UC Berkeley
UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Secondary Departments and Site Leadership Under Serial Reforms: "Evidence-Based Decision Making"

Permalink

Author

Moore, Jacquelyn Anne

Publication Date

2009

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

Secondary Departments and Site

Leadership Under Serial Reforms: Responses

to "Evidence-Based Decision Making"

by

Jacquelyn Anne Moore

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Joint Doctor of Education

with

San Jose State University
California State University, East Bay
San Francisco State University

In Educational Leadership, Equity and Reform

in

the Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Judith Warren Little
Professor Sandra Hollingsworth
Professor Karlene Roberts

Fall 2009

Secondary Departments and Site Leadership Under Serial Reforms: Responses to "Evidence-Based Decision Making"

by Jacquelyn Anne Moore

Abstract
Secondary Departments and Site
Leadership Under Serial Reforms: Responses
to "Evidence-Based Decision Making"
by
Jacquelyn Anne Moore
Doctor of Education
University of California, Berkeley
Professor Judith Warren Little, Chair

This dissertation responds to the growing emphasis on evidence-based instruction and instructional decision-making by examining teachers' perspective on evidence in high school departments. There is a reasonably large body of work on high schools, including a number of studies that discuss the role of the subject department, and a smaller body of work specifically on academic departments. Yet few studies focus on how secondary subject matter departments process and use student assessment data or mediate assessment-related educational policy. This study employs a case study of two subject area departments, English and Social Sciences that have been involved in various reforms over 20 years in one high school. Through multiple interviews, informal conversations, and observations of teachers' work in departments and teams, the study focuses on how the departments in the present reform period use student evidence to inform practice.

Findings indicate that the ability to respond effectively to current assessment expectations depended on the departments' specific reform history, commitment, and capacity. The English Department had a more extensive history of student assessment focused on writing, and was more prone to resist a focus on external standardized measures. Both departments were more inclined to attend to assessments if they were more closely tied to their own curriculum or had consequences for students (such as the high school exit exam). They were more skeptical about the utility of evidence resulting from other external assessments. Pressures around external assessment had little impact on teachers' work in departments or in the classroom, but did erode the time and resources needed to continue with internally relevant assessments.

Site leadership over 20 years varied in its reported effect on department perspectives and practices, but did reflect a growing presence of district pressures. The district's pressures in turn placed new demands on site leaders in their work with subject departments. The study has far-reaching implications for the training of teachers, department heads, and administrators.

Dedicated

To

Nancy Schaeffer Moore and William C. Moore

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Acknowledgements

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Given the unprecedented demand for data-based decision making, school districts and school sites are facing tremendous pressure to use data to determine instructional practices that improve student achievement. The complexity of this policy issue is not clearly understood and encompasses more than examining test data. The idea that test data are the successful key to educations' current wave of reform appears simplistic. Publications and studies spanning over 100 years suggest data review and analysis are not simple processes, and they involve the ability of a number of system and non-system actors to make individual and institutional sense of these processes.

This current reform because of its subject-specific focus has a direct impact on subject teachers and departments. To inform the field and deconstruct the processes, I focus on the interaction between local interpretations of policy–district and principals–and subject area departments' and their smaller subgroups' interpretations or implementation (or not) of policy. In conducting this study, I hoped to better understand how subject area departments, site leaders and their site organizational structure assist in the interpretation of policies to improve student achievement. `

In order to provide a general framework for this current reform movement, I will present some background information that provides a brief history of educational assessment in the context of reform policies. I will then review the literature that informed this study.

BACKGROUND

As a result of policy shifts that have pressured educators to utilize scientific evidence to shape their practices, the number of studies on the use of evidence in education has increased tremendously (NCLB, 2001). This includes both external evidence from state standardized tests, district-wide tests; and internal evidence from teacher made tests, department designed interim assessments, formative assessments, authentic assessments, and informal assessments including student observations. The school district —once largely ignored in studies of school reform — has emerged from these studies as an important actor in shaping the emphasis that schools place on particular kinds of evidence (Coburn, Honig & Stein, 2009; Coburn & Talbert, 2006; Honig & Coburn 2005). Current research suggests there is incongruence between district and teachers in the area of examining data (Coburn & Talbert, 2006; Guskey, 2007; Olson, 2007; Young, 2005). In other words, what and how data are used by educators–both at the site and district level–appear dependent on varying norms and belief systems about data, education, and perceptions districts have of teachers and teachers have of districts. At the high school level, the perception and use of various kinds of evidence are further complicated by departmental organization and the fact that some subjects are the target of state testing and others are not.

Educational Assessments: Past and Current

The history of assessment for purposes of determining competence and evaluating learning is quite old. And there have always been questions of how well particular assessments do that. Controversy regarding the purpose and use of assessment has surrounded standardized testing

since its beginnings in the United States in 1840 (Resnick, 1982). In 1844, Samuel G. Howe used assessment as a tool to thwart the current controversy of the direction of education and support his "radical reform" of education (Tyack, 1974, p. 35).[1]

The sheer numbers of students attending schools in the late 1800's produced reformers working to perfect the system and forced a bureaucratic reorganization of education that replaced the decentralized village pattern of schooling (Tyack, 1974). In the early part of the 20th century the rapid growth of the population and the increase in enrollment of students who previously would not have attended school forced schools to rethink their purpose in educating students. The use of assessment to determine or affect students' life's chances also turns out to be a long one. For more than 160 years, educators have used assessments to determine their students' competencies (Resnick, 1982). Since students would eventually fill a wide variety of occupations, tests were designed to evaluate their capabilities (Tyack, 1974). Students were then assigned to a specific set of classes in what we refer to now as different tracks. This process of sorting using assessments still continues.

Assessments' roles have expanded with the use of assessment as a power broker and gatekeeper. The courses students currently take and their ability to receive a diploma are based on assessments. Assessments are used to determine the effectiveness of schools and districts. And the results of these assessments have the power to drive policy and close schools, displacing hundreds of students. Broadfoot and Black (2004) argue that the use of such a pervasive measure with far reaching consequences requires a scrutiny it has not received even among it own proponents.

Educators have always expressed caution regarding the use and impact of assessments. Odell (1928) in his book, *Traditional Examinations and New-Type Tests*, provided some criticism about testing. Five of the eight criticisms appear to be applicable today: (a) "the content covered by the examination questions does not agree with the recognized objectives of education" and encompasses factual memorization rather than. . . reasoning, and other higher thought processes" (p. 10); (b) examinations often become objectives in themselves and students believe that passing the exam is the chief purpose of the class instead of mastering the subject; (c) the time devoted to examinations can be more profitably used otherwise; (d) the results of instruction in the field of education are intangible and cannot be measured as production in industries can; (e) examinations are unnecessary.

In speaking of the history of educational research and subsequent decisions, Lagemann (2000) in her text An *Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research* presents the divergent views of Edward L. Thorndike and John Dewey. Dewey, "holistic, deeply social and pragmatic" (xi) and Thorndike who "favored precise, numerical measurements of anything and everything relevant to education" (59) both shared our current concern– how to face educational challenges. However, Lagemann's conclusion is that Thorndike "won" and the philosopher Dewey, "lost" . . . (xi). This early battle on the field of education determined the direction of assessment–measuring discrete pieces of knowledge rather than measuring "reasoning and other higher thought processes" (O'Dell, 1928. P. 10). Dewey's educational philosophy did raise its

---

[1] For a pointed perspective on the use of education as a policy tool, see Meyer, Tyack, Nagel, & Gordon (1979). Public education as nation-building in American: Enrollments and bureaucratization in the American states, 1870-1930. *American Journal of Sociology, 85* (3), 591-613, who posit the argument that the rapid spread of education from 1870-1930 was not due to the generally accepted need for educated workers but because of the agenda of policy makers and religious leaders.

head again in the 1920s and 1930s and again in the 1960s, but current accountability climate favors Thorndike' desire for precise measurements.

Over 80 years after Odell's observations and 100 years after the Dewey and Thorndike collision, these concerns about what methods to use to measure students' success still have not been adequately addressed. The current focus on measuring students with high-stakes accountability has opened a much clearer window into how policy makers and policy implementers interact or mediate around the issue of how to improve student achievement.

To inform the field and deconstruct the processes, I will focus on the interaction between policy makers and subject area departments. In particular, I hoped to better understand how subject area departments and teachers interpret policies of data-based decision making (and other policies) in order to improve student achievement.

Literature that Informed this Study

The knowledge base for this study came from studies focused on four areas: the significance of subject area departments in the work of high school teachers; educators' beliefs and roles regarding evidence; organizational effectiveness; and processes of policy interpretation and mediation. After key findings that shape this study are reviewed, I turn attention to unanswered questions about policy mediation that drive my study.

Subject Area Departments

Although most studies of policy implementation focus on the school as the unit of interest, and few studies have examined subject departments' mediation of policy (e.g. Aguirre 2002), there are pivotal studies that contribute to our understanding of subject departments as a significant feature of the high school workplace.

In a comparative study of three comprehensive high schools, Siskin (1994) revealed the multifaceted nature of academic departments in secondary schools. The project specifically focused on the perspectives, interchanges, and actions of teachers in what was called a 'bottom up' perspective. The main focus of Siskin's (1994) study was the department as a workplace for teachers. It involved teachers' individual histories, professional philosophies, and leadership roles of the department chairs or teachers. The first stage of this study was to determine whether departments were worth studying and whether department differences existed. Three aspects of departments emerged that influenced their interactions: their social norms; their political power, mainly manifested in their access to resources; and their specific subject matter. She determined that these subgroups or departments form not only the formal structure (visible in an organizational chart) but also the base of the informal organizational structure of secondary schools.

Siskin distinguished four types of departments representing four distinct kinds of social communities. The "bonded" department is socially cohesive with a high commitment toward the department goals. They are inclusive, leadership is collaborative and uses a consensus model. The "bundled" department has a low commitment to a department goal, there is high inclusion of their members, but the chair is the decision maker. Teachers are supportive of each other, but they reserve their individual autonomy. All department members are welcome at meetings and non-teacher gatherings on campus. All are included in decision making. "Fragmented" departments have low commitment, low inclusion and leadership is determined by default; it happens to be their "turn in the barrel" (Little, 1993, p.153). Teachers in a "split" department are divided into factions regarding goals and access to resources.. Leadership is in a power struggle and the chair does the decision making.

There are a number of studies on educational reform and its impact, but few that address a department's mediation of that reform. Aguirre (2002) investigated how teacher beliefs and department norms interact to influence discussions in a climate of reform. This case study analyzed teacher discussions-in two ways: individual teacher beliefs about math, teaching and learning, and department community; cultural norms and collegial relations that shaped their work.

Aguirre found that there is a connection between individual teachers and their beliefs and sociocultural context of their work and that of their department. If teachers are in departments with strong norms of professional autonomy, solutions that the departments devise will not be implemented if they get in the way in which individual teachers teach. However, in departments with collective commitments to communal actions, teachers can openly critique each others' suggestions and/or adopt some of their practices. When department norms are disturbed, individual beliefs trump department cultural norms. Instructional practice is shaped outside classroom context through collegial interactions or meetings. Teachers in department meetings on curriculum and instruction avoided conversations that might potentially introduce controversy or require disclosure of deeply held beliefs regarding math, teaching, and learning. In these meetings beliefs remained unchallenged.

Aguirre (2002) asserts that teacher beliefs–what they value and feel is important–come out clearly in their contributions to meetings. Teacher beliefs influence how individual teachers respond in instructional discussions. Categories of beliefs were tightly coupled with math reform. Teacher beliefs about the nature of math, student learning and teaching shape their classroom practice in powerful ways.

Educators' Beliefs about the Value and Uses of Evidence

There are differences in educators' beliefs regarding what is valid and valuable knowledge. These beliefs inform their decisions regarding the merit of particular kinds of evidence. Coburn and Talbert's (2006) study on how individuals in a school district conceive of evidence based practice insight into how a school district's use of evidence guides their educational improvement Individual educators perceived evidence quite differently. Educators' faith in research-based studies ranged from strong to skeptical (Coburn &Talbert, 2006). One hundred percent of top-level district administrators (superintendents and assistant superintendents) had strong faith in research; 50% of frontline administrators (central office personnel who work in direct contact with schools) had strong faith; principals had 33% and teachers 50%. Principals, however, expressed a high degree of skepticism in research (67%).

What these educators consider valid evidence also fluctuated with their position. Principals valued drawing on multiple measures: reliable psychometric measures, and alignments of measures with valued academic outcomes, but also measures that offered insight into thinking and reasoning that conveyed authenticity and captured teacher judgment (83%). Top level district administrators saw alignment with academic outcomes as critical (62.5%), frontline administrators also valued alignment with academic outcomes (55%) but had a close second choice of insight into thinking and reasoning (45%). Teachers, however, saw insight into thinking and reasoning as the most critical (61%) with alignments to valued academic outcomes running a distant second 39% (Coburn & Talbert, 2006). This study points to disparate beliefs of system actors regarding the value of data.

There are few studies that specifically address the mismatch between districts' and teachers' beliefs about evidence (Hamilton, 2005; Wirt & Kirst, 2005; Zeuli, 1994) and more specifically

data use and teachers' use of evidence and data (Young, 2006). Coburn and Talbert's (2006) study implies that the disparity in beliefs regarding data is one of the causes for the disconnect between district and teachers. Wirt and Kirst (2005) assert that external data is more valued by districts since districts typically believe external assessments provide a clearer snapshot of the district's progress. Teachers find those pictures inaccurate and inadequate. They, instead, rely on internal assessments believing that diagnostic internal assessments provide them with the data necessary to modify their instruction in response to individual student needs (Supovitz & Klein, 2003). This disconnect may hamper educators' attempts to navigate our current river of data driven decision-making.

Teachers' role in reform efforts: teacher's interpretation about the use of data

Unlike the limited number of studies on district administrators' beliefs, there have been myriad studies designed to determine teacher beliefs and practices (Coburn, 2004, 2005; Elmore, 1996; Pedulla, Abrams, Madaus, Russell, Ramos & Miao, 2003, Supovitz & Klein, 2003; Young, 2005; Zeuli, 1994). Research suggests that policymakers (Stein & Coburn, 2008) and districts posit beliefs that conflict with teachers' practice (Cohen & Hill, 2001). Research on assessment and data suggests that standards-base assessments have limited use for diagnostics (Kornhaber, 2004; National Research Council, 2001; O'Reilly & McNamara, 2007) especially for the individual learner (Rupp & Lesaux, 2006). This may explain why teachers pull from their pedagogical repertoire and incorporate what produces results or matches their preexisting beliefs or experiences about teaching (Elmore, 1996). According to Coburn (2005), the processes by which teachers gain information, theorized as sensemaking often determines whether these changes were implemented in their classrooms.

Despite efforts at the federal, state, and district level, few educational reforms are fully implemented in the classroom. The lack of uniform teacher compliance may be explained in part by their response to policy ideas. Coburn (2005) suggests teachers respond in five ways to their connections to policy ideas: (a) *rejection*, which is a complete denial of the importance of the policy, (b) *symbolic response*, which demonstrates a surface change but not a substantive one, (c) *parallel structure*, which creates a few approaches that will loosely correspond with the intent of the policy, (d) *assimilation*, which makes changes in the material or classroom organization that are in line with a teacher's preexisting beliefs about the policy, and (e) *accommodation*, which restructures the fundamental way in which a teacher organizes or delivers curriculum (Coburn, 2005). The last two assimilation and accommodation both demonstrate a change in classroom culture reflecting their belief in and true understanding of the policy.

What constitutes teachers' actual data use and how that use is implemented in the classroom has had scarce attention. Young (2006) studied teachers' data use of literacy in schools in two different districts to determine what constituted data. Some teachers expressed their data needs were in direct contrast to the accountability pressures of their principal. Young determined that agenda setting, establishing rationale and expectations for teachers to use with particular forms of data, the modeling of such use, and the time provided for teachers to learn these processes was critical to successful use of student data. Schools that did not have direct principal involvement in the data review and analysis process were not as successful. Both colleagues and administrative leaders influenced teachers' effective use of data. Interesting to note was the norming influence of grade-level teams in analyzing student work and assessment data (Young, 2006).

A more recent breakthrough in the coherence between teachers and assessment data involves the use of data to inform teachers about students' use of thinking in reading (Olson, 2007). *The*

Formative Assessment of Student Thinking in Reading (FAST-R), was developed by a local education foundation in Massachusetts to inform teachers what students were thinking while they were reading. The teachers then received a graph of their class that showed a pattern of student responses, student level data summaries and the students' race, gender, and special education status. These reports are received one to two weeks after the assessment and provide timely and insightful information about students' thinking and learning. The feedback not only provides teachers with rich information about individual students, but it also prompts ongoing conversations with their colleagues about student learning and how they can more effectively teach them.

The significance of formative assessments has been given more credibility through a text designed for educational leaders and teachers (Reeves, 2007). This text provides specific information for educators about the ways to use formative assessment so that it has a direct impact on student achievement. The significance of formative assessments has been noted by researchers (Black, 2000; Wiliam & Black, 1996) as well as the tensions that often exist between the perceived utility of formative and summative assessments (Wiliam & Black, 1996).

If professional development is tied to meaningful assessments, teachers will build their capacity to provide the coherence that systematic reform requires (Chrispeels, 1997). Since many reforms, including the newest assessment and accountability reform, require direct involvement of teachers, it would appear their support for the implementation of any reform would be necessary (Cuban, 1990). Cuban suggested that ". . . few reforms aimed at the classroom make it past the door permanently" (1990, p. 11). It would appear that teacher support is critical for this current reform involving assessment and accountability.

This suggests that the use of data for instruction requires multiple system actors to review and analyze data. Specific site level direction can be conducive to teachers' effective use of data (Young, 2006). Districts' ability to determine what data to use and how to use it involves more than looking at externally designed data to provide a direct and positive impact on student achievement. It also involves mediating various political pressures and understanding data limitations (Coburn, Honig, & Stein, 2009). This suggests that the full organizational system we call education may benefit from improved knowledge sharing and organizational learning.

Districts' roles in reform efforts: districts' decision making and implementation.

One cannot look at how teachers and sites use evidence or make decision without looking at the direction they receive from their district office and site leaders. The political pressure districts feel does differ from school site principals and teachers in intensity. A critical link in school's response to policy changes depends on how districts make decisions especially in response to reform pressures.

Policy makers and researchers' focus on districts and their practices have been relatively new (Coburn, Honig, & Stein, 2009; Coburn & Talbert, 2006; Corcoran, Fuhrman, & Belher, 2001; Honig, 2004; Rusch, 2005). However, Coburn and Talbert's (2006) recent study indicates that district administrators have differing beliefs about the purpose and efficacy of data than site level educators. They also found that the individual departments, units, in the same district office had differing beliefs about how data and evidence should be used (Coburn & Talbert, 2006).

Another recent study on the use of evidence by district offices highlights the disparate pressures district are under and provides insight into the complexity of the decision making process (Coburn, Honig, & Stein, 2009). Coburn and her colleagues' study investigated the decision making process of school districts by providing a comprehensive review of the literature. The premises that state policymakers make about the use of data support the policy

logic (Young, 2005) concept (see Table 1.1 for a more expanded yet still linear reform logic model). They assume that there is a linear pathway between data use and decisions that will assist in improving student achievement (Coburn, Honig, & Stein, 2009). The data instead is processed by districts according to their multiple functions including organizational and political contexts (Coburn, Honig, & Stein, 2009).

Coburn and her colleagues suggest that the nature of evidence presents challenges for district offices. Districts have a difficult time finding data and often lack the technological infrastructure to access it. When they do find it, it often contains contradictory findings. This is exacerbated by the rapid pace of district decisions and the relatively slow pace of research findings. In some districts the research office is a separate and often marginalized unit. Once districts find the evidence, there is a need to set up a process to interpret it and determine if it can be used in their district. Coburn and her colleagues suggest that this sensemaking or interpretation is filtered through their pre-existing understandings. Both group and individual interpretations of the evidence influenced decisions in districts. This process involved districts often discounting evidence that did not match their prior beliefs. Districts also simplified evidence to pieces of information that they understood discounting other pieces of information. Individuals in different sub-units in the same district office often had disparate understanding of what the evidence actually meant (Coburn, Honig, & Stein, 2009).

Political considerations also played a large part in how districts used evidence or determined not to use evidence in order to provide a politically expedient decision (Coburn, Honig, & Stein, 2009). Coburn and her colleagues determined that districts' use evidence fall into three basic roles: *symbolic*, *sanctioning*, and *no role*. The *symbolic* role justifies or creates legitimacy for district solutions that were already in place. The *sanctioning* role involves using data because it is approved by the state. The state requires districts to use researched based programs and materials. They then produce a list of these programs for school districts that they deem researched based. Only these programs will receive state monies. Districts then purchase programs and material based on these lists. District can also have *no role* for evidence. There were a number of district decisions without any reference to research or evidence. No role was played by evidence in over 50% of decisions in one of the studies (David, 1981 as cited in Coburn, Honig, & Stein, 2009).

A fairly large study on reform involving three school districts determined a number of flaws with their implementation of those reforms (Corcoran, Fuhrman & Belcher, 2001). The first issue revolved around the question, what part of the district is responsible for a reform? Is it the district, the professional development team or the school sites? Although education has seen more than 16 national reform efforts in the past decade (NCES, 2003), these districts did not have a process for filtering or implementing a reform (Corcoran, Fuhrman & Belcher, 2001). Ultimately the failure in all three districts to implement any meaningful reform was the continued disconnect between policy and practice and teachers and district office administrators (Corcoran, Fuhrman & Belcher, 2001).

Part of this failure may be attributed to the districts' approach to implementing a reform effort. The district invited reform agents, teachers and site leaders but then dictated parameters. The teachers in turn rejected the approach because it was too prescriptive. Some schools came on board because it was a mandate but gradually recused themselves from the reform. In all three districts, the districts' professional development was not aligned with their reform efforts (Corcoran, Fuhrman & Belcher, 2001). Much of the professional development offered by these

Table 1.1
Linear Reform Model

```
┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────┐
│                 │        │ Policy          │        │ Policy Implemented  │
│ Policy          │───────▶│ Communicated to │───────▶│ at School Sites     │
│ Development     │        │ School Districts │        │ often with outside  │
│                 │        │                 │        │ support:            │
└─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘        │ consultants, funding │
                                                       └─────────────────────┘
                                                                 │
                                                                 │
                                                                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐
│                         │        │ Policy in place and     │
│ The assumption is that  │        │ (sometimes) evaluated.  │
│ the policy continues to │◀───────│ Outside support can now │
│ function over time as   │        │ exit, mission           │
│ implemented.            │        │ accomplished.           │
└─────────────────────────┘        └─────────────────────────┘
```
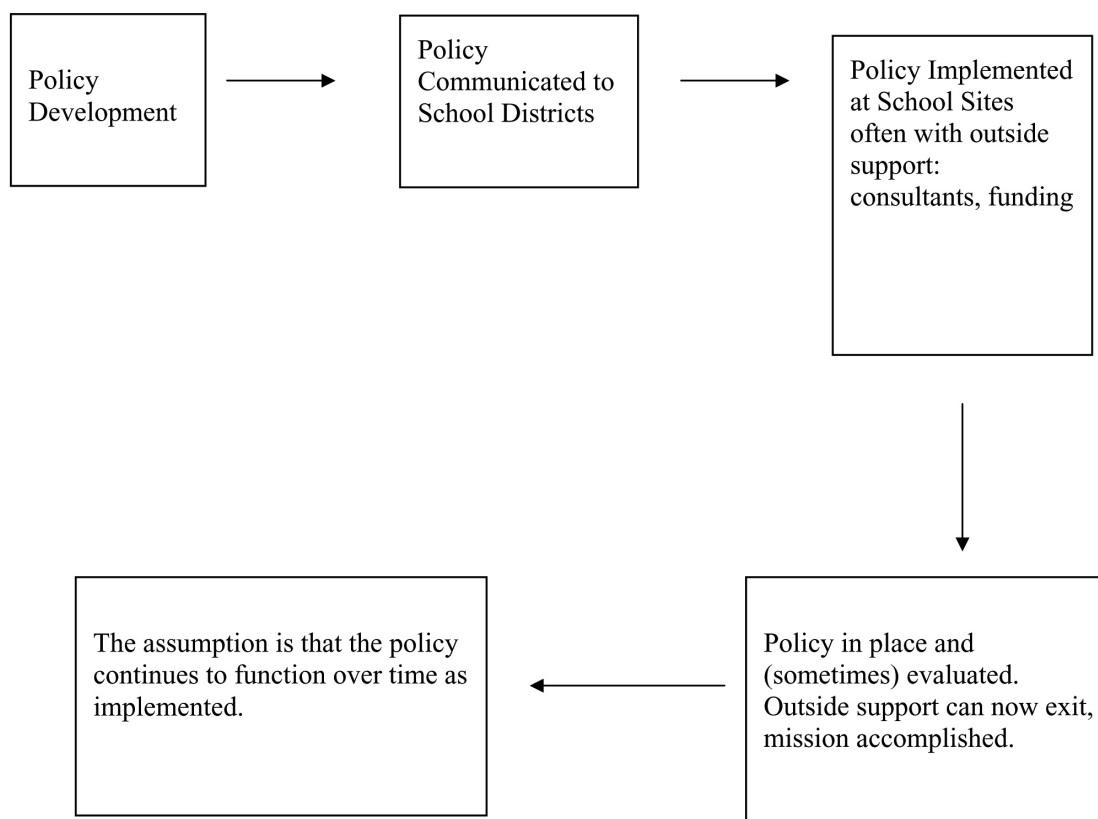
districts was developed by program generalists and did not provide specific assistance to teachers in their subject areas of need (K-6) or in their subject areas (7-12). It was also designed to please the teachers and not necessarily to meet their teaching and learning needs (Corcoran, Fuhrman & Belcher, 2001)

In studying the district role in interpreting state policy for school level educators, Togneri (2003) found that district actions could decrease policy fragmentation between state and school levels. State policies are also distorted when assimilated by school districts (Coburn, Honig, & Stein, 2009; Spillane, 2004), and inconsistently presented when that policy finally sifts down to the classroom (Chatterji, 2002). This implies that to be effective, interpretations of policies must be conveyed to school sites keeping the intent of the policy intact. The process of translating policy into practice, however, provides some room for interpretation. Districts could use their goals or visions to frame the policy and therefore buffer their district and provide a bridge for reconciling issues (Honig, 2004).

How districts communicate information to their sites is as important as what they communicate. Research suggests that districts do not effectively implement state and federal policies unless they have a coherent internally aligned philosophy or practice they espouse which is conveyed accurately and consistently to school sites (Spillane, 1998). This coherence must also stand the test of ever-changing policies. This process in which school and school districts work together to craft or negotiate the gap between external demands on district and school goals and strategies is critical to district and school coherence (Honig, 2004). To be effective, districts

must respond to the frequent changes in state policy and translate that into a clear message to school sites (Cohen, 1982). This requires effective communication from the state to districts to sites.

This communication is often in the form of professional development. Districts are responsible for the majority of professional development provided to their teachers (Little, 1989). Some have used data to determine the professional development needs of their teachers (Marsh, Pane & Hamilton, 2006). Despite this effort to use data, district sponsored professional development has often been criticized for fragmented decision making and for dealing with issues that are too great a distance from the classroom (Corcoran, Fuhrman & Belcher, 2001; Little, 1989; Rusch, 2005).

Their distance from the classroom may also contribute to the misaligned development of district sensemaking and formulation of their beliefs regarding effective teachers and classroom practices. Research suggests policy makers, including district personnel, have continued to focus on classroom practices that often differ from the beliefs and practices of teachers (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002).

Educational Organization and Its Effectiveness

The three previous sections outlined the differing beliefs of teachers, site principals, and districts specifically in regard to decision making and the use of evidence or data in that decision making. The educational system, at least at the secondary level, appears to be divided into three separate divisions that not only accommodates internal disagreements but also allows more significant disparate beliefs among themselves. This educational organization has its critics and its proponents.

One could argue that this structure or organization provides "checks and balances" in the system's decision making (O'Day, 2002; Perrow, 1999; Scott, 1995; Orton & Weick, 1990). Meyer and colleagues (1981) in their review of educational structure provide evidence that educational structures are amazingly resilient and functional. Education, originally designed to fit a production process, developed instead into an organization that brought it under a socially standardized set of goals that recognized the interplay between various individuals and groups. Educators manage huge amounts of money to support the operation of the school. Their levels of participation and constituent satisfaction are high. Schools throughout the world use similar organizational structures to help facilitate student learning (Meyer, Scott & Deal, 1981). Meyer and colleagues (1981) call this structure loose coupling, which they suggest recognizes the interplay between structural constraints and individual autonomy.

This loose coupling structure suggests that educational organizations use specific ways of communicating and approaching challenges. A number of researchers assert that there are basic structures of organizational relationships that support their different purposes (Meyer, Scott & Deal, 1981; Orton & Weick, 1990; Perrow, 1999). A decoupled organization, in efforts to regulate the flow of information and to buffer members from uncertainty, isolates various sections of the organization from each other (Elmore, 2002; Meyer, Scott & Deal, 1981). This organizational structure is used in industries that wish to seal off one section from another, for example the technical unit of their organization from the manufacturing unit (Meyer, Scott & Deal, 1981). Tightly coupled organizations closely integrate their actors and actions providing close interdependency with only one way and one direction the process can flow (Perrow, 1999). This is often used in high-risk operations like nuclear power plant production or the production in a chemical plant. Loosely coupled organizations use the middle ground between tightly

coupled and decoupled systems, offering insularity for parts of the system but also enabling the system to work together as a whole (Perrow, 1999).

