting.

The unique themes which emerged from Mr. Henley's data represent the only solid evidence that institutional controls were stronger in a particular setting. Recall that additional themes of *instructional policies* and *testing policies* emerged for Mr. Henley. He discussed the instructional "filters" of the RtI and STM programs to a greater degree than other participants. Though aspects of these programs exhibited in the rural setting, such as the "before, during, and after" class structure, Mr. Henley suggested that administration looked for "specific methodologies" and emphasized these "best practices". He also explained that the school had "data team meetings", "strategic teaching meetings", and that they were "doing pre and post-assessment data on every class". This heavy administrative focus on explicit instructional strategies and data was not evident in discussions with the rural teachers. Additionally, Mr. Henley had specific testing policies which affected his teaching. In terms of standardized testing, controls were largely similar between the learning environments. While Mr. Henley had the charge of preparing for the graduation exam, Ms. Happ noted that she focused on reading instruction for the ARMT. However, both of these tests were in the process of being phased out by the respective districts. Mr. Henley, though, did deal with the vestige of standardized testing policies on a daily basis. The existence of "0" period and its incongruence with the current testing format left Mr. Henley in an awkward situation where this period became "almost meaningless". This also implies that there had been a school-wide focus on testing remediation in this setting that was not evident in the rural setting. Lastly, in terms of classroom assessments, Mr. Henley noted that a new school policy required that formal assessments counted for 55% of students' overall grade. On the other hand, while Ms. Happ mentioned shutting down classes to

focus on final exams, she explained that they only counted for 10% of students' grades, which alleviated pressure for test preparation.

What this evidence suggests is that there was a slightly greater existence of institutional controls in the urban setting. However, the data supporting this conclusion was limited to two unique themes that emerged from Mr. Henley's data. Thus, I feel that this finding is inconclusive and tentative at best. Part of this is because there was a wealth of data regarding institutional controls and the emerging themes were extremely similar across the cases. The data from every participant revealed themes of *curricular controls*, *time constraints*, and *emphasis on skills*. Everyone had clear institutional directives to teach ALCOS objectives, Common Core standards, and to do so in a time efficient manner. However, there clearly was a difference between the dyads, as represented by the discussion of frameworks of expertise. What do we make of the fact that the rural dyad followed the "teacher as technician" model while the urban dyad followed the Dreyfus model, even though the institutional requirements were largely similar? I believe that differences were most likely due to the individual capacity to navigate the conflict between institutional controls and phronetic teaching. Mr. Henley, for example, seemed to have both the willingness and skill to incorporate socially valuable goals within the institutional framework that other participants did not have. Conversely, Mr. Smith, Ms. Happ, and Mr. Gwynn largely bought in to the institutional framework of education or were not as skilled in incorporating social goals within it.

This speaks to two important points. First, perhaps this presents a new perspective on the idea of the expert teacher in social studies. Given the current educational climate, the expert teacher may be one who can successfully navigate competing educational objectives. They would be able to achieve institutional objectives while providing the personal and social meaning

that lay at the heart of both *phronesis* and social studies. Second, perhaps attributing differences between learning environments to individual capabilities contradicts the idea of institutional controls. In other words, if teachers have the ability to incorporate socially valuable goals of education which undermine institutional objectives, perhaps these controls are no controls at all. The findings from this study suggest that this was overwhelmingly not the case. Recall that, though I categorized Mr. Henley as exhibiting student-centered pedagogy and breaking from institutional norms, this was largely due to constant comparison with other participants. Institutional requirements still constrained his teaching heavily. He explained that he was “obligated to teach the entire course of study”, that this undermined his ability to include student dialogue and personal application, and that his school’s focus on instructional programs and academic benchmarks restricted his professionalism and the inclusion of social goals in the curriculum. He stated that it was his responsibility to teach for personal connections and active citizenship because the school focused on efficient content coverage and Common Core standards so that students would be prepared for college. So, Mr. Henley represented the participant least tied to institutional controls and yet these requirements still constrained teaching as *phronesis* and supported teaching for predetermined institutional objectives. Thus, what was left was the possibility that an experienced and socially engaged educator, such as Mr. Henley, could incorporate phronetic conceptualizations while navigating broader institutional controls. Reflecting upon this and the overall findings of the study, I am left asking critical questions related to the impact of institutional controls upon social studies education, whose purposes these controls serve, and whether there are alternatives. I address some of these issues as I answer the final research questions in the next section.

**Research question 4.** The final set of research questions asked the following: What do these cases indicate about how institutional controls function in social studies education? Who wins and who loses; by which mechanisms of power? Does this contribute to quality social studies education, is this desirable, and are there other possibilities? These questions stem from the methodological orientation that I discussed in chapter III. In addition to studying *phronesis* as an object of analysis, I chose to engage with *phronesis* methodologically. Flyvbjerg (2001) suggests that such a methodological grounding in *phronesis* plays to the inherent strengths of the social sciences by contributing to “the ongoing social dialogue and praxis in a society” rather than to unequivocal universal knowledge (p. 139). The major strength of the social sciences is their contribution to reflexive analysis and discussion of values and interests, “which is at the core of *phronesis*” (p. 3). I make no claims of producing any universal knowledge from this study. Rather, I hope to contribute to our social dialogue about the meaning of social studies education, the role of teachers within this discipline, and our evaluative conclusions about contemporary discourses of education, through the exemplary knowledge offered by these cases. This study provides a micro perspective of how institutional forces function to undermine the natural strengths of social studies education, which informs the macro perspective of the impact of contemporary educational discourse on education and the teaching profession in particular. By addressing these final research questions, I hope to evaluate the case knowledge generated from this study in the context of broader issues in education. The questions that I articulate derive from Flyvbjerg’s (2001) value-rational inquiry that lies at the heart of phronetic social science.

