

Beginning history teachers' enactment of pedagogical content knowledge through content  
decision-making

By

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## Abstract

Pedagogical Content Knowledge exists in some capacity in every teacher. It is more well-developed as the wisdom in practice informs it. In their capacity as curriculum gatekeepers, teachers enact their PCK as they decide which content to teach. But what knowledge is of most worth? How do teachers employ the structures unique to their disciplines as they make decisions about what content to teach? This study examines the earliest enactment of pedagogical content knowledge of three, beginning history teachers via what content they decide to teach, and how they organize the content to bring sense to it as they prepare it for learners.

Keywords: pedagogical content knowledge, beginning teachers, teacher education, history education, content knowledge

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

List of Tables .....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
List of Appendices .....	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Research Problem .....	2
Research Question .....	8
Chapter 2: Review of Literature .....	9
Curriculum Gatekeeping and PCK.....	9
Content knowledge in history.....	15
Content knowledge in history education.....	22
Chapter 3: Research Methods .....	30
Rationale for Qualitative Research Model.....	30
Participants .....	30
Gaining Access .....	35
Positionality.....	35
Data Source and Collection .....	37
Analytical Framework .....	42
Limitations .....	45
Trustworthiness.....	46
Definition of Terms .....	47
Chapter 4: Findings .....	49
Teacher #1: Beckett .....	49

Context: Beliefs about history and history education .....	49
Context: Approach to unit planning .....	50
Unit 1: Planning to teach.....	51
Unit 1: What is taught.....	58
Unit 2: Planning to teach.....	68
Unit 2: What is taught.....	72
Teacher #2: Grace .....	86
Context: Beliefs about history and history education.....	86
Context: Approach to unit planning.....	87
Unit 1: Planning to teach.....	87
Unit 1: What is taught .....	90
Unit 2: Planning to teach.....	106
Unit 2: What is taught.....	110
Teacher #3: Ryan.....	117
Context: Beliefs about history and history education .....	119
Context: Approach to unit planning.....	120
Introductory unit: Planning to teach.....	121
Introductory unit: What is taught .....	121
Unit 1: Planning to teach .....	128
Unit 1: What is taught.....	133
Unit 2: Planning to teach.....	146
Unit 2: What is taught.....	147

Chapter 5: Discussion .....	159
Relationship to Previous Research .....	160
Summary of Findings .....	161
Recommendations for Further Study .....	168
New Opportunities.....	170
Conclusion.....	171
References .....	174
Appendices .....	178

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Participant Demographic Data .....	31
Table 2: Data Sources .....	41

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Pedagogical Content Knowledge .....	12
Figure 2: Pedagogical Reasoning .....	13
Figure 3: Illustration of Schwab's structures of a discipline .....	15
Figure 4: VanSledright's adaptation of Schwab's structures of a discipline .....	23
Figure 5: A characterization of history domain knowledge .....	26
Figure 6: Order of data collection .....	41
Figure 7: Reforms of the National Assembly .....	97

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: First Order Principles Concept Chart .....	185
APPENDIX B: Second Order Principles Concept Chart .....	186
APPENDIX C: Consent form .....	187

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In 1860, Herbert Spencer posed the long-debated question: “What knowledge is of most worth?” This question spurred educational researchers, as well as experts in other related fields, to attempt to find a widespread acceptable answer that would largely influence the direction of curriculum. One hundred and fifty years later, the question still largely guides educational research in fields like history education (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Cherryholmes, 2013; Harris & Bain, 2011; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013).

Following Shulman’s (1986) call for more educational research to focus on the content aspect of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), history education researchers have spent considerable time studying the uniqueness of history education, and the teaching of it (Bain & Mirel, 2006; van Hover, Hicks & Cotton, 2012; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Seixas, 1998; Seixas & Peck, 2004; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991). VanSledright (2011) and Monte-Sano & Budano (2013) have begun synthesizing that literature to initiate discussions that would help establish a domain-specific framework for PCK using the structures unique to the discipline of history. Research on the discipline-related decisions of beginning U.S. history teachers could potentially add to the body of literature on creating a domain-specific framework for PCK. Beginning teachers are the best candidates for this type of study because they have not yet been largely influenced by the “wisdom of practice.” Instead, the bulk of their teacher knowledge arrives in the form of content knowledge. Therefore, the purpose of this case study of beginning, secondary teachers was to investigate which historical concepts teachers decided to teach in a history class, and how they employed the organizing structures of the discipline to make sense of those historical concepts as they transformed the content to make it learnable for their students.

## Research Problem and Question

In the context of teaching, Spencer's question is particularly crucial because as Seixas (1993b) argues, the "central professional task" that history teachers face is that of constructing "historical presentations for students," (p. 319) which necessitates history teachers making "day-to-day decisions concerning both the subject matter and the experiences in which pupils have access and the nature of that subject matter to those experiences" (Thornton, 2005, p. 1). In this role, teachers act as "curriculum gatekeepers" (Thornton, 2005) as they decide what is taught in their classrooms. While many factors (policymakers, standards, textbooks, etc.) influence what is taught in history classrooms across the country, at the end of the day, it is the teachers who make the final curriculum decisions related to content and pedagogy, (Thornton, 2005; Cornbleth, 1985) thereby deciding which knowledge is of most worth for their students.

Prior to 1986, educational researchers focused largely on gatekeeping related to pedagogy. It was then that Shulman (1986) challenged this line of research calling it insufficient alone, and argued there is more to teaching than classroom management, activity design, and question writing. Instead, he proposed that there was a "missing paradigm" that should focus on the *content* (original emphasis) (p. 8). He suggested that by adding a content focus, researchers could find answers to essential questions such as: "where do teacher explanations come from? How do teachers decide what to teach, how to represent it, how to question students about it and how to deal with problems of misunderstanding?" (p. 8). Shulman (1986) was not trying to "denigrate the importance of pedagogical understanding" in effective instruction, instead, he argued pedagogical understanding is equally as important as content knowledge adding that "mere content knowledge is likely to be as useless pedagogically as content-free skill" (p. 8). As

a result, he argued that educational researchers should study how the two contribute to teacher knowledge.

A year later, Shulman (1987) proposed that there were seven, smaller bodies of knowledge that made up teacher knowledge:

content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appears to transcend subject matter; curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as ‘tools of the trade’ for teachers; pedagogical content knowledge...; knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures; and, knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values and their philosophical and historical grounds (Shulman, 1987, p. 8).

Shulman argued, however, that PCK was the one body of knowledge that is of “special interest” because it represents a “special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding” (p. 8). This body of knowledge allows a teacher to take the content and “transform” it in order to make it learnable for someone else. Teachers then become the gatekeeper mediating between content specialists and students of the discipline. A well-developed PCK allows teachers to strongly align the content with pedagogy, while enabling them to easily identify when students are misunderstanding. PCK is also enacted when teachers provide students with a new representation of the idea/concept. Since PCK is largely contingent upon “wisdom in practice” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8), it is not surprising to find that research on PCK in early career teachers largely concludes

that PCK exists in such a formative stage that it is difficult to observe (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013). This means that for beginning teachers, those in the first three years of teaching, enactment of PCK begins before they ever encounter students. It begins by deciding what content to teach, and how to organize the content in a way that mirrors how content specialists approach their disciplines.

Teaching then, “necessarily begins with a teacher’s understanding of what is to be learned and how it is to be taught” (Shulman, 1987, p. 7). No teacher can enact his/her PCK and transform anything for learners without first having content knowledge necessary to teach. Despite twenty years of research on PCK, Monte-Sano and Budano (2013) assert that “the field [of history] has yet to create a coherent statement of what PCK for teaching history entails, conceptualize how new teachers develop PCK, or consider what such knowledge development involves” (p. 172). But there is some consensus among researchers that “the degree of conceptual understanding of the respective content provides the scope for PCK development” (Kleickmann et al., 2013, p. 92; Ball, Lubienski, & Mewborn, 2001; Baumert et al., 2010; Friedrichsen et al., 2009; Harris & Girard, 2014; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013). In preparing to transform the academic discipline of history for learners, teachers must have full understanding of the discipline-specific structures that underpin it (Bruner, 1960; Schwab, 1978; VanSledright, 2011).

Every discipline contains unique content knowledge structures (Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; Harris & Girard, 2014; Schwab, 1962; VanSledright, 2011), and a deep understanding of these structures lies at the heart of PCK (Darling-Hammond, Orcutt & Austin, 2015; Shulman, 1986). Schwab (1962/1978) argued that there are two types of content knowledge structures: the substantive and the syntactic. The substantive structure is made up of two pieces of knowledge: the concepts/ideas, and the organizing principles of the discipline. The organizing principles

work to bring meaning to the concepts/ideas by connecting them to one another. The syntactic structure encompasses the principles of inquiry inherent to the discipline. These include the procedures specialists use to determine truth or falsehood while helping discern truth among competing claims. Schwab (1962) said that these structures are important to teachers because they must be taken into account when designing curriculum and other teacher materials arguing that the “significance of these diverse structures lies precisely in the extent to which we want to teach what is true, and have it understood” (p. 205). These structures, then, become “building blocks” for teachers to use when “organizing curriculum” that will engage students in lessons and experiences that are built around the “core ideas” (Darling-Hammond et. al, 2015, p. 174).

In the field of history, the substantive structures are made up of historical concepts and historical information that are held together by organizing principles unique to the discipline. Concepts acceptable for historical inquiry may include but are not limited to: capitalism, democracy, political parties, imperialism, and revolution, etc., which are further explained using specific pieces of historical information/facts. The organizing principles are unique in that there are multiple accepted modes of organization of historical concepts: cause-effect, historical agency, continuity and change, historical significance, and periodization, to name a few (Banner, 2012; Case, 1991; Seixas, 1993b; VanSledright, 2011). Likewise, history’s syntactical structures are also unique in that there is no single history that is accepted as the only truth, instead multiple interpretations of history are accepted on a wide-variety of topics so long as accepted historical procedures are followed. Upon framing a historical question, the historian, finds sources of historical evidence to help answer the question; analyzes the reliability, bias, and perspective of those sources; places the question within a historical context; constructs an evidence-based argument through synthesis and interpretation; and writes the historical account (Case, 1991;

Grigg, 1991; van Hover, Hicks & Cotton, 2012; VanSledright, 2011). Given that “research on substantive concepts has not received nearly as much attention as research on procedural [syntactical] concepts”...“attention to substantive concepts holds great promise for improving instruction by helping teachers to create more coherent teaching units, focus on major patterns, make comparisons, and connect learning to present circumstances” (Neumann, 2012, p. 387), all of which informs the development of a teacher’s PCK.

Since Shulman argued the importance of integrating the structures of the disciplines into knowledge needed for teaching, researchers in history education have been working to create a domain-specific framework for developing a history teacher’s PCK (Bain, 2005; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Fogo, 2014; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; Seixas, 1993b; Seixas & Peck, 2004; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991). In 2011, VanSledright proposed a framework to help bring uniformity to developing history-specific content knowledge. He begins by giving Schwab’s parts of substantive knowledge distinct names: he calls the knowledge and concepts needed for teaching history, “first order conceptual and narrative ideas and knowledge,” and he calls the organizing principles, “second order conceptual ideas and knowledge” (p. 50). First order concepts are the product of the historical investigation, such as industrialization or democracy, which typically are presented in the form of a historical narrative (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Drawing upon “second order concepts” (VanSledright, 2011, p. 50), teachers are better positioned to compose a narrative with actors, events, and conclusions about industrialization. When making second-order content decisions, teachers may consider historical significance, multiple perspectives, cause and effect, empathy, chronology, periodization, and continuity and change (Barton, 2012; Fogo, 2014; Levesque, 2008; Seixas and Peck, 2004; VanSledright, 2011; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991). Utilizing multiple perspectives in a study of industrialization, for

example, might lead to narratives that include how industrialization socially influenced children, women, immigrant groups and others, while a cause-effect approach might lead a teacher to consider the economic factors that led to industrialization and the emergence of monopolies. This type of conceptual construct, however, is dependent upon beginning teachers possessing a certain depth of understanding of the substantive knowledge types.

Darling-Hammond et. al (2015) argued that the structures of the discipline should “inform the overall curriculum” (p. 178). In many instances state and local standards serve as a broad framework to guide a teacher’s curriculum. Teachers should then fill in the gaps left by the curriculum standards by applying the structures of the discipline. Since beginning teachers have such little experience with curriculum, it is no surprise that researchers have discovered that textbooks play an integral role in a beginning teacher’s curriculum knowledge and in their role as gatekeepers (Cochran, 2010; Nicol & Crespo, 2006; Thornton, 2005). It is expected then, that many beginning history teachers’ first and second order content-related decisions will be greatly influenced by the contents of the textbook. This limited knowledge of the curriculum and the substantive structures of the discipline often leads to an uncritical approach to using the textbook, which means the textbook influence the beginning teachers’ content transformation, and ultimately the development of their PCK.

Given the importance of PCK in the work of a teacher, and the problem of the lack of PCK in beginning teachers, it appears that additional research is needed on the beginnings of a beginning teacher’s PCK. More importantly, the domain-specificity of PCK suggests that studies should examine how beginning teachers are making domain and content specific decisions in the most formative stage of PCK development. This case study sought to identify how beginning

U.S. history teachers were beginning to enact their PCK through the content decisions they made as they prepared to teach history.

**Research Questions:**

- 1) How did beginning, high school history teachers conceptualize and operationalize first order concepts over the course of two units?
  
- 2) How did beginning, high school history teachers use second order concepts to organize their first order concepts over the course of two units?

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the 25 years since Shulman's article introduced PCK, researchers have attempted to bring some kind of consensus and definition to a conceptual framework for PCK. Most recently, studies pointed to the possibility that each discipline may establish its own framework for PCK, (Ball, Thames & Phelps, 2008; Harris & Bain, 2011; Hashweh, 2005; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013) given that the knowledge needed for each one is domain-specific (Ball et. al, 2008; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; Shulman, 1987; Schwab, 1962/1978). Since researchers largely agreed that content knowledge is the first step in the development and enactment of PCK (Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman 1989; Friedrichsen et al., 2009; Shulman, 1987), the next step would be to study how beginning teachers in each discipline make content decisions within PCK. Drawing from Joseph Schwab's (1962) two domains of content knowledge, the substantive and syntactic, Shulman (1986, 1987) argued that teachers

must understand the structures of subject matter, the principles of conceptual organization, and the principles of inquiry that help answer two kinds of questions in each field: 1) What are the important ideas and skills in this domain?, and 2) How are new ideas added and deficient ones dropped by those who produce knowledge in this area? (Shulman, 1987, p 9).

Together, these questions provided strong validation for the call for each discipline to establish its own framework for PCK.

#### **Curriculum Gatekeeping in PCK**

Everyday, history teachers answer Spencer's question as to "what knowledge is of most worth" whether they are fully cognizant of it or not. Apple (1992) argued that teachers have a

“long history of mediating and transforming” (p. 10; McCrum, 2013) materials for students. He also argued that every day, teachers are “accept[ing], reinterpret[ing], and reject[ing] what counts as legitimate knowledge” (p. 10) as they navigate between the discipline of history and what is learnable for students. Thornton (2005) called this duty “curriculum gatekeeping.” Teachers act within the role of curriculum gatekeeper as they enact their PCK by making decisions about what historical concepts to teach within a history course, how to organize it, and how to present it. And although many history teachers may not be aware of or interested in the “degree of control their gatekeeping exercises over the curriculum” (Thornton, 2005, p. 245), their role in it is inevitable because “all things known cannot be placed before children in the school room;” there must and will be selections made with reference to “some frame of knowledge and values, more or less consciously established in the mind of the selector” (Beard, 1934, p. 182; Barton & Levstik, 2004).

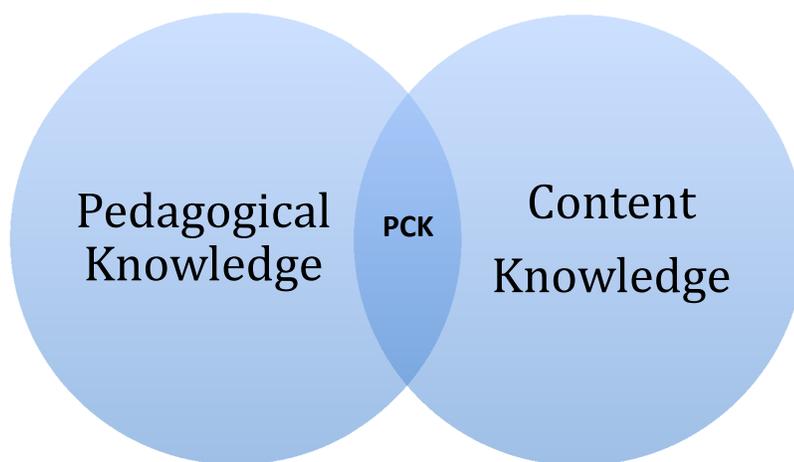
Most teachers are equipped with curriculum materials that may consist of syllabi, textbooks, and teacher guides. Embedded within those materials is a “curriculum (a school subject or course of study) in which content is selected, organized, and transformed” (Deng, 2011, p. 538) for a variety of educational purposes. For a beginning teacher, textbooks are often seen/interpreted as the official curriculum. The textbook then, serves as a springboard by which beginning teachers become curriculum gatekeepers as they combine their content knowledge acquired from their pre-service program with the school-issued textbook to decide what content to use and what not to use in their classrooms (Apple, 1992; Nicol & Crespo, 2006).

Teachers are key players in curricular implementation. They are the ones who make curricular decisions and construct the “curriculum-in-use” (Cornbleth, 1985, p. 36)—that is the curriculum students actually experience, which may or may not be what the state or district

might prescribe for them (Cornbleth, 1985; Ross, 2001; Salinas & Castro, 2010; Thornton, 2005). Teachers then “seem to be more powerful determinants of students’ actual classroom experiences” (Cornbleth, 1985, p. 39) as they mediate, interpret and implement the curriculum-in-use (McCrum, 2013; Salinas & Castro, 2010). In this role, history teachers are determining the “curriculum-in-use” (Cornbleth, 1985, p. 39) when 1) deciding which historical concepts are to be taught in their individual classrooms; 2) choosing how those topics will be arranged for study; and 3) deciding which skills should be promoted. History teachers in particular call upon organizational structures such as: periodization, cause and effect, and historical significance, etc. to help determine what historical concepts should be taught, and what historical information (basic facts) might be essential for understanding the larger concepts, and what is not.

In addition to knowledge of the curriculum, the way history teachers understand the structures of the discipline shapes the way they “focus and frame the material for students” (Ball & Cohen, 1996, p. 7; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; Schwab, 1962; Thornton, 2005; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991). They use those structures to determine course content and organization. The historical knowledge that results is then presented to students through narratives, expository/descriptive histories, or explanatory histories (Cochran, 2010; Barton & Levstik, 2004). These vehicles for representing historical knowledge not only encompass the decisions made on a broad level, which include the purpose of a course and the larger themes therein, but it also includes the smaller units and day-to-day lessons that point to the overarching goals of the course. Since teachers act as curriculum gatekeepers on broad and narrow levels, then it is important to know what decisions they are making related to the substantive structures they use to transform their content to make it learnable for students.

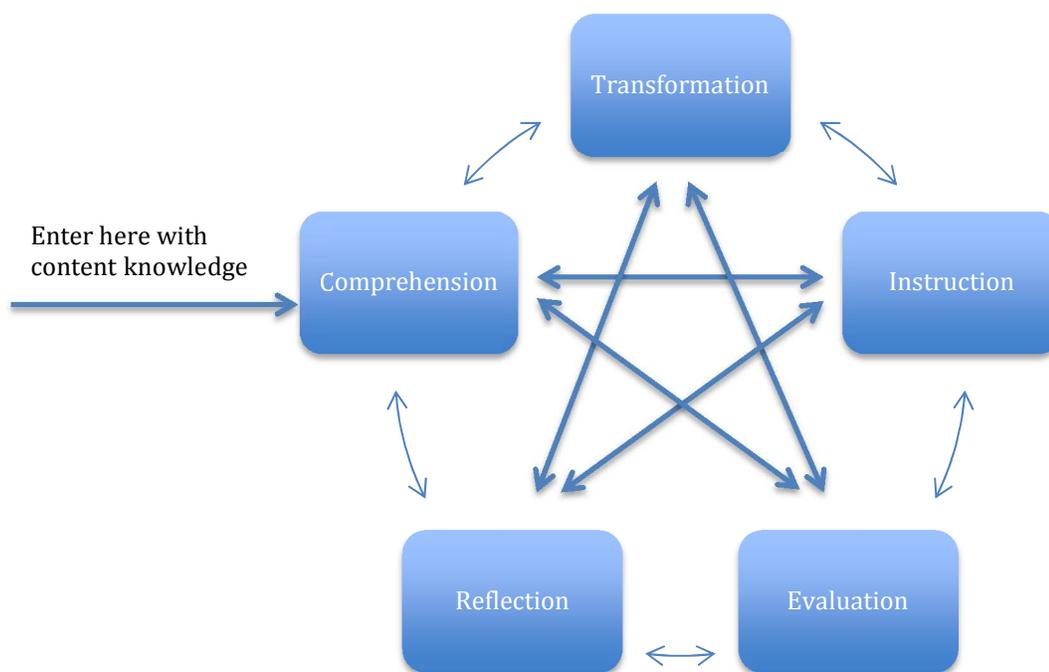
In 1987, Shulman articulated the complexities of teaching and stressed the uniqueness of the craft arguing that although there are seven categories that make up a teacher's knowledge base, there was one of "special interest" that represented a "special amalgam of content knowledge and pedagogy" that he called "pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). He argued this knowledge was unique to the teacher, thereby separating him or her from the content specialist by enabling teachers to "transform" (Shulman, 1987, p. 15) what they understand and make it "ready for effective instruction" (Shulman, 1986, p. 14) (See Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* PCK. This figure illustrates the make-up of PCK.

In the decades leading up to Shulman's piece, educational researchers had focused on the pedagogical process of teaching, while a teacher's content knowledge required for teaching had been largely ignored. Shulman encouraged a renewed focus on content over pedagogy suggesting that "to blend properly the two aspects of a teacher's capacities requires that we pay as much attention to the content aspects of teaching as we have recently devoted to the elements of teaching process" (Shulman, 1986, p. 8; Grossman et al., 1989). His article called for educational researchers to focus on building upon his beginning framework for a teacher's PCK by intentionally including content knowledge in the discussion.

During a teacher's enactment of PCK, Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987) contend that a teacher's content knowledge goes through an iterative process known as "Pedagogical Reasoning" (See Figure 2). In this model, a teacher's content knowledge must first be understood/comprehended before he or she can prepare to transform that content before it can be comprehensible for others. That transformed content then meets the classroom and interacts with students who will inform that content, leading to further transformation of the content via adaptation, and new representations of it. The whole time this is happening, the teacher is engaging in evaluation of the students, determining levels of understanding and misunderstandings, all while evaluating him or herself during instruction.



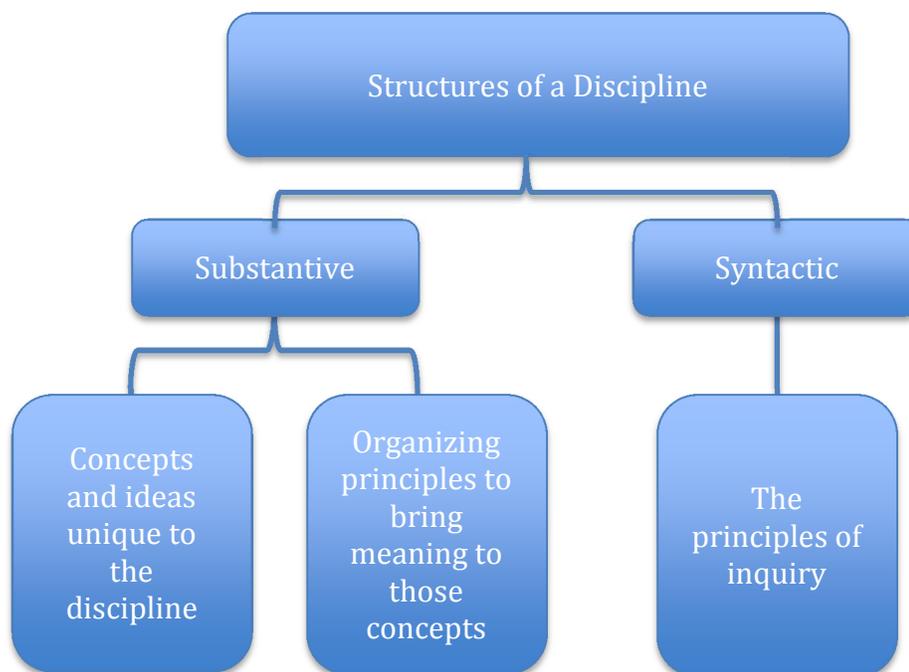
*Figure 2.* Pedagogical Reasoning. This figure illustrates the iterative process of enacting PCK. Adapted from Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987).

While all teachers likely engage in pedagogical reasoning, the knowledge needed for it likely differs among the disciplines. Since Shulman's piece, educational researchers have attempted to establish a domain-specific framework for PCK. While there is a rich body of literature on math and science content knowledge in PCK (Ball et al., 2001; Ball et al., 2008; Friedrichsen, Driel, & Abell, 2011; Gess-Newsome, 1999; Hill, 2010; Magnusson, Krajcik & Borko, 1999; Morris, Hiebert, & Spitzer, 2009), there is a dearth of literature on content knowledge needed for history education (Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013). In analyzing the mathematical knowledge needed for teaching, Ball et al. (2008) sought to identify the knowledge necessary for teaching. First, they argued that teachers need "common content knowledge" (CCK), that is the general knowledge and skill within a discipline that is used in any setting other than teaching. But, more importantly, teachers also need "specialized content knowledge" (SCK) which is that specialized knowledge of the discipline that is necessary for and unique to teaching that "involves an uncanny kind of unpacking" that is "not needed—or even desirable—in settings other than teaching" (p. 401). Given the discrepant nature of the various disciplines, CCK and SCK will differ among them, justifying the need for domain-specific framework for PCK for each one.

It is argued that history teachers do bring adequate content knowledge to the table after completing coursework in history and passing a content test for licensure to teach it. However, without the "wisdom in practice," including curricular knowledge and knowledge of students, their PCK is largely underdeveloped. While beginning teachers may not have a sophisticated PCK, they are beginning to enact it by transforming the content before it interacts with students. They are deciding which historical concepts to teach, and how to organize those concepts in order to present it to students.

## Content Knowledge in History

In order to think more deeply than the simple facts of history, history teachers must be thinking about the structures unique to the discipline (Bain & Mirel, 2006; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; Seixas, 1993b; Shulman, 1986; VanSledright, 2008/2011; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991). Since one main role of teachers is to facilitate student learning, it is imperative they understand the content in this way, because it will influence learning (Bruner, 1960; Schwab, 1978). Schwab adds that if a teacher fails to consider or teach both the substantive and syntactical structures, students will likely arrive at a misunderstanding of the content (See Figure 3).



*Figure 3.* Adapted from Schwab's Structures of a Discipline. This figure describes the make-up of content knowledge.

If history teachers are curriculum gatekeepers (Thornton, 2005), then they need to understand the structures of history; both in substance and syntax, in order make strong content

decisions that will help students acquire new knowledge and skills (Bruner, 1960; Schwab, 1978). This understanding has to come before teachers can transform that knowledge to “make learning more comprehensible and transferable to new situations” and to help students “learn things more efficiently” (Darling-Hammond et. al, 2015, p. 176). When teachers understand the structure of the discipline, they will be able to make decisions about how to arrange curriculum in such a way that causes students to think more deeply and more critically about their content (Schwab, 1978). Without understanding these disciplinary structures, history becomes “merely a collection of facts” (Bain & Mirel, 2006, p. 213). It is only through this understanding that the teacher can begin enacting PCK and make the subject accessible and worth knowing (Bain & Mirel, 2006; King, 2012).

Shulman (1986) refers to the disciplinary structures as the variety of ways in which “the basic concepts and principles of the discipline are organized to incorporate its facts” (p. 9) and serve as a “guide to inquiry” (Schwab, 1962, p. 203). In history, many historical concepts/ideas are studied, and many different organizational structures are accepted. Some historians argue the major organizational structures are

chronological conventions [that] divide historical time by dynasties, reigns, centuries or periods. Then, equally convenient, there are spatial divisions of history, such as histories of Europe...Much orthodox historiography...divides history into nations...From this it has not been difficult to write histories of institutions, organizations, and more recently, social groupings [such as] trade unions, the working class, churches and sects (Stanford, 1986, p. 21).

In considering what to study, historians do not simply think within the frame of the structures of knowledge, instead, they think in terms of problems and then use structures to narrate a response

(Briggs, 1966). Case (1991), adds that we can also expect historians to divide their narratives chronologically by dividing by centuries, decades, periods; topically by persons, events, and themes, and; geographically by continent, region, country, states, etc. While it is apparent that there is no strong consensus on how to organize history, historians have clearly demonstrated that periodization, cause-effect, and historical significance are largely acceptable means by which to do so. That does not, however, discredit other ways to organize history content. For teachers that have a true understanding of these different ways to organize history, the content in their classrooms is likely to be, and arguably should be, organized in the same way. Ultimately, when the organizational structures are well-situated among the historical concepts, historians end up presenting their histories in narrative form. It is this story, then, that brings meaning and the final layer of coherence to the history (Bain & Mirel, 2006; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Levesque, 2008).

One of the most accepted structures for organizing history is periodization. Periodization is generally defined as “manageable and coherent units of time” (Green, 1992, p. 13; Bentley, 1996) founded on discipline-specific concepts of continuity and change. These units of time are only distinguishable because of the “long-term continuities” and distinct changes that lie within/between them (Green, 1992, p. 13). However, meaningful continuities are only clear when historians, and in this case, history teachers, adopt a longitudinal perspective to teaching history (Le Goff, 2015). Le Goff points out that “breaking time into segments is something historians cannot help but do,” because

periodization is more than a mere collection of chronological units. It contains also the idea of transition, of one thing turning into another...a new period represents a repudiation of the entire social order of the one preceding it. It is for this reason that

periods have a very special meaning; in their very succession, in both the temporal continuity this succession embodies and the rupture of temporal continuity that it brings about, they constitute an inescapable object of inquiry for the historian (Le Goff, 2015, p. 2; Bentley, 1996; Green, 1992).

As historians begin to frame which aspects of history “deserve highest priority in compartmentalizing the past” in order to place them into well-defined historical periods, historians are imposing their values on the past (Green, 1992, p. 15). However, some historians fall short of clearly articulating what defines the period. Green (1992) found that

Historians who framed standard western periodization did not use dynamic models. Their approach to periodization was episodic, not systematic. They observed change; they did not explain it. Evading precise definitions, they were more concerned to identify transitional episodes than to fathom the underlying dynamics that gave rise to those episodes (p. 15).

Appropriate and well-developed use of periodization makes change over time a “manageable topic” (Stearns, 1987, p. 561), which is why it is so commonly used to make sense of history.

Continuity and change is another common second order organizer, which is the most closely related to periodization. Change is the belief that “important parts of what is believed today will not be believed tomorrow” while continuity is the belief that “threads of the past are woven into the fabrics of the future” (March, 1996, p. 287). Employing this structure requires “looking beyond individual events to identify if change occurred” or if there were “underlying continuities where we initially see only change” (Seixas, 2009, p. 138), which makes it an iterative complement to periodization by helping to define the terms of a single period.

Historical significance is another accepted structure of the discipline. For a historian to say something is historically significant is to say “it is worthy of historical study” (Seixas, 1994, p. 281; Lomas, 1990). It is a “valuing criterion through which the historian assesses which pieces of the entire possible corpus of the past can fit together into a meaningful and coherent story that is worthwhile” (Seixas, 1994, p. 281); however, it largely requires another organizing principle to help link the historically significant events together. Using this organizer requires first that the historian determines what is historically significant. A historical phenomenon “becomes significant if and only if members of a contemporary community can draw relationships between it and other historical phenomena and ultimately to themselves” (Seixas, 1994, p. 285), which could begin to also frame a time period. It is the job of the history educator then to also “make choices about which topics are most relevant and meaningful” (Barton, 2012, p. 135). Educators may apply different aspects of historical significance when deciding what content to teach. Levesque (2008) argues that the criteria of determining significance depend on “a variety of related history factors” used in “advancing sophisticated forms of knowledge in history” (Levesque, 2008, p. 46; Bruner, 1960). Levesque (2008) defines the factors of historical significance as: importance, considering the importance of the event for the people at the time; profundity, considering how deeply were people impacted by the event; quantity, considering how many people were impacted by the event; durability, considering how long the event endure; and relevance, considering the event’s relationship to current events/interest. Teachers may call upon any combination of these factors in their decisions of determining historical concepts or knowledge as historically significant.

