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REIMAGINING ADVANCED PLACEMENT WORLD HISTORY:
WHEN TEACHING MORE OF THE SAME IS NO LONGER ENOUGH

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Abstract

This paper was designed as a way to document my personal growth as I explored ways to honor my identity as an educator while still navigating institutional and societal expectations regarding the meanings and methods of social studies education. Due to the nature of the paper, I decided to pursue a publication-ready thesis. The thesis itself is broken into several parts. First is the abstract. Next is the report, which is the main body of the thesis. The main body will be submitted as an article for possible publication in a peer-reviewed educational journal. Throughout this portion relevant literature is incorporated in a teacher-friendly format. The remaining information, including my research methodology and theoretical framework can be found in the Appendices A and B respectively.

**REIMAGINING ADVANCED PLACEMENT WORLD HISTORY:
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ENOUGH**

“Have You Ever Done This Before?”

I had optimistically thought that the days of being asked that question were behind me - that by the fourth year of my career, my reputation as a dedicated and at least half-way decent teacher would be solidified and that question would no longer leave the lips of my students and their parents. I expected the surprised remarks regarding my young appearance and the occasional request for a hall pass. After all, no amount of successful school years could erase the fact that I am a five-foot, four-inch female teacher with a face that looks like a sixteen-year-old. However, I had hoped that by the end of my fourth year as a teacher, I would have gained the trust of my colleagues, my students, and their parents – at least to the extent that they would believe me when I assured them that I knew what I was doing inside the classroom. That trust has proven to be harder to earn than expected, especially since I teach Advanced Placement (AP) World History.

Not I that blame them, if I’m being completely honest with myself. I cannot say with complete certainty that I would not be at least somewhat skeptical of a sixteen-going-on-twenty-six-year-old teacher, especially if that educator was to teach my fifteen-year-old child college-level skills and content. Not to mention that since college credit is on the line, the pressure to do well is overwhelming. To make matters even more complicated, AP World History, with its 10,000 years of required historical

content and multiple regions of study, is a behemoth of a course for even the most dedicated and prepared students, regardless of my attempts as an educator to make the class more sophomore-friendly.

Another reality is this: for most of my students and the vast majority of their parents, my class may be one of those experiences (mine happened in the third grade), where school does not come naturally – where the most-desired "A" is not guaranteed and the outcome is equivalent to the amount of effort and hard work put in. I do not believe it is my responsibility to spoon-feed answers to student-shaped vessels that will be promptly forgotten upon regurgitation for their exams. It is my job to offer guidance as students practice and master skills which will help them be more independent and critical thinkers.

Needless to say, there is a bit of an adjustment period every year.

Which brings us back to the beginning – to the answer to that question: "Have I ever done this before?"

Well, I have a confession to make. The answer is simultaneously yes and no.

This was not my first time to teach AP World History. In fact, the 2015-2016 school year marked my third foray into the world of the College Board's Advanced Placement curriculum. I inherited the program from a teacher who taught the course for only one year before passing it to me. I was the only one at my school who had the desire to teach it. The program has grown to averaging about 130 AP World History students every year. It is the only thing I teach, so I have quite a bit of time and energy to devote to developing my curriculum and my official scores from the past two years support the claim that I am effective.

A Self Divided?

Although my test scores were encouraging, for those first few years I felt like a contradiction. It was almost as if I was living a double life. On one hand, I imagined myself as a practitioner of social studies education, one who, in the footsteps of John Dewey himself, focused on helping students develop the skills they would need to participate in a democratic society.¹ I wanted to foster the development of creative, independent, and critical thinkers who authentically cared about the world-wide community that they shared with others around the world. I wanted to help change the world, one student at a time! I had dreams of making difference, and I still do.

But, in my heart, I knew that I was doing little to actually live up to those goals. So, here was my reality: for the first few years of my career, I had taught exclusively through lecture. To be honest, it made sense at the time. I grew up loving history because of the larger-than-life stories with twists and turns that could put telenovela writers to shame. My favorite history teachers had also been fantastic orators who could weave the story of humanity into a complex work of art. Two teachers in particular stood out above the rest as influential mentors. My AP European History teacher from high school was my model for the kind of teacher I hoped to be, and he remains an invaluable mentor for me now that I am an educator. Not only does he have a mastery of European history that I can only dream of having, he also uses that mastery to foster a love of history among his students. In college, I had the privilege of learning from amazing professors during my undergraduate career. One in particular seemingly weaved magic with his lectures. Every lecture was a theatrical production, complete

with "historical" reenactments involving the professor and unsuspecting members of the audience. Even in a lecture hall filled with 300 students, he held us all captive. I wanted to create the same magic for my future students. I wanted them to fall in love with the complexities of the real people who helped write “the story of us.” And I hoped that maybe they would grow to see themselves as part of a much larger world.

For the longest time, I thought lecture was the only way to approach teaching history. I was exposed to other models of teaching during my undergraduate social studies methods classes, however these new approaches couldn't undo the years I had spent quietly internalizing the idea that history should be taught through lecture. Dan Lortie described this process as a kind of apprenticeship of observation. “Teaching is unusual in that those who decide to enter it have had exceptional opportunity to observe members of that occupation at work,” Lortie argued.¹ After all, individuals who eventually return to the classroom as educators usually have at least sixteen years of continuous contact with teachers and professors.² These interactions are powerful and can often shape the actions and perceptions of education students as they reenter the classroom as teachers. This proved accurate in my situation. Even though I embraced the philosophical ideas presented in my methods classes, many of which challenged my views regarding the goals of social studies in general, my preconceived understandings of what it meant to teach history held fast.

When I finally entered into the classroom for my first year of service, I clung to lecture as if it were my only life-line. It was my go-to mode of instruction. In fact, the only time I didn't use lecture was the few times I was formally evaluated each year. I

¹ Lortie, Dan C. *Schoolteacher*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 65.

² *Ibid.*, 61.

felt like a fraud, but at the same time I didn't know how to effectively teach all the content required of world history without using lecture every day.

By the time I reached winter break in my fourth year of teaching, I realized something wasn't working for me anymore. I was no longer content to just rely on lecture. There was an uneasiness in my conscience. I knew I could be a better teacher – that I could be true to myself and my educational goals of using my curriculum to challenge and promote the development of more compassionate and critical citizens.

