Becoming Historians:
Discourse, Engagement, & Deeper Learning in High School History

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Abstract: This project investigates a problem of low student engagement and a scarcity of higher-order thinking opportunities in high school history classes within a ‘no excuses’ charter high school. In an attempt to address these problems, revealed to the school through its internal data, the school launched a new pilot program in its history classes to prioritize student reading and discussion of primary source documents. Utilizing comparative lesson plan analysis, student classwork samples, class observations, and structured open-ended interviews with teachers, this project found that although the rewritten lessons represent an attempt at greater student engagement, the school remains overly reliant on its previous school-based systems of student compliance that ultimately hinder diffusing student engagement and learning.

Keywords: Engagement, deeper learning, discourse, primary sources, history education

I. Organizational Context

Over the last decade, scholarship and popular media have cited College Prep High[1], a public charter school in the northeast, as a model of academic success among 'no excuses' schools. Coined some two decades earlier, the title 'no excuses' represents schools within low-income and predominately Black and Brown communities overseen by non-profit charter management networks. Many major charter management organizations assert ineffective school models are fueled by an acceptance of external 'excuses' (such as poverty, race, parents, children, and zip codes) as reasons for low student achievement and the Black-White achievement gap (Golann, 2021). As the chief of schools of the charter management organization overseeing College Prep High explained, "Students' failures are *our failures*. We teach until they learn and we don't make excuses for failure—ours or the students" (L. Jones, personal communication).

College Prep High educates roughly 700 students across ninth through twelfth grades—all identifying as students of color receiving free or reduced lunch (J. Phillips, personal communication). The school has a roughly even male-female ratio (51% male and 49% female) and over half of the students (54%) have been in CPH's specific charter network since kindergarten (J. Phillips, personal communication). Only 14% of students receive any academic accommodations (ESL, extended testing time, modifications, etc.) and the school's attrition rate is only 2% annually (J. Phillips, personal communication). Extant literature on charter schools within charter management networks notes high teacher attrition year-to-year (with many schools over 30%) and relatively little experience for most charter school faculty within charter networks (Golann, 2021). However, CPH only hires 5-6 new faculty members each year among its 60 faculty (10% attrition) and, on average, over two thirds of the faculty have at least five years of teaching experience (S. Smith, personal communication). These statistics suggest, with respect to faculty retention and experience, CPH may be a relative outlier within the charter management community. Only 20% of the faculty self-identify as people of color and the faculty skews slightly more female (54%) than male (J. Phillips, personal communication). The school's administration (head of school, assistant head of school, curriculum director, dean of students, and director of operations) have all been at CPH in their respective roles for the last six years (J. Phillips, personal communication).

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[1] To protect the anonymity of the partner organization and its members, a pseudonym will be used for the name of the school and all participants.

Since its inception, CPH has employed strictly aligned curricular and instructional models designed for the largest number of students to achieve basic proficiency on standardized assessments. All classes have aligned lesson plans written by network-based curriculum writers working from the neatwork's home offices. The school requires teachers to use instructional timers and 'economy of language' to maximize instructional time. As the head of school candidly explained, "Traditionally, we have resisted anything that might harm scaling the most knowledge to the greatest number of students—even if those efforts reduced the rigor of the classroom because external tests have been our benchmark" (S. Smith, personal communication). To the extent possible, the course scope and sequence of all classes are aligned to end-of-year external national assessments (AP exams, SAT, ACT, and state testing) to assess student performance (S. Smith, personal communication). CPH evaluates teachers based on students' demonstrated mastery and performance on internal quarterly exams and external (state or College Board) end-of-year assessments (S. Smith, personal communication).

The school's instructional model has engendered tangible successes in terms of student achievement in a range of measures. For example, each year 100% of the senior class matriculates to a four-year college and CPH regularly outperforms its neighboring White suburban schools on aligned national assessments (SAT, ACT, and AP exams) with respect to overall student proficiency (L. Jones, personal communication). On average, the school welcomes some twenty school administrators each year from different ‘no excuses’ schools throughout the country eager to observe CPH’s instructional model. As the head of school reasoned, “Our success on assessments and within the college admissions process has led to a lot of eyes being on us with the hope that we have discovered the secret sauce” (S. Smith, personal communication). One major news outlet went as far as to describe College Prep High as one of the most rigorous and academically challenging high schools in the United States due to its student testing data. Despite these successes, College Prep High’s own internal evaluations have begun to identify limitations to its curricular-instructional model that, the school asserts, are inhibiting student engagement and more meaningful learning. As the head of school lamented, “We thought we had cracked the code to student achievement only to come to believe we had been working on just one part of the puzzle—or maybe not even the right puzzle” (S. Smith, personal communication).

II. Problem of Practice

Despite the school's success, school leaders had evidence in the spring of 2022 of low student engagement in classes and limited alumni success in college coursework. They suspected both trends were the result of instructional design. Specifically, the school described a problem in the spring of 2022: the school's instructional design was not supporting students for higher-order thinking and authentic engagement (S. Smith, personal communication).

Although an initial instructional design devoting class time to content internalization and students reproducing teacher-created materials (notes, outlines, flow charts, etc.) allowed the school to achieve a sustained level of success with respect to student proficiency on aligned national assessments (specifically College Board AP exams), the model only provided a foundation for basic student understanding (L. Jones, personal communication). College Prep High has intentionally omitted opportunities for students to evaluate and analyze content—fearing those opportunities could threaten the greatest number of students in each class achieving basic mastery. As the head of school noted, CPH has traditionally "taught to the low-middle of the room" so that everyone can be successful academically (S. Smith, personal communication). One teacher even expressed that the school openly has encouraged teachers of AP classes to "teach to a 3" rather than integrate the critical thinking skills necessary for students to earn a 4 or 5 on the AP exam (G. Miller, personal communication). Thus, the instructional design that has served as College Prep High's bedrock for decades (and allowed it to gain a level of national prominence and perceived internal and external success) is now the very impediment to its continued growth.

III. Present Organizational Intervention

After reviewing their internal data from the last five years, College Prep High expressed in the fall of 2021 they had a problem of limitation (low student engagement and scarce higher-order cognitive thinking opportunities) within their current instructional model. In response to this assumption, CPH launched a redesigned instructional design (as an improvement pilot) in its history department for the 2022-2023 school year. The pilot instructional design contains two parts—the second being the focus of this quality improvement project. First, CPH recrafted its history department to make history courses ‘AP for All’ for sophomores and juniors. All CPH students (regardless of previous coursework) now take AP World History in sophomore year and AP U.S. History in junior year. All freshmen take pre-AP World History (with a course scope and sequence designed by the College Board) and Seniors–who are not required to take a history course–may enroll in AP U.S. Government & Politics, AP Seminar, AP Research, or a non-AP seminar-based elective (S. Smith, personal communication). The network’s curriculum writers have redesigned history lesson plans where students spend the majority of each lesson reading and discussing primary source documents (S. Smith, personal communication). As the network has explained, they want “to make students into practicing historians” (L. Jones, personal communication). Although the school (and the charter management organization overseeing CPH) are interested in diffusing an ‘AP for All’ model to other departments for aligned courses and scaling its new curricular-instructional system over time, CPH’s history department is currently the only department across the network implementing this new system–and there are no plans to remodel other departments before the 2023-2024 school year.

The second component of the new instructional initiative is the focus of this investigation. In addition to a new curricular-instructional system within the history department that relies on ‘AP for All,’ CPH’s history department seeks to involve students more actively in lessons to improve overall student engagement. During the entirety of the 2022-2023 school year, CPH’s history department is focusing on daily classroom discourse (spoken and written) as its ‘big rock’ goal (in all classes) and target history teacher professional development around fostering student discourse. Network curriculum writers have pledged to ensure a minimum of 20-30 minutes in each daily CPH lesson plan (roughly half the lesson of a 60-minute class) contains authentic opportunities for spoken and written student discourse (G. Miller, personal communication). CPH, through its network professional development, has adopted Ron Ritchhart’s definition of student discourse—which has served as a core text for all faculty during a summer 2022 retreat (L. Jones, personal communication). According to Ritchhart, classroom discourse can be defined as any exchange (spoken or written) where students express novel ideas, thoughts, opinions, or perspectives on a given topic and engage with both their peers and the teacher to advance common shared understanding of a given topic (Ritchhart, 2015). Network and CPH leaders hope a new instructional design predicated on ‘AP for All’ and student discourse will enable students to become more genuinely excited about course material as well as transform students into working historians who can apply content and skills broadly beyond a tightly scripted classroom context (L. Jones, personal communication). With these changes, school leaders hoped to promote student engagement and higher ordered reasoning during instructional time without sacrificing the ambitious student outcomes the school was known for achieving. Therefore, this project focuses on the second piece of College Prep High’s pilot model with the purpose of providing the school and network insight into the extent to which opportunities for spoken and written discourse are impacting students’ engagement and learning—as well as how this pilot may emerge as a sustainable model for CPH year-to-year.

IV. Review of Literature

This project is shaped by several prominent themes in the extant literature. Specifically, this investigation relates directly to research on the curricular and school-based systems of ‘no excuses’ public charter schools, deeper learning as a means of higher-order cognitive thinking, and situated theories of learning. Although it would be impractical to enumerate all of the work in these thematic and theoretical sub-fields, the literature presented represents an interdisciplinary sampling of the arguments and tensions emerging from the present scholarship.

Curricular & School-Based Systems of ‘No Excuses’ Public Charter Schools

Over the last three decades there has been significant public and scholarly discourse related to ‘no excuses’ public charter schools and school reform efforts. Nationally recognized ‘no excuses’ charter management organizations (such as KIPP, Success Academy, Uncommon Schools, and Achievement First) differ with respect to specific school-based systems, but are all organized around a common set of principles including: strict student behavior standards that correct and penalize any infractions, aligned and tightly timed (and heavily scripted) lesson plans, high standards for rigor (aligned to state or national assessments), and diffused classroom instructional and management practices aimed to maximize instructional time and learning opportunities (Golann, 2015). Arguably some of the most normed and diffused instructional techniques of ‘no excuses’ schools are the requirement that students ‘track the speaker,’ teachers use ‘economy of language,’ and ‘silent and solo’ Do Now’s and independent practice during class time accompanied by real-time teacher monitoring and coding of student classwork to glean the level of student mastery in order to focus instruction where students are not learning (Whitman, 2008). Many charter management organizations require all classes to complete daily ‘Exit Tickets’ to assess the level of student learning for a given lesson and for school leaders to review and use the data in weekly check-in meetings with teachers (Radoslovich, Roberts, & Plaza, 2014). ‘No excuses’ schools argue that strict curricular, behavioral, and instructional systems are necessary to insulate students from potential impediments to learning that could occur in the high-poverty urban communities where these schools are located. Thus, ‘no excuses’ schools seek to use highly detailed and scripted systems as affordances to ensure student learning and outcomes are comparable to those of their White suburban peers (Mehta & Fine, 2019).

Ethnographic scholarship underscores that ‘no excuses’ public charter schools can foster a narrow understanding of ‘success’ for students (often Black and Latinx) measured by assessments designed to mirror standardized tests. Through this model, ‘no excuses’ schools appear ‘high performing,’ yet can harm students of color by forcing them to conform to a White middle-class worldview concerning perceived educational respectability (Marsh, 2021). In enacting this approach, students can lose individuality in the learning process if the primary pedagogical focus is achieving the highest mean classroom test score (Buddin & Zimmer, 2005). Researchers in education and social psychology (using positioning theory as an analytic framework) posit that teachers in ‘no excuses’ schools are mandated to position students as abstractions. Through schools’ mandated pre-scripted curricula and focus on standardized testing, teachers view economically-marginalized students of color as unaware of both how to learn as well as their potential as self-saboteurs of their own potential success without the support of rigid and regressive behavioral management systems (Lopez Kershen, Weiner, & Torres, 2018). Rather than empowering students, the systems of ‘no excuses’ charter schools have the potential to marginalize and oppress the individuals these schools claim to serve.

‘No excuses’ schools brand themselves as communities of empowerment for students of color. Empowerment has emerged in neoliberal discourse surrounding ‘no excuses’ public charter schools to emphasize both consumer choice and schools' promises to change economic outcomes for students by ensuring college matriculation (Ellison & Iqtadar, 2020). Yet, as sociologist Joanne Golann has argued, 'no excuses' schools represent a paradox. Although their practices of aligned curriculum, data-driven instruction, and extended instructional time have aided student academic achievement (and emerged as a meaningful urban school-reform model), these schools nevertheless dehumanize students into "worker learners" as opposed to life-long learners. Golann defines "worker learners" as "children who monitor themselves, hold back their opinions, and defer to authority" (Golann, 2015, p. 103). The impact of reducing students of color to 'worker learners' is further reinforced in these schools' use of 'scripts.' 'No excuses' schools often rely on 'scripts' for student behavioral comportment in the name of educational social justice. Students are often directed by majority White faculties and administrations regarding what constitutes both 'normative' and 'proper comportment' (Stahl, 2019). The existing literature has emphasized that charter management organizations' scripts and codes for students extend to student appearance (Stahl, 2019). Nationally prominent 'no excuses' schools have banned hoop earnings, visible student tattoos, dyed hair, and any 'excessive jewelry' (usually more than two pieces of jewelry of any kind) arguing that such displays can interfere with student learning (Stahl, 2019). Through its codes regarding student dress and appearance, 'no excuses' charter schools (intentionally or unintentionally) commonly enact a "biopolitics" on student bodies by using student bodies as a means of legitimizing control (Stahl, 2022).

Scholars have raised concerns that the potential harm 'no excuses' systems of order and control enact on students may outweigh any potential perceived academic benefits. 'No excuses' instructional and cultural models can reproduce the inequities and deficit perspectives these schools wish to redress by teaching curricula that does not mirror the lived experiences of the students they serve. The extant literature has noted that ‘no excuses’ charters almost exclusively align curricula to state or national assessments (generally College Board AP courses at the high school level) due to arguments that such exams represent clear benchmarks for rigor and success (Golann, 2021). Yet critics assert that such alignment to standardized assessments fails to adequately capture the culture and lived experiences of the students that generally comprise ‘no excuses’ classrooms—students of color in urban spaces whose families may qualify for free or reduced lunch (Waitoller, Nguyen, & Super, 2019). ‘No excuses’ schools rarely rely on students’ funds of knowledge (Sondel, 2016). Funds of knowledge, as a theory and practice, seek to challenge prevailing deficit perspectives by focusing on the knowledge bases students bring to school rather than knowledge students ‘lack’ vis-à-vis formal language and understanding sanctioned by formalized school curricula (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Through this lens, funds of knowledge serve as a counter discourse and a means of socio-cultural capital for communities whom educational institutions assumed were without any such capital and resources (González, Wyman, & O’Connor, 2011).

As a result of ‘no excuses’ schools’ intentional curricular choices aligned to standardized assessments, studies have questioned the extent to which curriculum within ‘no excuses’ (despite potential rigor) are un-relatable to students and, as a result, a mediator of student disaffection with school. Large-scale survey data with students and teachers suggests that students in ‘no excuses’ charter schools are generally less-engaged than their public-school peers. ‘No excuses’ students, especially high school students, traditionally express feelings of apathy and boredom with respect to classes and lessons (Wei, Patel, & Young, 2014). Observational data comprising a significant volume of hours in ‘no excuses’ classrooms affirms prior survey results that suggest student disengagement across classes, grade levels, and subject areas. In one study, for example, students would often display signs of disengagement such as yawning, heads on desks, sleeping, and eye rolling (Ellison & Iqtadar, 2020). Some scholars have cited such survey and observational data to make correlational claims to explain why ‘no excuses’ schools, notably at the middle and high school level, struggle considerably with student retention and almost never publicize retention statistics for public consumption (Anderson, 2017). Although the scholarly literature defines engagement in different ways and through different means of data collection (classroom observations, student and teacher surveys, student and teacher interviews, etc.), there is nevertheless a recurring thread questioning the extent to which ‘no excuses’ students are actively participating in learning and enjoying class time structured around rigid behavioral, curricular, and instructional systems (Golann, 2021; Mehta & Fine, 2019).

In acknowledging evidence of low student engagement, however, some previous scholars have argued that ‘no excuses’ schools represent an instructional paradox. Student engagement is often observably low compared to peer public district schools. But classroom content, scholars contend, (aligned to state and national assessments) represent high intellectual rigor compared to peer public district schools (Betts & Tang, 2011; Chingos & West, 2015; Clark, Gleason, & Tuttle, 2015). Many ‘no excuses’ schools overseen by charter management organizations generate aligned lesson plans that target key learning objectives designed to allow the most students possible to demonstrate basic proficiency (Golann, 2021). More recent investigations, however, have begun to challenge earlier claims of instructional rigor. Mehta and Fine (2019), for example, use the metaphor of “floors” and “ceilings” to describe the intellectual rigor of ‘no excuses’ classrooms. These schools, Mehta and Fine contend, have few students (compared to traditional public schools in their parent cities) that fail to demonstrate basic mastery of skills or content knowledge. Yet an emphasis on content memorization and continual guided practice (where the teacher models the thinking and students take notes) prevents complex understanding and higher-order cognitive thinking. Building on Mehta and Fine, Waitoller, Nguyen, and Super (2019) note that an alignment to standardized tests in ‘no excuses’ schools can deny students the creativity and intellectual challenges of project-based learning. This reliance on teaching content specifically covered on aligned standardized tests is especially true in science courses, scholars reason, where labs are significantly less common than most public schools because labs do not align to an end-of-year standardized assessment as well as continual content recall (Sahin, Willson, & Caprano, 2018). These schools’ techniques of ‘drill and kill’ have ushered in an industrial model of teaching at the expense of developing students’ higher-cognitive thinking skills (Mehta, 2013). When seen through this lens, ‘no excuses’ instructional designs have reduced school to merely a “game”—one where students apathetically perform tasks in a quest to earn points and develop basic recall and understanding rather than become inquisitive agents inspired and challenged by learning (Mehta & Fine, 2019, p. 199). While ‘no excuses’ schools align to external standards that are recognizable and may appear rigorous, ethnographic sociologist Joanne Golann’s investigations have led her to suggest that the actions of teachers and students in ‘no excuses’ classrooms prevent deeper complex learning (Golann, 2021).

Deeper Learning

If the purpose of schooling is not primarily a game to master particular cannons of information, what, then, could potentially more meaningful learning look like in schools? Research on deeper learning in American high schools and its implications for curricular and instructional design is an increasingly expanding literature that highlights a key alternative. The concept of deep learning, first coined by Craik and Lockhart (1972) but developed more recently by scholars such as Lampert (2009), distinguishes higher-order cognitive thinking performed by students as compared to teacher-directed surface learning, where students engage in route memorization and the procedural work of reproducing pre-scripted knowledge. Deeper learning has emerged in literature as a broad category of school-based curriculum and instructional design predicated on learning that transcends basic recall and understanding (Mehta & Fine, 2019). The term emphasizes a curricular-instructional design that moves beyond evidencing student learning primarily on students' standardized test scores (Bellanca, 2015). As defined by The Hewlett Foundation, deeper learning empowers students to appropriate a scholar-practitioner mindset through active critical thinking and problem solving (Hewlett Foundation, 2013). In engaging in these higher-order thinking competencies, literature on deeper learning has underscored that deep learning (as opposed to basic recall and understanding) requires students to appropriate the competencies and mindset of practicing scholars through the acquisition of content and skill mastery (Hariss, Krajcik, Pellegrino, & DeBarger, 2019).

In classrooms where students' deeper learning is present, content knowledge serves only as a necessary prerequisite for students to engage in higher-order thinking processes. Pedagogical approaches designed specifically to encourage deeper learning can help transform students from passive consumers of information into knowledge-creators redefining the boundaries of learning through an appropriation of a scholarly mindset (Nijhuis, Segers, & Gijselaers, 2005, p. 87). To engage in higher-order cognitive thinking, students must debate ideas, challenge the premise of questions, and engage in a learning environment where teachers serve as mediators for more student-directed learning centered around discussion in order to understand an idea, process, or phenomenon from multiple (and perhaps conflicting) perspectives (Chapman, Ramondt, & Smiley, 2005, p. 223). Through pedagogy designed to foster deeper learning, content simply serves as the common language through which students demonstrate higher cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills (McTighe & Silver, 2020).

Deeper learning (which can be achieved by engaging in understanding, analysis, and application) can increase student engagement. Case study analysis suggests that new instructional design models that focus instructional time on ‘deep learning’ (moving beyond basic recall) increases student engagement across a multiplicity of subjects and diverse student populations (Meyer, Coyle, & Connolly, 2018). Literature has underscored that students gain investment in classes when they are actively invited to participate in knowledge construction rather than knowledge regurgitation (Meyer, Coyle, & Connolly, 2018). Longitudinal analysis of deeper learning classrooms suggests that this engagement is sustainable and diffusible within a school regardless of a particular subject area or a teacher’s level of experience (Metcalf, et al., 2018). Through this lens, deeper learning can be an instructional focus for a classroom of diverse learners and is not restricted to students deemed by a school to be ‘high skilled.’

Scholars have also emphasized the importance of discipline-specific learning as a means of fostering deeper learning. Mehta and Fine (2019), for example, argue that students engage more actively in lesson tasks when such tasks authentically mirror the work of discipline-specific practitioners. Students, Mehta and Fine contend, are more likely to feel like the teacher values their intellectual potential and that the classwork has meaning. Scholarship has noted that pedagogical practice must integrate discipline-specific knowledge to engender both the highest learning and engagement among diverse student learners (Lampert, 2009). In history, specifically, Abby Reisman (2021) has noted the importance of regularly integrating student reading and discussion of primary sources into history classrooms as a mediator of engagement and learning. Reisman, however, acknowledges possible teacher hesitation with such mediation due to the level of subject-specific expertise required by teachers, especially in high school classes.