The organizing structure of cause and effect aims at showing that an “event in question was not a ‘matter of chance,’ but was to be expected in view of certain antecedent or

simultaneous conditions” (Hempel, 1942, p. 39). This structure is used to show the intersection and interaction of various phenomena over the long-term or short term (Ringer, 1989). Causal reasoning, however, is not a linear structure. Instead, changes over time

form a further layer of causal relationships. Comparisons of similar or simultaneous historical developments can be vital to the task of distinguishing a background of common trends from a foreground of local or distinctive circumstances that play the role of intervening causes (Ringer, 1989, p. 158).

Therefore, when the historian proposes to “tell the whole story” s/he really means to put on display “everything ‘important’ for the actual outcome, everything that ‘made a difference’” in a clear and “cogently ordered” network of “interacting causal sequences” (Ringer, 1989, p. 158).

Another common structure is historical agency. Seixas (1993a) defines historical agency as “historical actors actually making a difference in the decisions and actions they took” (p. 307). Typically historical agency will appear in a narrative or explanatory history that sounds like “now” and “then” which helps divide the stories between the past and the present and lends to the complementary use of cause-effect and continuity and change as teachers prepare to have students identify the realities of then and now. This tool is used to help students “make meaning out of history, as historical thinkers” while “enhancing their capacities as agents in the present” (den Heyer, 2003, p. 411). Seixas (1993a) argues that without this tool (historical agency), “students cannot see themselves as operating in the same realm as the historical figures whom they are studying, and thus cannot make meaning out of history” (p. 303).

Making decisions about how to employ any of these organizational structures of the discipline is the earliest enactments of PCK that is the unique work of a teacher. To transform content to prepare it for learners is what differentiates the work of the teacher with that of the

historian. PCK takes years to develop, which means beginning teachers' largest body of PCK knowledge they bring to the table is their content knowledge. As curriculum gatekeepers, teachers are deciding every single day what content to teach and how to make it make sense for students. VanSledright (2011) argues that history teachers in particular should consider the first order and second order domains of knowledge when deciding what to teach. This study sought to learn how three beginning history teachers began enacting their PCK through the content decisions they made using VanSledright's (2011) first and second order domains of content knowledge for history education.

While there is no consensus among historians as to the substantive structures in history, albeit in concept or organization, the syntax (or method) for studying history is strongly agreed upon (Banner, 2012; Case, 1991). Syntactical structures describe how knowledge is generated and tested in the field, while providing a way to establish truth, falsehood and validity (Shulman, 1986). Schwab (1962) calls the syntax the "pattern of [the discipline's] procedure, its method, how it goes about using its conceptions to attain its goal" (p. 203). While presented here linearly, the method for historical inquiry is an iterative process that includes:

- Framing and asking a question of historical significance;
- Finding historical evidence that could answer the question;
- Verifying and evaluating sources for reliability, and;
- Constructing an evidence-supported answer (Case, 1991; Joint Committee on Historians and Archivists of the American Historical Association, 1993; VanSledright, 2011).

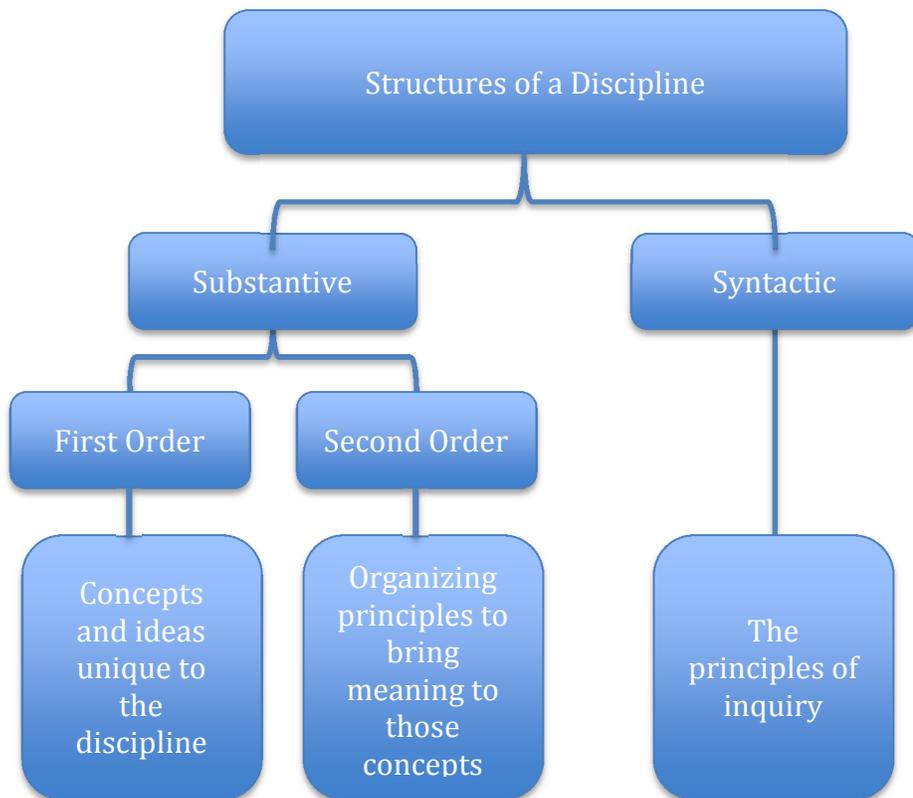
Shulman (1986) argued that the teacher "need not only understand *that* something is so; the teacher must further understand *why* it is so, on what grounds its warrant can be asserted, and

under what circumstances our belief in its justification can be weakened or denied” (p. 9). Since history teachers are acting as curriculum gatekeepers, then they need to understand the structure and syntax of the discipline in before they can decide what to teach.

### **Content Knowledge in History Education**

If PCK “represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8), then the structures of the discipline should influence those decisions. Westhoff (2012) argues that expert history teachers not only know “more information than their students (though we expect them to of course), but “they perceive and organize [the content] differently” (p. 535). This means that in addition to selecting content to teach, they have to connect it into coherent lessons, and units in order to help students “understand history’s themes, big ideas, and unresolved questions” (p. 536).

Since history education is tied to the work of professional historians, VanSledright (2011) proposed a “Characterization of History Domain Knowledge” that mirrors the substantive and syntactic knowledge structures widely accepted for both the field of history and of history education. VanSledright’s characterization attempts to integrate the structures of the discipline proposed by Schwab with Shulman’s call to find domain specifics for PCK (See Figure 4). VanSledright (2011) argues that the job of a historian, is to create a history through a study of the past, using a method of investigation that is widely-agreed upon in the field of history, and is traditionally framed through a narrative (Bain & Mirel, 2006; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Levesque, 2008).



*Figure 4.* VanSledright's adaptation of Schwab's structures of a discipline. This figure shows VanSledright's rewording of the substantive structures into first and second order.

Creating that history, VanSledright (2011) argues, requires a

sense of the relationship between progress and decline, periods of continuity and those of change. It also necessitates thinking about causation or, put more specifically, multiple causative factors that can account for, say, an era of rapid change following a time of relative historical stability and permanence—such as the rapid movement toward industrialization and urbanization after decades of reliance on agrarian living arrangements (p. 49).

The claim he is making here is that teachers should consider several methods by which to organize the information because there is already an iterative nature to them. It is these structures

in history that help shape a meaningful historical narrative (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Westhoff, 2012). In turn, it is the narrative, or story, that demonstrates strong use of those substantive structures. And while there are other vehicles used to present history, such as an explanatory or expository/descriptive history, the narrative is more often than not, the goal for history teachers (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

Although narratives are the most commonly used vehicles for presenting a history, they do vary among teachers just like they would among historians. First, teachers may choose different historical concepts/ideas to teach within the same unit. For example, in a unit covering the Civil War, one teacher may take a military focus, while another may take a political focus, leading to different concepts/ideas presented in that unit. Likewise, teachers may also choose different ways to organize the content. Often times, multiple layers of organization can be found within a unit. For example, in its College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards, the National Council for the Social Studies suggests that when investigating cause and effect, historians and teachers similarly are likely to find and consider issues of change over time, perspectives, and human agency (NCSS C3, 2013). Given all of the choices before them, where should history teachers begin constructing the history they plan to teach?

VanSledright (2011) argued that like historians, teachers begin making decisions about what content to teach by first asking “powerful historical questions” (p. 54) that lead to a construction of a history via two types of content knowledge: substantive and syntactic. He further subdivided Schwab’s substantive content knowledge for teaching history into two parts: 1) “foreground/first-order conceptual and narrative ideas and knowledge,” and 2) “background/second-order conceptual ideas and knowledge.” He describes the first substantive knowledge type as the concepts, ideas, and knowledge that stemmed from the “who, what,

where, when, and how” questions of history (p. 50) (See Figure 4). The foreground is composed of the concepts/ideas of history: imperialism, revolution, human movement, and war for example, which can be presented in narrative, expository, or explanatory style. Before a history can be presented, however, teachers must apply the second order concepts to the first order ones. He argued that teachers must construct a history through use of the second order concepts to bring meaning and coherence to the first order concepts and ideas (See Figure 5).

The second order concepts are at the heart of a history. Creating a history typically begins with a teacher asking his/her own questions of historical significance in order to determine what is historically significant to teach that will answer those questions, and what makes it so (Bain & Mirel, 2006; Case, 1991; Levesque, 2008; Neumann, 2012; VanSledright, 2011). Literature on historical understanding suggests that determining historical significance may also be influenced by empathy, agency, and multiple perspectives (Barton, 2012; Seixas & Peck, 2004; Wineburg, 2001). These pieces are then constructed with overarching second order concepts such as continuity and change (Bain & Mirel, 2006; Levesque, 2008; NCSS, 2013; VanSledright, 2011), cause and effect (Bain & Mirel, 2006; Levesque, 2008; NCSS, 2013; VanSledright, 2011), and chronology (Case, 1991; NCSS, 2013; VanSledright, 2011). Teachers then use these second-order concepts to make sense of historical knowledge and then enact their PCK as they transform it for student learning. For example, in a course of ancient world history, periodization is likely a dominant second-order concept for organizing the content. However, it manifests itself differently in the first order. When talking about Egypt, the teacher will likely address the various kingdoms therein. In China, they will likely discuss the various dynasties. In areas of the Middle East, they will likely focus on the different peoples who inhabited the area resulting in empires, such as the Sumerian or Babylonian Empires.

A Characterization of History Domain Knowledge
<p>Substantive Knowledge Types</p> <p>(1) Foreground/First-Order Conceptual and Narrative Ideas and Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretations of the past that come from who, what, where, when, and how questions. Often rendered chronologically in narrative, explanatory, or expository style.</li> <li>• Examples: Stories of nation building, capitalism, socialism, economic production, military exploits, democracy, political parties, names, dates, etc.</li> </ul> <p>(2) Background/Second-Order Conceptual Ideas and Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts and organizing ideas that investigators impose on the past in the practice of researching, interpreting, and making sense of it.</li> <li>• Examples: Causation, significance, change over time (e.g., progress, decline), evidence (i.e. author perspective, source reliability, nature of sources), historical context, human agency, colligations (e.g., the American Revolution Period, the Progressive Era).</li> </ul>

*Figure 5.* A characterization of history domain knowledge (VanSledright, 2011, p. 50). This figure describes VanSledright's domains of history knowledge.

Within a single historical narrative, description or explanation, several second order concepts may exist, albeit to different levels of sophistication. Cause-effect, for example, can be used in a simple fashion, resulting in a narrative that says, if you do x, then y will happen. More

sophisticated use of cause-effect results in the presentation of iterative cause-effect relationships of several causes contributing to one or more outcomes. When teaching about any war, for example, there are often multiple underlying causes for the conflict that are in operation at various times and in different capacities as tensions rise, which result in war. This is much more complicated than simply saying a single event, such as the assassination of a nation's leader alone brought about war. Just like cause-effect organizers, chronology can be used in simple or complex ways. When employing chronological ordering of first order concepts, the presentation often results in a description of historical information/events that fall along a time line that may have little to no relationship among each other (Bain & Mirel, 2006; Green, 1992). Chronology used in a more sophisticated way lends to periodization, which when combined with continuity and change can help identify an era characterized by likeness over time that begins and ends with some historically significant changes (Le Goff, 2015; Bentley, 1996; Green, 1992).

Likewise, each may carry different pedagogical implications. For example, if a teacher utilizes multiple perspectives as a second order concept, one can expect that students will be asked to read varying accounts of the same historical event. In order to analyze these second order concepts that produce the narrative, explanation, expository histories, I will also have to consider the product of the first order, which is more often presented in narrative form as opposed to an explanatory or expository history (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

While clear definition of what constitutes a narrative is rare (Barton & Levstik, 2004), what is clear is that narratives are largely accepted as the mode by which to present history (Fogo, 2014; van Hover, Hicks & Cotton, 2012; McCrum, 2013; Ragland, 2007; VanSledright, 2011). When creating a narrative history, "historians select some events as belonging together as part of a coherent sequence, and then arrange those events so that their coherence is clear"

(Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 131; Westhoff, 2012). History tends to be driven by narrative because “Humans tell stories to make meaning of their experiences” (Westhoff, 2012, p. 538). The process of constructing a narrative requires selecting and connecting (Westhoff, 2012) historical information and knowledge, which requires decision-making of first and second order concepts. For the sake of this study, I did not make judgments about the quality of the narrative nor did I focus on the beginning teachers’ intention of crafting one. Instead, I focused on examining the first and second order concepts that existed within the presentation itself because I sought to learn how the presentation holistically connected information together (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Montanero & Lucero, 2011).

As beginning teachers make decisions about what content to teach, they are engaging in their earliest enactment of PCK. LaBoskey (2005) argues that a “central aim” to teaching must be the “development of powerful subject matter knowledge” (p. 84), which includes a understanding of the structures of the disciplines, and if new teachers enter their classrooms without it, they will “enter their own classrooms without sufficient knowledge to teach their subjects well” (Bain & Mirel, 2006, p. 213). While many studies on PCK acknowledge that beginning teachers make decisions about what content to teach, their explanation of how the decisions are made are shallow, if existent at all (Fischer, 2010; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; Reddy, 2013). In order to help beginning teachers develop their PCK, research regarding what content decisions are made is imperative.

Instead, beginning teachers largely are excluded from the research about content knowledge in PCK because they do not have the wisdom in practice, knowledge of students, and knowledge of the community to help them make those decisions (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; Shulman, 1986). But, even beginning teachers’ content

decision-making manifests itself in classroom practice everyday (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

Teachers

select and arrange topics of study into a coherent story that conveys cause-effect relationships between and among events as well as the historical significance of events and people. In so doing they conceptualize and frame the history curriculum to illustrate significance, connections, and interrelationships (Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013, p. 174; Bain & Harris, 2009; Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987; Harris & Bain, 2011; VanSledright, 2011).

And it is this understanding of the content that is arguably a pre-requisite for PCK development (Ball et al., 2001; Baumert et al., 2010; Friedrichsen et al., 2009).

Monte-Sano and Budano (2013) argued “there is still work to be done in order to define and elaborate on the substance and nature of teachers’ development of domain-specific knowledge” (p. 173). In using VanSledright’s (2011) framework for substantive knowledge types for teaching history of the first order and second order, I examined how beginning teachers begin developing and enacting their PCK through first and second order decisions related to history content.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### **Rationale for Qualitative Research Methods**

The purpose of this multiple case study was to describe the content decisions made in a “bounded system” of beginning history teachers in three schools (Stake, 2006). According to Stake (2006), case studies “capture complex action, perception and interpretation” (p. 3), which is why it is an appropriate method to use when trying to describe how beginning teachers made decisions about what content to teach. Abramson (1992) suggests a multi-case study then, will provide a “range and variety of human experience” (p. 190) that describes the “thoughts, feelings, and desires” (Yin, 2003, p. 23) of these beginning history teachers as they engage in the “non-obvious occurrence” (Abramson, 1992, p. 190) that decision-making entails. And the “more cases included in a study, and the greater the variation across the cases, the more compelling an interpretation is likely to be” (Merriam, 2009, p. 49). Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that a multiple-case study will “strengthen the precision, the validity, and the stability of the findings” (p. 29). This case study was of particular value because it “contribute[s] to the refinement of theory, highlight[s] issues that warrant deeper exploration and mark[s] the limits of generalizability” (Au & Blake, 2003, p. 194; Stake, 1995) regarding beginning teacher’s content decisions as curriculum gatekeepers.

#### **Participants/Sampling**

Purposeful sampling was used in this study. The three beginning history teachers invited to participate in this study satisfy the following criteria: 1) beginning high school or middle school history teachers who 2) have an understanding of history content. They are “beginning” teachers, which are characterized as first or second year teachers. Two of the teachers teach in

rural school districts, and one teaches in a suburban district, all in the Midwest (See Table 1). I purposefully chose both first and second year teachers in three different high schools to help illuminate “different perspectives” (Creswell, 2007, p. 75) on their content decision-making. The teachers’ understanding of the content was demonstrated by the completion of undergraduate coursework and passing scores on the PRAXIS II.

Table 1

*Participant Demographic Data*

Name	School Demographic	Course	Number of years teaching
Beckett	Rural	U.S. history	First year
Grace	Suburban	World History	Second year teaching, first year teaching social studies
Ryan	Rural	Conspiracy theories in U.S. history	Second year

**Participant 1: Beckett.** Beckett’s first day of his teaching career began on August 19, 2015. Born and raised in an affluent, suburban town of a Midwestern-state, Beckett is the youngest in a family of three boys. He attended a Research 1 university of the same mid-western state where he graduated from a 4-year program with a bachelor of science in secondary social studies education degree in May 2015. Upon completion of his degree, he was awarded a teaching certificate that allowed him to teach social studies to students in grades 6-12.

Beckett landed his first teaching job in an accredited, less affluent, rural district of the same mid-western state, about one hour from where he grew up. The school district consisted of three schools: one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Beckett taught at the high school, which had an enrollment of 143 students. The school was 87% white, 6%

Hispanic and 8% “other.” Forty-seven percent of the high school population was considered “economically disadvantaged.” Over the past five years there had been zero students classified ELL or migrant. Twenty percent of the student body had a disability.

Beckett’s first teaching assignment included U.S. history (3 classes), which was required for all 38 juniors in the high school, as well as psychology (1 class made up of juniors and seniors), and current events (2 classes), one in the HS and one in the MS, which were social studies electives open to students of all grades. In addition to teaching, he also coached two sports: football, and boys & girls middle school basketball. Beckett was excited to be able to coach and teach so he could get to know the kids on a deeper level and have a larger impact on them.

For this study, I examined Beckett’s use of first and second order concepts for teaching history in a U.S. history course. This course began with Imperialism (1890) and ran through present-day (2015). For this study, I followed him through two of his units he initially called “WWI/Roaring 20s” and the “Great Depression.”

**Participant 2: Grace.** Grace’s first day of her teaching career began on August 13, 2014. This was her second year teaching, but first year teaching social studies. Born and raised in a suburban town of a Midwestern-state, Grace is an only child. She attended a Research 2 university of the same mid-western state where she graduated from a 4-year program with a bachelor of science in secondary social studies education degree in May 2014. Upon completion of her degree, she was awarded a teaching certificate that allowed her to teach social studies to students in grades 9-12.

Grace’s second year teaching is in the same district as her first teaching job: an accredited, suburban district of the same mid-western state, in the same county where she grew

up. The school district consisted of eleven schools: one early childhood school, six elementary schools, two intermediate schools, one middle school, and one high school. Grace taught at the high school, which had an enrollment of 1,921 students. The school was 83% white, 10% black 4% Hispanic and 3% “other.” Twenty-two percent of the high school population as considered “economically disadvantaged.” Over the past five years there had been 0.3% students classified ELL.

Grace’s teaching assignment included: world history and American government. In addition to teaching, she also coached debate and forensics. For this study, I examined her use of first and second order structures through two consecutive units in her world history course. She initially entitled the two units under study: “the French Revolution” and the “Industrial Revolution.”

**Participant 3: Ryan.** Ryan’s first day of his teaching career began on August 18, 2014. This was his second year teaching high school social studies in the same school he started teaching in a year prior. Born and raised in a suburban town of a Midwestern-state, Ryan is the youngest of three children. Immediately following high school, he went into retail management before joining the U.S. Air Force at the age of 21. After four years in the military, he attended a Research 1 university of the same mid-western state where he grew up, and graduated from its teacher education program with a bachelor of science in secondary social studies education degree, and a bachelor’s in history, in May 2014. Upon completion of his degree, he was awarded a teaching certificate that allowed him to teach social studies to students in grades 6-12.

Ryan’s first teaching job was in an accredited, rural district of the same mid-western state. The school district consisted of five schools: three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Ryan taught at the high school, which had an enrollment of 801 students.

The school was 61% white, 18% Hispanic, 14% African-American, and 7% “other.” Fifty percent of the high school population was considered “economically disadvantaged.” Over the past five years there had been 0.25% students classified migrant while 4% were designated ELL. Almost 14% of the student body had a disability.

Ryan’s teaching assignment this year included four sections of a required, year-long world history class offered to freshmen, and one section of a semester-long elective for juniors and seniors called “Conspiracy Theories in U.S. History.” This was his first year teaching Conspiracy Theories, so the spring semester was the second time he taught it. He did not coach or sponsor any extracurricular activities.

For this study, I examined his use of first and second order concepts through two units in his “Conspiracy Theories in U.S. history class.” This course drew upon the work of Olmstead (2009) on conspiracy theories in U.S. history in particular. Olmstead said a conspiracy occurs when “two or more people collude to abuse power or break the law” and that a conspiracy theory “is a proposal about a conspiracy that may or may not be true; it has yet to be proven” (p. 3). Given the uniqueness of this course, I followed Ryan through the first few days as he laid out his framework for the course, before following him through two units he entitled: “Salem Witchcraft Trials” and “Freemasons and McCarthyism.”

While the curricula among the three courses did not align chronologically, all three included first and second order concepts for teaching history. One such first order concept that showed up in all three courses, is the concept of the role of government in everyday life. In the high school U.S. history course, this included the role of the government during war as it tried to garner support for the war, while during the Great Depression, the U.S. government intervened in the economy and created jobs. In world history, the role of the government in everyday life

resulted in revolution. In the conspiracy theory course, the role of the government in conspiracies or conspiracy theories, Ryan argued, impacted the freedom of others. I then explored how each teacher used second-order concepts, such as cause-effect and historical significance, to make sense of the role of government in everyday life. By studying all three teachers, I got a better idea of the relationship between the first and second-order concepts used throughout various history courses.

### **Gaining Access**

This study followed all ethical guidelines as prescribed by the university. Each teacher was invited to participate in the study, and was asked to provide written consent to participate. They were given a description and purpose for the study as well as a description of the procedures to collect data. They were given the option to opt-out at any time. Participants were informed that their confidentiality will be protected, and pseudonyms were assigned to each individual, their schools, and the university name. I have already established a strong rapport with the participants in the study.

There was some minimal, or low, risk to participating in the study. The only known risks were feelings of discomfort when discussing the teachers' decision-making process, or feelings of inadequacy. Benefits included contributing to the literature on beginning teachers' content decision making, and becoming more purposeful in making their own content decisions.

If school districts want to see findings from the study, I will provide excerpts from this dissertation, after methods of trustworthiness have been exercised.

### **My positionality**

I spent eight years teaching high school social studies in a rural, Midwestern town. During that time, I taught U.S. history, World History, American Government, Missouri History,

Dual Credit American History, Dual Credit American Government, and the History of the Civil Rights Movement. Concurrently, I completed a master's in history. After eight years of teaching, I resigned my position to pursue my Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in social studies education. During that time, I taught elementary social studies methods, secondary social studies methods, Teaching Kansas Government, and Curriculum and the Secondary Learner. These experiences afforded me multiple opportunities in curriculum gatekeeping, specifically with content decision-making.

Not only do I have personal experience with content decision-making, but while pursuing my Ph.D., I also gained experience coaching pre-service teachers in it. For three years, I observed secondary social studies teachers during their practicum and student teaching semesters. In addition, I co-advised an extracurricular organization whose mission was to further social studies education. Two of the three teachers in this study were involved in that organization. It was then that I saw the early development of a pre-service teacher's PCK and became interested in learning more about domain-specific PCK in pre-service and beginning teachers.

When two of the participants' were undergoing study in their teacher education program, I served as their course instructor. However, I never supervised any of the participants during their student teaching experience. To those two former students, I am viewed as a mentor, and I have developed a strong professional relationship with both of them. As a result, my positionality with them may influence their decisions, their planning, etc. because they may want to impress me.

My positionality remains dynamic. The way I interpret this data is likely to change as I will get better at it and have a greater understanding of it. For example, I had to return to the

literature concerning historical significance so that I could better represent what the teachers were doing. In addition, I also sometimes found myself speaking for my participants, and I often had to check myself and let them speak instead. I stopped drawing conclusions about their thinking and cautioned myself as to whether or not my thinking ran ahead of the evidence. Likewise, my personal understanding of first and second order concepts continues to deepen as I spend more time studying it.

### **Data Source and Collection**

In order to have a clear understanding of the content decisions the teachers made, I followed each teacher through two units. I used the contextual definition of “unit” as a set of lessons that are constructed around a topic or theme for a target audience that concluded with a summative assessment. The unit consisted of all instructional materials that were used by the teacher, including all items that teachers shared with students, and all items teachers used in planning the unit. No student-generated materials were used. These materials included but were not limited to: essential questions, objectives, assessments, daily lessons, and textbooks.

I used extensive data collection (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2007) “not so much to get to truth, but rather” to find “multiple perspectives for knowing” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 254). Doing so helped me provide thick description of the cases (Merriam, 2009). VanSledright’s (2011) framework for first and second order knowledge for history education was used to frame the research questions, the data sets, and the analysis. There were five sources of data that helped me answer the research questions:

1. How did beginning, high school history teachers conceptualize and operationalize first order concepts over the course of two units?

2. How did beginning, high school, history teachers use second order concepts to organize their first order concepts over the course of two units?

The first data set was a questionnaire that was administered prior to the planning of the units. Each teacher received a copy of the questionnaire via email to complete as he/she could, but was administered far enough in advance that no planning for the unit had occurred. The purpose of the questionnaire was intended to provide me with a context about the teachers' "what" and "why of history and history education" so as to offer preliminary insight into their reasoning as they decide which first and second order concepts to use. Questions included in the questionnaire were:

1. What is the purpose of the discipline of history?
2. How is history organized? How is it created?
3. What is the purpose of history education in your school?
4. What should be the purpose of history education?
5. What is important for students to learn in a US history course? Why?
6. What is your role as a history teacher?
7. What makes for "good history content that is used for teaching?"

Secondly, I used semi-structured interviews because I wanted to explore general topics "to uncover participants' views" of content decision-making but still want to respect the way the participants' frame and structure the responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This method was important in my qualitative research because I wanted the participants' perspectives to "unfold" as they saw it; not as I saw it (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 144). Audio-recorded interviews were administered before the units began, and were transcribed immediately following. The

purpose of these planning interviews was to uncover the first and second order concepts the teacher planned on teaching during the course of a unit. Since I followed teachers across two units, I asked these questions during the planning stages of each unit. Follow-up questions were informed by the answers provided to the questions at the time of the interview. These interviews uncovered what the teacher planned to teach, or what they hoped to teach, before the content interacted with the students. The questions included:

1. What are the big, historical concepts will you address?
2. Why will you teach that selected content?
3. How will you support that content with historical evidence?
4. Are there any concepts in this unit that you are purposefully choosing to omit?
5. Why will you not teach that content?
6. How will you organize your content? Why?
7. What sources are you calling upon when creating your unit plan? Why?
8. What sources will students engage with? Why?

At the end of the second unit-planning interview, I added these additional questions:

9. What historical concepts do you plan to integrate across both units? Why?
10. How do you plan to organize the content of the second unit so that it bridges the content of the first?

Immediately following each unit, I conducted another semi-structured, reflection interview. The purpose of this interview was to ask the teachers to reflect on their decisions related to the first and second order concepts they actually taught. Follow-up questions were informed by both the analysis of the data collected during the observations, and the answers provided to the questions at the time of the interview. Immediately following each interview, the

recordings were transcribed. These interviews sought to uncover reasons why teachers made changes to their first and second order concepts, if any. Questions included:

1. Did you purposefully add or omit any concepts that were not included in the unit plan prior to instruction? What? Why?
2. Did you purposefully add or omit the organizational structures you used to connect the historical concepts? Can you provide evidence of how you did that?
3. Did you add or omit historical evidence that students engaged with? What? Why?

After the reflection interview of the second unit, I asked additional questions to try to uncover the teachers' thoughts concerning the first and second order concepts that were used to connect the contents of both units. The follow-up questions were informed by both the analysis of the data to this point, as well as the participants' answers to the questions. Questions included:

4. Did you purposefully add or omit historical concepts to connect the content of both units? What? Why?
5. Did you purposefully add or omit organizational structures to connect the contents of both units? What? Why?
6. Did you add or omit historical evidence students engaged with? What? Why?

Fifth, I collected all unit materials the teachers used in planning the unit, as well as what they planned on including in instruction, including but not limited to: unit plan, daily lesson plans, readings, worksheets, lecture slides, assessments, textbooks and graphic organizers.

Sixth, I observed the teachers teach one history class daily throughout both units. The teachers chose which hour they wanted to be included in the observation. Since I was not able to observe all of them in person everyday, I had the teachers record the class one hour a day throughout the two units. These recorded observations allowed me to see the content that was actually taught,

instead of relying on self-reporting by the teachers. This allowed me to be able to interpret what they did with raw data (See Figure 6). I then took field notes of those observations, and often referred back to them at times where my field notes needed clarification.



*Figure 6.* Order of data collection. This figure shows the order in which I collected each piece of data.

This variety of rich data afforded me multiple ways to understand how these teachers made their decisions about what to teach through examination of evidence before, during, and after each unit (See Table 2) and enabled me to triangulate data.

Table 2

*Data Sources*

<b>What is the source?</b>	<b>When will it be collected?</b>	<b>What research question will it help answer?</b>	<b>How will the data be collected?</b>
Questionnaire	Before the units are taught	R1, R2	Via email
Interviews	Before the units, between the units and after the units	R1, R2	In person
Planning materials	Before each units	R1, R2	However convenient
Observations	During the units	R1, R2	Video record
Instructional materials	Throughout the units	R1, R2	However convenient

## Data Analysis

My analysis included 1) identifying/describing what happened in each lesson; 2) identifying, describing, and analyzing how each teacher used first and second order structures in and among the two units from the planning stages through implementation; and 3) providing a thematic analysis across the cases (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When I realized how the third participant, Ryan, failed to fit this step-by-step analysis, I was forced to approach his analysis a little differently. Given that his entire course was based on a concept of “conspiracy/theory,” and given that he was attempting to craft a history while he was simultaneously transforming it for students, I realized I, too, needed a clear understanding of “conspiracy/theory” so I could better determine how Ryan was operationalizing it. This caused me to return to the literature and come up with a working definition and a list of criteria for both. Doing so helped me better identify the first and second order concepts he was using. This became especially important when he failed to provide a consistent, clear definition of the concept on which his whole course was based.

I used VanSledright’s (2011) framework to analyze the data. I began by identifying the second order concepts the teachers used to make sense of the first order concepts. Doing it in this order better enabled me to identify which first order concepts were being used. I analyzed their use of second order concepts such as, but not limited to:

1) periodization, which is defined as “manageable and coherent units of time” (Green, 1992, p. 13) founded on continuity and change;

2) continuity and change, which is defined as “important parts of what is believed today will not be believed tomorrow” and “threads of the past are woven into the fabrics of the future” (March, 1996, p. 287);

3) cause and effect, which is the belief that “an event in question was not a matter of chance but was to be expected in view of certain antecedent or simultaneous conditions”

(Hempel, 1942, p. 39),

4) historical significance, which is employed when educators “make choices about which topics are most relevant and meaningful” (Barton, 2012, p. 135). Given the broad nature of historical significance, I focused on how teachers used Levesque’s (2008) different factors of historical significance: importance, profundity, quantity, durability, and relevance; and

5) historical agency, which is when historical actors are “actually making a difference in the decisions and actions they take” (Seixas, 1993a, p. 307).