However, something had been holding me back...

I felt pressure to continue doing what I was doing – If I changed, I would be going against the grain of what was expected in my department. I desperately wanted to fall into step with my coworkers. It's a desire I'm sure many new teachers feel during their first few years. These feelings were further complicated by the fact that the other teachers in my department were simultaneously my former teachers as well as my colleagues. I was afraid of being perceived as forever fourteen years old in their eyes. I wanted to establish myself as a dedicated and capable social studies teacher and be recognized as an equal member of the faculty I respected.

In many ways, doing something different felt like breaking with tradition. Lecture was the “traditional” way to teach history. It is what my teachers in middle and high school relied on. It is what I was exposed to during much of my undergraduate career as a history major. My personal experiences seemed to resonate with the words of James Barth, who argued that even though social studies courses were meant to foster civic practices, many people experienced social studies curricula that were snippets of historical, geographical, and political trivia memorized for final exams.ⁱⁱ

To complicate matters, I had achieved what many would traditionally consider “success” while using lecture in the classroom. I survived my first years as an educator with minimal parental complains, my students seemed to enjoy the class, and enrollment in AP World History continued to increase every year. My AP scores, which I anxiously awaited every July, provided me with consistent, standardized, presumably “objective” evidence that my students were either: (a) learning critical skills which would provide a foundation for future learning, or (b) mastering the standardized tests. I have many invaluable mentors in my life who believe in my abilities, even when I have trouble believing in myself. And, for the last couple of years, I have even had the privilege of serving as a cooperating teacher to preservice interns who are about to start their own unbelievable journeys as educators.

These pressures and fears gradually shifted from subconscious concerns that would only give me pause in quiet, still moments to almost tangible realities that constantly called to what Parker Palmer has described as our integrity and identity as educators.³ As I continued to reflect on my own situation, it made sense that these personal experiences might be symptoms of more universal pressures others may also face.

Pressures from generations of tradition, countless external expectations, and the understandable desire to not “mess with success” can all conspire to reinforce the status quo. Fears of taking risks and ultimately violating societal expectations can keep individuals from honoring their desire to strive for something different. And fears of

³ Palmer, Parker. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007), 31.

the unknown can prevent the taking of risks that could lead to the development of transformative relationships.

One pressure that seemed to be at the heart of my experiences, which I imagine calls to most people at some point in their personal journeys, was the desire to be true to myself. How can we navigate our way through the institutions we inhabit, reinforced as they are with both internal structures of support and external pressures of accountability and standardization, while remaining true to our individual identity and integrity?

What Can Be Done When More of The Same Is No Longer Enough?

During four years of wrestling with feelings of unrest stemming from the disconnectedness of my dreams for my students and the realities of my classroom, I gradually became aware that I had arrived at a proverbial crossroad. Parker Palmer describes this crossroad by explaining that there can come a time when a person can no longer tolerate being divided against oneself. At first, this internal division was easier to ignore because my need to be authentic was overpowered and cast aside by my almost primal need to survive my first years as a classroom teacher. I focused on achieving traditional “success” and strived for highly effective ratings on my formal evaluations. I wanted to seamlessly blend into my department. Instead of focusing on my identity as an educator, I became preoccupied with just making sure I had lessons that would carry me from one class period to the next, allowing me to fly under the radar instead of rocking the boat. However, as I became more confident in myself and my practices, I gradually realize that something needed to change.

In *The Courage to Teach*, Palmer explains that “when we listen primarily for what we “ought” to be doing with our lives, we may find ourselves hounded by external expectations that can distort our identity and integrity.”⁴ I had spent the first few years of my career focusing on what I believed I *ought* to be doing. I worried about not falling into step with more veteran teachers. I worried about failing to blend in only to be noticed for all the wrong reasons. And, just as Palmer writes, when I followed only the *oughts*, I found myself “doing work that was ethically laudable but not mine to do.”⁵

I could feel myself steadily approaching the divide between my reality and my identity. I felt isolated from who I am within my core by who I was inside the walls of my classroom. It was becoming more difficult to be content with teaching from a place of division, where my integrity and identify as a teacher were pushed aside. I knew that I wanted to create opportunities to use history to explore complex relationships. I agreed with the argument presented by Nel Noddings – we can’t learn to think critically if we don’t think about critical issues such as war, race, gender roles, and the effects of socialization.ⁱⁱⁱ However, teaching through lecture maintained hierarchies within my classroom. It established me as the “expert,” thus creating distinctions between my students and myself that prevented more interconnected relationships.

I felt accomplished but unsatisfied and isolated.

And I was tired.

I was traversing a path that I no longer wanted to follow. I wanted to try to redefine my classroom community – to leave the “success” I had found for a chance to

⁴ Ibid., 31.

⁵ Ibid., 31.

be more authentic. In deciding to follow Palmer’s advice, to live “divided no more,” I chose to acknowledge that the institutions surrounding the public school system which pressured me to believe that there was one right way to teach history only had power over me when I consented.⁶

This was a personal revelation. I didn’t have to fit perfectly within the box created by the institution’s definition of what history teachers looks like.

There Is No Starting Point – Just Jump

So I decided to try to be different. I knew I was no longer willing to live a divided life. I decided that more of the same was no longer an option and I resolved to try to reimagine my classroom so that it was a true reflection of my hopes and dreams for my students. However, many challenges remained.

For example – Where should I start?

I had made the decision to try to be true to my authentic self. I just needed to know where to start. If I just knew where to start, then everything would be different. I could fix my classroom environment so that it reflected the hopes and dreams that I had for my students. If I could just pinpoint the exact, singular place in my curriculum where I could begin, it could act as a springboard to a more authentic year.

Ironically, in my attempt to find a starting point from which to reimagine my AP World curriculum, I found myself lost in a vicious feedback loop.

So, where *is* the starting point for such a colossal task?

⁶ Ibid., 176.

My answer to this question was both simple and maddening at the same time – there ultimately isn't a starting point.

You just have to jump.