Recommendations for cultivating deeper learning in the extant literature parallel Ron Ritchhart's (2015) conception of a "culture of thinking" (p. 21). According to Ritchhart, five core pedagogical beliefs comprise a "culture of thinking": (1) focus on learning rather than work, (2) prioritize understanding rather than knowledge, (3) encourage deep rather than surface learning, (4) promote independence rather than dependence, and (5) develop a growth mindset. "Cultures of thinking" norm the value of error whereby students can discuss, refine, and apply ideas through discourse and targeted teacher feedback. More specifically, "cultures of thinking" are dependent on peer collaboration through active discussion and discourse. "Cultures of thinking" help instill deeper thinking through encouraging problem-based-learning and forcing students to apply learning to new scenarios, either through discussions or written prose (Walsh & Sattes, 2016). Thus, "cultures of thinking" (as opposed to general content recall) understand learning as inherently unfinished and evolutionary. Conceptualizing learning as evolutionary (and inherently formative by nature) poses challenges for educators and school administrators who seek to quantify and evaluate student learning as a measure of the overall effectiveness of classroom teaching (Walsh & Sattes, 2016).

Much like Ritchhart, Mehta and Fine (2019) have argued deeper learning can only thrive when teaching moves beyond transmission to enable students to engage in learning through active discourse. Mehta and Fine (2019), using case study analysis, argue that opportunities for student discourse (written and spoken) are a necessary instructional strategy to foster deeper learning in students. Other case study analyses cite regular spoken and written student discourse as a primary means of fostering students' higher-order cognitive thinking and moving beyond an instructional approach predicated solely on content internalization (Bellanca, 2015). Such studies cite theoretical work from James Gee to conceptualize discourse. According to Gee, small-d discourse (analyzing language in use) is distinguished from large-D Discourse (combinations of language, objects, interactions, tools, beliefs, and values). Both forms of communication allow for deeper meaning and novel application (Gee, 2015).

Deeper Learning in Humanities

Existing scholarship has used case study analysis to analyze the effectiveness of instructional techniques designed to encourage deeper learning by analyzing students' written discourse within humanities classes. Researchers in educational psychology have argued that writing tasks that encourage students to make meaning through prose (especially by analyzing a textual excerpt) strengthen long-term content knowledge and empower students to make connections across disparate content units (Miller, Scott, & McTigue, 2018). Literature has emphasized that instructional techniques in humanities that prioritize students' ability to move beyond basic recall and develop multiple arguments strengthens argumentative writing, with special education students seeing especially positive gains in writing skills vis-à-vis classes structured around basic recall (Mehta & Fine, 2019).

Building on this analysis, Abby Reisman has argued that (specifically in history) document-based historical inquiry and questions targeted at the larger meaning and historical creation of documents train students to develop an internalized questioning schema to evaluate the larger meaning and legitimacy of history (Reisman, 2015). In this sense, such an instructional approach encourages students to read and think like practicing historians. Much like earlier literature, Reisman suggests the benefits of such a pedagogical and curricular approach is often evident in changes in student writing. Consistent exposure to historical documents and teacher questioning concerning the production and creation of documents improves students' argumentation and analysis in written prose (Reisman, 2015).

While based on only limited case studies, early results suggest such a model can be scaled and diffused within a community of diverse learners in humanities classes (Riordan, Klein, & Gaynor, 2019). Specifically, researchers have found that targeted teacher professional development around teaching literacy can allow classes of diverse learners to transition classrooms away from textbooks (which focus on content recall) to more disciplinary literacy focused on student reading of historical documents or fictional texts (Monte-Sano, et al., 2017). Transitioning classrooms (and pedagogy) to disciplinary reading of subject-specific texts can also impact students' written and spoken discourse by providing them conflicting perspectives from which to formulate original arguments and interpretations (Monte-Sano, et al., 2017).

Deeper Learning & Spoken Discourse

Current literature has focused especially on classroom discourse in an effort to document evidence of students' deeper learning (Mehta & Fine, 2019). Literature has identified spoken discourse as any student-directed discussion (whole-group or small-group) where teacher intervention is minimal. Teacher talk, through this understanding, is only present to highlight gaps in understanding or redirect the conversation around a larger overarching question (Breunig, 2017). Spoken discourse can thus be understood as student-led discussions whereby students are responsible for higher cognitive thinking and answers to guiding prompts are either elusive, debatable, or require nuance in explanation and understanding (Murphy, et al., 2018). Analysis of discourse in education necessitates understanding the interconnections between language and social practice (Rodgers, 2004). Critical discourse (i.e., language that authentically integrates participants and challenges the preconceptions of those participants as they engage in learning) can be afforded to a multiplicity of diverse students in a classroom setting when pedagogical changes are made to empower students as agents of learning and expression (Rodgers, 2004).

Literature on student-centered discourse in American high schools has expanded significantly in the last decade (Reisman, 2022). An increase in scholarship is perhaps due to the challenges of facilitating student discussions. Abby Reisman, for example, has reasoned that facilitating discourse is difficult for all teachers, but especially novice educators. Discourse and open discussion require teachers to have significant content knowledge to guide discourse and pivot student talking to ensure student learning occurs (Reisman, 2022). Spoken discourse can only flourish when teachers relinquish a level of classroom control and improvise if discussions veer in unexpected directions (Reisman, 2022). As Reisman explains, “Blank stares and awkward silences threaten to undermine any [teacher’s] attempt” at integrating regular classroom discussions (Reisman, 2022, p. 106).

Research, while acknowledging the challenges of oral discussion, has advocated for more regular classroom discourse as an incubator of student empowerment and student self-expression, particularly regarding identity (Rumenapp, 2015). Consistent discourse allows power to be shared more equitably in a classroom and encourages students to more authentically appropriate learning through the expression of voice (Rumenapp, 2015). Consistent discourse reaffirms for students–especially those who are economically or racially minoritized–that their voice has value by contributing to collective learning as well as reaffirms a sense of shared community within a classroom (Soysal, 2020). The benefits of regular student-centered discourse for individual and collective student identity may be especially important in urban schools characterized by strict curricular and behavioral systems. In ‘no excuses’ urban schools, social scientists Lily Lamboy and Amanda Lu contend, discourse serves as a vehicle to express individuality, engage with one’s positionality, and challenge prevailing norms within a system that otherwise restricts personal and academic expression (Lamboy & Lu, 2017). In this sense, opportunities for students’ self-expression can help challenge deficit perspectives and center identity (both individual and collective) as a necessary pillar of student learning.

Pedagogical approaches that help encourage students’ spoken discourse must be understood within the larger theoretical context of discourse and agency. Theorist Norman Fairclough (1992) has argued that understanding discourse is essential to analysis of social change and relations of power. Discourse (and access to voice) is a central means of identity and power across disparate social settings. All discourse constitutes discourse-in-use. As defined by Bloome and Clark (2006), discourse-in-use devotes attention to the ways individuals interact with one another, the cultural tools individuals employ, the social-historical context of their interactions, and the accomplishments of those interactions. Such a lens enables one to examine the relationship between discourse and agency as well as discourse as an amalgamation that is both adopted and adapted (Bloome & Clark, 2006). Gresalfi et al. (2009) has argued that the degree to which students are able to enact agency in a classroom is reliant on the distribution of power within that space. Similarly, Amit and Fried (2005) differentiate expert and shared authority in discourse. Whereas expert authority is held by one person in a position of power (a teacher), shared authority exists between teachers and students in settings where students are empowered to exert agency over learning and where learning is collaborative.

Beyond the theoretical framework of student agency and identity, consistent student-centered discourse (both spoken and written) has been shown to significantly impact student achievement. Quantitative analysis has found that regular discussions, across different high school subject areas, increases student performance over the course of a single school year–especially for students deemed to be lower-performing upon entering a specific course (Larsson, 2018). These findings suggest that consistent discourse can benefit all students (particularly students struggling academically) in ways more structured pedagogical approaches have been unable to consistently achieve. Further supporting this finding, the literature has highlighted that regular equitable discourse has been found to have especially beneficial impacts on student writing–even for students as young as sixth grade (Wissinger & de la Paz, 2015). It is important to underscore that 'equitable' discourse denotes a student-dominated ratio of student talk vis-à-vis teacher talk and speaking by students must be balanced to prevent discussions (and the subsequent learning) to be appropriated by a small group within a classroom (Berger, R., Rugen, L., Woodfin, 2014).

Situated Theories of Learning

Opportunities for students to exert a greater degree of agency over their learning and to experience deeper learning connect directly to situated theories of learning. Situated theories of learning are an analytical framework to understand how individuals engage in learning within a community. A situative perspective (a lens for learning formed from a sociocultural perspective) posits that learning is co-constructed through mutually constitutive human interaction situated within an environment and influenced by the participation of others in that environment and even across time (Greeno, 1998). The activity system, rather than individuals' minds, thus emerges as a wider unit of analysis to understand the participation of community members as members engage in collaborative learning. Emphasizing context (rather than individual cognitive processes) enables one to understand the mutually constitutive nature of learning and its social availability to those within a group (McDermott, 1993). Situational learning posits that all human interaction is situated within a particular environment (Greeno, 1998). It allows for greater nuance (yet also acknowledged points of complication and confusion) in understanding how members of a community engage in learning.

Integrating discourse (spoken and written) within a classroom (in curriculum design, instructional choices, and necessary shifts in student identity vis-à-vis school culture) relates directly to the concept of legitimate peripheral participation—a theory derived from sociocultural theory. Legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991) underscores that learners develop a mastery of knowledge through increasing participation in activities that are central to the work of that community. Legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) posits that participation in learning is inherently interdependent—as all participants rely on one another to effectively carry out the work necessary in that community of practice. Through this perspective, periphery does not connote inconsequential engagement, but rather an opportunity for new members to authentically engage in the work of that community through increasing involvement (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Thus, central to legitimate peripheral participation is an understanding that work (even on the periphery) must directly impact the community's standard work and practitioners must continually acquire new skills to aid that foundational work. Consider an example Lave and Wenger (1991) offer of failed legitimate peripheral participation when discussing a case study of butchers: "the manager sees to it that his skilled journeymen can prepare a large volume of meat efficiently…he puts apprentices where they can work for him most effectively…Because journeymen and apprentices are so occupied with profit-making tasks, apprentices rarely learn many tasks" (p. 78).

Similarly, affordances to learn (Gibson, 1979, as cited in Greeno & Gresalfi, 2008) represent a community member's access to resources and practices of a system. Affordances underscore the ability to engage in a system in an authentic way that supports both learning and the work of the community. Through this perspective, affordances are thus relational and vary along a continuum. As Greeno and Gresalfi highlight through their research on student learning, "students' histories of participation shape their attunement to affordances in a setting and in a task but also reshape the nature of the affordances themselves" (p. 178). Rather than acquire the structures and norms of a community of practice, affordances acknowledge learning as a process where individuals participate more competently in practices that have structures (Greeno & Gresalfi, 2008). Human interaction within a community of practice influences individual and collective participation. Within an environment, cognitive activity is shaped by individuals, community members, and the embedded institutional history of the community (Rogoff, Topping, Baker-Sennett, & Lacasa, 2002).

Much like affordances for learning, mediated action, as defined by Wertsch (1998), focuses on agents and their use of cultural tools, which serve as mediators of action. Cultural tools are thus human creations employed by agents to participate in learning. The framework helps move beyond the individual as a unit of analysis by emphasizing an agent-instrument relationship where the environment (not just the individual) is shaped through mediated action (Wertsch, 1998). Therefore, mediated action and cultural tools enable analysis through micro-, mezzo-, and macro-level processes because both are inherently situated within a specific cultural, institutional, and historical context.

As a framework to analyze participation, mediated action and cultural tools refocus attention to why specific cultural tools are employed and who has determined which cultural tools are suitable (Wertsch, 1998). In analyzing how cultural tools are involved in action, one sees how these tools can be appropriated. As Wertsch (1998) identifies, language is a frequently appropriated cultural tool. Quoting Bakhtin (1981), Wertsch notes, “Language is not a neutral medium that, passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker’s intentions; it is populated-overpopulated—with the intentions of others” (Wertsch, 1998, p. 54).

Positioning Discourse within Situated Theories of Learning

Situated theories of learning make assumptions regarding shared discourse and allow one to see learning as a socially and historically situated activity. With respect to shared discourse, discourse models denote embedded assumptions about what is ‘appropriate’ or normative (Gee, 2006). These models are based both on individual experience as well as one’s personal position of power to help set the norms of understanding within socio-cultural groups. By regulating what constitutes ‘typical’ cases for a community, discourse models are thus exclusionary by nature and their partiality reflects individuals’ membership in a multiplicity of communities and institutions (Gee, 2006). As an example, Gee (2006) highlights the word ‘bachelor’ as a discourse model. According to Gee, “we are actually excluding people such as gay individuals and priests as ‘normal’ men, and assuming that men come into two ‘normal’ types: those who get married early and those who get married late” (72). In addition to learning and content retention, discourse models (appropriated by those in power) can thus influence student identity and sense of self—especially in a community where students of color have a teaching faculty and school administration that is predominantly White.

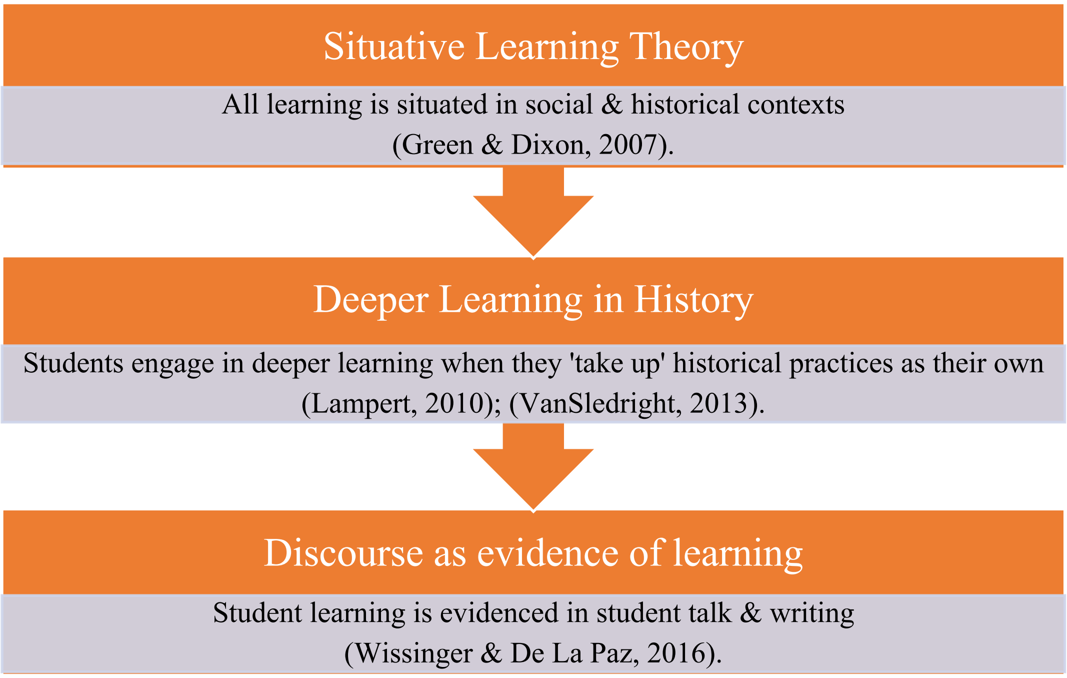
Situational learning fosters and necessitates discourse. According to Gee (2001), discourse is a source of identity. Discourse identity assumes the power of identity as being based in dialogue with others. Through this model, the power of one's identity is grounded in how people interacting with an individual treat or recognize that individual without being forced to act in that way through traditions or institutional authority (Gee, 2001). As such, discourse identity embodies a power of recognition as individuals construct and sustain identities through evolving dialogue with others regardless of one's biological state or institutional position. Although these individual frameworks of identity will, undoubtedly, intersect in a given context, understanding which strand predominates and why will enable one to better unpack how environments and interaction influence participation with respect to identity (Gee, 2001). This conceptualization of identity further helps define how individual and collective understandings of oneself shape ongoing participation and learning in a bounded community of practice.

Conceptual Understandings

Although College Prep High internally defined learning as higher-order reasoning and thinking opportunities, I have found the phenomenon of deeper learning (discussed above) to be a more appropriate conceptualization of what CPH hopes to diffuse and will use the term deeper learning throughout my discussion. Therefore, I will use the term deeper learning throughout. In defining deeper learning, I draw on the Hewlett Foundation's definition. According to the Hewlett Foundation (2013), deeper learning empowers students to adopt a scholar-practitioner mindset through active critical thinking and problem solving. In defining engagement in CPH history classrooms, I rely on Lampert's (2010) and VanSledright's (2013) conceptualization of engagement in history—the phenomenon of students taking up historical practices as their own.

Thus, in the context of this project, I define engagement as engagement in history given that the project is situated in CPH history classrooms.

V. Conceptual Framework



Situative Learning Theory

All learning is situated in social & historical contexts
(Green & Dixon, 2007).

Deeper Learning in History

Students engage in deeper learning when they 'take up' historical practices as their own
(Lampert, 2010); (VanSledright, 2013).

Discourse as evidence of learning

Student learning is evidenced in student talk & writing
(Wissinger & De La Paz, 2016).

VI. Project Questions

This project has three interrelated project questions:

1. In what ways (if at all), are elements of instructional design in 2022-23 history classrooms at CPH different than in the previous academic year?
2. In what ways does student discourse evidence engagement in target history classroom practices, as demonstrated in classroom talk and in student writing?
3. To what extent do faculty perceive that particular curricular-instructional tools for the 2022-2023 school year affected changes in 1) student engagement and 2) student learning in history?

VII. Project Design: Class Selection, Data Collection, Data Triangulation, & Data Analysis

A. Class Selection

This investigation drew data from CPH's AP World History and AP United States History classes. Since ninth-grade students at CPH are not enrolled in an AP course and the ninth-grade pre-AP World History course is itself a relatively new national pilot, I excluded them from the investigation. Similarly, since only three years of history are required, I excluded twelfth-grade AP history electives from the project due to substantially smaller enrollments that would prevent adequate comparison and analysis (S. Smith, personal communication). Attempting to use twelfth-grade history electives would have introduced a possible issue of the individual classroom teacher as a third variable (since these are single stand-alone courses) where comparison to other class sections with respect to trends would not have been possible. While none of the CPH history teachers are new to the school, the teachers nevertheless have various degrees of teaching experience and student achievement results (S. Smith, personal communication). Thus, the ability to compare trends across class sections of a specific course is useful for making larger organizational conclusions and recommendations.

B. Data Collection

Individual project questions rely on different data sources. Below are the individual project questions and the data I collected to address each question:

Project Question 1: In what ways (if at all), are elements of instructional design in 2022-23 history classrooms at CPH different than in the previous academic year?

To determine the extent to which elements of the new instructional design for the 2022-2023 academic year were different than the previous academic year, I relied on comparative lesson plan analysis. The project reviewed twenty randomly selected lesson plans from the 2022-2023 school year and twenty randomly selected lesson plans from the 2021-2022 school year. I only excluded lessons (from either school year) where an assessment consumed more than one third of the class period. I observed classes from both academic years as a check between available scripted plans for those classes and the actual tasks students engaged in within classrooms as a means of ensuring internal validity of the lesson plan analysis (John, 1991). The project utilized observations of six sixty-minute classes (3 AP World History and 3 AP U.S. History classes) from fall 2022. For a check against the 2021-2022 lesson plans, six 60-minute recordings from spring 2022 classes served as a comparative check. Observed classes (with the accompanying lesson plans for those classes) represented different lessons than those used within the randomly selected lesson plan analysis. Lesson plans served as the most valuable and feasible data source for assessing if elements of the instructional design changed. Lesson plans, as collected documents, can best show continuity or changes over time when assessing specific phenomena (Merriam, 2001). Unlike observations, which are subject to human cooperation and a sufficiently large sample to make conclusions regarding continuity or change, documents can be more easily accessible (as they were in this case). Documents allow researchers to draw conclusions without collecting a high volume of longitudinal observational data (Merriam, 2001). Given that I would not have been able to observe enough fall 2022 classes to determine if the instructional design was sufficiently distinct from the previous year, lesson plan analysis served as the most reasonable means of drawing such conclusions. The observational data as a check to ensure the fidelity of the plans helped protect against a potential limitation of documents as data: their tendency to show goals and aspirations rather than actual phenomena (Olsson, 2009).

Project Question 2: In what ways does student discourse evidence engagement in target history classroom practices, as demonstrated in classroom talk and in student writing?

Classroom Observations

This inquiry (in aiding the partner organization with the discourse initiative of its pilot program) was interested in determining if student discourse opportunities (speaking and writing) suggested student engagement in history-specific classroom practices. Classroom observations were necessary to understand to what degree students were engaging in history-specific practices. Leeson plans (as artifacts) would have highlighted affordances for student engagement, but not the extent to which students were actually engaging in these practices. Similarly, teacher interviews could not capture the nuances of student engagement (or lack of engagement) in subject-specific practices to the degree observations could. To assess engagement with history-specific classroom practices through speaking, this project relied on classroom observations of four fall 2022 classes (2 AP World History and 2 AP U.S. History classes). I observed different classes for this project question than those I observed for the lesson plan validity check for the first project question. I observed 6 60-minute classes (3 AP World History and 3 AP U.S. History classes). When observing classes, I relied on narrative field notes (that I then coded when analyzing data using a codebook) rather than a pre-determined classroom rubric. Each CPH class had around 30 students. For each observation, I followed the model of Mehta and Fine (2019) and randomly selected 12 students to observe (roughly 40% of the total students) for the entirety of the 60-minute class. As Mehta and Fine (2019) note, randomly selecting specific students to observe for narrative field notes in a general class setting is both unbiased and practical when undertaking classroom observations.