I then looked for trends and how the second order concepts were used. I quickly realized that these second order concepts varied in complexity, so I began to track simple and complex uses of the second order concepts. An example of this would be use of cause-effect. A simple approach resulted in more of a chronology presented as a timeline of people, places, and events, as opposed to an iterative approach that includes multiple causes that gave rise to an event, and how those multiple causes were often iterative ones that led to multiple effects.

Given that there is little to no research on teacher-use of second order concepts, Levesque (2008) provided the best analytical lens for the second order concept of historical significance, which inadvertently revealed the lack of clarity in how to analyze use of the other ones. While Levesque’s lens provided a way to analyze, it was not defined enough to be an analytical tool. However, the other second order concepts’ lack of definition grounded in the literature made it more difficult to clearly analyze. For example, although the definition of continuity and change talks about how things are different and are the same, it never clearly describes the importance of

historical contextualization of the then and now, albeit implied. Contextualization, however, is crucial in helping guard students against presentism.

I then analyzed how they used the second order structures to make sense of the first order as they are presented to students. Apparent use of a concept would include teaching an abstract idea not confined to time or space, and would begin with a clear definition. For example, a teacher may teach about revolution, which may be defined as a “sudden, complete or marked change from what was.” The teacher would then provide the historical context that led up to the historical example of revolution. For example, if a teacher were to teach about the French Revolution as an example of a political revolution as opposed to primarily a historical event or episode, s/he would have to provide context of what was happening in France that made it ripe for a major social and political revolution. The teacher would then use historical evidence, which includes historical facts and information, to build an argument about why the French Revolution occurred that would be explained using second order concepts such as cause-effect. If “revolution” was approached as a concept as opposed to a single event, the teacher would then repeat this process with other historical examples, such as the American Revolution, or the Russian Revolution. Teacher-use of conceptual clarity fell along a continuum between clear and foggy.

For each data source, I coded the different second order concepts each teacher used individually to make sense of the first order concepts, and allowed themes to emerge from it. I then compared those themes across each data source for each teacher for his/her first unit (Creswell, 2007) before comparing those themes across each data source for each teacher for his/her second unit. I then sought similarities and differences of the concepts across each

teachers' two units, followed by an description of how the teacher used those second order concepts to make sense of the first (See Appendix A and Appendix B).

Once each individual teacher was analyzed, I analyzed across the cases (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). I compared the teachers' use of VanSledright's (2011) first and second order concepts within and across their units. These similarities and differences were also charted to help me analyze them with more clarity. Although analysis began the first day of data collection and ran concurrently through the data collection period, I remained responsive to the changing interpretations of data, or lack thereof.

### **Limitations**

Throughout this study, methods were repeated, including the interview prior to each unit. This means that prior to the first unit, the teachers heard my questions for the first time. However, for the subsequent unit, the teachers were asked to complete a second interview that repeated the same questions. The teachers may have made more purposeful content decisions during later unit as a result. This means they likely thought about things they had not or would not have thought about without their participation in this study. It is also possible that this study caused teachers to become more cognizant of, and skilled/adept at exercising their PCK as it related to making decisions about what content to teach.

Another possible limitation may have been the influence that textbooks may have had on the teachers' content decision-making. In addition, beginning teachers may have found it difficult to clearly articulate why they did what they did. This may have led to feelings of discomfort, especially if they felt like they wanted to impress me.

Another expected limitation was the existence of a mentor. In many districts across the country, mentors are assigned to a beginning teacher. However, the mentor role may vary

significantly. While it was expected that teachers collaborated and brainstormed with colleagues, there were instances where teams of teachers taught the same material. Therefore, some of the beginning teachers' decisions might have been made by others, and the beginning teachers might have conceded to the expertise of the mentor, or more experienced teachers. This study did not seek to investigate the role of a mentor; therefore, I did not consult them. However, the participant when discussing content decision-making might have mentioned the existence of one.

Another limitation is the fact that I depended on each teacher to video record his/her teaching for each day through the unit. At some point, each teacher forgot to record a day of instruction. As a result I did not have all of the possible data to help me draw conclusions about the teachers' use of first and second order concepts.

Lastly, while I attempted to gather all resources teachers used to plan their units, it is possible that they consulted additional resources after our interview and did not pass that information onto me.

### **Trustworthiness**

I employed multiple methods to build trustworthiness. The first method was through member checking, which Lincoln & Guba (1985) call the "most critical technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). I solicited the participants' opinions of the findings, and my interpretations of the data, both during and after the data collection (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). I also allowed them to read the drafts and provide feedback as to the data or the interpretation (Stake, 1995). All participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about methods, and interpretations (Creswell, 2007). I also kept a written account of these debriefing sessions, and asked the participant to do the same (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

I also increased trustworthiness through triangulation of the data. I used multiple sources and methods to compile data. I called upon the participants to check the data for accuracy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 2009). In addition, I called upon a veteran U.S. history teacher to “ensure that analyses are grounded in the data” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 40).

I used rich, thick description in order to give the readers an opportunity to consider the possibility of transferability of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). I provided thick descriptions of the teachers, the demographics of the schools, the first and second order concepts they planned teach, and the ones they actually taught.

Since I already established a professional relationship with the participants, there was a sense of trustworthiness between them and me. I continued to work to build on that trustworthiness with participants through “prolonged engagement and persistent observation” (Creswell, 2007, p. 207) of the teachers and their classrooms.

Lastly, I clarified my positionality, and disclosed any biases that may impact the study (Merriam, 2009).

### **Definition of terms**

There are several terms that will appear throughout this study that may be unfamiliar to some. Those terms and their definitions are listed here.

- *Beginning teacher*: a first or second year teacher.
- *Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)*: “a special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8).

- *Substantive structures*: Concepts and ideas unique to a discipline coupled with the organizing principles that bring meaning to those concepts.
- *Syntactic structures*: The principles of inquiry of a discipline.
- *First order substantive structures*: “Foreground/First-Order Conceptual and Narrative Ideas and Knowledge. Interpretations of the past that come from who, what, where, when, and how questions. Often rendered chronologically in narrative, explanatory, or expository style” (VanSledright, 2011, p. 50).
- *Second order substantive structures*: “Background/Second-Order Conceptual Ideas and Knowledge. Concepts and organizing ideas that investigators impose on the past in the practice of researching, interpreting, and making sense of it” (VanSledright, 2011, p. 50).
- *Unit*: a set of lessons that are constructed around a topic or theme for a target audience, and conclude with a summative assessment.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

In chapter 4, I present each of the three cases, and then later draw conclusions as appropriate. In each case, prior to addressing the two research questions, I first create a context by discussing each teacher's philosophy of history education and approach to unit planning. Establishing this context is imperative to make sense of the participants' choosing of the first and second order concepts as they organize and present the content of their unit. After establishing a context for each case, I will then answer the two research questions by describing which first and second order concepts each teacher planned on using in the first unit, before describing which first order concepts were actually presented to students. I then describe how the teachers used second order organizers to bring coherency to the first order concepts. This description is in "real-time" so as to help the reader better understand what students experienced in the classroom. I then share each teacher's self-reflection on what s/he thought s/he did in the unit s/he just taught relative to the use of first and second order principles. I repeat this process with the second unit, but add how the teachers planned to connect the content from the two units together before describing how they actually did it.

I conclude the chapter by comparing the use of the first and second order principles among the three cases, and how each teacher's beliefs about history education may have impacted those decisions, so that I am in a better position to make recommendations about helping beginning teachers make more meaningful decisions about what content to teach.

#### **Teacher #1: Beckett**

**Context: Beliefs about history and history education.** Beckett is a first year teacher who believes that the purpose of the discipline of history is to allow students an opportunity to

“interpret and analyze historical events that have happened throughout the course of human history.” He calls it a “trial and error experiment with social, political and economic case studies that helps identify what works best for human interactions” (Beckett, Qaire Q1). In his school, he sees the purpose of history education as an opportunity for students to “read, formulate opinions, and [make] rational arguments” over the material, (Beckett, Qaire Q3) which he believes should be the purpose of history education everywhere (Beckett, Qaire Q4). He sees his role as a history teacher as a model for how to “read and analyze complex historical texts,” as well as crafting discussion questions that will get students to “think critically about the material” (Beckett, Qaire Q6). He believes that good history content used for teaching includes “primary sources followed by essential questions [students] are required to respond to” (Beckett, Qaire Q7). Beckett adds that the purpose of history education is to be a “tool for analytical reading and create discussions among classmates. Students need to understand the origins of their country as well” (Beckett, Qaire Q4). But he also says the purpose of history education at his school is to “give students a chance to form their opinions on the material...and make rational arguments (not like math or science)” (Beckett, Qaire Q3).

Beckett’s answers to the questionnaire begin to shed some light on his level of awareness and understanding of the first order content that will be presented to students, and of the second order principles that underpin the content. I address these in greater detail later.

**Context: Approach to unit planning.** In our first unit, Beckett shares how when planning a unit, he pulls together a variety of sources that includes: state standards, school-issued textbooks, college history textbooks, content websites, primary source websites, and his own content knowledge. He approaches his planning by first calling upon the state standards which he “uses as a guideline” for how to lay out what lessons he will teach each day (Beckett, 1I, p. 4).

He uses the “acquisition of knowledge” and “essential questions” pieces of the state standards to help him decide how he will structure his unit, although he does not use the “essential questions” verbatim. He looks for concepts, important people, key events that will be “relevant in terms of building onto another unit” (Beckett, 1I, p. 5). If something “strongly correlates with future units” then he says he will teach it. If he cannot see the connection or relevance, he omits it from the content of a unit arguing that “sometimes things don’t necessarily fit into the overall goal you’re trying to achieve with the essential questions” (Beckett, 1I, p. 5), so he feels comfortable excluding that content.

He also says he relies heavily on an online textbook-type source, USHistory.org, arguing that “it does a pretty good job of laying out the basics, the key concepts of everything...they have it in the order I like” compared to the school-issued textbook which he says is a “lot less organized” (Beckett, 1I, p. 7).

**Unit one: Planning to teach.** Beckett calls the first unit under study, “WWI (World War I) and the Roaring 20s.” Given his reliance on the school-issued textbook, it is worth noting here how the text uses first and second order concepts to better understand Beckett’s use of them as well. The school-issued textbook positions the WWI chapter as the third of three it has clustered together and titled “Imperialism and Progressivism, 1890-1920” (Appleby et al., 2010). This is an apparent use of periodization driven by first order concepts of imperialism and progressivism. The textbook authors define this period as a time when two

very important developments took place in American History. First, the United States began its rise to a global superpower it is today. Second, reformers began changing the government to solve problems caused by industrialism. Government became more involved in society than ever before (Appleby et al., 2010, p. 258).

This brief description suggests that the chapters might also be driven by cause-effect, continuity and change, as well as historical significance. It is expected that the historians, and history education experts that collaborated on this textbook would have sophisticated understanding of the second order concepts used to make sense of historical content, and therefore employ several of them iteratively as they decide how to frame their narrative. The book also offers historically significant questions to be answered in each chapter. For the chapter on WWI, which the authors call “WWI and its Aftermath: 1914-1920,” indicating use of cause-effect and perhaps historical significance, the authors identify “Why do nations go to war?” as the driving question for the chapter (Appleby et al., 2010, p. 319).

Although the textbook’s chapter title signals a begin date of 1914, the authors start telling their story of World War I by describing the rise of tensions in Europe immediately following the U.S. Civil War, almost fifty years earlier. These tensions resulted in what authors argue are four main causes of WWI (militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism). However, they argue the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in June 1914 was the most immediate cause of the war. One month after his death, Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia, and the alliance system is triggered. The authors explain how, while remaining neutral, the U.S. sided with the Allies by providing aid and building public support against a perceived imperialist Germany. They describe how once the U.S. made a formal declaration of war in April 1917, its government began organizing the economy by creating wartime agencies, mobilizing the work force, shaping public opinion and building the military. As they describe victories at sea and on land, the authors next address how new technologies and military techniques changed the face of war forever. The authors then explain the attempts to draft a peace treaty, the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, and the U.S. Senate’s rejection of the Treaty. The chapter concludes with the

economic and social impact of the war on the U.S. immediately following the war, which culminated in a political shift in the presidential election of 1920 when the U.S. exchanged a progressive era administration with a much more traditionally conservative one.

The narrative presented in the book is a clear and coherent one that is underpinned by several second order structures that provide clarity of the historical concepts and facts described above. Not only do the authors frame the narrative within a larger time period defined as “Imperialism and Progressivism,” but also they clearly articulate cause-effect relationships as they present a story of WWI, and how the US inevitably became involved. They pose historically significant questions related to WWI both in the short and long-term. This use of second order structures are clearly identifiable, highly-developed and sophisticated, and would provide a beginning teacher with a clear example of how to use the second order concepts to present a clear, coherent narrative. Since beginning teachers are often reliant on the textbook for information concerning what to teach, it is important to consider the content from which they may pull to construct their own narrative.

Although the textbook has WWI as a separate chapter from what is often referred to as the “Roaring 20s,” according to Beckett in his first interview, he says he plans on combining the two periods together for his first unit, although he offers no explanation for why he is choosing to do this. It is important to note here that the textbook presents the 1920s as a subset of a new era it calls “Boom and Bust: 1920-1941.” The textbook combines three chapters: “The Jazz Age, 1921-1929,” “The Great Depression Begins, 1929-1932,” and “Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1933-1941” into a time period of “Boom and Bust,” which begins with the end of WWI and ends with the U.S. entry into WWII (World War II). In the textbook, the “Jazz Age” chapter is divided into five smaller sections: “the politics of the 1920s, a growing economy, a clash of values,

cultural innovations, and African-American culture” (Appleby et al., 2010, p. 360). Its guiding question for the chapter is “Why does culture change?” (Appleby et al., 2010, p. 361). In spite of these clear organizational structures that have been utilized to craft a narrative in the text, Beckett chooses to combine WWI and what he refers to as the “Roaring 20s” into his first instructional unit.

As our interview continued, Beckett notes that before the school year started, he decided which units he wanted to teach and in what order. He is still following that plan and tentative time-line for teaching his two units for this study. Beckett’s first unit for this study (third of the year) is set to begin on October 6, 2015. He calls this unit “World War I and the Roaring 20s,” and by the end of this unit his goal is for students to “understand what got the United States involved in WWI” (Beckett, 1I, p. 1). He wants them to know that some people “think it was a business move, while other people think it was, as they say, ‘flex-your-muscles’ kind of move” (Beckett, 1I, p. 1), and he wants his students to consider these different perspectives in preparation for crafting their own response to why the United States entered WWI. He says another goal he has is for students to understand “how there was a huge social change in America” following WWI, and also how the Treaty of Versailles was a leading cause of WWII. He stresses that he wants students to decide which solution to ending WWI was a better choice: Woodrow Wilson’s 14 points, or the Treaty of Versailles (Beckett, 1I, p. 1). In this brief discussion of what he plans to teach, Beckett may be making subtle suggestions that periodization, historical significance, and cause-effect may be the driving organizers of his content. However, the depth to how he would employ these structures is unclear.

When asked what concepts he would use to support those larger goals, he listed first order concepts such as communism, socialism, capitalism, and anarchies (Beckett, 1I, p. 1). He

also wants students to understand what happened with the Spanish influenza, and the social issues that were going on at the time including the revival of the Ku Klux Klan, and Wilson's comments legitimizing the film *Birth of a Nation* (originally called *The Clansman*), which glorified the KKK and denigrated African-Americans. He says he also plans on discussing how warfare changed during WWI such as the use of trench warfare, and improvements in weapon technology. But, one of his "most favorite things to do in this unit is to talk about the sinking of the *Louisiana* [sic]," and the controversy surrounding it (Beckett, 1I, p. 2). Beckett then described that he will talk about the Harlem Renaissance and women's suffrage because they are specifically stated in the state standards or are of personal interest to him because "it's not a bad thing to include a little bit of your own personal interest" (Beckett, 1I, p. 2). It is worth noting, however, that in the state standards, the Harlem Renaissance and women's suffrage are mentioned as possible pieces of historical information that could be used to support the standards, but are not listed specifically in the standards (Kansas Standards, 2013, p. 95).

When asked what historical concepts he wanted to teach in this unit, Beckett begins to list historical information, or basic facts, from history consisting of people, places, dates and things, that are confined to time and space, such as: Lusitania, women's suffrage, KKK, President Wilson, and the Harlem Renaissance, while overlooking the first order historical concepts that transcend time and space. For example, in this unit, one might expect a history teacher to teach concepts such as: war, imperialism, movement, democracy, race-relations, and nation-building. In order to teach these first order concepts, the teacher will likely call upon historical information to demonstrate those ideas. So, if a teacher wanted to teach issues of democracy, s/he might tell stories related to women's suffrage, the (re)emergence of the KKK, the role of President Wilson, and explain how all of them teach different aspects of democracy. Instead, in his interview,

Beckett proposes, not historical concepts, but historical information he wishes to cover in this unit, largely because the historical information fits within the time period. Likewise, he offers no explanation for how he will tie these pieces of historical information together. For example, he never makes mention of how WWI was an exercise of U.S. imperialism, and when he lists KKK and the Harlem Renaissance as topics he will teach within the context of the 1920s, he never mentions how the two might be related to one another in the study of race relations. It is these larger, first order concepts that VanSledright (2011) suggests teachers be cognizant of in order to help students understand them more deeply through various historical examples and to prepare them for future historical study.

When asked about his plans to organize this particular unit, Beckett said that he plans on using chronology first, citing that “we just finished up American imperialism or expansionism so this is kind of where we are next” (Beckett, 1I, p. 6). This statement suggests an underdeveloped understanding of historical periodization. While the textbook groups the chapter on WWI with others and entitles it “Imperialism and Progressivism, 1890-1920,” Beckett never acknowledges how WWI fits into this time period framed by imperialism/expansionism.

Instead of focusing on the continuities and changes that leads to including WWI in the discussion of imperialism and progressivism, Beckett plans to take an episodic approach to history by focusing on WWI as a single historical event presented in two parts: the U.S. first as a neutral nation, and then a warring one. It becomes an episode because he explains that WWI is so, but now how it is so (Green, 1992; Barton, 2012). Beckett plans on using this chronological ordering approach to organizing the content because “it’s how I tend to keep myself very organized...cause I’ve found that students, this is my personal experience, students get more confused when you switch back times” (Beckett, 1I, p. 6). He believes that if he adheres to a

chronological ordering approach that students will better understand the content (Beckett, 1I, p. 6). However, when teachers do not recognize the larger periodization that exists at any given time, it becomes difficult, if not impossible to recognize continuities and changes, prevailing cause-effect relationships, and matters of historical significance. In a simple chronological ordering approach, history is often limited to an episodic history resulting in an explanation of various pieces of historical information while lacking explanations of the changes that are observed (Green, 1992). History then becomes nothing more than a “collection of facts” (Bain & Mirel, 2006, p. 213), rather than a deep understanding of historical concepts that are not limited to time or space.

Although Beckett never uses the term “cause-effect” he does indicate that he will also organize first order concepts and pieces of historical information in the unit that “strongly correlate into future units” (Beckett, 1I, p. 5) noting that the “Treaty of Versailles must be taught if you’re going to teach WWI and the Roaring 20s” (Beckett, 1I, p. 5). Here, Beckett seems to be hinting at cause-effect relationships between the end of WWI, the Treaty of Versailles, and the Roaring 20s, as he explains that the Treaty ended up leading to WWII, but he does not cite any further relationship between these concepts.

While in his questionnaire, Beckett explained that history content could be organized into smaller themes related to “social political or economic” contexts (Beckett, Qaire Q2); he never mentions taking that approach in his interview when he was talking through how he would organize the content he would teach. Instead, he says, “The school-issued textbooks aren’t organized chronologically,” rather, it is organized from “social history, economic history, and political history...not chronological. I prefer the chronological set up.” Given his preference for a chronological approach to teaching history, he says he relies more heavily on his own college

history textbooks to help him organize his content because he feels they do a better job at presenting content chronologically (Beckett, 2I, p. 11). What remains somewhat unclear is if he is thinking of chronology as periodization or if he plans on adhering to a chronological ordering approach.

Beckett says he also plans on using cause-effect as an organizer to some extent for the content of this unit, noting that events of the war led to the Treaty of Versailles, which he argues inevitably led to the Second World War. He says that “it’s important to know why the war happened, and what the relationship was between weapon technology, [alliances], and the Treaty of Versailles” (Beckett, 1I, p. 8) throughout the war. He suggests cause-effect “In terms of US involvement [in WWI], you can’t leave out the sinking of the *Louisiana* [sic] and the Zimmerman telegram” (Beckett, 1I, p. 5). Many historians cite these two events as the triggers for U.S. entry into the war, but they also attribute the larger causal underpinnings of the war, such as militarism and the alliance system, as contributing to the United States’ involvement. Although Beckett suggests he will organize the content for the WWI portion of this unit using some version of chronology, cause-effect, he did not cite which organizers might be employed with content of the 1920s.

**Unit 1: What is taught.** Beckett’s first unit begins on October 6, 2015. From the beginning, his organizational structure of chronology is apparent. As I watched the recorded class period, I see him open his unit with Woodrow Wilson’s 1912 presidential election, which provided a clear, definitive start date, although the textbook puts Wilson’s election in a previous chapter that discusses progressive presidents. Without a clear transition, he then segues into what he calls “the main cause” of WWI (Oct. 7, 8:00): the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914. In spite of him calling the assassination the main cause, it is clear Beckett has

at least some understanding of how the larger, underlying causes of contributed to the outbreak of WWI because he then takes time to describe each one. However, he presents each cause as distinct from one another rather than ones engaged in an iterative relationship that contribute to the building of tensions in Europe prior to 1914.

In the lesson, Beckett presents the larger causes by first asking students, “has anyone heard of M.A.I.N.? These are the possible causes of the war” (Oct. 7, 29:00). He then explains that M.A.I.N. is an acronym for what he says are the possible causes for WWI: militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism. He offers a textbook definition of each cause both verbal and on his power point slide, albeit largely absent the historical context of WWI. Instead of using the textbook’s definition as a springboard to explain the iterative relationship between the causes and the onset of the Great War, he instead says simply that militarism resulted from “the growth of nationalism and imperialism” (Oct. 7, 10:00). During the lesson, he offers neither a reason for why this relationship is so, nor does he explain how any of those things contributed to the war. While the textbook attempts to demonstrate a causal link between militarism and the outbreak of the war defining it as “the aggressive build-up of armed forces to intimidate and threaten other nations” (Appleby et al., 2010, p. 321), Beckett only describes militarism to students as a “policy of glorifying military power and keeping an army prepared for war” (Oct. 7, 14:55). Then when he explains what he called the “trigger” for the start of WWI, the assassination of the archduke, he does not refer to any of the four main causes he just described and even claims that “alliances were a result of the assassination” instead of the alliance system being a long-term contributing factor to the tensions in the first place (Oct. 7, 36:05). In this lecture, Beckett misses the iterative relationship between the first and second order when he treats the causes of WWI as historical

facts that could be chronologically ordered instead of using them as second order organizing concepts that demonstrate a link among all of them.

On the third day of his lesson, Beckett provides students with a “bar fight activity.” He tells students that this activity will give them an “an overview of the war,” that briefly describes some of the causes of war, the major players, the United States’ neutrality and involvement, and how the war ends (Oct. 8, 20:00). In this activity, students are to read a scenario where several people entered a bar and a fight quickly ensues among some of the bar’s patrons. Soon, more people enter the bar and join the fight. Eventually, the fight comes to an end and blame is placed on one person. Beckett tells students to read this scenario and upon completion, explain the symbolism including, but not limited to: what represented the causes, which major players were represented, and what some of the terms were of the Peace Treaty. At the conclusion of this lesson, Beckett says, “tomorrow we will hit the ground running” and talk about the early years of the war and how the United States’ policy shifted from isolation to involvement (Oct. 8, 46:00). This statement indicates that the bar fight was ill-placed in the presentation of content because students did not have the background knowledge to be able to analyze the bar fight. This lack of organization demonstrates his struggle to maintain his chronological approach to the unit. Instead, he let his pedagogical desire to use the activity usurp his content decision-making.

The next day, I see Beckett open class by posing what he calls a “historically significant” question: “Why did the US enter WWI?” (Oct. 13, 32:30), although he never clearly articulates what he means by “historically significant.” He has students examine two speeches from President Wilson, one from 1914, and one from 1917, and an excerpt from a book by Howard Zinn (1980), which came from a SHEG (Stanford History Education Group) WWI lesson plan he pulled from its website. Students then use the documents to answer the smaller, guiding

questions that accompanied the individual documents before answering the larger, historical question. Beckett then asks students for their answers to the guiding questions to help him identify the holes in student understanding, so he could fill them with historical facts. He incorporated these facts and began constructing an explanation as to why the U.S. did not get involved in WWI in 1914.

Beckett then asks students why Wilson wanted to remain neutral at the beginning of WWI and a student guesses that it was “because Wilson believes the conflict will split the US apart?” (Oct. 14, 44:00). The teacher confirms that belief saying that Wilson “believes the situation in Europe will split up America” because it has a lot of immigrants who originate from countries on “both sides of the war...and going to war requires a unified country. He feared that if the U.S. entered the war on one side, it could split society. If you’re going to war, you can’t be split [on it]” (Oct. 14, 46:00). Beckett then asks students if Wilson thinks the U.S. should go to war, according to his 1917 speech? He explains that yes, with the interception of the Zimmerman Note and the sinking of the Lusitania, Wilson felt forced to declare war on Germany. This simple cause-effect approach resulting in chronological ordering of episodes in history suggests that only one or two single events could pull a nation into the largest war in world history, and overlooks the more dynamic, iterative forces at work that drew the U.S. into war (Green, 1992). Surprisingly, in this verbal description of what drew the U.S. into the war, Beckett never refers back to the four main causes for war he presented a couple days prior, nor do they appear on his power point slides. Without greater understanding of the long-term causes of the war, and the potential economic benefit that could come with a war victory, students may understand U.S. involvement only as responding to a single, violent act such as the sinking of the Lusitania, or

the interception of the Zimmerman Note, as opposed to being influenced by larger causes that were only tipped by these two specific incidents.

When class resumes on Oct. 19, I observe Beckett begin class by discussing the project students will be working on for the next five days. He hands students a sheet of paper describing the “propaganda poster assignment,” and immediately directs students to the URL at the bottom of the page that points them to the website of the official Library of the United Kingdom, the British Library. Here students can learn more about propaganda and the types used during WWI by browsing through the collection. Although Beckett never explicitly stated why or how propaganda was used during WWI, the website he provided does. The library explains how “propaganda was employed on a global scale” which served to fulfill four main purposes: “to mobilise [sic] hatred against the enemy; to convince the population of the justness of the cause; to enlist the active support and cooperation of neutral countries; and to strengthen the support of allies” (British Library, 2017). Beckett does not, however, tie the use of propaganda into answering “Why did the U.S. enter the war” or why do nations go to war at all, or why they should stay engaged in military conflict once involved. Without larger organizational structures in place to help make sense of the posters, they seem insignificant and not worth students’ time to study.

Prior to Beckett explanation of the criteria for the poster, I noticed a two-sentence introduction at the top of the page that said “During WWI almost every nation involved in the war participated in propaganda advertising to garner (gain) support for the war effort. Propaganda posters, postcards, billboards, movie reels and many other forms of media tried to encourage the people to participate in the war effort in some form or fashion” (Project: Propaganda Poster assignment sheet, p. 1). Instead of explaining that purpose of propaganda and

the posters in particular, I listen as Beckett skips over that introduction, and moves into what students need to include in their own poster: color, words, symbols, message, audience and purpose, some of which may be difficult without understanding why posters were significant to the war effort. Skipping straight to the simple criteria demonstrates some disconnect between the historically significant purposes of the posters, the causes and effects of them, with the requirements of the assignment.

It is not until the next day that Beckett introduces “types of propaganda” (Oct. 20, 0:02) to students, but even then, there is no mention of how to tie types of propaganda into the posters students have already begun creating. In addition there were still no clear ties between the types of propaganda that are used generally, and how they were used during WWI. Likewise, there were no connections between how propaganda contributed to the larger overarching concepts of war or nation building. Instead, the posters are absent any historical context, although a few examples from WWI were available for students to look at.

After devoting one day to how the U.S. was pulled into the war with the “Thinking Like a Historian” lesson from SHEG Stanford, and a week on propaganda posters, Beckett shifts his focus to the war at home, and introduces the first order concept of the role of the U.S. government during the war: “In this lecture we will discuss wartime agencies, mobilizing the workforce, and shaping public opinion. We are going to move from talking about the war itself to talking about the war at home—what was happening at home during the war” (Oct. 27, 21:00), although he has yet to spend any time talking about military episodes or significant military leaders such as John J. Pershing. He jumps right into the lecture and says “let’s talk about government agencies” (Oct. 27, 21:15), without establishing a need for the agencies in the first place reinforcing an episodic approach absent any explanation for what gave rise to the event in

the first place (Green, 1992). Beckett seems to use historical significance as his primary organizer as he describes the War Industries Board and the Food Administration. In his lesson, he calls the WIB as “one of the most important agencies” that was established to “coordinate the production of war materials. This agency would tell manufacturers what they could produce, allocated resources, and ordered construction of new factories” (Oct. 27, 24:45) because the government needed help with the war effort. However, he does not clearly state that this is why this particular agency was so important to the war effort. Without another organizer such as cause-effect in place, students may understand simply that it was an important agency, but not understand how or why it was so important.

I then listen as Beckett then shifts to describing the Food Administration whose purpose he described as “increasing food production while reducing civilian consumption...to save food for soldiers” (Oct. 27, 27:00). He provided examples of increasing production via victory gardens and reducing consumption by encouraging people to grow their own food, and following the strategy of “Meatless Mondays and Porkless Thursdays” (Oct. 27, 28:00). He then shifts to talking about “mobilizing the workforce” where he describes how “success in the war required cooperation from the workforce” (Oct. 27, 33:40). He describes the creation of the National War Labor Board, which was used to prevent strikes that could hurt the war effort. Each of these episodes were displayed on the power point for students to record in their notes.

The next day, I listen as he resumes his lecture on how the government shaped public opinion. I can hear and see on his power point where he introduces the Committee on Public Information (CPI) which he argued was created because “It wasn’t enough for the government to organize America’s economy, they also needed support of the people” (Oct. 28 5:00). He explained how the CPI recruited “advertisers, artists, authors, entertainers, motion picture

companies, to shape public opinion” on the war (Oct. 28, 6:20). Although he never tied this historical information on the CPI into the propaganda posters the students just spent several days creating, one of the students asked if this, too, was “propaganda?” The teacher replied with “yes!” without any further comparison or explanation as to why the CPI is significant (Oct. 28).

Upon reflection, I realized that over the past two days, Beckett’s content was a little more cohesive because he had clearly identified the first order concept of the role of the U.S. government during the war, and used specific examples of historical information, such as the agencies, to describe the government’s role in the war. To make sense of the content, he maintained his chronological ordering that places the government’s action on a clear timeline beginning with its declaration of war in 1917, the mobilizing of the workforce, and the shaping of public opinion that immediately followed.

At the end of the unit, I observe Beckett’s more apparent use of the cause-effect organizers as he explains what happened at the Paris Peace Conference (Oct. 30, 13:00). He starts the last lecture by asking students “When a country causes a war or great casualties and damage, what is the appropriate punishment?” (Oct. 30, 0:00). He says he asks this question because following the end of WWI “there was a severe bitterness when Germany was forced to give up land it acquired from France (earlier) in 1871. They were also limited on building their military and limited its use...” (Oct. 30, 8:00) as the Allies placed full responsibility of the war on Germany. He explains how the purpose of this was to make Germany weak, and as a result Germany was “less of an immediate threat to the world”...however, the treaty “caused an uproar in Germany and resentment and bitterness towards other countries in Europe and the U.S.” He then explains that Germany went into a “serious, serious economic depression” because the war debt was too great for the nation to handle. What was unclear in this description is how the terms

of this agreement came to be. Instead, Beckett told students Germany had to pay reparations simply “because they lost” the war (Oct. 30, 6:35). While division of land further substantiates the argument that this time period as one of imperialism and expansion, there is no reference to it in Beckett’s discussion of the Treaty.