For me, jumping meant letting go. I had to let go of fears which mandated that I must teach ALL of the world's history. I had to let go of pressures to be like the rest of the teachers in my department. I had to let go of traditional expectations which convinced me that I was to be the sole expert and master of content. I had to let go of the idea that there was one “right” way to teach history.

Jumping also meant that I had to trust. I had to trust my students to take ownership of their own learning. I had to trust that my administration, my coworkers, my students and their parents would trust me and my different approach to history. Although trusting myself was a lot easier in theory than in reality, in the end I tossed my curriculum and started fresh. I decided that my classroom was no longer going to be a stage where I performed daily. I redefined what it meant to teach history, only this time, I focused on my identity and integrity. As an educator, I kept my personal goals of developing critical thinkers at the forefront of my mind. I resolved that everything we did in class would take steps to reach that end goal. I no longer wanted to be the sole expert in the room. So I chose to try to develop a community where my students could see themselves as the experts they are.

Although my personal transition is still a work-in-progress, from the beginning it gave my students and me new opportunities to place world history in the center of our classroom.^{iv} No longer was history a collection of facts that would be promptly forgotten at the end of each unit. History had become something for my students and

me to “do” in our classroom. It was something we shared and interpreted. Sometimes we saw eye-to-eye while at other times our thoughts and understandings diverged. What used to be a static, teacher-centered classroom gradually became more dynamic and alive.

As my classroom gradually became collaborative and ever-changing, – it began to look different every day. Some days we worked in groups and others we didn’t. Desks drifted across the room, creating a patchwork of smaller communities within a larger whole. There were even times when the desks were pushed against the wall, momentarily forgotten in order to make space for Socratic dialogues. Critical issues such as those discussed by Noddings anchored and guided our community. Primary source documents allowed us to enter into relationships with the voices of the everyday people who truly make history. We began to ask hard questions and sought answers by exploring and wrestling with the complexities of the past. Traditional lines between teacher and student slowly faded, revealing a community of learners eager to listen to the living subject which rested at the heart of our classroom.

Weathering New Worries and Fears

Interestingly, my biggest opponents to this radical change of style weren’t my school administration, the students or their parents. Of course, there was some resistance during an initial adjustment period. The meanings and purposes of social studies needed time to be redefined by my students just as they needed to be altered in my own mind before I was able to find the courage to move forward. Many of the same pressures that encouraged me to maintain the status quo also whispered to my students.

However, eventually most of my students understood and embraced my motives, recognizing that I was trying to challenge them in ways that would help them grow as thinkers.

Therefore, in the end, my biggest obstacle wasn't found in an external source.

It was my own fears.

As I wrestled with my own fears, I found myself returning to Parker Palmer's chapter on fear in *The Courage to Teach*. It is a text that I return to often, especially now that I am an inservice teacher. For Palmer, fear is what prevents us from entering into community with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents. Fear is what shuts down "experiments with truth" that could allow us to weave a wider web of connectedness.⁷ Ultimately, fear also shuts down our ability as educators to truly teach.^v

My own fears manifested themselves in a giant string of "what ifs". What if I'm not the type of teacher who can pull off this type of experiment? What if I say the wrong things or push the wrong buttons? What if I'm labeled as one of those *bad teachers*? What if a parent decides to complain to the district? What if this experiment doesn't work? What if I ruin the kids? What if I fail my students?

What if this was a horrible idea?

Looking back at my brief career, I can more clearly see the roles these fears played in my classroom. Fears of failure and vulnerability convinced me to hide behind the status quo when I knew my integrity and identity as a teacher called me to move outside of my comfort zone to a place where my pedagogical authenticity and reality

⁷ Ibid., 36.

intertwined. These fears also moved within my students, creating silence where protection could be found hidden behind blank stares and cell phone screens.

Even as I write, my fears are still a part of my identity. I wish I could say my personal fears regarding my pedagogical journey are no longer relevant. If there was a guaranteed method for washing away the fears that we and our students' experience, perhaps it would be easier to live an undivided life.

However, just as there is no one way to teach – there isn't one way to banish our fears.

I may not have the right prayers to be able to banish the fears that lurk in the shadows of my mind, but I do know this: every day I have a choice.

I get to choose the place from which I teach.

Our head principal told us a story at the beginning of his first year at our school. He spoke of a mentor who acted as a guide throughout the early part of his career. Every day, his mentor read him a quote from Haim G. Ginott, an accomplished psychologist, psychotherapist, and educator:

I've come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.⁸

⁸ Ginott, Haim G. *The Teacher and Child: A Book for Parents and Teachers*. (New York: MacMillan, 1972.)

Although fear has become deeply ingrained in educational institutions, this does not mean that we must make it our master or allow it to control our teaching. Every day, I make choices regarding the “weather” in my classroom. I can choose to let my fears create stormy waters or I can choose to teach from a place of curiosity, passion, honesty, or hope.

By making conscious decisions such as choosing to teach from an undivided place within, not only did I begin freeing myself from the control of my fears, but I also began finding ways to allow students to confront their own fears with greater promise that they would truly be heard.

Just Teaching “Enough”

In teaching it can be easy to forget what our students actually remember from their time in our classrooms. We can get bogged down in content – worrying about whether or not we covered everything in the state standards or, in my case, the AP course framework. These pressures feel even greater when traditional American views of social studies, especially history classes, focus on series of names, people, and dates.^{vi} As the British mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead observed almost a century ago, education in general is too often equated with the memorization of inert facts.^{vii} When history is perceived and taught as a single chain of events disconnected from one another, there is little opportunity to use the richness, complexity, and connectedness of the discipline to promote meaningful civic understanding.^{viii} In reality, what students needed to take away from my classes was a complex understanding of the world so that they could become more effective critical

and democratic citizens. At least that is my goal. And, as much as I loved the impressive tales of “Great Man” history, that wasn’t what I needed to focus on to achieve my ultimate goals for my students.

While historical people and events need to be incorporated into any history curriculum, I gradually realized that perhaps content shouldn’t be at the center of my classroom. If my goals for my students were to encourage the development of critical thinking, then maybe I needed to redefine myself as a facilitator of my students’ growth and understanding. By creating spaces for my students to explore their own critical sensibilities, I was freeing myself from the confines of “teaching” a laundry-list of facts and standards. In many ways, this let me know that I didn’t have to teach my students everything – I just had to teach enough so that I could open spaces for students to explore their own thinking.