***What do these cases indicate about how institutional controls function in social studies education?*** The findings from this study indicate that, in these contexts, institutional controls removed judgments about the goals of education from the perspectives of those engaged in its

practice. With its emphases on meeting ALCOS objectives and Common Core standards, each institution supported teaching as *techne*, or production toward external ends. At times, this conception was informed by an epistemic or applied science view of teaching, especially in the case of the urban context, which emphasized adherence to scientifically-researched teaching models. Consequently, institutions constrained teaching as *phronesis*, as the institutional requirements in each setting undermined teacher judgment and deliberation about the goals and purposes of social studies education. These findings correspond with the broader literature suggesting that institutional controls have destroyed teacher professionalism within contemporary educational policy and that teachers now implement techniques for institutional goals (Leaton Gray, 2007; Weiner, 2007; Au, 2011).

The findings also indicate that the emphasis on institutional objectives undercut other educational possibilities formed by the practical judgments of teachers or the perspectives of students. The exclusion of teacher judgment of ends and student dialogue, reflection, opinion, inquiry, and application was prominent across the cases. Thus, the truly *social* aspect of social studies, be it engaging socially with other perspectives or making social applications, seemed to be stripped away by institutional requirements. Mr. Smith's evaluation of his role as a "glorified reading specialist" due to Common Core requirements exemplifies this phenomenon. This connects with literature suggesting that institutional requirements have regulated content and pedagogy to the detriment of socially valuable aspects of the social studies curriculum on a broad scale (Au, 2009).

It is important to note that Au (2009) discusses the impact of institutional controls on social studies education within the context of high-stakes testing. However, as this study indicates, even when schools lack a high-stakes testing component, other institutional mandates

can still constrain teachers' abilities. Each school setting was in a state of flux with regard to testing. The high school and middle schools in this study were each phasing out their respective standardized exams. However, the simple act of the institution dictating objectives and standards acted as a control for teachers. The findings illustrate that participants largely directed their teaching at efficiently covering ALCOS objectives to the exclusion of social application or reflection upon the curriculum's content. Additionally, Common Core standards charged teachers with incorporating literacy strategies into their curriculum objectives. Participants noted that these strategies would become the primary focus of instruction in the absence of testing as schools prepared for the future adoption of Common Core assessments. Thus, the sheer removal of deliberation about the goals of education from its practitioners has the effect of controlling the means of education. This connects with what Alfie Kohn (2004) has said about the inherent control of institutional standards. Speaking of the danger of direct standards, he writes:

Some insist that these lists of facts and skills don't prescribe how students will be taught; the standards are said to be neutral with respect to pedagogy. But this is nonsense. If the goal is to cover material (rather than, say, to discover ideas), that unavoidably informs the methods that will be used. Techniques such as repetitive drill-and-practice are privileged by curriculum frameworks based on a 'bunch o' facts' approach to education. Of course, that kind of teaching is also driven by an imperative to prepare students for tests, but not less by an imperative to conform to specific standards. (p. 48)

This argumentation directly corresponds to evidence from the cases in this study. Participants commonly cited their control over instructional means. However, the emphasis on covering institutional standards clearly affected these means by establishing pedagogical norms that participants had difficulty resisting.

Lastly, there remained a limited space for teachers to negotiate their personal educational values within the institutional framework. Teachers, on occasion, could break away from institutional requirements to focus on non-curricular material that they deemed important for

students. Mr. Henley exemplified this consistently throughout his teaching, as he intentionally incorporated discussions of social issues into his lesson plans and also responded to student-generated inquiry at times he deemed appropriate. This connects with literature suggesting that teachers still have spaces to negotiate their personal judgments with institutional requirements. Apple (1995) suggests that actors in specific contexts have the ability to resist the force of institutional controls. Bender-Slack and Raupach (2008) even suggest that socially-valuable goals of education, such as social justice, do not have to be incompatible with standards. These authors state that standards and social justice can be complimentary if teachers conceptualize social justice instruction as “method rather than content” (p. 255). However, they acknowledge that test preparation required teachers in their study to emphasize some topics over others, leading to superficial discussions of social justice. As my study indicates, pressures to cover the curriculum, especially with respect to preparation for future levels of education, can also limit teachers’ abilities to infuse standards with socially applicable components. Though Mr. Henley often attempted to do this, he still discussed the incorporation of social goals within a context of limitation. He had to “stop” from ALCOS objectives to accomplish this and still had to “cut off the conversation” to “cover the class content”. So, while there was a space for socially valuable aspects of social studies instruction in this study, and the literature supports this finding, I am left asking, is this what we want from social studies education? Do we simply hope that concerned social studies educators have those “teaching moments” where they can carve out a space for the inherent strengths of social studies within the institutional framework? My response to these questions is decidedly no and I return to these thoughts later as I address the desirability and quality of the social studies education exemplified in this study.