I suspect Beckett may have realized his explanation lacked context, which results in him backing up in time and explaining that the Paris Peace Conference is where the Big Four (Great Britain, France, Italy and U.S.) met to negotiate peace following the end of WWI (Oct. 30, 13:00). While this would have been an opportune time to refer back to the bar fight activity from earlier in the unit, Beckett fails to do so. Then I watch as Beckett then introduces Wilson’s idea for achieving lasting piece via his 14 Points, which he says was rejected because the allied nations “didn’t believe the punishment was harsh enough” (Oct. 30, 17:10). Beckett did not explain why the 14 Points were significant, just that the president brought forth the idea to bring peace to Europe. Instead, Beckett explained to students that both in his lecture and on the power point, that the other nations wished harsher punishment for what they claimed was the destruction Germany caused them, so they drafted the Treaty of Versailles, which “stripped Germany of its war-making power by keeping close tabs on production, limits on the number of soldiers and military equipment” (Oct. 30, 26:00). Beckett adds that Germany reluctantly signed the treaty on June 28, 1919. He further explains that the treaty not only placed restrictions on Germany’s military, but Germany also lost territory, must accept war guilt, and pay reparations of \$33 billion. He explains that the “treaty wasn’t beneficial to Germany” (Oct. 30, 43:20) and suggests that if it had been more beneficial to Germany, “WWII might not have happened, or not have been as catastrophic...but Germany felt bitter and hatred. Japan and Italy were also upset because they didn’t gain as much territory from the war” (Oct. 30, 44:00). He then asks students

why it is “significant that I mention Japan and Italy?” to which a student responds, “because they ended up being enemies of the allies in WWII” (Oct. 30, 45:00).

In the planning interview at the beginning of the unit, Beckett mentioned how he wanted to teach about the Treaty of Versailles because it was a cause of WWII. Given his understanding of some kind of a relationship between the Treaty of Versailles to the start of WWII, he seemed better positioned to make decisions about which aspects of the Paris Peace Conference to include in his description which he underpinned with simple, cause-effect relationships between two, world-changing events: WWI and WWII. As a result, his description of the Treaty included: who the major authors of the treaty were, what the terms of the treaty were, and the short and long term impacts of the treaty. He explained that the victors of WWI, upset with and fearful of German aggression, sought to economically and militarily neutralize, even punish, Germany. This made Germany so angry and bitter that it eventually sought revenge against the victors, which he suggested was a contributing cause to WWII. His understanding of a cause-effect relationship between the Treaty and WWII may have better enabled him to decide what historical facts to include in his description. This discussion on the Treaty of Versailles concluded his unit.

Beckett said he decided to cut the 1920s from this unit and move it to the next unit for pedagogical reasons. Some of the activities related to the 1920s were going to be too difficult to complete without Beckett’s facilitation, and too many students missed class for various student field trips (Beckett, 2I, p. 3). In addition, he worried that there was too much time between the start and end of the unit, arguing that “I didn’t know why but I kind of associate the Treaty of Versailles in my mind as kind of a stopping point...I don’t know... I just felt like I had given them a lot of information as it was, and I thought it was a good amount of information to test them on” (Beckett, 2I, p. 4). It appears that since the Treaty had a firm date associated with it, as

it was signed in June 1919 and enacted in January 1920, it fits with his chronological order approach to the historical concepts and facts.

Immediately following the last day of instruction, I asked Beckett if he thought he was able to maintain the organizational structures he planned at the beginning of the unit. His immediate response was that he did because he told the story about what was happening overseas before talking about what happened at home, but as he talked through what he actually taught, he quickly realized that “I didn’t really follow through in terms of how I said I was going to organize it” (Beckett, 2I, p. 5). It was as if he had forgotten what he set out to do, and how he was going to organize it, and only upon reflection did he realize that he did not follow it. Instead, he may not have realized it, but he allowed activities to help decide his content for him, and he ended up sticking to a descriptive approach to historical people, places and events that was largely motivated by a simple, chronological ordering of them.

**Unit two: Planning to teach.** Beckett’s next unit falls within the textbook’s fourth section entitled “Boom and Bust: 1920-1941.” The book’s section encompasses three, smaller chapters entitled “The Jazz Age, 1921-1929,” “the Great Depression Begins, 1929-1932,” and “Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1933-1941.” The textbook’s authors describe the time period (Boom and Bust) as one where

new technology, including automobiles, airplanes, radios, and electric appliances helped create a booming economy with rising stock prices, and increased consumer spending. In 1929, economic problems triggered the Great Depression. This led to increased federal regulation of the economy and several new programs, such as Social Security as the federal government took on the task of protecting people from economic hardship (Appleby et al., 2010, p. 358),

which, ironically, seems to better fit the traditional naming of the “Roaring 20s,” rather than “The Jazz Age,” given all of the changes in the 1920s that had nothing to do with music. Each of the three chapters is led by an essential question: Why does culture change?; What causes depressions?; and Can government fix the economy?, respectively.

Initially when Beckett crafted his year-long plan, he said he had intended to teach “WWI and the Roaring 20s.” According to Beckett during our second interview, when other external factors pushed him to move the “Roaring 20s” to the next unit, he opted not to teach it as its own unit, but instead to combine it with the Great Depression in hopes to maintain his schedule for completing the Great Depression by Christmas. He offered no other explanation for why he is combining these two into one unit.

In the second interview, Beckett shares which first order concepts he plans on using in this unit. I quickly noticed a stark difference in his plan to use first order concepts compared to his planned use of them in his previous unit. Prior to teaching the last unit, Beckett said he was going to teach a unit entitled “World War I and the Roaring 20s;” however, for this unit he changed the wording and said the next one is called “The 1920s and the Great Depression.” This title change provides some insight into how he might structure the unit. More often than not, the 1920s is presented by historians as an era of major social and cultural change, which is why it is often dubbed “the Roaring 20s.” By changing the title, he may be suggesting a shift in how he might approach the unit. Instead of being guided by periodization of the 1920s, he may be preparing to carry his chronological ordering approach through to this unit that is largely guided by “episodic events” (Green, 1992, p. 15) that occurred in the 1920s.

Beckett adds that he plans to open the unit with discussion about the following first order concepts: “the politics of the 1920s, the cultural changes of the 1920s, the Great Depression, and

New Deal” (Beckett, 2I, p. 4). He then says he will teach other “major historical concepts” of the time period including, but not limited to: “the crash of the stock market, Harlem Renaissance, Dust Bowl, New Deal, Social Security, suffrage, and prohibition” (Beckett, 2I, p. 10). His description of historical concepts indicates there might be some misunderstanding as to what constitutes a concept. Instead, it seems as if what he is really describing in some of these examples is historical information, or basic facts, that occurred during the 1920s, that he will use to teach the larger concepts. For example, the Harlem Renaissance is an example of cultural change, and the stock market crash is an event that triggered the Great Depression. The Great Depression is the name given to a time period in U.S., and ultimately world, history marked by severe economic downturn that for Americans “utterly redefined the role of government in American society” (Kennedy, n.d., p. 1). As a result, I will pay particular attention to how these examples of concepts are operationalized, so I can say whether or not they were presented conceptually or as historical fact.

Although Beckett’s preferred approach to organizing historical content is chronological ordering, he recognizes that in the 1920s,

some of those social things aren’t really pin point years, ya know, so much as the New Deal or the start of the Great Depression, like the stock market crash. But to start out...with those social changes I talked about. That will be talked about the first couple days. But then once I hit the Great Depression, it’s gonna be chronological...but the social concepts—that’s not something you can really do chronologically (Beckett, 2I, p. 14).

In this interview, Beckett seems to be suggesting that since social change often does not have an event with a clear start or end date, he cannot present those changes on a time line, so his simple

chronological ordering might not work as his primary organizer. That is not to say that various movements will not be presented chronologically; he just will might not be able to rely on the timeline approach he prefers when he is presenting the 1920s, much like what he experienced when presenting the M.A.I.N. causes of WWI. He does say, however, that when he gets to the Great Depression, he will revert to the time line approach as the primary organizer for his content using the stock market crash of 1929 as the event that he says ushered in the Great Depression, much like how he used the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand to describe the start of WWI.

When pressed about how he will organize his content if the simple chronology is not the best fit, Beckett says “I’m not 100% sure on that...” (Beckett, 2I, p, 14). The textbook, however, offers one way to organize the content, which relies on cause-effect relationships. For example, the text begins by explaining the “myth of isolationism” and ways by which the U.S. attempted to exert influence over trade and arms control worldwide, before explaining the role of the government in the economy immediately following the end of WWI, and the emergence of technology and the role it played in revolutionizing and fostering a consumer-oriented economy. Authors of the text then discussed how those factors directly impacted farmers, the stock market and ultimately the crash of it, and the resulting bank failures. Concurrently, authors tell the story of the “clash of values” and the general rise in racism and nativism as a result of WWI, the immediate economic recession that followed, the impact of immigration and the government’s response to it, the changing roles of women in America after having fought and won the right to vote during and immediately following WWI, and the rise of fundamentalism and prohibition, before highlighting cultural innovations that emerged as people encountered these social changes (Appleby et al., 2010, Chapter 10). Beckett recognizes that beginning and end “dates aren’t

(necessarily) associated” (Beckett, 2I, p. 15) with prevailing social movements and economic changes in the 1920s, but seemed to struggle with articulating how else to organize the content he wanted to present in the unit. Instead he reiterates that he will share the “major” or “key concepts” of social change (Beckett, 2I, p. 16). Relative to the social change in the 1920s, Beckett may be suggesting that continuity and change may be a more likely organizer as he makes sense of the social and cultural changes of the 1920s.

Even though he struggled with clearly articulating the first and second order concepts he plans on teaching this unit, he says “already know[s] in [his] head how [his] unit is gonna look,” it is just “the specific details” that he does not know “quite as much” (Beckett, 2I, p. 9). He knows for sure that he needs to “explain the causes for the Great Depression and the long-standing consequences of it” (Beckett, 2I, p. 8) and wants to make sure

students are aware that while the United States was staying isolated, what was going on in Europe? And making sure to stress that point to them so that you know in the end, when I teach the end of WWII, they know how much different it was in America after the second world war than the first” (Beckett, 2I, p. 9).

This suggests perhaps that cause and effect, as well as chronology may play a role in how he organizes his content as well.

**Unit 2: What is taught.** November 4, 2015 marks the first day of the second unit. As I watch his first lesson, I hear Beckett introduce the unit to students as “the end of WWI through the Great Depression” (Nov. 4, 11:00), which he said would be approximately 1919-1935 (Nov. 4, 26:20). Although most historians would argue that the Great Depression did not come to an end until the beginning of WWII in 1939, Beckett says he will mark the end of his unit with the enactment of Roosevelt’s Second New Deal, which included a landmark piece of legislation, the

Social Security Act. It is worth noting that given how at the same time that FDR is enacting his New Deals, Hitler has risen to power and consolidated it when he declared himself Fuhrer, it would seem logical then, that some history teachers may also use 1935 as the time to shift the focus from domestic policy to foreign as the world prepares to enter WWII. Beckett tells students that he will begin the unit by discussing the “politics of the 1920s” before getting into the “more exciting stuff like the consumer revolution, the buying of goods, entertainment of the 1920s, the Harlem Renaissance” (Nov. 10, 6:00).

He opens his first lecture of his unit with the politics of the 1920s, which is right in line with the school-issued textbook. Much like he did with the WWI unit, he took an episodic approach to marking the beginning of this unit with the election of Warren G. Harding as president of the United States in 1920. The discussion that followed focused on the scandals that stained his administration: Forbes Scandal and Teapot Dome Scandal, two of the most well-known scandals of his presidency (Nov. 10, 8:00), all of which were highlighted on his accompanying power point. Beckett explains that the Forbes Scandal proved that “Harding was incapable to pick good people to surround him” (Nov. 10, 15:00) while the Tea Pot Dome scandal consisted of the Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Falls using of “public land for his own benefit” (Nov. 10, 17:00). Beckett stresses the importance of the individual scandals, but fails to connect it to other people, places or events, and has yet to make the connection of this administration to the Great Depression, which makes up the second half of this unit.

Maintaining this chronological ordering approach to historical information, Beckett moves to the next president Calvin Coolidge who he says took office upon Harding’s death in 1923, and then won the election 1924 despite the lack of trust in the Harding administration (Nov. 10, 18:30). He begins by saying “Ok guys, this is very important that you write this down.

Does anyone know why it's important to write down the politics of the 1920s? It's important to understand the political factors that led up to the Great Depression. That is why we are going over this" (Nov. 10, 23:30). When explaining the Coolidge administration, Beckett focuses on Coolidge's domestic economic policy of "trickle down economics" arguing that Coolidge believed that "prosperity rested on business leadership" not government interference, and therefore, "lower taxes will boost the economy as businesses and individuals invest their money, thereby creating higher tax revenue" (Politics of the 1920s PPT, slide 7). He shares that this is the same perspective of the Republican Party today and briefly adds that Republicans think the government should keep its hands off business while Democrats think the government should be more involved in regulating it. Aside from the basic definition of trickle down economics, there is no further explanation of the historical significance of it or how it impacted the Great Depression. And although this would have been an ideal time to tie in the concept of laissez-faire, which was introduced during the Industrialization unit and again in the Gilded Age, he never uses that term nor does he tie back to those same time periods. In addition, he does not hint at how these policies may have played a role in the economic successes or failures in the 1920s. Once he concluded explaining trickle down economics, he changes topics saying, "Ok, now let's move onto foreign policy" (Nov. 10, 28:45).

As he moves into foreign policy in his lecture, Beckett explains Coolidge's belief in isolationism as "The idea that the United States will be safer and more prosperous if it stays out of world affairs" (Politics of the 1920s PPT, slide 8), but Beckett argues that the United States was "too powerful and too interconnected with other countries economically to be truly isolationist," and as a result, the U.S. would try to "promote peace through economic policies" (Politics of the 1920s PPT, slide 8). Beckett argues that one way the U.S. would do that would be

to help struggling economies abroad via the Dawes Act, which allowed American banks to make loans to Germany to help it make its war reparations. Beckett explains that the U.S. thought it would be beneficial to help Germany by loaning the money because “a healthy German economy is very beneficial for Europe. Europe isn’t as valuable to the U.S. without a strong German economy. The U.S. wanted to strengthen Europe so that it would start buying American exports. Does that all make sense?” (Nov. 10, 34:30).

Beckett quickly transitions by saying, “ok, now, let’s talk about the last piece of foreign policy: the Kellogg [Briand] Pact” (Nov. 10, 37:00), which “essentially what it was...was an unbinding agreement that these nations would abandon war altogether and settle disputes by peaceful means” (Nov. 10, 37:30). However, Beckett overlooked the major players involved in this Pact, the reasons for it, its relationship to the Treaty of Versailles, and thereby missed its historical significance. Instead he said, people were “genuinely excited about this because they thought this was gonna stop another world war from happening” (Nov. 10, 38:20). Had Beckett included discussion of the Washington Conference, which preceded the Kellogg-Briand Pact, it would have been easier for him to utilize cause and effect to explain the historical significance of the Pact both in the short and long term. For example, in 1921, the Washington Conference was held in Washington, D.C. This was a meeting between nine major countries to discuss disarmament and other long-term peace efforts--just two years post WWI. These discussions resulted in a naval limitation treaty, but the nations were unable to come to an agreement to limit land forces. Japan however, was angered because it was required to keep a smaller navy than the U.S. and Great Britain, which birthed early animosities between Japan and the other two nations. The success of this meeting boosted hopes that perhaps an agreement could be reached that would end war altogether. This led to the agreement called the Kellogg-Briand pact in 1928.

Nations around the world were already crippled by war debt, and already began naval disarmament. The nations that signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact agreed to abandon war and pursue peaceful responses to conflict on the eve of German and Russian militarism in the 1930s. Given the lack of second order organizers to help bring clarity to the historical significance of the Dawes Plan and Kellogg-Briand Pact, which Beckett called “the most notable pieces of foreign policy in [Coolidge’s] administration” (Nov. 10, 38:30), he falls short of defining what constitutes “notable” and therefore misses an explanation of its historical significance. Had Beckett employed complex cause-effect organizers he would have been in a better position to demonstrate the importance and profundity factors of historical significance (Levesque, 2008), thus justifying Beckett’s argument that these policies were important.

Beckett’s initial organizer ended up dividing the 1920s into smaller time periods driven by the presidential administrations of the 1920s and then subdividing each administration by events that appeared to have historical significance within three types of actions: economic, foreign policy and politics, although he never clearly states how he is defining them. The extent to each action’s impact is unclear and each one’s connection to the Great Depression is also unclear, although Beckett said that learning about the politics of the 1920s was important to learning about the Great Depression. At the end of this lesson, Beckett reinforces what appears to be what he deemed were historically significant first order concepts by asking students: “What did the scandals during the Harding administration have in common with each other? Explain what supply side economics is. Why would the US want to help Europe with the Dawes Plan?” (Nov. 10, 38:40). When debriefing the questions with students, Beckett’s answers remain discreetly related to the first order concepts or historical information/facts mentioned in the respective questions, but still falls short of connecting them to others within the time period.

Instead, the only relationship the concepts have to one another is that they fall within the 1920s along a time line consistent with his use of chronological ordering.

The next first order concept Beckett addresses in the unit is the “consumer revolution.” Given that this is one of those concepts he described as not having a clear-cut start and end date in his planning interview, he was eventually forced to choose another primary organizer other than the simple chronological approach he prefers. So, he begins by showing students four pictures related to the consumer revolution of the 1920s and asks students questions about the pictures that get at why he chose them: “1) what is the picture trying to represent, 2) what is the significance/how did it transform US society, 3) how relevant is the product today, 4) how relevant/important is this in today’s society?” (Nov. 11, 24:15). Unfortunately, I never received a copy of the pictures he showed them, and the video recording of the lesson was too blurry to see the screen in his classroom clearly, but at one point in the discussion I heard him describe one of the pictures as one of a Ford plant assembly line. While the question “what is the significance/how did it transform society” appears to call upon the importance, profundity, and quantity factors of historical significance (Levesque, 2008), and the question of “how relevant is the product today” aligns with the durability and relevance factors of historical significance, and begins to hint at elements of continuity and change between the 1920s and present-day, Beckett never clearly articulates these organizers to me or to students. Given that class ended before a debrief of the activity, I never heard his or his students answers to the questions, so I do not know if this was the intent of his questions or not.

Beckett appears to continue the use of historical significance as he teaches the social and cultural changes of the 1920s during subsequent class periods. The next first order concept he teaches is prohibition. In this lesson, Beckett hands students a “Thinking Like a Historian”

activity from SHEG Stanford on prohibition which has students read primary resources related to prohibition. While students read the documents, Beckett explains that the National Temperance Council fought against alcoholism because it believed alcohol lessened productivity, increased industrial accidents, hurt an individual's health, and increased domestic violence (Nov. 16, 19:45), which he argued are still true of alcohol today.

After students complete the readings, Beckett says “you guys should know something that's relevant to this today because alcohol laws are highly discussed. ... There's a movement right now—uncorking Kansas—but that's specifically why I chose this activity, because it's still relevant today in the state of Kansas” (Nov. 16, 23:00). Beckett drew comparisons between the arguments for and against prohibition in the 1920s, and the arguments directly concerning the social issue in Kansas today. He concluded his discussion by telling students, “I'm glad we did this activity. This is a relevant topic to today's society” (Nov. 16, 39:30). He missed an opportunity, however, to tie this present-day alcohol discussion into other first order concepts such as consumerism and prohibition, which may stem from a lack of curricular knowledge, and of prohibition on a conceptual level. Instead, he segued into having students read the section in the textbook about “women's rights, the KKK, and the Scopes Trial,” which he said were “pretty significant events in this time period” (Nov. 16, 40:05). The bell rang before he had a chance to debrief what students read, so I could not qualify his use of historical significance in this instance.

On November 20, I listen as Beckett opens his class period by saying “Lets talk about African-American culture during the 1920s” via the Harlem Renaissance. He proceeds to describe the Harlem Renaissance as a time when “African-Americans sparked new trends in music, art, literature as a result of the Great Migration.” He argues that “there is relevancy to

this—it led up to the creation of rock and roll” (Nov. 20, 4:30). He focuses on great persons that were musicians, artists, poets, etc. who contributed to the Harlem Renaissance such as: Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Louis Armstrong, and the Cotton Club (Nov. 20, 11:25). He asks students “why is the Cotton Club significant?” He explains that it is “because their [African-Americans] music is being heard, which was a huge advancement for them...the Harlem Renaissance succeeded in bringing international fame to African American arts” (Nov. 20, 15:45). What is missing from this discussion is the historical context, which helps frame what made this such a historically significant advancement. Instead, Beckett treats the Harlem Renaissance as a historical fact, as opposed to a historical event representative of social change for a minority group, and told students simply that the Harlem Renaissance was an example of some change. This omission is noteworthy because without strong establishment of the realities of African-American culture, it would be difficult for students to understand how the Harlem Renaissance was demonstrative of social change. It would take understanding that change to be able to better gauge its historical significance.

What is interesting in Beckett’s discussion of the Harlem Renaissance is the way he briefly introduces cause-effect saying that the Renaissance is a “result of the Great Migration” which he defines as a time when “hundreds of thousands of African Americans moved from the rural south to the urban north during the 1920s” then said “that’s all you need to know” (Nov. 20, 7:40), and that was all that he included on his power point slide relative to it as well. He argues that African-Americans fled the south to the northern cities in search for economic opportunity, which led to exponential population growth in the cities. Although the textbook argues that it was this population growth, combined with racial pride, that fueled the artistic development that became known as the Harlem Renaissance (Appleby et al., 2010), Beckett simply said the

migration resulted in the formation of nightclubs, music, and political activism in the cities. So although Beckett suggested there is a cause-effect relationship here between the Great Migration and the emergence of the Harlem Renaissance, the lack of a description of that relationship suggests students are expected to simply accept the migration was a cause of the Harlem Renaissance, but not how or why these events are related.

In another part of this same lecture, there is a Power Point slide entitled “Great Migration Impact.” Beckett argues that the Great Migration also “had an impact on politics” (Nov. 20, 19:20). According to Beckett, one of the most important political groups to rise in prominence was the “NAABP. The National Association for the Advancement of Black People [sic].” He says its effort “focused on lobbying public officials and working through the court system to get equality accomplished” (Nov. 20, 19:45). He then does something he had not done up to this point; he pulls in previous first order concepts and accompanying historical facts to explain the relevance of the NAACP. Beckett asks students “does anyone remember the two African-American political figures we talked about earlier in this class?” (Nov. 20, 20:00). He then briefly reminds students of the work of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois to further equality for African-Americans at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He then asks the students which person “would have been more likely to join the NAACP and why” (Nov. 20, 20:15). He agrees with the students that W.E.B. Du Bois would be because Du Bois believed in being granted full equality now, as opposed to Washington’s belief that equality should be achieved incrementally. After this brief comparison, Beckett concludes with “That’s all for today!” (Nov. 20, 22:51). Interestingly enough, Beckett never made any mention that Du Bois was one of the three founders of the NAACP. While his lecture falls short of describing the historical significance of the NAACP, it also neglects to make the connection between the

NAACP and the Great Migration. Surprisingly, he also neglects to discuss racial tensions and nativism that were prevalent in the U.S. in the 1920s. Instead, this brief lecture ends his discussion of the social and cultural changes of the decade via an episodic approach absent further explanation (Green, 1992). This is also demonstrated in his use of chronology and political history in his presentation of the 1920s framed via presidential administrations. This underlying second order concept and prevailing framework of political might help explain how he overlooked the race riots of 1919 and the Spanish Influenza of 1918.

On November 24, Beckett is out sick but leaves students to complete a worksheet over Chapter 11 Section 1 reading from the textbook. This section covers “the Causes of the Great Depression” (Appleby et al., 2010). As he said in his planning interview, when it comes to the Great Depression, he rests on the comfort of the organizational structure of chronological ordering beginning with the stock market crash, and the impact of the Roosevelt administration. However, it is during the Great Depression that I saw a strong emergence of cause-effect structures that may have influenced which first order concepts he would teach. When Beckett returns to class the next day, he reviews the questions and answers on the worksheet provided the previous day. It was then that he begins to explain some of those causal relationships in smaller chunks. For example, in answering one question he says “There was a bull market when the stock market was increasing, but they borrowed money to invest in the stock market. This is a great reason why the Great Depression happened” (Nov. 30, 11:00). On another question he explained that, “Some banks suffered more losses than they could afford and this caused banks to close” (Nov. 30, 15:05).

Given that the short answers “required a little more thought and a little bit of a more thorough response” he, too, provided a longer explanation. What emerged was the lengthiest

explanation he ever used throughout the two units under study. The answer seemed to naturally emerge as the cause-effect structures organized what he talked about (Nov. 30, 15:20).

“Question 1: What was the stock market like in the 1920s?” When students replied with “bad” he responded saying “I’ll tell you what I wrote down” and his explanation began.

The stock market in the early and mid 1920s was a bull market. Do you know what that is? A time period where stocks are increasing, and it was a long period of speculation, meaning that with stock prices increasing, it made people believe it was a good idea to invest. If people purchase stock in 1925, a stock may be at \$50/share, but consistently rising stock leads people to believe in 1926 that it would be up to \$67. So people were wanting to invest. But what they didn’t realize is that stock markets have a natural decline. But this rise got people in trouble because they invested their money and borrowed money. Little did they realize that little instability would cause issues. On Black Tuesday, people were realizing the market was at its peak so people sold their stocks, which decreases the value of the stocks. People got scared and started selling their shares. And overnight, they saw HUGE drops in their share prices.

The reason this is important to learn about is because this happens over and over again. It happened in 2008. People ended up investing in homes, and land, but the demand wasn’t there and they were selling off houses quickly and it caused the same issues as this.

It’s important to note that the stock market crash was not the reason the Great Depression happened. The Great Depression happened because the growing economy

had a weak banking system.

On Black Tuesday the average stock was valued at \$380, by the next morning, it was down to \$230. That's incredibly significant. The Great Depression wasn't just referring to the stock market crash, but also overproduction of consumer goods. People couldn't buy them because they lost all their money in the stock market. This was also the highest point of unemployment in U.S. history. The unemployment rate reached 25%. Usually unemployment is about 5%. We call 10-11% bad (Nov. 30, 15:30).

A student then asked "didn't that happen a few years ago?" Beckett explains that in "2011, 2012, somewhere in there" unemployment reached upwards of 13-14% (Nov. 30, 25:00). I notice this description shows a stronger, more developed understanding and use of cause-effect organizers, and continuity and change, as he tells a story of the stock market crash and the beginnings of the Great Depression, and makes comparisons to the Great Recession of 2008. He then concludes this day's discussion by pointing students to other long-standing causes of the collapse of the economy as described in an infographic in the textbook on the "Causes of the Great Depression:" overproduction, uneven distribution of wealth, high tariffs, falling demands, stock market speculation, and low interest rates (Nov. 30, 26:25; Appleby et al., 2010, p. 404). By placing a greater focus on cause-effect, and continuity and change, he momentarily sets his chronological ordering approach aside.

There was one last lecture on December 1, 2015 that would conclude the unit.

Unfortunately, I never received a copy of the lecture and the lesson was not recorded. Given that Beckett's approach to this unit has been to follow the textbook page-for-page, I could surmise this lecture included the end of the Hoover administration, the election of Roosevelt in 1932, and

Roosevelt's response to the Great Depression. Students were, however, given the opportunity to analyze the effectiveness of the New Deal via a "Thinking Like a Historian" activity from the Stanford Research Group where they had to use primary sources to answer the question "Was the New Deal a success or failure?" Since there was no debrief of the activity the next day, I cannot say how he structured this last part of his unit.

At the end of the unit, I met again with Beckett to reflect on the units that were just taught. When asked what organizational structures he used for the second unit, Beckett said he focused on the presidencies in a chronological order, first political then social. While reflecting on the content he taught in his unit, Beckett repeatedly used the term "government intervention" as if it was a driving conceptual organizer of his content in this unit, although it was barely mentioned in his earlier interviews and only mentioned once in his teaching videos (Beckett, 2I; Nov. 10). He said that he "probably ended up" (Beckett, 3I, p. 4) organizing his unit by presidents because "they are interesting" and there is "such a strong contrast" between them (Beckett, 3I, p. 4). While he may not realize it, teaching presidencies inherently appeals to his simpler chronological ordering approach to teaching history in that there is a definite beginning and end date, and what the president does lends itself to a timeline ordering of historical information. To organize the content chronologically was a part of his plan at the beginning and was certainly a common way for him to organize his content given that he did it within and across both units.

When recalling the first order concepts he used in the second unit, he believes he taught all of the ones he set out to teach, "like prohibition" but thinks he "dropped the ball in terms of talking about the need for the Second New Deal....I never went into detail" (Beckett, 3I, p1). He also remembers teaching about the NAACP although he hadn't planned to. He "distinctly

remembers” bringing up the NAACP which led to discussion on the present-day controversy surrounding the South Carolinian flag coming down, although he did not plan on talking about it. He said that the topic “just came up” and “student questions” kept the conversation going (Beckett, 3I, p. 2). He decided to continue the conversation because students were “more likely to hear about the NAACP [in the news] and I think they were fascinated to learn about it” which ties back to that “time period we were talking about” (Beckett, 3I, p. 2). This was an interesting reflection because much of this reflection must have been about conversations that came up in other classes because he is citing specific points that were never made in the class I observed, therefore I cannot say with any degree of certainty if he used continuity and change, historical significance or something else to tie these concepts together, although what he says hints at it.

When asked how he thought he organized his content, he says he maintained the structure he set out to use by talking about “Harding’s presidency, then Calvin Coolidge, then Herbert Hoover, then FDR...So chronologically...I actually, technically kinda went with political but along with political...that ties in with a lot of social things (Beckett, 3I, p. 3). He acknowledges his chronological ordering of historical information and adds that he then categorized into political actions and social actions that fell along his timeline. He says he used “government intervention” as the first order concept he used to weave the presidencies together as he discussed domestic and foreign policy of each administration. He then says he shifted to economic concepts and ideas within each administration as well as the stock market crash. He says he noted how FDR took an opposite approach as Hoover given that Hoover’s policies were failing. What is interesting to note here is that Beckett appears to be beginning to see the iterative nature of first and second order concepts as his use of chronological ordering of economic policy begins to suggest perhaps a cause-effect relationship between the events, although he never

clearly articulates it. It is also worth noting that he fails to reflect on the social aspects of the 1920s with any degree of clarity.

In this last interview, he also mentions that he thought some themes emerged from these two units that connected these units together: government intervention and evolution of African American rights (Beckett, 3I, p. 9). He then proceeds to list concepts from both units that fit within those themes, but it was clear that those themes emerged through his own self-reflection, brought forth by this interview, not ones he intentionally weaved throughout the units. In his discussion he says these two themes are historically significant in that they “are relevant to today” (Beckett, 3I, p. 10). He recognizes that these emerged during this reflection saying “I have acknowledged just now, but that doesn’t mean that it hasn’t been happening since day 1...I have been doing it since day 1, I just didn’t realize a lot of the stuff I’m talking about...I’m starting to realize [it]” (Beckett, 3I, p. 10). He adds,

So next year when I’m teaching this class, I’ll absolutely gonna make sure that those themes are mentioned day 1 in my class....maybe use key themes throughout American history—I’ll mention that to them so what when I’m in the middle of lecturing or they’re working on something I can say ‘remember when’ we talked about that last unit and weren’t talking about that this unit, doesn’t that apply to our theme that I presented at the beginning of the semester? That is something I plan on doing (Beckett, 3I, p. 11)

### **Teacher #2: GRACE**

**Context: Beliefs about history and history education.** I sent the questionnaire to Grace a few times, but never received responses. However, her initial interview shed some light into her beliefs about history education. In her interview she said that she wants students to “see things from the past and understand it” (Grace, 2I, p. 8). She wants the “world to seem more real

to them. Like they weren't just fake people living back then. They were actual people. So I think it's important" (Grace, 2I, p. 8). She says this is largely her motivation for using primary sources, especially ones that include personal accounts from people living at the time she is talking about. This is also why she often gives students real life examples of the same concept in a present-day setting. Her comments here allude to historical perspective-taking, historical agency, and continuity and change, which are elements of VanSledright's (2011) second order concepts.

**Context: Approach to unit planning.** When Grace sits down to plan her unit of instruction, she calls upon various sources: the school-issued curriculum, the school-issued textbook, the History Channel.com, other teachers' websites, and materials she may already have created from when she taught world history during her student teaching experience. She does however, depend heavily on the textbook because "that is what I was handed" (Grace, 2I, p. 8; Cochran, 2010). Although she is not the only teacher who teaches this course at her high school, she says she does all of the planning on her own (Grace, 2I, p. 8).