The extant literature provides precedent for using narrative field notes for assessing student engagement in targeted classroom practices. I followed the general example of Mehta and Fine (2019) in their use of narrative field notes to understand engagement in a classroom context. Specifically, Mehta and Fine (2019) use narrative field notes to record classroom tasks, teacher actions, and students' actions in a holistic way across different classes within a single high school to understand levels of student engagement. Narrative field notes also serve as a primary data collection tool in numerous canonical works on engagement and learning in schools (Goodlad, 1983; Lightfoot, 1983; Powell, Farrer, & Cohen, 1985). Narrative field notes offer an alternative to rubrics for classroom evaluations. Scholarship has cautioned that using rubrics to evaluate classrooms can cause the researcher to be both constrained in what he/she 'sees' or miss larger trends and nuances not initially scripted into a rubric for data collection (Mehta & Fine, 2019). Rubrics risk fitting teacher and student actions into preconceived categories that may mask what was actually occurring in classrooms (Lightfoot, 1983). Researchers have argued that deductive and inductive coding of narrative field notes with a code book can capture degrees of tension and nuance that may go unnoticed by completing a pre-designed observation rubric (Mehta & Fine, 2019).

Narrative field notes are also helpful with data triangulation by putting different data sources into greater conversation with one another to aid the researcher in a holistic investigation (Powell, Farrer, & Cohen, 1985). Further, rubrics can mask key context from observational data and artifacts, such as where the lesson or student work fit in relation to the broader learning within a course unit or class more generally (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). Additionally, literature has argued that, unlike rubrics, narrative field notes empower researchers to study classrooms and learning ecologically (Mehta & Fine, 2019). An ecological approach to studying student learning presupposes that it is not one single factor (or isolated individual factors) that make learning models successful or unsuccessful, but rather a nuanced multiplicity of disparate factors (Mehta & Fine, 2019).

Student Classwork Samples

To understand student engagement in history-specific classroom practices related to writing, this project utilized student classwork samples. Specifically, this investigation drew from twenty different Exit Ticket prompts and accompanying student samples (10 from AP World History and 10 from AP U.S. History). Each Exit Ticket prompt (for both AP World History and AP U.S. History) featured a primary source document and accompanying questions related to document sourcing (see Appendix A). Classwork samples, as documents, were readily available and served as the best means for understanding student engagement in writing. Although teachers (in interviews) might have been able to speak to larger trends in student engagement in writing practices, such observations would have lacked the nuance that reviewing a large set of actual student work afforded. With respect to capturing nuance, Sharan Merriam argues documents are especially valuable sources of data when trying to understand the context of a problem, specifically when, where, and how the problem arises (Merriam, 2001). In seeking to provide CPH contextualization for student engagement in history-specific practices, I was especially interested when (in writing) students authentically engaged in the practices and the extent of that engagement.

Project Question 3: To what extent do faculty perceive that particular curricular-instructional tools for the 2022-2023 school year affected changes in 1) student engagement and 2) student learning in history?

Structured-open ended interviews were essential for this project to assess faculty's perception of both student engagement in targeted history practices as well as student learning.

Given that this quality improvement project did not have access to student work samples or classroom observations from the entirety of the 2022-2023 school year (only the fall), teachers' perceptions were the only means of assessing the relative impact of the instructional intervention on student learning. The investigation conducted structured open-ended interviews with each CPH AP World History and AP U.S. History teacher (6 teachers total; 3 AP World History and 3 AP U.S. History). (See Appendix B for teacher recruitment letter and Appendix C for the full list of interview questions). The questions I asked teachers provided them an opportunity to assess perceptions of student engagement and learning both from the beginning of the school year and the previous academic year. The questions encompassed teacher perceptions of student engagement and learning in both spoken discourse and writing. I provided all interview participants the opportunity to review the interview transcript before analyzing data for this investigation.

Structured open-ended interviews allow qualitative researchers an opportunity to glean the unique perspectives of collaborators and engage in dialogue that honors the agency and expertise of participants (Bhattacharya, 2017). Interviews (when free-flowing and open-ended) empower site collaborators in the co-construction of knowledge and situate the researcher in a relationship where learning is bi-directional, rather than appropriated through extraction. Authentic listening enables the researcher to better understand authentic needs of a community (Paris & Winn, 2014). However, interviews have limitations. Interviews are inherently susceptible to subjectivity. Network leaders and school-based administrators regularly evaluate CPH teachers and leaders and assign individual bite-sized 'action steps' that teachers must master—which can prevent a broader view of the many interconnected (and moving) pieces within a classroom and throughout the course of instruction. CPH teachers also have numerous obligations beyond simply teaching. Time (notably for thoughtful reflection) is usually at a premium during the school day.

C. *Data Triangulation & Overall Data Summary*

This quality improvement project collaboration, as in qualitative field research, faced possible threats to validity. The project followed the model of qualitative field work by consulting multiple data sources and coupling specific data sources to individual project questions to determine the kind of data necessary to best contextualize the problem of practice for CPH (e.g., Ravitch & Carl, 2021). In addition to ensuring greater validity, triangulation also enhances the rigor of a study and enables researchers to probe greater nuance within a specific context (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The table below captures the above data summarized in the previous section by detailing the data sources for each individual research question:

Research Question	**Collected Data**
1. In what ways (if at all), are elements of instructional design in 2022-23 history classrooms at CPH different than in the previous academic year?	• CPH Lesson Plan Analysis (20 lesson plans from 2021-2022 and 20 lesson plans from 2022-2023) • Fall 2022 classroom observations (as a check between scripted plans and in-class tasks); 6 60-minute live classes • Spring 2022 classroom recordings; 6 60-minute recorded classes
2. In what ways does student discourse evidence engagement in target history classroom practices, as demonstrated in classroom talk and in student writing?	• Fall 2022 classroom observations (student discussions); 6 classes total • Fall 2022 student classwork samples (student writing); 20 different Exit Ticket prompts
3. To what extent do faculty perceive that particular curricular-instructional tools for the 2022-2023 school year affected changes in 1) student engagement and 2) student learning in history?	• Structured open-ended interviews with AP World and AP US History teachers (6 teachers total; 3 per course)

D. Data Analysis

Each project question relied on specific data analysis. Below is an explanation of the data analysis I undertook for each project question:

Project Question 1: In what ways (if at all), are elements of instructional design in 2022-23 history classrooms at CPH different than in the previous academic year?

In analyzing lesson plans, I first constructed a list of tasks where students had opportunities to apply spoken and written discourse. These tasks were based on my conversations with the network's director of K-12 History and the CPH head of school outlining the network's goals for the new instructional initiative as well as the directives network leadership provided to lesson planners within the home office. Literary scholar Dan Reynolds, using lesson plans as a data source to analyze opportunities for students to apply skills, has emphasized the value of coding tasks as a means of understanding the intentionality of instructional design (Reynolds, 2017). The list of the tasks I analyzed within the CPH lesson plans are listed below. (See Appendix D for specific task definitions).

1. Student opportunities to talk with whole group or peer where a prompt is present
2. Tasks that allow individual or collective reflection (that may not count as discussion)
3. Opportunities to analyze a primary source in writing
4. Opportunities to analyze a primary source (without writing)
5. Opportunities to connect the present lesson's content about the past to other content about the past (could include prior lessons, prior curriculum, or other student prior knowledge)
6. Opportunities to formulate an argument/thesis using documentary evidence
7. Other (something that may be relevant to PQ1 but does not fit in these categories)

After constructing the list of tasks, I coded the data by the specific task. My observational analysis followed the precedent of Reynolds (2017) since I used observations to check lesson plans to ensure tasks actually occurred within a classroom. During each classroom observation for a lesson plan check, I marked each lesson plan task with a check (signifying the teacher afforded students the opportunity to perform the task as scripted in the lesson plan) or an 'X' (signifying the teacher did not enable students to complete the lesson plan task as scripted by the network curriculum writer). In the six classes observed (a mix of veteran and novice teachers), 100% of teachers carried out lesson plan tasks exactly as scripted in the lesson plans—though not all teachers followed the precise time stamps in the lesson plan. *(Please see Part I in the analysis section of the paper for possible explanations for this level of lesson plan fidelity).*

Project Question 2: In what ways does student discourse evidence engagement in target history classroom practices, as demonstrated in classroom talk and in student writing?

Classroom Observations

In analyzing class observations, I relied on previous literature of history classroom spoken discourse related to target history practices (Martin & Matruglio, 2019; Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, & Long, 2003) and specific CPH school-based practices that CPH has internally distinguished as markers of student engagement. The list below represents broader overarching categories of spoken discourse that I have coded. (For the full spoken discourse code book, including definitions of these practices, see Appendix E).

1. Historical reasoning practices (sourcing, contextualizing documents, corroborating, & close reading)
2. Argumentation - building an argument based on evidence (or just sharing opinion related to the historical topic)
3. School-specific practices (tracking the speaker, taking notes, strong voice, and straight posture)

Many of these broad categories, however, have differing levels of engagement and attempted engagement (as reflected in the categorical breakdown for each in the code book attached in Appendix E). As an example, I defined sourcing (as a form of historical reasoning) as engaging with the author, audience, purpose, or perspective of a specific document. When coding sourcing in students' spoken discourse, students could show sourcing through any of the following:

A. Student identified that the source has an author, audience, purpose, or perspective.
B. Student accurately identified information about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective.
C. Student used accurate information about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective to identify the significance or main idea of the document.
D. Student used accurate information about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective to place the document in broader historical context.

Student Classwork Samples

In analyzing writing, I relied on coding identified in previous literature on student written discourse in high school history practices (Miller, Mitchell, & Pessoa, 2014) as well as specific CPH school-identified standards of student engagement in writing exercises. The list below represents my general coding of written engagement in student work samples (Exit Tickets). (See Appendix F for complete definitions of these forms of written engagement).

1. Historical reasoning practices (sourcing, contextualizing documents, corroborating, & close reading)
2. Argumentation - building an argument based on evidence (or just sharing opinion related to the historical topic)
3. School-specific practices (following the prompt, writing in full sentences, using professional academic language)

Much like spoken discourse, however, these broader overarching categories of written discourse have differing levels of engagement and attempted engagement (as reflected in the code book attached in Appendix F). As an example, I defined close reading in the context of this project as a student specifically using, referencing, or identifying the specific words or genre of the document. Close reading in student work samples could be evidenced by students in the ways listed below. (For the full written discourse code book, see Appendix F).

A. Student annotated the document (underlining, starring, or highlighting) and makes marginal notes

B. Student attempted to paraphrase from the document or reference the genre of the document (poster, speech, political cartoon, etc.) but does so inaccurately.
C. Student accurately identified the genre of the document (poster, speech, political cartoon, etc.)
D. Student accurately paraphrased something from the document.
E. Student accurately quoted from the document.

Project Question 3: To what extent do faculty perceive that particular curricular-instructional tools for the 2022-2023 school year affected changes in 1) student engagement and 2) student learning in history?

My coding of teachers' perceptions of engagement, as highlighted in teacher responses, represented the student practices of a history classroom (Nokes, 2012)—as highlighted above in the coding for class observations and restated below):

1. Historical reasoning practices (sourcing, contextualizing documents, corroborating, & close reading)
2. Argumentation - building an argument based on evidence (or just sharing opinion related to the historical topic)
3. School-specific practices (tracking the speaker, strong voice, straight posture, and taking notes)

Learning, as supported by the extant literature, represents a teacher's perceived change in the above practices through which students engage in a history classroom (Mehta & Fine, 2019). Change, as indicated by teacher responses, represents transformation in students' engagement in the targeted history practices above from August until the time of the teacher interviews (November) and teachers' perceptions of change from last year's students to this year's students. (Year-to-year change is possible for teachers to assess in this context since CPH teachers teach the same classes each year and there was no teacher attrition in the history department since the beginning of the previous school year).

VIII. Project Timeline

Component	Key Deliverable	Completion Date
Partner approval & initial conversations (Pre-data collection & analysis)	• Secured approval from partner organization and conducted preliminary discussions with school & network leadership	May 2022
IRB (Pre-data collection & analysis)	• Obtained IRB approval through Vanderbilt University	October 2022
Lesson Plan (Collection)	• Collection of 2021-2022 & 2022-2023 lesson plans	October 2022
Lesson Plans (Analysis)	• Lesson plan analysis of 40 lesson plans (20 lesson plans from 2021-2022 and 20 lesson plans from 2022-2023)	November 2022
Classroom Observations (Collection)	• Fall 2022 classroom observations (as a check between scripted plans and in-class tasks); 6 60-minute live classes Spring 2022 classroom recordings; 6 60-minute recorded classes	November 2022
Student Work Samples (Collection)	• Collection of fall 2022 student classwork samples (student writing); 20 different Exit Ticket prompts	November 2022
Student Work Samples (Analysis)	• Coding & analysis of student work samples	November 2022
Teacher Interviews (Collection)	• Structured open-ended interviews with AP World and AP US History teachers (6 teachers total; 3 per course)	November 2022
Teacher Interviews (Analysis)	• Coding & analysis of teacher interview transcripts	December 2022

Classroom Observations (Collection)	- Fall 2022 classroom observations (student discussions); 6 classes total	December 2022
Classroom Observations (Analysis)	- Coding & analysis of narrative field notes from classroom observations.	December 2022

IX. FINDINGS

First Project Question
In what ways (if at all), are elements of instructional design in 2022-23 history classrooms at CPH different than in the previous academic year?

2022-23 lesson plans remain overly similar to their 2021-22 iterations because they overly rely on teacher control & CPH systems that hinder engagement.

The first project question investigated the various ways the 2022-2023 lessons were (if at all) different than in the previous academic year. I reviewed twenty randomly selected lesson plans from each year for comparison. Network curriculum writers from the CPH home office wrote all plans. The 2022-2023 plans demonstrate an attempt at differentiation by altering the student tasks that comprise the majority of the lesson. Although the learning objectives and opening content recall exercises were identical in both sets of plans, the 2022-2023 plans all integrated primary source documents for the majority of the 60-minute lesson whereas all 2021-2022 plans required students to copy teacher notes for the majority of each lesson and did not contain any primary source work. **Ultimately, the 2022-2023 plans were different than the 2021-2022 plans through their inclusion of primary source documents and opportunities for students to engage with those documents through discussions and writing. Still, teacher control predominated the lessons due to a continual adherence to previous CPH instructional procedures and limited opportunities for students to generate a variety of original responses.**

There is a difference in lesson sequencing between the two sets of plans.

Although the lesson sequencing and structure differed across the two school years, all lessons in each year followed an identical and repetitious series of tasks. Both sets of plans opened with identical content recall exercises to scaffold student content knowledge. However, the plans then differed with respect to the main lesson activity and the end product students submitted (Exit Ticket) for the teacher's review. The chart below highlights the lesson structures for both school years:

Table 1

Sample lesson sequencing.

Tasks	2021-2022 Plans (60 Minutes)	Fall 2022 Plans (60 Minutes)
Opening Exercises	**Previous Content Retrieval** (10 Minutes)	**Previous Content Retrieval** (10 Minutes)
Main Lesson Activity *(CPH terminology)*	**Create a Content-Based Graphic Organizer** Students Copied Teacher Notes (50 Minutes)	**Applying Historical Reasoning to Primary Sources** Silent Reading, Small-Group, & Whole-Class Discussion (40 Minutes)
Final Submission	**Class Notes/Graphic Organizer** (N/A Minutes)	**Analysis of Historical Reasoning in One Excerpted Primary Source** (via an Exit Ticket) New Primary source & 3 sourcing questions (10 Minutes)

There Is Identical Opening Content Recall Exercises Across Both School Years.

Across both school years, each lesson began with the teacher calling attention to the student learning objective. For example, two different lessons from AP U.S. History across both school years featured the same student learning objective: "Students will be able to evaluate the primary causes of the American Civil War." All learning objectives (across both years) were content-based (rather than skilled-based) even as the primary student tasks of the lessons differed between years. With respect to the two lessons on the primary causes of the American Civil War, both lessons contained identical lesson introductions. (The use of identical lesson introductions was mirrored in all other lessons I reviewed; the opening content recall exercises were identical between years). The lessons required students to complete an open-ended Do Now content recall exercise by identifying the "aftermath and outcomes of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act." Students had ten minutes to complete the Do Now silently and independently. Both lessons noted that the teacher should display a timer on the board via a document camera and alert students when there were two minutes remaining. The lesson plans also both scripted the identical three answers (e.g., specific historical context) for student mastery based on a previously assigned homework content reading. Students needed to identify that the act:

- Created two new territories (Kansas and Nebraska) that allowed for popular sovereignty in determining the state's status as a 'free' or 'slave' state.
- Helped produce a violent uprising ("Bleeding Kansas") as pro-slavery and anti-salary activists descended upon Kansas to influence the vote.
- Caused the final destruction of the Whig Party and inspired the formation of the Republican Party.

Following the Do Now, both lessons transitioned to a ten-minute ‘oral drill exercise.’ (The lessons called for the teacher to recite the three correct Do Now responses, provide students 30 seconds to check and amend their responses, and—when finished reviewing their responses—stand behind their desks for the daily oral drill). During oral drill, teachers required students to stand upright behind their desks facing the teacher at the front of the classroom. The lesson plans for the specific content-based learning objectives contained an identical list of twenty terms for the teacher to use during the content drill. (These terms were all previous content from earlier lessons throughout the year). Instructions to teachers in each lesson plan were identical: “Be sure to stall the name and give the definition of the term before calling on a specific student.” The identical content terms for the oral drills accompanying the lessons (across both years) on the causes of the Civil War were:

Table 2

Oral Drill Terms

1. Andrew Jackson
2. Peggy Eaton
3. Federalists
4. Anti-Federalists
5. Dread Scott
6. Stamp Act
7. ‘Corrupt Bargain’ of 1824
8. Stono Rebellion
9. Louisiana Purchase
10. War of 1812
11. Frederick Douglas

12. *McCulloch v. Maryland*
13. Phillis Wheatley
14. Tecumseh
15. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
16. Henry Clay
17. James Madison
18. Fugitive Slave Act of 1850
19. Nicholas Biddle
20. John Adams

Note. CPH lesson plan, fall 2022

2021-2022 lessons focus on students recreating teacher-produced content recall graphic organizers and do not include any primary sources like the 2022-2023 iterations.

Following the oral drill task, the lessons diverged in structure. The 2021-2022 lesson plan spent the remainder of the lesson engaging students in a 'Guided Practice' exercise where students scripted possible causes and explanations of the Civil War dictated by the teacher. The teacher instructions in the plan for the reminder of the lesson explained *"Next, position yourself at the document camera and sketch out a T-chart for students to copy into their notebooks in real time. The chart will have two sides: possible causes of the Civil War and an explanation of these possible causes. As you write, remind students that your pen is their pen and they should copy everything exactly as you chart it*." A sample T-Chart, as scripted by the network curriculum writer in the lesson plan, can be seen below:

Table 3

Sample T-Chart

Key Causes of the Civil War	**Explanation**
Slavery	Disputes over slavery helped spark succession of southern states that wished to leave the union in order to preserve the institution of slavery and a plantation-based economy as its primary economic engine.
Dread Scott Decision, 1857	The court denied Dread Scott's request. It argued that no one with 'African blood' could become a citizen of the United States. The decision overturned the Missouri Compromise of 1820 which prohibited slavery in certain territories.
States' Rights	(Federalism): Consistent struggle and debate between states and the national government over states sovereignty/autonomy. Question of *who* had the right to regulate/abolish slavery: the federal government or the states?
Abolitionist Movement	The movement was strengthened by the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.
Missouri Compromise of 1820 & Kansas Nebraska Act of 1854	The law attempted to solve increasing sectional tensions by banning slavery north of the southern border of Missouri. The Kansas Nebraska Act replaced the Missouri Compromise and allowed for 'popular sovereignty' in determining if new territories should be free or slave. The law sparked an influx of anti-slavery northerners (and abolitionists) and pro-slavery southerners into Kansas to influence the voting. The conflict was violent—known as "Bleeding Kansas"

Source. CPH lesson plan, fall 2021.

The lesson plan instructed teachers that the Exit Ticket for that day (the final task that students complete where teachers evaluate individual student and whole-class mastery of the specific learning objective) would be a simple collection of student notebooks to ensure students captured all of the content scripted by the teacher. In addition to these instructions and a model T-Chart, the lesson plan advised teachers to *"Continually scan for engagement: pen-to-paper! Ensure that there is no opt out and pause every so often for a peer turn & talk where students exchange notebooks and their peer checks to make sure everything from the document camera is present in the other student's notebook."*

2022-2023 lessons focus on historical reasoning practices through the reading and discussion of primary sources.