*Who wins and who loses; by which mechanisms of power?* Flyvbjerg (2001)

incorporates the consideration of power into his utilization of Aristotle for research in the social sciences. Drawing upon Foucault, he says that power operates within all levels of society and, thus, requires attention for any evaluative understanding of social practice. This study illustrates a clear power dynamic between the schools as institutions and the individual. Participants were constantly subjected to a process of conformity by institutional regulations and, therefore, deprived of the construction of their own identities and purposes. However, as I suggested in chapters I and II, we cannot understand schools as institutions outside of the political context in which they exist. Apple (1986; 2006) has argued that educational institutions function as apparatuses of the state under the ideologies of neoliberalism and neoconservatism. Apple writes that neoliberalism “transforms our very idea of democracy, making it only an economic concept, not a political one” (2006, p. 15). Neoconservatism, on the other hand, utilizes the strength of the state to enforce discipline for the existing order. Understanding schools as apparatuses of the state, these neoliberal and neoconservative modes of power were quite evident in this study. Educational goals tied to the economic development of students, as displayed by Common Core standards, were valued over socially valuable aspects of the social studies curriculum. Concomitantly, these standards disciplined teachers by providing a consistent directive for teaching that limited educational possibilities.

Keeping with the phronetic methodological orientation of this study, I invoke Flyvbjerg’s consideration of power by asking who wins and who loses by the educational structuring. It is important to explain that it is problematic to view the entirety of these phenomena within such a strict binary. Establishing winners and losers is a normative claim and it is difficult to speak in such plain terms, especially considering that educational goals such as preparation for college



and careers are certainly important. However, within the context of neoliberalism, it is important to note the political implications and dynamics of power that are at play within standardized approaches to education. Considering this context, I retain the terms winners and losers in light of economic and socially valuable goals of education.

The winners are those who promote a managerial control of education for economic purposes. Recall Moe's (2003) assertion that the era of accountability is essentially a movement for more effective top-down school control. He states:

The idea is that, if public authorities want to promote student achievement, they need to adopt organizational control mechanisms—tests, school report cards, rewards and sanctions, and the like—designed to get district officials, principals, teachers, and students to change their behaviour in productive ways. (quoted in Au, 2011, p. 38).

Since the release of *A Nation at Risk*, these productive behaviors have been in view of neoliberal ideals (Hursh, 2007). This continues today, as federal education policies continue to focus on economic rather than social purposes. President Obama has continued this neoliberal focus on education, claiming, "Education is an economic issue—if not 'the' economic issue of our time" (quoted in Mirra & Morrell, 2011, p. 409). Additionally, the Obama administration required states wanting access to Race to the Top funding to adopt Common Core state standards by August 2, 2010 (Au, 2013). The Common Core standards reflect an economic understanding of education "by focusing explicitly on college and career readiness, to the near exclusion of preparation for democratic citizenship" (Mirra & Morrell, p. 409).

The narrow focus on accountability and top-down control of education has created clear beneficiaries. Au (2013) connects the Common Core standards, not only with economic goals of education, but also with the growing corporatization of public education. He states that no educational reform can be viewed outside of its political context. Within the context of

neoliberalism, Au claims, “the [Common Core State Standards] feel just like the 2.0 version of the last standards movement, and like the last standards movement will undoubtedly lead to NCLB 2.0 in terms of high-stakes, standardized testing” (p. 5). Though this is speculation, he cites Pennington, Obenchain, Papola, & Kmitta (2012) who remark, “The need to implement and assess the established CCSS situates those who created the standards as rainmakers for educational publishing companies and educational consulting non-profits they are affiliated with” (quoted in Au, p. 5). Furthermore, Au cites several research institutes which estimate that Common Core implementation will cost approximately \$12-\$15 billion over the next 3 to 7 years. This extensive allocation of funding for standards-based education provides great opportunity for corporate investment. He writes:

Given this potential market for private industry, it is not surprising that the *New York Times* reports venture capital investment in public education has increased 80% since 2005 to a total of \$632 million as of 2012. The development of the CCSS and the consequent rolling out of assessments, preparation materials, professional development, and other CCSS-related infrastructure fits quite well with the neoliberal project of reframing public education around the logics of private businesses as well as the shifting of public monies into the coffers of for-profit corporations through private contracts. (p. 5)

The findings of this study support this speculation as the three employed participants noted that Common Core strategies were being emphasized to prepare for the implementation of ACT Aspire. The website for ACT Aspire notes that, though it is a new company, it “attains its assessment-industry stature through the research, design and implementation legacy of two prominent, uniquely-accomplished partnering companies.” Additionally, it focuses on standards alignment, stating, “Our system is a vertically-articulated, benchmarked, standards-based system of assessments that can be used to highlight progress towards ACT College Readiness Standards and Benchmarks as well as the Common Core State Standards” (ACT Aspire, 2013). Lastly, the

website highlights the neoliberal ideal of consumer choice as it advertises not only the quality of assessments, but also their cost-effectiveness. In a section entitled, “Savings That Matter”, the website states, “We offer perhaps the most attractive pricing structure of any contemporary solution. Our program's features, quality and economy help our adopting partners confidently make ACT Aspire their preferred assessment choice” (ACT Aspire, 2013).