Structures of education that impact organizational learning

Research suggests that an organization's structure may contribute to how and why organizations learn (O'Day, 2002; Perrow, 1999; Scott, 1995; Orton & Weick, 1990). Some researchers suggest that the inherent nature of educational organizations determine their success or failure (O'Day, 2002: Weick, 1976). There are three problems in educational organization that must be recognized in order to effectively address current accountability policies (O'Day, 2002). The first concern she notes is that the school unit, the main unit of intervention, is held accountable for the desired changes of the individual within that school. The flaw is that there is no direct connection or motivation for the individual to learn. Her second concern is the assumption educational organizations make –the external control of schools influences the internal operations of those schools. This approach states that external forces can directly effect change in the internal actions of a site–something that organizational theorists have questioned (Weick, 1976).

O'Day also sees the relationship between the external and internal units as problematic. O'Day's third flaw parallels Young's (2006) assertion of the policy logic in education: once educators have the data they will follow simple linear steps to improve the learning outcomes. O'Day (2002) asserts that what information is available, how the information is interpreted, and what learning takes place after that process is problematic. Due to the focus on accountability, the flood of data (Celio & Harvey, 2004) also exacerbates the issue (O'Day, 2002).

Weick's (1976) educational organization theory of loose coupling anticipates O'Day's (2002) statement that the external control of the schools does not have a direct influence on the internal operations of those schools. This supports the organizational construct of loose coupling in which events are responsive but retain elements of separateness and identity (Weick, 1976). There are many advantages of a loosely coupled organization including a system that preserves independent elements while retaining the ability to respond to elements outside their sphere. It provides the ability for local adaptation without affecting the whole system. These systems or subunits have a fair amount of local diversity that aid in adaptations in case there is a break down in parts of the system. It allows for more self-determination of the actors (Weick, 1976). The tightly coupled organizational response is often faster and more decisive and laudable than loosely coupled organizations. But the same tightly coupled quick responses are catastrophic when they are wrong (Perrow, 1999).

The danger of using a tightly coupled system in education is addressed by Goldspink (2007) in his theoretical piece based on his study on *Learning to Learn*, a seven-year reform project in Southern Australia. He examines the managerialism model and the public choice or agency theory that has support among educational reformers. Both of these tightly coupled models are applications of business management principals to education. These two theories assume that there is tight coupling between educational policy and how teachers operate (and think). These systems provide an output focus-what is measured which is based on student standardized assessments, instead of an outcome focus, which is what is important.

Goldspink argues that markets are not efficient at allocating resources for public and merit goods since the benefits of merit goods, such as education, benefits the whole community and not any one particular person who is receiving its services. In practice these models have not supported an improvement in education. It has proven quite difficult to evaluate an agencies' compliance. The energy required to monitor teachers and provide incentives increases the

transaction cost and offsets any potential efficiency gains anticipated from these changes. He contends that when the relationship between policy and outcomes is unclear, there is a separation of policy from delivery. This has a negative impact on trust, teacher commitment, and morale.

Education's loosely coupled system is also a complex system–comprised of a large number of agents in highly connected networks. In these systems micro-structuring processes are critical for self-organization. The interrelationship of these members of the system, as well as the nature of learning, depends on the trust in one's colleague, and the acceptance of risks and effective functioning of the educational system.

Educational structures and effective leadership.

Orton and Weick (1990) continue this discussion of the characteristics of loose coupling and include subunits, the smaller units of an organization. However, they assert that subunits are obscured in a loosely coupled system. This suggests that grade level teachers at the elementary level, departments at the secondary level or individual classrooms are effectively isolated from the administrative end of the district–principal, district directors, superintendents–and form a sort of semi-independent structure of self contained modules. Individual teachers are also perceived as loosely coupled with the administrative structure (Weick, 1976). Although the implication is that district administration cannot change classroom practice, there is evidence to suggest that they can still impact this loosely coupled structure in significant ways (Coburn, 2004).

Understanding education's organizational structure is an important construct for any district office personnel or administrator who wishes to impact organizational learning. Organizational structure, culture, and routines result from micro actions and conversations and contacts over time (Porac & Thomas, 1989). It is these micro movements that require subtle leadership (Orton & Weick, 1990). This is the type of leadership that is sensitive to the diverse cultural components of an educational subunit. Orton and Weick (1990) and Goldspink (2007) provide a number of suggestions for leaders in loosely coupled organizations. These leaders need to build on teachers' behaviors and focus only on those issues that the leader has control over. The educational leader would also need to provide teachers the freedom to take existing reform information and adapt it to local needs (Orton & Weick, 1990) including smaller units of the educational structure. This intracultural variation provides the strength to the cultural consensus and ultimately to the overall organizational structure (Porac & Thompson, 1989).

The belief that a tightly coupled system with all things aligned: the district message, the teachers' professional training and understanding, the policy message–would produce true systemic reform is questionable (Chatterji, 2002; Elmore, 2002; Goldspink, 2007). Others question using a tightly coupled system in an organization with so much interrelatedness and need for autonomy (Goldspink, 2007; Perrow, 1999; Meyer, Scott & Deal, 1981; Orton & Weick, 1999; Weick, 1976). One could argue that loose coupling provides the system with the capacity to challenge and motivate educators to reinvent structures and practices from within an organizational learning community (Goldspink, 2007; Meyer, Scott & Deal, 1981).

Organizational Learning in Subgroups

There are a few organizational studies that look at evidence use at the district level (Coburn & Talbert, 2006; Coburn, Honig & Stein, 2009); however, there is little involving the culture and belief systems of subgroups or subunits that comprise a school site structure, specifically the secondary academic departments. Studies on teacher interaction in subgroups and their degree of collegiality usually find that teachers feel more effective when they function outside any subunit or group (Fuller, Wood, Rapoport & Dornbusch, 1982).

Organizational theorists outside education have argued that subunits, like subject departments, can present a collective mind that ensures heedful interrelating designed to avoid errors and improve the reliability of the organization (Weick & Roberts, 1993). Although most of these studies use high reliability organizations–nuclear power plants, aircraft carriers– as a backdrop (Perrow, 1999; Weick & Roberts, 1993), Weick and Roberts' (1993) study suggests that effective organizations that produce results have shared values, strategic communication, mutual respect and coordination of action resulting in heedful interrelating "regardless of whether the environment is stable or turbulent" (p. 377). This concept of heedful interrelating involving collegial decision making has been noted in studies that focus on smaller units of an organization working in consort toward a common goal (Bigley & Roberts, 2001; Cook & Yanow, 1993; Stringfield & Teddlie, 1991; Weick & Roberts, 1993). There has been speculation about how educators can work to create and maintain a collegial, fluid, reliable system that results in student achievement (Stringfield, 1995).

How organizations experience learning was the focus of a study of world renowned flute making firms (Cook & Yanow, 1993). Cook and Yanow (1993) framed the process of organizational learning in terms of organizational culture. They determined that organizational structure, culture, and routines result from micro actions and conversations and contacts over time. Their study of three flute workshops over several years brought into sharp relief the difference between individual learning and organizational learning.

This case study is based on extensive interviews and observations with all key personnel and "shop floor" interviews with flute makers and apprentices at all levels. They assert that organizational learning is not best explained in terms of individual learning or an extension of individual learning. Rather, it is better explained as a function of organizational culture. It requires a culture that demonstrates interrelationships and interworking. This interaction is not always precise or measurable. The craftsmen they interviewed spoke of the "feel" of the flute. It "doesn't feel quite right" or "this bit doesn't look quite right" or the key is "cranky" (p. 380). The craftsman would then give it back to the prior worker until it "felt" right to both their satisfaction. This lack of precise vocabulary for such a high end product is counterintuitive. Their interactions, "cognitive interdependence" (Weick & Roberts, 1993, p. 358), around their agreed upon end result creates organizational learning.

Weick and Roberts (1993) have cited similar observations and responses in learning organizations based on a study conducted on aircraft carriers. This was drawn from field observations, note of air operations, and interviews aboard Nimitz class carriers over a five-year period. Researchers spent four days to three weeks aboard the carriers at any one time. Observations were made from different vantage points. The data was entered into computer systems and later compared across observers and across organizational members for clarity of meaning. They too mentioned the interrelated nature of the members of the organization and noted the members' response to questions about their decision-making. The pilots would ask, "Does it feel right?" or "Is the rhythm wrong?" (p.363). Their methods–intense observations and interviews–suggest that when researching the interrelationships of people in organizations, qualitative methods provided the data required to uncover micro organizational structures.

Both Cook and Yanow (1993) and Weick and Robert's (1993) studies look at a measurable product or a measurable result of group learning and interactions. If the flute is not fluidly operable and precisely tuned, it is not a quality product. If an aircraft carrier has loss of life or property, it has an immediate impact on the learning of their organization. The high levels of coordination needed with serious consequences for error are not conditions found in education.

Measuring the interactions with a less tangible product such as student achievement over time including a myriad of variables proves less definitive.

Networks: the interrelated nature of communication

There are studies on the interrelated nature of communication especially among smaller groups or groups that are not in close proximity to each other (Carmichael, McCormick, Procter, Honour, 2006; Coburn & Russell, 2008). These social networks are correlated with individual and organizational performance (Gloor, Paasivaara, Schoder & Willems, 2008) and are formed whenever people come in contact with each other.

The networks that teachers and site leaders form are significant factors influencing learning. Social networks can be measured by studying the depth of the interactions using conversation direction, proximity, and frequency (Carmichael, McCormick, Procter, Honour, 2006; Coburn & Russell, 2008). Gauging the strength of these networks or ties provides insight into how messages travel. Granovetter's (1973) analysis of social networks discusses strong and weak ties. Both have a significant impact on the way in which messages travel. The strength of a tie is probably linear and related to the amount of time people spent together, the emotional intensity of that relationship and the reciprocating services each person provides. Usually people with strong ties have congruent feelings or ideas. Those with strong ties also have a number of weaker ties to others.

These weak ties, which are more numerous than the strong ties, provide a venue for messages from and to more people over shorter pathways. This increases the number of people who receive the message. Thus weak ties play a more significant role in social cohesion than was previously believed often moving in circles different that the original strong ties. Weak ties allow a message to travel among personal contacts to convey messages that are more readily accepted. It also tends to link members of different small groups.

Granovetter posits that trust in a given leader is often reliant on the weak ties, a person can from their own information or understanding indicate that the leader is indeed trustworthy. The power of weak ties can be significant. Both strong and weak ties make up what we call the social networks of both micro and macro linkages and can have a significant impact on the exchange of information and learning in an organization.

Needed Research: High Schools, Sub Groups and Their Impact on Reform.

The increased focus on assessment and evidence-based decision making, as measured by student achievement in particular subject areas demonstrates a shift in particular uses of evidence. The high school, with its subject specialization organized through academic departments, is a likely home for this work. This would suggest that a study of subject departments and their mediation of reform policies could provide significant information to inform current practices.

There is a reasonably large body of work on high schools, mostly in the last couple of decades (Angus & Mirel, 1999; Carnoy, Elmore, & Siskin, 2003; Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995; McLaughlin, Talbert, & Bascia, 1990; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985; Siskin, 1991, 1994; Siskin & Little, 1995; Sizer, 1992; Stodolsky, 1993). There is a smaller body of work on academic departments (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995; McLaughlin, Talbert & Bascia, 1990; Siskin, 1991, 1994; Siskin & Little, 1995) and some small amount attends to how departments focus on student success (Gutierrez, 1996). There is also a study that investigates teachers' professional autonomy norms, collegial norms, pedagogical norms and the interactions of these norms within subject departments (Aguirre, 2002). There are, however, few studies that focus on how secondary subject matter departments' process and use student assessment data.

Despite the panoply of research in education, we still know very little about how teachers look at and discuss evidence and its implications in their educational subgroups. There has been work that investigates the mediation of educational policy by individual teachers (Cohen, 1990; Coburn, 2004, 2006), but very little has been studied in the way of teacher subgroups or sub-structures (Imants, Sleegers, & Witziers, 2001). Studies have investigated the subculture of subject area departments (Aguirre, 2002; Ball & Bowe, 1992; Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995: Guitierrez, 1996; Hargreaves & Macmillan, 1995; Hill, 1995; Horn, 2005; Imants, Sleeger, & Witziers, 2001; Little, 1995, 2003; Siskin, 1991, 1994) with some interesting results indicating norms and practice differ among departments.

A few studies of secondary sites investigated the impact on subject departments when the school structure was reorganized to include sub-cultures in addition to or other than subject area departments (Hargreaves & Macmillan, 1995; Imants, Sleeger, & Witziers, 2001; Little, 1995). Some looked at high school departments and their ability to learn collectively (Aguirre, 2002; Little, 2003). There is also evidence that there are other ways in which teachers collectively interact that impact their effectiveness in the classroom (Gutierrez, 1996; Little, 2003).

There are some studies that have investigated specific aspects of departments and their impact on reform (Aguirre, 2002; Ball & Bowe, 1992; Grossman & Stodolsky, 1994; Stodolsky & Grossman, 2000). Aguirre (2002) provides a window into how teacher beliefs and department norms interact to influence discussions on curriculum and learning in a climate of reform. Few investigate the ways in which subject matter departments mediate educational policy (Aguirre, 2002; Ball & Bowe, 1992).

There are those who suggest that professional communities, the most prevalent of which are subject departments, are the ultimate makers of educational policy; they mediate the broader political environment and determine for themselves what they will implement (Ball & Bowe, 1992; McLaughlin & Mitra, 2001). There are, however, no studies that focus broadly on how departments gauge student learning or their use of student evidence, specifically assessments, to inform instruction. None look at how a department uses student evidence to assist them in mediating a federal and state policy.

One study does look at the department leadership, the department head, in terms of a department's ability to implement reforms (Ball & Bowe, 1992). Other subject department studies do not look at the impact of site leadership on departments' response to policy. This suggests an aspect of department mediation of policy that has been overlooked.

Ball and Bowe (1992) posit four basic concepts that allow us to understand the process of change (or lack of change) in a subject department: *capacity*, *contingency*, *commitment*, and *history* (Figure 1.2). Capacity is the experience and skills of members of the departments, commitment the existence of firmly-held and well entrenched subject or pedagogical paradigms within a department (or school). History includes the history of development and change in a department. A history of curriculum change is associated with high levels of commitment and lead to a greater willingness to interpret text in light of previous practice, which leads to reconciliation and mutation of a reform. Contingency refers to factors that enhance or inhibit the possibilities of change - staffing, students, and facilities (Figure 1.2).

The observations of department meetings noted that the more vague the policy the wider the interpretation of that policy by subject departments. The observations of departments also indicated that four basic concepts–capacity, contingency, commitment, history–provide a clearer

Figure 1.2
The Mediation of Policy in Subject Departments (adapted Ball & Bowe, 1992).

The policy process is a dialectical process in which legislation is loosely coupled with teacher implementation.

Pattern of Problem and Response to Policy

Dependent on Interactions Among Four Basic Aspects of a Subject Department

Correlations

Low **capacity**, low **commitment**, no **history** of innovation= high degree of reliance on policy texts, external direction/advice, verging on panic leading to uncertainty, confusion and a sense of threat.

Low Capacity

No Commitment

No History

Capacity the experience and skills of members of the departments

Commitment the existence of firmly-held and well entrenched subject or pedagogical paradigms within a department (or school).

History-the history of development and change. A history of curriculum change is associated with high levels of commitment. And lead to a greater willingness to interpret text in light of previous practice which lead to reconciliation, mutation.

Contingency-factors that enhance or inhibit the possibilities of change-staffing, students and facilities

Conclusion

Institutional structures, cultures, histories and environment may produce very different responses to policy texts.

understanding of how departments make decisions around the area of policies. The final results demonstrate "internal slippage" that occurs when policy moves from one arena (policy makers) to another (subject departments).

A prevailing norm of collegiality is crucial for instructional improvement (Ball & Bowe, 1992; Little, 1982). This suggests that the strength and importance of department collegiality and collaboration impacts student achievement (Boaler & Staples, 2008).

Tension and Policy Mediation

The interplay between social competence and personal and professional experience often produces a tension that can improve learning (Wenger, 2000). It has been noted that "irredeemable tensions" are at the heart of policy research (Ball, 1987, p. 271) and can affect organizational behavior (Olsen & Sexton, 2009). This same tension can also stymie efforts at any long lasting reform (Little & Bartlett, 2002). The latest accountability policy provides an added tension–the perceived discrepancy between current accountability measures and actual measures. Do our current accountability measures actually measure an improved, well-educated student?

Mintrop and Trujillo's (2007) study looked closely at this practical application for educators. They wanted to know if the ". . .performance indicators and practitioner experience of quality and effectiveness speak to the same reality. . ." (p. 320). They set out to find what characteristics with practical relevance determine school improvement over time. Specifically, did California State's API actually assist educators in an understanding of how schools improve. Unique to this study was the use of other educational quality measures not typically used by districts or states to determine student achievement. They measured their separately collected data against other portions of the data to assess its reliability. They assessed the differences between the low and high groups of students based on teacher survey responses, student survey responses, classroom observations, and student writing samples to see if there was a clear correlation, and found no consistent statistically significant correlations of these multiple measures with a school's API.

They did note that schools generally had a combination of two characteristics rated either high or low: educational quality and organizational effectiveness. If the organizational effectiveness was low, the API was usually low as well. If it was high, the reverse was generally true. There was also a correlation between schools whose faculty did not embrace the accountability system and their lower API scores. Schools that were high in educational quality measures did not necessarily have high API scores. Two of the three schools with leaders that more strongly supported current accountability measures improved. However, due to the transient nature of school leadership at many of the schools in the study as well as the irregular performance of those schools, it was difficult to find correlations between other educational quality measures and a school's API scores.

The lack of a systematic connection between educational quality measures and API scores suggests that the API scores do not have practical relevance in measuring a school's achievement. The limitation of the current accountability system is that it rewards schools that work on intensive transmission of state assessed knowledge. Other measures of educational quality are not addressed by the state's accountability system. The Mintrop and Trujillo (2007) study also provided a demonstration of the tensions and conflicts surrounding the accountability reform and schools' efforts to mediate that policy.

There is a clear picture of the tensions around the "policy cycle" that we can call reiterative reforms. The newest structure and attainment tasks for students written into the United Kingdom's National Curriculum policy was the focus of Ball and Bowe's (1992) study. This is one of the few studies designed to investigate secondary department's mediation of policy. The researchers contend that because, in part, teachers, districts (Local Educational Authorities), and education lobbies were not involved in formulating this policy, the subject departments' and those closest to the classrooms had to mediate to make sense of the policy. The end result was a

hybrid form of the policy. The importance of collegiality and attributes needed in departments for the recreation of policy on context of practice is also discussed.

Unanswered Questions About Policy Mediation

Given the relatively short life of any reform directed at secondary education, it is clear that we have to address this issue differently (Little & Bartlett, 2002). There are myriad unanswered questions around this topic of policy mediation. What is the relationship between individual learning and meditation of policy (Cohen & Hill, 1998, 2001) and group mediation of policy (Ball & Bowe, 1992; Coburn, 2006; Cook & Yanow, 1993; Weick & Roberts, 1993)? How do subject area departments respond to accountability policies? Do these policies actually produce improved teaching and improved student achievement in that subject area? Do the assessments designed to measure improved student achievement accurately measure that (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2007)? Do these same measures provide teachers with the information they need to improve teaching instruction? What measures provide an understanding of student achievement or lack of achievement? What is the range of devices teachers in a subject area use to get at this student understanding? How much of this acquired repertoire that uncovers the processes students' use to learn is discovered by individuals and how much through collaborative organizational processes?

The process of an individual or an organization constructing a perspective involves the consideration of how individuals' process and groups or organizations process information as well as their discussions and interactions around that information. I hope that what comes out of those recursive internal and external conversations will provide some answers to the following questions: To what extent and in what ways are departments positioned to respond to reform demands? What is the work that departments do in responding to and making sense of assessments and accountability policies or expectations? To what extent do site leaders assist or hinder teachers' abilities to respond to reforms?

DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

Chapter 1: Introduction and Conceptual Framework

The beginning of this chapter orients the reader to my research and research questions. It reflects on lessons learned from the literature to inform my study. It calls into question linear reform models, as did Young (2005). The typical linear reform model as noted by numerous studies does not allow for the actual complexity of reforms. The chapter examines the concept of a linear reform model and suggests that there may be a more accurate model.

The literature reviewed includes the mediation of educational policy by individual teachers and teacher subgroups or substructures. One study in particular addresses the concept of practical relevance in collecting and analyzing student evidence. It finally touches on the impact of organizational cultures and sense of community on its members.

Chapter 2: Research Design and Analytical Methods

In this chapter, I explain my initial goals, describe the literature that helped formulate my research design, the research design and framework that I will use to explore this topic.

Chapter 3: History and Culture: MHS English and Social Studies Departments

In this chapter, I tell the story of the inception and development of Madrone High School, a school in the central valley in California. The chapter explores the initial excitement of a school's restructuring focus and its more recent struggles with the accountability movement.

The chapter explores the English and social science department cultures and their work together as a subject area culture as well as their work in subgroup*s* groups. Using guidelines from Carmichael, McCormick, Proctor and Honour (2006) and Granovetter (1973), I mapped teachers' networks and hubs working to discover how and when they connect in the areas of teaching and learning.

Chapter 4: The Usefulness of Evidence and the Collision of Internal and External Accountability

The chapter investigates the collision of external and internal accountability standards on department and teachers' pedagogical decisions. It looks at external measures including the California High School Exit Exam and the California Standards Test. There is a discussion of the district's external accountability measures used at Madrone High School. It also compares these external measures to the internal measures departments use to determine whether students are learning effectively.

What teachers value and why they value their own assignments or assessments provide a window into their responses to reform pressures. Some teachers also use these assessments to determine their efficacy as a teacher.

Chapter 5: The Role of School Leadership in Reform Efforts

This chapter looks at three reform movements, restructuring, standardization, and accountability, and the impact on this school. It looks back to the restructuring reform movement and its implementation, which was driven by the principal who hired teachers to support this vision. It moves through to the school's evolution and into the accountability movement. The continuous thread woven into this chapter suggests the impact of the principals on the individual teachers' and departments' ability to mediate policy. This impact appears more formidable than the impact of the department culture on individual teachers' response to reform movements.

It follows up with a discussion on the impact of history, tradition, and changes in leadership and demographics on student achievement. It ends with a discussion of the ability of principals to mediate reform and translate it into a format that makes it relevant to teachers and the classroom.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the findings including the realization that the impact of principals and other site educational leaders cannot be underestimated. I present both practical and theoretical results of my study as well as the implications of this study on reform and change at secondary school sites.

CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH DESIGN AND ANALYTICAL METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the conceptual framework derived from the literature review summarized in Chapter 1, introduces the research design, and presents details of the research site, data collection methods, and approach to data analysis.

Concepts derived from the literature that inform my design

I use Siskin's (1994) distinctions among bonded, bundled, fragmented, and split departments to characterize the culture of the focal departments. Ball & Bowe's (1992) dimensions (history, commitment, capacity, contingency) assisted me in gauging how departments are positioned to interpret and respond to external policy changes (Figure 1.2). I focus on the distinction between internal and external accountability found in Carnoy, Elmore, & Siskin's (2003) text to examine the degree to which past department assessment practice is congruent with or at odds with the new expectations. Coburn's (2004) work with individual teachers and their response to reform pressures also informed the ways in which I characterize teacher and department response to reforms. Aguirre's (2002) investigation regarding how teacher beliefs and department norms interact to influence discussions in a climate of reform also informed my design. Finally, I examine departmental responses to see if they conform to the apparent "linear" policy logic discussed in various pieces of literature including Young (2006).

My plan capitalized on the accountability reform movement as an opportunity to examine the extent to which two different subject area departments and site leadership were positioned to respond to external reform demands. I also examined more specifically in what ways they used evidence in the course of their work. The study was also designed to investigate a theoretical linear reform model (Figure 2.1), which indicates that policies move from inception to the classroom in a linear fashion. This required that I conduct individual teacher interviews, department and grade level team observations, and review and analysis of documents and student data. Multiple sources of data and different units of analysis provided the triangulation useful to generalize from these two cases.

RESEARCH DESIGN

I used a multi-level qualitative, case study design to compare the perceptions and practices of evidence use and policy mediation in two departments in a single comprehensive high school. The comparative case study method allowed me to determine the extent to which two different subject departments with differing attachments to accountability, at the same school site take policy and use it in their own practice. It also illuminated the significance of the department's original formation, the department development over time and the significance of support for the departments' reform efforts.

The comparative case study approach also afforded an opportunity for analysis at multiple levels. First my research questions required a design that used different units of analysis. One unit was the individual teacher, another the department as an organizational sub-unit, and the third the school as an outside influences on department action or inaction. Since English and social science have different accountability pressures, I predicted contrasting results.

Figure 2.1
Linear Reform Model

| Policy Development | → | Policy Communicated to School Districts | → | Policy Implemented at School Sites often with outside support: consultants, funding |

| The assumption is that the policy continues to function over time as implemented. | ← | Policy in place and (sometimes) evaluated. Outside support can now exit, mission accomplished. |
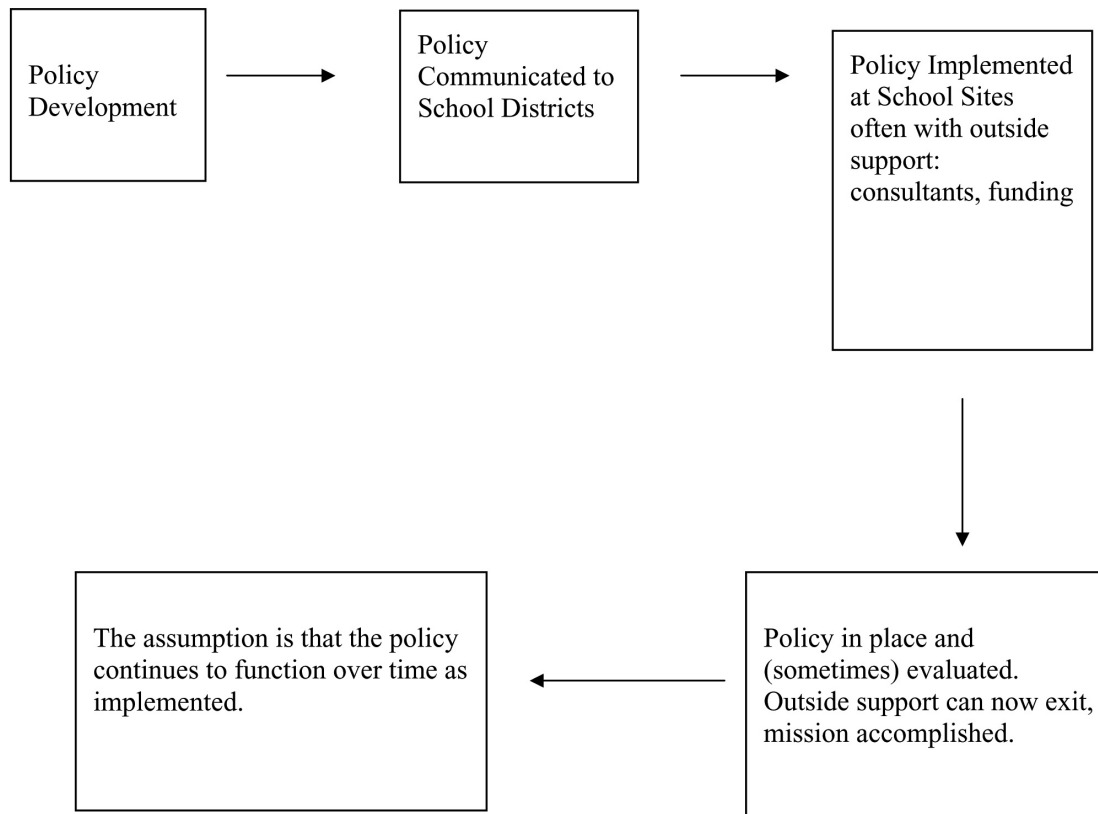
The research was conducted as a participant observation study. Throughout the study, I also occupied a participant role as a vice principal in the school with responsibilities for department supervision and teacher evaluation, facilitation of various site committees, and ensuring effective site communication and operation. My role as a vice principal in the school enabled me to observe classrooms, be involved in hallway conversations, and participate in various *ad hoc* meetings as the need arose. Although this was not an ethnography, I used ethnographic methods that allowed me to observe shared patterns of behavior, teacher beliefs and language use (Creswell, 2007). This provided me with a greater understanding of the complexity of how messages and beliefs get transmitted at a school site and how those beliefs shape teachers' perspectives and ultimately the extent of their focus on accountability guidelines. I worked to build an in depth picture of the departments and in doing so, discovered that there was another critical factor–if, how, and/or when reform efforts were folded into classroom practice.