That idea was terrifying.

Just teaching “enough” meant letting go of control and trusting soon-to-be-sixteen-year-olds to take ownership of their own learning. It meant that even though content was important, some of it would have to be left out in order to create space to critically explore history. This caused all sorts of fears to bubble to the surface. What if it wasn’t enough? What if I left out the wrong things? Would I teach enough about Oceania? What if there was an essay question about Sogdian trading practices in Central Asia on the AP exam?

These fears stemmed from my entrenchment in traditional understandings of history – ones that placed me solidly in what Parker Palmer calls the “Objectivist Myth of Knowing.”

I had been taught that good historians were individuals who removed themselves from what they were studying in order to deliver sterilized and unbiased views of historical events. According to this perspective, including ourselves in historical narratives is heresy because our personal thoughts and feelings stained the pristine truths told by our pasts.

These myths are not just prevalent in the historical field – they are something that has seeped into the foundational narrative shared by western society. In his work, *My Ishmael*, Daniel Quinn uses an allegory of a prison to create striking parallels between what Quinn identifies as Mother Culture and Palmer’s idea of the Objectivist Myth of Knowing. Quinn explains that every generation of industrial and postindustrial societies builds a prison for itself. This prison, which is sustained by generation after generation, is the culture of settled societies which can trace its origins back to the Fertile Crescent some ten thousand years ago.^{ix}

This objectivist prison was a “reality” I learned early and quickly. Ironically, it was one of the more memorable lessons from my first AP experience during my own sophomore year of high school. It came in the form of a note on my first essay for AP US History. Written in red pen, it read, “Never use ‘I think’ in an essay. It makes your essay weak.”

Such lessons are continually reinforced by the Objectivist Myth of Knowing. Every formal historical experience in my K12 and undergraduate career had me separated from the subject I love, kept at arm’s length by a wall of seemingly all-knowing experts. I wasn’t qualified to really “know” history, only to receive interpretations of it from historical experts. As one of my students once wrote, I was

only a “semi-expert” since I only had a bachelor’s degree in history, not a Ph.D. Like so many others, I was taught that my personal experiences shouldn’t be included in my understanding of historical events, and I subconsciously carried those lessons into my classroom.

One problem with the Objectivist Myth of Knowing is that “it falsely portrays how we know, and it has profoundly deformed the way we educate.”⁹ By separating ourselves and our students from the subjects we study, we quietly teach them that history is not theirs to make. The experiences that make up our personal histories becomes marginalized, and the only people considered worthy of writing history are the victors. All of us, teachers and students alike, are surrounded by narratives that reinforce objectivist ways of knowing to the point that many are no longer aware of their influences.

Validation from the Ground Up

It was towards the end of my fourth year of teaching when I realized new questions had begun to replace the ones that opened this paper. I first noticed these new questions on a normal day in May, a week or so before the AP World History Exam. My colleague, a fellow AP teacher whom I respect greatly, caught me outside my classroom. He asked me how my experiment was going. I crossed my fingers and expressed my hope that the AP exam would go well for my students. And then came the first question:

“So how will you know if this worked?”

⁹ Palmer, Parker. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*. (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007), 104.

It caught me off guard.

How *would* I know if it worked? Could I explain my “success” in a way that could be quantified, measured, tracked, normed, and validated? Traditionally speaking, there were some successes. Even though my current students’ pass rates remained basically unchanged from the results of the prior school year, the number of kids who earned higher scores drastically increased. It was unbelievably exciting to see the number of students earning 5s on the AP exam jump from just three or four during prior years to ten in the wake of my new approach. It made me look great on paper. However, those scores were just numbers and they did not reveal the intricate complexities weaved together to form the shared experiences in our classroom community.

Once again, I found myself drawn to the words of Parker Palmer as I reflected upon my colleague’s question. How would I know if it worked? Palmer explains in his final chapter that new forms of validation and reward evolve around alterations to the status quo.^x These new rewards give strength to individuals looking for new ways to live an undivided life, for they create space for change within societal institutions and open them up to negotiation. For example, by honoring our identity and integrity, we can embrace the idea that no punishment could be worse than conspiring against ourselves. Entering into what Palmer calls “communities of congruence” allows us to be supported by like-minded individuals who understand the meaning attached to personal growth and transformation.¹⁰ Ultimately, these new rewards are some of many that can come with living one’s personal truths.

¹⁰ Ibid., 188.

Changing my approach gave me the opportunity to explore not only how I viewed my AP World History curriculum but also myself as a teacher and an individual. I still may not have enough empirical evidence to adequately support my answer to my colleague's question. Maybe in a few years I will. Maybe I won't. However, I am confident that my students found success last year.

It just might not look like what is "traditionally" expected.

The forms of validation that supported me through difficult times and encouraged me onward did not come from the administration of my school, or from a single test taken in May. While appreciated and valued, those forms of validation do not necessarily give me the same motivation to continue to grow alongside my students.

Again I return to the question: How will I know if it worked?

I do know the answers won't come from the top.

They will come from the ground up – from my students

My students are one of the primary sources of my validation. Their curiosity excites me. Their victories give me strength to teach another day. When they proudly exclaim that "AP US History is easy compared to AP World!" I know this is their way of expressing their confidence in themselves as they prepare for new challenges and new journeys. When it is time to finally part ways, it is the students who let me know everything will be fine.

There is No Going Back

One final question seems to conclude this part of my journey as an educator:

“What will happen next?”

Unlike the others, this question doesn't surprise me.

Given the culture of accountability and high stakes testing which seems to surround public education, it makes sense that pedagogical practices that yield objective results would be valued greatly. These high stakes can make it seem like the bottom line of education can and possibly should be boiled down to A-F accountability scales. While I do think that some of these more traditional measures of success should play a role in how I approach my curriculum, they are just one piece of a much larger whole.

Yes, higher test scores were one outcome of my personal journey to live an undivided life as an educator. However, I was not solely motivated by a desire for better scores, and I should not rely on them as my only measure of success.

My journey wasn't about test scores.