The winners of this conceptualization of education are those affiliated with the top-down control of education and the corporate partners who benefit from both the neoconservative and neoliberal ideology so prevalent in current educational discourse. On the other hand, the losers are those critically-minded educators who understand social studies as an avenue for fostering positive change in society. Throughout this study, it was clear that institutional focus remained heavy on efficient coverage of content and/or instilling literacy skills. Consistently, teachers had difficulty including content or pedagogy that did not conform to institutional norms. As Leaton Gray (2007) points out, the institutional control of teaching may inevitably lead to teacher alienation as these professionals are forced to implement a model that has little or no bearing on those in their charge (p. 201).

As this point indicates, students are another loser of the current conceptualizations of education. Though this study was about teachers, students were often marginalized by the impact of institutional controls. Participants often limited the active inclusion of students in the curriculum. This is particularly disappointing for the area of social studies, as Gibson (2012) points out that numerous studies have found this content area to be “the least liked course that children and youth take in school and the one that they feel most lacks relevance to their lives” (p. 43). As Dewey (1973) indicates, for the curriculum to be meaningful, teachers must illustrate

how its components exist within the lives and experiences of the student. This connection remained on the margins for students in this study.

Lastly, another loser is the content area of social studies itself. Au (2013) explains that the Common Core standards continue the trend in the age of accountability where social studies has become devalued. In addition to broad curricular reduction within schools, social studies has “increasingly become a site of ancillary literacy instruction” (p. 6). This is exactly what I found in these cases. Rather than focusing on the social import of historical content, participants implemented documents to teach reading and writing skills. As a result, social studies disciplines lose their inherent strengths. Commenting upon this, Au writes,

A striking aspect of the Social Studies/History CCSS is that they essentially exchange the pure content of previous era’s ossified standards for a new focus on pure skills. While existing content-focused social studies/history standards have never been particularly good, in exchanging pure content in favor of pure skills, as my *Rethinking Schools* colleague, Bill Bigelow, remarked in conversation, the *CCSS for Literacy in Social Studies/History* literally take the “social” out of the “social studies.” (p. 7)

This illustrates that, viewed through predominant conceptualizations of education, the social studies must adapt or die. Unfortunately, that adaptation consists of becoming something it is not and should not be.

***Does this contribute to quality Social Studies education, is this desirable, and are there other possibilities?*** I connected the purposes and nature of social studies with the core characteristics of *phronesis* in chapter II. As shown by scholars, organizations, and the statements of the participants in this study, the major strength of social studies is its contribution to reflective inquiry about ourselves and society in general. The disciplines of social studies help us to deliberate and judge what is good and bad. Quality social studies education would foster this kind of reflective inquiry and deliberation about the “the best of the goods for a human being

that are achievable in action” that is at the core of *phronesis* (Aristotle, 2000, p. 110). However, the institutional controls placed upon teachers, and their basis in an economic understanding of the role of education, undercut these qualities. Thus, I do not believe that the dynamics between the institution and the teachers represented in these cases contribute to quality social studies education. It strips away the salient features of social studies and its inherent strengths for contributing to social praxis. Thus, we are left with the very undesirable result of social studies becoming less and less important within the curriculum and more aligned with the skills and workforce training that characterizes education. But, perhaps, I have created an unnecessary dichotomy. Perhaps, institutional standards and socially valuable goals can and do co-exist. As I conclude this discussion, I address the role of the two most prevalent themes of institutional controls represented in this study, broad content knowledge and skills, to speak to other possibilities that might exist for teaching in the social studies.

I suggested earlier that there was perhaps some indication by participants that teaching for socially valuable aspects were naturally compatible with institutional objectives. For example, when I asked Ms. Happ about making broader social applications from content, she said, “it’s just not a problem” and that “it’s just second nature for me”. Describing the way that she would incorporate these social connections, she said, “we do it with the text itself...also I’ll bring in a graphic organizer and I have a chart that goes up on the board and we talk about it as well”. This utilization of texts and charts was one of the main ways that she would efficiently teach to content objectives. During classroom observations, she did attempt to engage students in connections and social applications from this content. However, these were infrequent and constituted brief moments within the overall context of the lesson. So, perhaps, Ms. Happ interpreted these social connections to naturally flow from a broad content knowledge. Mr.

Gwynn also seemed to indicate this natural connection between the importance of content and the skills emphasized by Common Core. He said, “I think [Common Core standards] also realizes obviously the significance of the content, too. It’s not, you know, they just need to be reading and writing.” Additionally, Mr. Henley indicated that there was nothing explicit in ALCOS that focused on the application of content to students’ lives or social issues. He said that “there is nothing...that says you need to adapt this [ALCOS objective] to modern day taxation, but at the same time, if you look at the principles and purposes of the course of study, it is to build upon citizens”.