Although the participant-observer role enabled me to take advantage of an insider's knowledge and access, it also presented me with dilemmas. Of course, insiders may be blinded to dynamics that outsiders may perceive. Insiders also occupy particular social positions that affect access to information and may also raise ethical issues. As an administrator, for example, I had evaluation responsibilities for a subset of teachers; to ensure that no one was coerced to participate in the study, I eliminated those studies from the data collection plan.

Chapter Overview

The following section provides information that includes the description of the school site, background of the school and the data collection procedures, and the methods used to analyze this data. In the first sections, I provide the rationale for the site selection and the background involving the school's inception and subsequent opening. Next I describe the collection of data and its analysis. And finally I present limitations and extensions of this research design.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Site and Participant Selection

I chose Madrone High School because it is a site that began a number of years ahead of the wider spread implementation of the restructuring reform movement; yet it opened with many of the concepts of restructuring. I also wanted to observe the interactions in specific subject departments. This meant ensuring the site had teachers who had a history of working together for an extended period of time. It also meant finding a site that was not in receivership and a district whose reform message was clearly given to sites.

To gain specific knowledge of how departments were positioned to do the work that they do, I chose to study two departments in one high school. The departments were unique in that they both faced three reform movements. The first movement, high school restructuring, they faced together as a "division." They worked in consort using an interdisciplinary focus and intense collaborative work. During to the second reform, standards reform, and prior to the third reform, high-stakes accountability, they had, over time, moved into two separate departments now representing English and social science. At the high school level the high-stakes accountability movement initially required three years of testing in both English and math. Only later was social science added as a tested subject. These two departments provided an opportunity to observe the variable testing pressures of subject departments.

I had also done some previous work at the site and knew its teachers were quite comfortable with researchers and their methods. My research required intensive and frequent observations and my recent promotion as a vice principal to Madrone High School enabled me to do that type of fieldwork. Because of my supervisory position, I did not interview any teachers who were to be evaluated that year. This provided me with five English teachers (although one took early retirement part way through the year) and five social science teachers that fit the criteria (Table 2.1) Until the end of the evaluation cycle, I did not interview any teachers new to the school. At that time I interviewed two new teachers: one from English and one from social science.

Table 2.1

Madrone High School English and Social Science Department Interviewees

Teachers Interviewed	Subject	Years Teaching	Age	Ethnicity (self-designated)
JESSICA	English	25	52	Caucasian
AMY	English	6	37	white
SARA (2nd semester)	English	1	24	white
GARY	English	14	39	Caucasian
BRETT	English	27	55	
ALBERT (Ist Semester)	English	32	63	White
HARVEY	Soc. Sci.	23	57	WASP or

				Caucasian
VICTOR (2ⁿᵈ semester)	Soc. Sci.	3	29	Latino/Hispanic
PATRICK	Soc. Sci.	10	40	Hispanic
MARISSA	Soc. Sci.	6	34	Caucasian
SHAWN	Soc. Sci.	19	43	White
LARRY	Soc. Sci.	13	37	Mexican

Madrone High School (MHS) Background

Within the Central Valley District, the community of Madrone, located in northern California, consists of light industrial as well as single and multiple family housing. The median household income for the area is $44,794, below the county's median of $49,877. Families in the community are diverse socio-economically, ethnically and linguistically. A large immigrant population contributes to the culture of the Madrone area.

Madrone High School (MHS) opened in 1989 and was the district's third comprehensive high school. Originally built for 1,800 students, the campus grew to 2,560 in 1996-97 before returning to the present 1,800 student number. In 2005, the school was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as one of the few high schools that continually closed the achievement gap. Currently, their API scores have been improving however, the site scores and comparison to similar schools fluctuate.

Madrone High School has also undergone changes in its ethnic and cultural student makeup. The two fastest growing ethnic groups of recent years have been Hispanic and African American while the White student group has decreased 24 percent since 1993. With 26 different languages currently spoken on Madrone's campus, the English Learner population is large and diverse. After peaking at 786 students or 33.4% of the population, the overall percent of Madrone's English Learners has been declining over the past five years. Traditionally about one third of the students have been English Learners. That percentage changed to 25 percent in 2004 through 2006 but has risen to 26 percent in the current school year.

Reform Context

The school began 20 years ago with an interdisciplinary focus, providing smaller learning communities for students, and the idea that subject area departments should be combined into divisions that focus on an interdisciplinary approach to teaching. These divisions, in particular the Cultures and Literature division, were expected to work together designing common curriculum and reinforcing writing and critical thinking skills. This restructuring approach was supported through legislation designed to provide grants for schools that implemented these ideas. Almost ten years later, the standards reform arrived with the expectation that all teachers used California subject standards to guide their teaching.

Although Madrone was already struggling with successful implementation of some of their original concepts, this accountability reform naturally focused on specific subject areas and their specific standards. The division concept, which was already floundering due to complications with the master schedule, now fell into disuse.

DATA COLLECTION

Because this qualitative study will address the interpretation of policy by subject area department faculty, I wanted to observe department and grade level team meetings and interview teachers in two departments in the same high school. This high school was suitable for such a study because for five years (2001-2006), the emphasis in departments has been the use of

external assessment data to make classroom decisions. To get two different perspectives, I chose the English department, which has the California Standards Test (CST) as one legislated requirement and the California High School Exit Exam (CASHEE) as another. The other department, social science, has requirements for administering two CST exams–Word History (10th grade) and United States History (11th grade), but no legislated testing for their 9th grade course, Geography, or for their 12th grade courses, Economics and Government. It also does not have the added pressure of being a subject assessed on the CASHEE.

The data for this study were collected over a period of 16 months. I spent five days a week at the school site interviewing teachers (Appendix A & B), observing both formal and informal conversations, and attending department and grade level team meetings for both departments. Part of my duties included having goals meetings twice a year with members of both departments. I also met weekly with the department chairs of both English and social science (Table 2.2, Appendix C).

Table 2.2
Summary of Subject Department and Teacher Leaders Data Sources

Department	Department Meetings	Team Meetings	Interviews	One on One Meetings with Teachers
English (number)	6 (9 hours) 1 Exp. Grant Meeting (1.5 hours)	4 - 9th grade 3 - 10th grade 4 - 11th grade 1- 12th grade	10 Phase I 5.0 Phase II 8.5	38
English (time)	10.5 hours	11.5 hours	13.5 hours	28.5 hours
Total English	64 hours			
Social Science (number)	3 (5.25 hours) 1 HLC Meeting (1.5 hours)	2 - 9th grade 2 - 10th grade 1 - 11th grade 2 - 12th grade	11 Phase I 6.2 Phase II 9.2	25
Social Science (time)	6.75 hours	5.25 hours	15.4 hours	18.75 hours
Total Social Science	46.15 hours			
Leadership Interviews	Interviewed eight teachers and teacher leaders who had been with the school 19 or 20 years. 10.5 hours			
Interview and informal conversation with principals	Current principal 2.5 hours First principal 0.5 hours =3.0 hours			
Total	123.65 hours			

Documents	• Course syllabi
	• Course schedule
	• Master schedule
	• WASC Report
	• Policy documents
	• Professional Learning Communities Agendas
	• Meeting Agendas
	• English and social science textbooks and ancillary materials
	• Grade level student work
	• Teacher handouts, power points

The study took on an exploratory sequential design (Phase I, August 2008- October 2008 and Phase II, January 2009-April 2009) to examine the processes by which subject area departments construct their knowledge about student understanding and the impact of accountability policy on that sensemaking. The two-phase approach was designed to ascertain if teacher or department proximity to the external assessment had an impact on their individual or department focus or behavior. The assumption was that the value they placed on the state's external accountability system would determine their focus and behavior. For example, if the state's assessment was valued, then the closer the site got to the external assessment the more they would focus on external rather than internal assessments. If it were highly valued, there would be constant pressure throughout the year. If it were not valued, there would be no discernable pressure throughout the year.

These two phases were divided into Phase I, August 2008-October 2008 and Phase II January 2009-April 2009. The school-wide California Standards Test occurred in the last week in April. Subsequent interviews and informal conversations designed to clarify collected data or for follow up questions occurred from May 2009-October 2009.

Tracking conversations about evidence use and responses to policy entailed observing two different department meetings, grade level team meetings, as well as the school site leadership team, the Steering Team. These meetings are a part of a teacher's normal work life and as such seem to be the natural home for discussions of practice. This would then afford an opportunity to hear in a number of venues how teachers addressed or did not address the pressures from the accountability reform movement.

Sources of data such as one-on-one semi-structured interviews with teachers (12 teachers, Phase I and II), subject department chairs (2 department chairs, Phase I and II), and department (9 total, Phase I and II) and grade-level team observations8 teams, 18 observations, Phase I and II), observations (27 total, Phase I and II), informal check in meetings with the department chairs (16 total, Phase I and II), field notes, memos, and document analysis were collected in two parts. Phase I occurred from August 2008-January 2009. The data analysis for Phase I informed the direction of the questions and focus of the observations for Phase II (from January 2009-April 2009). Follow up questions in casual interviewing and informal conversations rounded out this view of department mediation of accountability policy. With permission from the participants, all conversations were audio taped.

DATA ANALYSIS

All interviews, team and department meetings were audio recorded to produce verbatim transcripts. I read every transcript to get a whole sense of the transcript. I used open coding, to build rather than test for a theory, to look for themes as they emerged and an iterative process

that included axial and selective coding. Memos–code notes, theoretical notes, operations notes, analytic notes–were a continual check to keep the research grounded and to maintain my awareness.

The texts from department meetings were examined for ways in which the participants engage in organizational sensemaking (Weick, 1995). Again pattern matching (Yin, 2003) was used to determine what relationships, if any, existed between concepts/themes and observations. This study was bounded (Phase I and Phase II) to determine if the distance from the actual state assessment impacted departments' mediation of policy.

For the discussions on department culture, I used systematic comparisons to three pieces of literature that have similar properties and dimensions to my proposed study: Ball & Bowe, 1992, Aguirre, 2002 , and Coburn, 2004. I examined the text from department meetings for ways in which the participants engage in organizational sensemaking (Weick, 1995). Again pattern matching (Yin, 2003) was used to determine what relationships, if any, existed between concepts/themes and observations. For the discussion on social interactions and networks, I relied on Carmichael, Fox, McCormick, Proctera and Honour, 2006 and Granovetter, 1973 to lend a structured approach to the analysis of networks and social interactions within departments and outside department cultures.

Generalizability, Reliability, and Validity

Qualitative research has been criticized for its inadequate ability to allow its findings to be generalizable or having "predictive ability" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.267). However, given the same constructs and following the same rules for data gathering and analysis, and a similar set of conditions, other researchers should be able to replicate the same or similar theoretical explanation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Qualitative research gains generalizability in part by identifying theoretical concepts and relationships that prove effective in explaining interactions across a range of contexts. In this case, I
use concepts derived from Ball & Bowe, 1992, Aguirre, 2002, and Coburn, 2004, in analyzing the empirical results of this case study (Yin, 2003).

To ensure the findings demonstrate internal validity (Yin, 2003), I triangulated data from four sources: interviews, observations, informal discussions, and artifact analysis. In order to increase reliability, I established and maintained a chain of evidence (Yin, 2003) from the interview protocol to the interview to memo to data input to data analysis. This will allow any researchers to follow my data through to my findings. The reliability of this case study is provided by the case study protocols and the case study database (Yin 2003). This will allow the data collection and data analysis to be repeated with similar results.

Limitations and Extensions

I am aware that the qualitative approach in this study and the focus on two departments at the same school site makes generalizability of my results quite difficult. Examining two departments to determine how reform policies are implemented is quite ambitious. My work functions more to focus the direction of research on the interactions and interworking of a school site, so that educational leaders, policy makers, and teachers have another lens to view how and why policies do or do not impact classrooms.

My approach merges a number of techniques (Ball & Bowe, 1992; Coburn, 2004; Cook & Yanow, 1993; Mintrop & Trujillo, 2007; Siskin, 1994; Weick, 1995) that were used in similar more compartmentalized studies and applies those techniques to the specifics of this site.

My unique position as an administrator at the site provided numerous opportunities to observe departments, department members, *ad hoc* groups, and networking unimpeded by time

constraints. This provided a richness of data that would not have been possible if I were an outside researcher. However, the potential for my own position to bring my biases to the study is also a constraint. This did provide an opportunity for me to reflect on my own position, to note my impact on the participants, and see how my own observations differed from the participants I was observing.

Qualitative case studies can be generalized to assist in forming theories but cannot be applied to specific populations (Yin, 2003). My methods that incorporate individual and group mediation of accountability policies as well as tracking the policy message through networks and organizational structures have not been used in previous educational studies. Given our federal and state proclivity toward designing educational policy, examining if, how, and to what extent that policy is implemented may illuminate significant obstacles to implementation. These obstacles must be discerned so that policy makers can perceive differences in the meaning, consequences and utility of reform.

CHAPTER 3
MHS ENGLISH AND SOCIAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENTS:
HISTORY AND CULTURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to portray the history and culture of the two focal departments, situate that portrait in the "pioneering" history of a high school, and establish how the two departments are positioned in response to new external demands focused on the use of student achievement evidence. The story moves from the history of the overall school to that of two departments whose cultures, which began quite similarly, have diverged. The English and social science departments began as one division called Cultures and Literature. Their department history began during the restructuring reform era, 20 years ago, with an interdisciplinary focus requiring collegial planning, common student projects, and an evaluation protocol. This division history would lead one to expect them to be a locus of student learning and teacher reflection. Over the years, their history of joint action and common experience has changed. Their expectations, use of artifacts, and even what they value has changed. This history of the school and department development and the stories of the individual teachers provide a picture that illustrates a surprising metamorphosis over the past 10 years. This story is a perfect portrait of non-linearity in reform (Table 5.2).

The chapter unfolds in several parts. The first section provides a history of the school set against the backdrop of the restructuring reform. It draws primarily on interviews to characterize the departments in relation to Siskin's (1994) four-fold characterization of departments as bonded, bundled, fragmented, or split and to show them as strongly or weakly positioned to respond to new external demands (Ball & Bowe, 1992). A second section further elaborates the departmental character and positioning by focusing on the metaphors that teachers introduced to describe each department. These metaphors provide significant insight into the conditions and assumptions in both English and social science departments. A third section charts the strength of collegial ties and the nature of teacher networks within and across departments and in relation to school administrators. This indicates that physical proximity, teachers' common beliefs regarding pedagogy, and their opportunities to interact provide significant direction to them for improvement of their craft. Finally, the chapter examines more closely leadership roles enacted by the current department chairs in each department, and how the approach to leadership further positions each department for a response to accountability demands.

History of the School in Relation to English and Social Science Departments

The Opening of the School

Madrone High School was opened in 1989 and promised to be a bastion of innovation. As the current English chair explains, the school ". . . had talented, intelligent and driven teachers who believed in the whole idea of moving into a depressed area and giving them the same education, as you know, [provides a name of a high performing] High School." She further explains that MHS attracted teachers who were unconventional. Today, however, that pioneering approach does not appear to be present.

Madrone High School was a recipient of a number of grants and other reform-related funding; most influential was the SB 1274 School Restructuring Demonstration Program. This program supported school-level governance, decision-making, and performance goals. It

provided professional support for teachers and teaching, social support for students and families, and a focus on the classroom that included varied instructional practices and a school-wide assessment practice. The writers of this program wanted it to reach low-performing schools and the grant allowed MHS teachers to conduct peer observations, evaluate student work and teacher practices with a consistent protocol, plan cross-curricular programs, projects, and student assignments (Little et al., 1998).

SB 1274 also allowed Madrone to structure the school into smaller learning communities including two career academies and a number of career or theme-based houses. Currently the school has one solidly supported academy through outside dollars, one floundering academy, and no career academies. New teachers, not present during the development of the school, replaced those who left. Frequent principal and staff turnover due to upwardly mobile administrators or teachers who moved to the openings of new schools, made it difficult to stay any true course. Despite the unique concepts that founded the school, there is no formal training for teachers or department chairs in order to continue the innovative work of the original staff. The only training these new teachers receive is what their colleagues provide in situ in the course of a school year.

The English Department: Professional and Moderately Collegial

The 15 members of the English department, four of whom have taught in the department since the school's opening, highlight its generally collaborative ethos and professional orientation. However, those with a long history in the school (about half) also recount a steady movement away from the interdisciplinary vision that drove their early collaboration. The department is a socially cohesive department with a high level of inclusion of its members. However, its commitment to a common purpose is low. Teachers do support each other, but they do not necessarily agree on the significance of some of the main focal points of the department that have historically been accepted.

The department's history and subsequently its focal points can be traced in part through the history of its chairs. The department has had five chairs during its 20-year history, one of which was a founding member of the department. The department began with a chair that focused on a-g requirements (college approved courses) for all students, heterogeneous grouping, and a cross-curricular focus. Five years later with a new department chair, some changes were forced because of scheduling conflicts and the emergence of more urgent priorities. For example the 9th grade students were having difficulty transitioning to the high school and performing poorly. A 9th grade house was designed to improve their success rate. This decision also impacted the flexibility of the master schedule. A third department chair did not appear to contribute to the department's overall improvement but seemed to keep the status quo.

The fourth department chair was there for one year. She was directed to follow a district mandate that the school implement the Language! program by Sopris West. This program was seen by some district people as a highly prescriptive way to ensure the students' reading skills moved quickly up to grade level. The teachers saw it as a highly prescriptive program that restricted their ability to improve student skills. Teachers did not follow the full regimen of this program, paying attention to some of the more basic or surface approaches. This symbolic response (Coburn, 2004) lasted for more than eight years before schools began to unilaterally drop the program without the sanction of the district. Currently, the Language! program is only used by the special education department. The belief of the fifth and current department chair, Jessica, was that this Language! program arose and was supported by the district because of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), not because it was effective or produced results.

The English department currently, is a cross between what Siskin (1994) calls a 'bonded' department–one where members work together "with a high degree of commitment toward department goals" (p.99) and a 'bundled' department–on in which " inclusion is high, but commitment to a common purpose is low" (p. 90). They have high commitment for most of their members, high inclusion, a leader who is administratively adept yet also collaborative. The chair often makes the decisions for the department, but that usually includes informal input from her colleagues. The teachers support each other, but they speak often of "autonomy" and value their ability to work as what Huberman (1993) would call "individual artisans."

Eight of the English teachers have been with the department for nine years or more the other seven have been at Madrone for one to seven years. The department members who have been at Madrone since the beginnings of the school admit that they are not in the place they were when the school first opened. In fact, one retired in the Fall because he felt overwhelmed by the myriad changes over the years and discouraged by the "clinical" data he was expected to use to inform his practice. Back then they had a common approach to evaluating student work and teachers' reflection and response to that work. They had division meetings with the two departments: English and social science. The Cultures and Literature division would go over portfolios of student work. They would also sit down together and norm and score student writing. A teacher would bring a lesson and the materials she used and sit with a panel of colleagues, site administrators, district personnel and talk through the work in the portfolio. This protocol — adopted during the period of SB1274 funding —asked focused questions regarding the process used to reach the students and the process of creating the product-usually writing. The presenting teacher was asked probing and self-reflection questions. This process also provided a way for both departments to understand the rigor and content required for teachers in the division.

One teacher, Albert, describes this process as probing deeper to get at how they think as teachers. "It's a wonderful way to delve deeply into what we do and how we do it. It's not like cold hard data. We were forced to go beyond clinical data. . .it was so demanding and sometimes often threatening." The distinction between "cold hard data" or "clinical" data and "going beyond [it]"is a key point that will be discussed more fully in chapter 4. He explains that it "fizzled out" because of the money required to take 5-10 teachers off site for a day to discuss their work. Another teacher cites the fact that the newer teachers do not share this same commitment to reviewing student work and do not volunteer to go off site to discuss it.

The use of this protocol required strong collegiality, which often involved challenging one's beliefs or practices (Little, 1990). The protocol also required strong site leadership, organization, and money. Jessica believes it was the lack of money that stopped this process. She, in frustration, explains, "They [the grant givers] say that when the grant goes away, the support infrastructure will be so developed that the changes will stand on their own. But that's bogus. . . Most of the time we can replace lost money with new money. . . And we are a school that had one grant after another!" However, the departments no longer work together on student work. Jessica has been finding it increasingly difficult to get money for norming and scoring of student work just for the English department. Currently, only a few members of the department use the portfolio concept though peer observations have continued in a more limited way.

English Today: What's Working?

The overall feeling of the English teachers about their department is positive. They are collegial and do joint work as "truly collective action" (Little, 1990, p. 519). Whether this also provides room for innovation (Little, 1990) will be discussed in chapter four. They also have regular social gatherings that often involve both the English and the social science departments.

Taken together, their social ties and their commitment and history of curriculum development and weathering change have positioned them to face many waves of reform (Ball & Bowe, 1992). How this positions them to mediate accountability policies will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter four and five.

The eight long-term department members provide modeling for the new teachers on how one engages in professional development activities including norming and scoring of student papers and peer observations. There is no specific training of new teachers and at least half have individually chosen what to incorporate into their repertoire and what to leave out. Some of the original concepts used at Madrone, student portfolios and senior project, have been eliminated by some teachers or modified by others. The reflective protocol has been eliminated.

The English department has a number of teacher leaders who demonstrate a high commitment to the department and to their work as a teacher. Amy, a newer teacher to the profession with six years of experience five of those at Madrone, was the 9th grade English team leader this year. She worked with her colleagues to ensure that the team focused on curriculum that supported students' thinking and writing. Her meetings were well attended with discussions that addressed teacher planning, design of units, and evaluation of student understanding at the end of these units.

She believes the department has improved in the years she has been there. She lauds Jessica for her leadership but asserts that the department has struggled. Later she attributes the struggle to the current accountability climate, which she finds challenging:

> Well, it's evolved over the past couple years. It's gotten better in the sense that Jessica, her leadership, I think she's very clear with her objectives, and so we go in, we have objectives and she's a good facilitator, and so we talk about curriculum, we talk about needs, we talk about what we're doing right, what we need to work on, we're talking about the peer observations, trying to help each other, again that kind of cohesion, again trying to be a solid front to improve our practice and to kind of promote, I don't know, promote more cohesion and… to try to perhaps uplift in a trying, challenging [accountability] environment. [Amy, Int. 1]

When asked to think back to a particularly interesting discussion the department had or a challenge that they faced and how they negotiated it, she brought up a department meeting that involved the teachers putting their reflections in writing:

> . . .this past meeting we had we did a reflection piece . . .where she [Jessica] had us write, and so we've never really done much writing, and so we were responding to some questions about our curriculum and basically kind of our strengths and our weaknesses and looking at as a department these particular things that we want to hit, and are we doing those things, how are we doing those things, and how can we adjust our teaching, our pedagogy or whatever, and so that reflection was really good, because really what I like to do if I could pick what meetings would be, it would be all of us talking for a little bit and then literally just processing what is going on, because reflection is such a good piece. . . I'm glad that Jessica sees that as valuable because I think that when people kind of peer in and, oh, you guys are reflecting, they don't see perhaps on the outside that that's an essentially valuable thing about what you're doing. [Amy Int. 1]

Teachers' ability to engage in reflective dialogue contributes to their sense of efficacy (Chan, Lau, Nie, Lim & Hogan, 2008). Jessica's awareness of the individual needs of her department–what motivates her department–is a key factor in the relative success of their department (Hill, 1995).

Brett, who typically works in isolation and stays in and near his classroom, had an opportunity this year to develop and participate in a Professional Learning Community (PLC).[2] Brett along with Jessica designed this PLC that was attended by half of the department with an equal amount of members outside of the department. Although the PLC topic was interesting, the study of rhetorical reading and writing, the main draw for the staff appeared to be the respect they have for Brett and Jessica. Brett is seen as a voice of experience and an expert on the teaching of writing; and in the capacity of a co-leader of this PLC, he has had an impact on other teachers. A social science teacher, Harvey, lists Brett as a resource for him based on Harvey' membership in that PLC. Brett and Jessica speak regularly and have classrooms right next to each other.

Brett rarely uses his colleagues for information or support. He indicates that he has an extensive library at home and uses the Internet if he needs ideas for his practice. One could argue that he feels most effective in the classroom.

His strength as a teacher comes from his profound knowledge of English, specifically his understanding of the writing process, and his ability to get students who are often under prepared for college ready to face the challenges of college writing. Brett has been teaching at Madrone since it opened and is one of the earlier English teachers who indicate their department is working well. He likes the department, their diverse opinions, and the feelings of camaraderie:

> We got like twelve or fifteen people in that department. Everyone's opinionated. Everyone. So it's, we, there are things we certainly agree on, and I think as a department when we're outside, if we get together or we're just in the lunch room, it's very, everyone likes each other. The department's, I've been here, people ask you, well, why Madrone, since 1991, I love it here! Part of the reason is I really like the people I work with. A lot of the teachers that I came in here with are still here, and they're great people, so I'm real happy with the staff and with the English department for the most part, but we certainly disagree on things, and we try to talk about, but…I don't think anyone ever, as long as I can remember, has walked away bitter about something or felt that he or she wasn't heard. [Brett Int. 1]

He sees Jessica, as most members in the department do, as a key to the department's success. In regard to her leadership Brett is enthusiastic:

> I have worked with Jessica ever since I first got here, and her opinion to me is as valuable as my opinion. I really listen to her a lot. If I have an issue, we've team taught, we've worked a lot together, and been [in a classroom] next door for years…. So I don't have any problems going over there and talking to her. We see eye to eye on a lot of things. But I don't think either of us is afraid of saying, well this might be a better way to do that, or this is a better way to handle that. [Brett Int. 1]

---

[2] Professional Learning Communities (PLC) began this year at Madrone. They are comprised of groups of teachers who share a common interest and wish to direct their own learning studying that topic. All the teachers in Brett and Jessica's PLC self-selected that topic.

Jessica's leadership tasks extend to ensuring that there are teachers for our intervention program. This year Gary was asked to teach this particularly difficult class of homogeneously grouped high-risk students [START students] and this has proven challenging for him. Gary arrived at Madrone in the school's 7th year and feels as though the department is not only a functional part of the school but also exhibits collegiality and professionalism:

> I'd say we're a very high functioning, respectful, open group. We listen to each other's ideas, we have a great department chair, who really understands how to manage our various personalities and interests in terms of what we teach and what's important to us as teachers. But also with a real strong focus on let's be a strong department that has consistencies across classrooms. For instance in our last meeting we were talking about what's working for us in our classrooms or as a department and what's not working, and we just spent 20, 30 minutes writing in response to some questions about that, which will then pull back together for the next meeting, and analyze what are we doing well, what's really working, what can we be proud of, and we should continue, and then where are the holes, what are the weak spots. And I think everybody feels like their opinions are heard and considered. [Gary Int.1]

The department meetings I observed echoed the teachers' perceptions of their department. The department meetings began on time with a lot of greetings, cross talk, and overall congeniality. In discussions, teachers were considerate of their colleagues and provided them the opportunity to talk through their points before they would step in. The conversations around whether to give students a letter grade boost based on their California Standards Test (CST) scores was lively, but not contentious. When Jessica asked a few people who had expressed reservations last year about how they were feeling about continuing the process, they felt free to express their objections. When the discussion was over and all had been heard, the department decided to continue the CST reward system for another two years. There was a general acceptance of this decision.

The enthusiasm teachers profess they had in the initial years of Madrone including the SB1274 protocol of looking at teacher practices and their discussion of what works in the classroom has changed to a less rigorous practice. They still take a few days off campus to norm, score, and discuss student writing; but the larger self-reflection piece is missing. People's memory, especially of the more distant past, is often selective and people can overestimate rare behaviors and underestimate frequent behaviors (Belli, 1998; Schwarz & Oysterman, 2001). If their historical perspective is fairly accurate, then my observations of their interactions suggests a weaker collegiality today.

The impact of reform on teachers and possibly the department is also of interest. The relative contentment of Brett during this restructuring reform contrasts with the discontent and early retirement of Albert. Albert is quite social and did throw himself into the initial restructuring reform and less enthusiastically into the accountability reform. Although he began this school year with the intention of teaching to the end of the year, he decided to retire saying that he had had enough. Brett tends to isolate himself and only comes out when he has personal commitment and control. The PLC he co-chaired is an example. These two cases support the contention that reform enthusiasts often suffer when the reform goes away (Little & Bartlett, 2002).

My interviews and observations of the department's interactions, except for the writing reflection, did not note personal, team or department scrutiny and examination of teacher beliefs

or practices. It involved no innovation. There was some nostalgia from the teachers who have been at Madrone for 10 or more years who long for the days when they had the time to be more collegial. Though they profess they are collegial now, there is a feeling that they are not the powerhouse they used to be. There has been a movement to recapture some of that through a recapturing of the "division." This idea will be discussed briefly later in this chapter.