My purpose was to explore my identity as a teacher and reflect upon my personal growth. I set out to find an undivided place within my core that honored who I am and who I hoped to be. I didn't intend to provide a set of recommendations for others. However, since in my experience, we are often more similar than we are different, perhaps there are others who might resonate with my experiences.

I am not sure of what will happen next. However, I do know that turning back isn't an option. I will continue to move forward, ready to explore ways to grow as a teacher by connecting my identity to my practices. I no longer expect myself to be isolated by expectations and traditions. Instead, I will focus on creating spaces where

my students and I can be in community with one another. Regardless of what awaits, I find strength in knowing that I won't be alone.

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Appendix A: Research Methodology

At the core of this paper rests basic qualitative research. According to Merriam (2009) in her work, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, “all qualitative research is interested in how meaning is constructed, how people make sense of their lives and their worlds. The *primary* goal of a basic qualitative study is to uncover and interpret these meanings.”¹¹ My personal goal was to reflect upon and document my journey to develop a curriculum and classroom environment that reflects my overall goals for my students’ development as well as my own identity and integrity as an educator. Because the primary focus of my research was to better understand the relationship between my beliefs and practices as an educator, this study could be considered a form of teacher action research. Since there was also a heavy focus on the understanding of self, it also incorporates elements of autoethnography. Finally, because I was also interested in structural issues of powers and justice, there was also a critical dimension to the study.

In order to approach these goals, I drew inspiration from Henry Giroux (1985), *Teachers as Transformative Individuals*. More than thirty years ago, Giroux argued that there were rising trends in education that devalue and deskill educators. Pressures caused by the desire to standardize school knowledge in an effort to control both what students learn as well as what and how educators teach have resulted in the proliferation of “teacher-proof” curriculum packages. The effect, Giroux argues, is “not only to

¹¹ Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009), 22.

deskill teachers, to remove them from the process of deliberation and reflection, but also to routinize the nature of learning and classroom pedagogy.”¹²

Giroux explains that one way to rethink and restructure how society views educators and their roles in classroom environment is to first encourage teachers to see themselves as intellectuals. When teachers choose to see themselves as intellectuals, they can take “active responsibility for raising serious questions about what they teach, how they are to teach, and what the larger goals are for which they are striving. This means they must take a responsible role in shaping the purpose and conditions of schooling.”¹³

While Giroux provided a rationale and a framework for this paper, Houser’s (1990) *Teacher-Researcher: The Synthesis of Roles for Teacher Empowerment*, provided a structure to explore my classroom curriculum. Like Giroux, Houser encourages teacher empowerment by affirming the roles of educators as intellectuals who actively reflect and improve upon their classroom curriculum and pedagogy. Over the last thirty years, there have been three distinct views regarding the role of classroom teachers in education research. The first, which does little to recognize the teacher as an intellectual, paints classroom educators as minimally informed beneficiaries of work completed by researchers.¹⁴ The second view highlights collaboration between teachers and researchers. Sometimes referred to as action research, this view implies a “level of teacher autonomy not realized under the constraints of traditional research practices.”¹⁵

¹² Giroux, Henry. “Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals” in *Social Education*. May (1985): 378.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 378.

¹⁴ Houser, Neil. “Teacher-Researcher: The Synthesis of Roles for Teacher Empowerment” in *Action in Teacher Education*. (1990): 56.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

In the third view, “the teacher is simultaneously researcher, instructor, and analyst.”¹⁶ This framework forms the foundation of the methodology used in this paper. At the heart of teacher action research is praxis. Inspired by the works of Paulo Freire and others, praxis is “based on the idea that through action, theory is developed; that theory is in turned modified through further action.”¹⁷ Teacher action research can empower classroom educators because it encourages them to move beyond simply implementing the curriculum of others. Instead, it encourages them to act independently as intellectuals, fully capable of curriculum and theory development.

This thesis began with a question which represented authentic concerns regarding my personal practices and curriculum. Over the course of my brief career, I had become increasingly aware of the reality that my professional goals for myself and my students were not aligned with my actions within my classroom environment. While I aimed to incorporate practices that would foster the development of critical thinking as part of my curriculum, I felt I was actually doing little to accomplish that goal.

I decided that my first course of action to explore these problems was to learn about new ways to approach social studies curricula. A few key elements helped guide my actions. First, Styles’ (1996) *Curriculum as Window and Mirror*, provided ways to understand and the unique experiences my students carry with them into the classroom. Styles argues that curricula need to function as both windows and mirrors for students in order to “reflect and reveal most accurately both a multicultural world and the student

¹⁶ Ibid., 58.

¹⁷ Ibid., 58.

herself or himself.”¹⁸ Classrooms can provide mirror experiences when one’s own humanity and experiences are reflected in the curriculum. Conversely, window experiences occur when the curriculum reveals the “humanity of another whose preference might be very different from one’s own.”¹⁹

Using Style’s work as a guide, I began to shift the focus of my curriculum away from state mandated topics and content. I focused on finding a balance between providing mirror and window experiences by choosing to emphasize some of the critical issues that rest at the core of the study of history. These critical issues often revolve around gender relationships, class struggles, the impacts of the distribution of wealth, appeals of religions and belief systems, and cycles of political and societal power. By shifting my focus to these overarching themes, I have been able to create new spaces to introduce wider ranges of window and mirror experiences for my students and myself.

Another element incorporated into my redesigned curriculum was to “flip” my classroom.²⁰ The premise behind a flipped classroom is relatively straight-forward. Students assume responsibility for completing basic instructional preparation for class while at home. Home instruction methods can take a variety of forms. Some teachers use online videos while others use podcasts, textbook chapters, short articles, and other materials that covers required topics. This frees class time for students to practice new concepts and skills through interactive lessons. By “flipping” the instruction, teachers are able to redefine their roles within the classroom. My own flipped curriculum allows

¹⁸ Styles, Emily. “Curriculum as Window and Mirror” in *Social Science Record*. Fall, (1996). First published in *Listening for All Voices*. (Summit: Oak Knoll School monograph, 1988,): 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁰ Brame, C., “Flipping the classroom.” *Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching*, 2013. Accessed November 16, 2016, <http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/flipping-the-classroom/>

me to function as a facilitator within our classroom environment. One of the benefits is that I can offer instant and personal guidance to students when they need it most.