The 2022-2023 lesson plan differed significantly after the lesson's oral drill. The contrast in the plans was in the practices students engaged in during class. The 2021-2022 plan prompted students to copy a T-Chart of possible causes of the Civil War and a brief explanation of those causes dictated in real-time by the teacher. The 2022-2023 lesson eliminated the time for students to create a content recall graphic organizer and instead integrated opportunities for students to apply historical reasoning practices to primary source documents. The 2022-2023 lesson (and accompanying student classwork packet) featured two primary source excerpted documents related to slavery during the 1840's and 1850's. The documents included excerpts from: George Fitzhugh's *Sociology for the South* (1854) and Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Speech on the Fugitive Slave Law" (1854). The documents (as seen below as a representative example) were sufficiently short (yet detailed) for students to read and respond to in a timed classroom setting:

Document 1: ***Sociology for the South*** **(1854)**
"There can never be among slaves a class so degraded as is found about wharves and suburbs of cities. The master requires ordinary morality and industry…. The free laborer rarely has a house and home of his own; he is insecure of employment; sickness may overtake him at any time and deprive him of the means of support; old age is certain to overtake him, if he lives, and generally finds him without the means of subsistence; his family is probably increasing in numbers and is helpless and burdensome to him."

-George Fitzhugh, lawyer, *Sociology for the South*, 1854

Document 2: "Speech on the Fugitive Slave Law" (1845)

"You relied on the Constitution. It has not the word "slave" in it; and very good argument has shown that it would not warrant the crimes that are done under it…. For one would have said that a Christian would not keep slaves; but the Christians keep slaves. Of course they will not dare read the Bible. Won't they? They quote the Bible, quote Paul, quote Christ to justify slavery. If slavery is good, then is lying, theft, arson, homicide, each and all good, and to be maintained by Union societies? These things show that no forms, neither constitutions, nor laws, nor covenants, nor churches, nor Bibles, are of any use in themselves. The devil nestles comfortably into them all. There is no help but in the head and heart and hamstrings of a man."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, lecturer and author, speech on the Fugitive Slave Law, 1845

The lesson dictated that students would have 15 minutes to independently read the short excerpts and answer three questions. The questions required students to source the individual author's perspectives and contextualize the documents. Specifically, the questions asked students to:

1. Briefly explain (in your own words) Fitzhugh's perspective in the first excerpt.
2. Briefly explain (in your own words) Emerson's perspective in the second excerpt.
3. Provide one piece of evidence from the period 1830 to 1860 that is not included in the excerpts.

The lesson plan specifically advised teachers not to tell students "the answers" during the independent work time, but instead pause the class and initiate a peer-to-peer discussion if at least one third of the class was struggling. This directive to teachers represented a significant change from the 2021 plans where the teachers modeled all of the content mapping and students reproduced the teacher's notes. The fall 2022 lesson plans seemed to admonish teachers about helping students. The lesson on the Civil War, for example, noted: *"Let the students embrace the rigor of the lesson and academic struggle! DO NOT intervene unless a turn and talk does not ignite greater understanding. Students are likely to resist this work initially. Be the coach not the player for them."*

With respect to the level of detail and precision the lesson plan sought from students in answering the sourcing questions about the documents, the network curriculum writers provided the following student-facing exemplars as a guide for teachers.

Table 4

Lesson answer key

Question 1: Briefly explain (in your own words) Fitzhugh's perspective in the first excerpt.	**Question 2: Briefly explain (in your own words) Emerson's perspective in the second excerpt.**	**Question 3: Provide one piece of evidence from the period 1830 to 1860 that is not included in the excerpts**
Fitzhugh argues that the moral and physical conditions of the wage laborer are worse than those of the slave because unlike the slave, no one cares for the wage laborer, gives him a home, or takes care of his family regardless of his age or ability to work.	Emerson argues that the Constitution and the Bible do not support the American institution of slavery, yet these are used by proponents of slavery to defend it. To end slavery, Emerson believes that the help is "in the head and heart and hamstrings of a man." In other words, while the Constitution and the Bible can be manipulated ("the devil nestles comfortably into them"), men understand right and wrong in their heads and hearts and must act against it with their bodies (by running and helping others run).	There is a wide range of evidence students might cite and explain here including the following. • For Fitzhugh: ○ Conditions in Northern mills ○ Lowell girls ○ Apprentices and the changing conditions of wage labor ○ Plantation system • For Emerson: ○ Fugitive Slave Law ○ Right to property in the Constitution ○ Conditions of slavery ○ Slave resistance ○ Underground railroad ○ Moral suasion ○ Radical abolitionism

Source. *CPH lesson plan, fall 2022.*

As students independently read the documents and responded to the questions, the lesson plan instructed teachers to move around the room with the lesson's answer key and *"actively mark student papers."* The plan instructed teachers to make one of the following marks on student papers for each of the three guiding questions:

Table 5

Teacher Monitoring Instructions

Check Mark	~ (Tilde)	X
Tell students they got it! Everything looks good!	Very close, but something is off. Orient students to a place in the document or a place in their textbook notes (for a historical context question) as a clue. *[Keep a tally of tildes. If more than 1/3 of the class has a tilde, state the class gap(s) and initiate a peer turn& talk].*	Something is wrong! Student is not sourcing correctly (e.g., who is the author vs. what is the purpose?) *[Keep a tally of X's…if more than 1/3 of the class is receiving an X for a question. Stop and begin modeling how to do the question].*

Source. CPH lesson plan, fall 2022.

2022-2023 plans attempt to foster discourse through primary sources whereas the 2021-2022 plans omitted opportunities for student discourse.

In addition to not including primary sources, 2021-2022 plans did not afford opportunities for student discussions. The teachers utilized the lesson to aid students in producing content-based graphic organizers to map content connections. Students engaged in this practice silently. There were only limited opportunities for students to discuss their content maps with peers (less than one minute when the teacher directed). However, the plans noted that these student conversations were only intended for students to confer with a peer that they had copied the organizer exactly as the teacher had drawn it on the white board. Thus, in the 2021-2022 plans the only opportunities for students to engage with peers through discussion was as a means of ensuring their independent copying of the teacher's content grid was reproduced exactly as the teacher had drawn it.

The 2022-2023 plans differed from the 2021-2022 plans in their inclusion of more sustained student discussion opportunities. After the students independently read the documents and responded to the three guiding questions (with possible assistance from peers during peer-to-peer discussion or teacher-initiated modeling when needed), the lesson plan instructed teachers to review the documents and questions with students by engaging them in a full-class student-led discussion. The lesson plan explained to teachers, *"After students independently read the documents and answer the guiding questions, use your monitoring notes to specifically cold call a student who accurately answered the question correctly. Have the student:*

1. *State their full answer. You copy the student answer in a blank classwork packet projected to the whole class by the document camera as the student dictates the correct answer.*
2. *Ask the student to identify how he/she came up with the answer…where in the text is the evidence for the perspective (questions 1 & 2) ...where in the chapter is that specific piece of historical context (question 3)?*
3. *Instruct students to compare their answers to the student answer you copied for the whole class AND any level of detail they are missing. They should copy any missing information so their answer matches the student answer you copied for the class.*
4. *Repeat this process for all three questions.*

All twenty 2022-2023 lesson plans I reviewed followed the same lesson sequence as the lesson highlighted above for work with primary source documents. Lessons first featured a content-recall Do Now where the lesson prompted students to identify previous historical context reviewed in class or an earlier homework reading. Lessons than transitioned to oral drill to review (and assess student mastery) of previous historical content. The main activity of each lesson contained opportunities for student independent practice with two short excerpted primary source documents. Although the questions related to the documents differed across lessons, all questions required sourcing documents with respect to one of the following criteria: audience, purpose, point of view, and historical context that moved beyond the current documents. Each lesson instructed teachers to allow students to work on the documents and questions independently and then review questions as a whole-class through a teacher-directed student-led discussion (where teachers would use the real-time notes teachers had gathered during their monitoring of student work to call on specific students to state and explain answers).

2022-2023 plans utilize a primary source Exit Ticket to access student learning.

Following the independent document practice and whole-class discussion, each 2022-2023 lesson I reviewed contained an Exit Ticket where students would elicit another element of document sourcing independently. Lesson authors noted that students would have another opportunity to practice a historical skill they had "just practiced during the lesson." Take, for example, an AP U.S. History Exit Ticket from a lesson on the Emancipation Proclamation. The Exit Ticket first prompted students to read the following primary source document excerpt:

Source: Abraham Lincoln, Letter to Kentuckian Albert G. Hodges, April 4, 1864

I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think, and feel… If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.

The Exit Ticket then asked students two questions. The questions and answers identified by the lesson plan (in italics) are below:

1. Who was Lincoln writing to in this document? *(Audience; Kentuckians)*
2. Why did Lincoln write this document? *(Purpose; Lincoln wrote this document, most reasonably, to describe his anti-slavery stance).*

All 2022-2023 lessons I reviewed contained nearly identical Exit Tickets. Every Exit Ticket had 2-3 questions following the document that required students to engage in a history-specific practice such as sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, argumentation, close reading, etc. (Roughly 50% of lesson Exit Tickets questioned students about sourcing (i.e. saying something specific about the document), usually the same type of document sourcing as the questions posed in the earlier independent document practice). The level of similarity across all 2022-2023 lessons mirrored the lesson-to-lesson consistency within the 2021-2022 plans. Among the 20 2021-2022 lessons I reviewed, none featured any type of primary source analysis—undertaken by students or via a teacher modeling exercise. 100% of those lessons continued a Do Now, oral drill, and some type of guided practice exercise where students copied and reproduced teacher notes on a white board or document camera related to historical context. The mode of outlining the historical context differed across lessons (T-charts, Venn diagrams, cause-effect graphic organizers, and historical timelines), but nevertheless always centered on students making detailed notes concerning teacher-introduced historical context. In the 2021-2022 lessons, the teachers did all of the thinking and students simply copied the teachergenerated ideas. 100% of the 2021-2022 lesson plans instructed teachers to simply collect student notes and grade them based on their similarity to the teacher-written model. In one lesson from AP World History, for example, the curriculum writer even instructed teachers: *"Be sure to always collect the student notes as an Exit Ticket to hold them accountable for copying everything down!"*

To ensure the lesson plans (as written by the network curriculum writers) accurately reflected what was occurring in classrooms during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years, I used classroom observations as a check for lesson fidelity. To determine fidelity of implementation, I watched six recorded videos of 2021-2022 classes as well as six live 2022-2023 classes (all with the accompanying network-aligned lesson plans). While the lessons themselves were vastly different across both academic years, teachers carried out the lessons with nearly universal fidelity to the scripted plan. This level of fidelity was consistent across all observations. During the six observations from each academic year, 100% of teachers followed the lesson's sequencing of tasks and components (e.g., Do Now, oral drill, etc.) exactly as detailed in the plan. Teachers, in all observed lessons, did not omit or add any components to the lessons. During three 2021-2022 and two 2022-2023 lessons, however, teachers did adjust the allotted time of lesson components (e.g., spending two extra minutes on the oral drill and two less minutes on the Do Now) within the scripted plans, but not in any way that altered the spirt of the lesson or the nature of any individual lesson tasks. Across both academic years, 100% of the College Prep High teachers I observed adhered fully to the instructions and intentions of the curriculum writers.

While the 2022-2023 lesson plans represent a clear change from their 2021-2022 versions, the plans only partly meet the network's goal of providing new authentic opportunities for student engagement in history-specific practices. As the data revealed, opening content recall exercises remained unchanged—and these exercises fail to generate discourse or meaningful understanding of the historical content. Although the new lessons added primary sources, the lessons followed the same structure day-to-day with no variation and the sources themselves were largely exclusively produced by powerful White men in history—failing to integrate nuanced historical voices which could present both a more balanced account of the past and potentially increase student engagement. Teacher intervention, while less overbearing than the 2021-2022 plans, still dominated student work with documents. Thus, the 2022-2023 plans represent a change from the 2021-2022 plans through their inclusion of primary sources and opportunities for students to engage with historical thinking through discussions and writing. Yet, those opportunities are still largely dominated by CPH systems of teacher instructional control.

2022-2023 plans integrate increased opportunities for historical thinking.

The 2022-2023 plans demonstrate significantly greater opportunities for students' historical thinking than the plans from the previous school year due to alterations in the lesson design for the activities after the opening content recall exercises. The main activity of the lesson for each 2021-2022 plan featured students copying some type of chart or graphic organizer composed by the teacher at the board or document camera. During this time in the lesson (roughly 30-40 minutes of each 60-minute class) students did not engage in any original thinking. Although there were scripted opportunities for teachers to pause the lesson and prompt students to confer with a partner, discussions were based solely on a peer checking another student's notes to ensure the student did not omit any components of the teacher's notes. The 2021-2022 plans also did not contain authentic Exit Tickets to check student knowledge or understanding in a novel way. Exit Tickets instructed teachers to collect and grade the notes students copied during class time. Scholars have noted that graded work such as notes (especially when it is continuous) within a high school class can undermine the value of the activity for students by presenting the task as a compliance check rather than an opportunity to authentically improve learning (Mehta & Fine, 2019). As Mehta and Fine (2019) have cautioned, when students do not feel lessons and activities are cognitively challenging, students may be unable to prescribe value (and thus full engagement and effort) to the task. Scholarship in cognitive psychology has shown that failures to allow students to demonstrate thinking and originality of thought can weaken students' academic confidence and self-efficacy within a subject (Metcalfe, 2017).

Tensions exist in the 2022-2023 plans between the opening content recall exercises & the larger discourse initiative.

Although only the 2022-2023 lessons contained primary source excerpts where students applied historical reasoning practices to their reading and discussion of the documents, both sets of lesson plans featured learning objectives centered on historical content (not skills) and opening content recall exercises (Do Now and oral drill). In both sets of plans, Do Now's posed questions to assess students' prior historical content knowledge. Although the curriculum writers identified specific answers they deemed to represent 'correct' responses for these exercises, the questions themselves appeared to allow for a multiplicity of contestable responses. As an example, the Do Now question from an AP U.S. history lesson plan highlighted in the previous section asked students to identify the "aftermath and outcomes of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act." Lesson writers scripted three specific outcomes that represented, what they deemed, 'correct' answers. However, the origin of these answers is not clear and this could cause possible student confusion because students may be unclear why their answer is not acceptable. Any student confusion, in turn, may limit engagement. The class textbook for the course (*The American Pageant*, fifteenth edition), for example, notes in its passage on the Kansas-Nebraska Act that the act was a clear prelude to the U.S. Civil War. Yet the network writers, in identifying the outcomes of the act, ironically did not mention the act as a foreshadowing of the Civil War—which the students' textbook speaks about at length. Earlier lessons indicated that the textbook section where *The American Pageant* spoke about the act as a prelude to war was a required homework reading for student content knowledge.

The lack of clarity over where and how curriculum authors determined the specific (and limited) responses to Do Now content questions highlights a tension within the lesson plans and curriculum design for the 2022-2023 curricular initiative. The opening content recall exercises still present history as a definitive series of 'facts' outlining to students 'what happened' in the past. Conversely, the main focus of the 2022-2023 lessons requires students to interpret 'facts' through an understanding of arguments and evidence. (I.e., rather than simply recite historical information, the main focus of the 2022-2023 plans is for students to authentically do history by applying evidence and argumentation to historical information).

Yet, Do Now and oral drill exercises are (perhaps unintentionally) messaging to students 'correct' and 'incorrect' content facts. These content recall exercises may hinder students' sense of confidence with respect to historical content knowledge. Scholarship in learning science notes that disparities between teacher 'answers' and those within a textbook or required reading can cause students to unfairly question the accuracy of their answers, stifle student participation, and engender a tension between readings and the teacher as the true content authority (Metcalfe, 2017). Potential hindering of student participation is especially significant in the context of

College Prep High since the school is hoping its new instructional initiative will increase student engagement.

The opening content-recall components of the 2022-2023 lessons where this tension appears, however, are the exact reproductions of the opening sequence of the 2021-2022 plans. (Importantly, network and school-based leaders had already identified those plans as hindrances to overall student engagement by not, in the words of the chief schools' officer, "generating any student voice.") A second tension within the 2022-2023 plans appears to be the incongruence of the reproduced Do Now's and oral drills and the more open-ended discussion-based nature of the primary source analysis components of the lessons. Ron Ritchhart has cautioned that higher-order cognitive thinking and student engagement are limited when only some lesson components afford for student discourse (Ritchhart, 2015). Engagement and high-order cognitive thinking are most easily developed and sustained when all lesson components afford students opportunities to share divergent interpretations, opinions, and perspectives (Reisman, 2015).

Both sets of plans have repetitive & unchanging sequencing of lesson tasks that could hinder student engagement.

Repetitive sequencing and a recurring cadence to each lesson, despite different tasks, characterize the lessons from both academic years. In the 2021-2022 plans, the content students copied in a chart or graphic organizer changed, but the activity was constant across all of the reviewed plans. Similarly, although the 2022-2023 plans represented substantially heightened opportunities for historical thinking with respect to students' affordances to engage in the practices of historians (e.g., document sourcing), the sequencing across lessons reviewed was also identical across all lessons. The same tasks occurred in each lesson in the same order. Literature has posited that a lack of variety in lesson construction and student tasks can impede student engagement and prevent student participation in targeted disciplinary practices (Bridger & Mecklinger, 2014). Moreover, a lack of lesson and student task variety can harm students' long-term interest in a discipline by presenting that discipline as only concerned with a certain set of specific tasks. In this way, rigidity of lesson components and tasks fails to transform students into practicing historians and instead becomes a burden to student engagement and learning (Bridger & Mecklinger, 2014). A lack of task variation in lessons is particularly important for College Prep High, which has identified a need to increase student engagement as a primary motive of its new curricular initiative and its design specifically seeks to increase student engagement in discipline-specific activities.

2022-2023 lesson documents do not represent culturally responsive pedagogy.

Research has posited that culturally responsive teaching in history, specifically integrating diverse primary sources and historical perspectives into lessons, can aid student engagement and students' sense of empowerment (Harmon, 2012). With respect to students in urban Title I schools, scholarship has noted that student engagement can decrease if primary sources only support a singular perspective dominated (historically) by White male power (Harmon, 2012). Some scholars have open advocated a repositioning of power through intentional selection of course readings and sources. Jared Walker, for example, has advocated for African Americans and historically marginalized groups to serve as the protagonists of historical and literary narratives of empowerment and strength rather than powerless subjugated actors (Walker, 2006). Reflecting on his own course design, Walker explained:

> "I had become my own stereotype, a character in one of my short stories who insisted on seeing himself primarily as a repository of pain and defeat, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. The very people with whom I had been raised and had dedicated myself to rendering in prose had become victims of my myopia" (Walker, 206, p. 56)

Although the 2022-2023 lesson plans feature primary source documents in each lesson, these documents represent largely the singular historical perspectives of powerful White males. Each lesson plan contained two primary sources for independent student practice during class and an additional document for the lesson's Exit Ticket. In the 20 lessons I reviewed (60 total documents), only 10 documents (less than 20%) were written by someone who was not a notable White male from the time period. Although a majority of texts from the time period are indeed authored by White men, the plans nevertheless reproduce that disparity and silencing of minoritized voices by failing to integrate the sources written by marginalized authors that do exist. The lack of representation of women voices was even more striking. Of the ten documents that were not written by White men, four were written by Frederick Douglas—leaving only six documents written by a woman. There were no documents from non-White women. Abby Reisman cautions that teachers' document selection sends explicit and implicit messages to students concerning whose voices are valued and respected. Reisman posits that omission of minoritized voices and perspectives in primary sources can help contribute to the process of historical erasure (Reisman, 2022). Advancements over the last two decades in archival work and digitization has made documents from a greater variety of historical actors more accessible (Reisman, 2022). There is not a complete absence of documents from minoritized voices, even if those documents were not as prevalent or carefully preserved as those from White male contemporaries (Santos, 2015).

Additionally, in the twenty lesson plans I reviewed, all of the documents were exclusively text-based. The lessons did not contain any political cartoons, quantitative sources (graphs and charts), ephemera, or artistic representations produced during the time period under study. Research on student learning in the context of primary sources notes that non-textual primary sources (when integrated with traditional text-based documents) aids students cognitive thinking by encouraging them to think about audience and purpose and this, in turn, helps diffuse the greatest student engagement across all learners (Reisman, 2015). Indeed, audience and purpose represent elements of historical sourcing that College Prep High is hoping to engage its students to aid deeper learning and student investment in history.

Lesson plans still encourage teacher intervention to aid students in determining a singular answer during student independent practice with primary sources rather than maximizing student agency to foster deeper learning.

In analyzing the ways the 2022-2023 plans instruct teachers to monitor and intervene in student independent practice with primary sources, there seems to be a tension between teacher and student autonomy. The lesson plans instruct teachers to physically walk around the room and monitor student papers during practice with primary sources. The lessons provide a coding structure for teachers to mark student papers in real time (check, tilde, or X—signifying if an answer is correct as well as the level of correctness). In the second portion of the document section of the lesson, the lesson instructs teachers to utilize student voices to reveal correct answers and explain their rationale. However, there seems to be incongruence between the "silent and solo" independent student practice with primary sources and a desire for student collaborative learning. For example, if a teacher marks a tilde on a student paper for a sourcing question related to a primary source (signifying that the response is "very close, but something is off") the student has no affordance (other than their own ability to determine the gap) of identifying the issue. With the teacher walking around the room coding student papers and students not permitted to seek help during this time from their peers, students could be left unable to proceed in the lesson. Given that a primary goal of the 2022-2023 curricular redesign is to increase student engagement, such an approach seems as if it could engender greater student opt out. Literature on collaborative learning in high schools argues that students need to feel free to seek help from peers in order to diffuse a genuine sense of collective learning (Ritchhart, 2015). Unscripted on-task discussions among peers (where teachers do not set the full agenda of the discussion) can engender deeper learning in ways not originally conceived in a lesson plan (Mehta & Fine, 2019). The inability for students to seek help from their peers during work with documents (when sourcing—and primary source documents more generally—are new to students) seems to be a relic of the school's systems of order and control. Observations of 'no excuses' charter schools have revealed that these schools (historically) have structured student tasks, practices, and activities in ways that have limited authentic engagement and higher-order thinking (Golann, 2021). Through the lens of task design, student engagement and levels of students' deeper learning are direct byproducts of the system of instructional tasks schools have designed for students.