Social Science Department: Congenial but not Collegial

The social science department has had only two department chairs in the site's 20 years. This stability in leadership suggests that perhaps its history or commitment would remain intact and support strong collegiality—the sort that recognizes failures in the system and works to provide solutions. That is not the case: the department is congenial but not collegial in any more ambitious sense. Except for an isolated meeting of the Geography team and an observed meeting of the Historical Learning Community (HLC), an outside sponsored organization, most meeting agendas reflected logistical rather than pedagogical concerns. Department meetings were infrequent and mostly administrative in focus. They did not have pedagogical discussions or conflicts in team or department meetings (Table 3.1). However, smaller group conversations among people who do spend time together in curricular and lesson planning indicate their dissatisfaction with the department's operations and lack of focus.

Table 3.1
Timeline for the Social Science Department Meeting
November 2008 and January 2009

November 2008		
Topic	**Time spent**	**Comments**
District and School Budget	4 minutes 15 seconds	We are short supplies. How to conserve supplies.
Team Meetings	5 minutes	Keep on with your common assessments
Professionalism	10 seconds	Thanks for being here on time. Hold ourselves to the same standards we do for our students.
Observation by district administrators	6 minutes	Explained this was to train administrators in evaluating teachers
Evaluation process	18 minutes	Explained by vice principal
Selection of new department head procedure	5 minutes	Principal will send out an email by Thanksgiving and by Christmas we will know who our new chair is.
Mock elections	8 minutes	How will we do this in our classes?
Period 10	1 minute 30 seconds	Period designed for testing and registration

January 2009		
Discussion of Night School. Who can teach it?	5 minutes	"Nice to approach the department first. We can address the rigor."
Student Teachers	3 minutes	Do we really want Phase II teachers on campus? Discussed what student teachers will be here on campus
Budget Information	9 minutes	It was reduced 30%. We now have 60% of what we are usually allocated." "Contractually, they have to give us paper."
Department chair description	5 minutes	Larry will work on a department chair description to help us decide who will do what.
Evaluation Status	3 minutes	Where are we with the evaluations of teachers.
Textbook adoption	6 minutes	Social science steering meeting is addressing this. There is a grant renewal for teachers who want a masters degree in American History. Half will be paid for by the district.
Upfront Magazine	2 minutes	Larry discusses the latest article in it: Obama, Putin. He has a class set people may borrow.

The social studies department members have suffered a loss of experienced teachers due to staff movement to newer schools. They began with 20 teachers and all have left. Shawn and Sue, the longest-term teachers at Madrone, have been at the site for 19 and 17 years respectively. Six local high schools have been built since Madrone was established and teachers excited at the prospect of opening a newer school have left. This loss of experience is felt and is directly related to a department's ability to adjust to policy issues or to enact positive change (Ball & Bowe, 1992).

Ball and Bowe's (1992) four basic concepts, introduced in chapter two, allow us to understand the process of change (or lack of change) in a subject department (Figure 2.1). The established focus or *commitment* of social science is not clearly defined and held. Pedagogical paradigms are not evident nor is there a long history of curriculum change. Its members are less experienced overall than their English colleagues. Although years of teaching do not always indicate skill, the social science department, with 11 members, has 10.4 as the average number of years teaching and 37.5 average age (the English department with initially 15 members has 15.6 and 49.5 respectively). Although studies have found that teaching effectiveness tends to increase steadily for the first five years, it levels off there after (National Academy Education, 2009). The

example of Brett and Albert's' response to the site's history of reforms suggest that perhaps experience after five years may assist with mediating reforms.

There are five social science teachers with 10 years or more in the profession who admit--or their colleagues have identified them--as ones whose practice has been stagnant. A number of the department members note the loss of the more experienced teachers to other school sites. This lack of *capacity* coupled with the other factor of losing staff (*contingency*), has compounded the difficulties of a department, which desires congeniality but has an undercurrent of tension. A retired English teacher and the librarian, both of whom have been with Madrone since it opened, have also commented on the great loss of experience and expertise that the social sciences department has faced.

Teacher recruitment for experienced, quality teachers has been non-existent. The department chair notes their influx of new teachers, " . . . every single teacher I've hired except for maybe one, but seven of the last eight teachers have all been right out of the student teacher program." A department with these characteristics, according to Ball and Bowe (1992), would not have the ability to reconcile governmental mandates and their own practices. This does lend credibility to the notion that capacity is necessary for a department's survival in a reform environment. It's interesting to note that the chair does not see this as an opportunity to inculcate the new recruits with department philosophy, focus, direction, and training.

The current department chair has been in this position for seven years. In that time, the members of the department convey two contradictory perspectives. Two of the five expressed a view that might be summed up as 'He is a good leader and we respect him. Three complained that 'he has done nothing to improve the department and, in fact, the department has lost much of what made it good because of a lack of leadership.' This department would be what Siskin (1994) calls a "fragmented" department. Its leader continued in the position because no one else wanted it. The leadership is unclear and the decision-making process is undefined. There is little inclusion of the department members in basic decisions that impact all of them. When the principal asked for the department's meeting schedule for the next school year, the chair determined it and told the department the days and times. There are some department members who have a high commitment to their craft, but most members follow the pacing guides and believe that they are doing what is necessary. Larry announced in the fall of the school year that he was stepping down as chair at the end of the year.

And indeed as the budget picture became grimmer for 2009-2010, the district reduced the full time equivalent (FTE), the number of teachers the district office assigns to the school site. Because of that, the social science and the science department chairs' preparation period have been eliminated, effectively eliminating their chairs. Only English and math have retained their department chairs for next year.

With this in mind, the social science department then looked for ways to divide the tasks of the chair amongst themselves. This is a relatively weak leadership strategy typical of a fragmented department (Siskin, 1994). During some department discussions about the lack of leadership for next year, Patrick stepped up and told administration that since no one would step up, he would take it by default (Siskin, 1994). There was a third department meeting called to discuss how to address the lack of leadership for next year. This resulted in a half-hearted discussion of tasks that needed to be completed; but few members participated, and no one volunteered to help the department. There was no resolution or apparent ability to determine how this could be done. Although the results of this meeting do not directly address the four concepts that Ball and Bowe (1992) indicate provide resiliency in departments, it does speak to the notion

that having a history of development and change might have made this negotiation of leadership tasks possible.

During the conversation regarding distribution of leadership tasks the department chair indicated that he would be willing to take up the master scheduling piece, working to assign teachers to courses. Since that meeting, the supervising administrator was approached by four different department members (one English and three social science) who warned her that if the chair gets this task, he would ensure that he gets the courses he wants to teach and not look out for the interests of colleagues.

The chair never indicated any awareness that his department members might not support his leadership. Larry 's first interview viewed the department as collaborative and congenial:

> Well, we talk about lessons, curriculum, content, instruction… Everyone's very willing to share and try new things, absolutely. If I come and I say, look, I have something I think is a good activity, you might want to think about trying it, a new way to approach it, I've never really gotten a lot of resistance in that at all. [Larry Int.1]

Larry also views his department as congenial:

> Ever since I've been here, everyone's really willing to share ideas and things like that. So that's been helpful. As far as department meetings, there's really not a lot of tension. I think we socialize enough outside, but when we come in, I never go to a department meeting thinking, oh god I don't want to talk about this, or I've got to make sure I don't push this button here because those two will get into it there, or there's a history between those people there. I'm pretty fortunate. I don't have any drama like that at all. [Larry Int.1]

In all the grade level team and department meetings I attended, I heard no conversations about lessons or instruction. I did hear conversations about what curriculum (content) was covered so far. The only issue that Larry cites as contentious in the years he has been chair was an extended discussion topic last year at the department meetings regarding professionalism. "The only–I think it's seven years now I'm department head–the only one that was really a little touchy was the issue when we started talking about professional dress" (Larry Int. 1). The issue of the department's lengthy discussions about professional dress came up a few times in my interviews with his social science colleagues. Many of whom thought he was spending too much time on something fairly insignificant to the more looming issues of teaching and learning. In this interview Larry also spent a lot of time discussing the critical nature of arriving on time and professional dress. He explains that it has helped him in gaining and keeping classroom control and feels as though his colleagues would also benefit from paying more attention to their dress. Some of his colleagues are coaches and often on practice days do underdress. A few wore clothing he thought was inappropriate. His perception of collegiality was not shared by all members of his department nor was the need to focus on professional dress.

Although two members of the department expressed disagreement with Larry's priorities, it could not be said that there was widespread support for a department chair who would take on the role of instructional leader. In fact, no one mentioned that they go to Larry for instructional strategies. He is known for his planning and pacing guides. Shawn, a 19-year veteran at the school and the union representative, sees his department as a group of congenial people who get along and share their materials. When Shawn discussed his expectations for a department leader,

he speaks of what it is not. He does not see the person as an instructional or curricular leader, "I don't know about [a department chair needing] expertise and helping people teach." When asked about his department and their history of agreements or disagreements, he says, ". . . we've had our disagreements, but they've been pretty minor."

In this district the department chair stipend is an item negotiated with the union. When I asked the district office for a job description of department chairs, they did not have one. These two perceptions of the task of department chairs indicate that it is not a job with any clear boundaries or expectations. Shawn also expressed his concern regarding the negative changes in the department and the school couched in terms of a failure of funding and district leadership, not local leadership or individual teachers.

Some department members who had been at Madrone for a while were upset that the nature of the department had changed so critically. Marissa, who has been at MHS for six years, describes a department that has lost the practices that once focused them on evidence of student learning:

> We used to talk with grade levels, in our grade level teams. We don't do that anymore. . . Honestly? People weren't meeting. People weren't coming in on times to meetings and people weren't coming in at all, and so it became, we didn't have time, and so we stopped having valuable meetings. Our meeting time just became bitching sessions. We weren't looking at the stuff we used to. When I first came into the department, we used to get together as an entire department and we would go over, we would look at our scores, we would talk about common assessments, we would talk about where kids are struggling and which units they're struggling in and which questions they're actually struggling with or concepts they're actually struggling with, and how people are doing at teaching this or that. It used to be great. Sometimes we'd even spend pullout days where we'd work on an entire unit together and generate assessments together, which was awesome. We don't do that anymore. . .I don't really know [when it changed]. . . We had a lot of people leave. We had a lot of people leave in our department. [Marissa Int. 2]

Later in the school year during a conference, I went back to this comment and asked Marissa, 'when did the department change?' She indicated it seemed to be a confluence of events: the funding for release days disappeared and therefore the department did not look at students' work or portfolios, NCLB arrived with some of its restrictions including the message from the department to adhere to pacing guides, and Larry became the department chair. Alesio a third year social science teacher who was also at the conference, indicated that he did not like the lack of direction in the department. He hoped that it would be different next year.

Although Victor, a third year social science teacher, admits the nature of team meetings in the department is chaotic, he finds them useful:

> . . .even though people are flustered and running around and thinking about what they're going to do when the bell rings, there still has, for me at least, been productive stuff that has come out of those meetings . . .because I always go with questions, because there's somebody I want to talk to about something, and sometimes easier to do that face to face than in an email. . . Go to this meeting, say hey, I was wondering about the travel project, got a few questions about how you set it up with this, and do you have the handout for that, and by being able to talk to her face to face, get that face time, and spend at least a couple of minutes, then when I

come to her in a mad rush at some point later and say do you have those copies for me, or do you have that handout . . .So, those meetings. . .they've been real productive for me, just in terms of being able to connect with somebody and to check in with people. [Victor Int. 1]

Yet Victor's view appears somewhat idiosyncratic, perhaps a function of his relative newness to teaching and his need to glean help wherever he can find it. When asked about the usefulness of the department meetings, his colleague Patrick, a teacher for 10 years, says that they reflect a top down approach:

. . .what's on the agenda are items that affect all and are not incredibly specific to grade level curriculum. So I think usually they're driven by bigger concepts. . . it might be, our budget is cut sixty percent, so I hope you got a stash of paper, because we're not giving it to you, and don't make a whole lot of copies, because we ran out of ink. Those type of things I think are in the big meetings. . .like I said, depending on leadership…I've been here for eight years, and we've had various leaders with various agenda, so often times . . .we have a situation, it might trickle down from Mark [the principal], or we might use a particular model in terms of how we're going to deal with issues, or like in the START [intervention] program recently, we've had a different approach in terms of how we're going to solve problems. Is it an issue, or is it, you've been to the meetings more than I have, . . so I think you have to deal with the various individuals who are in your department. [Patrick Int. 2]

Patrick was very flexible and accommodating about what occurs in his department. He made no overt judgments and readily admits that he does not attend the meetings he is expected to attend. He just stated what he sees. Initially, his opinion of his department chair was complimentary, but he changed his stance abruptly in the same interview:

Larry has been in my opinion a great leader, and has brought us together, and his approach with his peers and his approach with teachers is a good one. . .He has a way of being a colleague and a friend, but also at some point you end up doing what you need to do, because you really don't want to disappoint him . . . So when I first arrived here [eight years ago], I thought, the social science department's pretty dysfunctional, and again we've had a lot of people leave, so the new teachers that have come in I think have come in when Larry has been here . . . (*Patrick abruptly changes course*) Larry isn't as much of a presence, that I think [we] are starting to kind of fray, in terms of accountability, sometimes, the sense is, if I don't go to the grade level meeting, what's going to happen to me, I don't show up on Wednesdays when we're supposed to be out there at adjunct, what's going to happen to me? [Patrick Int. 2]

This initial full-throated support of the department chair and the switch to his lack of leadership is interesting. Over the year, as the department faced dauntingly large class sizes and the non-reelect of a likeable teacher, they appeared to gain awareness that not only was Larry a fairly ineffective leader, but they felt the freedom to voice this. This was also reinforced in a number of ways especially toward the end of the year as the site began planning for the next school year.

This apparent lack of leadership is exacerbated by a lack of support for newer teachers. Victor earlier noted that he gets information wherever he can including in chaotic department meetings. Harvey, a teacher who has been with Madrone since 2004, speaks of getting to know the culture of the school. Although Harvey has been at the school for five years, and has taught for more than 20, he still feels like he is the new kid. He speaks of what he gets out of the team meetings. "I'm relatively new here – I've only been here since 2004 … everywhere you go you have to learn a new culture, and I've been to four different schools in my 22 years of teaching."

Besides being a member of the History Learning Community[3] (HLC), Harvey also uses another group as a venue for learning about the culture, the Professional Learning Community (PLC), Reading Rhetorically. He explains that he is a member:

> . . .not only because I think that reading is super important, but I wanted to be with Brett and Jessica , because I think they are people that have real roots here in the culture. They understand the school really well, and they have a particular point of view that I want to find out about, so I've been picking their brains in the PLC. Or just listening. . . And so, they're into more of a humanities approach. They're into more of a, let's challenge the writer. Let's, what is the writer trying to accomplish, how do they go about doing it. Rather than just acquiring information, which is more I think what you do if you're trying to get kids through the curriculum for the CST. [Harvey Int. 2]

Many of the teachers' references to the California Standards Test (CST), were embedded in their responses to other questions. The concept of teachers needing to just "get kids though" the CSTs will be addressed further in chapter four.

The last interview with Larry revealed a different perspective about his department than his earlier interview. He focused on the individual or isolated nature of their work. He indicates here that his department functions mostly as individuals in their quest to perfect their lessons. He also discusses the locations of his department members' classrooms, which makes it difficult for them to get together easily:

> No, at this point it's all completely still individual . . .we rarely have teachers or the department getting together with their results . . . Sometimes we do it like the CSTs were taken in April, we'll meet in the summer to talk about our holistic scores and what we want to do as a department . . .but not ok everyone, we just taught WWII, here's our test, let's see your results, let's go back and see what, where… we don't do that. . . It's not the culture of the department to do that. . . It's logistically very hard, in a sense getting everyone together. . . I have teachers spread out all over and we . . .don't have a center room, so we don't eat lunch together, we don't, we really don't, the department doesn't really see each other as a department except for passing in the copy room. [Larry Int. 2]

Proximity does impact communication (Carmichael et al., 2006). Seventy-five percent of the social science department is housed in the same building with classrooms that lead out to a common quad. A quarter of the department is in the portables, a fair distance from the rest of the social science department. The department office is in the main building that is often shared with the English department. The department changed from a collaborative culture with time to plan

---

[3] The History Learning Community is supported by various grants. Although the district does not provide this professional development, the district does ensure site social science teachers are aware they can apply for it.

and implement lessons to one that focuses on the pacing guides as a great preparation for the CST. The strong direction of their beginning has evolved into meetings that are not meaningful to their members. And with few exceptions, the individuals have moved back into their classrooms and quietly closed the doors.

These aimless and disjointed feelings came out in all interviews with the social science teachers. Some like Marissa felt isolated; Alesio wants the department to focus on teaching and learning; Harvey goes with the flow and searches to understand the culture; Shawn thinks they are agreeable but merely idling; Patrick accepts whatever is put in front of him, even if it is top down; and Victor just hopes the more experienced teachers keep giving him useful classroom materials.

The two departments, despite the fact they began as a joined division with common goals and common ways in which to examine their practice, are, 20 years later, quite far apart. English forges ahead with some of the original intentions of the initial grants and programs looking at student work and spending much of their time in team and department meetings discussing teaching. The social science department does not. Like a ship at sea without properly trimmed sails it moves haltingly though the water not knowing its destination.

Metaphors: An Image is Worth a 1,000 Words; Surfers, Rowers, Amoebas, and Idling Engines

English: All is Movement

The richness and complexity of metaphors often convey more than the actual event or observation and suggest other possibilities (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Hill (1995) encourages the use of metaphors to explore what teachers use to illustrate their conditions. "Any metaphor is necessarily both provocative and limiting, illuminating some features and obscuring others" (Hill, 1995, p. 125). I asked in both sets of interviews (Phase I and Phase II) what metaphor the department members had that gave an idea of how their department functioned. These images reinforce the previous discussion of both departments. You will notice the sense of action and movement in the English department metaphors. The social science images were shapeless, amoebic, static.

Jessica the English department chair begins in the fall with the comment, "We're kind of a slightly used car. So for the most part, the parts work together to move the car forward, but there's some weaknesses in there." But she could not come up with one in April saying that she would think about it and get back to me. She did so on the first day of CST testing. She dropped in quickly and left just as quickly, underscoring the message. Speaking in spurts with an endless feeling: list-like, fluid, and intense, she said; "We're a MASH Unit. We triage . . . We are ill-supplied on a remote outpost, ill staffed, constantly under stress- and that's why we use humor and alcohol . . . [we are] in crisis mode all the time and that's why the stress level is so high." She turned already in route to her next task.

A teacher new to the profession with less than one year of teaching experience uses a similar concept of the creaking car that's still moving:

> I would say it's kind of like a rusty bus . . . it works, it gets the job done and maybe
> it's like a fixer upper so things are getting fixed. I think we have a competent, more
> than competent driver, that we're definitely headed in the right direction, some of us
> are moving slower and making more noise than others. (*laughs*) [Sara Int. 2]

Another member speaks less forgivingly of those who are "moving slower and making more noise." He calls them "undertakers–tall, pale morticians from the short stories of the 1850's." Their lifeless nature contributes nothing.

Jen's image suggests department improvement, movement over the year but with a distinctive focus on individual accomplishments. It begins with a more chaotic image of each department member surfing and riding in the tube often spit out instead of riding it all the way to the breakers to her Spring image of the team windsurfing with control. "And so we have our sails and we have the strength of the bar, so we're not, it's not as risky or as difficult as surfing, without anything to hang on to, and it's like we're all going in the same direction."

Brett's first image addresses the English department's ability to roll with the pressures, to be flexible:

> I hesitate to say like a rubber band, but . . . it has its function, it is flexible. . . Maybe something a little more resilient, like maybe some kind of a rubber ball or something like that. That's not a bad metaphor, I guess. When it gets hit or whatever it comes back relatively in the same shape. When we have people leave, we normally, I mean, we take other people in and it continues. It's resilient, it gives when it has to, but not so much that it can't function. [Brett Int. 1]

Brett's Spring metaphor contrasts with some of his colleagues and presents a powerful image of the majority moving in the same direction:

> Well, it's certainly more positive than it was. Let's say that it's something… I'm going to say kind of a snowball rolling downhill, and although it's not a perfect metaphor, certainly, it's got some aspects, I think we're moving forward at a little better pace than we have in the past. I think in terms of the snowball metaphor, more people are getting on. I think it's become bigger, more unified, kind of thing. There's some people that we're still kind of rolling over, you know what I'm saying? They're not getting picked up by the bigger ball. They're getting kind of run down by it. But I think that we're moving forward more rapidly and getting more people to buy into what's going on, or at least becoming more unified as we go. Fewer loose people around. I feel pretty good about what's going on. [Brett Int. 2]

One member's image does not, and apparently could not, separate the department from the leader, Jessica. He begins with an image that projects the department's movement. His images, however, presents Jessica as an integral part of the department's functionality. He too modified it over time.

> We have a leader who is not just yelling out row, row, row; but she does a good job of keeping us or guiding our rowing. And she is also rowing, of course. Um, and then the idea is that when we are all in agreement about something, say for instance the outside reading requirement, or the importance of academic vocabulary, the ship moves in a pretty steady direction that we feel good about. However, in a situation where like say portfolios, we have half of a department believing in them and understanding them the other half not um; we tend to go in circles or not go anywhere. And that's the basic idea and I do think there are probably, to extend the metaphor, there are those who pull an a little bit more than others, but that's not really, an issue. I don't think anybody feels like within the department like that they are having to pull more weight than another. [Gary Int. 1]

He continues this same metaphor six months later but with a slight difference.

   I think we're kind of a rowboat. We're all working on our oars, but we maybe have
   hoods on sometimes? We don't really know if the guy next to me is rowing as well,
   or if we're rowing at the same pace. You know, the communication could be better.
   But then there's always, I do feel like Jessica has done an excellent job of keeping us
   focused on, these are the things we've decided to do. We're going to row. And we're
   all going to row at this time and do this at this time, so there is good communication,
   but for individual teacher, and this maybe has to do more with the individual
   technique of rowing. I could be rowing so much more efficiently if I knew how to
   hold this oar better. Or if I knew how to change my grip, or something. So more
   strategizing between individual rowers.

   Well, we both know we need to row, and we both know ultimately when to row. But
   you may have a much better technique of rowing. You use your legs better, and you
   have a stronger grip. So to bring it back to the classroom, there's a teacher who's
   working less and getting more done.

   And that's the way I feel sometimes, like I am rowing my ass off with my START
   kids, I'm working way harder than I have to, and it's one of the things Emily
   [instructional coach] pointed out to me, she asked me after the end of the lesson, she
   said, you must be exhausted. She said, you're working so hard. And I was like, I've
   got to figure out how to do more with less, be more efficient. So the opportunity to
   discuss our techniques, the strategies that we're using and just really get down to the
   nuts and bolts, we've been doing it, we do that, but I just think it's so important that
   we continually do that, that we're always focusing on that, that every department
   lesson or department meeting should have the discussion of techniques and strategies
   in the classroom. [Gary Int. 2]

   English department colleagues' conversations and actions support Gary's belief that the
department chair is providing department meetings that address significant issues, but it does not
have what Gary specifically needs to stop "rowing [his] ass off." This belief of his is echoed in a
number of his comments in and out of his interviews with me. This year he was asked by Jessica
to take on a class of homogeneously grouped students whose score on the CST is Far Below
Basic (FBB) and Below Basic (BB), and it has drained him to the point of questioning if he
should even be in the classroom.
   Jessica also feels the stress of the job: she takes on a lot of work in order to ensure the
department members do not feel the burden inherent in being an English teacher. Gary feels his
unpreparedness. Sara, Jessica, Brett, and Amy have expectations that the department will
progress and Brett and Amy's second metaphors confirm that belief.

Social Science: Amoebas, Sixteen-Year-Old Drivers, and Idling Engines

   The social science metaphoric images of their department appear to be a more direct and
powerful statement than their earlier comments of their department. Informal conversations in
passing reinforce these comparisons. Larry discussed the lack of more experienced teachers in
his department:

      . . .it's a sixteen year old with a new driver's license. In some ways it is, where
      you're qualified to drive, and you have the potential to be a really good driver, and I

don't question your ability to learn how to drive, but you've only been driving for six months. There are certain things that just take time. One of the problems is that we lost a lot of experience, with the [opening of] Monterey Trail [High School] and with the transfers, we lost some really good experienced teachers, and every single teacher I've hired except for maybe one, but seven of the last eight teachers have all been right out of the student teacher program. And they've been good, and they're strong and they want to learn, but sometimes they're sixteen-year-old drivers. [Larry Int. 1]

And in the Spring he discussed their formlessness:

. . .we're kind of like an amoeba . . .we're together, but there's really no true structure and every single day we're completely different. There is a form . . . but it's not like, it's almost like this gel, this kind of fish going in all sorts of directions and part of it is pulling this way and this way, but there is a structure there, there's something to work with. It's not like loose atoms all over the place . . .we're just like this floating amoeba that's just kind of together but literally floating around and on any given day it looks completely different . . .yeah it's almost like a weird cylinder or dish that has no form, just kind of floating there. [Larry Int. 2]

Marissa reflects this insubstantial and fragmented feel of the department with her comparison to the Gilded Age and Indonesia:

I feel like it's a little gilded, so it looks great on the outside, but if you scratch it a little bit, it's kind of… And don't want to say really, because the Gilded was pretty awful on the inside, and it's not awful, but it's, it looks great, but you scratch a little bit, and there's some, there's a lack of, I think everybody truly respects each other, but there is an unwillingness to change, and there are people that are set in ways and are unwilling to, I think unwilling to change for their audience. [later in the year in an email] We're like Indonesia [one name but]-hundreds of tiny islands! [Marissa Int. 1 & 2]

This lack of desire or inability to change is reflected in Shawn's sentiments of his social science colleagues; they need to be more dynamic. His image implies movement, but it is not happening:

[The] social studies department of Madrone High School is a …is a …it's a machine. I would say that maybe we're kind of a machine that's running. . .It's just like we're idling, like an idling engine… You've got the parts. They're working in conjunction with each other…but I think we're idling. Everything's working together. No problems. The engine's running. [Shawn Int. 2]

The overall metaphors reflect in a more basic way the differences between the departments. The English department has a strong chair who does attempt to get all the rowers working together and, as a result, feels like she is in constant triage mode. She is respected: members do her biding or participate in discussions that result in decisions that she follows through on. The reference to morticians refers to a few of the older and more infirm teachers who seem to go through the paces of teaching. The overall feel is that the department is progressing and that they well work together. There are some comments that indicate members would like more conversation and application around instruction.

In contrast the social science department is formless and idling. It has had a department chair that for the past seven years who has not focused on the department's progress on instruction and learning. He has worked to ensure the department is congenial. He has insisted on two department meetings a year with the rest of the meetings being team meetings. These are quite brief with poor attendance. Their supervising vice principal attended most of these meetings and Larry indicated that the lack of timeliness and attendance was embarrassing. Marissa indicates that this was not previously the norm, but it is now. There are some indications that the department is ready for some changes. Ever since department members have been aware that Larry is stepping down as chair, there has been more conversation about how to restructure the department meetings so they address teaching and learning.

At the end of the year, Jessica, who has indicated her awareness of the dysfunctional nature of the social science department, was working to reinstitute the "division" concept for next year. Her vision is that both English and social science departments would work together as one department, or division. One focal point would be writing; this will be further discussed in chapter four.

In part, some of these metaphors could lend themselves to the theory that the closer in the year the school gets to the CST assessments, the more disjointed or stressed teachers feel. That was certainly the case for Jessica. However, two people in the English department felt things were going better. The social science department didn't appear stressed or disjointed, just directionless. It is also the end of the year and the knowledge that time is running out and curriculum needs to be finished, final projects and grades are due; graduation pressures on parents, students and teachers; the exit exams scores are not yet in for the seniors; Senior Project presentations and papers are due; final meetings for Departments, Teams, PLCs were wrapping up; WASC updates for next year's visit were still being written; final evaluations were due; proms and balls were ongoing; and final sports games and meets are all wrapping up in the same three months of March, April and May.

Never in these conversations about metaphors were there connections to accountability, the California Standards Test, the high school exit exam, the district mid year (MYPAS) or end of the year exams (CSRE) in English and math., or any preparation for them. It was about their department dynamics or lack of them, their organization and efforts to improve that, and how they interacted and felt as teachers.

Social Cohesion: Network Ties

Knowledge and what it can produce is the exchange medium of teachers. There is no strong inducement for teachers to share knowledge or their understanding of how that knowledge fits into the craft we call teaching. In fact, the isolation that teachers seem to prefer has been well documented (Fuller, Wood, Rapoport, & Dornbusch,1982; Huberman, 1993; Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975). Information and knowledge is exchanged where there is cause for exchange. The prerequisite for this exchange is trust (Avis, 2003; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Moller & Eggen, 2005) and the depth or quality of their ties (Carmichael et al., 2006; Granovetter, 1973). Understanding why and how teachers exchange information is critical to discovering how information and understanding travels among subject area teachers. "Reform cannot succeed without some understanding of how teachers think about their work" (Kennedy, 2002, p. 356). This exchange of information or lack of exchange, especially among experienced teachers, is evident in this study.

It is understood that teachers at the secondary level are part of departments and sometimes they span departments, but they also negotiate a "middle ground" of micro communities (Siskin, 1995). These smaller social worlds are evident at Madrone. In order to discover the smaller social worlds and when and how teachers exchange information, I explored the social networks of department members. I discovered that measuring the depth of the interactions using conversation direction, proximity, and frequency (Carmichael et al., 2006; Coburn & Russell, 2008) as well as the value to the individual teacher (Carmichael et al., 2006) provided insight into the significance of these network links. It also leads to the micro worlds where teachers were, albeit momentarily, steeped in discussions regarding improvement of their craft or the craft of the department.