**Unit one: Planning to teach.** During our first interview, Grace says she will call her first unit under study "French Revolution and Napoleon." Historians often describe the French Revolution as a period of social and political upheaval in France beginning in 1789, which resulted in the French people overthrowing the monarchy and the system of feudalism, while also removing political power from the Catholic Church. This new freedom would culminate into a democratic despotism as Napoleon rose to absolute power, but the ideas of equality and liberty continued to influence France and the rest of Europe for generations to come.

Grace says the concepts she wants students to understand by the end of this unit is "how the monarchy interacts with people." She also wants to look at the "effect of social classes," and how "people change their political environment." She is largely guided by the questions; "How

do people work together to enact change?” (Grace, 1I, p.1), and “What are the causes of the French Revolution?” (Grace, 1I, p. 3). These questions suggest her potential understanding and use of historical agency, and cause-effect, as second order concepts for teaching history.

The school-issued textbook puts this chapter in a larger group of chapters called “Enlightenment and Revolution: 1700-1850” which includes four smaller chapters: the Enlightenment and the American Revolution: 1700-1800; The French Revolution and Napoleon: 1789-1815; The Industrial Revolution Begins: 1750-1850; and Revolutions in Europe and Latin America: 1790-1848” (Ellis & Esler, 2009, p. 541). Unlike other textbooks, this one does not provide any further descriptors of why the chapters were grouped the way they were, but the book does lay out the key concepts it claims it tries to weave throughout the text: “empire, cooperation, conflict, revolution, nationalism, genocide, democracy, political systems, dictatorship, migration, geography’s impact, people and the environment, trade, economic systems, cultural diffusion, belief systems, advances in science and advances in technology” (Ellis & Esler, 2009, p. 542).

Although the text provides no description for how these first order concepts are related to each other or to the chapter at large, it does provide the teacher with some ideas about what first order concepts to focus on in this chapter. Lastly, the authors open the chapter on the French Revolution and Napoleon with a chapter focus question: “What were the causes and effects of the French Revolution and how did the revolution lead to the Napoleonic era” (Ellis & Esler, 2009, p. 571), before dividing the chapter into four smaller sections: “On the Eve of Revolution; the French Revolution unfolds; Radical days of the Revolution, and the Age of Napoleon” (Ellis & Esler, 2009, p. 571).

During our first interview, when asked what organizational structures she plans on using to connect her first order concepts together, Grace immediately hints at the importance and relevance factors of historical significance saying “I think [the French Revolution] is definitely relevant to today, especially since it was so closely tied to the American Revolution,” although she does not offer further explanation as to how it is relevant to today or tied to the American Revolution. She says she enjoys the French Revolution because

I’m one of those who people who’s like, ‘let’s feel good about life’ I guess. People *can* change their government. You are not a victim to your circumstances. You can have an impact on your world. And so I think the French Revolution does that pretty well. Like it shows how common people can make a change (Grace, 1I, p. 1).

Although she never articulates a purposeful intent, this brief description implies a reliance not only on human agency but also on historical significance, given her reference to the impact the French Revolution may have on the U.S. today, although it occurred over two centuries ago in Europe.

Grace also plans on organizing her content chronologically, although the degree of sophistication is unclear at this juncture. She describes her use of chronology as “it’s literally going in order of when things happen, because I think that makes the most sense...to me” (Grace, 1I, p. 5). She says she wants to organize it this way because “I think it goes from specific to broad...that scaffolding...like, you go from really, really specific, and then like—ok, so the first question is ‘what are the social classes?’ and then—then it goes to that really broad question of ‘why does government matter?’” (Grace, 1I, p. 5).

When asked why she was going to focus on chronology, she says “since it’s (French Revolution) one event, it would be hard to do it any other way...to me it makes sense that they

have to learn it chronologically, I guess. I don't know. I guess I've never thought of teaching it another way, if that make sense" (Grace, 1I, p. 6). Her description here suggests that she may be approaching the French Revolution both as an event and a time period. She then hints at another way to organize her historical information, by categories of information rather than through the use of second order concepts: "Some [things] we group like social, religion, that type of thing, but this one I just felt like it has to be chronological to get it" (Grace, 1I, p. 6). Given her uncertainty for how else to organize her first order concepts, it is no surprise that she is struggling with explaining what she would teach.

She comes full circle at the end of her description of her organizers to suggest again, her use of the relevance factor of historical significance. She adds, "I think we're trying to be conscious about finding things that connect it to today. ...but I think I like just trying to show them *this is relevant* (emphasis added as she raised her voice and threw her hands in the air), ya know? I don't think we're just teaching it because you need to know the French Revolution. I hope we're teaching it like this is why it's relevant and this is why it matters" (Grace, 1I, p. 9), although she never explains what makes it relevant.

**Unit 1: What is taught.** Grace begins her unit on February 8, 2016. In her first lesson, I watched and listened as she told students "We are starting our new unit, the French Revolution. This is focusing on one event, in one country, which should help you keep it in order. This event is incredibly influential, and we will learn about why" (Feb. 8, 0:00). Laying out this episodic approach to her curriculum may suggest that she does not realize the characteristics of periodization that would help draw out the continuities and changes both during this period and between the ones that came before and after, and she might have overlooked the textbook's larger periodization structures at play. She does, however, suggest to students her intended use of

chronological ordering, and historical significance. She then provides some examples of historical information/facts that she will incorporate in this unit via historical figures, not concepts, such as: “Marie Antoinette, the Queen of France, and Louis the XVI, the King of France, and Maximilien Robespierre, a catalyst for the Revolution” (Feb. 8, 2:00). She then shows a three-minute long video that provided an overview of the French Revolution before saying, “I just wanted you to see that as an overview. Now we’re gonna talk about the finer details” (Feb. 8, 7:10).

She begins her discussion of those “finer details” via the different social classes, known as the “Three Estates,” that existed “prior to the French Revolution” under the “old Regime” (Feb. 8, 10:00). Although this statement signaled the existence of periodization given the “Old Regime” and the change that came after the Revolution, and the continuity and change that would help define those periods, Grace never indicates to me nor to her students that she was fully aware of those second order concepts.

Grace frames the next section of her discussion around her thesis that people can work together to enact change, and reinforces her use of historical agency, and cause-effect. She begins the discussion of the three estates by trying to help students relate to the situation in which people in each estate found themselves. For example, when she explains that the top two social classes, which represented the top two percent of the population, did not have to pay taxes, but the lower class did, she says, “let’s say this class needed to buy all of the supplies. Everyone needed to pay money to buy the stuff except for two people, but they still get to use the supplies. This is how the third estate felt” (Feb. 8, 11:15). She uses that example to segue into the inequality of taxation saying that the third estate, “hated the first and second estate because they [members of the third estate] were burdened by taxes. Anything the first two estates wanted was

funded by the third estate. The third estate faced hunger and starvation as a result” (Feb. 8, 14:10). Here, she is laying the foundation for why the third estate revolted against the monarch and solidifying its agency in this time period, although she has not presented this as a potential cause for the revolution. This description of the difference between the classes, and the beginnings of conflict among them, lasted about ten minutes.

Grace adds some context to the rise in tensions among the estates by saying that there were some “left-over economic trouble from Louis the XIV” such as deficit spending explaining that “the French government had been spending more than it takes in” (Feb. 8, 17:30), which left France in debt. Recent wars, general rise in costs, and the palace of Versailles were costly” and because of what Louis the XIV did the “country is feeling the effects” (Feb. 8, 19:45). She then tries to demonstrate continuities and changes as she explains the relevancy of a problem like this by likening it to how decisions lawmakers make today will impact students in the future. She uses the rising costs of college, the difficulty in obtaining funding for college as an example of the government making decisions that could adversely affect them as teenagers (Feb. 8, 21:45). However, instead of explaining how the third estate’s tax burden increased to pay the interest on that debt, which caused a gap between income and cost of living, she just says “things were bad” (Feb. 9, 8:50) and people were starving. However, the relationship between that tax burden and “People fought over bread simply because there wasn’t food to eat” (Feb. 9, 9:50) is unclear. Likewise, although some of these first order concepts seem to be organized with elements of continuity and change, as well as cause and effect, it is unclear if she is doing so consciously or not.

Grace uses simple cause-effect structures also to explain that the economic issues plaguing France required Louis XVI to abandon his absolute power and forced him to summon

the Estates General—which was a representative body made up of all social classes. She explains that although the Estates General was a representative body, there was unequal representation in favor of the higher classes, which caused the “third estate to create its own National Assembly” (Feb. 9, 12:00). She describes how the third estate invited representatives from the other two estates to join them to write a constitution (Feb. 9, 12:25). Finally, she draws a clear conclusion for students arguing, “This helps you see the progression for how we got to the point of Revolution. People can only take being told what to do for so long before they have to fight back” (Feb. 9, 13:53).

She continues this description by following the textbook’s content and describing how the tensions escalated and culminated into the Third Estate Storming the Bastille, a medieval fortress used as a prison for political prisoners and a symbol of oppression. In trying to explain why this event was important, she compares the Storming of the Bastille to the American Colonists’ Boston Tea Party, which “showed the British” that “we are not messing around” (Feb. 9, 17:10). She then shares paintings, drawings, quotes, and video clips that explain the Storming in greater detail (Feb. 9, 18:55). This depiction not only suggests the historical significance of the event, but it highlights the human agency of the people who made up the third estate as these artifacts tell their story about how they worked to topple the monarch. What remains unclear is the impact of the Storming of the Bastille on France and its people, although the textbook calls it a “wake-up call to Louis XVI. Unlike any other riot or short-lived protest, this event posed a challenge to the sheer existence of the regime” (Ellis & Esler, 2009, p. 577). Grace never clearly states why this event was important. It is unclear as if this event “is” the French Revolution, marks the end of it, or something else.

For the next class period, Grace prepared a role-play that places students in the roles of members of the three estates in hopes to help students understand what the French people, particularly in the third estate, might have been feeling during this time, thereby furthering her use of historical agency. However, this activity lacked the appropriate historical context to help students situate themselves within their respective roles. For example, in this role play, students were asked to put themselves in the shoes of the third estate as its members were taxed heavily for the spending of the first estate, suffered from a shortage of food, and lacked representation in the Estates General. Grace tells students she wants them to understand the frustrations of the third estate that leads not only to its storming of the Bastille, but to the long term change in France. However, in the previous class period, students were already exposed to the culmination of these economic tensions, which resulted in the storming of the Bastille. Without appropriate historical context, it is unclear then as to whether or not this role-play situated students as French men and women prior to the storming of the Bastille or after. Although Grace said she planned on employing a simple chronological approach to this unit, she seems to abandon that linear approach with this activity by “going backwards” in time to reinforce the economic and political causes that led to the storming of the Bastille. However, students may not have understood that is what was happening. In order for a role-play like this to be successful, Grace would need to adequately and appropriately set the historical context for students. Doing so would allow her to move “back and forth” in time without disrupting student understanding of what was happening while depending more heavily upon the human agency, and perspective-taking as the primary second order concepts.

Every first order historical concept and supporting historical information Grace has discussed up to this point has occurred in 1789. Even a few days into this unit, that has not

changed. She is still describing the conditions of France at the time using cause-effect. But another organizational structure is emerging, one that consists of categorizing historical information via: economics, politics and society. Up to this point, she has talked about the social conditions of France, then the economic conditions of France and how those conditions led to the formation of the National Assembly and the Storming of the Bastille, but has only loosely organized the material in this way. Today, she talks about what she calls the “political crisis” (Feb. 11 13:39). She begins by reminding students of the social and economic issues that have laid the groundwork for political upheaval arguing that “No one was caring about obeying laws when basic needs weren’t being met” (Feb. 11, 17:40). As a result of those basic needs not being met, Grace says that revolts pop up around the country made up of “radical groups like the Paris Commune that take over the government in Paris and is in charge” (Feb. 11, 19:10).

She then explains that when “French revolutionaries” (Feb. 11, 20:00) started the National Assembly, it was their goal to reform the government, although she does not describe who these revolutionaries were, which could lead students believe that this was a new group of people who differed from the people of the third estate who initiated change in France. In discussing the types of reforms brought about by the National Assembly, she again defers to her political, social, and economic categories to help her organize the historical information. She engages in a comparison approach to the reforms a la continuity and change in her lecture by tying the experiences of the French during the Revolution with the experiences students are facing today. She begins by reminding students of yesterday’s activity where members of the third estate were frustrated at the monarchs and decided they wanted their own government. She then says it was out of those frustrations that changes to the National Assembly emerged. She opens this discussion by saying:

Today, we are going to talk about three areas where we see reforms in the National Assembly. When I say reform, I mean change.

The first [reform] is political. All male citizens become equal before the law. It excludes females, and citizens of African descent. And 50% of our population is female, so really is it a stride forward? Yes, it was. Because prior to this only 2% of all people had power. Now the third estate males have power. [The National Assembly] also limited the power of the monarchy. The king doesn't have as much power. The legislative assembly gets to make the laws. Prior to this, the King decided what was legal and what was not.

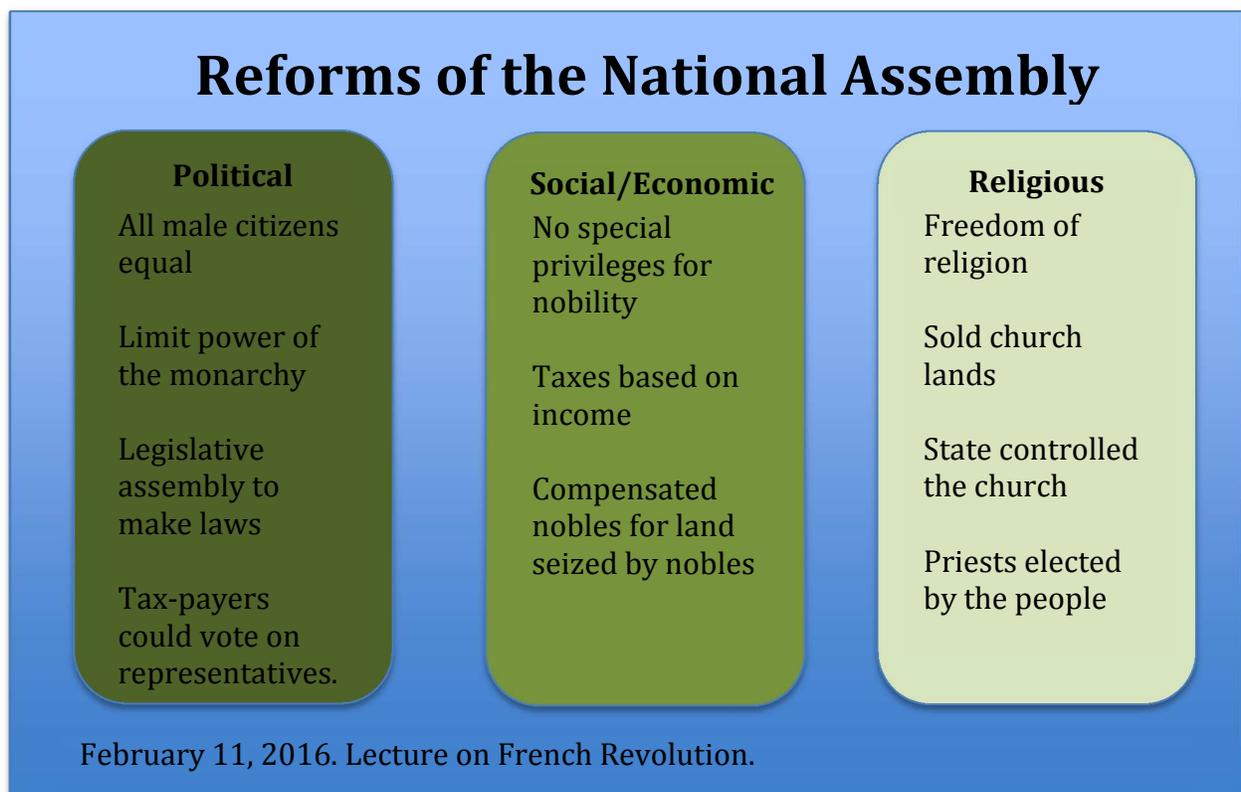
Taxpayers also vote to elect representatives (Feb. 11, 22:00).

In the social and economic realm, we have no special privileges for the nobility. You get privileges because you earn them, not because you were born in the right family. Does this work in the United States? Not necessarily. Look at how celebrities get out trouble when the rest of us suffer consequences for things we do. Taxes are to be based on income. And from now on the government will be required to compensate nobles for land seized by nobles. This is the same as eminent domain in our country today. The government has to pay you if it wants to take your land (Feb. 11, 25:00).

The last reform is religious reform. We have freedom of religion that emerges. Religion pretty much died out in France at this time unless you were rich because the first estate was made up of the clergy so the third estate stopped caring about religion. They feel like God has abandoned them. So the church sold lands, the state controlled the church, and

priests are elected by the people. This is similar to how church is running today. For my uncle to become a pastor, the members got to decide and vote. So in some ways we still see that today (Feb. 11, 28:40).

This is the visual she presented to students that show how she organized some of the content by categories of reform characterized by political, social/economic, and religious reforms, although this is the first time so far in this unit that she has referenced religion (See Figure 7). However, in her lecture, her constant reference to similarities to present-day United States shows her continued use of continuity and change to help make sense of the changes that were happening in France in the late 1700s.



*Figure 7.* Reforms of the National Assembly. This is the figure Grace showed her students that clearly demonstrates her using larger categories to present the historical information.

She concludes today's lecture by having students read "the Declaration of the Rights of Man" out loud. However, she never discusses the historical significance of the document as having been the first step towards writing a new constitution in France, and thereby taking power away from the monarch and putting in the hands of the people. Instead, she reads a brief description from the textbook that says the Declaration of Rights of Man was a document modeled after the English Bill of Rights and the American Declaration of Independence, but it is unclear what the purpose of this document is during the French Revolution, or how the three documents might relate to one another. Without enough context about each document, students are not yet in a position to engage in comparative thinking about the documents; instead they are left to simply accept that some relationship exists. This lack of clarity may result from a lack of understanding of the "Declaration of the Rights of Man" which resulted in her resorting strictly to what the textbook said about it (Cochran, 2010; Nicol & Crespo, 2006).

The Reign of Terror was the next topic addressed in the unit. Instead of employing more complex cause-effect structures that call upon the economic, political and religious tensions that existed in France, Grace uses simple cause and effect structures to help her begin to construct a descriptive history that discussed how the monarchs sensed their time as rulers would be cut short. She describes how the monarchs disguised themselves and tried to escape the country, but their efforts were in vain. Both Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were captured and executed before the Committee of Public Safety, under leadership of Maximilien Robespierre, who rose to power and the "reign of terror" began (Feb. 16). Although she never gave precise definition to "reign of terror," which the textbook defines as "the time period during the French Revolution from September 1793-July 1794 when people in France were arrested for not supporting the revolution and many were executed" (Ellis & Esler, 2009, p. 1199), she did share stories of the

Committee on Public Safety acting with absolute power, which resulted in the execution of several people.

She then gives students a worksheet entitled “The Reign of Terror” which discusses the horrors in greater detail, and includes excerpts from primary sources that includes quotes of people describing the tense situation. In addition, it provides a description of the time as one when “thousands of people suspected of anti-revolutionary activities or of helping France’s enemies were sent to the guillotine” (Reign of Terror Worksheet, p. 1). The text on the worksheet explains that eventually, French citizens grew weary of the killings and they looked for someone to blame. They turned towards Robespierre who found himself facing the same fate as many before him: the guillotine (Reign of Terror worksheet, p. 2). Students answered questions on the worksheet related to the content on it. However, Grace did not have a chance to discuss or debrief this worksheet before the bell rang to end class that day.

Pressed for time to finish the unit, she concludes discussion about the Revolution with very brief notes entitled “effects of the revolution” but tells students they “don’t need to write this down” (Feb. 17, 9:15). She sums up the Revolution by explaining that

By 1799 the French Revolution had dramatically changed France: it had dislodged the old social order, overthrew the monarchy, and brought the church under state control, and many changes occurred in everyday life. And we will talk about how it changed things for people.

Women gained more rights than they previously had. Now I still don’t mean like they could vote; they did own property. Not huge gains, but gains nonetheless.

Titles were eliminated. So it didn't matter what family you were from everyone was supposed to be seen as the same.

Elaborate fashions were replaced by practical clothes (Feb. 17, 9:15). If you've ever seen 21 Jump Street when Channing Tatum has to go back to high school...he says here knows how to be cool in high school...Drive a fast car, be a jerk...But when he gets to high school, he realizes that the cool kids actually, ya know, care about the environment, ride their bike and are all about their feelings.

Channing Tatum thought the way to be cool was to have all the flashy and fancy things, when it turned out times had changed. And now the way to be cool at that high school was to care about people. Very similar to the French Revolution. Before the FR it used to be cool to have fancy things and designer clothes. Now, it is cool to care about intellectual ideas, and to live plainly... Because flashing money around was seen as something you didn't want to be associated with like the monarchy,...being selfish, and full of yourself (11:30).

Last two changes: People developed a strong sense of national identity. If you meet someone from somewhere else and they say "tell me something about yourself", one of the first things you'll probably say is that you're American or are from the United States. We have a very strong sense of national identity here. Nationalism emerges. That is a strong feeling of pride in one's country. We are going to see how nationalism begins to overtake a lot of reason (12:00).

Grace presents these effects as somewhat insignificant as she moves onto the next unit topic: “Now, let’s talk about Napoleon” (Feb. 17, 14:00). This abrupt shift demonstrates that she lost sight of her original thesis that common people can bring about change, and the related concept of historical agency. There was a missed opportunity here to show the climax of that human agency by clearly articulating the role the everyday people played in the long-lasting changes that resulted from the revolution. Instead, the “French Revolution” was attributed with bringing about those changes, as opposed to saying the people brought about the Revolution, which culminated in these reforms. Outside of the first couple of days of instruction and the role-play where the majority of the students acted as members of the third estate, which could be perceived as representative of the people, there was little to no reference to everyday people bringing about change.

As I continue to observe her class, I see Grace transition into Napoleon by loosely explaining that his rise to power was a result of the people’s search for a stable government. It’s worth noting here that this transition offers a unique opportunity for Grace to overlay continuity and change as Napoleon’s rule was democratically elected by the people, while his rise to power also represents partial return to an autocratic ruler. Instead, Grace explains that the people favored Napoleon who was a popular war hero because he instilled confidence in them (Feb. 17, 17:40). It is unclear, however, what war made him a hero, or what kind of power he achieved in France. She does say that Napoleon consolidated power by strengthening the central government, which signals he was the head of state in some capacity operating on the ideas of “Order, security, and efficiency” (Feb. 17, 25:00).

Although Grace refers to the time period she is about to discuss as the “the Age of Napoleon,” she does not call upon periodization and the continuities and changes that make up the period to frame her content choices, and instead seemingly shifts her organizational structure to that of historical significance. In this instance, she appears to call upon the importance factor of historical significance (Levesque, 2008) by explaining the changes Napoleon brought to France and his reasons for them. This descriptive history offers a loose connection to historical significance as she shares things she believes were important to France at the time, and stood to have impact on the profundity and quantity of people there. In this discussion, Grace takes more of an episodic approach (Green, 1992) to describing his accomplishments. For example, she said:

1. Napoleon enacted the Napoleonic Code. In that code, there were no privileges based on birth, largely because he wasn't born into royalty. He thought everyone should work for what they get in life.
2. He believed in the freedom of religion. That was important to him.
3. He believed government jobs should go to the most qualified. He didn't like that people got jobs from who they knew.
4. He didn't feel like France had enough land, so instead of fighting or conquering, he just redrew the boundaries the way he wanted them to look.
5. He controlled a lot of Europe through force. He put friends and family on the thrones throughout Europe. He believed he could control them better if he was related to them.
6. He forged alliances with people (Feb. 18, 18:30).

Although she prefaced this as Napoleon's accomplishments, some of items on the list were simply facts about him, rather than accomplishments. In addition, even after this description,

Napoleon's relationship to France is still unclear. Was he a King? Was he an elected leader? Did the newly established National Assembly maintain power under his rule? Did the people of France relinquish any of their liberties in exchange for the security Napoleon promised them? All of these questions remained unanswered. This is an instance where inadequate historical context makes Napoleon's historical significance unclear.

On the last day of the unit, Grace discusses what she calls "highlights" of Napoleon's rule through a strict chronological approach (Feb. 19). This is the first time in the unit when events were directly associated with dates. In addition, it is the first time Grace is largely dependent on chronological ordering without underpinned cause and effect relationships linking them together. Instead, she presents historical facts related to his military conquests. She describes his rule via this time line, which was provided to students on the power point:

By 1799, Napoleon was a military dictator. In 1804, he declared himself the last emperor for life. By 1810, he was ruling most of Europe. In 1812, disastrous event where he tried to invade Russia in the winter. In 1814 we have his first exile. He wanted his son to take over, but France said no. But [it] feared he would try to rule through his son. He eventually escaped exile, and came back and said he was going to take over again. Then he lost the battle of Waterloo and was sent to St. Helena for life and he died there. So there's that (Feb. 19, 0:00).

In spite of these military conquests, there was never any reference to why he engaged in any of them or if he ever had any successes. One could surmise that Napoleon was trying to expand his empire, but that was never clearly stated. Instead, students were simply told he went on these military conquests, lost at the Battle of Waterloo, and embarrassed the country (Feb. 19, 3:15).

However she did make quick reference to the Congress of Vienna, which she described as a meeting of European heads of state, attempting to contain “French ambition” (Feb. 19, 4:00).

It is important to note here that she skipped over the section of the book-chapter entitled “Napoleon’s Legacy” (Ellis & Esler, 2009, p. 598), which shed light on the relationship between the French Revolution and Napoleon’s Rule, and helped establish Napoleon’s historical significance. Although earlier in the lecture Grace mentioned some of Napoleon’s accomplishments, she did not tie any of them back to the French Revolution. The book argues that some of his longstanding legacies include but are not limited to: consolidating many changes from the Revolution, such as creating a constitution, expanding suffrage, allowing citizens to own property, and providing access to education unlike the old regime. However, French citizens lost “many rights promised so fervently” (Ellis & Esler, 2009, p. 598). But to the rest of the world, Napoleon left other legacies such as spreading the ideas of revolution, sparking nationalist feelings through Europe, and helping to double the size of the U.S. and “ushered in an age of American expansion” (Ellis & Esler, 2009, p. 598) when he sold the nation the Louisiana Territory. According to the textbook, these legacies helped clearly identify continuities and changes that are used to identify why Napoleon was historically significant, and how his reign signaled a new era in French and world history.

In the middle of Grace’s lecture on Napoleon the day before, she directs students to look back at the primary source packet over the “Reign of Terror” she gave them two days ago. She asks students to go through and categorize each of the sources in the packet as either: political, economic, religious, social, ideas, or arts, which she refers to as P.E.R.S.I.A. She told students doing so would help them prepare for their in-class essay they would be writing the next day. The question for the essay is “What are the causes and impacts of the French Revolution?” This

caught my attention because it is a formalization of the organizational structure she imposed on the content in the book as she transformed the content in preparation for students. She asks students to consider answering this essential question via the categories presented in P.E.R.S.I.A. While she never came straight-forward and said “here are the economic causes of the Revolution” she did present conditions in France using these classifications. In essence what she is presenting is a multi-tiered system of cause-effect by asking students to classify the causes into political, economic, social and religious categories.

In our second interview, when I asked Grace if she added or omitted any first order concepts that she had originally planned to teach in this unit, she said “No, I don’t think so. No” (Grace, 2I, p. 1). At the beginning of the unit, she said she was going to teach the textbook page for page. And while she did teach something about the majority of the concepts presented in the text, there definitely were concepts she skipped over that the book discussed, such as: the women’s march on Versailles, Napoleon’s reforms, Napoleon building an empire, and the Congress of Vienna. By omitting some of these concepts, students may have holes in their understanding. What is unclear is why she omitted these concepts when they were in the book. For example, she spent a significant amount of time talking about Napoleon, but then declined to discuss his rise to power, his relationship with the rest of Europe, as well as his historical significance and legacy both in France and abroad, and thereby missed what things helped to characterize what constituted Napoleon’s rule as an “Age.” Given that she had no clear plan of what concepts she was going to teach other than going through the book, there was no clear reason why some were omitted, although viewing his rule as an event as opposed to a time period would certainly lend to more of an episodic description of his rule (Green, 1992).

Likewise, it was difficult to discern if students understood the ideas, like revolution, at more of an informational or conceptual level.

When asked if she added or omitted any organizational structures, she quickly responded with “No” before remembering “well originally I said we were going to focus on the causes of the French Revolution, but we put in the impacts as well” (Grace, 2I, p. 33). During her first interview, she mentioned she would use historical significance, chronology, to organize her content, but would then use politics, society, economics, and religion to categorize other pieces of historical information. In this unit she largely implemented those structures. However, she was heavily dependent on cause-effect, and continuity and change, which she did not mention she was planning on using, nor did she mention it here as an organizational structure she used.

**Unit two: Planning to teach.** Grace calls the next unit she will teach “The Industrial Revolution.” Historians describe the Industrial Revolution as a period in human history when there was a shift from pre-dominantly agrarian and rural societies, to industrial and urban ones, particularly in Western Europe and the United States. The changes were largely brought about through inventions that allowed for massive production and easier distribution of goods that largely operated in factories. As Grace thumbs through the school-issued textbook, she says that the larger concepts she will focus on include: “the emerging middle class, like social structures changing as a result. A lot of economic ideas...how values change as a result of new things emerging” (Grace, 2I, p. 2). However, she plans to exclude other (first order) concepts that “I don’t think my students need to know” (Grace, 2I, p. 2). For example,

I think people are important, don’t get me wrong, but just like with the Age of Absolutism, I don’t think they need to know every James and every Henry...I think it’s more important that they understand how culture changed because of those things, cause I

think that's when people get into not liking history, and they shut down when they feel overwhelmed by everything, or they don't have the buy-in factor. I think it's more important to teach here's what happened and this is who did it. As opposed to memorize what this person did and when they were alive (Grace, 2I, p. 2).

She adds, "I like to focus on social change and how technology led to social change. I think that's going to be the main idea" (Grace, 2I, p. 3). In these few sentences we see a clear argument against focusing on "great people" and instead see an expression of her interest in telling the story of the everyday people. In this brief description, not only is she citing specific first order concepts such as economic ideas, emerging middle class, but she is also getting at the structures that are at play suggesting she may be reliant on historical significance ("here's what happened and here's who did it and why it's important"), cause-effect ("how technology led to social change"), historical agency (the emerging middle class), and maybe even some comparisons to the French Revolution (social change).

When explaining why she wants to teach these particular concepts, she provides insight to her understanding of the Industrial Revolution as a time period, calling it "the transition between the old world and new world" (Grace, 2I, p. 3). This statement suggests that she recognizes some continuities and changes brought about by this period that have long-term impact across time and space. She says she wants to show "how technology changes people's access to communication and makes the world smaller." She continues by arguing the Industrial Revolution serves as "kind of the bridge between living under kings and queens and...it kind of bridges that old regime [with] how did we get to WWI and WWII and the New World. I think they need to see how people's attitudes about things change the world" (Grace, 2I, p. 3), which suggests the first order concept of "revolution" will be used to link the political and ideological

revolutions during the French Revolution to the technological and economic revolutions in the Industrial Revolution. She was proud of that revelation and exclaimed “Put that on a poster!” (Grace, 2I, p. 3). These comments suggests that she possesses some thoughts on what ideas might frame the Industrial Revolution as a time period: dramatic change, a bridge between the old and the modern, an emergence of economic and technological innovations, perhaps organized through historical agency.

As she thumbs through the textbook, she explains that there are not many concepts she will omit because “it’s a pretty short unit” (Grace, 2I, p.5). One thing she says she will not talk about is literature and paintings because “I have a really hard time understanding paintings and stuff” (Grace, 2I, p. 6). She says she knows it is important to talk about them, and she will briefly mention them, but “I don’t know if I can sit there and dissect paintings, I guess. It’s harder for me. And the kids kind of struggle with it, too” (Grace, 2I, p. 6).

The textbook’s chapter called “the Industrial Revolution Begins: 1750-1850” (Ellis & Esler, 2009, p. 606) also begins with a chapter focus question which asks “What technological, social, economic, and cultural changes occurred as the Industrial Revolution took hold?” (p. 607), which may inform her continued use of P.E.R.S.I.A. or some adaptation of it in this chapter. The chapter is divided into four smaller sections entitled: “Dawn of the Industrial Age; Britain leads the way; Social impact of the Industrial Revolution; and New ways of thinking” (Ellis & Esler, 2009, p. 607). This organization provides insight to the textbook authors’ sophisticated use of cause-effect, and continuity and change.