Analysis of ALCOS documentation did reveal this broader purpose of teaching for socially valuable goals. In the “General Introduction” to the course of study for social studies, the document states that the theme of ALCOS is “responsible citizenship” (Alabama Department of Education, 2010, p. 1). Discussing this broad theme further, the document claims:

Responsible citizens are informed and active citizens. They are aware of and participate in various levels of civic responsibility. Mastering standards included in this document provides all students in Grades K-12 with essential knowledge regarding economics, geography, history, and civics and government. With this mastery, students develop an international perspective necessary for living wisely in a world that possesses limited resources and that is characterized by cultural diversity. They learn to view the world and its people with understanding and concern and develop a sense of responsibility for the needs of all people, including a commitment to finding just and peaceful solutions to national as well as international problems. (p. 1).

Thus, ALCOS implies that active citizenship and social responsibility are a natural outgrowth of content mastery. This is informed by an analysis of the actual standards listed in ALCOS.

Looking at 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 9<sup>th</sup> grade World History, the two most prominent subjects taught by participants in this study, objectives implying a regurgitation of knowledge are prevalent while the creation and application of knowledge are marginal. For example, out of the 34 overarching objectives for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade World History, the words “trace” and “identify” are used twice,

“compare” is used three times, “explain” is used six times, and “describe” is used twenty times, while “analyze” is used only once (Alabama Department of Education, 2010, p. 52-61).

Noticeably absent are words that might apply some sort of social connection and inquiry, such as “apply”, “debate”, “discuss”, or “evaluate”. Rather, the objectives focus primarily on descriptions, explanations, and identifications of people, places, and events with no explanation of how these are relevant in students’ lives or applicable to the overarching objective of responsible citizenship. I have also described previously how the Common Core standards for literacy in social studies focus on broad literacy skills and de-emphasize the historical significance of texts or the meaning that students personally create from them. Thus, it seems that there is an assumption that larger socially applicable ends of education naturally flow from accomplishing the institutional goals of covering content and acquiring skills.

Dewey criticizes the notion that broader aims of education naturally flow from isolated facts and skills. There are a few extended quotes from *How We Think* (2005) that speak directly to this idea. First, he says:

In some school subjects...the pupils are immersed in details; their minds are loaded with disconnected items...Induction is treated as beginning and ending with the amassing of facts, of particular isolated pieces of information. That these items are educative only as suggesting a view of some larger situation in which the particulars are included and thereby accounted for, is ignored. (Dewey, 2005, p. 76)

So, Dewey contends that broad content knowledge cannot truly be educative unless the pieces of information are brought to bear on some larger concept or situation. Continuing on, Dewey suggests that deduction, or the application of some broader theme to the particular pieces of information, allows students to understand the significance of content. He says:

Only deduction brings out and emphasizes consecutive relationships, and only when *relationships* are held in view does learning become more than a miscellaneous scrap-bag...Again, the mind is allowed to hurry on to a vague notion of the whole of which the

fragmentary facts are portions, without any attempt to become conscious of *how* they are bound together as parts of this whole. The student feels that ‘in a general way’, as we say, the facts of the history or geography lesson are related thus and so; but ‘in a general way’ here stands only for ‘in a vague way’, somehow or other, with not clear recognition of just how. (Dewey, 2005, p. 77)

This indicates that assuming responsible citizenship naturally results from a “miscellaneous scrapbag” of isolated information with no indication of broader relationships, as exemplified by ALCOS, is erroneous. Dewey suggests another possibility where teachers explicitly see the applications of content and allow students to articulate these broader meanings.

Another consideration is that the socially valuable goals cannot be taught before students understand the basics of content and literacy skills. Ms. Happ indicated this on several occasions. For example, she said, “We should be teaching critical thinking skills...but...we’re picking up fail-safes that happen below us, so we’re...having to teach them reading skills...So, you don’t really get to explore how all of this really, truly impacts us today”. Thus, she implied that broader social applications cannot be made until students acquire literacy skills. In regard to content, she stated, “They just need more critical thinking skills...but...you can’t think critically about something when you don’t know it and what I’m finding out...is that they’ve really never had really true history until they get to me.” Mr. Gwynn echoed the sentiment that broader applications should happen, but only after the basics of content knowledge. Speaking of socially valuable themes, he said, “I think we have to explicitly connect them for them, maybe after you teach the content you need to go back and re-visit”. These examples indicate the notion that broader social applications should happen, but that they cannot occur until students learn content and skills that would allow them to engage with these applications. However, the primacy placed upon content and skills within given time constraints consistently limited or eliminated potential for personal and social connections. So, is this the only possibility? Must teachers be



handicapped from socially valuable goals of social studies because they must teach the “basics” first?

The pedagogical stance exhibited by the previous examples illustrates the banking model of education that Freire attempts to dismantle in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000). Some of the characteristics of the banking model are evident in the above excerpts, such as “the teacher teaches and the students are taught, the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing, the teacher thinks and the students are thought about, the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly” (p. 73). Freire connects this banking model with modes of domination while “problem-posing” education allows students to relate to the world and become involved in social praxis. Students actually learn by first directly engaging in critical social thinking. Freire writes:

Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge. Because they apprehend the challenge as interrelated to other problems within a total context, not as a theoretical question, the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly less alienating. Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understandings; and gradually students come to regard themselves as committed. (p. 81)

So, not unlike Dewey’s thoughts (1973), true education only occurs when the student sees the significance of the content “relating to themselves in the world and with the world”. This critical understanding and learning through relation to oneself offered by Freire, I believe, is at the core of *phronesis*.