Students' spoken discourse is highly structured and predicated on predictability.

Much like student work with primary sources, students' opportunities to speak about the documents in both whole-class and small-group discussions is structured in such a way to allow teachers significant scripting and control over the conversation. The plans instruct teachers to monitor student work during independent student practice and call on specific students to share answers during the student discussion (that the teacher would know are correct from the prior monitoring). While the discussion portion of the lesson is intended to be student-led, the teacher dictates who speaks and, to some extent, what is said. Opportunities for student participation and voice are higher than the 2021-2022 plans. In those plans, student voice is largely only present in ways where deeper explanation is not possible—such as teachers asking students to share specific isolated pieces of content (e.g., "the Kansas-Nebraska Act", "Andrew Jackson", "The

Enlightenment", etc.) or to check the class notes of a peer to ensure their accuracy. Thus, while the 2022-2023 plans encourage greater student participation, the plans reflect the entrenched nature of the larger historical whole-school systems of CPH that were initially designed to preserve instructional time and ensure the greatest number of students achieved basic content mastery.

Authentic student-directed spoken discourse requires designing opportunities within lessons for students to be the primary thinkers. Student-led discussions require teachers to trust both their own teaching capacity as well as their ability to possibly pivot the discussion to ensure it is relevant and productive (Murphy, 2018). Spoken discourse in high school classrooms presents an unknown gray space for teachers where anticipation and planning are required, but cannot account for every possible student response or direction a discussion may lead (Reisman, 2022). Even as it tries to infuse student discourse in its revised lesson plans, College Prep High's network curriculum writers seem reluctant to allow any opportunities for unanticipated responses or actions since the school has continued to keep all of its previous school-based systems in place even as it launched this instructional pilot program. Such levels of lesson scripting has led scholars to classify students within similarly styled 'no excuses' schools as 'worker learners' due to the heavy scripting of each portion of a lesson (often down to the minute) in order to ensure a level of predictability for teachers (Golann, 2021), which may be effective for content-recall goals but interferes with ambitious disciplinary learning goals and authentic engagement.

This phenomenon is contextualized through the analytic lens of situated theories of learning (e.g., Greeno, 1998). Well-designed spoken discourse affords students opportunities to learn from their peers within a classroom and re-centers learning as a collaborative and co-constructed activity rather than coming from a singular source, such as a teacher (Green &

Dixon, 2007). Conceptualizing learning as co-constructed and distributed across persons, tools, and participation in social practices can encourage greater engagement and participation in activities—which are transformed into opportunities and affordances for greater participation rather than a series of information recall tasks (Green & Dixon, 2007). Situated theory understands students as knowledge creators rather than passive learners (Greeno, 1998). Thus, opportunities for students to exchange nascent ideas refocuses both the purpose of learning and the role of the learner in creating knowledge in ways that can increase student engagement.

Despite student discussions having a level of unpredictability, the student-generated questions, thoughts, and ideas that emerge from student-led discussion most authentically transform students into disciplinary practitioners (Wagner, Parra, & Proctor, 2017). A key goal of College Prep High's revised curriculum is to attempt to transform students into practicing historians by engaging them in discipline-specific practices. The school hopes such ownership will increase both engagement and learning. This aspiration is supported by the literature citing qualitative case study analysis. When students perceive themselves as authentically doing the tasks of historians (such as reading and sourcing primary sources), students are more likely to be genuinely curious about a subject and this natural curiosity can increase engagement in discipline-specific tasks (Reisman, 2022). Yet the present construction of student-led discussion opportunities in the plans seems to constrain the authenticity of student discourse as well as affordances for students' deeper learning. Although the 2022-2023 plans allow teachers to relinquish some degree of control over the classroom and a greater opportunity for student voice (compared to the previous year), the plans nevertheless seem to rely on student compliance rather than authentic engagement. Students are only permitted to engage with the primary sources in ways dictated by the teacher and there is no space within the document reading, sourcing, or discussion for any novel student observations not originally anticipated by the lesson author. In this way, there is a perception of greater opportunities for student engagement and learning, but not in ways that differentiate the structure sufficiently from the previous lesson models.

Teachers maintained strict fidelity of lesson plan implementation.

Teachers' strict fidelity to lesson plan implementation at College Prep High is not unexpected given the structures and procedures that have served as the backbone of the school since its founding. The school's mid-year teacher evaluation rubric contains a row related to "Alignment to Network Lesson Plans and Curricular Materials." The rubric's language for the "Advanced" row of the rubric states: "The teacher always follows the scripted lesson plan and has thoroughly internalized the plan in order to be able to execute it with strict alignment with respect to tasks, rigor, and mastery responses." This phenomenon is not unique to College Prep High. A critique of even the highest performing 'no excuses' charter high schools in scholarship has been that these schools require teachers to utilize overly scripted lesson plans and teachers can be punished for failing to follow the exact scripting, timing, and exercises detailed in the plans (Mehta & Fine, 2019). For College Prep High, the mid-year evaluation rubric serves as the only metric for determining a teacher's salary increase for the subsequent school year. In this way, alignment to the network curriculum writer's plans is seen by the network as essential for teacher growth within the system. Mehta and Fine (2019) have reasoned that many high-performing charter management networks have come to see teachers less as professionals and more as operators—carrying out a vision through series of step-by-step actions authored by someone who never sees or interacts with the students in that teacher's classroom. While tight control of instructional time is preferable to opportunities where students do not engage in learning activities, it is not preferable to deeper learning practices. Thus, rather than a dichotomy between learning and teacher control, redesigning instructional practices affords the opportunity for teachers to foster greater student agency over learning.

More work remains to redesign the 2022-2023 plans to meet CPH's intended curricular vision.

The 2022-2023 plans differ from their 2021-2022 iterations. The 2022-2023 plans eliminated the content mapping practices that dominated the 2021-2022 plans and integrated excerpted primary sources into each lesson to afford students opportunities to read, discuss, and write about the sources using historical thinking practices. Still, although curriculum authors altered the main activity of the 2022-2023 lessons (replacing content mapping with primary sources), the plans continue to rely on teacher interventions in student thinking that stifle the engagement and deeper learning CPH hopes to cultivate. A redesign on the 2022-2023 lesson plans will allow CPH to more intentionally position teachers to engender students' deeper thinking and engagement in history-specific practices through work with primary source documents.

Second Project Question
In what ways does student discourse evidence engagement in target history classroom practices, as demonstrated in classroom talk and in student writing?

Student engagement in target history practices varied considerably between both specific practices and through student talk and writing.

According to Lampert (2010) and VanSledright, (2013), students engage in deeper learning in history specifically when they take up historical practices as their own. History practices represent historical thinking skills outlined by the Stanford History Education Group (2022) that enable students to make meaning and arguments from historical information. For the second project question, I investigated the level of student engagement in target history practices in both spoken and written discourse. I relied on classroom observations and student classwork samples (Exit Tickets) from the 2021-2022 school year and the fall 2022 school year to determine the extent to which students were engaging in historical thinking practices in both spoken and written discourse. These practices comprised both the practices of practicing historians as well as specific school-based practices (related to expectations of oral and written communication) that CPH curriculum writers (in consultation with the head of school) deemed necessary in order for students "to engage in the work with fidelity" (S. Smith, personal communication). (See Appendix E & F for the full definitions and various degrees of these specific history-based and school-based practices in students' spoken and written discourse). All 2021-2022 history lessons required students to simply copy the teacher's notes. Discussion opportunities only permitted students to check the accuracy of their copied notes with peers and Exit Tickets were simply the submission of these student notes. Therefore, I was only able to use the 2021-2022 classes as a comparison for specific school-based spoken and written practices (not historical thinking practices) since there were no authentic opportunities to engage in spoken or written discourse related to historical thinking during the 2021-2022 school year.

Ultimately, these findings suggest possible limitations of CPH's internal characterizations of school-based engagement. What CPH terms engagement with respect to school-based practices, I define as complacence and reserve the conceptualization of engagement for history-specific practices. Levels of student engagement in target history practices in fall 2022 classes varied by both the specific practice and the type of discourse (spoken and written). Student compliance with CPH-specific school-based practices varied between the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year. Although students in fall 2022 classes did not always meet the formal CPH definition of compliance in these practices (due to the rigidity of these practices), student compliance in school-based practices consistently appeared stronger and more faithful to the task in both spoken and written discourse compared to the previous school year.

CPH student engagement in history and school-based practices varied across specific practices and through spoken and written discourse. The tables in this section summarize the general findings for fall 2022 classes and code them with respect to the level of student engagement as discussed above. I followed the model of Mehta and Fine (2019) who examined engagement and learning in high school classes and classified strong engagement as at least 70% of the overall students (whose work I reviewed or actions I observed in classes) doing the practice, moderate engagement as 50-69% (roughly half the class), and poor engagement as below 50% of students. (For complete definitions of engagement in each category and representative examples, please see Appendix E & F).

The school-based practices comparative table in this section summaries engagement in CPH school-specific practices for spoken and written discourse between 2021-2022 and fall 2022 classes. Coding for the levels of engagement (strong, moderate, or weak) followed the same guidelines and precedent as the above table. (For complete definitions of engagement in each school-based category and representative examples, please see Appendix E & F).

In what follows I outline the level of student engagement in history practices in both students' written and spoken discourse. I then outline the level of student compliance in each of CPH's school-specific practices. By isolating the specific history and school-based practices, I hope to show the disparity in engagement and compliance across both individual practices as well as between student oral and written engagement and compliance.

Document Sourcing Core Finding
In both spoken and written discourse, students consistently demonstrated basic document sourcing, but rarely placed the sourcing in a larger historical context.

Student sourcing of documents in both spoken and written discourse did not place the source in a larger historical context.

Each class I observed (for the fall of 2022) afforded students opportunities to engage in various historical reasoning practices in both spoken and written discourse. The most prevalent practice across all class periods (orally and in writing) was sourcing of documents (engaging with the author, audience, purpose, or perspective of a specific document). During fall 2022 classes, nearly all students work I reviewed from a given class (90% across all classes I observed and as high as 95% in some individual classes) were able to identify that a given primary source had an author, audience, purpose, or perspective in spoken discourse at least one time during a given class. In the written student Exit Tickets I analyzed across all fall 2022 classes, 96% of students across all classes were able to identify that a given primary source had an author, audience, purpose, or perspective in their writing. (In some classes, 100% of students accurately identified that sourcing identification in their writing).

With respect to moving beyond that simple identification to distinguish something specific about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective, however, student engagement was less consistent in both spoken and written discourse—though students showed stronger engagement in written discourse with this level of sourcing. (See table below for specific disparities between spoken and written discourse).

Table 6

Sourcing

Practice	Spoken Discourse	Written Discourse
Sourcing (identifying a source had an author, audience, purpose, or perspective)	**Strong** **90%**	**Strong** **96%**
Sourcing (saying something specific about the source author, audience, purpose, or perspective)	**Strong** **75%**	**Moderate** **50%**
Sourcing (identifying the main idea of a source)	**Moderate**	**Strong**

	65%	**70%**
Sourcing (placing the author, audience, purpose, or perspective of a source in larger historical context)	**Weak** **20%**	**Weak** **40%**

Across all student Exit Tickets, nearly 75% of samples noted something specific about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective of a document. (In some classes, nearly 85% of students could identify something specific about the sourcing). A typical example of a student identifying something specific about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective can be seen in an AP U.S. History student Exit Ticket which required students to read an excerpted speech by Henry Clay criticizing Andrew Jackson's Native American Removal Act and (as the first of three questions) "Identify something specific about the author or his purpose in writing the speech." According to the student, "Clay was a candidate for president a few times and a rival of Andrew Jackson. He didn't support Jackson's policy of Indian removal and was trying to explain how it was unjust to Indians and unnecessary for the country." However, students may have needed more time to complete the Exit Ticket—which required the student to read a new excerpted primary source and answer two-three questions related to different elements of historical reasoning in roughly 10-12 minutes. On student Exit Tickets, questions related to document sourcing were always the first of the two-three questions following the document. This is the kind of complex reasoning that can promote deeper thinking in history. With respect to students who did not source the documents beyond identifying the document had an element of sourcing, 100% of these students did not answer any of the remaining Exit Ticket questions related to other elements of historical reasoning. Several students (who were able to identify the document had an author, audience, purpose, or perspective but did not write anything else) scribbled at the bottom of the Exit Ticket “More Time.” One student who only answered the first of three questions even protested: “There isn’t a lot of time to do this much!”

Students more consistently articulated something specific about the source than identified the source’s main idea in their discussions.

Unlike written discourse, spoken discourse revealed only some 50% of students I observed on average able to say something specific about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective of a document. (In some classes, only one third of students I observed were able to engage in this level of sourcing in their spoken communication). An example of the disconnect between spoken and written discourse in identifying something specific about the document sourcing can be seen in an AP World History class I observed covering nineteenth-century European imperialism. During that class, most students I observed (roughly 60%) failed to identify something specific about the document sourcing for a speech by Otto Van Bismarck. This would indicate that students may be struggling to place the content within the document or the document’s author in a larger historical context. During a small-group discussion among four students, a student explained, “Well we know it’s got an author, Otto Van Bismarck, and he’s making a point about something because he took time to write it all down.” Two of the other four students nodded their heads in agreement and the third student replied, “Yeah I was basically going to say the exact same thing” and the students quickly transitioned to a new topic of discussion related to the document. This type of spoken exchange was characteristic of many student conversations related to document sourcing across all classes I observed. In one moment in an AP U.S. History classroom, the teacher attempted to prompt the student group as she moved around the room. The teacher asked the group (as the students read a document by Thomas Jefferson), “What do we know about the document author to help us understand the letter better?" In response to the teacher's prompt (asking students to identify specific information about the author), students eagerly responded to the teacher "We know Jefferson wrote this one because he signed his name right at the bottom!"—and students then transitioned to talking about another element of historical reasoning.

While students only were able to identify something specific about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective of a given document through spoken discourse about half the time, there were numerous examples of students doing this well. As an example, in the same AP World History class reading the speech by Otto Van Bismarck, a student in a small group (of three students) noted in the discussion, "He is talking to the German people, I think, because he is trying to say Germany is falling behind France and England in imperialism." Another student in the group excitedly agreed and added, "And he started the Berlin Conference to get Germany to the table with France and England and a lot of other European countries." Another instance of students doing this level of sourcing in their discussions came from AP U.S. History after students read Andrew Jackson's 1832 Bank Veto Message to Congress. The students immediately identified Jackson as the author and all four students in the small group identified broader information about Jackson as the author and his possible audience, purpose, or perceptive. One student explained to his peers, "Well Jackson is telling this to Congress, so I think he's like trying to get them to see why the bank is bad for the common person because they are like controlling the interest rates and all that." Another student in the group (a smile filling his face), noted, "Yeah, and we know he wants to get rid of the bank because in the document it says 'monopolies are granted at the expense of the public,' so we know his view is that the Bank of the United States hurts the average person because the bank has a lot of economic power." Thus, with respect to identifying more information about the given author, audience, purpose, or perspective of a document, spoken discourse was more uneven in displaying this level of engagement than written discourse.

In both spoken and written discourse, students rarely placed the source in a larger historical context.

With respect to identifying the main idea of a given document, students showed mostly strong engagement in both spoken and written discourse. In student Exit Tickets, on average 70% of students accurately identified the main idea of a document when prompted and 65% of students I observed during classroom spoken discourse were able to identify the main idea. A key barrier for identifying the main idea in both written and spoken discourse, however, may have been the language used by the author in written documents. On one student Exit Ticket from AP U.S. History, the student wrote small question marks next to words in the primary source (a speech by Alexander Hamilton) every time she did not know a word. Another student, on an AP World History Exit Ticket with a document from the Renaissance, scribbled a note to the teacher: “I couldn’t get the question about the main idea because there are so many big words in here and I didn’t really know what some of it was saying, but I know a lot about the Renaissance so I’m really really mad.” Similar barriers due to document language appeared during spoken discourse. During an AP U.S. History whole-class discussion, after the teacher asked students to identify the main idea of a speech written by Andrew Jackson, one student quickly raised her hand and said, “Wait, but first can we just clarify what enfranchisement is?” After the teacher explained to students that enfranchisement was a synonym for voting, the student early exclaimed, “Oh! I know the main idea now”—and accurately identified the document’s main idea. Another student, sitting on the opposite side of the room, smiled and said aloud, “Damn, I thought it meant slavery, my main idea was all wrong and that’s why. That’s crazy.”

Even as students were generally identified the main idea of a document in spoken and written discourse, students rarely placed the author, audience, purpose, or perspective of a document in larger historical context in both spoken and written discourse. In nearly all instances during student discussions, students did not identify outside historical context on their own. When prompted to do so by the teacher, some 80% of students I observed needed to look in their notebooks or textbook to attempt to find information about the document author or time period. When searching through these resources, students took significant time (five minutes on average) to find appropriate historical context. In one memorable student comment to a peer in AP U.S. History, the junior student (as she flipped through her textbook looking for context on the Kansas-Nebraska Act) said “I knew mad amounts of history information last year in AP World and this year I feel like I am reading a lot of things and don’t remember or know the story of what’s happening.” Students also did not consistently engage in sourcing by placing an element of the document sourcing in broader historical context in their writing. On student Exit Tickets across all classes, only some 40% of students were able to accurately answer sourcing questions asking students to connect the author, audience, purpose, or perspective to a larger historical context. Most students admitted to being unsure. One common response on several Exit Tickets across different classes was: “I don’t remember.” Exit Ticket questions asking students to place the author, audience, purpose, or perspective in larger historical context were always the first of two-three questions (when asked) and students commonly left that question blank even as students answered the remaining one-two questions related to other elements of historical reasoning. On one Exit Ticket for AP World History, a student (who accurately answered the two other questions on the Exit Ticket) wrote, “I just don’t have time to look through my book for this and I don’t remember it right now.”

Sourcing Conclusions

The data I gathered through classroom observations and Exit Tickets in fall 2022 classes revealed students' ability to engage in sourcing by identifying that a document had an author, audience, purpose, or perspective. Still, there seemed to be a difference between students' ability to say something specific about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective in spoken discourse as opposed to written discourse. Whereas roughly 75% of students undertook this level of sourcing in their writing, only roughly 50% of students did so in spoken discourse. This discrepancy suggests that (rather than a skill issue) students may be unable to organize their thoughts effectively related to document sourcing when discussing a document. Reisman has suggested that teachers provide students some type of document grid (listing specific historical thinking practices) as a scaffold for students to complete independently when reading documents as use as a discussion resource when speaking about documents (2015). Through this perspective, the spoken and oral discourse related to documents is inherently interconnected, even if the lesson tasks (requiring students to write or speak at a given time) are different.

In both spoken and written discourse, students did not regularly place either the author, audience, purpose, or perspective in some type of larger historical contest. As the one student in AP U.S. History explained to her peer, she felt last year she knew significant content in AP World History, but in AP U.S. History she did not know "the story" of the course. Despite this student's comment, each fall 2022 class contained the same opening content recall exercises (do now and oral drill) as the 2021-2022 plans and students (across classes) showed strong content knowledge on both written do now's and spoken oral drills. The lessons and Exit Tickets I reviewed contained opening content recall exercises that foregrounded key historical context to allow students to place the author, audience, purpose, and perspective of the lesson's documents in broader historical context. Thus, there seems to be a disconnect between student content knowledge present in these opening lesson exercises and students' ability to apply this information to a sourcing element of a given document.

The inability for students to effectively apply content knowledge to sources might be explained, in part, by Reisman's reasoning that document sourcing represents an inherently novel skill for most students that seems disjoined from memorizing 'facts' (2022). Reisman's case study analysis has found that students can display historical content knowledge in one part of a lesson, yet show an inability to apply that knowledge to an element of a document's sourcing (author, audience, purpose, or perspective) to help better understand the document. Reisman reasons that students view documents as inherently separate from textbook facts, even as those 'facts' can help a student source the document and identify the main idea (Reisman, 2022). Similarly, David Kobrin notes that students (when writing or speaking about documents) often do not have an organizational strategy to combine historical content knowledge and historical thinking skills needed to source documents. The gap, Kobrin argues through case study analysis, is not student ability or willingness to engage with nuanced sourcing, but rather a lack of organizational schema to synthesize information (Kobrin, 1996). Thus, CPH students' disparities between oral and written discourse could be explained by a lack of available tools to synthesize content and ideas to best engage in a rigorous historical practice.

Contextualization Core Finding
Although students' contextualization was more frequent in written discourse, students did not regularly attempt to draw connections to content not in the given primary sources in either spoken or written discourse.

Fall 2022 classes and student classwork samples underscored challenges of students' ability to engage in contextualization (accurately placing the source, author, and information contained within the document into a broader historical context) through both spoken and written discourse. Students (across all classes I observed) demonstrated strong and accurate content knowledge during the Do Now content recall exercises and oral drill, yet contextualization of documents was overall inconsistent and relatively weak. Across all CPH history classes I observed, students only attempted to make a historical connection to context referenced directly in the document some 50% of the time in spoken discourse. However, when students did reference historical context connected to the document in spoken discourse it was generally accurate—though students largely refrained from attempting any non-accurate historical connections. In students' written Exit Tickets, students attempted to make a historical connection to historical context referenced in the document some 80% of the time, but only roughly half the time was the connection historically accurate.