According to Merriam, qualitative research is based on the assumptions that meaning is socially constructed and context-specific rather than absolute and universal. As a result, the overall purposes of qualitative research are to “achieve an *understanding* of how people make sense of their lives, delineate the processes (rather than the outcomes or products) of meaning-making, and describe how people interpret what they experience.”²¹ This method of research best relates to the purpose of this study, which was to understand my personal situations and concerns. In addition to qualitative research and teacher action research, this study also incorporates many elements of autoethnography, which utilizes self-reflection to understand how personal experiences connect to wider cultural influences.²²

Wolcott describes autoethnographic research as “doing ethnography from inside out,” by attempting to capture the views people hold of themselves.²³ It is a way to connect one’s personal stories to the cultures that influence them. Autoethnography is meant to be “intensely personal, often passionate and confessional.”²⁴ As a result, most of the data used in this study came from personal reflections. After each school day, I recorded a brief description of my lesson plans and the standards they aligned to in a journal. In these journal entries, I recorded my thoughts and feelings from throughout the day. The purpose of these entries was to critically reflect upon the new lessons

²¹ Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009), 14.

²² Wolcott, Henry F. *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing*. (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2008). Kindle Edition. Chapter 8.

²³ *Ibid.*, Chapter 8.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Chapter 8.

incorporated into my curriculum and whether or not these lessons mirrored my professional goals of fostering an environment in which my students could practice being critical citizens of our global community.

To analyze the data, I utilized related literature to better understand potential causes of the fears and pressures I was experiencing as well as any possible courses of action that could be taken to address these concerns. This fusion of my self-reflections and relevant theories helped shaped the praxis driving the teacher action research that resulted in this study.

I used axial coding to sort my journal entries into categories. These categories eventually coalesced into on four common themes including weathering fears and concerns, identity and integrity, alignment with pedagogical goals, and sentiments of personal empowerment. Formal assessments from unit exams, the AP exam, and student samples were incorporated into these various categories. My interpretations of these data can be found within the main body of the study.

Finally, like quantitative researchers, qualitative researches are also concerned with issues of confidence and trustworthiness. Merriam discusses several methods that can help ensure the overall credibility of qualitative research. The way I sought to deal with these issues in my study was through triangulation, adequate engagement in data collection, and researcher reflexivity.²⁵ I compared and cross-checked the data collected from formal assessments and student work samples with my journal entries regarding classroom interactions as a method of triangulation. To ensure adequate engagement of data collection, I spent a full academic year observing and reflecting

²⁵Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009), 219.

upon my classroom environment. Finally, this study reflects personal concerns and experiences. As a result, it was important that I articulated and clarified my assumptions, experiences, and worldviews.²⁶ By explaining my fears and experiences, it is my hope that readers will better understand who I am as an individual and what paths led me to the findings presented in this study.

²⁶ Ibid., 219.

Appendix B: Theoretical Framework or Interpretive Lens

A theoretical framework or interpretive lens is a means by which researchers can step back from basic descriptions of words and events to engage in thoughtful analysis or interpretation of the origins and significance of those words and events. Because theories explain, theoretical interpretations can provide explanatory power. Thus, for example, rather than simply acknowledging or *describing* a teacher's sense of disempowerment or despair, a theoretical or interpretive lens can help researchers take the next step to *explain* potential causes and consequences of that despair. Several theoretical ideas informed my thinking about issues of honoring one's identity as an educator, navigating institutional pressures and personal fears, and developing curriculum that aligns to personal goals.

The overarching framework for my study emerged from personal concerns regarding my goals as an educator and whether or not my classroom culture and curriculum reflected those goals. As I spent time reflecting on the relationship between my classroom culture and my desire to foster global citizenship, I came to understand that there were institutional pressures, such as desires to replicate "traditional" social studies approaches, as well as fears of failing to meet standardized definitions of teacher effectiveness, that influenced my actions.

An important idea that shaped my praxis is Palmer's explanation of identity and integrity as a catalyst for teacher empowerment. Palmer argues that "good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of

the teacher.”²⁷ Identity and integrity, according to Palmer, lie “in the intersection of the diverse forces” that make up one’s life and the ways in which those forces bring “wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death.”²⁸ When we, as teachers, reclaim our identity and integrity which rests at the heart of good teaching, “we can reclaim our belief in the power of inwardness to transform our work and our lives.”²⁹ For Palmer, empowerment begins when we reclaim our hearts by remembering who we are. Instead of seeing ourselves as victims of external forces, our identity and integrity as individuals gives us an inner power that cannot be taken away.³⁰ After all, Palmer argues, the “institutions are also ‘us.’”³¹ If we, as educators, remember our identities, we empower ourselves to enact reform from within.

Another impactful concept included Freire’s insistence that the “people’s vocation” is “humanization.”³² Humanization is rooted in the desire to become, and be recognized, as more fully human. For Freire and many others, education can and should aide in the quest for humanization. However, many institutions “dehumanize” students through “banking” education, which views students as “‘receptacles’ to be ‘filled’” with knowledge from teachers.³³ This only serves to perpetuate institutional systems of oppression because it keeps students passive. Education becomes “an act of depositing,” thereby minimizing student agency. Banking education views knowledge as “a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those who

²⁷ Palmer, Parker. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*. (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007.) 10.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

³² Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (30th anniversary Kindle Edition) (New York: Bloomsbury, 2000) Chapter 1.

³³ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2.

they consider to know nothing.”³⁴ This method of education negates students’ agency and creativity, for it views them as objects and prevents them from developing a “critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world.”³⁵

Freire suggests an alternative to the banking concept of education. The solution, he argues, is to “abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relationships with the world.”³⁶ Problem-posing education creates dialogue by erasing the distinctions of “teacher-of-the-student” and “students-of-the-teacher,” replacing them with a new paradigm in which the teacher is “no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in a dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach.”³⁷ In problem-posing education, people develop their power to critically understand “*the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves.*”³⁸ This empowers both students and teachers alike to see the world as a “reality in process” instead of something static and permanent.³⁹

These ideas informed my thinking about global education and subject-centered education. According to Merryfield and Kasai, the primary goal of global education is “to prepare students to be effective and responsible citizens in a global society,” which is often accomplished by infusing multiple, often conflicting global perspectives into

³⁴ Ibid., Chapter 2.