The theoretical insights that I provided here suggest that there are other educational possibilities for social studies. If we see social studies as invaluable for its contribution to social application, there are pedagogical ideals available which break from institutional norms and the traditional modes of teaching it espouses. This is critically important for challenging the current discourse that pervades public education. Social studies educators must start contending with

crucial questions between themselves and others. What happens when we only see education in terms of its economic utility? What consequences will we as a society confront when we divert attention away from fields which inform our social responsibilities because they do not directly produce the skills which contribute to the market economy? Though some scholars suggest a negotiation between institutional objectives and socially valuable goals in social studies (Bender-Slack & Raupach, 2008), I am inclined to believe that subversion of institutional norms, and the educational philosophy it engenders, is the appropriate course of action (Seltzer-Kelly, 2009). Perhaps, only this way, can concerned social studies educators both revive this marginalized content area and affect meaningful social change in education as a whole.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are several limitations of the current study which I address in this section. First, I should perhaps state that the findings and conclusions from this study are not generalizable in a theoretical sense. However, I hesitate to call this a limitation as this was neither the intention of the study nor the rationale behind utilizing case study methodology. As Flyvbjerg (2006) states, “in the study of the human affairs, there appears to exist only context-dependent knowledge, which, thus, presently rules out the possibility of epistemic theoretical construction” (p. 221). My intention was to provide in-depth exemplary knowledge of how institutional controls function and manifest in local contexts of social studies teaching. Though not generalizable, I attempted to show how these findings are representative of the effects of neoliberal education reforms discussed in the broader literature. Thus, these findings present transferrable knowledge, where educational practitioners may respond to these findings by a fusion of case knowledge with their own experiences in the vein of what Thomas (2010) calls “abduction”.

One specific limitation of the study is that the participants did not align perfectly for comparative purposes. I selected two teacher dyads from different learning environments, composed of one “novice” teacher and one “expert” teacher by years of experience. Ideally, the years of experience would have aligned between the learning environments. If I had a pre-service teacher in the urban dyad as the “novice”, I would also have had a pre-service teacher in the rural dyad as the “novice”, with the same correspondence for the “expert” participants. To adjust for this incongruence, I chose to focus on the progression of expertise represented between the teachers and compare across learning environments, rather than a direct comparison of the two novices and the two experts. This allowed for an understanding of what progression along the Dreyfus model might look like in the context of teaching as well as progression according to “teacher as technician” framework. Similarly, the comparative component of the study was limited because participants taught at different levels of education. The rural dyad taught at the middle school level while the urban dyad taught at the high school level. Though this still fits within the broad category of secondary education, this possibly created different dynamics with the way institutional controls functioned. For example, Mr. Henley and Mr. Gwynn had to deal with the graduation exam at the high school level, while Mr. Smith and Ms. Happ would not have this at the middle school level. This discrepancy is largely why I described the results for research question 3 as inconclusive.

Another limitation of the study is that participants primarily taught History. Mr. Smith also taught 7<sup>th</sup> grade Civics and I observed several classes in this area. However, Ms. Happ exclusively taught 8<sup>th</sup> grade World History and, while Mr. Henley taught other social studies disciplines, I only observed he and Mr. Gwynn teaching 9<sup>th</sup> grade World History and 11<sup>th</sup> grade American History. This does not necessarily mean that the dynamics of institutional controls

would be different in these other disciplines, but it is possible, thus limiting the scope of the observational evidence primarily to History. However, the interviews, especially the final interviews dealing with participants' conceptions and philosophies, presumably provided evidence inclusive of experiences in all social studies disciplines that participants taught.

Lastly, the study allowed for only a snapshot of teacher practices and struggles with institutional controls. I conducted ten classroom observations with the three employed participants, which, of course, is only a brief glimpse of their overall practice. This should not invalidate the results as interviews allowed participants to connect the observational data with their broader experiences with institutional controls. However, a larger ethnographic study would provide deeper insight and case knowledge of how participants dealt with institutional controls over time. For example, though participants spoke to these things in interviews, it would have been much more powerful to actually observe the classroom dynamics when participants narrowed the curriculum due to testing or time constraints at the end of the year. This speaks to the potential for future research that I discuss next.

### **Possibilities for Future Research**

There are numerous possibilities for future research which might expand upon the issues addressed in this study. As I mentioned previously, the research questions that I engaged with in this study would benefit from a larger ethnography, allowing for a richer account of teachers' struggles with institutional controls relying more heavily on observational data. Additionally, at the conclusion of the research questions, I suggested the notions of both negotiation and subversion of institutional controls to allow for phronetic conceptualizations of social studies education. The problem of institutional impact on social studies would benefit from research displaying how teachers actually negotiate and even subvert their institutional requirements to

allow for phonetic reconstructions. Questions might engage with the pressures that teachers face as they attempt to teach for socially valuable purposes of social studies and the limits that exist for this kind of education.