Table 7

Contextualization

Practice	Spoken Discourse	Written Discourse
Contextualization (attempting to make a historical connection to content referenced in the source)	**Moderate** **50%**	**Strong** **80%**
Contextualization (accurately making a historical connection to	**Moderate**	**Moderate**

content referenced in the source)	**50%**	**65%**
Contextualization (attempting to connect the source to content not directly in the source)	**Weak** **20%**	**Weak** **30%**

Students inconsistently attempted to make connections to content directly in the source in their writing and those connections were often inaccurate.

There were inconsistent student attempts to connect a given primary source to a piece of historical context directly in the document in written student Exit Tickets. However, the contextual connections students referenced often included information that was not historically accurate. As an example, an AP U.S. History Exit Ticket following a lesson on federalism contained an excerpt from the antifederalist paper Brutus no. 1—where the antifederalists argued that America was too large to support a republic and thus antifederalists could not support the ratification of the Constitution. The second Exit Ticket question asked students: "Identify a piece of historical context that directly connects to information in the document." One student noted, "The Antifederalists did not want to ratify the constitution. They were from big slave states in the south and wanted each state to have representation in congress based on the population of the state." Although the antifederalists (to the student's point) did not want to ratify the Constitution (as the document showed), the student confused the perspective of the antifederalists and the federalists with respect to their regional location and perspective on congressional representation—thus the historical context was inaccurate.

Another example, from AP World History, featured an excerpted letter from Toussaint Louverture to Napoleon Bonaparte discussing slavery during the Haitian Revolution. For the question prompting students to “Identify a piece of historical context that directly connects to information in the document or connects to information in the document,” the student explained that “slavery was also an issue during the French Revolution and just like Haiti the French did not free the slaves during the revolution.” Although the issue of slavery did arise during the French Revolution and the letter referenced slavery in the context of Haiti, the French National Convention enacted a law abolishing slavery in France, but not French colonies (such as Haiti)—thus the attempt to identify context on slavery (the main subject of the letter) was inaccurate.

In student discussions, students inconsistently attempted to make connections to context in the source and those connections were often inaccurate.

In one key example of spoken discourse, a fall 2022 AP World History class had 100% of students I observed accurately define their historical context term on late nineteenth-century European imperialism during the oral drill. These terms related directly to historical context referenced in a document students read on the Scramble for Africa. Yet when those students read the primary source in small groups, only two students (out of the twelve I selected to observe) made an accurate historical connection to historical context in the document and only five students even attempted to make a historical connection to context in the document, even if the connection to the document was not historically accurate. Seemingly frustrated, the teacher said to the class, “Guys, you know the background of the information in this document, we just reviewed it during oral drill.” As soon as the teacher stopped speaking, a student shook his head and turned to his peer and stated, “She must be joking because we don’t even know what we’re even supposed to be doing with these readings.” This suggests a potential problem with students not fully understanding the goal of the task as well as students’ ability to organize and chart context as they read and discuss the documents.

Students rarely attempted contextualization not in a document in both speech and writing.

Yet despite these historical inaccuracies in the student attempts to connect to historical context contained in a document, I rarely witnessed CPH students (in both spoken and written discourse) attempt to connect a primary source document to a piece of historical context not directly mentioned in the document. Among all students I observed during all class observations, only four students even attempted to connect a document to historical context not already contained in the document—and only two of those attempts were historically accurate in the sense that the context was situated in the proper time period and geographic location. I discovered a similar trend in students' written discourse. Across all student Exit Tickets I reviewed, only eight students attempted to make a historical connection to context not contained in the document—and only five of those attempted connections were historically accurate. During all class observations, teachers never prompted or reminded students to try to connect to historical context not contained in the document—despite it being a regular question on Exit Tickets.

Contextualization Conclusions

Contextualization seems to be an area of growth for CPH students. Only 50% of students I observed during CPH classes attempted to contextualize the document by making a historical connection to context specifically in the document, but those connections were mostly always accurate. In written discourse, students attempted historical contextualization by connecting to context in the document some 80% of the time, but only roughly half the time were those connections historically accurate. The difference between students' attempts at connecting to a previous document in talk and writing may suggest that students felt more comfortable attempting contextualization in written discourse as opposed to writing. Literature has noted that students, especially when discussions have not been a regular and normed classroom activity, can refrain from engaging unless students feel certain their responses are accurate. Spoken discourse contains an added layer of vulnerability (since it is consumed by both the teacher and peers) that written discourse does not (Breunig, 2017).

When students did attempt to connect historical context to something contained in a document, there was significant historical inaccuracy in those connections. On the surface, students' historical inaccuracy is surprising given how much context students appeared to know in my observations of do now content recall questions and oral drill. (Historical inaccuracies were especially glaring given that these do now and oral drill content terms almost always directly related to historical context in that lesson's primary source documents). Case study analysis has revealed, however, that when the practice of working with primary sources is new, students can struggle applying historical content knowledge to a document and even confuse content due to an inability to situate the document in a larger historical narrative (Kobrin, 1996). Whereas a textbook presents a neat tightly-packed narrative for students, connecting primary sources and historical context requires students to remake the narrative themselves, often causing issues with contextualization and periodization (Reisman, 2022).

Additionally, the findings revealed a relative absence of students' attempts to make historical connections to content not explicitly referenced in the document. This phenomenon was true in both spoken and written discourse. Despite this trend, students (across classes) did show strong content knowledge during do now and oral drill exercises. David Kobrin has noted that, when working with primary source documents, students can have "tunnel vision"—an inability to apply knowledge that extends beyond the documents due to a singular focus of analyzing the document (and its language) in an almost forensic exercise (Kobrin, 1996, p. 67).

Given that working with documents is a relatively new skill for CPH students, there seems to be an engagement gap in applying content to better unpack a primary source document when that specific content is not referenced in the document. As the one student in AP World History complained, he felt that he and the other students did not know what to do with the primary source readings, suggesting a need for an additional layer of scaffolding for students to empower them to engage in the level of historical contextualization CPH leaders desire.

Corroboration Core Finding
Although students attempted to corroborate documents in written discourse roughly half the time, attempts at corroboration were rare in spoken discourse.

Corroboration of documents, which scholarship has identified as a type of historical reasoning practice where students compare a document or text to a different document or text used in class or for homework (Reisman, 2015) had the lowest level of CPH student engagement across all historical reasoning practices.

Table 8

Corroboration

Practice	Spoken Discourse	Written Discourse
Corroboration (attempting to connect the source to a different document or text; does not need to be accurate)	**Weak** **>10%**	**Moderate** **50%**

Corroboration (accurately connecting the source to a different document or text)	**Weak** **30%**	**Moderate** **50%**
Corroboration (connecting an element of a document's sourcing to another document/text)	**Weak** **10%**	**Weak** **10%**

Students attempted and accurately corroborated sources roughly half the time in written discourse, but did not regularly attempt corroboration in spoken discourse. Attempts at corroboration in spoken discourse were generally inaccurate.

Students rarely engaged with document corroboration in written discourse. One question that regularly appeared on student Exit Tickets asked students to "Connect this document to another document we read in this unit." (Though poorly worded, the question prompted students to connect the document's main idea or an element of the sourcing to another document or text from the unit). Across all student Exit Tickets I reviewed, some 40% of responses left that question entirely blank. Some 50% of students did indeed accurately connect to another document or text, but only by naming the document—a reasonable response (perhaps) given the wording of the question. Only 10% of student responses even attempted to connect the document at hand to an element of the main idea or sourcing of a previous document—and of those responses, roughly only half did so accurately. On one student Exit Ticket from AP World History, a student scribbled a note to the teacher under the question (after leaving the question blank): "I know what the question is asking but we read so many stories and things that I can't keep track of all the names and points in these."

During my observations of fall 2022 classes, only eight students (across all class observations) attempted (one time) to connect a primary source document to a different document or text. These attempted connections, however, were often inaccurate. Of those eight students, only three accurately connected the present document to a different document or secondary text (specifically, the class textbook)—though all only by superficially naming the other document or text rather than comparing the sourcing or main idea between the two documents. As an example, in one AP U.S. History class, the teacher (after the class read a speech by Andrew Jackson regarding Native American Removal) instructed the class during a whole-class discussion by asking: “Okay, so how can we connect this to the main idea of another document we read in this unit?” A student eagerly raised his hand and stated, “Oh this connects to the other presidential speeches by Jefferson.” Appearing confused by the response, the teacher prompted the student “Hmm, interesting, say more. How does this main idea connect to a main idea in a Jefferson speech, and tell us the speech.” The student appeared confused by the question and stated, “Well they are both presidential speeches delivered by the president.” The teacher than revealed a connection to another Jackson primary source students had read, asked students to copy her response, and transitioned the discussion. Connecting a document in a meaningful way (or at all) to the main idea or sourcing of a previous document was virtually absent in students’ spoken discourse.

Even as students corroborated more consistently in written discourse, the depth of their corroboration was similar across written and spoken discourse. In both written and spoken corroboration, students rarely connected content in the primary source or another document or text (including the textbook). In both written and spoken corroboration, students only made connections between a document’s content and an external document or text 10% of the time.

Students seemed to struggle to keep track of the previous documents and texts they had read. One student scribbled in the margins of an AP World History Exit Ticket, “Can’t remember the names or ideas of the other readings, but I know we read some that fit here.”

Corroboration Conclusions

CPH students’ engagement with document corroboration appeared limited in both spoken and written discourse. (Student engagement with corroboration was stronger in written discourse, but this trend may be explained, in part, by the direct questioning asking students to compare the main idea, author, audience, purpose, or perspective of a current document to a previous document or text). When students were able to connect a document to a previous document, students were generally only able to name the other document—not authentically connect the main ideas or sourcing across two documents. Although fall 2022 lesson plans instructed teachers not to give students the answers to document questions (and emphasized to teachers that students must try to collaborate with one another), I found in classroom observations that teachers were quick to provide a model answer with respect to document corroboration in ways they were not with other forms of historical reasoning. Teachers’ actions with respect to document corroboration may suggest that engagement with document corroboration was weaker than the other historical reasoning practices.

Students themselves may have offered insight into the gap in engagement with respect to corroboration. As the one student in AP World History explained on his Exit Ticket, he found it difficult to keep the names of the documents and their key points (author, audience, purpose, and main idea) organized since, he noted, the students read many different documents over the course of a unit. Abby Reisman has argued that students (across grade levels and skill abilities) benefit from using graphic organizers or charts to keep track of document sourcing and main ideas. As Reisman explained, even professional historians must keep analysis of primary sources codified in some written way as it is impossible to consistently remember so many different disparate texts and sources (Reisman, 2022). Although network curriculum writers redesigned the 2022-2023 lessons to become focused around primary source analysis, the curriculum authors did not create student-facing resources to help students codify information from documents to use in later lessons. Corroboration, as a historical thinking practice, necessitates the placing of documents or texts across lessons, weeks, or months in conversation with one another (Martin & Matruglio, 2019). Although CPH teachers and Exit Tickets asked students to engage with documents in by drawing connections to previous readings, students did not have a tool to appropriately engage in this historical practice with fidelity.

Close Reading Core Finding
Students demonstrated strong similarities in their practices of close reading in both speech and writing. Students regularly identified the genre of a document and quoted from the document, but rarely attempted to paraphrase.

Of all the history-specific practices I observed and analyzed, students engaged most consistently in close reading in both written and spoken discourse.

Table 9

Close Reading

Practice	**Spoken Discourse**	**Written Discourse**

Close Reading (accurately identifying & referencing the genre of a document/text)	Strong 90%	Strong 90%
Close Reading (quoting from documents/texts)—attempts & accuracy	**Strong** **80% Attempted** **75% Accurate**	**Strong** **78% Attempted** **70% Accurate**
Close Reading (paraphrasing from documents/texts)—attempts & accuracy	**Weak** **20%** **>5%**	**Weak** **10%** **>5%**

Students regularly identified and accurately referenced the genre of a document in their Exit Ticket writing. On average, 90% of student responses in Exit Tickets accurately identified the genre of a source. On one representative Exit Ticket from AP U.S. History, featuring a 1915 movie poster from D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, a question asked students to "Name the type of primary source the above source represents." The student wrote, "This is a movie poster" and added "I know this because Birth of a Nation was talked about in the textbook and it said it was a movie!" On many Exit Tickets, students made marginal annotations next to the document accurately noting the genre. These were generally the only marginal notes students displayed next to the primary source excerpt.

Student also regularly quoted directly from the documents in their writing. In questions that asked students to identify the main idea, purpose, or perspective of a given document, some 78% of students quoted from the text and 70% of students used an accurate quote. A number of students (roughly one third) used a highlighter or different colored pen to identify key quotes in the text. It is unclear, however, if students identified quotes before or after reading the Exit Ticket questions.

In class observations (in both small-group and whole-class discussions), I observed students consistently accurately identifying and referencing the genre of a document. The majority of documents students read and engaged with in class (and on Exit Tickets) were text-based (almost exclusively letters or speeches). When students did have an opportunity to work with different types of documents, however, students did so effectively. In one AP U.S. History class, for example, 100% of students I observed identified a document as a political cartoon. This data was consistent with other class observations (where between 90%-95% of students I observed accurately identified the genre of a source).

Students consistently quoted accurately from the documents during in-class discussions. In one especially impactful moment in AP U.S. History, a student used a direct quote from a document to further support another student's point. One student, after students read George Washington's Farewell Address, noted that George Washington wanted unity in America. Another student, excitedly squirming in her seat and raising her hand while moving her hand from side to side with her arm raised to get her teacher's attention, added, "And he says that in his Farewell Address. On page 7 Washington says, 'The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils and joint efforts—of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.' So, like, it's clear he wants unity, like you said." Using direct quotes from the text to say something specific about a document or the time period was prevalent in spoken discourse, both during whole-class discussions with all students and small-group discussions of 3-4 students.

Students rarely attempted to paraphrase documents and their attempts were mostly inaccurate.

Unlike quoting, which students generally attempted and successfully executed in spoken and written discourse, students seemed more hesitant to paraphrase in both spoken and written close reading. Paraphrasing requires a deeper level of understanding by forcing students to put the author's words into their own language while still capturing the original meaning. Across all classes I observed, students rarely paraphrased a document by placing the ideas of a document in their own words. On average, the students I observed only attempted to paraphrase 20% of the time when providing evidence and quoted 80% of the time. I found a nearly identical trend in student Exit Tickets. In questions asking students to identify the main idea, purpose, or perspective of a given document, only 10% of students paraphrased (78% quoted and 12% did not answer the question or the response was inaccurate without attempting to paraphrase or quote). In both oral and written discourse, student paraphrasing was not inaccurate, so much as incomplete. Attempts and paraphrasing and the accuracy of the paraphrasing was consistent across disparate types of documents (textual and visual) in both spoken and written discourse. Take, for example, a student Exit Ticket from AP World History containing a painting from the Haitian Revolution showing Jean Jacques Dessalines cutting out the white portion of the French flag with his sword following the revolution. One student, in a response typical of others I observed attempting to paraphrase, noted, "He is cutting the flag and showing he will not tolerate the French." The response is not inaccurate, but does not identify the man cutting the flag as Haitian leader Dessalines and does not reference the white portion of the flag (symbolizing the removal of the French from the island following the fighting) in the context of the paraphrase.

Thus, while the paraphrase (in a very general sense) is partly accurate, it is too incomplete to be effective. This level of incomplete paraphrasing was representative of nearly all CPH students' attempts at this skill in both spoken and written discourse. This suggests that CPH students need explicit lessons on paraphrasing and an organizational tool to check the paraphrase against the document's original language.

Close Reading Conclusions

Student engagement with close reading proved mostly strong in both spoken and written discourse. Students, synthesizing both spoken and written discourse, consistently accurately identified the genre of documents. Although there was not great variety of documents (as mostly are text-based speeches or letters) in the CPH lessons and Exit Tickets, students were consistently able to distinguish document genres when there was variety. In both discussions and in their writing, students were eager to quote from documents and generally did so effectively to say something specific about the main idea, audience, or purpose of a document. Given students' eagerness and strength at quoting from documents, it is unclear if students habits related to quoting were influenced by CPH's English curriculum—which is based on SAT reading and writing strategies that teach students to quote directly from literary texts (G. Miller, personal communication). Nevertheless, students displayed a willingness and ability to use direct quotations from the document to support a response concerning the main idea or sourcing of a document.

Paraphrasing was significantly less prevalent among students in both spoken and written discourse. When students did attempt to paraphrase, their attempts did not capture the nuance or full meaning within a text or document—regardless of the genre. Extant literature has noted that the skill of paraphrasing is a significantly more challenging skill for high school students than quoting because it requires students to synthesize ideas and meaning and derive new words for expression (Miller, Scott, & McTigue, 2018). Additionally, the CPH head of school noted that CPH's English department explicitly instructs students to not paraphrase literary texts and instead use direct quotations, as this is the strategy students must employ on the SAT and AP English Language exams (S. Smith, personal communication). Although English and History are different disciplines with distinct disciplinary practices, scholars warn students can often become confused between English and History practices when teachers do not clearly articulate the subject-specific practices and the reasoning for those differences (Kobrin, 1996). Given CPH students' willingness and strength in quoting from documents, it seems reasonable that CPH students will be able to reach the same level of engagement and accuracy with document paraphrasing if CPH provides students a scaffold or tool to paraphrase elements of a document (such as the main idea) in their daily document work.

Argumentation Core Finding
In both spoken and written discourse, students consistently made arguments drawing on their own opinions but less regularly drew on evidence from documents to substantiate their claims.

As outlined by the Stanford History Education Group (2022), argumentation is saying something unique and specific about the past. I investigated two distinct types of student argumentation: defensible claims and personal opinions. I defined defensible claims in this context as the building of an argument (defensible stance) related to the document or the historical content the document encompasses. Personal opinions in this context represent the sharing of an opinion not grounded in the document. In both spoken and written discourse, students most consistently engaged in argumentation by sharing opinions related to a document not forming a defensible claim.

Table 10

Argumentation

Practice	Spoken Discourse	Written Discourse
Argumentation (making a defensible claim about the document/text)	**Weak** **>5%**	**Weak** **>10%**
Argumentation (sharing a personal opinion not connected to the document/text)	**Strong** **80%**	**Strong** **75%**
Argumentation (sharing a personal opinion directly connected to the document/text)	**Weak** **40%**	**Strong** **70%**
Argumentation (sharing an opinion that is historical in nature, but not connected to the specific document or time period)	**Weak** **>10%**	**Weak** **>10%**

Students consistently shared personal opinions both directly related and unrelated to the documents in their writing.

Argumentation, albeit still heavily driven by sharing opinions rather than formulating defensible claims, was more nuanced in student writing. Student Exit Tickets, unlike student discussions, often attempted to justify an opinion about the document by connecting the opinion to a specific piece of historical context in the document or the historical time period in which the document was situated. Some 70% of the time when offering an opinion in their Exit Ticket writing, students justified their opinion. As an example, when asked in an Exit Ticket to “Develop an argument/unique perspective about this document” after reading Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, an APUSH History student opined, “I really enjoyed reading this document and it was really valuable to read. Lincoln said that he was speaking for the judgement of mankind and this really stood out to me.” This type of response (sharing an opinion and connecting directly to something in the document or time period) was typical in student writing. Another example can be seen in a student Exit Ticket from AP World History requiring students to read an excerpt from Mary Wollstonecraft’s Vindication of the Rights of Women. Just like the APUSH Exit Ticket, the question asked students to “Develop an argument/unique perspective about this document.” A student wrote, “I agree with Wollstonecraft and appreciate this document. I liked the document and literacy was not high for women at this time and not too many women had a platform to try to ask for and demand greater rights and to show the oppression women faced.”

With respect to student writing, of the roughly 40% of students who did attempt to make a defensible claim about the document, nearly all of those students stated a historical fact that they seemed to confuse as a defensible claim. As an example, when prompted to “Develop an argument/unique perspective about this document” for the Emancipation Proclamation, a student noted, “The Civil War dealt with the issue of slavery.” For that same Exit Ticket, a different student explained, “Slavery was an important topic during the American Civil War.” These responses were characteristic of student attempts to make a defensible claim related to a document in both spoken and written discourse.

Students consistently shared personal opinions not connected to the documents in their spoken discourse.

In student discussions, I observed that student opinions were generally only opinions about whether the student liked or disliked the document—disconnected from anything specific about the document or time period. In one typical example from a small-group discussion in AP World History, after students independently read the Declaration of the Rights of Man and then discussed the document. The teacher prompted the small groups by explaining to the class, “Make sure your groups discuss the document and come up with a group argument/perspective about the document.” Following the teacher’s prompt, one student noted “The document was good. I liked reading it and it made me understand the topic.” The three other students in the small group nodded in agreement and said “same” before proceeding to start their homework. The highlighted exchange was typical of small-group and whole-class discussions related to document argumentation across all classes I observed.

With respect to formulating defensible claims after reading a document, student engagement was almost entirely absent from spoken discourse. Across all students I observed in classes, only four different students (at least one time) successfully made a defensible claim about the sourcing of a document (author, audience, purpose, or perspective) and only five students (at least one time) made a defensible claim about the larger historical context of the document. There were three other students who attempted to make a defensible claim during discussions, but only restated the question. Nearly all students, however, only attempted to engage in argumentation through spoken discourse by stating an opinion about the document.

Students rarely made a historically-based argument unrelated to the documents in either written or spoken discourse.