³⁵ Ibid., Chapter 2.

³⁶ Ibid., Chapter 2.

³⁷ Ibid., Chapter 2.

³⁸ Ibid., Chapter 2.

³⁹ Ibid., Chapter 2.

social studies curricula.⁴⁰ This connects back to Freire’s concept of problem-posing education. Merryfield and Kasai argue that complex global issues and problem solving must be included as a part of classroom experiences if students are to be prepared for active citizenship in a multicultural and global democracy. By promoting “worldmindedness” through classroom curricula, students are able to develop greater critical consciousness which can empower them as transformative citizens in a global community.⁴¹

These concepts also informed my understanding of Palmer’s subject-centered education. Palmer explains that a debate has existed between advocates of teacher-centered models of education and student-centered models.⁴² Trapped between concerns regarding rigor, on the one hand, and active learning on the other, many educators feel caught between two poles. Palmer suggests that a possible alternative can be found in a synthesis of the two modes. “Perhaps,” he argues, “the classroom should be neither teacher-centered nor student-centered but subject-centered.”⁴³

Subject-centered classrooms are characterized by the fact that at the center a *great thing* “sits in the middle and knows.”⁴⁴ In such classrooms it becomes possible to explore the mysteries of life and learning Palmer extolls while entering into the critical and self-critical dialectical relationships promoted by Freire. Distinctions between teachers and students can dissolve, allowing teachers-as-students and students-as-teachers to “come

⁴⁰ Merryfield, M. M. and Kasai, M. “How are teachers responding to globalization?” *Social Education*, 68, no. 5, (2004): 354–359 in *Social Studies Today: Research and Practice* ed. Walter C. Parker. (Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.) 165-166.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁴² Also see Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum*, for a critical analysis of this apparent dichotomy.

⁴³ Palmer, Parker. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*. (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007.) 119.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

into a genuine learning-community, a community that does not collapse into the egos of students or teachers but knows itself accountable to the subject at its core.”⁴⁵

ⁱ In *The Child and the Curriculum*, John Dewey explores the relationship between how students learn and how schools are structured. Dewey argues that different schools of thought regarding education developed from the desire to understand the relationship between students and the curriculums designed to teach them. One school of thought focuses on the “importance of the subject-matter of the curriculum as compared with the contents of the child’s own experience” (7). In this school of thought, the curriculum is broken down into subjects. As students master one subject, they can proceed to the next. The second school of thought argues that “the child is the starting-point, the center, and the end. His development, his growth, is the ideal. It alone furnishes the standard” (9). Dewey is critical of both schools of thought. He argues, “the ‘old education’ tended to ignore the dynamic quality, the developing force inherent in the child’s present experience, and therefore to assume that direction and control were just matters of arbitrarily putting the child in a given path and compelling him to walk there” (18). The “old education,” which focused on breaking the curriculum down to subjects ignored a student’s authentic and individual interests. Likewise, “the ‘new education’ is in danger of taking the idea of development in an altogether too formal and empty way. The child is expected to ‘develop’ this or that fact or truth out of his own mind” (18). This proves problematic for Dewey for it assumes that students are always developmentally capable of learning and growing as individuals without any guidance. Dewey suggests an alternative school of thought. There must be a balance between the student and the curriculum. He argues “the value of the formulated wealth of knowledge that makes up the course of study is that it may enable the educator to *determine the environment of the child*, and thus by indirection to direct... Let the child’s nature fulfil its own destiny, revealed to you in whatever of science and art and industry the world now holds as its own” (31).

ⁱⁱ James Barth begins his conversation of social studies with a brief history. He explains that before social studies, history and geography were the two main fields of study. While some elements of social studies education began to emerge towards the end of the nineteenth century, the stresses of urban industrial life prompted the idea that social studies curricula should offer citizenship education for a democratic society. To put it simply, “the goal of teaching social studies is citizenship” (5).

ⁱⁱⁱ In her work, *War, Critical Thinking, and Self-Understanding* (2008), Nel Noddings explores how educators can use critical issues to foster critical thinking within the classroom. She argues that while critical thinking is frequently stated as a fundamental aim of education, many teachers feel like they cannot approach certain “forbidden” critical issues within the classroom. Many of these issues, such as current wars, religions, and cultural differences, are not only relevant and significant in the lives of students, but they also help create space in which critical thinking can be explored and practiced. Noddings acknowledges that current educational climates which emphasize standardized, high-stakes testing create stressful demands on educators and take away time within the classroom to explore these critical ideas and issues. However, Noddings argues, perhaps an answer to that problem is to “get rid of trivia and spend time on topics that really matter” (137).

^{iv} Parker Palmer explains in his work, *The Courage to Teach*, that one possible response to counterbalance the Objectivist Myth of Knowing is what he calls the Community of Truth. The Community of Truth is actually a collection of communities where “the many are made one by the fact that they gather around a common subject and are guided by shared rules of observation and

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.

interpretation that require them to approach the subject in the same way” (104). At the center of each community rests a subject. This is one of the critical differences between the two schools of thought outlined by Palmer. “A subject,” Palmer argues, “is available for relationship; an object is not” (104). When we as teachers and learners place a subject at the center of our focus, we “give it the respect and authority we normally only give to human beings” (105). It is through this focus that classrooms transform into Communities of Truth.

^v Parker Palmer explains that from grade school on, education is a fearful endeavor for students as well as teachers. “Educational institutions are full of divisive structures” Palmer writes. However, these “external structures of education would not have the power to divide us as deeply as they do if they were not rooted in one of the most compelling features of our inner landscape – fear” (36). According to Palmer, “the personal fears that students and teachers bring to the classroom are fed by the fact that the roots of education are sunk deep in fearful ground...it is our dominant modes of knowing, a mode promoted with such arrogance that it is hard to see the fear behind it.” For Palmer, the dominant modes of knowing that currently flow through our educational systems creates disconnections between teachers, their subjects, and their students because it fosters fear within the classroom. This mode, called objectivism, paints truth as “something we can achieve only by disconnecting ourselves, physically and emotionally, from the thing we want to know” (52). Objectivism fears subjectivity. It keeps us from forging relationships with the things that make our world unique. According to Palmer, objectivism turns life into objects and once that happens, life cannot transform us.