An interesting part of the findings from this study dealt with the methods of enforcement of institutional controls. As noted by several participants in this study, there was not heavy administrative involvement in teachers' practices. During informal conversations, two of the participants in the study noted that they were unaware of any tangible consequences that would result if they failed to adhere or complete ALCOS and Common Core standards. However, each participant recognized that these were expectations of their job to which they adhered. Thus, another potential area of inquiry related to this topic would be a deeper understanding of the methods of enforcement of institutional controls. What is the rationale behind teachers continuing to instill rote practices of teaching and learning, especially if they recognize the importance of other educational possibilities and the lack of penalty for deviating from institutional objectives? Perhaps, this is part of a larger school culture where teachers become conditioned to instill objectives and standards over valuing their own educational beliefs and professional reflection. Thus, a larger study with a focus on the school as a whole, and the culture it engenders, would inform this question of the methods of enforcement of institutional controls. In many instances, especially during heavy institutional emphases on standardized assessments, these methods of enforcement are more tangible. As Au (2013) points out, and as many participants in this study suggested, these assessments may very well be coming through Common Core standards. In such cases, teachers may be under more heavy scrutiny to "teach to the test" and, thus, adhere to institutional norms of pedagogy. In either of these cases, where methods of enforcement are tangible and where they are more covert, the study of teaching as a

phronetic act would benefit from an examination of how, and with what difficulties, teachers negotiate spaces for *phronesis* within educational institutions.

Another suggestion in this study is that social studies represents a unique case within the school curriculum. Due to its inherent engagement with human affairs, I posited that current educational policy and institutional controls harm social studies to a greater degree than other content areas. A broader study comparing teaching across content areas might shed light on this issue. For example, does the alienation felt by teachers resulting from institutional controls suggested by Leaton Gray (2007) impact social studies teachers more than those in other content areas? Are certain content areas more compatible with the neoliberal educational structuring that has been so heavily discussed in the literature? My feeling is that social studies must suffer more than many content areas within the current educational climate, but a large-scale study specifically addressing this issue would provide an empirical basis for this assertion.

This study also engages with the concept of teaching as *phronesis* and, thus, primarily looks at how institutional controls impact phronetic conceptualizations of social studies from the perspective of the teacher. However, this naturally had an impact on students and their possibilities within social studies education, as I noted that a major result of institutional controls was the passive role of the student. The broader topic of institutional controls and the impact on social studies as *phronesis* would benefit from focusing on the perspectives of the students. Questions might engage with how students experience the education that results from institutional controls and expectations. This would speak to how students perceive the content area of social studies within the school curriculum. Do they enjoy social studies? Do they see practical value from it or is it simply an academic exercise and requirement?

Each of these potential spaces for future research would inform the long-term viability of social studies as a core content area in the school curriculum. They would illustrate the effects of educational policy on social studies teachers, students, and the perception of the content area as a whole. They would also show what needs to be done by educators to revive social studies as an independent and powerful discipline that has practical import and significance in the lives of students. Continued research on this topic might not only change the possibilities for social studies, but also challenge the dominant discourses of education that have stunted our collective aptitudes for social action.

### **Implications**

This study has several implications in the areas of social studies education, teaching, and social science research. First, in terms of social studies education, *the major issue that this study helps raise is that the “official” objectives of the educational institution inhibit education which promotes a consideration of social values.* I do not intend to generalize this point from the cases in this study, but rather see these cases as representative of a phenomenon that is well-represented in the scholarly literature. Institutional controls in the era of standardization and high-stakes testing have pushed out socially conscious disciplines, such as social studies, from the curriculum altogether or stripped them of their socially conscious components, such as multiculturalism, social justice, and anti-racism (Au, 2009a; Au, 2009b). In this study, I have attempted to position social studies within the state of *phronesis* because of its inherent consideration of social values. However, if it is assumed that the main strength of social studies is such considerations, this is exactly what has caused it to not “count” within the contemporary educational discourse. Thus, as indicated in this study relative to Common Core standards, in order to “count”, social studies has been transformed by its own attempts at standardization and

by becoming a place of ancillary literacy instruction (Au, 2013). I hope that this study helps us see how this phenomenon works at a micro level and helps us reevaluate what social studies educators must do to draw upon the natural strengths of social studies.

Second, in terms of teaching, *this study helps us consider what it means to be an expert teacher*. I attempted to contrast two different understandings of teaching expertise as part of the theoretical framework of the study. I believe that each of these frameworks were evident within the teacher dyads. Though Apple's (1986) description of the "technicization of teaching" is not a model of expertise, it implies that the bureaucratic management of teaching promotes an understanding of the expert teacher as one who has mastered context-independent knowledge and techniques. We have seen this model of expertise implicit in policy efforts such as the 2002 SRE report and the designation of "highly qualified" teachers under NCLB, which are based in part on exam scores. By contrast, the Dreyfus model portrays the expert as one who is responsive to contextual factors and, because of this, has the capacity to break from rules and procedures to meet situated needs. So, which of these frameworks should be promoted in teacher education? Do teacher educators instill the "best practices" and pedagogical techniques that will allow teachers to meet institutional standards or do they guide future teachers through reflective practice (Schön, 1983) and culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Perhaps, as illustrated by the case of Mr. Henley, a new framework of expertise in teaching emerges where the expert is one who successfully navigates the domains of institutional standards and contextual judgments. On the other hand, as I tried to illustrate, though Mr. Henley incorporated socially valuable aspects in his teaching, the force of institutional controls still limited these possibilities. Might expert teachers, then, be those who retain spaces within the institutional structure of the school but subvert its standards to promote what they deem valuable? I hope that



this study at the least contributes to our consideration of what expertise means in teaching and illustrates what the effects might be of certain understandings of expertise.