In both spoken and written discourse, only rarely did a student share an opinion historical in nature but not related to a specific document or time period. Across all observations and analysis of student Exit Tickets, sharing a historical opinion not related to a specific document or time period occurred only twice in student discussions and three times in student writing. An example of this phenomenon (in the limited instances when it did occur) can be seen in a whole-class discussion in AP U.S. History. When discussing a letter from George McClellan to Abraham Lincoln during the U.S. Civil War, a student emphatically declared, “I don’t like this document. When Andrew Jackson was a general he had a lot of success against the Spanish and didn’t let us not get Florida.” Still, this style of argumentation (connecting an opinion not related to a specific document or a different time period) was consistently rare across students’ discussions and writing.

Argumentation Conclusions

Of all the historical thinking practices I observed and analyzed, CPH student engagement in argumentation was perhaps the weakest of any of these history-specific practices. Students seemed to think they were making authentic arguments about documents. In both spoken and written discourse, however, student arguments were largely just opinions about the documents. In spoken discourse, these arguments were largely purely statements of whether the student liked or disliked reading the document and not supported by anything from the document or time period. Although students did provide greater explanation for their opinions in written Exit

Tickets, the students nerveless were purely opinion-based arguments and not defensible claims about the document. Extant literature has posited that argumentation in humanities is one of the most challenging skills for high school students because it challenges the model of STEM-based classes where students seek to find one correct and clearly defined answer (Mehta & Fine, 2019). Argumentation requires students to understand history as a multiplicity of arguments (that can all be contested if supported by evidence) and this mode of thinking about a subject is antithetical to traditional modes of learning in American high schools (Reisman, 2022).

A limited number of students in spoken and oral discourse were indeed able to formulate defensible claims about the sourcing or time period of a document, but this engagement was not diffused. Students, however, seemed to think they were indeed making acceptable arguments. With respect to student Exit Tickets, perhaps the consistency of the argumentation directions (“Develop an argument/unique perspective about this document”) provided confusing to students. Although CPH leadership and curricular writers envisioned Exit Tickets reinforcing student learning and skill mastery, it could be that the argumentation wording in Exit Tickets hindered students’ ability to make defensible claims about documents in spoken discourse. Developing a “unique perspective” (per the language of the Exit Ticket) could represent sharing a general opinion about a document. Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine caution that poorly worded questions or directions can be the source of student disengagement (not skill gaps) especially when prompts and questions are consistently worded the same way in aligned curricula (Mehta & Fine, 2019). This project examined classes and student work samples over a short period during the fall of 2022. The literature notes that among historical-thinking and reasoning skills, argumentation is often a skill students tend to resist and engage with least (Kobrin, 1996). It is unclear, for example, if engagement may have improved—even with respect to more attempts at formulating a defensible claim in a more longitudinal study. However, the consistency of student engagement habits and wording of argumentation prompts on student Exit Tickets suggest a need for instructional intervention with respect to argumentation to diffuse greater student engagement in this historical-thinking practice.

School-Based Practices Core Findings
Students more consistently tracked the speaker in 2021-2022 classes, but more consistently had strong voice and posture in fall 2022 classes. Students more consistently followed the prompt in 2021-2022 classes, but more consistently wrote in full sentences and used academic language in fall 2022 classes.

Although CPH defined all of its spoken and written practices as engagement, I understand them and define them as compliance. Joanne Golann (2021) has noted that ‘no excuses’ charter schools often confuse compliance for engagement. While distinct, compliance and engagement are interconnected. Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine (2019) have argued that an overemphasis on student compliance by ‘no excuses’ schools can actually hinder authentic student-drive engagement in academic practices.

Table 11

Spoken School-Based Practices

Specific School-Based Practice	**2021-2022**	**Fall 2022**
Tracking the speaker (spoken discourse)	**Strong** **90%**	**Moderate** **50%**

Strong voice (spoken discourse)	**Moderate** **50%**	**Strong** **80%**
Posture (spoken discourse)	**Moderate** **60%**	**Strong** **90%**

Table 12

Written School-Based Practices

Specific School-Based Practice	**2021-2022**	**Fall 2022**
Writing in full sentences (written discourse)	**Weak** **45%**	**Strong** **<90%**
Following the prompt (written discourse)	**Strong** **90%**	**Moderate** **50%**
Use of academic language (written discourse)	**Weak** **40%**	**Strong** **<90%**

Students more consistently wrote in complete sentences and used academic language in fall 2022 classes.

To compare compliance in students' written discourse, I reviewed student work samples (Exit Tickets) from 2021-2022 and fall 2022 classes. Compliance in CPH school-based practices in writing appeared stronger in fall 2022 classes. With respect to writing in full sentences and professional language, 2021-2022 student notes (which students submitted as their Exit Ticket) consistently contained sentence fragments, stand-alone singular words without context (e.g., "Germany"), and non-professional language ("cuz," sames," etc.). In fall 2022 samples, by contrast, students almost always wrote in full sentences and I discovered only a handful of instances (7 in total) when a student did not use professional language. The primary difference between the two sets of samples was student compliance in following the prompt. CPH defines following the prompt as a student completing all questions or finishing a task in its entirety, even if the responses or writing is inaccurate (S. Smith, personal communication). Based on CPH's definition of this practice, over 90% of students in 2021-2022 samples followed the prompt compared to only some 50% of students in fall 2022 classes. When students did not meet the CPH definition of following the prompt in fall 2022 samples, it was almost always a result of not finishing all of the Exit Ticket questions—though authentically attempting the ones students did answer.

Students did not consistently follow the prompt in fall 2022 classes.

College Prep High defines following the prompt as completing all questions and sub questions of a given task. Thus, if students attempt to answer questions, but do not complete all questions in the allotted time, they are considered (by CPH's definition) of not following the prompt. Historically, CPH has defined following the prompt in this way to ensure student compliance in time-on-task behavior. However, the school has not augmented this school-based practice in the wake of altering the nature of student academic practices around primary sources. Thus, while by CPH's definition students may appear noncompliant, the school's internal understanding of following the prompt does not take into account the rigor of the task and may mask the compliance and engagement of students. Nearly all student samples I reviewed attempted to answer Exit Ticket questions, but only about half the students were able to finish all of the questions—and as a result these samples would be considered by CHP's definition as not following the prompt.

Students more consistently demonstrated strong voice and posture in fall 2022 classes.

Given that school-based practices in both spoken and written discourse were consistent across 2021-2022 and fall 2022 CPH history classes, I was able to compare levels of student compliance between school years and modes of discourse. During 2021-2022 recorded classes, students demonstrated remarkably strong and consistent compliance in school-based practices during spoken discourse. Across all students and classes I observed from the 2021-2022 school year, some 90% of CPH students tracked the speaker. CPH defines tracking the speaker as a student making direct eye contact with the speaker 100% of the time the individual is speaking, unless recording notes (S. Smith, personal communication). Although students consistently tracked the speaker during the 2021-2022 school year, strong voice was often lacking. CPH defines strong voice as a student speaking clearly and audibly for the entire room to hear (S. Smith, personal communication). (It was common for teachers to physically move to the other side of the room when a student was speaking to ensure the student was appropriately projecting their voice). Only some 50% of students I observed during 2021-2022 classes demonstrated strong voice, as defined by CPH. Teachers would often give an affirmative reminder to these students to project their voice by interrupting them to be “loud and proud.”

I found nearly the opposite compliance in fall 2022 classes. In those classes, some 80% of students I observed demonstrated CPH strong voice, but only roughly 50% of students tracked the speaker. When students were not tracking the speaker, however, the students were almost always rereading and reviewing potions of a primary source—often underlining words or looking up from the source to think independently. In one notable moment in an AP U.S. History class, the teacher reminded a student (who was re-reading the primary source as his peer spoke) to track the speaker. The student, in a rare display of defiance to a teacher in CPH classes, adamantly protested: “But I am trying to find where in the source this is happening because I think she isn’t factoring in all of the things the author is saying.” The teacher, though, stopped the class and instructed the student to “track the speaker or wait in the hall.”

Another key difference in student compliance in school-based practices during spoken discourse was student posture. CPH defines ‘proper’ posture as a student sitting straight and upright in their chair for the entirety of class (S. Smith, personal communication). During 2021-2022 classes, I observed some 60% of students across all classes displaying adequate CPH posture. (This trend was remarkably consistent across classes). Yet during fall 2022 classes, some 90% of students I observed across all classes demonstrated CPH adequate posture. (This was also consistent across classes). During the 2021-2022 classes I observed, it was common for teachers to announce to the class “posture check”—as a reminder for students to adjust their posture. During fall 2022 classes, however, only one teacher in the classes I observed reminded students to adjust their posture.

Compliance in school-based practices conclusions

In the example cited in the findings from AP U.S. History (where a student failed to track the speaker due to his desire to review the primary source document as his peer spoke), the student's actions met CPH's criteria of a lack of compliance. Yet the student was eagerly following along with the document—seemingly more compliant than his peers as he tried to understand the rationale of his peer's perspective. An overemphasis on compliance appears to have occurred in CPH classrooms with respect to strong voice. Students only demonstrated strong voice roughly half the time in 2021-2022 classes as opposed to some 80% of the time in fall 2022 classes. Ron Ritchhart (2015) has reasoned that students are often more authentically engaged and compliant when the rigor of an academic task is elevated and students are empowered to share their perspectives and apply reasoning practices. During 2021-2022 classes, students simply copied notes from the white board and only spoke with peers to determine the accuracy of those notes. Fall 2022 classes afforded students the opportunity to discuss primary sources and share their opinions. Strong posture, as defined by CPH, was also stronger in fall 2022 classes. Trends in student posture in fall 2022 classes could suggest greater student interest in classes and perhaps more genuine excitement for the lesson.

While, by CPH's definition, students followed the prompt more often in 2021-2022 writing samples, the task simply required them to copy teacher notes from the white board. Based on the CPH definition, students did not follow the prompt as often in fall 2022 samples, yet the task was significantly different (questions based on a document related to sourcing and argumentation) and failure to complete the task was most reasonably due to the heightened level of historical thinking required. (Students almost always attempted and completed some Exit Ticket questions after reading a document, even if students did not finish all three questions).

I found evidence of heightened authentic student compliance in fall 2022 writing samples through students' use of full sentences and academic language (as defined by CPH as no slang or profanity and avoidance of overly vague words) to a significantly higher degree than 2021-2022 samples. Yet students merely had to copy (verbatim) teachers' notes during 2021-2022 classes. On the surface, it seemed student compliance in these areas should have been stronger since students were simply copying full sentences that already used academic language. Researchers in cognitive psychology, however, have noted that students are less likely to comply with school-based practices when tasks are not rigorous with respect to applying reasoning and students perceive the tasks as overly routine (Bridger & Mecklinger, 2014). Classroom tasks that lack meaning and fail to engender curiosity can weaken teachers' ability to norm student academic and behavioral expectations. When tasks are consistently low rigor and monotonous, students may fail to understand how specific school-based expectations will benefit their learning (Berger, Rugen, & Woodfin, 2014).

Third Project Question
To what extent do faculty perceive that particular curricular-instructional tools for the 2022-2023 school year affected changes in 1) student engagement and 2) student learning in history?

Teachers perceived increased student engagement and learning in fall 2022 classes.

Although my analysis of lesson plans, classroom observations, and student classwork samples could gauge student opportunities for engagement and levels of engagement in specific history and school-based practices, my ability to assess engagement is limited vis-à-vis classroom teachers. I would need to undertake a longitudinal study to make claims regarding student learning. As a result, CPH history teachers (in addition to confirming or challenging my perceptions of student engagement) served as the best means for understanding the extent to which students' engagement impacted learning. Ideally, I would have undertaken an authentic longitudinal study, but given the time constraints for the project, such a study was not feasible, and, thus, prevented defensible claims regarding student learning differences. Given that CPH history faculty lost no teachers between the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year (and teachers taught the same classes both years), the faculty were uniquely positioned to share their perspectives regarding student engagement and student learning.

Teachers perceived heightened student engagement in fall 2022 classes.

All teachers I interviewed asserted that student engagement across all students and all classes was higher in fall 2022 classes than the previous school year. Among teachers, their perceptions and thoughts concerning student engagement were remarkably similar. It was common for teachers to smile and speak with an elevated eager tone when describing student engagement in fall 2022 classes. One AP U.S. History teacher, as a representative example, seemed to think that engagement through spoken discourse in fall 2022 classes was the highest she had ever witnessed while teaching at CPH. She noted:

> This is [fall 2022] the most locked in I have seen the kids…It's really crazy how different they are working with the documents. They don't always look at the speaker, but it's because they are so locked in to reading the documents and following along, so I am sometimes unsure if I should remind them to track because I don't want to destroy their natural curiosity.

The teacher's underscoring that the students were "the most locked in" that she could remember speaks to her sense of heightened student engagement. She noted that students were "different" when working with documents, suggesting the documents served as a possible mediator of increased engagement among students.

Teachers expressed similar positivity with respect to student engagement in spoken discourse in AP World History classes. One AP World History teacher, mirroring the sentiments of his colleagues, explained:

> I think the most remarkable aspect of this that has really surprised me is the students' posture. They sit up straight in their chairs and even lean forward when someone is speaking…This year I'm not really doing anything differently with my classroom management, but the result is much better.

The teacher's comments regarding student posture (especially students leaning forward) speak to student excitement for the in-class tasks. The teacher seemed both excited by students' actions and unsure what prompted such strong engagement. Although the teacher did not specifically mention the curricular changes, this would explain disparity in student engagement in fall 2022 classes compared to the previous year.

Teachers universally expressed comparable thoughts with respect to heightened student engagement with respect to written discourse in fall 2022 classes compared to the previous school year. One AP World History teacher, for example, even admitted confusion with respect to the phenomenon he noted he was witnessing on student work. He reasoned:

> I'm kind of baffled, to tell you the truth. Last year I would write out the notes and I would correct for all kids of errors—spelling, grammar, slang, you name it…But this year I get so much less slang and improper grammar. They don't always finish all the questions, but what they do is really polished. Even the handwriting is so much neater. It's nuts!

Given that students copied teacher notes and content written on the white board in 2021-2022 classes, spelling and grammar mistakes that year may be reflective of low engagement. The teacher seemed surprised that students did not reproduce the same spelling and grammar errors in fall 2022 classes (especially since students were not merely copying a teacher-created diagram like they had in 2021-2022), but this may be explained by the attention to detail engendered by student curiosity and excitement for the task.

Teaches noted that their perceptions of heightened student engagement were sometimes at odds with how CPH defines engagement.

CPH teachers also perceived heightened student engagement in student writing even though it was common for students not to finish all of the questions. One AP U.S. History teacher revealed her reactions to student writing by stating:

> At first I thought this was such a flop. The kids weren't finishing the Exit Tickets and the grades were low. But when I had my weekly data meeting and we [teacher and instructional coach] reviewed the work, it was clear that they put a lot of effort in. They were writing in full sentences and I was barely correcting slag and improper words.

Many teachers, however, seemed to feel tension between their perceived sense of heightened student engagement and fear of not fully enforcing school-based systems. This tension was a recurring theme in numerous teacher interviews. One AP U.S. History teacher, as a representative example, candidly noted:

> I don’t know what to make of this year. The students are so much more engaged than they were last year and it isn’t even a comparison. But not all of my kids track the speaker because they read the document and they don’t know where to look….and I don’t know either…I don’t have 100% of kids tracking and the kids almost never finish the Exit Tickets, so I feel like they [school leadership] are going to berate me for not holding the kids to task.

Much like the AP U.S. History teacher, an AP World History teacher seemed to worry that, although she perceived student engagement in spoken and written discourse as higher than the previous school year, her classroom and student work has appeared weaker to her school leadership since student engagement has declined in several of CPH-identified school-based practices. She was one of three teachers to share this concern. She explained candidly and regretfully:

> It’s odd. I think I am doing the best teaching job of my career this year. The students are actually excited about learning history and working with historical material…I’m afraid to tell my coach that I think some of these things [CPH systems] will actually kill the vibe if I enforce them to the letter of the law that the school wants.

Teachers perceived deeper learning in fall 2022 classes.

With respect to history-specific skills and practices, teachers almost universally asserted students demonstrated heightened and tangible learning. Teachers commonly used an iteration of the words “learned” and “mastered” when describing students as well as lesson and assessment content. One AP World History teacher, for example, emphatically declared:

> The kids are doing college-level work. They are making arguments from the documents and it’s amazing because the very idea of students making original arguments would have seemed like a distant dream last year. They can connect the documents to other readings…and they are understanding what the document authors are saying.

Similarly, a teacher of AP U.S. History explained:

> Last year, the kids knew the history, like the broader information, they story. But this year, they can make an argument about that story. They can read a document and pick out what the author is saying and who the author may have been writing to….This is the first

> time I feel like a facilitator and I think that is because they are applying so much learning and executing these history skills in each class.

Still, despite the enthusiasm teachers displayed regarding their perceived sense of heightened student learning with respect to history specific practices, many teachers worried that students demonstrated weaker historical context knowledge in fall 2022 classes compared to the previous school year. Teacher regularly noted that students struggled to understand the broader historical background of a document or its author. One AP U.S. History teacher, whose sentiments mirrored other teachers I interviewed, even noted her bewilderment concerning her perception of this phenomenon. She stated:

> It doesn't make sense. The students can read a challenging historical document and connect it to other documents by saying, oh a democratic republican also wrote Tuesday's document, and pin point the author's argument, but then draw a blank when trying to tell me something about the author or the time period of the document. And it's super strange because the kids seem to be doing the homework.

Perhaps as a result of their belief that students in fall 2022 classes had weaker historical context knowledge, teachers seemed to invent new mediums to review historical context for students. One AP World History teacher admitted:

> I became worried about kids not knowing as much information. I started holding review sessions after school. Then I started offering review sessions at lunch. They are short, 30'sim minutes. But it is a space for me to review content with kids. They don't get it in class. I don't know how they will do on exams this year [end-of-year assessments] and that scares the hell out of me.

Numerous teachers explained that they employed similar extra out-of-class review sessions to review historical content with students. One AP U.S. History even noted to me that she "almost never [had] lunch" because of all the extra content review she was holding for students. An AP World History teacher complained openly to me "clearly the do now and oral drill in the lesson isn't enough because the kids aren't retaining any of the content. If I don't make time after school for review, it will be on me to explain it and justify it to admin when the test results come back in July." When teachers spoke about these out-of-class review sessions, their demeanors often changed—appearing anxious about how a perceived lack of content knowledge might impact student end-of-year test scores and, subsequently, school leaders' perceptions of their teaching effectiveness.

Teachers' perceptions of students' deeper learning may be confusing engagement for deeper learning.

In my interviews, teachers noted students demonstrated heightened engagement in fall 202 classes. As the findings demonstrated, veteran CPH teachers even noted that such a level of student engagement was not possible based on their experience teaching at College Prep High in previous years. Teachers' perceptions of such heightened engagement, however, may be explained by recent research by Jal Mehta and Sara Fine. Mehta and Fine (2019) argue that curriculum that empowers students to authentically do disciplinary-tasks (such as reading documents) can generate more consistent and authentic student engagement because the tasks honor students' perceived intellectual potential. Similarly, Ron Richhart (2015) has posited that infusing discussion opportunities for students in humanities classes, where students discuss short texts, allows students to own their learning in ways more passive instruction (e.g., lecturing or copying notes) does not permit.

Although this quality improvement project did not attempt to assess student learning through my review of student work samples and classroom observations, teachers' perceptions of student learning (as evidenced through history-specific practices) belied my understanding of their level of engagement in these practices. This disparity in my perception of engagement in history-specific practices and teachers' perception of authentic learning exhibited by students may be explained by two factors: confusing engagement for learning and an inability among teachers to authentically assess student learning. Mehta and Fine (2019), after undertaking case study analysis in multiple high schools, have noted a frequency among both teachers and school leaders of confusing engagement for learning when levels of engagement are significantly higher among students than previous school years. In addition to the lesson structure and tasks being new, CPH history teachers explained that student behaviors (speaking loudly and audibly, sitting up strait in chairs without reminders, etc.) represented authentically new (and exciting) developments. Sometimes, Mehta and Fine (2019) reason, students engaging in a new and rigorous task can engender such excitement among teachers that purely engaging in the task and displaying some degree of mastery can mask student gaps in learning.

Similarly, it is unclear if CPH teachers have the training or tools to authentically assess student learning in history-specific practices. Abby Reisman (2022) has argued that diffusing and scaling student work with primary source documents necessitates significant ongoing teacher professional development to empower teachers to see evidence of student learning. Although CPH history teachers all have experience at the school (none are first-year teachers), only roughly one third of the history department has a degree (of any kind) in history (S. Smith, personal communication). Most teachers have degrees in adjacent social science or humanities disciplines (e.g., political science, sociology, government and law, English, etc.) that does not employ the same history-specific practices CPH teachers are teaching students. Given that CPH just launched this pilot for the 2022-2023 school year, the network's director of history openly noted that the teacher professional development to compliment the launch has been "kind of spotty" (G. Miller, personal communication). It is unclear, for example, if more sustained teacher professional development in the specific historical thinking practices (e.g., sourcing, corroboration, contextualization, close reading, argumentation, etc.) would cause teachers to reevaluate their sense of student learning in these practices.