I used the egocentric perspectives of networks, which is based on the individual's perception of their connections and the nature of those connections to others. Teachers were asked what staff members they had spoken to in the last week about teaching and learning. They were also asked whom they speak with when they have questions about curriculum or pedagogy and also whom they seek out when they need to make decisions about the design or implementation of student assessments (Table 3.2, 3.3). Unlike some studies using the egocentric perspective (Carmichael et al., 2006), I also was able to verify these ties through observations and conversations with others. Three of the social science and one of the English members of the Steering committee (the school's leadership committee which is open to all staff members) were also asked for a visual map of the teaching and learning connections they have with others (Carmichael et al., 2006).

Taking information regarding teachers' connections and the value participants placed on those connections (Carmichael et al., 2006), I charted the strength of teacher-to-teacher ties that using reported conversation direction and frequency, together with physical (classroom) proximity to the person they listed. One-way directed conversations in which a person is seeking information from an authority and does not have a full two way exchange with that person is a weak tie. However, weak ties have the power to convey information more extensively than strong ties (Granovetter, 1973). Two-way conversations I defined as representing strong ties; they tend to take more time, produce a synergy, an emotional intensity, and reciprocal services (Granovetter, 1973). Those conversations that were occasional were considered weak and those that were frequent or daily, strong. Those in which the person's work location-office, classroom- is far from the participant is a weaker tie. And those whose work location-office, classroom- is close to the participant is a stronger tie. The participants who listed or mapped at least two other strong connections that produced a synergy creating new directions or solutions were called a hub (Tables 3.2, 3.3).

Tables 3.2 and 3.3
Madrone High School Networks and Hubs

The following was designed to get at the strength of the ties between members of these two departments (Camichael et al., 2006; Granovetter, 1973) and also the value of those ties (Carmichael et al., 2006)

Key
One-way = **1w** (weaker tie)
Two-way = **2w** (stronger tie)
Frequency of communication = **da** = daily (stronger tie), **r** = regularly,

o = occasionally (weaker tie)

Distal = **d,** work location-office, classroom- is far from the participant (weaker tie)

Proximal = **p**, work location-office, classroom- is close to the participant (stronger tie)

Hub = this group works quite closely together using a collegial, problem/solution approach or merely the person they can open a dialogue with. Each hub has a number; however, some people are members of multiple hubs. Hubs can also provide team, department, or school-wide improvements.

Social = **(s)** these participants meet socially

Low value = **(lv),** the participant indicated this connection was of low value

		English					Social Science							
		Jessica	Amy	Gary	Brett P.	Sara	Larry	Victor	Harvey	Marissa	Shawn	Patrick	Alesio	Hub
English	Jessica*	--	--	--	2w da p	2w r d	1w o p		--	--	--	--	--	Hub 1
	Amy	1w r p	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1w o d	--	--	1w o d	
	Gary	1w o d	1w o d	--	--		--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Hub 4
	Brett P.	2w da p	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Sara	2w r d	1w r d		--	--	--	2w da p	--	--	--	--	--	--
Social Science	Larry *	1w r p	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2w r d (s)	--
	Victor	1w o d	--	--	--	2w da p	1w o d	--	--	1w o p	--	--	1w r p	--
	Harvey	1w o p	--	--	1w o p	--	1w o p	1w o d	--	1w o d	--	--	1w o d	--
	Marissa*	1w r d	--	--	--	--	1w o d	--	--	--	--	--	2w da p	Hub 2, 3
	Shawn	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Patrick	--	--	1w r d Hub 4	--	--	1w o p (lv)	--	--	--	--	--	--	Hub 4
	Alesio*	1w r d	--	--	--	1w r p	2w o d (s)	1w r p	--	2w da p	--	--	--	Hub 2,3

Table 3.2

* Designates those who have extra non-teaching time in the day because of their chair position

Networks and Hubs of Non-Participants

This Chart includes all those non-participants in the interview or mapping process who were named as part of the teachers' network.

		VP	Instructional Coach	Scarpa Princ.	El teacher	Social Science	Librarian	Shelly, English	Jan, English	Coach	English	English	Other
English	Jessica	2w r d Hub 1	--	2w r d Hub 1	--	--	(s)	--	2w r d	--	--	--	Dept. Steering New Teachers
	Amy	--	1w o d	--	1w o p	--	--	1w r p	--	--	--	1w o p	Karen Victoria-dist. 9th Team
	Gary	1w o d	1w r d			--	--	1w o d		--	--	--	Hub 4 Bob. Gladys (internet)
	Brett P.	--	--	--	--	--	(s)	--	--	--	(s)	--	(internet) socializes at most lunches
	Sara	1w r d	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Jessica BTSA Off site teacher (s)
Social Science	Larry	1w r d	1w r d	1w o d	1w o d	--	--	2w da p (wife)	--	--	--	--	Off site teacher (s)
	Victor	--	--	--	--	1w r p	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Harvey		--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2w o d	--	--	(internet) Dist. Dave.
	Marissa	2w r d Hub 2	--	2w o d	2w r d Hub 3	2w r p	2w o d		--	--	--	--	Leslie Brandy
	Shawn	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	(internet)
	Patrick	--	1w o d	--	--	--	--	--	--	2w r d	--	--	Bob George
	Alesio	2w r d Hub 2	--	1w o d	2w r d Hub 3	2w r p	2w o d	--	--	--	--	--	Brett Brandy

Table 3.3

Using this charting method, I found four people who regularly show up as members of hubs: the English department chair, two social science teachers who are also co-chairs of the El department and the vice principal supervising the English and social science departments. Based on the number of times a person was named provided, the formal and informal leaders on campus for these two departments. There was also a hub of the START teachers — teachers who teach the lowest-performing 9th grade students — who clung to each other for assistance. This will be discussed further in this chapter.

Opportunity is a factor in teacher networking. Since the English department had just had a department-wide norming and scoring session all said they had the opportunity in the last week to speak with all of the members of their department. When I asked the more specific questions about who they seek out for information or discussions on pedagogy, teaching and learning, the expectation would be that the people who were physically closer to the teacher's classroom-proximal-would be the stronger contacts (Carmichael et al., 2006). This did not appear to be the

case for either department. Both social science and English had similar proximal and distal contacts. There were 15 proximal regular contacts with both social science and English with social science having 19 distal contacts and English17 distal contacts. The nature of those contacts, distance from each other-proximal or distal, whether the contacts used different venues (face-to-face, email) or were frequent or infrequent suggests the strength or weakness of those contacts (Carmichael et al., 2006). Jessica emails her department weekly and therefore also sets up weak ties with members of her department that she does not regularly contact.

The flow of these connections or networks varied depending on what the participant required in the way of teacher knowledge or support. Marissa knows whom to seek out for what specific information:

> If I'm looking for something for EL I'm going to go to Sara, I'm going to go to Alesio, I'm going to go to Jennifer, and sometimes I'll even email Victoria at the district. . . .For department things, since I'm the ninth grade lead, I typically am always connecting with Jessica. She's usually the first I go to. And then if it's something particular, like rubrics or things, then I'll go to Shelly, who I think is strong and writing, who does transitional writing, and Carol, who's been teaching forever and has a ton of knowledge. . . rubrics with Carol. Rubrics, yeah, especially rubrics, and with Shelly it's more writing strategies. [Amy Int. 2]

> Jessica is much less structured about how and when she communicates with her colleagues: . . .I typically hit up whoever is kind of in my path. So if it's in the J office, I'm having conversations with people in the J office. If I'm out about in the P wing, then I'm having conversations with Jan. I tend to have more conversations with the veteran teachers about teaching and learning than I do with the novice teachers about teaching and learning. And mostly within my subject area, not very much outside the subject area. . . . a dialogue starts, rather than here's the problem, can you give me a solution, it opens a dialogue, and I think that's what I'm drawn to if I want to have conversations. Those are the kinds of people I'm going to have them with. [Jessica Int. 2]

The lack of time has been a persistent concern of teachers (Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975; Siskin, 1995); time is teachers' "most valued and least accessible resource" (Little, 1990, pp. 212). Amy mentions the lack of time in her department and attributes that as one of the factors in their inability to work together on teaching and learning. Time and convenience were also main factors especially with the teachers who did not get the extra preparation time someone in a chair position would get. Gary says he needs availability and convenience to connect with his colleagues. He was a member of one of the hubs, the START hub, a group of teachers who taught the lowest performing students in the 9th grade. They had these students for 90 minutes and then took them out for a 15-minute break. He and his colleagues in the hub have spoken many times about how those 15 minutes a day rejuvenated them and also provided some needed information on specific students of concern. Much like a survival camp, he and his fellow teachers, clung to each other for mutual support. Gary most valued those who could help him with these students including the instructional coach.

One of the START teachers, who was not listed by others as a networking contact or support, had an interesting perspective, ambivalent and a bit formless. One gets the feeling that he does

not network with his colleagues though he thinks he should. He speaks of what he should be able to do:

> I'm starting to develop into that stage where I should be the guy who knows the answers or as early in the stage where you're a first year teacher, you don't know much. Three to five [years teaching] you're starting to get in on your own and then at this stage I feel as if I should be able to work that out that if I have a concern, I should be able to network or just ya know, and then again within the circle most of us have, I think a group, or should have a group of teachers or colleagues and peers that you feel really comfortable with in terms of that trust factor that you can bounce ideas off, get their feedback and then ultimately make your own decision. . .I have done, cuz in geography I work with the START kids, so in terms of somebody who's, so in terms of being credible in START, I am somewhat . . . the guy, ya know. [Patrick Int. 2]

Although Patrick indicates he should be a contact, and he is "the guy" to contact because of his experience, he is fairly isolated. He is not named by anyone as a network contact. Another colleague, Shawn, also expresses his isolation. He does not list any particular people at Madrone he seeks out for curricular or pedagogical support. He continued to reference the social science department's history of having grants and extra funding that enabled them to work collaboratively on projects designed to improve student learning. He consistently spoke of the lack of time and his lack of contacts with others. He too was not named by anyone as a networking contact.

Although Harvey seeks out others for assistance, he is not sought by anyone. He has more depth of knowledge than any other social science teacher teaching U.S. History, but he is seen as a lecturer who has a larger percentage of disengaged students. Although he is a member of the HLC, his contribution to the HLC project was minimal.

At the end of the year, the steering group had a conversation about the departments and their progress or lack of this year. Marissa spoke of the department she joined almost eight years ago, its focus on student work in interdisciplinary approaches, and the way in which they worked together. She expressed sadness at the state of the department now. When asked what changed during that time both she and Alesio listed the opening of another high school in the district that lured way many of their most experienced teachers. Also the money they used for department planning time was gone. And, so, they no longer had the time or the opportunity to share work and discuss course and lesson designs like they had in the past.

The Varying Roles of Department Chairs

In California there is not a strong tradition of the department chair as a formal authority. There is also no tradition of more informal expectations centered on curricular and instructional leadership (Little, 1995). Most department chairs make their own way based on their belief regarding the job or because of direction given to them by the principal. In the case of Madrone's department chairs, Jessica determines the role she will play based on the history of English department chairs. The social science chair, Larry, believes that his job is to makes his department members feel supported in areas that teachers find impede their practice. Their perceptions of their roles in this study are significant. This section takes a look at how these department chairs conceive of their own role and how others express their expectations for their respective chairs and their assessment of the chair's performance.

Jessica has worked closely with the site administrative team and has garnered their respect and support. Her ability to communicate regularly with administration, and her understanding of their philosophy suggests her ability to position her department to work independent from site authority. This ability assists in developing or supporting a cultural system. She also functions as a boundary spanner (Honig, 2006). These connections to others including members of the English and social science department (Table 3.1, 3.2) position her to provide a stable sub-assembly with critical adaptive advantages (Scott & Cohen, 1995). Jessica was at the top of the list of connections to others. She also functions as a spanner between her department and administration. She meets weekly with the principal and her supervising vice principal.

She ensures connections are always open and often drops in administrative offices with ideas and requests for support she needs for her department. She is a powerful force ensuring her department gets a balanced course schedule that allows more fluidity in the master schedule. This results in lower class sizes for her department. She also drops in on teachers while they are teaching to provide them with materials or information that she has compiled or completed for them, thus saving them time. Twice during the year she was concerned about the resiliency of two of her teachers and she made it a point to take them out to eat or for a drink to provide support and assistance if possible.

One example of Jessica's ability to work with authority and at the same time protect her department members occurred mid way through the school year. The English supervising vice principal discussed with Jessica a teacher in her department who was performing quite poorly. Generally, there is a code of silence among teaching colleagues about teachers who teach poorly. The teacher in the presence of the vice principal broached a conversation about the quality of his teaching based on his walk through comments from his vice principal. Jessica, instead of assuring him this was not the case, made it clear she agreed he needed to improve. This began a turn in the conversation where he and Jessica discussed the fact that over the years he has "lost his way" when it came to being a solid academic teacher who challenged his students. He admitted to allowing the changing demographics over the past 20 years to impact his teaching and that he could no longer accomplish in the classroom what he had in the past. He was struggling to maintain his classroom and thought he did it quite well. He cited his lack of sending students to On Campus Suspension and his ability to "get something" out of his students as measures of doing quite well.

These are examples of ways in which Jessica supports her department emotionally and pedagogically while providing a buffer between the classroom and administrative pressures. She also communicates with her teachers regularly sending out a weekly email on Monday that provides them with the department or team logistics for the week, and any pressing school-wide activities. She takes the time to recognize each person for their strengths and also works with them on their weaknesses. You cannot be anonymous in the English department.

The social science chair is not as visible nor does he have the global picture of what would impact his department. He does not work directly with administration on the balancing of department classes nor does he visit teachers in their classroom or provide the emotional support Jessica does. He focuses on smaller annoyances that he feels provide collegial support, ". . . sixty percent of my time as department head is fixing the coffee machine, literally. . . it's buying brillo, I need overheads, Larry. Larry we're out of paper, Larry I need to order this, Larry I don't have a pencil sharpener. Got it? And if you didn't have that, then the teachers don't have their basic needs met and there's no instruction going on." [Larry Int. 1] He further explains that the chair also has to have a good relationship with administration so that he is able to get the "stuff" that

his department needs. He takes care of the copier, ensuring that it is always up and running, which his department greatly appreciates.

Larry was encouraged by his supervising vice principal to ensure the department meetings were meaningful to teachers. He was asked to work with his staff on the "how" and not the "what" of curricular planning. In the October 2008, department meeting, he discussed grade level meetings and his expectations that they share upcoming lessons and discuss previous units sharing their ideas. He went over the pacing of the units so that World History and U.S. History could have common assessments. He was insistent in his instructions that teachers were to be discussing WWI by the first semester and in U.S. History, they needed to be up to the 1920s. To the government, economics teachers he commented, "Economics, I can't tell where you should be." He reminded the Economics team of their November meeting and said that they will have a department meeting probably once a quarter.

Larry's emphasis on managerial details and his limited concern for and attention to curricular and instructional quality and coherence (apart from pacing guides) placed him, and therefore his department, in a weaker position to control external pressures. Communication that provides meaning and motivation to the members of a department (Scott & Cohen, 1995) appears to provide stability and enable department members to focus on their craft. The argument that loosely coupled systems are best for institutions that function in a rapidly changing climate (Goldspink, 2007; Weick, 1976) presents some intriguing questions about the place of leadership in these micro systems we call departments.

CONCLUSION

How are these departments positioned to respond to accountability reforms and demands? An organizational culture is "a group of people with a history of joint action or practice" (Cook & Yanow, 1993, p. 386). It is a group whose sets of expectations, what they value, and the artifacts that support them are part of their culture (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). This chapter has described the history and culture of two departments, the actors' perceptions of the school and their departments, the communication networks, and the department cultures that make up one aspect of this high school site. The history, commitment, skills, experience of the department members and department leaders, and the stability of staffing contribute to the success or lack of success of departments in responding to external pressures.

Both departments have a history of joint action, but only English currently has a culture of joint action. These are two departments with different and varying concerns and beliefs, problem solving, leadership, history, and commitment. Given the contrast between the two departments, it would seem obvious which department is better positioned to respond to the demands placed on them by accountability reforms. This will become more evident in the next chapter, which examines in more detail how the two departments respond to and make sense of assessment and accountability policies.

CHAPTER 4
THE USEFULNESS OF EVIDENCE AND THE
COLLISION OF INTERNAL AND
EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter examined the history and professional culture of the English and Social Science departments at Madrone, showing that they are quite differently positioned to respond to current accountability demands that center on the review and use of evidence of student learning. This chapter delves more deeply into the question of how each department actually makes use of such evidence, and how department history and culture might explain the department perspectives and practices.

As conceived by federal and state accountability policies, teachers would regularly use the results of standardized testing and other assessment data to inform practice. Of course, such policies do not live in a vacuum. As the previous chapter suggests, schools and teachers encounter new policy demands through the lens or filter of prior history and current relationships (Darling-Hammond, 1993; Coburn, 2001). In this chapter, I employ the distinction between internal and external accountability (Carnoy, Elmore & Siskin, 2003) to compare the departments' own stance toward useful student learning evidence and that sought by the state and district. My interest is in whether the growing external pressures strengthen or weaken established internal arrangements, and in the extent to which teachers see congruence between their established ways of attending to evidence of student learning (internal accountability) and those introduced by the district or state (external accountability).

Put simply, a department with the capacity and willingness to respond in concert with external accountability pressures would embrace the use of the results of standardized testing and other systematic assessment data to make decisions about curricular priorities and otherwise to inform instructional practice. However, if the department's perspectives on useful evidence differed philosophically from those encompassed in external accountability pressures, the department would likely either provide a symbolic or surface response, a response that loosely corresponds with the intent of the policy or a complete rejection of most or all of the policy.

The system of internal accountability at Madrone developed during a policy moment (late 1980s and early 1990s) that emphasized performance assessment. At that point, internal and external systems of accountability aligned well at the school. Departments at Madrone developed a certain history, especially in English and rather less so in Social Science, of internal accountability based in close attention to the products of student work. This internal accountability aligned with their values and has remained relatively constant.

Over the past ten years, the accountability "logic" of the state has shifted from performance assessment to more narrowly defined standardized testing in a few core academic areas. External pressures from the state of California now center around annual testing of students as measured against a list of standards for the grade level and subject area. The two major assessments differ in their consequences for schools and students. At the high school level the California High School Exit Examination (CASHEE, with high stakes for students) and the California Standards Test (CST, with high stakes for schools), ensures students in grades 9-12 are tested one to four times a year.

Teachers in this study, as in others (Carnoy, Elmore & Siskin, 2003) express beliefs about accountability that may be different from those that underlie external accountability practices that are designed by actors outside of education: policy makers, testing companies, lobbyists. There is tension between the state accountability-testing models that stress final products or score and teachers' use of multiple assessments to determine student understanding. This teacher

assessment model usually stresses a process of student learning measurable in increments over time. Many of the teachers in this study believe that student progress needs to be measured, but do not agree with policy makers on how to do that.

Teachers are also concerned because the high poverty and minority students they serve do not fare as well in this current accountability and testing climate. Some teachers understand that there is a mismatch between these high stakes tests that assess using one dimension and their beliefs and knowledge about how to teach "our" students. Other teachers just think that the students at MHS cannot fare as well on these tests as other students in the more affluent schools.

The emphasis on state accountability measures is not as concerted at MHS as other schools with a similar student population. Because of the consequences for individual students, teachers have a heightened awareness of the impact of the high school exit exam (CASHEE). They do not speak as disparagingly of the CASHEE as they do of the CST. This is due, in part, because of CASHEE's impact on a student's ability to graduate. There are other unresolved issues regarding the current accountability climate including what constitutes evidence of student knowledge or understanding and how that evidence informs teacher practice. This chapter recounts two departments' response to external accountability and their members' judgments about their own internal accountability in department and team interactions around student work and assessment practices. Important is what tested and untested student evidence teachers actually use to inform their practices. This chapter will end with a brief discussion regarding Albert's earlier comment in chapter three that teachers need to go "beyond" this "cold hard data" and work with information that has "practical relevance" (Hargreaves, 1996; Mintrop & Trujillo, 2007).

External Accountability Policies and the History
of MHS Departments' Response

Madrone High School was founded on the premise that smaller learning communities coupled with an interdisciplinary focus would create a place where all students could be successful. To accomplish this, the leadership worked with handpicked teachers introducing them to research and having multiple discussions about what this focus would mean in the divisions, in the departments, and in teachers' classrooms. Testing scores were not a concern in the first few years: there was no high school exit exam and the CLAS,[4] still in its infancy, faced public controversies that might determine whether this type of testing would continue. The CLAS test appeared to be an assessment that reconciled much of the tension between internal and external accountability.[5] Because of the public controversy surrounding the CLAS assessment, it was suspended in 1994 with no replacement assessment. In 1995 Madrone's school district designed and implemented in English and math departments a Curriculum Standards and Review Examination (CSRE) as an accountability measure. In 1998, the CST (California Standards Test) became California's external assessment, replacing the CLAS.[6]

---

[4] California Learning Assessment System CLAS) was first introduced in 1987 at the 8th grade level. Its purpose was to use assessment to improve teaching and learning. However, the controversy surrounding the approach of the CLAS in both English and math coupled with its cost caused it to be removed and later replaced by California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) assessment program.

[5] See Cohen and Hill's (2001), *Learning Policies: When State Education Reform Works*, for an example of this congruence between internal and external accountability.

[6] For a greater understanding of the cost involved in assessments see GAO, 2002. The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) estimated the cost to the states for varies test types. Multiple choice is the cheapest with the total state expenditure at $1.9 billion. The limitations on what these types of tests can measure have been noted by educators for 79 years (Asselin, Early, & Filipenko, 2005; Firestone, Fitz & Broadfoot, 1999; Hamilton, 2005; National

State Accountability: CST/CASHEE

When the state testing resumed, Madrone's statewide and similar school ranking on the CSTs were both four out of ten. This was also the time that the district office pushed for all sites to have teacher discussions about testing data and how it informed them. Since Madrone's Academic Performance Index (API) scores were low (Chart 4.1), the district office worked directly with the principal to ensure the teachers addressed these low scores. When asked, teachers identified the tipping point from the original interdisciplinary, small learning community focus to a more traditional high school approach as occurring during the third principal's tenure at Madrone. One teacher explains his perspective, "You know, you hired 120 teachers and [have] 2,000 kids. How can you get everyone to buy into everything?" However, that might not have been the only reason for the teachers' perceived shift in the school's focus.

The district, mindful of a concerned public, did not want these published scores to alarm the community. They set in place a new student information system that enabled administrators and teachers access to state testing data on their school, their departments, and their individual students by ethnicity. Sites were directed to look at the data, including the disaggregated data, and determine steps to remedy low scores or scores

Table 4.1
Madrone High School Academic Performance
Index (API) Reports 2000-2009

School Year	Number of Students	Base API	Statewide Ranking	Similar School Rank	Target Growth	Next Year's API Target
2008-09	1225	703	5	9	5	708
2007-08	1225	689	5	8	6	695
2006-07	1332	669	4	5	7	676
2005-06	1409	676	5	7	6	682
2004-05	Not available					
2003-04	1654	644	5	8	8	652
2002-03	1653	622	5	9	9	631
2001-02	1527	614	5	8	9	623
2000-01	1422	602	4	7	10	612
1999-20	1301	572	4	4	11	583

that demonstrated an achievement gap between students of different ethnicities. However, the district did not provide any specific assistance or advice for how to accomplish this.

Research Council, 2001; Odell, 1928). If states use a mixture of multiple choice and open ended questions that are hand scored the cost rises to $5.3 billion (USGAO, 2002).

The CST results for the latest three years also indicates that Madrone's student scores are consistently lower than both the district scores and the state scores (Table 4.2). Although teachers are aware of these scores, they believe that they are teaching students who have many disadvantages and gaps in their learning. The teachers that were involved in this study indicated that their work with students at Madrone has been exemplary. A few have cited the award the site received in 1994 that recognized their exemplary work with disadvantaged students. In the past two years the site has received similar school rankings of eight and nine out of ten (Table 4.1) indicating they score much higher than schools with similar demographics.

Table 4.2
CST Results For All Students

Comparison of School, District and State
This table shows the percentage of students who achieved the Proficient or Advanced level on the CST

Subject	School			District			State		
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
ELA	33%	34%	36%	48%	49%	51%	42%	43%	46%
Math	15%	14%	13%	47%	48%	49%	40%	40%	43%
Science	26%	33%	36%	38%	43%	51%	35%	38%	46%
Soc. Sci.	33%	25%	31%	37%	37%	40%	33%	33%	36%

Teachers reviewed the CST scores in departments and noted their strong and weak strands (Table 4.3). They were then asked to determine ways to teach to those strands more concertedly with the purpose of improving their strand scores the following year. The district set in place their "Targeted Goals" and asked each school site to write up their Targeted Goals and devote professional development for teachers and focus their site budgets to accomplish those goals. Albert describes this exercise, "We were drunk with data [but did not know what to do with it]."

Table 4.3
CST Strands English and Social Science

English 9:
Percentage of students school-wide that scored in the top two categories (advanced and proficient) of the CST exam in years 2006 - 2009

Year	WrdAnlVoc	Read Comp	LitRsp&Anl	WritCnvtn	WritStrat
2009	54%	54%	48%	48%	29%
2008	55%	48%	48%	46%	26%
2007	52%	57%	61%	54%	32%
2006	66%	47%	40%	63%	29%

WrdAnlVoc   Word Analysis and Vocabulary

Read Comp   Reading Comprehension
LitRsp&Anl   Literary Response and Analysis
WritCnvtn   Written Conventions
WritStrat   Writing Strategies

English 10:
Percentage of students school-wide that scored in the top two categories (advanced and proficient) of the CST exam in years 2006 - 2009

Year	WrdAnlVoc	Read Comp	LitRsp&Anl	WritCnvtn	WritStrat
2009	67%	56%	37%	50%	41%
2008	71%	48%	44%	64%	47%
2007	60%	40%	40%	57%	41%
2006	66%	43%	29%	56%	38%

WrdAnlVoc   Word Analysis and Vocabulary
Read Comp   Reading Comprehension
LitRsp&Anl   Literary Response and Analysis
WritCnvtn   Written Conventions
WritStrat   Writing Strategies

English 11:
Percentage of students school-wide that scored in the top two categories (advanced and proficient) of the CST exam in years 2006 – 2009

Year	WrdAnlVoc	Read Comp	LitRsp&Anl	WritCnvtn	WritStrat
2009	56%	53%	48%	58%	47%
2008	49%	32%	46%	42%	40%
2007	52%	35%	28%	56%	46%
2006	48%	41%	35%	48%	44%

WrdAnlVoc   Word Analysis and Vocabulary
Read Comp   Reading Comprehension
LitRsp&Anl   Literary Response and Analysis
WritCnvtn   Written Conventions
WritStrat   Writing Strategies

World History
Percentage of students school-wide that scored in the top two categories (advanced and proficient) of the CST exam in years 2006 - 2009

Year	Dev ModPol Thought	Industrial ExpanImp	Cause/Effect WWI	Cause/Effect WWII	Intrnl Dev Post WWII Era
2009	43.2%	37%	41.1%	35.5%	28.4%
2008	38.4%%	34%	31.7%%	33%	22.3%
2007	34.5%	27.1%	30.4%	36%	11.2%

| **2006** | 35.2% | 38% | 36.4% | 39.4% | 23.2% |

Dev ModPol Thought   Development of Modern Political Thought
Industrial Exp & Pol   Industrial Expansion and Imperialism
Intrnl Dev Post WWII Era   International Developments in the Post-World War II Era
Cause/Effect WWI   Cause and Effects of the First World War
Cause/Effect WWII   Cause and Effects of the Second World War

US. History
Percentage of students school-wide that scored in the top two categories (advanced and proficient) of the CST exam in years 2006 - 2009

Year	FndUS P/S Tht	IndUS WrldPwr	PostWWII Di	US Btwn WWs	WWII FA
2009	37.5%	64%	44.5%	43%	56.3%
2008	27.8%	38.3%	33.8%	25.7%	30.3%
2007	22.7%	38.7%	26.1%	30%	32%
2006	26.6%	38.2%	36.9%	36.3%	28.1%

FndUS P/S Tht   Foundations of American Political and Social Thought
IndUS WrldPwr   Industrialization and the U.S. Role as a World Power
PostWWII Di   Post-World War II Domestic Issues
US Btwn WWs   United States between the world Wars
WWII FA   World War II and Foreign Affairs

A number of teachers used their own diagnostic assessment in the first few weeks of school. Others discussed the fact that their initial writing assignment in their classes informed them of their students' skills including both strengths and weaknesses. Waiting for the release of the CST scores, which did not provide specifics for an understanding of their students' skills, did not make sense to them.