However when I asked her specifically how she plans on organizing her content, she said, “That’s a really good question that I wasn’t having to think about until you asked. I think we’re going to start off with—and I’m not sure if this is what you’re looking for so stop me if it’s not—

but starting off with technology. And then science, like how the Germ Theory and how people realizing maybe we shouldn't be living twenty people in a room that type of thing. The factories...." (Grace, 2I, p. 6)...“Then social classes. Then arts and that type of thing” (Grace, 2I, p. 7). Her answer here suggests she will use some form of P.E.R.S.I.A. again and perhaps will organize her historical information via first order concepts of technology, science, society, and economics, but she fails to specifically mention any use of what VanSledright calls second order concepts for organizing content for teaching history.

So I asked why she planned to teach things in that order. She said,

I think it's a natural progression. They have to invent the stuff for people to have those changes. Like I think we will kind of start off with 'remember how terrible life was, well people decided they wanted to make their lives easier.' And then kind of go from there.

And so once life gets easier, I think people have to adapt to it (Grace, 2I, p. 8).

Here, she seems to be hinting at a cause-effect organizer, although she does not clearly articulate it. In the first unit planning interview, she specifically mentioned wanting to use cause-effect, historical significance and chronology to organize her content. In this interview, she does not mention any of them with any degree of clarity, which could provide some insight into her lack of knowledge about the Industrial Revolution as a time period and/or a first order concept. While a simple chronological organizer tends to feel more natural when discussing political change as with the French Revolution, an era with major social change might not fall as easily along a time line, but can still be presented chronologically although several movements might be occurring simultaneously.

Given that this unit is the second of two that are a part of this study, I wanted to know what first order concepts Grace plans to use to integrate across both units. She said she wants to

show “how governments have to change when the people change. And how society responds to new ideas” (Grace, 2I, p. 9). She chose this as the thread to tie both units together because “both [units] lend themselves to social change because the revolution was all about social change. I think this is gonna be a little more closer to how people get to modern day government a little bit” (Grace, 2I, p. 9), which suggests some understanding of continuity and change between all of these time periods. Although she thinks that simply referencing the prior unit is organizing content to make it make sense for her learners, what it sounds like she is really getting at here is cause-effect because what happened earlier explains “how we got to now” (Grace, 2I, p. 10). She also seems to be planning on using human agency again given that it is the people that are bringing about these changes. It was these changes in both the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolutions where there was some collapse of the “old” and emergence of the “new” which paved the way for social, economic and technological change. These early comparisons suggest she may call upon continuity and change to compare the French and Industrial Revolutions as well.

**Unit 2: What is taught.** Grace begins this unit on the Industrial Revolution on Thursday, February 25, 2016. This time, I see her open the lesson by offering students a clear introduction to the unit. She says, “The Industrial Revolution began in Britain. We know from our past unit that revolution is a change. In this case, a change in industry. Britain leads the Industrial Revolution, then other nations get jealous and try to catch up. But what made Britain so special?” (Feb. 26, 3:00). She clearly articulates that the larger first order concept that will be the focus of this unit is revolution, and begins to describe the factors that made Britain fertile for the revolution, although did never offered that clear of a description in her interview prior to the unit.

She immediately introduces her organizational structure for answering the question "Why Britain?" as the start of Industrial Revolution (IR). She asks students to draw a web on their paper that places the question in the center with four bubbles coming off it. She wants each one labeled as the larger reasons for "Why Britain?": Natural resources, stable government and economy, agricultural revolution, and inventions (Feb. 26, 5:10). She structures this lecture around filling out the boxes. She is still following an adaptation of the P.E.R.S.I.A. structure by answering the question "Why Britain?" using adjectives that describe the types of causes: "political, economic, and ideas" (PEI). She shares a map of Britain with students to allow students an opportunity to analyze the natural resources, such as: rivers, iron ore and coal, (E) which made Britain ripe for the IR. She argues that the water made transporting new goods easier, and inventions made waterpower easier to harness. She also tells students that coal and iron ore were used to build machines (Feb. 26, 6:00). She then suggests they "skip to inventions" (I) (Feb. 26, 8:00). She chose three that she called "the three major inventions" of the IR: "the Spinning Jenny, which allowed people to quickly spin threads; the steam engine, which gave engines power; and the Steel process, which was used to make steel stronger, cheaper and more accessible" (Feb. 26, 9:15). By presenting her information this way, students understand that there were three different types of reasons for what made Britain a ripe place for the Industrial Revolution to begin.

Grace resumes the lecture the following day by reminding students that "there are a lot of changes going on at this time" (Feb. 29, 7:07) such as how people lived and worked, signaling some beginning use of periodization. She continues her discussion talking about "Why Britain?" (Feb. 29, 7:20) by expanding on the four reasons why Britain was the catalyst for the IR, focusing on the political, economic, and innovative changes that were happening. She explains

that “Great Britain had a stable government (P) and economy (E). A sound economy makes it easier for businesses to grow and people to spend money. When people get more money, they buy more stuff” (Feb. 29, 7:30). When shifting to agricultural advancements, she cites the enclosure movement and crop rotation before closing out with “let’s talk about the railroad” because “this is what sets off the IR. This is why this is important” (Feb. 29, 10:14). This leads her to discuss the importance of the steam engine and the railroad, which she attributes to bringing about the IR because the new, more powerful engine revolutionized trains not only for land travel for people, but also for goods (Feb. 29, 12:57). Within these smaller groupings, she constructs a 1-2 minute long description of why those causes are significant and how that cause allowed the IR to take off in Britain.

From here, she defers largely to a more complex cause-effect as she explains how these technological advancements forced people from working out of their homes to working in the factories. She explains how migration to the cities brought about new problems: poor working conditions, child labor, and a less-educated populace (Feb. 29, 49:00). A less-educated populace, she suggests, means people would work for less, would be less likely to advocate for themselves, and not ask questions. This brings her to tell students “some of you are probably saying this doesn’t matter, but the point of us talking about this is to tell you about your rights and what you have. And while you may never study the Industrial Revolution, it does tell you your rights as a worker, so it does make a difference” (March 1, 10:07). While observing this class I wondered what Grace was talking about. Where were these work force changes taking place? When were they taking place? The textbook talks about how Britain and the United States both saw drastic urbanization and the rise of factories, but Grace never draws any distinction between the two nations, and given how she was just talking about “Why Britain?” a student may think she is still

talking about Britain, and wondering what that has to do with their rights as a worker. This comparative approach is unclear and could cause confusion for students without clearly articulating the organizing principles that are being used to bring coherency to the content.

Grace then does a quick review to get all students on the same page. What we find from this quick review, is that she reviews the items that appears she thinks are the most important, which guided by simple, linear, cause and effect relationships.

Real quick, just a review of how we got here. Great Britain was the starting place for the Industrial Revolution. Inventions and increased transportation changed people's lives and work, which will kinda lead us to today. People began working more with machines and in factories. So they're not working in their homes as often, now they're gonna work in factories. Next we are going to talk about how that changes life and the world as people know it (March 1, 11:57).

After this brief review, she quickly shifts to today's topic through simple cause-effect by saying "Ok, the first term I have for you is 'urbanization.' This is the movement of people to cities" (March 1, 12:00). To demonstrate this change, Grace begins by describing the community that students live in as a "pretty rural area" by comparison to the largest nearby city. Without any transition, she then flips back to talking about Britain and says, "and as a result, what used to be small towns with natural resources are now booming. Those natural resources we talked about earlier....these are going to become major players during this time" (March 1, 13:00). She tries to help students understand urbanization by citing a local example. She recounts how when she was in high school, at the same place she currently teaches, there was a population boom in the district, so the school had to make accommodations for the increase in people. It did this by

adding trailers and eventually building a new building. She concluded the comparison by saying “These cities facing urbanization had to do similar things. Questions?” (March 1, 13:30).

Then, she abruptly moves to the next piece of historical information and says ok, the first major industry was the textile industry, which is clothing. This is in large part due to the Spinning Jenny because it increased productivity. When they are able to produce things faster, more people are going to purchase them and be more interested in the material. If I produce soccer uniforms, and if they are cheaper and look just as good as anyone else’s uniforms, why wouldn’t you purchase them from me? So this is going to increase productivity...I’m going to have to produce more. And so we have this increase need for factories and mass production (March 1, 14:45).

She then tells students “I’m gonna give you some figures to show the increase of workers” (March 1, 16:40) and how that impacted life in “factories and factory towns” (March 1, 18:09). She further explains the working conditions of the factories including: long hours, lack of safety, child labor, and low wages. While the second order organizers she is using are unclear, she seems to trying to fit the discussion of mechanization and urbanization into a simple, linear cause-effect relationship but is struggling with how to do so. This may suggest that is she trying to not only address a more complex form of cause-effect, but also how to reconcile that with her reasons for why the Industrial Revolution began in Britain.

Grace then transitions to explaining the “impact” of urbanization. She tells students that people who moved to the cities lived in tenements with poor sanitation, and the cities were filled with pollution (March 1, 23:00). Here she loosely describes how urbanization and the rise of the textile industry impacted both work and home life, although she has yet to specifically state it. Instead, students are to draw that conclusion on their own. She then has students engage in “the

Urban Game” which put students in the role of city planners who had to respond to rapid industrialization and urbanization. After the role play, she asks students “Would you want to live in the city you created?” (March 3, 24:40). She tells students directly that the point of this lesson was for them to understand “that so many people were moving in” all at once and it brought many changes. She explains that many people just accepted this reality and “started giving up and saying ‘well, this is my life. This is how it is’” (March 3, 29:00). To escape the stress, “people turned to the pubs. There was an increase in alcoholism, an increase in crime, more jails, more cemeteries, more death” (March 3, 30:10). This is one of the first times in her teaching that she does not make a tie into present-day society, thereby overlooking the continuities and changes and an opportunity to compare the impact of the revolutions in Britain and the United States. Doing so makes it appear as if this is an issue facing Britain alone, and that the United States was not a part of the IR, when in reality, it was.

She then shifts gears to talking about how unsanitary conditions in the factories made food less safe, as portrayed by Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (March 3, 33:00). This transition is somewhat confusing considering that this was a book written by an American author who was trying to expose the conditions for workers in the meat-packing industry in the United States. By adding this to the discussion, Grace seems to be collapsing the first and second industrial revolutions together, and in essence, covering about 150 years of history. While the textbook frames the Industrial Revolution as something that occurred in Europe from 1750-1850, Grace travels across the Atlantic to explain what was disclosed in *The Jungle*, which was written and published in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Grace wants students to imagine they were consumers during this time and wants them to react to the realities of the food they were eating given the circumstances under which it was prepared, meat packing in particular. After reading several

excerpts from primary sources about the conditions of the meat packing factories, she asks students to consider “What can the government do to combat problems for workers and consumers?” (March 3, 47:30). Her references to *The Jungle* suggests her belief in the historical significance of not only the factories, but also in the power of the literature at the time, which brought these grievances to light. Many historians attribute Sinclair’s work to helping bring about legislation that regulated the food industry in the United States that still exist today. However, this historically significant contribution was left out of Grace’s discussion on the IR as was Sinclair’s historical agency to use his writing to bring about change. Perhaps this would have been discussed if Grace had more time to debrief.

Grace concludes the unit by briefly discussing the lavish lifestyles of the business owners during the same time when people were suffering in tenements and in unsafe working conditions. What is interesting to note, however, is her omission of the revolt of the working class that helped bring about many of the changes to the issues she mentioned. This reality is a significant reason why historians believe the IR is worth talking about. There is historical significance of the IR given the impact of those changes we still see on society today. Instead, students were left to draw those conclusions themselves.

At the end of the unit, Grace and I met to debrief the unit she just taught. I began by asking Grace if she added or omitted any concepts that were not included in the unit plan prior to instruction to which she responded that she added “economic philosophies” such as “capitalism, socialism, communism. Just views on property, views on religion, and then views on revolution” (Grace, 3I, p. 1). She said she decided to add the content because “it was in the book and I didn’t realize it. And the next unit builds on it, so they need to know” (Grace, 3I, p. 2). This was an interesting statement because I did not see a single lesson where this content was taught. This

might be because she neglected to teach about it in the class I observed, or a video might have been missed. But she said she does not think she deviated from her plan of organizing the content.

When asked to reflect on how she tied the content of the two units together, she was unable to provide any clear tie-in and did not refer to the ways in which she planned on doing so prior to teaching the second unit. Instead she only noted that “I guess when we talked about wealth—Rockefeller and stuff, we talked about how---oh he had a really cool place to live and life sucked for everyone else. Versailles was really awesome but life sucked for everyone else. And people got mad because they didn’t have nice things—like the French Revolution” (Grace, 3I, p. 3).

Grace made no mention in her reflection interview of her original intent to use “how governments have to change when people change” and “how society responds to new ideas” as driving first order concepts (Grace, 2I p. 9). She originally had said she planned on using those concepts because they both lend to “social change because the revolution was all about social change” (Grace, 2I, p. 9). She said she kept her organizational structures between the units consistent with her plan as well, although she did not say what those structures were. She said she pretty much just followed the book (Grace, 3I), although there was no evidence of her talking about how the IR served to transition the old world to the new one, which is a major piece of the book’s narrative. Perhaps these ideas were not ones that she intentionally used to drive her content decisions and instead were ones she identified when asked about it in an interview.

### **Teacher #3: Ryan**

Ryan’s course involved in this study was not a traditional one. Inspired by a course he took as an undergraduate, Ryan drafted an outline for a course entitled “Conspiracy theories in

U.S. history” because he thought students would be just as fascinated by it as he was. He wanted to offer it as an elective for upperclassmen in his high school. He frames this course around Olmstead’s (2009) definition of a conspiracy theory, which Olmstead defines as a “proposal about a conspiracy that has yet to be proven” (p. 3).

On the outset, Ryan plans on crafting this entire course around the first order concept of conspiracy theory. Given the unique nature of this course, and of using a single first order concept as the foundation for the entire class, it is worth our time to discuss the nature of conspiracies and conspiracy theories as they relate to what Ryan plans on teaching in this course. Researchers begin their discussion of conspiracy theories by first defining conspiracy, which they have largely agreed includes two or more people (conspirators) colluding (come to a secret understanding) against others (a target group) to achieve a desired outcome, while the theory is an effort to explain a conspiracy that has not been proven (Byford, 2011; Olmstead, 2009; Sunstein & Vermeule, 2009). In addition, conspiracy theories could also be used to offer an alternative to an accepted interpretation of what occurred. Byford (2011) added that a conspiracy theory is worthy of study if it is “large-scale” and has “dramatic social and political” implications (p. 21). Olmstead adds that prior to World War I, most conspiracy theories in the U.S. concerned a belief that outsiders were trying to take control of the U.S. in some capacity. However, as the government gained more power at the start of WWI, the government itself became the focus of concern for many conspiracy theorists. And given that some of the theories that arose during the 20<sup>th</sup> century have proven true over time, such as the conspiracy of the U.S. government to assassinate Fidel Castro in the 1960s, more theories have been birthed and more are believed (Olmstead, 2009; Sunstein & Vermeule, 2009). Adding to that, partisan politicians

have also helped to legitimize conspiracy theories by taking the time to investigate theories that pertain to the involvement of their opponents in some kind of conspiracy.

When it came time to putting together the proposal for the course, Ryan worried that “there’s no way [the school’s administrators] are gonna want me to actually teach this” (Ryan, 11, p. 8). In order to secure permission to teach the course, he knew he needed a “more systematic method” for teaching it, so he pulled from several different sources to craft the outline of the course including: Kathryn Olmsted’s book *Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy: World War I to 9/11*; a website created by Mark Cheatham from Cumberland University that highlighted conspiracies in U.S. history; and resources “I’ve kind of picked and chose and adapted and changed” (Ryan, 11, p.8). Ryan submitted his proposal to add the course to the high school program of study, and was granted permission by the school board to move forward with this elective. Given the uniqueness of this course, I decided to follow Ryan through his introductory material during the first few days of the semester to better understand how he frames this course for his students (Ryan, 11. p. 1) in addition to the other two units.

**Context: Beliefs about history and history education.** Ryan believes the overall purpose of the discipline of history is to preserve, document, and gain “understanding of the human condition across space and time” because it “informs and molds our cultural, religious, economic, civic, governmental and environmental understanding and experiences” (Ryan, Qaire Q1). He argues that the role of history education then should be to “provide the future citizen a solid and accurate understanding of the past while drawing connections with the present” (Ryan, Qaire Q4), and that his role as a history teacher is to “present students with historical questions in which they are tasked with answering...” while “conveying relevance” to students (Ryan, Qaire Q6). He says that history is organized in a way that helps people “learn and understand the cause

and effect relationship among historical events” (Ryan, Qaire Q2), and argues the best way to do this is to “tell a story” (Ryan, Qaire Q7) so that students can “connect with and relate to” it as they “begin to gain deeper understanding of a historical topic” (Ryan, Qaire Q7).

**Context: Approach to unit planning.** Since he designed this course from scratch, and given that no textbook on this topic exists, he compiles his own resources to help craft his content and pedagogies. He relies heavily upon Cheatham’s website of conspiracy theories in U.S. history, largely because of the repository of resources listed on the blog that Ryan uses to “put together some sort of coherent story” (Ryan, 2I, p. 3). He also uses the Encyclopedia of Conspiracy Theories, and Olmsted’s *Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy, World War I to 9/11*. He wants to use these different sources in particular because “they take a slightly different look” at conspiracy theories. For example, he says, one of the sources focuses more on the political impact, while another looks at the impact the conspiracy theory has on the American people, while another focuses on the wider culture of America in order to give students “multiple ways of looking” at individual conspiracy theories (Ryan, 2I, p. 11). This comment suggests he may focus on perspective taking and the interpretation of history, as well as the corroboration of evidence, all of which he argued were important to history education in his questionnaire.

**Introductory Unit: Planning to teach.** For this introductory unit, Ryan says he has three goals, 1) to give a course overview, 2) to introduce primary sources and teach how to contextualize, analyze, and interpret them, and 3) to have students craft a definition of conspiracy theory, which he will use to guide which conspiracy theories he will teach the rest of the semester (Ryan, 1I). He plans on pulling a “whole bunch of primary source analysis worksheets from NARA (The National Archives and Records Administration) to help [students]

ask critical questions” of primary sources they will be examining, such as: posters, pictures, textual documents, then, “I go to the various books of primary sources I have to kind of pull some examples for them to work with” (Ryan, 1I, p. 7). He wants students to learn how to analyze a primary document and contextualize it. He is not sure which ones he will use exactly, but he plans on giving students excerpts from diaries written during the Great Depression. He wants students to learn how to analyze primary documents outside the scope of conspiracy theories because he says he just wants to “focus on the skill and not so much on the content” (Ryan, 1I, p. 8). While he focuses on the importance of contextualizing primary sources, he falls short of saying anything about the importance of contextualizing the conspiracy theories themselves.

Ryan says he will then pull information from Olmstead’s *Real Enemies*, which provides an overview of conspiracy theories and some examples. He will then have students consider what makes a conspiracy worth their time to study. At the end of this unit, he wants students to understand how the conspiracy theories are “important to them” (Ryan, 1I, p. 3), and how they potentially “impact [them] today” (Ryan, 1I, p. 4). But ultimately, he wants to organize the content around studying specific conspiracy theories that fit the definition of conspiracy theory students will create. He adds that he has a few conspiracy theories in his mind that he expects he would talk about because he believes they would likely fit any definition students may create. Those include: Salem Witchcraft Trials, Freemasons, McCarthyism, JFK, and Watergate, just to name a few (Ryan, 1I, p. 2).

**Introductory unit: What is taught.** I observe as Ryan opens the first class period of the course by having students play a mystery game where they have to solve a whodunit-type scenario using evidence that has been provided to them. Upon completion of the game, Ryan

tells students the purpose of this activity is to show them what a historian does. He says “a historian is like a detective” in that when the historian digs for details, he or she is finding evidence to help him/her tell a story. The historian then “has to take these different clues, maybe a government document, a diary entry,...and takes these to try and craft a reasonable story” (Jan 6, 32:40). He adds that while a detective may be able to uncover the truth behind what happened, a historian never really knows for sure.

He then spends a few days introducing students to primary and secondary sources to help them understand how “we will piece these conspiracy theories together” (Jan. 7, 9:40), although he has yet to define a conspiracy theory with or for students. He has students practice contextualizing, sourcing and analyzing various documents, (Jan. 8, 26:20) as well as identifying bias in those documents. He then explains that for this class, he will bring primary sources in for them to analyze, but he wants them to understand that the “key to actually running a successful conspiracy is secrecy” which means finding primary sources might be difficult because they are kept hidden (Jan. 8, 34:25). However, Ryan tells them that learning “how to analyze primary sources” will help them “be [better] able to deal with conspiracy theories” (Jan. 8, 48:12).

Even before explaining what a conspiracy theory is, Ryan introduces students to the Flat Earth Society (FES), which is a group of people who believe the earth is flat, that gravity does not exist, and that the earth is moving in a constant upward motion. After having students investigate the FES’s claims, he asks students if “studying this conspiracy is worth our time?” (Jan. 12, 4:50). Students are asked to answer this question, with no frame of reference as to what a conspiracy theory is. As a result students may not know how best to craft an argument to answer the question. When students say no because of the overwhelming amount of evidence contradicting the thesis of the FES, Ryan argues that, “the purpose of this is to show you that not

all conspiracy theories are equal, not all are worth our time to study” (Jan. 12, 5:00), although he never clearly articulates how or if the FLS is a conspiracy theory—who is seeking power, over whom, and why.

Ryan then asks students to come up with a list of characteristics of conspiracy theories that are worth their time to study (Jan. 12), again with no definition of a conspiracy theory to draw upon. After students have brainstormed a list, he then has students read an excerpt from Olmsted’s piece because “she has gone to great lengths to connect how conspiracies have become central in American history, culture, and democracy even though the conspiracy or conspiracy theory undermines democratic principles” (Jan. 14, 44:00). This statement suggests Ryan’s use of historical significance, as well as continuity and change, by suggesting students understand the impact conspiracies and conspiracy theories have on the U.S. both then and now. And although students spend time crafting characteristics and definitions of conspiracy theory and what makes them worth their time to study, Ryan does not review any of those definitions in class, and does not offer a single synthesized definition to them that each of them will use throughout the rest of the course, although he does say that “I see this list [of characteristics] as something that will change throughout the semester, in that... as we look at certain conspiracy theories, do we need to change the list/alter it given what we’ve learned about conspiracy theories” (Jan. 12, 25:20).

On day six of this introductory unit, I listen as Ryan provides students with Olmstead’s (2009) reading and asks them to use it to learn how she defines: conspiracy, conspiracy theory, and conspiracism (Jan. 14, 7:30). After students filled out a graphic organizer over the reading, he debriefs by asking them what they found interesting in the reading, before asking how Olmstead (2009) defines conspiracy. Ryan clarifies Olmstead’s definition of conspiracy as

“when two or more people, collude, work together to gain power, to break the law” (Jan. 14, 48:50). He adds that Americans might be more susceptible to believing conspiracy theories because “As Americans we enjoy our freedom but are also aware of the inherent danger of that freedom. With freedom comes risk based on people that might come here to take advantage of our freedoms to abuse power, make money, or whatever” (Jan. 14, 52:40). His comment suggests that when people conspire, others lose freedom, but he also clouds Olmstead’s definition by suggesting that to “make money, or whatever” may also constitute a conspiracy although he just previously defined conspiracy theories as when people collude to “gain power, to break the law.” He adds that Olmstead also makes these “important comments”:

- 1) [Conspiracy theories] are prominent in the United States because information about them is so readily available;
- 2) not all conspiracy theory believers are on the fringe of society. One third of the population believes in a conspiracy theory...;
- 3) ...there is a mistrust in the government
- 4) people believe in conspiracy theories because they have come true before...;
- 5) we allow a lot of people in, from different cultures/religions and they come in and that could bring in people we don’t trust;
- 6) subversion—a systematic attempt by people working within the system to take away our freedoms...; and,
- 7) [conspiracy theories] tend to focus on wartime or tragic events (Jan. 14, 53:30).

He offers students no explanation for why these statements are “important comments,” instead, he moves onto telling students that now “we are going to begin by starting with a real conspiracy before the notion of conspiracy theories became popular” (Jan. 14, 1:02:40): the Salem

Witchcraft trials. This opening statement in discussion about the Salem Witchcraft Trials is unclear for those who know the history of the Salem Witchcraft Trials because in order for something to be labeled a “conspiracy,” it has to be proven true. Given that there has never been any historical evidence to prove witches were engaged in a conspiracy in the United States in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it still remains a conspiracy theory. What he might be suggesting however, is that certain people in Salem believed their community was plagued by witches. Without a clear definition of who the conspirators were, it is difficult to determine if the Witchcraft Trials were a conspiracy or conspiracy theory.

Over the next couple class periods, Ryan opens the discussion on Salem Witchcraft Trials by laying the historical context of society in Salem, Massachusetts in the early 1690s, one founded on Puritanism. He explains the role that religion played both in government and in everyday society. In an effort to protect their society, he argues, residents sought to “ensure the population understood the religious beliefs of their version of Christianity.” (Jan. 14, 1:05:00), and if someone did not live by those standards, s/he could no longer live in that community. the Puritans’ deep-rooted faith in God meant that they also believed “satan is active in the world” and catastrophes were a result of him, and “Satan actively recruits” followers, which meant the Puritans constantly looked for signs of him (Jan. 15, 4:30).

Ryan says that this belief in satan caused several residents of Salem to believe there were women engaged in witchcraft who were actively working on satan’s behalf to bring destruction on the people of Salem. Ryan describes how people in Salem fell “strangely ill;” teenagers began “exhibiting strange behavior;” and doctors suspected the behavior had a “supernatural origin” (Jan. 15, 9:00). Eventually, many people in town were diagnosed with “hysteria” and the people believed that it was the direct result of “witchcraft and satan” (Jan. 15, 12:00), and yet the only

evidence the people had to justify their assertion was the behavior of those who had been diagnosed with it, such as: babbling incoherently, and contortions. He described how these suspicions led to investigations of the suspected witches, and ultimately the “trials” that resulted in the hangings of several suspected witches.

At the end of his discussion on the Salem Witchcraft Trials, Ryan argues that the suspected witches were treated as if they were “guilty until proven innocent” which he says “is the opposite of our legal system is supposed to work” (Jan. 21, 30:00). What is important to note here is that while Ryan mentions “our legal system,” there was no “United States” at the time and therefore, no legal system as we know it. This begins to raise some questions about Ryan’s use of presentism and his lack of historically contextualizing the witch trials. Ryan continues by adding that several legal rights we now have were not applicable to the suspected witches back then. For example, today, he says, the state has to provide evidence beyond reasonable doubt that someone committed a crime, a jury has to find him/her guilty, and the justice system must adhere to due process, none of which existed in 1692. Ryan argues that these rights are meant to “defend the idea of personal freedom” and to protect it (Jan. 21, 35:40). He adds that when the suspected witches were coerced into confessing, that process “flies in the face of what we see as the basis of our legal system” (Jan. 21, 38:40), and that today’s Miranda rights are meant to protect citizens from that kind of behavior. He reminds students that while the constitution did not exist at this point, the Salem Witchcraft Trials were used as an example of what not to do, and thereby served as “the model for the legal system and our constitutional rights” (Jan. 21, 39:00). Ryan does not, however, provide evidence for how this is so. Ryan continues by saying eventually the accusations of witchcraft, and the subsequent trials ceased as the concern over “spectator evidence” grew, which community leaders viewed as “unreliable” (Jan. 21, 55:40). Meanwhile,

several people sat in jail accused and awaiting release, which Ryan claims resulted in the present day right to a speedy trial (Jan. 21, 1:03:00), although he does not offer evidence to substantiate his claim.

In crafting the story of the witchcraft trials, Ryan never articulates how he would organize his content, but he ends up employing simple cause-effect structures to provide a timeline of events related to the witchcraft trials. However, when stepping back and summarizing the event and its impact on today, he attempts to employ larger cause and effect organizers as he suggests specific ways our legal system has changed as result of it, but offers no evidence for causality, which makes its use difficult to argue. Instead, his description relies heavily on presentism, which is when people view the past “subconsciously (rather than consciously) through their own ethical, moral and cultural perspectives formed based on their own personal experiences” (Huijgen & Holthuis, 2015, p. 50) as he made constant comparisons of “then and now” absent historical context.

In this historical example, Ryan identifies who the conspirators were (the witches) and what the illegal act was (physically hurting people), but failed to clearly articulate what the “desired outcome” for these witches are? Was it just to hurt people, or was there some larger motive, which Byford (2011) argued was a requirement of a conspiracy theory worthy of study. However, Ryan never tied these details back to any definition of conspiracy, conspiracy theory, or to the characteristics of a conspiracy theory. Instead, students were expected to draw these conclusions on their own.

At the beginning of this unit, Ryan argued that he wanted students to evaluate historical evidence to learn about how conspiracy theories impact students today, but when talking about the Salem Witchcraft Trials, Ryan did not provide students an opportunity to ask historical

questions nor engage with sources, instead he presents those sources as evidence in his explanation. In spite of his argument that the evidence used to convict people of witchcraft in Salem was unreliable spectator-evidence, students were not given an opportunity to make those evaluative claims or arguments. It was also this very argument that pointed to the fact that the “conspiracy” he presented was actually still a “conspiracy theory” because it had not been adequately proven.

During the reflective interview following the unit, I asked Ryan if he added or omitted any concepts from what he had originally planned he said “No, I don’t think I did” (Ryan, 2I, p. 2) before remembering that “I did add subversion as a concept...subversive...which plays well into the fear Americans have and what makes them especially vulnerable and more likely than others to believing in conspiracy theories” (Ryan, 2I, p. 2). When asked if he changed any of the organizational structures he had intended on using, Ryan said “I don’t think I did” (Ryan, 2I, p. 2). He also made both of these statements without reiterating what those things are.

**Unit one: Planning to teach.** Before Ryan teaches his first unit, I interview him about his planning for the unit. When I ask Ryan what the title of his first full unit is, he says “I don’t necessarily have a title, per se...” but it is about “the Freemasons and it’s about McCarthyism” (Ryan, 2I, p. 4). Ryan says that “the overarching connection” he is going to be making in this unit is how the “definition of freedom changes depending on circumstances” (Ryan, 2I, p. 4) thereby emphasizing freedom as another central first order concept of this unit, although it is largely already implicit in the definition of conspiracy theory given that for one to exercise power to take more power, or engage in illegal acts, does infringe of freedoms of others. This overarching connection is also consistent with his beliefs about the purpose of history is to understand how the human condition “informs and molds our...civic, governmental...

understanding and experiences” (Ryan, Qaire Q1), as well as his beliefs that “when people conspire, others lose freedom” (Jan. 14, 51:30).

His discussion of what he plans to teach about the Freemasons was incredibly vague, which he attributes to the lack of verifiable information about them because “they don’t want us to know something. They are pretty good at keeping it quiet, which only fuels that they are up to something; they keep quiet. They have secret hand shakes, code words, knocks,...they still exist” (Ryan, 2I, p. 5). He does not offer any explanation for how the Freemasons fit into conspiracy theories or how this particular example is worth study other than “they still exist.” It is unclear as to whether or not the Freemasons are engaged in some kind of conspiracy or if they are the victims of it. It is worth noting here that Hofstadter (1963) offers one way to define the conspiracy theory about Freemasons by arguing that the Freemasons (conspirators) are a “fraternity of the privileged” that are “considered to be a standing conspiracy against the republican government” (targeted group) in order to gain political power and have their own set of rules (desired outcome)...by nearly monopolizing political offices” (p. 79). However, it is unclear how Ryan is conceiving of conspiracy/theory related to the Freemasons.

In this unit, Ryan will also teach about what he calls “the conspiracy that literally was Joseph McCarthy...” who “literally was accusing people for his own gain that really weren’t communists” because he was trying to “find the communists among us” (Ryan, 2I, p. 4). He does not, however, frame the conspiracy theory. Given that collusion is a pivotal component of a conspiracy, what McCarthy did could not be classified as a conspiracy. What McCarthy did in accusing people of being communists was not acting as a conspirator, as he was out in the open about his accusations, but instead he was a perpetrator of a conspiracy theory that suggested that communists (conspirators) were infiltrating the U.S. government and its society (its target group)

to somehow bring it down or take it over (desired outcome) under the veil of secrecy. In doing so, McCarthy did gain political power and hoped to gain power, but that was a byproduct of perpetuating and investigating his own conspiracy theory. What is unclear in the description of what he will teach relative to McCarthy is how he will present the conspiracy theory. Is McCarthy a conspirator, or did he perpetuate a conspiracy theory, or something else?