School-Based Practices Conclusions

In addition to perceived heightened student engagement across classes and lessons, teachers noted a significant decrease (and in some cases an absence) of necessary corrections. Research on 'no excuses' charter schools has reasoned that lessons can feel robotic and apathetic to students across grade levels and subject areas due to lesson over scripting and unchanging in-class lesson routines. Students in 'no excuses' schools may demonstrate opt out and a failure to comply with normed school-based expectations if students do not sense newness or value in the classroom tasks (Golann, 2021). Despite essentially following the same lesson sequence in each fall 2022 class (content recall exercises, individual student document reading and analysis followed by small-group and whole-class discussion, and a document-based student Exit Ticket to close class), documents in each class were different. Researchers have suggested that when lesson tasks authentically captivate student interest, school-based expectations become normative—a means of engaging in a desired task rather than a perceived dictate from the teacher as an authority figure (Berger, Rugen, Woodfin, 2014). Based on my interviews with CPH teachers, this phenomenon appeared to be occurring in fall 2022 classes. The curricular-instructional redesign introduced by CPH in fall 2022 classes represented a watershed shift in the class structure normed since the school's founding. Similarly, since history classes were piloting this shift in instructional design, it is reasonable to suggest that students may have been more engaged and excited in history classes since the other classes on their daily schedule represented CPH's traditional instructional model of teacher talking and student note taking. Fall 2022 history classes were the only opportunities for CPH students to engage in any hand-on content-specific application.

Yet teachers' perceptions of heightened student engagement in lesson tasks were often accompanied by fear concerning students' inability to embody or comply with CPH school-based practices in the manner students had in previous years. Teachers' interviews revealed their own inherent tension with student behaviors: students were authentically engaging in tasks but not consistently following the school-based practice as CPH had instructed. This tension seemed to come through most powerfully with student tracking (looking at a speaker at all times). Teachers expressed discomfort with correcting students for tacking since, as the teachers revealed, students were demonstrating a different type of engagement (perhaps arguably more valuable): following along and reading the document as a peer spoke. This type of tension with school-based practices articulated by teachers in my interviews has been discussed in extant literature. Golann (2021), for example, has noted that school-based systems in 'no excuses' charter schools employ a 'one size fits all' approach that may come into conflict with a particular situation or lesson. Teacher interviews seemed to suggest that adherence to CPH school-based practices, like tracking, could actually moderate student engagement rather than mediate heightened student investment in the task.

Teachers also noted a concern that students' inability to merge engagement through history-specific practices with previously established school-based practices could lead to poor reviews and negative feedback from school leadership. Extant literature has argued that teachers can come into conflict with a school's mission when teachers understand their actions mediating student behavior in specific ways detract from student learning or overall student excitement (Berger, Rugen, Woodfin, 2014). Teachers seemed to understand the daily work with documents as mediating the heightened and authentically new student engagement in classes and certain CPH school-based practices (such as tracking) as potential hindrances to this shift in student engagement. Golann (2021) has argued that such stringent adherence to uniformity and negative feedback to teachers for failing to employ school-based practices as written within ‘no excuses’ schools is a major cause of teacher attrition and burn out within this environment. Research has argued that teachers cannot appropriately mediate engagement and learning if teachers perceive failure to follow certain practices (which may not be valuable to students) will result in negative feedback and potential disciplinary action (Berger, Rugen, Woodfin, 2014). When teachers feel constrained in this manner, teachers can feel their agency has been revoked by school leadership and, as a result, uphold practices that may ultimately hinder student engagement and learning (Golann, 2021).

Teachers (through their descriptions of student work and class participation) seemed to suggest that the curricular redesign has mediated universally weaker historical content knowledge among CPH students. This trend was common across teacher interviews. Yet it is unclear if the trend I observed in teacher interviews is an accurate understanding of the phenomenon. For example, teachers admitted (and my classroom observations confirmed) consistently strong student content knowledge and retention during the opening content recall exercises in each lesson. These opening content recall exercises often tested content that connected directly to the lesson’s primary source documents. Thus, it seems that students may be struggling with understanding how to apply content to documents (or how to organize all of their thoughts as they read documents) rather than failing to have adequate content knowledge. Research has posited that teachers can mistake a lack of knowledge for a lack of available organizational tools that may be needed for students to display appropriate knowledge (Bridger,

& Mecklinger, 2014). A lack of necessary student tools may be especially important in the case of CPH history classes since curriculum writers and teachers have not provided students any tools (other than their notebooks) to chart documents or organize thoughts while reading documents. This may be a key area of need especially given the 2021-2022 classes provided students complete replicas of the material teachers tasked them to produce. Extant literature has noted that students, when working with primary sources for the first time, need scaffolds and some level of gradual release of organizational tools in order to employ historical thinking skills such as contextualization (Reisman, 2015). The absence of any such tools in fall 2022 history classes makes it unclear if students truly lack the historical content knowledge teachers noted or if students need a concrete tool to mediate the release of historical context they do indeed possess.

X. Recommendations & Conclusions

Based on the data gathered through lesson plan analysis, classroom observations, student work samples, and teacher interviews, I offered above a core finding for each project question. In light of each core finding, I offer a series of recommendations that may help College Prep High achieve its goal of ensuing its new curricular initiative increases student engagement and (perhaps) deeper learning.

First Core Finding:

Although fall 2022 lesson plans provide some opportunities for student engagement and deeper learning by devoting time for students to read documents and engage in historical reasoning, discourse, and writing, the plans are overly reliant on previous CPH systems and structures that hinder meaningful engagement and learning.

Recommendations:

If network curriculum writers revise current 2022-2023 lesson plans by allowing students more opportunities to engage in historical reasoning, discourse, and writing, it can help promote greater student engagement and deeper learning. Key revisions might include:

A. Redesign the opening content recall exercises in the lesson plans to provide discourse opportunities (spoken and written) for students to formulate contestable answers (e.g., various causes, effects, statements of historical significance, etc.), where appropriate. Such an approach will be more consistent with the affordances for deeper learning that students experience later in each lesson.

B. Curate and utilize a variety of primary and secondary source documents to better promote deeper learning. A selection of documents that encompass a greater multiplicity of voices and also draw from the rich array of non-textual evidence (political cartoons, quantitative data, and artistic representations) available can help provide different perspectives necessary for deeper learning.

C. Redesign student discussions of primary and secondary sources to be less teacher-directed and more student driven. Teachers can provide students an overarching question or series of prompts, but allow students the agency to determine the nature of the discussion surrounding the historical content and primary sources.

Second Core Finding:

College Prep High has taken a productive step in attempting to increase engagement in historical reasoning practices by introducing regular student work with primary sources. However, certain social and historically normed schooling practices are interfering with the current curricular-pedagogical initiative.

Recommendations:

If curriculum writers and teachers empower students to use specific tools (such as a document grid and primary and secondary source excerpts) throughout each lesson, student engagement in history-specific practices can be more consistent and diffused. These tools might include:

A. Create and norm a standardized document grid for students to use and chart as they read source documents. This tool can include space for students to note outside historical context as well as document-specific information such as sourcing, contextualization, and textual evidence. (See Appendix G for a possible initial model for primary soruces adapted from the Stanford History Education Group).

B. Encourage students to utilize primary and secondary source excerpts (from the current lesson and past lessons). Students' engagement in historical practices can be strengthened by allowing and encouraging students to return to previous documents. Similarly, encouraging students to actively locate evidence in documents from the current lesson during discussions can alleviate the tension between students not actively tracking the speaker, yet still attempting to engage in the discussion by referencing the text.

Third Core Finding:

Teachers noticed greater student engagement and increased opportunities for learning in fall 2022 classes, but teachers worried they lack appropriate clarity and support from College Prep High to consistently promote student engagement and learning.

Recommendations:

If CPH seeks teachers to promote sustained and meaningful engagement and learning across all classes and among all students, the school should:

A. Adapt the school's teacher effectiveness rubric to honor teachers' fostering of deeper learning and not penalize teachers if CPH students do not meet the school's present definitions of student spoken and written compliance. CPH's internal definitions of specific student actions are at odds with deeper learning. For example, CPH defines following the prompt as finishing the entirety of a task, but students (encompassing a range of learners) may still engage in deeper learning by completing only a portion of the task due to its complexity.

B. Provide teachers, either through network leadership or outside consultants, a coherent, iterative, and job-embedded professional development program on historical reasoning, discussion, and writing practices, both how to teach students to perform these historical practices and how to evaluate student engagement and learning through these discipline-specific practices. Teachers' conclusions of student engagement and learning can only be most meaningful if all teachers have a core bassline understanding of the very history-specific practices the new curricular design seeks to diffuse.

Conclusions

College Prep High has launched an ambitious pilot program to increase student engagement and learning. There is a great opportunity for College Prep High to transform engagement and learning through opportunities to engage in historical reasoning, writing, and discourse. Despite the school's past successes, school leaders and teachers have sought to innovate a new instructional design—believing the improvement pilot represents a greater opportunity for students. College Prep High has taken an important first step to realizing this transformative vision of a redesigned history classroom.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Sample Exit Ticket

EXIT TICKET

In a single republic, all the power surrendered by the people is submitted to the administration of a single government; and the usurpations [abuses] are guarded against by a division of the government into distinct and separate departments. In the compound republic of America, the power surrendered by the people is first divided between two distinct governments [state and national], and then the portion allotted to each subdivided among distinct and separate branches of government. Hence a double security arises to the rights of the people. The different governments will control each other, at the same time that each will be controlled by itself.

Source: James Madison, under the pseudonym Publius, *Federalist No. 51* (excerpt, adapted), 1789

The Anti-Federalists seem to think that a pure democracy would be the perfect government. Experience has shown that this idea is false. The ancient democracies of Greece were characterized by tyranny and run by mobs. The Anti-Federalists also argue that a large representation is necessary to understand the interests of the people. This is not true. Why can't someone understand fifty people as well as he understands twenty people? The new constitution does not make a rich man more eligible for an elected office than a poor person. I also think it's dangerous to assume that men become more wicked as they gain wealth and education. Look at all the people in a community, the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant. Which group has higher moral standards? Both groups engage in immoral or wicked behavior. But it would seem to me that the behavior of the wealthy is less wicked and sinful.

Source: Alexander Hamilton, June 21, 1788, addressing New York Ratifying Convention

1. **Answer bullet a, b, c, & d below.**
    1. Explain James Madison's argument in Federalist 51.
    2. Explain Alexander Hamilton's argument in his address to the ratifying Convention.
    3. Which argument is more valid and why?
    4. Give one piece of historical evidence that would support either Madison or Hamilton's argument.

Appendix B: Teacher Recruitment Letter

Dear (teacher's full name),

My name is Tom Brinkerhoff and I am currently a doctoral student in Vanderbilt University's Leadership, Learning, and Organizations Ed.D. program undertaking a capstone project in collaboration with College Prep High. Specifically, I will be working with the school and larger network to examine the new curricular and instructional initiative in AP History courses. After speaking with [name of CMO Head of High School Curriculum; name Redacted] and [name of Head of School for CPH; name redacted] about this opportunity, I would like to invite you to help collaborate with this project.

In order to collaborate with this research, I would like to request your time to engage in the following:

- An interview (November); followed by an optional meeting to review the interview transcript
- The scanning of two class sets of student Exit Tickets each week by end-of-day Friday in a shared Google Folder

In order to help honor your commitment to this work and collaboration, [name of Head of School for CPH; name redacted] has agreed to extend a full-period duty release (hall duty, lunch duty, study hall, etc.) for the initial interview and a half-release day (morning or afternoon) for the second interview. Meetings to review the interview transcript (fully optional) will take place via zoom outside of school hours, but I will fully work around your schedule for these meetings to ensure your words and thoughts are captured accurately in the transcript—and to give you the opportunity to remove anything from the transcript.

Please note that collaborating or declining to participate in this work will have no effect on your current (or future) teacher evaluations and anything you share will be for the express purposes of this research inquiry; nothing will be used in any evaluative way with respect to your performance or role at CPH. To ensure anonymity, you will be able to select your own pseudonym and can decline to answer any question or stop at any time.

I believe this work will help not only advance CPH's exciting curricular-instructional initiatives, but also provide valuable insights to engage students as lifelong learners who fulfill the network's mission of educational social justice. If you have any questions about the project or would like to speak further about the role, I would be happy to connect by phone or email. I look forward to hearing back from you!

Warmly,
Tom Brinkerhoff

Appendix C: Sample Teacher Interview Questions

Prior to interview, I clarified that 'discussions' represents whole-class, small-group, and peer turn and talk opportunities. Writing represents student prose in Do Now's, Exit Tickets, homework, and assessments.

Questions

1). To what extent do students regularly source documents in class discussions?

2). To what extent do students regularly source documents in their writing?

3). Has student sourcing of documents in discussions or writing changed since August, and if so, how?

- How does student sourcing of documents in discussions or writing compare to last school year?

4). To what extent do students demonstrate close reading in their discussions by citing and referencing the text?

5). To what extent do students demonstrate close reading in their writing by citing and referencing the text?

6). Has students' close reading as seen through discussions or writing changed since August, and if so, how?

- How does close reading as seen through discussions or writing compare to last school year?

7). To what extent do students contextualize documents in their discussions by referencing previous historical content (from this class, earlier courses, or outside historical knowledge)?

8). To what extent do students contextualize documents in their writing by referencing previous historical content (from this class, earlier courses, or outside historical knowledge)?

9). Has students' ability to contextualize documents as seen through discussions or writing changed since August, and if so, how?

- How does student contextualization of documents in discussions or writing compare to last school year?

10). To what extent do students use evidence to support their ideas in their discussions?

11). To what extent do students use evidence to support their ideas in their writing?

12). Has students' ability to use evidence to support ideas in either discussions or writing changed since August, and if so, how?

- How does student use of evidence in discussions or writing compare to last school year?

13). To what extent do students make original historical arguments based on the documents in their discussions?

14). To what extent do students make original historical arguments based on the documents in their writing?

15). To what extent do students exhibit North Star values as participants in class discussions (tracking the speaker, 'loud and proud voice', sitting up straight, etc.)?

- Has this been consistent since August?
- How does this compare to last school year?

16). To what extent do students exhibit North Star values in their writing (writing in full sentences, using proper grammar and syntax, using academic language, etc.)?

- Has this been consistent since August?
- How does this compare to last school year?

17). To what extent has the new instructional design changed the day-to-day look and feel of your classroom compared to last year, if at all?

Appendix D: Lesson Plan Task Definitions

Lesson Plan Task	Definition
1. Student opportunities to talk with whole group or peer where a prompt is present **2.** Tasks that allow individual or collective reflection (that may not count as discussion) **3.** Opportunities to analyze a primary source in writing **4.** Opportunities to analyze a primary source (without writing) **5.** Opportunities to connect the present lesson's content about the past to other content about the past (could include prior lessons, prior curriculum, or other student prior knowledge) **6.** Opportunities to formulate an argument/thesis using documentary evidence **7.** Other (something that may be relevant to PQ1 but does not fit in these categories)	**1.** There is time built into the lesson plan for teachers to allow students to talk with one peer, a small group, or as a full class. The opportunity is specifically scripted into the plan and a formal lesson component. **2.** A scripted opportunity in the lesson plan for students to reflect (either independently in their notebooks or with a peer orally) for 1 minute. These opportunities all ask students "why might this event/process/outcome have occurred?" **3.** The lesson contains an excerpted primary source and asks students (in a classwork packet or their notebooks) to identify the author, purpose, or point of view. **4.** The lesson contains an excerpted primary source and asks students (spoken with a peer or small group of 3-4) to identify the author, purpose, or point of view. **5.** The lesson prompts students to use the document to identify broader outside historical context (beyond the document) or significance of the source. **6.** The lesson contains a guiding question (where multiple answers can be valid) that asks students to develop an original argument. E.G., "To what extent was the U.S. Civil War motivated solely by slavery?" **7.** Anything that emerges in the formal scripted lesson plans (written by network curriculum writers) that I did not originally identify as a formal student task before beginning data analysis. E.G. "Stop and Jot in Your Notebook Before Writing a Thesis Statement: What is challenging or

	confusing for you about this Guiding Question?”

Appendix E: Spoken Discourse Code Book

Category	Type of Spoken Engagement	Definition	Levels
Historical Reasoning	Sourcing	Engaging with the author, audience, purpose, perspective of a specific document.	a. Student identifies that the source has an author, audience, purpose, or perspective. b. Student accurately identifies information about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective. c. Student uses accurate information about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective to identify the significance or main idea of the document. d. Student uses accurate information about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective to place the document in broader historical context.
Historical Reasoning	Contextualization	Connecting the document to relevant historical context mentioned or not mentioned in the document	A. Student attempts to make a historical connection to the document, but the context is inaccurate or anachronistic. B. Student accurately connects the document to a piece of historical context specifically mentioned in the document. C. Student accurately connects the document to a piece of historical context not directly present in the document.
Historical Reasoning	Corroboration	Comparing a document or text to a different document (used in class or for homework)	A. Student attempts to connect to a different document/text, but the connection to the document/text referenced is inaccurate or irrelevant. B. Student accurately connects to a different document/text only superficially by naming the document/text. C. Student accurately and meaningfully connects to a different document/text by comparing sourcing or main ideas between the two documents/texts.
Close Reading	N/A	Student specifically uses/references the words or genre of the document	A. Student attempts to paraphrase from the document or reference the genre of the document (poster, speech, political cartoon, etc.) but does so inaccurately. B. Student accurately identifies the genre of the document (poster, speech, political cartoon, etc.) C. Student accurately paraphrases something from the document.

			D. Student accurately quotes from the document.
Argumentation	Defensible Claims	Student builds an argument (defensible stance) related to the document or the historical content the document encompasses	A. Student attempts to make an argument, but the argument is a fact, not a defensible claim. B. Student makes a defensible claim about the sourcing of the document (author, audience, purpose, or perspective). C. Student makes a defensible claim based on the larger historical context related to the document.
Argumentation	Personal Opinions	Student shares an opinion not grounded in the document	A. Student offers an opinion but it is not substantive to advance discussion or learning. *(e.g., "I liked this document.")* B. Student's opinion connects directly to something within the document. C. Student's opinion connects to something related to the time period, but not the specific document. D. Student's opinion is historical in nature, but not related to the specific document or time period.
School-Based Practices	Tracking & Note Taking	Student looks directly at the speaker (100% of the time) unless recording notes in a notebook	N/A
School-Based Practices	Strong Voice	Student speaks clearly and audibly for the entire room to hear.	N/A
School-Based Practices	Posture	Student sits straight and upright in their chair without slouching (100% of the time)	N/A

Appendix F: Written Discourse Code Book

Category	Type of Spoken Engagement	Definition	Levels or Examples
Historical Reasoning	Sourcing	Engaging with the author, audience, purpose, perspective of a specific document.	A. Student identifies that the source has an author, audience, purpose, or perspective. B. Student accurately identifies information about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective. C. Student uses accurate information about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective to identify the significance or main idea of the document. D. Student uses accurate information about the author, audience, purpose, or perspective to place the document in broader historical context.
Historical Reasoning	Contextualization	Connecting the document to relevant historical context mentioned or not mentioned in the document	A. Student attempts to make a historical connection to the document, but the context is inaccurate or anachronistic. B. Student accurately connects the document to a piece of historical context specifically mentioned in the document. C. Student accurately connects the document to a piece of historical context not directly present in the document.
Historical Reasoning	Corroboration	Comparing a document or text to a different document (used in class or for homework)	A. Student attempts to connect to a different document/text, but the connection to the document/text referenced is inaccurate or irrelevant. B. Student accurately connects to a different document/text only superficially by naming the document/text. C. Student accurately and meaningfully connects to a different document/text by comparing sourcing or main ideas between the two documents/texts.

Close Reading	N/A	Student specifically uses/references/identifies the words or genre of the document	A. Student annotates the document (underlining, starring, or highlighting) and makes marginal notes B. Student attempts to paraphrase from the document or reference the genre of the document (poster, speech, political cartoon, etc.) but does so inaccurately. C. Student accurately identifies the genre of the document (poster, speech, political cartoon, etc.) D. Student accurately paraphrases something from the document. E. Student accurately quotes from the document.
Argumentation	Defensible Claim	Student builds an argument (defensible stance) related to the document or the historical content the document encompasses	A. Student attempts to make an argument, but the argument is a fact, not a defensible claim. B. Student makes a defensible claim about the sourcing of the document (author, audience, purpose, or perspective). C. Student makes a defensible claim based on the larger historical context related to the document.
Argumentation	Personal Opinions	Student shares an opinion not grounded in the document	A. Student offers an opinion but it is not substantive to advance discussion or learning. *(e.g., "I liked this document.")* B. Student's opinion connects directly to something within the document. C. Student's opinion connects to something related to the time period, but not the specific document. D. Student's opinion is historical in nature, but not related to the specific document or time period.
School-Based Practices	Following the Prompt	Student fully completes all questions (and sub-questions) of the prompt. Responses may not be fully accurate, but	N/A

		attempt to answer each question of the prompt.	
School-Based Practices	Writing in Full Sentences	Student response if fully formed prose without shorthand abbreviations.	N/A
School-Based Practices	Use of Professional Academic Language	Student uses professional language (no slang/profanity or overly imprecise/vague words)	*Examples of non-professional language: "cuz" "that thing" "get the bag [money]"*

Appendix G: Possible Universal Document Grid

Source Name & Author	**Main Idea of the Source** *(Support with quotes or paraphrase)*	**Key Historical Evidence in the Document** *(Support with quotes or paraphrase)*	**Key Outside Historical Context That Connects to the Document or Time Period**	**Similar Documents We've Read** *(How does this document connect to* ***either*** *the type of document, author, or evidence of another document we read?)*

Original Argument: ***(After charting the document, write 1-3 sentences explaining what the document is saying about the author or time period. Don't give your opinion, tell us what the document is suggesting about the author or time period).***