The district, in efforts to align site efforts and funding with the CST and CASHEE scores, required department chairs to review their department's Targeted Goals. They were asked to set new goals for the coming year based on recently released CST and CASHEE scores. The Targeted Goals are written by the vice principal. The year of this study the vice principal invited the department chairs to provide input. Some were involved in the writing of those goals, others were just as relieved to have the vice principal write these goals. This was an attempt on the part of the school district to align the site's resources and department goals to the CST assessment. There was no observable impact of these Targeted Goals on the department chair or the department. Most department members were not even aware that this was a district requirement.

The onus of the California High School Exit Exam (CASHEE) falls in the laps of the English and math departments. Typically 10th graders are the grade level with the highest passing rate. For the past three years, 10th graders at Madrone have fairly consistently passed English with a 74-79 % pass rate. This is 5-10% lower than the state passing rate. However, the overall student passing rate (10th, 11th, and 12th grade) for Madrone is 12% points lower than the state (Table 4.4). Minority student scores and English Learner scores are also lower than state scores. The only Madrone scores that were higher than states scores were 2008 for economically disadvantaged students.

Table 4.4
CASHEE Passing Rate 2007-2008
Madrone High School and State of California

	Madrone High School		State	
	2007	**2008**	**2007**	**2008**
All Students	64%	69%	76%	77%
Asian	69%	73%	86%	87%
Latino	57%	63%	65%	66%
Black/AA	55%	59%	64%	66%
White	71%	76%	89%	90%
Economically Disadvantaged	58%	66%	63%	65%
Not Disadvantaged	80%	80%	88%	88%
English Learners	39%	36%	42%	38%

The CASHEE is initially administered in the 10th grade, but 9th grade teachers are aware of this exam and occasionally referred to it. Most 10th grade English teachers have their students work through some multiple-choice questions and write to CASHEE-like prompts prior to the exam. The department also provides a CASHEE English class that is specifically designed to move students the last 15-20 points to a passing score. Typically students need to fail the CASHEE before they can take the class. However, the majority of students who consistently fail to pass CASHEE are special education students (SPED) and English Learners (EL). Students of poverty also score lower than their peers (Table 4.4). The frustration for both teachers and students and the tragedy of the situation is palpable in one of Jessica's interviews where she discusses the specific barriers for the SPED and EL population:

So it's specific skill instruction, then test taking strategies, and it's, especially with the special education students, the problem is [memory] retention. The problem is their long term memory. They walk in the next day and it's like the lesson has never happened, the lesson of the previous day has never happened. And so they're not hanging onto the instruction that has happened from day to day, and then I work on strategies like the reading comprehension for every question, for every multiple choice question, they have to go back to the reading passage and they have to underline or highlight the segment of the passage where they go the answer, and then if it's like question number 31 they have to write the number 31 next to it, and so we do that constantly. . . but then the language skills for the EL students are so underdeveloped that their comprehension of the passage is skewed, and the things that they will select to support the answer that they've chosen are just, they're completely disconnected from one another. And then we'll do another strategy where I'll tell them what the right answer is, and I'll say ok, now that you know what the right answer is, now go back to the passage and find where you should have seen this. Where should you, where's the information that you should have caught that would have led you to this answer? Some can and some can't. And so it just, it's a

class that the kids are delightful. *They're such lovely children. But it makes me sad. That class makes me sad.* [Jessica, Int. 2]

Except for the book chats or the book interviews, there is no visible concerted effort to address developing students' reading skills in English or social science. The social science department often speaks of providing students with power point presentations that are designed to fill in information that the students have difficulty reading in their text. There was some discussion at the end of the 2009 school year to focus more on specific reading instruction as a division. Initial 2009-2010 school year meetings indicate the two departments may collaborate on teaching more specific reading strategies.

Teacher efforts to address these external assessments are not specifically focused on the CST. The CASHEE gets more attention from teachers because of the obvious ramifications for students who do not pass. However, the CST and the CASHEE are not internal assessments; teachers did not see the need for these two examinations in terms of improving student or teacher learning. It will become clear in the next section that what the district designed as a meaningful assessment was not meaningful to the teachers.

District-Led Accountability: CSRE and MYPAS

In 1995, before the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability, the district designed a Curriculum Standards and Review Exam (CSRE) for high school English and math departments. This assessment was administered at the end of the year and used to determine how departments addressed the California State Standards. Teachers were paid over the summer to be graders. However, no teacher involved in this study could remember what was done with the data nor do they remember seeing any results. I was an English department chair in the same district during this time at a neighboring high school. Although we did administer the CSRE to our classes, the district did not provide us with the results of those assessments.

The Mid-Year Performance Assessment (MYPAS) is a multiple choice and writing exam designed in 2006 by the district's instructional coaches for both English and math. The exam follows the district adopted textbook series and also uses some of the textbook materials. It takes students three days to complete. One reason for the exam was to provide teachers with assessment results that would inform their practices for the second half of the year. Two high schools in the district set aside time to look at the site results. Only one currently does this data review. Madrone has not.

Initially, teams of teachers were paid to norm and score the MYPAS exam. Because the grading took place during the school year, the district found providing substitutes less expensive than using teachers to grade in the summer. However, grading an examination with a writing component still proved costly. The district continued to require the same number of teachers from each site to score the papers but gradually provided fewer substitutes to the sites than were actually needed. The site had to supply additional substitutes out of site money. Realizing they could no longer pay for the scoring of the writing section, the district removed it from the exam. As one of the instructional coaches explains, the district developed the MYPAS to avoid the cost incurred by the CSRE, which paid teachers to come in the summer to score.

The English department at Madrone continues to administer the MYPAS, but they also include their own writing section that they norm and score off site. As the department chair explains, they do not review or analyze the MYPAS multiple-choice scores, because ". . . it's a giant waste of time. We are not looking at the data." But they use the mid-year writing to determine students and teacher progress in their teaching of writing. She sees this as a critical

professional development for her department. It also functions to support the culture of looking at student work together and sharing insights about student thinking and writing. All new teachers must participate in this professional development. This initial induction into the teaching of writing has shaped the newer teachers' orientation in the teaching of writing.

Jessica was clearly frustrated by the panoply of assessments that are external to her site and department assessments. She believes that the writing norming and scoring, was "The only valuable part of the MYPAS . . . They [the district] mandates it but don't fund it." However, because the MYPAS multiple-choice questions are similar to the exit exam, some members of the 10th grade team use MYPAS results to inform them about their students' readiness for the CASHEE. Jessica seemed to almost understand the political pressures that impel the state to mandate specific accountability but found the district's efforts counterproductive and downright irritating.

In essence, except for the writing component that the English department continued using without funding or support, district-designed and implemented assessments including a mid-year assessment did not provide information that resulted in changes in teacher practice at Madrone.

Without any direct or understandable benefit to teachers, both the state and district external accountability took up time that teachers felt could be better used devoted to instructional time or teachers' professional development. The CST scores provided a rough guideline for teachers regarding the strengths and weaknesses of their department. However, as a number of teachers noted, they gleaned that information from the first week of school through reading student work. The fine-grained information required to modify teachers classroom practices was lacking in these types of assessments.

Internal Accountability: Teachers' Perceptions of Evidence Use

To determine where teachers were currently in this process of using student evidence in departments, teams, and with individual teachers, I asked about the nature of their work and interactions with their colleagues around the use of student evidence.

The chart below (Table 4.5) was compiled after six months of observing different interactions in meetings and in smaller groups within the social science and English departments. This chart reflects the variety of topics that were discussed in the initial six months including examples of those interactions. This discussion also contains excerpts of individual conversations that suggest the individual teachers' work using student evidence feels more effective to teachers than working with a group.

These conversation topics were collected and arranged in order of the distance from a direct impact on the classroom. "Reporting out" is when someone, usually the chair, merely tells teachers general information about the district or state changes. This information had the least impact on the classroom and is noted in the chart that it represents information that is the farthest away from the classroom. Using evidence to inform and modify teacher instruction was a more microscopic look at the classroom and is noted as the closest to the classroom. In the second phase (Phase II) of this study, teachers were given the information from this chart and asked where they would place the nature of their conversations in department meetings, in team meetings or smaller subgroups. Many of them also related this information to their individual classrooms and what they do when they did not seek out or have input from colleagues.

English Department

The English department meetings were seen as ones that began with reporting out and then moved quickly to curriculum or student work (Table 4.5). Jessica speaks to the range of their topics:

> Well, the department, there's, we're everywhere. I mean, there's very little [topics that are insignificant] that happens. . . . Reporting out is always the beginning of an agenda item. Typically the information comes first and then we jump into the more meaningful stuff. The curriculum pacing guide kind of stuff, to me I see that as reporting out, so I see that all kind of lumped together. If I had to look at the time, if we had an hour and fifteen minutes in a department meetings, I would say at least 45 of those minutes are [sharing student work or using evidence]. [Jessica, Int. 2]

Other department members rated department meetings a bit lower; though they did, with the exception of Brett, agree that their department meetings fell into the sharing ideas for the classroom and sharing student work range. Sara believed that department meetings were meaningful and had teachers sharing ideas and student work. She gave an example of their sharing of portfolios and discussion of student work. She did not note any conversations that used practically relevant student work that helped her modify her instruction. But she did observe most of the work she did that informed her practice was done in isolation with her own student work and her own reflection on that work.

The content in team meetings in English varied with the team. Most shared classroom lessons or student work. Sara, who runs the 10th grade meetings, thought they were the most lackluster of the four team meetings. Jessica agrees that this team is the weakest of the four grade level teams. They usually discussed curriculum and how they could meet the standards, but did not go further into a conversation about discussing student work. This would appear more urgent at 10th grade since this is the students' first time taking the CASHEE. Despite their statements that the 10th grade team lacked cohesiveness and a focused look at student work, the 10th grade CST scores for the 2008-09 school year (compared to their 2007-08 scores in 9th grade) demonstrated the greatest improvement of the three grade levels tested.

Brett consistently discussed his department, teams and smaller group conversations as merely discussing curriculum. He readily admits he is not performing as well as he'd like in his 12th grade class focusing more on what needs to get done instead of using student evidence to inform him on a regular basis. However, when teaching his AP English class, he sees himself as using student evidence all the time in order to inform his practice. I would speculate that the more enthusiastic AP students just naturally forced Brett to pay closer attention to his movement from student work to modifications of his classroom practice. Whereas, regular 12th grade students, who are typically less enthusiastic about a class, are usually the ones who need a closer connection between their work and the classroom. Perhaps the rigorous summative assessment that all AP students take, the rewards for a good score, and the student and teacher's vested interest in ensuring a score of three or better, forces both the student and the teacher to work in consort for the optimal test score. This appears to be an example of what occurs when there is an alignment between internal and external accountability.

English is a more focused department that uses specific student work to assist in their own professional development. They have a greater sense of the need for a vertical (9-12) curriculum alignment. One could argue that because their external testing is more frequent with higher

stakes (CASHEE) than social science, the department is more organized to support both external and internal assessment.

Table 4.5
Department and Team Conversation Topics: How Do These Conversations
Match What Individual Teachers' Value?

Using the list below choose what concepts you spend much of your time discussing in your department meetings, teams meetings or smaller subgroups meetings, and with colleagues? What information do you seek out that helps you most in your own classroom?

	Topic	Items discussed
Farthest from the Classroom	**Reporting out**	Examples: district budget information, CST scores for last year, changes in classes offered, the evaluation structure and process
	Discussing curriculum	Examples: pacing guides-who is adhering to the guide and how can we all keep up, putting information used by a teacher on the server so other teachers can use it in their classes, discussion of future development of lessons
	Sharing classroom ideas/lesson ideas and its merits	Examples: report out of what is on the server and its use in the classroom. Report out in a department meeting about peer observations-all positive and some lacking specifics for the value judgment
Closest to the Classroom	**Sharing student work**	Examples: norming and scoring with subsequent conversations about what this information tells them about their students' skills
	Using Evidence	Examples: using practically relevant student evidence to inform and modify teacher instruction.

Social Science Department

There was general agreement about the nature of social science department meetings. Victor saw his department meetings floating between curriculum discussions and sharing classroom ideas. His colleagues Jen and Larry believe the meetings are a basic reporting out of information or sometimes a discussion of curriculum. Larry makes the judgment that, "On our worst days we're [reporting out], on the best days we're [sharing classroom ideas], which is very rare but very consistently [discussing pacing guides]." Shawn agrees that the department is very much a reporting out body that sometimes discusses curriculum.

Their department was in agreement that department meetings did not discuss evidence or the classroom and barely mentioned curriculum. Marissa bemoaned the fact that, "when I first came [to this school six years ago], we were really, I felt like we were [sharing student work and using some students evidence]. However, she feels that now they are merely reporting out information and sometimes discussing curriculum. She wants to see her department deal with more depth rather than breadth. In discussing the importance of getting quality work in their Geography classes, Marissa states, " . . . if we did it thematically, you could probably get more depth, . . . and maybe even get three to three and a half quality weeks [of solid student work]." The focus on coverage, she believes, is a push from the makers of external accountability. Marissa wants internal accountability. She believes that depth is what provides solid student work and student insight.

The social science team meetings were noted by all members as "reporting out" meeting that sometimes discussing curriculum. No one in social science indicated that their team meetings were valuable and many-Marissa, Alesio, Patrick, Shawn, Larry-indicated that they were not useful to them as teachers.

EL and SDAIE Team

Both English and social science teachers who taught English Learners (EL) or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) classes noted their EL team meetings consistently looked at student evidence. They appreciated the meetings and indicated that the use of actual student work and the discussion of that work helped them modify their classroom instruction so they could better serve their students. Its direct impact on their classroom resulted in teachers in this PLC demonstrating excellent attendance, prepared participation, and a group synergy that creatively addressed challenges. The current EL leadership has been noted by colleagues as exemplary. The team members are valued by the staff for their expertise and professionalism.

Teacher Efficacy and Autonomy

One could argue that it is difficult to get a group of teachers together to discuss actual classroom application of knowledge gleaned from student evidence. These conversations do not provide a direct smoothly designed integration into the classroom. After all, teachers are unique, and how they teach arises out of knowledge, experience, and how they perceive the needs of their students. The belief in teacher autonomy would lend support for individual teachers, who have control over their classrooms, to use their own evidence to inform themselves about their efficacy in the classroom. They could then modify instruction as indicated.

Interesting to note was the direction of the conversations about student evidence. Teachers gave information about their department and team use of evidence, but they often volunteered their own use of evidence as being much more effective than what they achieved with their colleagues. This belief in the strength of individual efficacy was borne out by teachers' discussion of what they do with information. For most teachers, they noted that they look at student work critically and then use that information to change their direction in the classroom. Using Chart 4.5, Carlos, Brett , Gary, Amy, Marissa, and Sara indicate that they all work hard to ensure that they don't merely check off homework or student work. They read it carefully noting problems students are having and modifying their instruction the following day or week. This is usually done in isolation. The implication is that these teachers believe they are more effective in the classroom without their colleagues' assistance, at least in regard to effectively using student evidence.

Jessica, the English chair, indicates she uses feedback from students to inform her practices. When asked where he would place his own practice, Steve, the social science chair, said, "I'm with the rest of the department. I'm not doing anything different than just like I said the culture of the department, the way we operate . . . [discusses curriculum] sometimes [shares classroom practices] hardly ever [do I share student work]." Larry did believe that the one on one meetings between teachers were effective. "The individual meetings going there that's when you have, that's when you get into the [sharing of classroom ideas]. I don't see a lot of teachers actually sharing specific student work."

Despite my initial beliefs that subject area departments provide a unique venue for mutual learning, shared focus and direction, I saw the meetings' impact range from a reporting out of the state of the district, school, department in terms of planning or budget information to some look at student evidence to very little of that application in the classroom. Specific classroom and student analysis appeared to be the realm of the individual teacher.

Department Use of Student Evidence: Internal Accountability

"Evidence" in the education world is a rather broad topic. This could range from a student's score on the California High School Exit Exam (CASHEE), to student work, to a student's facial expression in the classroom. Teachers in this study had various types of evidence they used but most settled on a few pieces generally used by teachers in their department.

Teachers in both departments were asked what evidence they used that was most critical to them. Some began with a list, but as the conversation moved on, they were asked to isolate the most critical pieces of evidence that as a teacher they needed to have (Table 4.6). The three pieces both departments had in common were writing, quizzes and tests, and informal classroom questioning. Often the conversations about these pieces differed, including implementation and what constituted quality. There was no mention in either department about student reading or the teaching of reading.

Table 4.6
What Student Evidence Do Department Use?

	Writing – Assigned	Multiple Choice Tests	Quizzes Tests	Outside Reading Interviews	Writing Portfolio	Worksheets Work	Notebooks (Interactive)	Informal Questioning	Projects (poster, products)	Senior Project
Brett English	X	X			X			X		X
Jessica English	X	X	X Literature excerpts they respond to	X	X			X		X
Amy English	X		X	X	X			X	X	
Gary English	X				X			X		
Sara English	X	X	X					X		
Jan English	X		X	X	X			X		X
Victor Social	X		X					X	X	

Sci.									
Harvey Social Sci.	X		X			X		X	X	
Marissa Social Sci.	X						X	X	
Shawn Social Sci.			X					X	
Larry Social Sci.		X	X			X	X	X	
George Social Sci.	X		X			X			X
Patrick Social Sci.		X	X					X	

The English Writing Program

English has a "writing program," and all English teachers use writing quite extensively. Their writing program is referenced in almost all department and team meetings. Teachers in the department assign writing both timed and process pieces, writing assignments designed in stages or drafts. However, the instruction and feedback process differs with the individual teacher. Once or twice a year the department takes a day off site to norm and score student papers. This is completely dependent upon what monies are available to provide them substitutes. The school used to receive SB 1274 support and they used that money, in part, to support this norming and scoring of student work. One of the department meetings this year was solely devoted to bringing in samples of student written work and discussing their prompts, what worked in terms of instruction, and how they felt about the resulting products.

The Writing Portfolio and Expository Writing Grant

The writing portfolio is a component of the English writing program. The school began 20 years ago with 100% English support for the concepts found in the National Writing Portfolio guidelines. All students had writing portfolios composed of various pieces of writing that followed them for their four years at Madrone. Since then, it has become an individual teacher preference. As Gary explains it:

> One of the issues that is kind of telling within the department is we have a group of teachers who have been teaching for more than ten years, who remember the use of portfolios as a very valuable teaching and assessment tool, and then newer teachers who I think have come in, in this time of standardized testing and assessments and things that get thrown at the kid and collected and graded and then we go on, and that's what they're used to, and that's what they're comfortable with. They were never trained in working with portfolios. They were never asked to use portfolios as either a teaching tool or an assessment for our own teaching. And so that's one of our major discussions right now, is what are we doing as far as a department? What are we doing as a department with portfolios? Do we want to continue it? [Gary, Int. 2]

The department realizes that team and department evaluation of student work is costly. Over the years, they have been fortunate to be able to supplant one lost grant or funding source with another that enables them to continue their focus on student writing. This year the department has also received a California Program (CP) Grant for developing their Expository Writing Program. This grant requires 11th and 12th grade teachers to use two existing writing units and develop over time other units specific to the site that focuses on improving students' non-fiction reading and writing. This concept is not new to the department; they have been working with the local colleges on the Early Assessment Program (EAP), which is quite similar. They both emphasize the use of nonfiction writing as the starting point for student writing. They also focus on the construction of student argument and the support provided.

Unlike other assessments students take, the EAP is considered more directly beneficial to them. Students who reach a determined level on the EAP assessment are exempt from the CSU assessment exams in English. Because of that both students and teachers work to ensure student success. Since the units for this assessment have been embedded into the Madrone curriculum at the 11th and 12th grade level, college-bound students are more apt to improve their writing and thinking skills in preparation for an assessment that automatically places them in college level English. Unlike many other external assessments, this one has direct practical application to students. The Expository Writing Program grant is providing more resources so that the 11th and 12th grade teachers can work with colleagues to refine their lessons, focus, and assessments of non-fiction writing.

Many of the English teachers are passionate about the value of writing. They believe that it is the best way to help students develop their critical reading, critical thinking and writing skills. Brett explains:

> Almost all assessment comes out of essays that they write, either timed writings or process pieces. There are homework activities that they do, marginalia, different kinds of reading strategies that I do spot checks on what we discuss in class. It's kind of informal assessment. Most of the formal assessment comes from essay testing and process pieces... it does [keep me busy]. You know, it does, and I have only myself to blame, and I'm not really trying to play the martyr here, but the bottom line is, the only way you can truly assess them is their writing. There's nothing else that's better than that. We read out loud, we talk, we discuss readings and things like that, and you get a sense of it, but there's certain kids that talk a lot more than other kids, even if you're calling on other kids. They, you don't always know. And in the writing, there's nowhere to hide. They have to put out. [Brett, Int. 2]

Jessica echoes that, "In my classes, student writing [is] more [critical] than anything else." She speaks of the lack of background knowledge of "our" students, 78% of whom are receiving free lunch. Her urgency is born of the belief that her department and all teachers at Madrone have to help their students make up for their lack of academic survival skills. This concerted practice in reading and writing at school is often the only practice the students get. She expressed frustration at the lack of portfolio use in her department. It takes a lot of maintenance and thought to ensure students keep and maintain portfolios; and as Gary has said, the newer teachers do not see the return on their investment. It is typically a four-year commitment. Gary surmises that portfolios are longer-term approaches to the development of writing skills and that perhaps the newer teachers focus more on the short term because they grew up in a period of

accountability. Five out of the six teachers interviewed discussed portfolios as an important piece of student evidence.

Social Science and Writing

When discussing student work, the social science department has a different focus. Four of the seven teachers assign writing to their students, but few teach the writing process. Some social science teachers continue to use the interactive notebook concept that has traditionally been used in social science at Madrone. This notebook requires students to put their notes from the class lectures on the right hand side of the page (called inputs) and their responses or answers to questions (called outputs) on the left hand side. They are also given various handouts that they would paste into the pages of this notebook.

Although their interactive notebooks and some projects require writing short responses, no social science teacher seems to consider that "writing." Their general definition of assigned writing meant students are given a topic and asked to respond in three to five paragraphs to that topic. Some call the writing piece an "essay" some call it a paper.

Two of the four social science teachers who use specific writing assignments walk their 9th grade Geography students through one process piece during the year. This assignment for Geography students arose out of the original "division" concept in which English and social science teachers worked in consort on this grade-level project. However, next year due to pressures of reduced staffing, the department will only have their Geography students for half a year (as most schools in the district do) and will probably drop this writing component.

The newest social science teacher, Victor, unlike his department colleagues, indicated that writing was probably the most critical to him in gauging student understanding. Victor worked with his students on a four-week writing piece that allowed students to pick the focus for their piece. It was quite prescriptive and followed a template that the English department also uses to teach writing. This provided an interesting contrast to the new teacher in English who does not assign as much writing as her English colleagues do. Her writing assignments are usually shorter. She too walks students through a concerted process to get them to a finished piece of writing.

An honors social science teacher also uses writing, but he provides no instruction and very little in terms of guidance. He assigns writing and gives students a list of what is to be included in the "essay;" there is no rubric. His assessment of the quality of the students' work on this piece is also inconsistent and rewards neatness and correct spelling and grammar in lieu of content.

Test, Quizzes, and Informal Questioning

Almost all teachers in both departments indicated they used tests and or quizzes to assess students. Table 4.6 provides a distinction between multiple-choice tests versus quizzes or tests that were not multiple choice. This distinction arose because of some teachers' responses that indicated a belief about multiple-choice testing that was separate from other types of testing.

Three of the English teachers and three of the social science teachers noted multiple-choice tests or quizzes as critical, but two (one English and one social science) of them are AP teachers and use released multiple-choice exam questions for these classes. These are used to get students prepared for the AP exam, which consists of a multiple-choice section and a writing response section. The third teacher was a first year English teacher who often takes multiple-choice questions from the textbook's test generator program. Two other social science teachers used multiple-choice tests they designed or that were prepared by the department in the earlier years of CST testing. These were designed to get students prepared for the format and wording of the

California Standards Test (CST). Both teachers believed that students fared better on multiple choice than open ended types of assessments.

The social science teachers mentioned more informal ways of assessing than their English colleagues though all teachers noted that informal in-class questioning was key. Classroom informal questioning was referred to a number of times and deemed quite important by Shawn, Larry, Victor, Marissa and Patrick, though Harvey listed it as well. English teachers spoke of informal classroom questions in passing but did not list this as one of their main tools.

Social science relied more heavily on tests and quizzes including their unit tests which usually contained ten common questions the grade level team had agreed upon. This year there were no efforts to compare these scores to determine how the grade level program was faring. Many English teachers had regular vocabulary quizzes but most end of the unit tests were timed writing prompts or process pieces.

Other Ways to Assess Students

The use of projects that have a presentation or poster as a product, performance assessment, was usually a social science department assignment. Although some English teachers use the project concept as well. World History also uses a presentation for an audience with their museum piece project. This end of the year museum project involves students designing a visual three-sided poster with specific pieces of evidence on it. They then display this in the school's library and students act as a museum docents responding to questions posed by students and adults who come to see this project. Two of the social science classes participate in simulations including an end of a unit simulation on trench warfare. Amy discussed a few projects she does in English. English also has a culminating piece, the Senior Project, which is an interdisciplinary approach that requires both writing and a presentation to an audience.

A number of the social science teachers give students handouts or worksheets daily and then ask them to put all these in a packet at the end of the week to turn in as homework. These are the standard worksheets with fill in the blank sections and one or two sentence answers. Occasionally they will contain a chart students are to fill out. These mainly require students to recall knowledge or note the connection between one event in history and another. The student assignments for social science mainly revolves around what content students know. At times it requires them to explain the content in response to questions like the museum project.

English also has an outside reading requirement that involves regular interviews or "book chats" with students. All English teachers as demonstrated in department meetings and classroom observations do not adhere to this. It requires teachers to take time usually outside their regular school day to talk with students about their outside reading requirement. Teachers also set up regular "book chats" on late start Wednesdays two to three times a month. Teachers who are supporters of the outside reading program staff these. Any student can come in to discuss their book with any teacher present and get credit.

This year the Senior Project was moved from a school-wide domain to an English task. This was actually at the behest of the English department. They felt that the only way to ensure quality control with these final written and oral projects was to put it under the 12th grade English teachers' auspices. This evidence of their writing, thinking, and speaking skills is 25% of their senior English grade.

English teachers see themselves as skills-based teachers who use literature and non-fiction as a venue to teach those skills. They work on critical thinking using writing and speaking to determine the extent that students have those skills. They have numerous formal and informal conversations about how the students write and what they must be thinking to write the way they

do. Many of the English teachers feel their own specific work analyzing their students' work and their response to that work is what makes them an effective teacher.

The social science department, with a few exceptions, focuses on their subject content for guidance about what students are to learn. They use notebooks, homework packets and at times writing to see what their students know. Their examination of student work by most social science teachers is more cursory than that of their English colleagues. It yields an idea of what their students know or can recall but does not generally reveal what students understand. The lack of depth may also be seen in their CST scores, which reflect a lower percentage of students at the proficient and advanced level than student scores in English. Perhaps one practically relevant aspect of the CST scores for the social science department is to inform them that coverage is not very fruitful not only for the students' deeper understanding of the subject but also for higher CST scores.

Impact of Student Evidence on Department and Teacher Practices

Listing the evidence they use in working with students was an easier discussion for teachers than discussing the impact the evidence had on them as a teacher. Most spoke of it as a listing or repertoire they use to give students work. They often did not make the connection between what they used and why they used it until specifically prompted. They spoke out loud about what they thought was important or what informed them about their own basic beliefs or student understanding. Some were unable to articulate why they used the evidence. And others used their understanding of the policy climate and their own craft to make decisions about the efficacy of student work or evidence. There was a much more unified agreement in English about what evidence was critical to their classroom practices. Social Science often followed what their initial training or beliefs were to guide their evidence-gathering decisions.

Student Evidence: Inconsistent Beliefs and Practices Among Social Science Teachers

The social science department had a wider range than the English department of what each department member felt was critical evidence. For example, when Shawn was asked to narrow down his use of student evidence to two or three he could not live without, he spoke aloud, musing about what he would pick. The musing ended with a statement about why he chooses multiple choice. "It gets their attention and it really. . .when they see a Scan Tron. . . they really put out as much as they know because of the formality of it. I think it kind of scares them." He believes he gets a more accurate picture of what students know when they are asked to perform on a multiple choice exam. He also states that it tells him more and does a better job of informing him about what students know than a test with open-ended questions. Patrick also agrees with Shawn about the importance of multiple choice. "Their test scores are better with multiple choice."

Shawn's statement about multiple-choice questions appears to contrast with his earlier comment regarding the negative impact of external assessments. He hates the push for coverage that takes the "richness" away, yet he works to ensure his assessments emulate the CST format. And he believes the fear these types of assessments strikes in students actually reveals their understanding of the subject. This logic runs counter to the English department's focus on writing as the best venue to use to determine student understanding. One could argue that the students who grew up in this accountability era do associate Scan-Trons and bubbling in answers as a more important type of assessment than any other.

Other social science colleagues focus on student understanding that is best demonstrated through students' abilities to fill in the context of an event or idea. Victor and Alesio use very

few multiple-choice assessments. They both believe that multiple-choice results do not indicate student understanding. Their main concern is getting students to understand what the content means in the context of history. Their classroom questions do not focus on recall. They want their students to know what this information means in that time period and to their lives.