^{vi} *Two World Histories* by Ross E. Dunn explores the arenas where two competing groups debate the purpose of world history. In Arena A are scholars and teachers who “subscribe to the premise that the primary field of world historical investigation must be the planet as a whole, that is, the human species in its changing physical and natural environment” (183). Advocates of Arena A focus on human connections, interactions, and patterns of change that transcend particular countries or civilizations (184). Arena B, on the other hand, mainly focuses on the “social studies curriculum in American schools, including subject matter in non-American history, geography, culture, and current affairs” (184). Proponents of Arena B have traditionally been concerned about social studies as expressions of national values. In addition to the tensions between Arena A and Arena B, Arena B also experiences division within itself. On one hand, some members argue that history in public schools should primarily “transfer Western political, intellectual, and cultural ideals to the rising generations in order to strengthen their loyalty to the United States” (184). On the other, multiculturalist educators advocate for “cultural diversity, social justice, and international-mindedness” (186). One aspect of Evan’s discussion that I find personally relevant is his analysis of the College Board’s Advanced Placement World History program. Many educators who helped develop the AP World History curriculum pulled inspiration from Arena A. This is evident in its unified chronology and its emphasis on “the nature of changes in global frameworks and their causes and consequences, as well as comparisons among major societies” (191). Critics of the AP World History program, including those from Arena B, argue that the curriculum tries to cover too much content. Moreover, by restricting the amount of content regarding Western Europe and the United States covered in the curriculum, the course contradicts traditional narratives regarding the rise of the “West” (192).

^{vii} Alfred North Whitehead’s, *The Aims of Education* centers around the idea that “students are alive, and the purpose of education is to stimulate and guide their self-development” (V). He begins his discussion with the dangers of what he calls inert ideas. These are “ideas that are merely received into the mind without being utilized, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations” (1). Whitehead argues that throughout the history of education, emphasis on inert ideas has caused education to become routine. As a way to guard against the overreliance of inert ideas, two educational commandments emerged, “Do not teach too many subjects,” and “What you teach, teach thoroughly” (2). However, this has created a new set of problems. By dividing education into many small subjects, students often come to understand education as a collection of disconnected ideas. Instead, Whitehead urges, let “the main ideas which are introduced into a child’s education be few and important, and let them be thrown into every combination possible. The child should make them his own, and should understand their application here and now in the circumstances of his actual life. From the very beginning of his education, the child should experience the joy of discover” (2).

^{viii} Evans, Ronald W. “The Social Studies Wars, Now and Then.” in *Social Studies Today: Research and Practice*. New York: Taylor and Francis, 2010. Kindle Edition. Both James Barth and Ronald W. Evans discuss the nature of social studies and the various interpretations and applications of social studies

curricula. Evans further examines the competing role of social studies in education by exploring various pedagogical “camps” that exist within the field. He identifies five major camps. The first emphasizes “content acquisition, chronology, and the textbook” (26). The second camp “advocates social studies as social science” (26). This camp often includes those who focus on the various social science disciplines. A third group is comprised of “social efficiency educators,” who see social studies as a means to create a “smoothly controlled and more efficient society by applying standardized techniques from business and industry to schooling” (26). Social meliorists comprised of “Deweyan experimentalists who want to develop students’ reflective thinking ability and, thereby contribute to social improvement” form the core of the fourth group (26). Finally, the fifth camp is promoted by social reconstructionists or critical pedagogues, who “cast social studies in schools in a leading role in the transformation of American society” (26). Evans explains that throughout modern American history, the various “social studies wars” reflect the nation’s cultural divide – they are “deep fractures, a reflection of long-term trends, and are not easily healed” (26).

^{ix} Daniel Quinn’s book, *My Ishmael*, focuses on major differences between two different cultures as well as the impacts of those cultures on human history and development. The first of these two cultures, which Quinn calls Leaver culture, represents communities where agriculture does not dominate society. The second, called Takers, represents communities born of agricultural revolutions around the world. *My Ishmael* seeks to discuss the differences between these two cultures, and to explore the negative impact Taker culture has had on our world. In this particular reference, Quinn compares Taker culture to a prison, one that is rebuilt by every new generation and is maintained and managed by the prisoners. While this allegory seems bleak, Quinn does offer possible alternatives. When Julie, the young pupil of the novel asks how to escape the prison created by Taker culture, Ishmael, her teacher, responds, “By learning something different...By refusing to teach your children how to be prisoners...When six billion of you refuse to teach your children how to be prisoners of Taker culture, this awful dream of yours will be over – in a single generation” (129).

^x In his final chapter of *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer shifts his focus from the practice of teaching to the discussion of educational reform and its various stages. Palmer argues that social movements have four stages. The first stage occurs when individuals “come to a juncture where they must choose between allowing selfhood to die or claiming the identity and integrity from which good living, as well as good teaching comes” (173). In this stage, individuals must find solid ground outside of the institutions which influence their lives. It is less about rebelling against other people’s beliefs than the desire and need for one’s own beliefs to govern and guide one’s life (174). The second stage described by Palmer is characterized by like-minded people who come together to form communities of congruence. The primary purpose of these communities is simply to reaffirm and reassure. Palmer explains that when individuals with similar beliefs and goals are on the same path, they “are helped to understand that ‘normal’ behavior can be crazy but that seeking integrity is always sane” (179). The third stage of Palmer’s evolution of a movement occurs when the people who form a community of congruence go public. When a movement goes public, not only can it have a chance to influence others, but it also can challenge its members to reflect upon their core beliefs (182). The fourth and final movement centers on the diverse rewards that accompany new ways of living. Palmer concludes, “Some of us may decide to live divided no more, to align our actions as teachers with the meaning we attach to our work. Some of us may seek others who share our values, joining communities of congruence that can sustain our transformations. Some of us may go public with our beliefs, voicing our vision and being challenged by the response. Some of us may learn that conventional rewards pale as we experience the satisfaction of living by our best lights” (189-190).