Ryan's inclusion of the Freemasons and McCarthyism in the discussion of conspiracy theories may suggest that Ryan does not have a clear conception of a conspiracy theory or how the concept of conspiracy theory applies to these historical examples. Given that conspiracy theories need a clearly identified group of people who collude to gain power over someone else to achieve a desired outcome, it is not immediately clear how the Freemasons and McCarthyism fit here.

In addition to these two historical examples, Ryan says he will include other concepts to contextualize McCarthyism and the related conspiracy theory, such as: subversion, patriotism, Red Scare, and McCarthyism. He wants to teach these concepts because he doesn't "want [students] to lose sight of some of the impact [conspiracy theories have had] on our way of life and our culture" (Ryan, 2I, p. 6), although he does not provide an explanation for how either of these examples did exactly that. He does suggest use of historical significance, however, in his description of conspiracy theories' "impact on our way of life and our culture" (Ryan, 2I, p. 6).

Ryan says he will also be sure to remind students that history is often "disputed as a result of various interpretations of historical evidence, and as more evidence becomes available what we know about something may change" (Ryan, 2I, p. 6). However, given that there is no textbook for this course, nor is there a widely-accepted narrative concerning conspiracy theories, it is difficult to determine if he is omitting any concepts from his instruction for this unit as he is

continuing to construct his own history. He says he will omit some historical information on the Freemasons strictly based on the limited availability of historical evidence about them (Ryan, 2I, p. 8). He will also exclude content such as a deeper explanation of communism or socialism, because he says is “outside the scope of conspiracy theories” (Ryan, 2I, p. 8), which may suggest there might be a lack of historical context for each of these conspiracy theories.

Although I had not yet asked him how he planned to organize his content, he started to suggest the cause-effect and historical significance organizational structures that might underpin his content choices. When I asked specifically how he would organize his content for this unit, he said he will present the Freemasons and McCarthyism in chronological order with the Freemasons coming first, and McCarthyism coming second (Ryan, 2I, p. 8) because he wants to “keep with students’ ideas of linear progression of things” (Ryan, 2I, p. 9) without suggesting what that progression may be. He plans on linking these two conspiracy theories together with the first order concept of “freedom” (Ryan, 2I, p. 9) and the progression of the restriction of freedom through the Freemasons and McCarthyism, including the suspicions and “false accusations of innocent people” like what was seen in Salem (Ryan, 2I, p. 5). What is unclear at this point is how freedom is defined in these two contexts, and how the relationship between freedom and the Freemasons is similar and different to the relationship between freedom and McCarthyism. Ryan argues that the government tried to limit the freedoms of the Freemasons to peacefully assemble because it was suspect of their activities, while McCarthy tried to limit the freedoms of everyday Americans to have any political view they wanted. This approach suggests some early use of continuity and change as it relates to freedom. It seems as if Ryan is focusing more on how the government or a government official sought to limit the freedom of

conspirators as opposed to how conspirators seek to limit the freedoms of others, which he suggested earlier in the study.

Here is where the incompleteness of Ryan's conception of conspiracy theories arises again, this time with freedom intentionally added to the mix. In the context of conspiracy theories, conspirators seek power so as to wield influence over others, thereby reducing their personal freedom, because freedom, in part, is the ability to act without being influenced by others. Relative to the Freemasons, it could be that the government was fearful of being able to act if a secret society was working deliberately against it; therefore, the government sought to limit their freedom in an effort to preserve its own power. With McCarthy, the issue is whether or not the alleged conspirators (Communists) were seeking to limit the power of the U.S. people, or were his efforts resulting in limiting the freedom of those suspected of conspiring against the government?

Although Ryan never explicitly states the use of historical significance, or continuity and change, as possible organizers in this discussion, he does say that "at some point there will be a little discussion to kinda bring this whole idea of moldable freedoms home and will bring it current" (Ryan, 2I, p. 10) and even cites an example. He says "now think about this... we have presidential candidates [today] talking about preventing Muslims from entering the country. What freedoms do we give up at the airport with the promise of security? What information do we give up to the federal government?" Adding that he will use "these two case studies on conspiracies to drive home this idea of how our freedom is molded by the issues of the day" (Ryan, 2I, p. 10), thereby suggesting perhaps that loss of freedom is a real possibility if a conspiracy is successful. This again substantiates the argument that this unit will be largely driven by the restrictions of freedom and malleability of freedom, but in this discussion,

conspiracy theory has lost its importance and the conspiracies, or conspiracy theories that exist become unclear.

**Unit 1: What is taught.** I begin observing Ryan teach his next unit that begins on Wednesday, January 27, 2016. Instead of opening this unit with setting the historical context like he did with the Salem Witch Craft trial, he instead, opens his unit by asking students to list all of the things they think about when they hear the word “fraternity” (Jan. 27, 25:30). Ryan then provides students with a background of freemasonry calling it a “fraternal organization” made up of mostly white men whose goal was to “make good men better,” and explains that we do not know much about them because they are highly secretive. He argues that secrecy combined with an increase in membership is what increases the government’s and the peoples’ suspicion of the freemasons (Jan. 27, 49:30). He explains that in an effort to erase Freemasons from existence, law enforcement filed charges of “immorality and lewdness” against them (Jan. 27, 50:00). He adds that even the Catholic Church eventually accused the freemasons of conspiracy of trying to undermine it and its teachings and suspected them of satanic activity. This suspicion resulted in the Pope condemning freemasonry and excommunicating all masons. Ryan then asks students

So what’s the conspiracy here? Conspiracy Theorists will tell you it’s no accident there are triangles on our nation’s symbols. Look at all of them. They look at the Latin term on money...here’s a breakdown of some of the suspicions. There’s a Latin term “Secular New Order” on the back of the \$1 bill. The illuminated eye—while it’s Washington’s eye, it’s supposedly based on Lucifer. Number at the bottom of the pyramid that equal 1776, but if you do some weird calculations, you get 666. So, did the freemasons really have something to do with our nation’s founding? (Jan. 27, 54:00).

He then gives students a 30-page academic journal article on the Freemasons and asks students to read it to find similarities and differences between what he just described and what this author argues relative to the Freemasons, but he has yet to offer who the conspirators are, who is the target of the conspiracy and what their overall goal is.

Ryan then asks students to consider:

Did the Freemasons really have something to do with our nation's founding? What's the likelihood they would put that much time into hiding symbols in the dollar bill? I only gave you a snippet because I want you to compare what I told you with what is written in this document (Jan. 27, 1:00:00).

He then provides them an excerpt from a 30-page document about the freemasons. He says he wants students to understand the "level of involvement the freemasons have in conspiracies" by having students do some of their own research, and read about the conspiracies he provides for them (Jan. 29, 13:45). Students quickly discover that the freemasons have been accused of "raging a war against Islam and Christianity" and organized religion in general (Jan. 29, 41:30).

Ryan also explains to students that not only were freemasons believed to be behind the sinking of the Titanic, but are also currently controlling Hollywood to the extent that they use "sci-fi movies to introduce new ideas to the new world" (Jan 29, 44:20). After this activity, students might have been more aware of the potential conspiracy theory surrounding the freemasons (conspirators) who target/ed various groups of people (religion, passengers on the Titanic, American moviegoers) to try to "introduce new ideas." But he offers no explanation of a law potentially being broken, which he argues is a qualification for something to be a conspiracy.

Ryan concludes his discussion on the Freemasons by telling students "We have no knowledge of what they do" so,

What difficulty does that give us with historical perspective? We don't know a lot. And last semester, I didn't include the Freemasons...because I wasn't able to find enough reliable information on their history that wasn't tainted by misinformation the freemasons were putting out there. They say 'the conspiracy theory about us is misleading/fantasy.'

But this is what makes them interesting and yet difficult to understand (Jan. 29, 6:28).

What is unclear to me, however, is what the Freemasons think the conspiracy theory about them is, or if there is a commonly accepted conspiracy theory about them. Do the freemasons seek control of the United States government? Did they gain control of the United States government at its founding and now secretly run it? Are they responsible for one or more isolated incidents like the sinking of the Titanic? In addition, it is unclear how Ryan gathered information or misinformation about the Freemasons. Again, students were not given the opportunity to ask questions that led to an investigation, nor were they provided primary sources to analyze and determine how credible they were or were not. Instead, Ryan made this judgment on behalf of his students.

Weaved throughout the discussion of the freemasons is the conversation of the stand off in Oregon beginning in January 2016 when armed militants occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Students often ask Ryan questions related to the standoff as the situation intensifies. Ryan argues that those who occupied the wildlife refuge in Oregon are claiming that a government conspiracy is underway because the government is trying to steal land belonging to the American people. Ryan affirms that this is the perfect example of a conspiracy theory. He describes updates throughout January and early February in real time. He does not, however, show any relationships between this conspiracy theory, and any conspiracy theory related to the Freemasons, nor does he indicate any difference between conspiracy theory and conspiracy

groups. Given that there is significant misinformation about what is happening in Oregon, Ryan argues that it is hard to understand what is happening citing that both sides are giving different details. He explains that the protesters said the government officials were shooting at them, although they were unarmed, thereby implying that the use of force may be a possible indicator of the truthfulness of their claim of a conspiracy being underway. We learn later that the FBI's account was accurate—that the people occupying the federal building were, in fact, armed which led to the FBI going after them (Feb. 1). While this standoff in Oregon and the underlying conspiracy theory used to justify the occupation of the wildlife refuge would have provided an opportunity for Ryan to make comparisons between the other conspiracies, Ryan only describes it in light of a present-day conspiracy theory.

I listen as Ryan continues his instruction with the introduction of the conspiracy theory surrounding the New World Order (NWO) because “it’s interesting how all of these groups, the Freemasons, the New World Order, and the Illuminati are connected” (Feb. 1, 4:25). Even though Ryan never mentioned in the planning stages that he would address the NWO or Illuminati, he gives students a short article that provides background on the NWO, and its supposed role in the United States and its government. He notes that, “it is interesting the way the ideas/conspiracies that are fundamental to the New World Order can still be found today” (Feb. 4, 7:00). Ryan describes the central argument surrounding the NWO (the conspirators) as it being in charge of the government—all of the world’s governments (desired outcome) thereby exerting its control over mankind (target group). He suggests that there are connections between the NWO and the Freemasons, and said that many believe the Freemasons are a “part of the NWO” (Feb. 4, 10:00). He then encourages students to read the article and find commonalities between what they learn about the NWO, the Freemasons and the Oregon protestors, although he

has yet to clearly articulate the conspirators in the Oregon situation (Feb 4, 8:00). He offers no additional commentary as to the importance of the NWO or how it fits into this course or unit.

In the first half of this unit, Ryan seemingly employs several organizational structures as he transforms the content for his students. First, he chose to teach particular conspiracy theories that met the criteria for a conspiracy theory set forth by Olmstead, et al.: two or more people (conspirators) colluding against others (target group) to achieve a desired outcome. He argues that these criteria help determine what makes a particular conspiracy more worthy of study over another. He attempts to show the comparisons between each conspiracy theory, as well as the differences that make each one unique in spite of those commonalities, but falls short of that goal. For example, he failed to show the distinction that in the case of the Freemasons, the government was the one weaving the conspiracy theory while in the Oregon case, it was the occupiers who wove the conspiracy theory and argued that the government was a conspirator.

For the second half of this unit, Ryan switches the focus from a conspiracy group that allegedly attempted to seize power and influence (Freemasons), to a single man who alleged that others were responsible for trying to seize power and influence, and as a result seized greater power for himself. Ryan defines the second Red Scare/McCarthyism as a time in American history immediately following the end of WWII when the United States and the Soviet Union were engaged in a Cold War, as the two superpowers fought to preserve and expand their respective interests. He describes how during this time, Joseph McCarthy, a junior senator from Wisconsin, uses his position in the Senate to falsely accuse members of government of being communists (conspirators) who were infiltrating the American government (target group) to subvert American democracy (desired outcome). Ryan explains that in the beginning, people believed McCarthy's accusations, which resulted in blacklisting of Hollywood elite,

imprisonment of accused communist spies, and even execution for others. Not long thereafter, “people became skeptical of McCarthy’s claims, and his influence quickly waned, although the effects of what he did were long-lasting” (Ryan, 2I, p. 4-5).

Ryan opens the second half of the unit by asking students “What do you think of when you think of freedom?” (Feb. 10, 6:20). After students brainstorm what freedom means, he tells them “keep that in your mind” because he will revisit it later (Feb. 10, 9:00). He then opens a lecture on communism, which serves as a foundation for the success of what he calls the “McCarthy witch-hunts” (Feb. 10, 13:55). He makes a subtle comparison to Salem when he argues that these “witch-hunts” had a “profound impact on American society” (Feb. 10, 16:00), suggesting McCarthyism holds a degree of historical significance given its relevance to today. Ryan tells students that during their study of McCarthyism, they will consider:

- 1) the impact on American society, which creates the need to talk about it;
- 2) Reasons for American fear of communism because we need to understand the Cold War to understand how McCarthy did what he did;
- 3) McCarthy’s background and ambitions;
- 4) the House Un-American Activities Committee and the Hollywood 10;
- 5) Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs;
- 6) The methods McCarthy used;
- 7) The victims...we know he had a conspiracy that was unfounded;
- 8) Why did McCarthyism fail? And it did fail. Quite spectacularly (Feb. 10, 17:00).

What is immediately unclear in this outline provided to students is how Ryan is conceiving of “conspiracy” given that a conspiracy typically is something that has been proven, but he

immediately characterizes it as unfounded. Instead, what he is talking about is a conspiracy theory. What is unclear, however, is McCarthy's role in the conspiracy theory.

This outline for the unit suggests Ryan's use of historical significance and the "need to talk about it," (Feb. 10, 18:00) and its impact on today. He also begins to lay out the simple cause-effect relationships between the who, what, when, where, why and how of McCarthyism, while also alluding to the potential use of more complex cause-effect organizers as he talks about what made McCarthyism possible, and what made it fail. And although Ryan never explicitly states it, he seems to be framing this half of the unit around the first order concepts of McCarthyism, communism, and freedom.

From this lecture, Ryan immediately transitions into a discussion that explains "how McCarthy was able to get away with this" (Feb. 10, 17:25)—falsely accusing people of being communists. He opens his explanation by contextualizing his answer in the realities of the time. This well-developed explanation, driven by cause-effect organizers, lasts the remaining thirty minutes of class. His discussion begins at the end of WWII when the fight between the United States and the Soviet Union over "influence and control over Europe and the Far East" began (Feb. 10, 17:40). Ryan explains that alliances immediately emerged via "NATO and the Warsaw Pact" with clear lines being drawn between communist countries, and democratic nations. He explains how the world is divided into what he calls "two spheres: east and west" (Feb. 10, 21:55) where the west favored democracy and freedom, while the east favored communism. Ryan describes the United States' fear of the spread of communism immediately following the end of the war, and then provides maps that show how communism is spreading to nations whose economies were struggling immediately following the war (Feb. 10, 24:00). He explains how at the same time that communism was expanding, the two nations were engaged in an arms

race, and people found it perplexing that not long after the United States developed the atomic-bomb, the Soviet Union did as well. He says it was believed that the only way this could have happened was if communist spies stole secrets from the United States. Ryan says, “this becomes central to McCarthy’s witch-hunts” (Feb. 10, 29:00). Ryan claims that Americans no longer feel safe as the rivalry between the two nations continues to grow, and the arms race intensifies. He says McCarthy ends up preying off those fears (Feb. 10, 33:00) and “jumps on the scene claiming that communists had infiltrated the State department” (Feb. 10, 34:00).

Ryan then explains how it was this historical reality that gave McCarthy a platform to use “his position to wage an anti-communist crusade” that included: denouncing public officials by accusing them of being communists that are infiltrating the government, and holding controversial hearings on these accusations with little or not proof. This crusade ultimately results not only in some people losing their jobs, going to prison or being executed, but also in McCarthy seizing more power for himself (Feb. 10, 36:00). He explains that McCarthy was a politically ambitious man who was not yet well-known, but wanted to become known nationally, so he needed an issue, something to “make him known” (Feb. 10: 40:15). Ryan says that since McCarthy aspired to run for president, he needed something to help him reach every American. “How better to do that than to find the enemy among us seeking to do us harm?” (Feb. 10, 42:00). Ryan explains how McCarthy’s strategy exploits Americans’ fear of communism, and how McCarthy uses manipulation of reality to advance his agenda and gain credibility from the American people. Ryan tells students he will elaborate on McCarthy’s specific strategy next week. Given his consistent reference of McCarthy seizing power and influence, and given that there has been little to no description of what the conspiracy theory is, students may not understand that McCarthy’s role in this theory is simply as a theorist, not a conspirator.

Ryan opens the next class period asking students to provide examples of “freedoms.” Students share examples of rights expressed in the United States Constitution such as: speech, religion, press, and the right to bear arms. One student says “well, you can’t yell fire but you have freedom of speech” (Feb. 16, 10:00). Ryan uses that example to ask students if rights or freedoms are absolute, afterall, this comment suggests that “you’re worried about getting caught...so does that mean your rights are not absolute?” (Feb. 16, 10:52). Students agree that their freedoms had restrictions because to yell “fire!” is “dangerous” and “incites fear” (Feb. 16, 15:20).

Ryan asks students to keep these ideas in mind as they read an article reviewing Eric Foner’s book, *The Story of American Freedom*, where Foner discusses American freedom through history. After students read the article, Ryan asks them what they took away from it. A student responds that “freedom is malleable” (Feb. 16, 30:40), which means “it is moldable, changeable” (Feb. 16, 30:50). Ryan agrees and adds that there are also almost always two sides to a freedom argument. He cites the American Civil War as an example by describing how one side was fighting for freedom from slavery, while the other side was fighting for freedom from government intrusion. Ryan then offers another example by asking students to describe the difference between a “terrorist” and a “freedom fighter” (Feb. 16, 36:00). When students sit in silence, he suggests that the difference exists in the perspectives of the people you ask. He then asks them how the American colonists may describe George Washington versus how the British may describe him. Ryan concludes this part of the discussion adding that “freedom isn’t absolute; it does change” (Feb. 16, 37:00). In these examples, he attempted to situate the discussion and application of freedom from different historical perspectives, which show some

use of continuity and change related to freedom and suggests that he might use these structures throughout the rest of this unit.

Ryan builds on the definition of freedom by explaining the difference between positive and negative liberty, and how one's perspective shapes a definition of freedom. He describes negative liberty as a type that represents freedom from government interference while positive liberty is the existence of conditions that enable individuals to accomplish their goals as a result of government intervention (Feb. 16, 38:00). He then asks students which one of those types of liberty McCarthy is using. Ryan describes McCarthy as the "prime example of positive liberty meaning the goals of everyday people aren't attainable if the government doesn't step in," which he said was interesting because that was contradictory to the Republican platform (Feb. 16, 39:00). He segues into personal political freedoms by asking students if it is "illegal to be a Communist?" (Feb. 16, 41:00). Students overwhelmingly agree that no, it is not illegal to be a Communist, citing freedoms expressly stated in the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution. Ryan agrees and then tells students that during the next class period he will ask them to answer "how is it that McCarthy was able to make it illegal to be a communist, if you have the right to freedom of speech, expression, and to petition the government," thereby furthering his use of continuity and change as it relates to freedom as students begin to compare what McCarthy did in the 1950s with American freedoms, and what the students believe freedom is today (Feb. 16, 44:00). What remains unclear, however, is how freedom relates to conspiracy or conspiracy theories.

Ryan seemingly uses several second order concepts in his continued discussion of freedom. He opens the discussion with a review of the realities of American political culture in the 1950s, which lays the framework for McCarthyism to gain a foothold in American politics. Then, he shifts the focus of the discussion to the first order concept of freedom. He explains that

minimum wage is an example of positive liberty because the government is intervening, adding its presence by saying ‘you must pay people at least this amount’....what is an example of negative liberty? This is often talked about in the form of taxes. The government can shape what you do through taxes (Feb. 18, 14:20).

He argues that “both sides of the [freedom] argument are equally as valid...” and asks “so how do you find one to be more valuable than the other?...There are two sides to the freedom debate, so how do you come to a consensus as to what freedom is?” (Feb. 18, 19:10).

He then shifts back to describing more potential causes that gave credence to McCarthy’s claims. He says that initially, McCarthy’s accusation that 205 communists have infiltrated in the U.S. State Department and were “shaping policy in the state department” (Feb. 18, 21:09) gained little traction because of the lack of evidence. However, he says, the U.S. was engaged in a war in Korea in an attempt to contain the spread of communism, the Rosenbergs were convicted and executed for Soviet espionage, and a State department employee, Alger Hiss, was accused of betraying the U.S. for passing secrets to the Soviet Union, although ultimately convicted of perjury related to the charges. Ryan argues that given these other events occurred at the same time, this gives McCarthy credibility and the confidence to pursue the issue further (Feb. 18).

Over the next few class periods, Ryan tells stories of Communist witch-hunts conducted by Congress that were supported by Americans who “suspended logic and a sense of reasonableness in exchange for security” (Feb. 19, 10:00). This description shows a shift of his freedom focus to what happens to the freedoms of others when people pursue a conspiracy theory. He tells students that “this is why we looked at the idea of freedom....Essentially what has happened here is what? What has McCarthy effectively done in regards to freedom?... He essentially changed freedom” (Feb. 18, 39:35). The next day, Ryan reminds students that

“Senator McCarthy’s actions and his search for the communists among us altered our idea of freedom” much like how “after 9-11 our definition of freedom changed” (Feb. 19, 0:30). He said that post 9-11, Americans allowed freedoms to be restricted by allowing the government to listen to phone calls, read texts and emails, all without warrants. What remains unclear here is how the changing definition of freedom relates to conspiracy theory and McCarthy in particular.

Ryan continues by saying that the fear Americans had towards Communism after WWII mirrored the fear colonists in Salem felt towards witches and witchcraft. Ryan explained how these communist witch hunts resulted in over 9500 civil servants, 600 teachers, 500 state employees, and 2000 industrial workers losing their jobs, while 15,000 federal civil servants resigned while under investigation for ties to communism. In addition, he says, the House of Representatives ends up investigating members of the Hollywood Elite that culminated in hundreds of them being blacklisted in their industry simply because they were accused. He adds that eventually, McCarthy held a hearing with members of the U.S. Army. Ryan describes how McCarthy accused “army generals of having communist sympathies and loyalties towards communism” (Feb. 19, 21:30), which was dangerous to do because “there aren’t very many institutions in society that has huge support of the public like the military. When you start accusing them, you have problems” (Feb. 19, 23:00). Ryan argues that as the attacks became more widespread, people doubted the validity of the accusations, much like what happened in Salem (Feb. 19, 19:30). Then, he adds, when the latter hearings with the Army were televised, Americans’ perception of McCarthy changed. Americans saw him as a bully who was very angry, which hurt his approval numbers. Eventually the Army was able to prove that the “evidence” McCarthy presented as proof Communists had infiltrated the Army was doctored or purely made up. The Army had proved that “McCarthy had lied.” (Feb. 19, 25:00). Then, the

American news media “started turning on [McCarthy]” (Feb. 19, 26:55). His “tactics and reckless behavior in 1954” led to his colleagues censuring him (Feb. 19, 27:00). He died three years later.

After telling the story of McCarthyism, Ryan asks students “why are Americans uniquely situated to believe in conspiracy theories” and in this one in particular (Feb. 19, 32:00)? He reminds them that Olmstead said Americans are “uniquely situated to believe in conspiracy theories” because it happened before. Americans believed McCarthy because they were afraid and “fear will let you do a lot of things” and in this case, the people were afraid “communism would replace democracy” (Feb. 19, 32:30). McCarthy’s explanations seemed to be “backed up by evidence, which also made it easier for them to believe it was true. And that is the end of the McCarthyism notes” (Feb. 19, 33:00).

While Ryan planned to teach about the first order concepts of: freedom, Freemasons, McCarthyism and conspiracy, a lack of understanding of each of the individual first order concepts, and how they relate to each other, prevented him from being able to carry these concepts between the two conspiracy theories. This lack of understanding made implementation of second order concepts more difficult also.

When I interviewed Ryan a couple of days after the first unit, I asked him if he purposefully added or omitted any organizational structures used to connect the first order concepts together, and to provide evidence for how he might have done that. His answer demonstrated a lack of understanding of what is meant by organizational structures citing, “I organized it purposefully to go from something that was seen, at least at the time as more secretive organizations but yet their intentions being questioned, to a more known enemy in the communists, and comparing restriction on thought and freedom” (Ryan, 3I, p. 2). Here, he

compares the restriction of freedom on the Freemasons and on the Communists, however, during the instruction of the unit, he focused on the Freemasons and McCarthy, thereby suggesting that those two were more equivalent. Instead of having a clear plan for using organizational structures, he instead seems to organize by first order concepts of freedom and conspiracy during the two units but struggles with connecting them over time.

**Unit two: Planning to teach.** During our planning interview meeting, Ryan makes it clear that he wants to weave the concepts of freedom, the malleability of freedom, and the concept of subversion through to the next unit he is calling “the Watergate unit.” In between these two units, he taught a unit on “JFK.” I decided to skip that unit and study Watergate instead to see how he connects these ideas over time. During what he is calling “the Watergate unit,” he will introduce “more clearly” the “honesty of government/the trustworthiness of government” (Ryan, 3I, p. 5). He says that “trusting the government...also connects to JFK” citing that this first order concept (trust in the government) carries through multiple units (Ryan, 3I, p. 5). He argues that distrust of the government began when McCarthy’s evidence was disproven, when the JFK assassination became forensically unbelievable for many people, and now Watergate. He asks himself “what is the government hiding from us? What’s the government not telling us?” (Ryan, 3I, p. 5), which he argues only contributes to the rise of conspiracy theories (Ryan, 3I, p. 6). This is the question he wants students to consider.

Other first order concepts that he wants to teach in this unit include: presidential authority, the separation of powers, and the legacy of a president (Ryan, 4I, p. 1). However, given that the class is focused on conspiracy theories, he said he will intentionally not talk about “the finer points of his presidency” which he knows will “leave out significant pieces of his

presidency” such as Vietnam and the environment” (Ryan, 4I, p. 3). He plans to tell the story of Watergate in a

linear fashion so it’s going to begin with how Nixon got elected, how he came to be president, and then fast forward through some of his policy stuff. I’ll give some basic information just on his general presidency, then we will get to the Watergate break in,...the connection to Nixon...[presidential powers], “the Saturday night massacre,” his impeachment and then the pardon. So it’s really just following the chain of events linearly throughout the scandal, ultimately resulting in his resignation and pardon by Ford (Ryan, 4I, p. 3).

This plan for how to organize the unit shows his clear intent to use chronological ordering to make sense of the events that occurred during the Nixon administration as they relate to Watergate. Given that he has no textbook designed specifically for this conspiracy theory course, he says he will be calling upon a variety of resources to craft his description of what happened. Ryan plans on using “various books on Watergate and Nixon’s presidency, The Washington Post’s site, and Bernstein’s work” (Ryan, 4I, p. 5). The pervading first order concept he calls upon is the “progression of distrust in the government that Americans seem to have” which, he argues, makes them “more susceptible to believing conspiracy theories” (Ryan, 4I, p. 6).

**Unit 2: What is taught.** On April 11, I watch as Ryan begins his Watergate unit by having students share what they know about previous presidents, and setting some context relative to the Nixon administration. This is done in an attempt to introduce the idea of presidential legacy. Ryan says “every president is trying to shape his legacy to be remembered for good things” (April 11, 13:00). He then segues into a brief explanation of Nixon’s rise to the presidency, which he claims was birthed out of “a lot of distrust in the government” (April 11,

37:50) stemming from the JFK assassination, although he makes no reference to McCarthyism. Ryan argues that after JFK's assassination, the release of the Warren Commission's report, increased military involvement in Vietnam, and the drafting of young men into that conflict, Americans did not trust the government. And given that these things happened under a Democratic president, the American people wanted to "go the other way" (April 11, 38:20) and they elected Nixon president in 1968. Ryan explained that Nixon vowed to restore "law and order," and "vowed to respect the rule of law and stature of America" while providing "strong leadership" and ending the draft (April 11: 40:00). Ryan falls short, however, of describing the historical context in which the Watergate break-in occurred. There was no discussion of the 1972 presidential election season being under way and Nixon's attempt to win re-election. In addition there was only a very brief mention that the U.S. was engaged in the Vietnam War at the time, and Americans' thoughts and feelings towards it.

Ryan carries the concept of "distrust of the government" into the second day of the unit when he opens class arguing that "Watergate wasn't the only thing [Nixon] did that was questionable. The Pentagon Papers was one such example" (April 12, 0:15). What is missing, however, is any context to help students understand how to draw these conclusions that what Nixon did was questionable. Ryan explains how Daniel Ellsberg's, a defense department employee, release of the Pentagon Papers, which were classified documents assessing the war in Vietnam, showed that U.S. military officials believed they were getting themselves into a "quagmire, a no good, no win situation, which would result in huge loss of life" (April 12, 5:00). Ryan compares the significance of the release of the Pentagon Papers to Edward Snowden's release of classified government documents revealing the CIA's wiretapping program post 9-11. Ryan explains that as a result of the seriousness of the offense of releasing the CIA documents,

Snowden is currently in hiding overseas and as soon as he is caught in territory friendly to the U.S.; it is expected he will be extradited back to the United States (April 12). Ryan adds that not only did the release of the Pentagon Papers increase suspicion and distrust in the government, but when the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* published the papers, the Nixon administration sued them because the Pentagon Papers were classified. Ryan calls this an “interesting situation” asking students “Who wins here? What wins? Does confidential information trump freedom of the press?” (April 12, 11:00). Ryan asks students to call upon the idea of positive and negative liberty by asking, “Is it the public’s right to know or the government’s right to keep a secret? Did the media commit a crime by publishing something released to them?” (April 12, 11:28).

Ryan’s story continues as he describes Nixon’s call on the “White House Plumbers” whose job it was to stop the leaks of this kind of classified information (April 12, 15:20). He said these four men, known as “the plumbers,” set out to discredit the man they believed was responsible for leaking the Pentagon Papers to the media. Ryan calls this “Nixon’s first scandal” because while the Papers didn’t “necessarily reflect badly on Nixon,” setting out to discredit the guy who leaked the documents did reflect because it did not change the content of what was in the papers themselves (April 12, 18:35). Ryan says that as a result, Americans began to distrust Nixon and his re-election poll numbers began dropping. It was then that the plumbers’ activities “turned to political espionage” (April 12, 18:40). Ryan then tells students that Nixon and the Plumbers break into the Watergate building to bug his Democratic opponent’s office, and they were caught, although he has yet to mention that Nixon was currently seeking re-election in 1972, who the opponent was, nor a motive behind doing so. Ryan then gives students the *Washington Post*’s inaugural article about the Watergate break-in and asks them to read it to

become familiar with the details of the investigation early on. Ryan tells students that in order to understand this, they need to “put themselves in 1972” as if they were “living through this” (April 19, 18:30). He begins by telling students,

Here is some more on the timeline. Come January 1973, Nixon aides, Gordon Liddy and James McCord, are indicted and later convicted for conspiracy, burglary and wiretapping in the Watergate incident. Five other men plead guilty. There are other mysteries. What are they? What’s the main one?...to what extent did Nixon know and to what extent was he involved?

By April, White House staffers, John Ehrlichman, H.R. Haldeman, and Attorney General Richard Kleindienst, all resigned over the scandal. They are embarrassed. Things aren’t lining up well for these people at all. John Dean is then fired. This guy ends up going to a Senate hearing and outs the president about these Oval Office tapes.

So the Watergate committee starts nationally televised hearings. Archibald Cox is chosen as the Justice Department Special Prosecutor for Watergate. This is when it gets interesting. What is the purpose behind a special prosecutor? Usually a special prosecutor means there’s a conflict of interest with the original prosecuting attorney. Meaning, they had some sort of relationship... There is no trust that it will be carried out in a correct manner, in a legal way. There are questions as to whether or not the original attorney general can be effective. Cox is assigned to this job. John Dean who was fired, told investigators that he talked to Nixon about the Watergate cover-up personally at least 35 times...is there a problem with that? How is attorney-client privilege not invoked? If

Dean is talking to his client, Nixon, about Watergate, how does he get away with giving this information to investigators? And who leaked that information to the Post?