Victor indicates that the writing from his students is key to his ability to understand what they know. "You know, anything where they write, anything where I'm seeing two or three sentences together about anything, to me is very informative." And Leslie and Marissa believe that the simulations and presentations they do are more indicative of what students know than the end of unit tests.

Sometimes social science teachers indicated that their use of evidence varied depending on the type of class they were teaching. Larry uses practice multiple-choice AP tests as openers with his AP class. But he also uses weekly packets that are comprised of fill in responses, recalling of content, and some comparison work. As Larry explains, "it really gives me a quick snapshot" [of my AP class]. He explained that in one discussion he stumbled upon a way to get students focused and thinking:

> I am teaching... I have fifteen twenty minutes to talk about the difference between Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and so there's so much content. when you're talking about assessments, it's just hard for me to assess what they have because there's just so much content, but we did, it was actually good today, we were talking about Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and suddenly instead of a lecture we did an open Venn diagram and I just told them to write anything they wanted, before I even said anything, and they could talk to each other and instead of me kind of lecturing to them, we just went around the room and they had to tell me what they had in common or what they didn't and they gave me a much better idea of what they already knew coming into the class. [Larry, Int. 2]

Larry used the momentum of the moment to get his students directly involved in their own education. He felt this was a much better way to understand what this class knew. This was an example of what we might call craft knowledge, the ability to follow your intuition and experience to bring students to a place of deeper understanding (Kennedy, 2002).

With his English Learners, Larry uses their notebooks as the primary source. He also has classroom discussions that he feels are informative. He continually flips back and forth from their writing and vocabulary use at the start of the year to where they are currently. It becomes a running record of their progress that he finds extremely informative.

Sometimes teacher evidence arises out of an already existing assignment or unit that the teacher tailors for his or her own individual beliefs about their subject. Victor has said that student understanding of how an event in history shaped that moment as well as the impact on the world today was a critical part of his job as an educator. An example of this belief was evident in the assignment Victor used on British rule in the Middle East. He took a team-created unit and added discussion designed to provide students with multiple orientations and infused it with a set of resources students could use in order to complete the assignment. Students were asked to apply their knowledge of the area's geography, history, culture, including the various tribes from that area, and use other resources, and a better process than the British, to divide the Middle East. He did not tell them to divide it with the interest of peace in mind or with the territories' ability to acquire political power, he simply told them to use all information, knowledge, beliefs they now had about the area and redraw the boundaries. His assessment

included the full process. One that used discussions with students in the classroom, one on one conversations, small group discussions about various aspects of that part of the world, the students partner work to re-divide the Middle East, and their final product with an explanation for how and why they designed their map of the Middle East. Victor knows this assignment provides adequate and appropriate evidence of learning.

Harvey grapples with what his department should use as definitive evidence. He asserts if the homework indicates that students do not understand, he re-teaches the lesson or concepts they appear not to understand. But he has also done some talking among other high schools in the district and found one that uses a software program designed to take Scan-Tron answers and provide an analysis of these types of assessments. The school is improving its CST scores. Harvey believes that his department should also use that software program. When asked if it would work, he says, "The state thinks [they're] doing a great job! Right?" When he was asked if it would make a difference, he responds, "I have no idea. See that's the thing, is I don't have enough information to really judge whether what they're doing is a good thing or not." When asked what would convince him that the program works, he speaks of two other pieces of evidence he had not mentioned previously that would confirm the efficacy of this software program: interviewing students and student writing.

In social science, there are pockets of teachers' deeper understanding of what student evidence informs teacher practices, but with some it is intermingled with a lack of full awareness of the significance or lack of significance of that evidence. Why are homework packets that are checked only for completeness significant? Why do some teachers believe a series of multiple-choice questions is the best way to get accurate information of student knowledge? Harvey wants a program that "works" for another school. But when asked to reflect on the logic of that, he admits he would need some other way to verify its efficacy. The lack of mindfulness in this department and the scattered approach to student work does not position social science teachers to consistently use evidence to inform their practices.

English: Shared Emphasis on Writing

The English department believes that writing is a powerful way to develop student reading and thinking skills. The more fervent believers also participate in the student portfolio project. All English teachers assign and teach writing in their classes. They are also engaged in looking at student writing and assessing it according to agreed upon rubrics. This affords the opportunity to discuss student work in light of the department writing program. What appears missing is more fine-grained attention to details: analysis of students writing including student thinking and problem solving abilities.

The English teachers' ability to work the process of writing in order to get at students' best work was evident with a number of teachers including Brett. In describing how he sets up his assignments, Brett demonstrates that as the students work on their papers, he is continually assessing them and guiding them along. In this particular incident he is describing his metacognition that allowed him to move from a more traditional approach of assigning and developing a topic to one that provided multiple opportunities for students to perfect their writing skills and also allows them to determine their direction:

> Well, I just came up with it. I was doing it very traditionally where, ok, here's we're reading this unit on gender, ok, we read the articles blah blah blah, ok, we're going to write a paper now on gender, let's do a rhetorical analysis, and a standard piece they'd all write. Unfortunately, a lot of the pieces looked the same. I mean, the unit

may be different, the material may be different, but the writing always looks the same. I mean, it's always exemplification, it's, so anyway, I said I'm tired of this, so what I did is I let them choose a topic, any topic, I said [choose] some topic you're interested in and that there's research available on. And then they wrote, their first paper, I said you're assignment is to take a stand, I want you to take a very specific audience and I want you to outline that audience for me. And you can write any paper you want, I don't care, but your job is to try to move your audience toward your position, taking a stand . . . Ok, they had to keep writing that paper until they got a B at least on it… Students then their next paper, same topic, different audience, now I want you to write a comparison paper. So I love this. All of a sudden I saw students really struggling with different modes of development. You can't believe how many kids I had come to me, say, I don't know how to write. How do you do a comparison? If anything I learned from that I need to frontload more. I assumed, I should have, I gave them some comparison pieces to read and some stuff to talk about, how do comparison work, I thought that might be enough, it wasn't. [Brett Int. 2]

Brett can demonstrate his thought process as he works with students' written evidence. He saw his students writing similar papers on the topic they were given and realized the results contain no logically driven evidence or voice. He understands the need for autonomy, and so, he changes his tack giving them the ability to choose their own topic and then use the information for the same topic in multiple papers with a variety of audiences. This use of writing to clarify student thinking and to improve their versatility as writers is a profound use of student evidence to inform instruction. Because he used writing as a venue to improve student thinking, he notes it also required him to improve his teaching.

Gary, like Brett , uses his writing assignment to teach his students and himself. He regularly reflects on his teaching of writing using student feedback and student products.

In other words, like with the narrative essays that they've just turned in, we talked about, and I taught, writing direct dialogue, and I got those pieces. I'm looking at those to see the fact that I didn't teach that so well, apparently, or they didn't get that, because a lot of them are just using indirect dialogue, and saying, not using quotes, not using the skill that I thought I had taught. . . we reviewed, and we looked at models of paragraphs, talked about how paragraphs change when you change time or place in a story. I've seen a lot of kids who just don't, aren't doing that. [Gary, Int. 2]

Gary explains that all the skills he's taught are intended to be embedded in their writing. He explains, "It's supposed to be embedded in that narrative piece, and so I can assess for that, and get an idea of whether or not I've taught it effectively."

Jessica also sees the value in working with students on writing not only for development of their skills but also hers. In discussing the writing process, she describes how she changes her instruction based on her classes:

Process is more, to me process is more about the learning process and growth as a writer. And depending on how much I've contributed to their finished product, and I don't contribute a ton to finished products with seniors, AP seniors, but I do contribute a lot to finished products with freshman, and so sometimes it's telling me

more about my ability than it's telling me about their ability, depending how much I've intervened. So the timed pieces to me give me better information. Especially, we have a number of EL students who, it's not just EL students, though it primarily is, who don't turn in really their own work. The work that we get if it's a process piece is the sister at Berkeley has contributed to it, and the older brother who's gone through school has contributed to it, and so there can be huge discrepancies between what timed pieces and process pieces look like, beyond the discrepancies that we should see. [Jessica, Int.2]

Amy indicates writing is an authentic way to assess skills. It allows students to genuinely express themselves and demonstrate what they understand. She believes the department's student writing portfolio is helping them improve their writing program. She also sees the value in the department's push to set up an articulation of skills in writing by grade level.

Well, that's what we're doing with the portfolios, is that we are assessing our writing program, and we're really breaking it down, I mean, to what do we want our ninth graders, what do we want them to by the time they leave have in their tool belt. Same with tenth graders, and then we bleed it into eleven and twelfth. So I think that that collaboration definitely dictates our teaching. So if we look at writing samples and we say, ok, clearly our kids are struggling with analysis and finding appropriate evidence, then we use that and take that to our classrooms the following day, and we sort of emphasize that, or commas, or semicolons, or things like that, we are really now trying to get it to be very particular about how we collaborate, and then bringing that into the classroom. [Amy Int. 2]

The feedback Brett, Jessica, and Amy get from student writing is more detailed more specific and more telling about how their students' think than external accountability scores. This information is also used to improve the department's approach to writing. Teachers are interested in improving the department's approach to writing. Brett and Jessica speak regularly and one of their conversations dealt with having common papers:

Jessica and I did talk, oh, I don't know, a month, two months ago, about this thing about a common, we need common papers. We need something that we can look at and talk about as a group. . . .this idea of looking at our work and seeing what we all do and what we don't do and using that, once again this is a subtle form of pressure. . . Our next step is really to have some little kinds of things, ok, this is what a conclusion looks like to me. I'm going to present this to you. You got problems with that, let's hear, let's see, what's your, like trying to get out of summary in conclusion, for example. That makes me crazy. . . . So we have half of the department that's teaching summary as conclusion.. . we definitely determine what should be happening, or what our strengths and weaknesses are. Now, whether that transfers to actual instruction, that's difficult to say. . . And this is where the senior project is really valuable, more valuable than it's ever been, because the kinds of papers they're writing now are more legitimate than… the senior project paper prior to this year was an incredibly unique paper that a student would never normally write in any given situation. This idea of looking at student work and looking at common kinds of student work, common kinds of assignment, I think it encourages people to apply the information more. We can talk

in common language, we can talk about common problems, and we can talk about common solutions, because the papers are similar. So I think there's more chance for things to be done. [Brett, Int. 2]

Brett is clearly excited at the prospect of his department improving through the infrastructures that are in place: portfolios, common papers, and now the newly revised process for the Senior Project. The potential of teachers and students learning from writing was key to every conversation I had with English teachers. Brett encapsulates this, "There's more accountability, I think, ultimately, when we're talking about common kinds of writing. . . in the writing, there is nowhere to hide."

The power of students writing and teachers reading that writing and sharing their thoughts on what that writing means in terms of student understanding is quite powerful. The English departments' use of writing to inform their practice is seen in almost every English classroom. However, students' CST scores do not reflect high skills in writing. Perhaps that is because the CST only uses actual student writing in high school in the 10th grade. The other two grade levels face multiple-choice questions that provide a score estimating students' writing skills. To English teachers this lack of authentic assessment for writing makes these scores invalid. One site measure of actual student writing is the Senior Project paper. This year 96% of the seniors participated. The average paper score out of four was 2.56. If students' approach to writing and their results on the senior project are any indication of learning, then students who go through Madrone's English program are comfortable and confident in their writing skills.

The Practical Relevance of Evidence and the California Standards Test

In education one expects that data with practical relevance will provide information that can be directly translated into immediately useful feedback to practitioners. In the case of a large-scale assessment, practical relevance might provide a summary of what other site-wide measures also indicate or verify. In other words external assessments, in order to provide practical information to educational practitioners, must accurately reflect student knowledge and understanding that is, or can be, demonstrated through other types of formative and summative assessments. To many teachers the California Standards Test (CST) does not provide this information.

At Madrone, both English and social science teachers doubt the relevance of the CST to their own practice. Although social science aligns itself with the format and content of the CST, they have shown consistently lower CST scores than the English department. However, English with its well-developed internal accountability system linked to both formative and summative classroom evidence responds more favorably to the state's accountability system than their social science colleagues.

The English department uses writing as its touchstone, its indicator of student and, for some teachers, teacher learning. Writing is the main venue they use as a subgroup in the school to determine how they are performing. They did not make excuses for their failings in not helping their students to improve their writing. They looked to themselves to see what they needed to do to improve student work. To this department the most valuable information of practical relevance is student writing and teacher and student efforts to improve it.

Compared to the evidence and work on their writing program, the impact of CST scores on the English department is fairly minimal. Teachers and students know that these tests exist and that the student scores have been gradually improving. They are not sure why, but they do know

why their students' writing has improved. It has been a collaborative process between students and teachers over time.

Generally, the social science department is more concerned with matching the format and nature of the CST to some of their classroom practices. They design tests that mimic CST format. They also check to see what is included on the CST to ensure that they "cover" the material before the exam. They write pacing guides and curricular maps for each grade level to ensure the material is covered and regularly discuss their progress on those pacing guides.

However, three social science department members–Harvey, Marissa, and Victor–seem to question the relevance of the CST scores for teachers and students. Victor believes that the content of social science is "not rote memorization." Students need to learn history because it is intimately connected to their life and their future. Victor uses alternatives to the Scan-Tron tests because he sees real meaning in the assessments he uses.

The conversation with Harvey about the other school that used a software program to assess their work was revealing. Harvey did not know if that information actually helps inform practice, but he would like to have the opportunity to determine if it does. However, he admitted he would have to use student writing and student interviews to cross check the software scores to ensure their validity.

Marissa believes that the emphasis on breadth in the CST denies the richness of the depth of the subject content. She also believes that the depth approach allows for more students, especially minorities and students of poverty, to be successful. These three social science teachers saw the need to have student evidence that provided practical information about how effective they were as teachers.

The English department has at least one universally accepted measure of student and teacher achievement, student writing. Social science does not. It is interesting to note that the site-determined internal accountability for English appears to have more impact on student achievement, as measured on the state external test, than the social science efforts to align themselves with external accountability measures.

This notion that educational practitioners need multiple forms of evidence to assess student learning has been well documented. Studies support the notion that there are specific forms of data or evidence that are most beneficial to various educators at different levels of the school system (Wayman & Stringfield, 2006; Coburn & Talbert, 2006; Young, 2006). This study reinforces the notion that teachers need this evidence to teach them how to be better at their craft. The world of teaching is more complex and dynamic than that of test making. Teachers are artisans (Huberman,1993) who have to adapt on the spot, use their resources, understand the thinking of students, and bring it all together in the orchestrated improvisation we call teaching. For teachers, external assessments fall quite short in providing that understanding.

Chapter Summary

This chapter describes teachers' perception of their department and individual use of student evidence. Overall, external assessments do not appear to provide teachers with the nuanced and fine-grained feedback they need to modify their instruction. Student evidence is most significant when teachers use it specifically for their classroom. In the English department, teachers' internal accountability aligns with their department, values and has remained more constant over time than the current external accountability measures. It is not just that student writing is trusted as a valid measure of success, but it makes pedagogical sense to teachers. They have a history

that for 20 years has support this measure. And so, they revise their internal accountability as they see fit and ignore most of the direction, scope and wording of external policies.

Social science has few internal accountability measures and none that are used uniformly for the four years students attend Madrone. They all use the pacing guides that are designed to cover externally tested material. They all also use common assessments based on the curriculum and format for the CST. Despite that, their CST scores are consistently lower than English.

That said, there are patterned differences across departments. English tends to use evidence in ways that are more directly related to conversations about student learning. Social science generally uses evidence to determine their alignment with state standards. The process papers assigned by all of the English teachers and a few of the social science teachers provide a series of formative assessments that teachers have noted help them evaluate their own practice. A series of disconnected grants and now CP money have assisted the English department is keeping their writing program alive. During this same time period, social science, except for a few bubbles of innovation, has remained relatively stagnant.

Despite my efforts to see departments as the negotiators of policy, I instead saw in the English department a partially unified effort to use internal accountability with some homage paid to external assessment. The social science department focused on external accountability. Their apparent inability to mediate the accountability policy may have more to do with their capacity, history, commitment and staffing changes (Ball & Bowe, 1992) than any desire to be compliant with state guidelines. Ironically, their scores have not improved, despite the fact that they have adjusted their internal assessments to parallel the external assessments in order to demonstrate student improvement.

The purpose of both types of accountability is to improve student performance. The agreement of this philosophy is there but not the practical utility. State and district believe the CSTs and CASHEE scores to be a true mark of student achievement. Teachers do not. The disconnect between externally-imposed and internally-constructed student assessments appears in conflict. The impact of this collision leaves a gap that requires a mediator or mediators to reconcile.

This suggests that the reconciliation of external and internal accountability requires consistent guidance to all site departments that does not just rely on the piecemeal curricular design typical of individual departments. Site leaders certainly have the opportunity to unify departments' stance toward external and internal accountability. However, at Madrone the principals have had widely different impacts on the assessment focus of the site. The next chapter will explore the impact of the site's leaders on improved practices.

CHAPTER 5
THE ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN REFORM EFFORTS

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter established that the rise of the accountability movement beginning in the mid-1990s presented teachers at Madrone with a "collision" between a well-established system of internal accountability, especially among English teachers, and a new set of external assessment demands. Central to that collision were the perceived differences in the meaning, consequences and utility of externally-imposed and internally-constructed student assessments.

This chapter takes up the question of how the teachers' experience of that collision was shaped by the actions of a succession of school principals. It traces the history of the principalship at the school in relation to a shift in reform climate from "restructuring" to "accountability," and a corresponding shift in the district's expectations regarding teachers' use of student test data. The six principals fall into four phases of leadership, each which provided disparate approaches to reforms.

During this leadership the school experienced a shift from restructuring to subject standards, to test-based accountability. Madrone High School began with a number of basic concepts designed to move educators into the 21st century: a divisional cross-departmental organization that used an interdisciplinary approach in heterogeneously grouped classrooms using authentic assessments. The staff that was initially interviewed for this school was chosen because they shared the vision. At Madrone's inception, the staff and the principal embraced the restructuring concept. The district's start up money provided the site with the funding required in using this approach. A few years later, the SB 1274 restructuring grant money was used to support the vision of the founding staff at Madrone.

The first challenge to the site's restructuring work was the state's move to subject standards because it undermined the commitments to the interdisciplinary curriculum. This was reinforced by the district's insistence that teachers teach specific novels whose supplementary materials were tied to the new state subject standards. The subject based testing designed to assess the subject standards was the next challenge because it undermined the commitments to more "authentic" performance assessments that had been set in place during the restructuring movement.

The two founding principals along with their core of teacher leaders provided the focus and classroom support for the original restructuring reform. Their initial and existing beliefs and knowledge and the ability of both to be infused into the school over time has determined the extent that the initial culture exists today.

The growing standards and accountability movement presented a set of challenges to the major components of restructuring. It was not a reflection of the original interdisciplinary, heterogeneous grouped philosophy of previous years. Because students were tested in discrete subjects, the interdisciplinary approach was not measured. Because the new accountability was designed to put pressure on districts and sites to focus on their lower performing students, these students were often put in homogeneously grouped classes to get the remediation thought necessary to bring up their scores. It was not seen as a reflection of the values at the site, past or present, nor was there a consistent site approach to accountability or a concerted attempt, except on the part of the most recent principal, to assist the staff in translating accountability into

practice. This chapter explores the impact of a succession of principals on translating reform into improved teacher practices using these three reforms as a backdrop.

Changing Leadership at Madrone: The Four Phases

Since its opening 20 years ago, Madrone High School has had six different principals each with his own focus (Table 5.1). However, a pattern emerges that allows placing the principals into four distinct groups that comprise the phases of principal leadership at Madrone (Figure 5.1).

Table 5.1

Principals, Eras, Direction to Staff, Direction from the District Office

Dates	Principal Site Issues	Reform Era, Events	Direction to Staff	District Pressures
1989-1992	Paul Lindsay Given latitude to innovate.	CLAS replaces CAP	Smaller learning communities or academies, Divisional concept to support interdisciplinary focus	Focus on restructuring literature
1992-1996	Louis Duncan Faced boundary changes	1992 *Second To None* published CLAS discontinued in1995 State 1274 Initiative		The beginning of Standards & Accountability. District requirement to teach specific novels and writing genres based on grade level.
1996-2002	Jay Belmont	STAR Testing replaced the discontinued CLAS test in 1998 Accountability Era	Know the standards for your subject area. Review CST data and make changes in teacher practice based on that analysis.	District asked all principals to have teachers use CST data to inform their practice through concerted work in departments identifying strength and weaknesses and adjusting curriculum accordingly.
2002-2005	John Allen	Accountability Era NCLB Authorization 2001	Design curriculum maps and pacing guides that directly address standards and respond to CST scores.	
2005-2006	George Brand	Accountability Era CASHEE (exit exam) applied to the 2006 graduating class	Interim principal No specific direction	Asked to keep the status quo

2006-2009	Thomas Scarpa Described by one teacher as a "Return to order."	Accountability Era	Organize the site around significant and meaningful goals that get prompt action. Focus on teaching and learning and the scores will follow.	Align site resources to achieve goals directly related to CST scores. This was reflected in "Targeted Goals" for the year. However, the VP usually writes these. Scarpa says he did not get any district directives including any regarding accountability.

The greatest differences appear to be the approach they had toward reform and their ability to see both macro and micro aspects of the site.
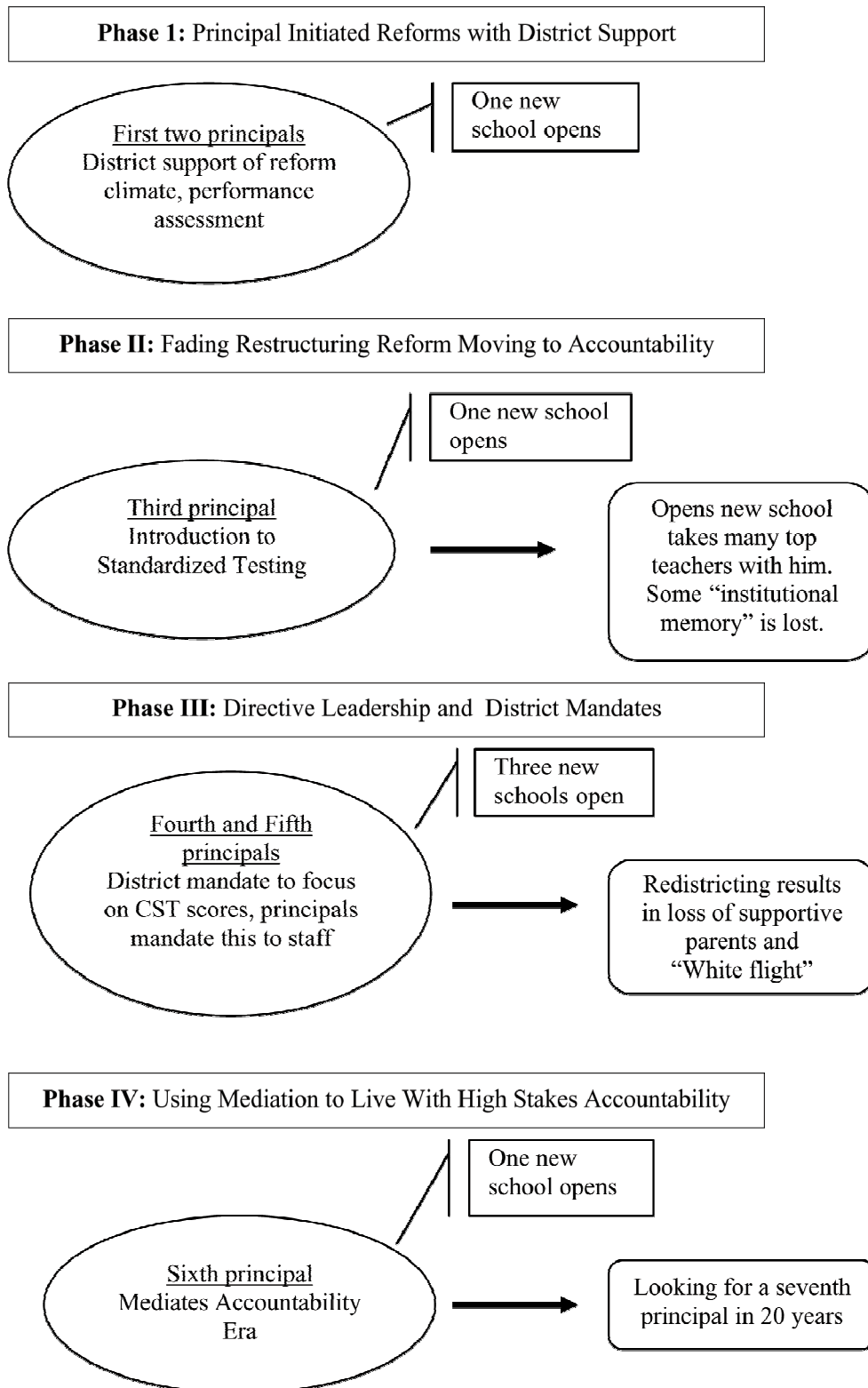
Phase I: Principal Initiated Reform with District Support (1989-1996)

Phase I spanned the tenure of two principals, and coincided with widespread state and national interest in locally initiated school "restructuring" (for example, as outlined in the California's high school reform document *Second to None* in 1992). The first principal, Paul Lindsay (Figure 5.1) who facilitated the school's planning and opened the school, was responsible for the school's architectural and curricular design. His focus was interdisciplinary, humanities based curriculum with heterogeneously grouped classes.

This approach was based on research that indicated tracking students in specific classes was detrimental to student achievement, especially minority students. The interdisciplinary focus and the heterogeneous class grouping all were designed to ensure student equity. The school developed houses, smaller groups of students with the same teachers. They designed the schedule to allow teachers in the English and social science department to work together in the same house. A conversation with Lindsay during this study revealed his enthusiasm about the opening of the school and its focus on equity. Currently a superintendent, he said that this school was his single most significant achievement.

The planning for the opening of Madrone began with a pioneering spirit and a sense of excitement. In order to open a new school, a principal needs staff members who want to be a part of the vision. The majority of teachers came from outside the district, but some of the more experienced ones came from the other high school in the district. As Lisa, a 20 year teacher at Madrone, explains the process of supplying those teachers, "He [Lindsay] raided Kennedy High School [another high school in Madrone's district]. . . [they came because] Madrone High School was going to be where they did all the experiments. . .the new stuff!" Even before restructuring reform arrived at most high schools in California, this high school was based on restructuring. In an era of tracking students, it was focused on de-tracking them into heterogeneously grouped classes. However, working on implementing a vision and

Figure 5.1
Madrone Phases of Leadership in Reform Eras

Phase 1: Principal Initiated Reforms with District Support

First two principals
District support of reform climate, performance assessment

One new school opens

Phase II: Fading Restructuring Reform Moving to Accountability

Third principal
Introduction to Standardized Testing

One new school opens

Opens new school takes many top teachers with him. Some "institutional memory" is lost.

Phase III: Directive Leadership and District Mandates

Fourth and Fifth principals
District mandate to focus on CST scores, principals mandate this to staff

Three new schools open

Redistricting results in loss of supportive parents and "White flight"

Phase IV: Using Mediation to Live With High Stakes Accountability

Sixth principal
Mediates Accountability Era

One new school opens

Looking for a seventh principal in 20 years

sustaining that vision requires quite different skill sets.

Both Jessica and Ann, teachers who had been at the school since Lindsay's tenure, conveyed the enthusiasm surrounding this new school with its innovative spirit. The excitement, and some would say hope, this school raised was powerful. Jessica read about this new school, moved from the Bay area, and immediately applied to Madrone. Ann says, "There was a big buzz about Madrone High School, about this new interdisciplinary, heterogeneously grouped students. There was a really strong buzz. . . the buy in was incredible! We were all chosen to be a part of it. . .it was high pressure to be the best." Ann describes the first two years at Madrone:

> There wasn't as much focus on the testing. . . [there was instead] a focus on the writing process. There was a lot more teacher support. New teachers had several days a quarter to develop strategies, Cal Lit Project, Area 3 Project, time working on teams to develop curriculum . . . In the first couple of years we had about 10 days a year of release time. . . Those first two years were overwhelming, I almost quit teaching then. . . we worked 70 hour weeks. [Int. 9/09]

The hard work was necessary because there was not much in the way of curriculum that supported the vision of Madrone, and so the teachers wrote most of it. A report that arose out of a study written by a group of researchers for Madrone describes the pressure and "challenges that teachers and administrators face in pursuing each of these aims–and pursuing them all at the same time."

In addition to the lack of curriculum that supported their vision, they also discovered a few other obstacles, most prominently the students' skill level and continual demographic changes. Ann was asked what informed her that Madrone's original expectations of the start up team needed revision. She explained that their ideals of holding students to high standards were too difficult to achieve because the students could not read the texts they had chosen. Students were asked to read the *Odyssey* or *Tale of Two Cities*, but they could not access this literature. Teachers spent a lot of time trying to walk students though the text instead of discussing concepts in the text. "Reality happened," Ann explains. The books were too high level and too difficult for kids to access. "We were teaching them the works, but the kids couldn't read them on their own."