Another consideration along these lines of inquiry is the terminology we use to describe the teaching act. Throughout this study, I analyzed teacher practices and understandings and interpreted them according to distinct notions of expertise. However, perhaps even the term “expert” has a connotation aligning it with elements of *episteme* and *techne*. We often think of an expert as someone who has acquired the abstract knowledge of a discipline or the practical “know how” of skill. The intellectual grounding for teaching, especially within social studies, that I have highlighted in this study is the contextual insight and moral wisdom of *phronesis*. Is it proper to refer to someone with these intellectual capabilities as an “expert”? Does anyone really gain expertise in deliberation about what is the right way to act in a given situation? Perhaps, we might think of a different intellectual understanding of what teachers are and what we hope they will become. Thinking about teachers in terms of “professionals” perhaps better encapsulates the contextual insight and ownership of practice that I have argued is needed. However, the situation described by Apple (1986), in which schools function as state apparatuses, has manifested in a political restructuring of educational inquiry where “professionalism” has been removed from teachers and granted to a select group of educational researchers conducting “valid” research (Baez & Boyles, 2009). To counter this dynamic, we need to create an educational environment which fosters teachers as professionals in the sense that they control the creation of knowledge about learning in their classrooms. As Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest, this would require teachers forming critical communities of action researchers who incorporate students and other community members in their self-reflection of learning. It would also mean that “advisers,

organizers, and curriculum developers” must devolve the responsibility for learning to teachers (p. 224).

This reorientation toward teaching and the notions of expertise and professionalism have obvious implications for teacher education. If this line of thinking is followed, what does it mean for preparing teachers? In this study, I presented a critical analysis of Mr. Gwynn’s university teacher education program because it reinforced institutional norms and reduced “valid” teaching to the extent to which it followed institutional objectives. If this is not the pattern to follow, does teacher education still have a place? I believe that pedagogical education and “preparation” (although this might also be a contested word) are vital, but not in the “application of theory” model which Zeichner (2010) describes as most predominant in American colleges of education. Zeichner argues for a “hybrid space” incorporating both the academic knowledge of the university and the practitioner knowledge of the teacher. In such a program, teachers do not learn academic knowledge so that they may gain expertise which equips them with directives for action. Rather, teachers use this academic knowledge to expand their options and possibilities for judgment of concrete situational problems, in a Deweyan sense. It is important to note that case knowledge takes on a critical role in this reorientation. Instead of learning academic knowledge distinct from practice, pre-service teachers might gain insights from academic knowledge and the practical knowledge of other pre-service teachers in the context of their own experiences. Teacher education programs in this light might be reconceptualized as a forum for practical problem-solving and reflective engagement rather than a formal vocational training.

Finally, in terms of research methodology, *this study illustrates what it means to engage in “phronetic” research*. It should be evident that there is a link between what I have said about teaching and social studies as *phronesis* and research as *phronesis*. Just as I argue that teaching,

especially within socially conscious disciplines like social studies, should not be reduced to scientific laws or technical practices, I also argue that research in the social sciences cannot be thought of this way. In the literature review, I highlighted several scholars who have opposed scientific reductionism in social science research. Flyvbjerg (2001; 2012) specifically ties this stand against a law-governed social science with *phronesis*. At its core, phronetic research assesses practices within contexts and evaluates those practices within the context of power and social desirability. This is more important than establishing prediction or directives for practice. I feel that the major strength of this study is its rich description of contextual practices and the evaluation of the power of the institution within the political context of education reform. Thus, I hope that this study accomplishes the task of “phronetic” research. I hope that any teacher that reads this study would not take away some specific directive, but rather would use it to consider the implications and desirability of their own practices.

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## APPENDIX

Office for Research  
Institutional Review Board for the  
Protection of Human Subjects

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA**  
RESEARCH

September 9, 2013

Austin Pickup  
Department of ELPTS  
College of Education  
Box # 870231

Re: IRB#: 13-OR-275 "The Impact of Institutional Controls on Teaching as  
Phronesis in Social Studies: A Comparative Case Study of Alabama Secondary  
Teachers"

Dear Mr. Pickup,

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your  
proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46.  
Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not  
limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language,  
communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research  
employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human  
factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies

Your application will expire on September 8, 2014. If your research will continue  
beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If  
you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved  
Protocol Form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval,  
except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.  
When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of the IRB Request for  
Study Closure Form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved stamped consent forms to obtain  
consent from your participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal,  
please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.



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