Dean admits that since 1971, Nixon had recorded all conversations in the Oval office, telephone, personal conversations. That kind of thing. President Nixon then refuses to release tapes that Congress and the special prosecutor requests. Nixon said they are protected under executive privilege and you won't get them.

Now here is the showdown. Prosecutor wants them. Nixon says no. Congress wants them. Nixon says no. You're gonna have a disagreement here.

The Nixon administration reached an agreement with the Watergate committee that its chair can listen to tapes and provide transcripts to committee and special prosecutor. Now this sounds like a good idea, right? That would have worked, except when the chairman goes to Nixon to listen to the tapes and the Nixon administration tried to give them transcripts. Why is this a problem? You can take stuff out. You can remove stuff. Maybe conversations get left out... You have an interesting situation here. Archibald Cox is not willing to accept those transcripts... and Nixon didn't take kindly to that. So [Nixon] starts cleaning house, so-to-speak because the special prosecutor is an employee of the Justice Department, so Nixon ordered the attorney general, Richardson, to fire [Cox]... When Richardson refused, Nixon fired him... The Deputy Attorney General, who is next in line, is asked to fire Archibald. He refuses. Nixon fired him. Then he goes to the Solicitor General, who is next in line, Robert Bjork is ordered by Nixon to fire Cox and

he does. Finally, Nixon gets his way. Cox has been fired and Nixon cleans house. The next headline in the Washington Post: “The Saturday Night Massacre.” All of these firings happened in one day.

What problems does this bring? Nixon’s willing to go to great lengths to prevent this investigation from continuing. What authority did he have to do this? Is his presidential authority enough? Does the President have the authority to essentially prevent an investigation of him?... Next we will look at presidential authority. This is important. He’s fired half of the Justice department because they wouldn’t go with his plan to cover up the Watergate break-in (April 19, 27:20-48:10).

These loose descriptions are commonplace in this unit, and often carry across class periods. The simple cause-effect organizers help chronologically order the episodes he presents. He begins the next class with a review of the Saturday night massacre, and then has students examine newspaper articles that discuss Americans’ perceptions of what was happening at the time. Ryan tells students he wants them to “take a deeper look at the perception of Nixon at this time because it’s important to think of the lasting impact of conspiracy” (April 21, 2:22), but what is unclear is if he meant the impact of the first order concept of conspiracy, or if he meant the lasting impact of this conspiracy in particular. It’s interesting to note, however, that at a time where he wants students to understand perspectives of the time, he already labels Watergate as a conspiracy, not conspiracy theory, leading students to thinking that it was proven before they had all the evidence.

After examining the newspapers and analyzing the tone and meaning of the articles with students, Ryan describes what happened with the release of the Oval Office Tapes in the *United States v Nixon* case. He describes how in this case, the Supreme Court ruled that “executive privilege is not an absolute power and it cannot be used to deny the court access to evidence” (April 21, 50:17). In its opinion, the Court said, “this evidence does not jeopardize national security” (April 21, 56:25). He added that while the Court acknowledged the need for executive privilege in matters of national security, the justices ruled unanimously in this case that this evidence was not a matter of national security. Ryan explains that in 1974,

the Supreme Court says you have to turn over the tapes. Not just parts of them, all of them. [The Court] rejected the idea of executive privilege in this instance, and told Nixon he was misapplying it. You cannot use executive privilege to circumvent the criminal justice system...this put a huge dent in executive privilege” (April 21, 1:05:42).

For the next week, Ryan was out on paternity leave. During his absence, his students view the film, *All the President's Men*, which is a screenplay based on a book written by two *Washington Post* reporters, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein. The movie uncovers details concerning the Watergate break-in via the investigational reporting of Woodward and Bernstein.

Upon Ryan's return, he has students look at a series of documents related to Nixon and Watergate. He tells students “the challenge is attempting to look at the importance of these documents. I would say these documents are probably some of the more famous things to come out of Watergate and Nixon” (May 2, 0:30). The documents included: memos debating Nixon's impeachment, transcripts of the Oval Office recordings, and Ford's pardon of Nixon. He tells students he wants them to determine what kind of document it is, and why it's “significant.” In answering the “significance” question, he wants students to think about why he, Ryan, thought

this was worth their time to read. He then wants them to consider how the average American might have responded to the document, and he wants them to be ready to explain what the document is about, and the conclusions students drew from it. This brief description of the assignment suggests that he chose these documents because they were historically significant in that they were important to the people at the time (Levesque, 2008).

He uses these questions to guide a whole class debrief of all four documents. He casually guides students through their documents first as individual groups then as a whole class. So while he says he wants students to consider the historical significance of the document, he forgets to ask the question of a couple of documents. He does ask “what’s the significance of the transcripts of a White House tape? Why might I give you this document” (May 2, 32:30). Student answers are inaudible, but he confirms that “yes, he’s trying to hide it. He’s actively working to cover it up” (May 2, 33:00). He adds that this document is called the “smoking gun” document, which he argues meant that it was one of the “definitive pieces to prove your guilt” (May 2, 33:55). He says that here was so much information in that document/tapes that either Nixon knew about all of the details concerning the break-in after the fact, and he tried to cover it up, but it also suggests that he might have had knowledge prior to the break-in as well. This description demonstrates strong use of historical significance as not only did he explicitly use the term, he attempted to give it some definition by having students consider why he thought it was important enough for them to examine. His description here begins to get at the importance factor of historical significance as the documents helped mark the end of Nixon’s presidency.

He concludes the last day of his unit telling students they will examine “some of the aftermath” of Watergate arguing that

when you have something that happens that ends with the president resigning, losing his job, potentially could have landed him in jail if it hadn't been for the pardon by Gerald Ford...there's an aftermath. So we are going to look at that. It's an important piece of the puzzle...this scandal has continued to impact America" (May 6, 0:30).

This brief description suggests that he thought Watergate was "historically significant" in that it is still "relevant" today given that it has "continued to impact America." Instead of telling students directly what ended up happening, he gives them a piece of paper that has two different laws on it that were passed after Watergate: the Freedom of Information Act of 1974, and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978. He wants students to consider if these laws are sufficient to prevent future scandals, thereby hinting at the relevance factor of historical significance. After students analyze the laws and answer some guiding questions, Ryan reviews what they just read.

Who can give me a quick summary of the Freedom of Information Act?... It gives people access to documents, to government information. What kinds of exceptions might there be? There are nine exceptions and those exceptions usually have something to do with national security, personnel information, or something along those lines. Sensitive information. Some argue that...these exceptions make it too easy for the government to withhold information. The overall goal of this act is to allow citizens to gain access to government information. You can, if you want, you can go to the federal government and say "I want every email President Obama has sent that is not classified"...this is actually how the whole email thing started with Hillary Clinton. A freedom of information request was placed and that was when they discovered there was another email address she was

using. So you have a right to that information...you have to pay for the copies and the associated man hours...

How does this connect to Nixon and Watergate?...He's trying to withhold information. He's trying to say, "look I don't have to.: They shredded a whole bunch of papers. And, in fact, that is illegal. Government documents, if you were going to destroy them, there are very specific protocols to go through to do it...So, ya, Nixon's trying to hide stuff and he's trying to keep this stuff from getting out. As a matter of fact, the way we got all those White House transcripts, the way we found out a lot of the information after the fact was the result of Freedom of Information requests (May 6, 32:00).

This description demonstrated the relevance factor of historical significance (Levesque, 2008) by showing how this law still impacts American society today. Ryan also called upon simple cause-effect by suggesting that the Freedom of Information Act was a result of Nixon shredding documents, although there was likely many other causes that contributing to the crafting of the law.

Ryan closes his discussion on Watergate by asking students, "Do we need the law?" and they overwhelmingly say "yes." However, when he asks students if they thought this law would "stop or prevent some of these things in the future," the students say "no" because the exemptions are too difficult to overcome. Ryan agrees. He says,

That's one of the biggest things. When you see cases go to court over this, lawyers argue these exemptions are too broad and we have no method for determining whether or not the document the government is withholding actually meets the exemption, because we are expected to take the government's word on

it...You have no way to check that. So now you have to sue the government to get it. Part of the goal behind the Freedom of Information Act was to make it easier for the public to get the information (May 6, 46:00).

Ryan then asks students to pack up as the bell is about to ring, and he does not have a chance to debrief the second document.

Upon reflection of what he had just taught in this unit during our final interview, Ryan says he believes that he did not add or omit any concepts from what he originally planned although “I didn’t go as detailed into the Freedom of Information Act as I had originally intended. I really wanted to do more with that” (Ryan, 5I, p. 2). He adds that the “order in which I wanted to present information” was a little different because of the paternity leave, and as a result he did not get to present presidential authority and presidential pardon at the same time (Ryan, 5I, p. 2).

When reflecting on the concepts he taught over the different units, Ryan said that he believed he “connected (dis)trust of government between this unit” and the others, in particular McCarthyism and JFK (which was not a part of this study). When asked how he connected this concept to the Freemasons, Ryan said “I didn’t explicitly” do that... “I mean I guess I could have found some sort of connection, but I didn’t....” (Ryan, 5I, p.5). He did not, however, say that conspiracy or conspiracy theory was a concept to connect them all together.

When asked about how he utilized organizational structures across the different units, he said that he believed he followed his plan the way he intended, which ended up being primarily through first order concepts as opposed to the second order. He said “with trust in government, the authority of the government, it flows fairly well because you have McCarthyism, you had the

big unit on JFK, and you go right into Watergate. Each of those units hits that concept or idea in a different way” (Ryan, 5I, p. 7).

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

During my time as a GTA at the University of Kansas, I had the privilege to not only teach courses in the School of Education, but also to supervise student teachers in the field. It wasn't until then that I fully realized how well-developed my PCK was (Shulman, 1987). As I made suggestions to student teachers about how to build upon what they were doing, they often asked me "how do you do that? How do you just know what to do?" It was then that I began to study PCK more deeply and realized that I had that well-developed form of professional understanding, the one that represented a "special amalgam of content and pedagogy" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). That realization made me more aware of what knowledge was still underdeveloped in those teachers. But more importantly, it revealed to me what knowledge they did have. From there, I began to consider how to call upon their content knowledge, according to Schwab (1962, 1978) and VanSledright (2011), and then I was better help guide them through thinking about different ways to transform that knowledge to prepare it for students (Shulman, 1986). As a result, I often found myself asking "why is that content worth our time to study?" Or "why aren't you going to teach a concept that is commonly taught within that particular time period?" When I heard students answer with "I don't know," or "because that is what is in the textbook," or "I don't know enough about it to teach it," I quickly learned that not only were they not calling upon the unique structures of the discipline to make content decisions, but there was also a disconnect between what they believe about history as a discipline and what they decided to teach. Given that history teachers are the mediators of the content between the academic/historian and the student who is learning it (Cornbleth, 1985; Thornton, 2005), I

decided to study how beginning teachers were using the unique structures of the discipline as they transformed the content for their students.

### **Relationship to Previous Research**

For years, researchers have built upon Shulman's (1986) theory of PCK and have worked to help teachers develop theirs. Current research has revived a call for domain specific frameworks that would help do exactly that while calling upon the structures and methods unique to each one (Ball et al., 2001; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; Morris et al., 2009). It is not surprising that given all of the knowledge that goes into a teacher's enactment and development of PCK, it requires years of first-hand experience. This has led researchers to consider what PCK looks like in beginning teachers, both in Shulman's general theory and in the beginnings of discipline-specific frameworks (Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; VanSledright, 2011). Seixas & Peck (2004), Monte-Sano & Budano (2013), Barton & Levstik (2004) and others have called for teaching history in a way that is "more consistent with the discipline" (Monte-Sano, 2011, p. 260), and in turn, helping to develop PCK for history education. As curriculum gatekeepers (Thornton, 2005), history teachers make multiple decisions every day about what content to teach, and often rely heavily on what the textbooks, state standards, district curriculum, and school-issued curriculum resources tell them what to teach (Nicol & Crespo, 2006). Given the uniqueness of history as a discipline, it is worth our time to see how beginning teachers use those unique structures to make sense of their content as they decide what to teach so we can better prepare them to help students learn "more efficiently" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2015, p. 176).

The earliest enactments of PCK for history education then, involves deciding which first order and second order concepts to teach (VanSledright, 2011). First order concepts that become worthy of historical study then, are ones that can be organized via the organizing structures unique to the discipline such as: cause-effect, continuity and change, periodization, historical agency, and historical significance (Banner, 2012; Case, 1991; Green, 1992; Seixas, 1993b, VanSledright, 2011). To organize content in this same manner as historians “holds great promise for improving instruction” as teachers create more coherent units of study (Neumann, 2012, p. 387). As a result, this study sought to further the discussion about what PCK for teaching history entails and how early service history teachers begin to enact it in their roles as curriculum gatekeepers (Thornton, 2005). The results of this study provide insight into how three early-service, secondary history teachers made sense of their content through the use of VanSledright’s (2011) first and second order concepts for teaching history.

### **Summary of Findings**

**Use of first order concepts.** This study shows that what these beginning teachers taught was typically content rich, while conceptually light. When I asked the teachers to share with me which concepts they would be teaching in their units, they often listed historical facts as opposed to historical concepts. Beckett mentioned facts and information such as the Zimmerman note, and the sinking of the Lusitania in the WWI chapter, and the KKK and Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s unit, while overlooking the larger historical concepts of war, expansionism, nation-building, and democracy, just to name a few. Likewise, when Grace was discussing her approach to the French Revolution, she missed the overarching concept of revolution as a prominent first order concept she could teach, and instead referred to the French Revolution simply as just “one event” (Grace, 1I, p. 6). However, later, she returns to revolution as a concept that could be used

to connect the French Revolution to the Industrial Revolution, but never fully developed the connection. Ryan also struggled with conceptualizing and operationalizing “conspiracy theory” although it was the basis for his entire course. As a result, his presentation became muddy as he attempted to craft the history through the use various historical events as examples of conspiracy theory. In addition, he said the concepts that pervaded each unit included freedom and conspiracy, where as I more clearly saw a three-way first order conceptual framework between power, freedom, and individual dis/trust of those with power. Then, on a second level, the actual conspiracies reinforce that distrust and thus raise the likelihood of conspiracy theory. Among all three examples, the first order concepts were largely presented as historical facts and information situated in time and space that were framed by the who, what, when, where, why and how of history, as opposed to larger, more abstract ideas.

Part of this disconnect between historical concepts and historical information might have resulted from the dependency the teachers had on textbooks, state standards, district-curriculum, and school-issued resources (Nicol & Crespo, 2006). For example, Grace wanted to cover the Declaration of the Rights of Man, but only understood it insofar as the textbook described it. Therefore, it was difficult for her to see this as a historical example that could be used to demonstrate a rise or shift democracy and freedom. It was also difficult for her to view it as an example of revolution for the French people. This resulted in the students learning the definition of the document, but not the historical significance of it. This is also true of Beckett when he failed to contextualize WWI within a larger period of imperialism and expansionism. Although the textbook situated the WWI chapter within a larger category of expansionism, without paying much attention to that structure, it was easy for him to miss that this chapter was intended to fit within a larger time period. Lastly, even though Ryan’s entire course was framed around the

concept of conspiracy theory, his misconception of it led to him referring to “the conspiracy theory that is McCarthy.” If teachers are to develop their PCK through continuous transformation of historical content, then teachers need to understand the nature of historical knowledge, otherwise “they cannot design meaningful learning experiences for students, because they will not know what it is that students need to learn (much less how to help them learn it)” (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 248).

**Use of second order concepts.** Second order concepts are the glue that holds the first order concepts together to help bring coherence and sense to them (Schwab, 1962; VanSledright, 2011). However, in these beginning teachers, those structures were not always present, and when they were, they were often underdeveloped. For example, when asking the teachers to share with me how they would organize their first order concepts, Grace asked what I meant by that (Grace, 1I), and Beckett said he didn’t know, and asked if I could provide clarification (Beckett, 1I). In addition to this, at some point, all of the teachers answered the organizational question with a first order concept. Beckett said he would organize his content via presidential administrations, while Ryan said he planned on organizing through the concepts of distrust of the government and of freedom.

There were times, however, when the structures were present, albeit in varying degrees of complexity. While periodization is undoubtedly a way to organize historical content, the teachers struggled with operationalizing, or even identifying, this structure in history. Their operationalizing of this concept then took on a simpler form: chronological ordering of information. Often times, these people, places or events fell along a timeline that presented no clear relationship to one another. This was particularly true of Beckett’s teaching of the 1920s. First, instead of following the common terminology to describe this time period, the Roaring 20s,

Beckett instead imposes a new label calling it “the 1920s,” which suggests a shift from periodization to a literal definition: ten years. In this unit, Beckett marked the beginning of those ten years the same way he did with the beginning of WWI: with the presidential election. What he failed to mention, however, was that the election of 1920 ushered in a major political shift from a progressive era of politics to one of more traditional conservatism. From there, he taught each administration, paralleled the textbook in deciding which aspects of each administration to teach, and presented those pieces of historical information in timeline format.

Grace also overlooked the second order concept of periodization when she failed to identify what characterized the “Age of Napoleon.” Instead, she described his rule as a list of his accomplishments and in the order they occurred. Even though the causal links to the items that fall along these time lines are not clear, teachers “imply them through the sequential ordering of events” because “we assume that if the events occur in order they must be related (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 132). However, without the teacher making these relationships clear to students, they might not be able to identify them on their own. Barton (2012) argues that to present history via chronological ordering alone results in a history curriculum that “revolves around laws, politics, warfare” and “becomes ‘event-focused,’ because wars, elections, and other political developments happen within a limited time frame,” and as a result, “long term change tends to receive less attention than they deserve” (Barton, 2012, p. 122). Therefore, in order to an effective history curriculum, teachers must call upon more sophisticated second order concepts.

Cause and effect was another commonly used structure among all of the teachers. Complex use of this structure would demonstrate layers of causes (Ringer, 1989) that show how an event did not happen by chance. In its simple form, cause and effect looks like, if x happens, then y happens. Although Beckett seemed to be setting himself up for complex use of cause-

effect as he described the M.A.I.N. causes for WWI, he quickly abandoned it once the assassination of the archduke occurred. In addition, he was unable to explain how the M.A.I.N. causes contributed to the assassination in the first place. Instead of attributing M.A.I.N. to the start of the war, he attributes the assassination to it. I suspect that his preference to using chronological ordering interfered with his ability to use complex cause-effect because iterative causes do not fit along a time line. Likewise, Grace attempted to describe the reasons why Britain was ripe for the Industrial Revolution, but failed to pull those layers of causes through the unit to clearly demonstrate the multi-layered effects of those causes. Ryan also called upon this structure as he organized the events related to Watergate. One way he did this was through his brief explanation of how Nixon's shredding of documents resulted in the Freedom of Information Act.

Given the teachers' episodic approach to history, it is not surprising then that historical significance tends to be the most developed second order principle among them. Levesque (2012) suggests that teachers could approach historical significance from the examination of a variety of factors. Beckett seemed to call upon this second order concept when he taught the consumer revolution. He asked students to identify the significance of the historical content of a picture and to describe how "relevant" the product is today. Ryan explicitly used this second order concept when he talked about "historically significant" documents related to Watergate and went so far as to say one of them was the "smoking gun" that ultimately brought down Nixon. Grace argued that the French Revolution is "relevant" to Americans today because of its link to the American Revolution, because it demonstrated how people can change their governments. While this principle appeared to be the most utilized, in some instances the teachers fell short of using it well because they did not adequately contextualize the person, place, thing, event, or

concept. For example, it becomes incredibly difficult to understand conspiracy theory in light of the Freemasons and NWO when it is hard to understand why the conspiracy theory emerged in the first place.

The teachers' use of second order concepts also had some distinct differences. Beckett's preferred mode of organization was chronological ordering, which is why he relied heavily on framing his units via presidential administrations, and then categorizing the content into smaller sections inside of them. He also called upon simple cause and effect structures that better enabled him to place his episodes on a time line. While Grace also defaulted to a chronological ordering of the content, she also employed another way to organize the first order concepts and historical information using her PERSIA structure. She also attempted to employ historical agency on multiple occasions, although she often found herself not carrying that structure through an entire unit or consistently among them. Lastly, Ryan also employed a simple chronological approach to ordering his information, which was organized by the first order concept of conspiracy theory.

Enacting second order concepts are what help bring cohesion and meaning to the history that is presented (VanSledright, 2011). In order to help students think more deeply about the facts and concepts of history, teachers must think about the second order concepts for teaching history (Bain & Mirel, 2006; Darling-Hammond et. al, 2015; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; Seixas, 1993b; Shulman, 1986; VanSledright, 2008/2011; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991). To not understand content in this way could lead to students misunderstanding the content (Darling-Hammond et. al, 2015). But before teachers can act in their role as curriculum gatekeepers and enact their PCK, they must first develop "powerful subject knowledge" (LaBoskey, 2005, p. 84), which includes having a firm grasp of first and second order concepts for teaching history. Doing

this also prepares teachers and students to engage with the syntactical structures of the discipline (Schwab, 1962).

**Iterative nature of first and second order concepts.** There is an inherent, iterative nature within first order concepts, and within second order concepts. There is also an inherent, iterative nature between them. Some second order concepts fit naturally alongside one another. For example, chronological ordering complements simple cause effect because both allow for information to be presented on a timeline. However, this underdeveloped use of the second order concepts is inadequate. Instead teachers should find as many ways to “illustrate significance, connections, and interrelationships” as possible (Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013, p. 174; Bain & Harris, 2009; Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987; Harris & Bain, 2011; VanSledright, 2011).

Some second order concepts strengthen others to help bring the first order concepts to a better understanding (Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013, p. 174; Bain & Harris, 2009; Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987; Harris & Bain, 2011; VanSledright, 2011). Historical significance of historical concepts and/or information can be used as building blocks for periodization depending upon the relationship between them. Likewise, continuity and change helps to define the parameters of a time period. More often than not, historical significance needs to be paired with another organizer to help bring its significance to light. If a teacher wants to strengthen an argument about the “relevance” factor of historical significance (Levesque, 2008), it would make sense for them to also employ cause-effect or continuity and change to demonstrate a stronger relationship between then and now, while avoiding presentism through contextualization. When talking about the stock market crash of 1929 as being historically significant, teachers could also use periodization to explain how the crash ushered in a new era in American history. Unfortunately, these beginning history teachers’ ability to develop the second

order principles were hindered by their lack of sophisticated understanding of the first order ones. Ryan's piece on McCarthyism illustrates this best. What he presented was chocked full of historical information, and he possessed an ability to clearly identify which first order concepts he heroically sought to historically conceptualize and operationalize. He even tried to use virtually all of the organizers but continually seemed to fall prey to his lack of clarity about conspiracy theory.

Teachers should recognize how multiple second order concepts could and should be operating at any given time if a teacher is to transform the content appropriately. These concepts better enable history teachers to "focus and frame material for students" (Ball & Cohen, 1996, p. 7; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013, Schwab, 1962; Thornton, 2005; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991). Doing so respects the teachers' autonomy to choose whatever material s/he wishes, but empowers them within their PCK to become better curriculum gatekeepers as they mediate the curriculum to make it learnable for their students (Cornbleth, 1985; McCrum, 2013; Salinas & Castro, 2010; Thornton, 2005).

### **Recommendations for future research**

Given the dearth of information on teachers' use of second order concepts, this study suggests a separate line of inquiry should be pursued for the many types of second order concepts, especially given the complex nature of each. It would be worth our time to investigate further the role historical significance (Levesque, 2008; Seixas, 1993a/1993b; VanSledright, 2011) plays in beginning history teachers' conception and presentation of history as they enact their PCK. Likewise, given the nature of historical significance, and its need for other organizers to be operating concurrently, researchers could also examine which structures teachers use to

help bring greater sense to the historically significant concepts the history teacher has chosen to teach.

VanSledright (2011) argues that there are two domains of substantive knowledge for teaching history: the first order and the second order. While this study focused on the content of the first and second order, we should pursue how teachers include the syntactical structures as well. Shulman (1986, 1987) argues that teachers

must understand the structures of subject matter, the principles of conceptual organization, and the principles of inquiry that help answer two kinds of questions in each field: 1) What are the important ideas and skills in this domain?, and 2) How are new ideas added and deficient ones dropped by those who produce knowledge in this area? (Shulman, 1987, p 9).

Together these types of knowledge frame what a teacher decides to teach as they enact their PCK for teaching history (Schwab, 1962/1978; Shulman, 1986; VanSledright, 2011).

The data from this study suggests that there was a discrepancy between what teachers say they teach and what they actually teach. One way to extend this line of research is to investigate the relationship between the two. It is recommended that participants be made aware of the potential misalignment and learn if the awareness of it lends to a change in their content decision-making. Participants could also be asked to reflect specifically on how their beliefs are demonstrated in their content choices, especially since all three participants in this study mentioned something about the historical significance, and cause-effect relationships among historical concepts, and yet failed to make their choices of what to teach in light of those beliefs very clear. As a result, they sometimes omitted the uses of the very things they claimed were foundational to the field of history.

Researchers may also extend this research by studying the development of history teachers' understanding of first and second order concepts over time. VanSledright (2011) argues "It's fundamentally a knowledge problem that must be addressed [among teachers], not a technical one" (p. 194), which he suggests would not take as much effort to learn. It would be worth investigating as a teachers' content knowledge becomes richer how they might operationalize first and second order concepts independent of and in relation to each other. Doing so may help teachers better understand and implement the first and second order concepts for teaching history, which could also contribute to building a discipline-specific framework for teaching history (Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013; VanSledright, 2011).

Further research on a history teacher's use of these first and second order concepts for teach history is important because as VanSledright argues, growing teacher knowledge in this way could help leverage the growth of the "smarter students we say we want," but growing that knowledge will take "time, effort, resources, and concerted, coherent efforts on the part of those organizations and institutions that play a role in the process" (VanSledright, 2011, p. 194). Researchers can play an important role in learning how best to help teachers do this by studying what is being done already. To help a teacher better understand these structures will not only impact what they decide to teach, but also inevitably impacts student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2015; VanSledright, 2011).

### **New opportunities**

VanSledright's (2011) piece compels history educators to pause as they "rethink" what it means to be a history educator. To rethink history education opens the doors for new opportunities in other ways. First, it may require teacher educators to "rethink history education preparation." Given that both the historian and the teacher have valuable knowledge to share, it

may behoove them to forge collaborative systems not just in higher education, but also in the local school districts (Steeves, 1998). Fostering such relationships may help pre-service and in-service teachers better understand the structures that exist in history, while helping teachers apply those structures to their content decision-making.

There may also be additional opportunities when it comes to rethinking the teaching of history in post secondary courses. Historians at the higher education level have the “power to transform how they teach their own classes” (Fillpot, 2009). Historians are also educating history teachers, and play an important role in doing so. By only sharing historical findings without making clear the structures and processes for how to get there, they are perpetuating the lack of use of structures and processes in the history classroom. In this instance, historians can model how to do it. Shedd (2010) implores historians to “take responsibility [in their role] for producing better social studies teachers” (p. 434) by welcoming teacher education as a part of their mission (Fillpot, 2009) and “emphasize a definition of the past as something to be discovered, not memorized” (Sheets, 2010, p. 457).

## **Conclusion**

The results of this study suggest that beginning history teachers are cognizant curriculum gatekeepers who are transforming content to prepare it for students’ learning. While their PCK is largely underdeveloped given their lack of experience in the classroom, the most well-developed aspect of their PCK is that of their content knowledge, which is the earliest enactments of their PCK. However, in this multiple-case study, all three participants’ use of second order concepts were a) largely dependent upon the depth of understanding of the first order, and b) largely

underdeveloped and therefore, underutilized, often resulting in an “episodic history” (Green, 1992, p. 15) that resorted to explaining that something was but not why it was so.

It is important for teachers to be knowledgeable of the structures of the discipline in order to be more purposeful in the “selection and organization” of their content because it shapes the “ultimate interpretation or argument” that is made (Sheets, 2010, p. 459). In order to make the best decisions for teaching history content, teachers need a firm understanding of first order concepts before the second order can be applied to it. They also need to be keenly aware of the second order structures that underpin the discipline and make those structures visible for students, instead of letting them operate behind the scenes (Schwab, 1978; Shulman, 1987; Sheets, 2010; VanSledright, 2011). In order to help students think more deeply, teachers must understand the discipline more deeply and “understand how historians frame historical problems, select and organize factual details, analyze and construct historical stories, and as important, how to present these ‘invisible structures to their students in meaningful ways” (Bain & Mirel, 2006, p. 213).

It is important to be “self-conscious in our practices so that our students see what we are doing” when we organize content for their learning (Sheets, 2010, p. 458). Because “by drawing back the curtain that shrouds the inner workings of the historical process, we invite students to interpret the past and awaken them to the interpretive possibilities and debates that are at the heart of [history]” (Sheets, 2010, p. 458). And every time a teacher engages with history content, s/he is engaging in an interpretive process informed by a personal value system as s/he decides what content to teach and how to make sense of it. By “emphasizing the process of history and by encouraging teachers...to think and teach historically, we might render its study more enticing to those who still twitch at the faint memory of their school days lumbering under the

weight of dead facts” (Sheets, 2010, p. 460). It is our duty then to continue to research how to “best to develop all aspects of PCK” which includes “the disciplinary understanding that is its foundation” (Monte-Sano, 2011, p. 271).

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**Appendix A**  
First Order Concept Chart

Story of Nation-Building (VanSledright, 2008)			
Day	People	Places	Events
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			



Appendix C  
Consent Form



**Name of Study: Beginning U.S. History teachers' enactment of PCK through content decision-making**

Dear Potential Study Participant,

The Department of Curriculum and Teaching at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit, the services it may provide to you, or the University of Kansas.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to learn which historical concepts/ideas beginning U.S. history teachers teach, and how they organize that content. It also seeks to understand why those content decisions were made.

**PROCEDURES**

By agreeing to participate, you are also agreeing to the following things during the fall semester of 2015:

- *Answer a questionnaire prior to the planning of the units under study (20 minutes);*
- *Participate in three, 30-minute audio recorded interviews (90 minutes);*
- *Provide the researcher with copies of all planning and instructional materials used during the two units under study (no additional time); and*
- *Record one lesson everyday through the duration of the units under study (one hour a day for two units—number of days contingent on the teachers' design of the units).*

I plan on audio-recording interviews, and video-recording multiple days of instruction for one class period. You have the option of having taping stopped at any time. However, these recordings are required to participate in the study. A transcriptionist will be provided with all recordings for transcription purposes only. Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the University of Kansas Human Subjects Committee Lawrence or its designees.

Recordings and field notes of the proceedings will be kept securely by the researcher and will be destroyed within 10 years. The data collected from this study will be used to complete a dissertation, but may be used at a later date at conferences or in journal articles.

## **RISKS**

There may be some minimal, or low, risk to participating in the study. The only known risks may be feelings of discomfort when discussing the teachers' decision-making process, or feelings of inadequacy. In addition, private academic and assessment records will need to be disclosed to show competency in history content.

## **BENEFITS**

Benefits to the study may indirectly include contributing to the literature on beginning teachers' content decision making. Direct benefits may include becoming more purposeful in making their own content decisions.

## **PAYMENT TO PARTICIPANTS**

You will not be compensated to participate in the study.

## **PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your name will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Instead, the researcher(s) will use a study number or a pseudonym rather than your name. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission. By signing this form you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information for purposes of this study for up to ten years beginning on the date of this consent form.

## **REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION**

You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to any services you are receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

## **CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION**

All data will be collected between August-December, 2015. You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose further information collected about you, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to: Tina M. Ellsworth, 1122 West Campus Road, JRP 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Lawrence, KS 66045.

If you cancel permission to use your information, the researchers will stop collecting additional information about you. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above.

### **QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION**

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form.

### **PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:**

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385, write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email [irb@ku.edu](mailto:irb@ku.edu).

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

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Type/Print Participant's Name

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Date

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Participant's Signature

#### Researcher Contact Information

Tina M. Ellsworth  
Principal Investigator  
Department of Curriculum and Teaching  
1122 West Campus Road  
JRP Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
816-686-4689

Dr. Joseph E. O'Brien  
Faculty Supervisor  
Department of Curriculum and Teaching  
1122 West Campus Road  
JRP Hall, #337  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
785-864-9663

**Consent and Authorization Form:**  
**Participation in “Beginning U.S. History teachers’ enactment of PCK through content decision-making”**

**Name of Study: Beginning U.S. History teachers’ enactment of PCK through content decision-making**

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**Please keep this copy for your records.**