There were other examples of "reality" that impacted the staff's ability to implement their vision. The career academies required a huge time commitment on the part of teachers. It also required them to link academic content with vocational opportunities, a feat that required most teachers to conduct research outside their subject expertise. There was also disagreement among teachers in the division regarding the best approach for the teachers who teamed. Social science was seen as a more structured department. When they teamed with the English department there were items that had to be negotiated. Jessica, who was the division leader, explains the difficulty:

> Social Sciences is very different from Math. They [social science]- have a very structured approach to doing things. And divisional finals for each grade levels that must be given by all teachers and things like that. And so it's very different. And when an interdisciplinary curriculum was created for this specific grade level, it took on more of the characteristics of the Social Science approach than the English approach and it didn't leave as much room as I would have liked and [previous division leader] would have liked for creativity, for creative differences and for creative approaches for different ways of doing things. But there is a core of that team that created that curriculum that believes very strongly that they have created

something wonderful and so part of it is hurt feelings. It's like, "If you don't want to do things the same way that I want to do them, then you must think that what I'm doing is bad." Well, wrong. [Jessica Interview, February, 1994]

The difficulty of transitioning from one division leader to the next provided an opportunity for the initial culture to be passed on, but that did not occur as one might expect.

[Teacher A], who is our previous division leader, didn't give us a lot of direction. It wasn't like we were wandering in the desert looking for water, but we have so many good people on staff that she trusted us to make decisions, and with very few guidelines, and choices that were right for us and right for our kids. [Jessica Interview, February, 1994]

The concept of transitioning leadership was a constant part of these sets of interviews. Jessica speaks of the lack of transition plan in her division. The same lack was also prevalent in the movement of principals through the school. The importance of leadership transition cannot be undervalued and will be further discussed in Chapter Six. This transition of principals and how they were categorized was addressed in part by Ann. Her observations about the principals provided an overall concept that divided them into two basic categories. The ones that the teachers felt were good leaders and were subsequently moved to the district office (Lindsay, Duncan and Scarpa) and the others who were a "beloved" but mediocre leader, who left the school (Belmont), or a poor leader, who left the district (Allen). The teachers felt they were constantly working not just at their job of teacher or teacher leader, but also as a trainer for the various principals who were hired for their site: "We [Madrone] are a training ground for leaders."

The first principal, Lindsay, was not involved in most of these concerns regarding the implementation of their vision. He was out every day at lunch working to build a positive climate with students and staff. Those conversations about reading comprehension and the micro aspects of the classroom, the constraints the teachers felt in teaching their students, the pedagogical disagreements, were up to the department and division to sort out. Recognized for his ability to take a vision and implement it at a school site, Lindsay was already on his way to the district office after his third year at Madrone.

During the tenure of Louis Duncan, the second principal, the English department was told by the district that they had to teach specific novels and specific writing genres at each grade level. This subject specific direction by the district was not a policy that the principal was involved with. It, however, added significant pressure to the Cultures and Literature Division, specifically the English teachers. Some of the novels might not have been as appropriate for the students at Madrone, but they were mandated. In a transcript from a previous study at Madrone conducted between 1992-1994, Jessica, a Division leader at the time, agrees with Ann that the reading proved difficult for their students. At times the literature just was not appropriate for Madrone's population. As she explains:

Huck Finn is probably my biggest bomb. "*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.* That has to be. And I think it partly has to do with African-American community and the fact that no matter how many ways you try to rationalize the use of derogatory terms in the book, it still hurts. Every time they hear it, it's like a knife in the chest. And you can't walk away from that. And they really, it's such a, the book is, in some ways it's so much a children's book. It's so much a children's story but

it's so much an adult novel because of the social criticism. . . Well, I'm not teaching Huck Finn this year even though I'm supposed to. [Jessica Interview February, 1994].

The mandated novels and writing also hampered the interdisciplinary planning between the English and social science departments. Although Duncan might have been able to negotiate these concerns with the district office, he was either unaware or felt it was not his purview. This policy along with financial constraints, the focus on subject specific standardization, and the inconsistent focus of site leadership, teachers and principals, assisted in the erosion of the division concept and ultimately the innovative restructuring.

Duncan started the school with his predecessor and continued their work; it was the most seamless transition to another principal the staff has had. Ann explains, "From Paul to Louis in leadership it did feel like there wasn't a shift in leadership. It was a shift in reality for our students." She does not believe that there were any district pressures on the school or Duncan. The district did new teacher meetings and trainings, but it was not felt at the site level. Duncan started a house program for the 9th and 10th graders following the school within a school concept. This was seen as a natural extension of the academic academies smaller learning community concept.

Teachers felt supported by Duncan. They speak of his interest in their classroom work. When Ann was asked what she meant by feeling supported she replied, "support feels like knowing who you are, what you do in the classroom, listening and I guess, just recognizing who these people are. . .it's knowing who your teachers are and getting out there. Louis went into classes a lot and knew who I was as a teacher." Dr. Duncan was the champion for equity. "He was heavily supported by the district, their fair-haired boy. He had a lot of political and community muscle that helped him get the job done." [Sally Interview]

Duncan supported his core teacher leaders writing of the SB 1274 grant. The money allowed Madrone to continue their work on restructuring and helped to provide more collaborative working days. These assisted in smoothing out the discrepancies in teachers' perceptions of what needed to be done to keep Madrone on its initial path. This work also started the protocol used to discuss teacher lessons and to look at student work. It assisted in the work of getting an academy at the site. A core leadership team of teachers who thoroughly supported Duncan completed this work.

Teachers speak of the district and school site boundary conflict that arose during this time. A new school's planned opening to handle the fast growth of the area, required boundary changes. The act of redrawing the boundaries caused further erosion of Madrone's start to reform education. Parents who felt the newer schools would provide a better education for their children often lobbied successfully for gerrymandering that moved many of Madrone's most supportive families out of their attendance area. The community fervor and the perceived lack of district support for Madrone solidified the staff's belief that they were no longer considered the innovative school they once were. Eventually the boundary changes did indeed move a lot of families who had provided cultural and community support to Madrone out of their attendance area. As one teacher explained, "We felt un-empowered especially by losing our vocal parent groups." The boundaries were changed during Duncan's tenure before the new high school opened. The negative impact of these demographic changes in 1996 was felt over a period of years and the loss of their most involved parents is still felt today in 2009.

Table 5.2
Madrone High School Demographics 1994-2009
Ethnicities with the Greatest Representation

Year	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	African American	White (non-Hispanic)	Total Students
2008-09	34.0 %	25.6%	20.5%	12.2 %	1768
2007-08 +	33.2%	22.7%	20.0%	12.8%	1832
2006-07	33.3%	21.1%	21.3%	12.8%	1917
2005-06	34.2%	20.2%	22.7%	14.0%	2093
2004-05 +	34.8%	19.1%	22.4%	14.3%	2218
2003-04	34.3%	18.6%	22.1%	15.8%	2360
2002-03 +	34.1%	18.5%	20.2%	17.8%	2355
2001-02	34.2%	17.2%	21.7%	18.0%	2301
2000-01	33.7%	16.3%	21.1%	19.7%	2197
1999-00	34.1%	15.0%	20.4%	21.5%	2088
1998-99	31.7%	15.9%	18.9%	24.0%	2201
1997-98 +	28.2%	15.2%	19.1%	26.7%	2230
1996-97	24.5%	14.5%	18.0%	31.2%	2560
1995-96	23.2%	13.5%	17.8%	34.5%	2423
1994-95 +	23.3%	12.1%	16.6%	35.9%	2378
1993-94	24.2%	11.9%	17.2%	36.2%	2417
Only English Learner information was available from 1992-93. The percentage is derived from the total number of EL students.					
1992-93 *	60%	13%	Not available		
1991-92 *	63%	16%	Not available		
1990-91 *	65%	15%	Not available		
1989-90 *	66%	13%	Not available		

+ Years a new school opened
* Only English Learner information was available for these years. The percentage is derived   from the total number of EL students.

Despite the "political muscle" that Duncan had, he could not protect his school site from the winds of change. The "White flight" continued for the next 12 years–spanning his tenure and the next three principals' tenure–while moving Madrone from 36.2% Caucasian in 1993 to 12.2 % in 2009. He moved to the district office and continued to be supportive of Madrone from that position. A preacher in his community, Duncan had the ability to inspire others. "He was very empowering in how he talks to you" [Alisha, Interview]. Nonetheless, by the time of his departure, the start up money for the site had been depleted and the school had to work with tighter finances. This cut down the number of specialized programs the school could offer students and the professional development opportunities available to teachers. And the standards and accountability movement was gaining strength.

Table 5.3
Madrone High School: Principals, Openings of other Local Schools,
External Testing and API Reports 1998 -2009

School Year	Principal	Opening of Other Local Schools and Testing Information	Number of Students	Base API	Statewide Ranking	Similar School Rank
2008-09	Thomas Sarpa	2008 Another HS opens	1225	703	5	9
2007-08			1225	689	5	8
2006-07		CASHEE required for 2006 graduating class	1332	669	4	5
2005-06	George Brand	2005 Another HS opens	1409	676	5	7
2004-05	John Allen	2004 Another HS opens	Not available			
2003-04			1654	644	5	8
2002-03		2002 Another HS opens	1653	622	5	9
2001-02	Jay Belmont	NCLB Authorization	1527	614	5	8
2000-01			1422	602	4	7
1999-20		API/AYP available for all K-12 schools	1301	572	4	4
1998-99			Prior to CST test creation. Scores are Not Available from 1989-1998			
1997-98		1997 Another HS opens in 1998 STAR Testing replaced the discontinued CLAS test				
1996-97		No state testing				
1995-96	Louis Duncan	No state testing				
1994-95		1994 Another HS opens No state testing				
1993-94						
1992-93						
1991-92	Paul Lindsay					
1990-91						
1989-90		CLAS replaces CAP				

Phase II: Fading of Restructuring Reform and Moving into Accountability (1996-2002)

Phase II marks the consolidation of the subject standards movement and the return to standardized testing. Jay Belmont, Phase II, arrived at the same time the state designed and released standards for each of the subject areas (Table 5.1). Belmont had these standards downloaded and provided every department a Standards Binder. As Lisa explained, "For the first couple of years standards were in place. We said, 'Ok, we got these standards what are we going to do with them?'" Jay had only a short year or two to work with and develop the staff before district officials told him his teachers needed to regularly review the California Standards Test scores and change their practices based on that data. These scores were published in the third year of Belmont tenure (Table 5.3).

Although teachers got the binders and the district directive, there was no training or support for how to translate these scores into the work that they do. Belmont did not translate the district message into effective faculty action. Teachers report sitting in meetings looking blankly at scores and talking around what the scores mean or might mean to them as subject specific teachers.

Another challenge that spilled into Belmont's tenure as another unresolved issue was the boundary changes. With the opening of a new school came new boundary changes that each time cut out the more affluent families from Madrone's attendance area. Teachers describe the continued "white flight" as yet another new high school opened this time during Jay's tenure. The faculty was upset over their perception that the district office did not work for a more equitable division of the area. The teachers talked about how to bring back the families they lost. "The changing of the boundaries left a bad taste for us [it felt like the message was] we [the district office] are going to hamper you in any way we can. They totally gave in to parent pressure" [Ann, Interview, 2009].

Belmont was very supportive of the teachers, but no one seemed able to describe his vision or focus. When a former teacher during Belmont's tenure and current vice principal was asked what Belmont's vision was, he replied, "Well, what day of the week was it?" As one faculty member comments, "He let the good things be. I can't say what he did. . .I don't know that he had a real strong vision." Alisha echoed that, "I don't know what Jay's vision is. . .he used it [the job] as a stepping stool [for a better job]. . . we lost a vision that year. We went into departments and not divisions. . .people stopped coming to staff meetings. . .I felt so abandoned. . .frustrated."

When asked, teachers identify the tipping point from the original focus to a more traditional high school approach occurred during his tenure at Madrone. As one teacher explains his perspective, "You know, you hired 120 teachers and [have] 2,000 kids. How can you get everyone to buy into everything?" However, the lack of leadership in addressing the faculty's difficulties in using the standards and the students' test scores suggests Jay's inability to walk his staff through these policy changes. Couple this lack of reform guidance from the principal, with the changing demographics of the site, and Belmont's move to a new job, the faculty was now lost without a leader in the center of the accountability storm. The subject-based standards did not provide support for an interdisciplinary focus. This, along with the lack of funds, contributed to the loss of the division and the original interdisciplinary concept.

Phase III: Directive Leadership and District Mandates: Mandated
Teachers' Attention to Test Data (2002-2006)

The four-year period beginning in 2002 coincided with passage of the federal legislation *No Child Left Behind* and the onset of high-stakes, test-based accountability. Information from the teachers, documents, and research pieces strongly suggest that the next two principals appear to have their focus on teaching and test scores, but they were not able to guide their staff through the maelstrom of standardization and accountability. The leadership of principals four and five did not focus on the macro picture of the site but instead looked to the smaller view in departments and classrooms. They were also facing a faculty that was still recovering from the pressures of the start up of the school and the subsequent restructuring reform. The burnout was felt after seven difficult yet innovative years. The staff had worked long, hard hours with their two original leaders of the reform, who were now gone.

Many of the core teachers who helped the school become this restructured school left with Jay Belmont to go to the new school he opened. Lisa, tired about getting yet another new principal said, "It seemed like every year there was a new acronym, a new book, dump the previous one. . .we got John Allen and it was, 'what is it this year? What do you want us to fill out and do? What is it?" Even now in conversation, seven years later, the weariness was heard in her voice; she waved her hand softly to the side to indicate the uselessness of it all.

John Allen, principal number four, (Table 5.1) came "in without any knowledge [of the school]" (Ann, Interview). He walked into his first teacher meeting with the message that the teachers had to improve test scores. He outlined the methods he used in his previous school as the methods they would also use at Madrone. He hammered home the points from his background including the significance of disaggregated data. He had teacher and parent meetings to discuss the disaggregate test scores pointing out the poor showing of minorities and students of poverty. The direction from this principal was focused on alignment of the standards with the curriculum taught in the classroom.

He started the whole school push designing curricular maps for each subject area. Alisha explains, "It really became our bible across the board. . . everyone will have a curricular map by X date and pacing guides by X date . . . He was aggressive about his policies and that gave rise to a faculty senate." Three of the six original teachers interviewed said that they believed Allen actually said in that first speech, "It's my way or the highway!" As teachers describe it, Allen could not even get through this presentation. Teachers were so disruptive; he stopped. Ann says, "He came to fix us, and we were not really broken."

Alisha, who preferred strong leadership coupled with quantitative data said, "I loved John Allen, I respected him as a guru of assessment and accountability. . .[but] he was our ghost. He was always gone at meetings in the district or with the superintendent." This comment did not reflect the majority of the faculty who began the Faculty Senate, an organization of teachers designed to have open discussions about the school leadership and conditions of the school. The leaders of this group met regularly with Allen to mediate between his administration and the faculty.

A retired teacher, Troy, who had been with Madrone for six years (2000-2006), said that during the tenure of Allen and Brand, he never had an evaluation. "He was here to take us to the next level as if we didn't know what we were doing. . . Part of the problem was that the district was throwing shit on the wall to see what would stick. . .We didn't stick with something long enough to see if it made a difference." [Troy, Interview, 2009]. The underlying message from the teachers was that they were working at the behest of district leaders and site principals who did

not have a vision. Since the vision was non-specific, "get your test scores up," but not supported by any specific information or training, the staff's collaborative nature slowly died away.

The district pressure in the later years of Belmont's tenure and all throughout the tenure of Allen was significant. The continual meetings at the district office for principals focused almost solely on getting their site's CST scores up. Principal evaluations pointedly addressed their success in terms of their site's CST scores. During this time Madrone had a statewide ranking of five; however, compared to similar school state rankings they scored eight and nine (out of 10). Despite that, the district focus, as one teacher in the district explained, verged on the edge of obsessive excluding other measures of success and other means to achieve success.

After three years, and just two weeks into the new school year, the associate superintendent came to the staff to tell them that Allen moved on to another district in a central office capacity. Sally says, "At that point we were really adrift." Because of the late start, the district immediately posted the job only to reject all the candidates in the interview process. Teachers felt lost, abandoned, adrift. The district opted to have an interim principal.

As most teachers indicated the interim wasn't really a principal. He was a "bookmark," a "place marker," someone to manage the finances and keep order. Sally, one of the original teachers and a hard working mainstay of the school, almost breathed a sigh of relief when the district announced that George would be there for a year. "We went to ground and had a sort of healing with George Brand. I enjoyed Mr. Brand's tenure here. He went back to a child-centered holistic approach. . .[I] didn't feel the push for academic improvement at a high level."

These three principals did not appear to the staff to be leaders that had a deep understanding of the larger picture of the organization, the smaller picture of the academies and the departments, or the more personal realm of the individual teachers. They focused on bringing up test scores, and, in the case of George Brand, keeping the school afloat until the 'real' principal came along.

Phase IV: Living with and Mediating High-stakes Accountability (2006-2009)

The start of Thomas Scarpa's tenure was five years into the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Districts, schools, and principals were judged by their publicly available test scores. The pressure to improve test scores was, and still is, the main focus of Madrone's school district. No textbooks were approved for site use if they did not provide specific curricular connections to California State Standards for that subject. Schools in the district now had to set annual goals based on their school's CST scores These goals, called Targeted Goals, had to be tied to the use of funding for the site and teacher professional development. The result was denial of funding requests not directly related to improving test scores. These annual Targeted Goals were reviewed by the district and the school site council before they could be approved or money released to the site. This was the high stakes environment that Madrone's sixth principal worked to mediate.

On the side of the school opposite the administration building, the English department's first meeting at the start of the 2008-09 school year–the beginning of Thomas Scarpa's third year as principal of Madrone–began with a few, on the surface, disconnected thoughts. All the comments, however, were directly related to the principals the site has had. They provide a faculty perspective of the impact administration has on the work that they do.

> Brett: What is it about Madrone. . .it bothers me that it [high teacher absence rates] happened here? I would like to get at the root causes [of absences] (*He then asked the vice principal why the high absence rate exists here. She mentioned the high-risk*

population, which can be stressful, but she did not know either. He then said that we need to get at the root causes) 'Will this be the soup *du jour*. Last year it was the professional learning teams. Will this [focus on teachers' attendance and efficacy] go away?"

Jessica: I think this is on us, not them [administrators]. They come and go. John [John Allen principal number four] was gone, nobody was even watching us while John was here. . .I think we are still suffering from that era.

Albert: Things have been dictated to us and so you feel like a victim, a curricular victim.

Brett: It kinda comes from the top down. Administration embraces this or it doesn't. Screw the rest of the school if we're on board, great. . .[frustrated because these things come and go]

Sam: It's a great idea [cross curricular approach to teaching] that is how we began [the school].

When asked about how she is doing with the changes over the course of Madrone's development, Ann softly responds, "I would love to have a consistent person here." She speaks of the lack of consistency and focus. "Ok, now we're on this [focus] next year now we're on this. . .and so people stopped buying in. And many times the changes were under the same principal." Ann blames the district for these changes-their lack of awareness of the impact of boundary changes, of allowing the most experienced teachers to move to other schools in the district, of the lack of equitable resources. "We get comp. ed. [comprehensive education funds], but that's kind of a joke because it doesn't do enough for our kids. . .So much is expected of us but we don't get support."

Because Scarpa was currently the principal, it was easier to get reflective comments about him than another other principal. In response to any pressures she or her department felt from the principal about the CSTs or the CASHEE exam, Jessica responds:

He [Scarpa] doesn't, that's not who he is, he doesn't pressure, but I understand that the pressure is there. I understand that, and it's not even about test performance, it's about our students' skill level needs to improve. Period. Our students need to be more literate than they are. And some of those assessments do a pretty decent job of giving us information about their literacy skills. I don't dismiss the assessments, I just think we're absolutely bombarded by them, and I think there's some redundancy, and that frustrates me, because it's, I've no patience, like teaching the same lesson twice if you got it the first time. Why would I do it? Why are you assessing them on the same skill twice in a year? [Jessica, Int, 2]

I mean, no, I don't feel real pressured by that. I know what they're testing for, and I know what I'm teaching, and they complement one another. I don't feel as if I'm adrift in terms of what I should be teaching, what curriculum should I be dealing with, in order to have students perform, or be prepared for those tests. [Brett Int. 2]

This was a decidedly different from the previous principal who had insisted teachers spend department and grade level team meeting time reviewing and analyzing CST scores.

Practical Changes and an Organizational Vision

Unlike the first five principals, I had a chance to interview, observe and also work with Thomas Scarpa for 21 months as his vice principal. I have also had the opportunity to speak with most of the teachers on the site about the focus or direction of the school. This provided on site, real time information from multiple perspectives about Thomas' leadership. He had a business perspective that focused on the organizational structure of the site and an understanding that to achieve success- this was couched in terms of student success-teachers must work together to learn their craft and apply that learning to the classroom.

Scarpa faced significant issues when he first arrived including non-compliance with education codes and rules and regulations, out of compliance with special education issues, facilities issues, inaccurate transcripts, no course catalog alignment, independent study given to students by teachers who were not credentialed in that area. All of these issues he described as critical to address to keep the school out of litigation. It was as though the years prior to Scarpa nobody appeared to be minding the site for basic legal compliance issues.

This provided his initial focus on getting these issues in order. Because his administrative team was weak, he sought out teacher leaders to assist him with the work to set up an organizational structure that addressed their current needs but was flexible enough to adjust for their future needs. This began with a new look at the site leadership team–Steering, formation of Action Teams, and a flexibly designed structure of *ad hoc* teams as needed. The foundation piece to the organization was working with the staff to help them articulate their core values. These values would help guide the development of the site's organizational structure. As Scarpa explains, "The infrastructure wasn't there to work on curriculum and instruction. It took three years to get this organized . . . now we are positioned for instructional focus." The following discusses Scarpa's organizational approach and focus on learning and standardized assessments. At the end of this study, he too left the site for a district position.

Organizational Arrangements and Standardized Assessments

As Scarpa prepared to leave his principal position for one in the district office, he was asked to provide the incoming principal with some guidelines for his "Administrative Areas of Focus." This document focused on the grants that needed to be managed, the California Partnership, the Site Support Team, the Steering Committee, the work to improve the counseling and special education departments, the site action teams and the site's newly developed Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Nowhere in this document does he mention the standardized tests (California Standards Test - CST) or their importance to a principal. This document was all about understanding the structures in place that were designed to support teacher and student learning. However, this omission does not indicate he ignored the impact or import of standardized assessments.

Thomas' belief was that measures of success are not embedded in the CSTs:

> To accurately assess our growth and success, we need to examine numerous metric points that include student achievement, participation, behavioral and attendance figures, graduation rates, A-G completion percentages, etc. API is what is termed a meta-summative metric. It is a valid measure that has far greater programmatic and political relevancy than it does to our day-to-day operations The significance of it cannot be overlooked however. The expertise and dedication of each one of you

individually as well as the tremendous collective capacity we have are resulting in sustained measurable improvements. [Reiteration of his comments to the Steering Committee sent to the staff in the Weekly Update May 2009]

A year earlier in response to a question about what was an accurate reflection of student achievement Scarpa responds:

The day to day stuff . . . Mathematics is an actual CST disaster. . .I've had a phone call from two board members. . .we will have things imposed on us. I will not say a word about it to staff this week . . .Based on what the state says caring ain't cutting it.". . .we've seen successes in some subject areas. How did that happen? The message from me is. . .if CST came up, those aren't relevant for us. . .but if we ignore it, we can't ignore it for long. . .If it is not CST, how do we measure it? [Steering Meeting August 2008].

He provided a practical approach to the CSTs. In a Steering Meeting, Scarpa said, "We need to look at much smaller and meaningful pieces of data . . .discussing the daily assessments in classrooms." Scarpa then asked Steering Committee members how they wanted to approach these CST scores with the staff. Steering opted to discuss CSTs through their departments instead of via large groups with Scarpa. He then discussed some changes in the logistics of testing that were designed to provide a consistent structure for testing and a schedule that encouraged all students to come to school and participate. The school used minimum days for testing by having students come to school the second half of the day (reverse minimum days). [These] "Reverse minimum days had a very negative effect on our site; some students just did not come to school."

In Steering meetings, Scarpa was more vocal about the importance of the CSTs, but in staff meetings and individual conversations with faculty, he focused on the four "Essential Questions": What are we supposed to teach? How do we prioritize, sequence, and deliver our instruction? How do we know they're learning? What do we do when they are not learning? The remaining organizational teams that he set in place were designed to use multiple avenues to ensure students received the instruction needed to be successful. This included the development of the Steering Committee, the Action Teams, the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and various *ad hoc* committees designed to move quickly and decisively on smaller issues. He believed that when all these pieces were in place the CST scores would naturally follow as a result. He did not focus on the CST scores themselves. This approach that focused on educational quality and organizational effectiveness is noted as an approach that raises test scores (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2007) without spending instructional time in teaching to the test.

The Steering Meetings at Madrone have evolved under Scarpa's leadership to be ones that stress the members' own learning. This includes book studies. He moved complicated issues to small fast moving committees who took a week or two to investigate the issues and then report back to Steering. If the Steering discussions proved too involved, Scarpa again redirected the smaller committee to bring back information the next time for discussion. Steering did not vote on issues, they had a discussion and, by consensus, determined decisions. At times, it was what some dissenters could live with rather than allowing dissenters to put a stop to innovative solutions.

Steering began a book study of DuFour's book, *Learning by Doing*. Scarpa pointed out the PLC continuum rubrics and MHS continuous improvement process as measures they could use

to determine their progress. He reiterated the importance of using teams to assist individuals to demonstrate continuous improvement "If we don't look at the teams, we will grind up individuals." He also spoke about the students and teacher attendance rate. He talked briefly about Doug Reeves and his studies including his 90% of teachers using the same approach would result in major improvements. He always had another piece of current research to inform the committee, to push them further.

A Leadership Grant awarded Madrone through Scarpa's application allowed him to dedicate needed resources to develop teacher leaders at the site. These leaders went to trainings, participated in Steering and smaller committees including the Professional Learning Action Team, The School Climate Action Team, and the Technology Action Team. They also lead teacher selected PLCs. Although these teams reported to Steering and had guided discussions with Scarpa, they along with their colleagues determined the scope and direction of the team.

The annual report regarding the use of the leadership grant reveals Scarpa's awareness of and ability to be flexible with the school's organizational structures to achieve site goals. In discussing the rapid changes in the school population and teacher reductions and the acquisition of 1.75 million dollars in total grant funding Scarpa's report states: "These influencing conditions have created leadership challenges that necessitate plans that are flexible and evolving, all the while maintaining the essential focus of tangibly improving students' achievement."

Noted on Scarpa's "Administrative Areas of Focus" document was administration's work with the five-year evaluation PLC Pilot. The district had negotiated with the union that in lieu of the usual two-year teacher evaluation administrators could move teachers who meet or exceed expectations from an evaluation every two years to a five-year evaluation. In speaking to Steering about his process Scarpa asked what teachers' perceptions were about learning. The indication was that learning was an ongoing process and not just a five-year reflection. Scarpa discussed the administrative team's work to change the nature of the five-year teacher evaluation. His remarks about the current district policy regarding automatically moving teachers to the five-year evaluation cycle demonstrate his focus on evaluations that inform the teacher rather than going through the steps because it is required, "It's a time saving device, but it's a really poor practice."

A discussion ensued where department chairs spoke about the issues with evaluations in the past. The history of evaluations not being done or administrators "forgot" they had an evaluation. There have been side bar agreements about putting teachers on a five-year evaluation cycle made without any written documentation. As one teacher commented, "This is such an opportunity to have our administrator have knowledge of us as educators. . . we need people in our classrooms with immediate feedback, validation." Thomas comments, "What is most important, is that it [the evaluation process] is effective." This practical approach was seen in many aspects of Thomas' decision-making.

The approaches Thomas brought to Madrone to improve student achievement included a focus on the multiple organizations on site. This included a revamped Steering Team that was open to all staff members and the smaller one to three week investigative or research committees who streamlined the work of the Steering Team. Action Teams were formed when larger projects required it. They made recommendations to Steering, and they were disbanded when they were no longer needed. A teacher of 20 years, Anh, restated Thomas' approach, "He [Thomas] tried to reverse the top-down decision making process, made it group-oriented, implemented action groups to get things done. [It also] improved test scores."

Scarpa downplayed the CSTs when they might have been disheartening to the staff. But he advertised them when it was a celebration. In an email to the staff after receiving the 2007-08 CST scores Thomas writes:

> CONGRATULATIONS! Madrone High School has moved beyond the 700 point API mark! Our commitment to continued progress and sustained growth is validated by our CST success. We have achieved a 34 point growth in the past two years. . . We will continue our efforts that have achieved these results and maintain our focus on ensuring the success of our African American, EL and Special Education students.
>
> What can we attribute our success to?
> - Commitment to quality teaching and counseling services
> - Expansion of intervention services
> - Improved accountability systems
> - Expanded teacher/counselor leadership
> - Supplemental financial support
> - A sustained growth organizational structure
> - Unwavering commitment to ensure every student reaches his/her potential
> - Never settling for the status quo

The organizational structure, the desired and required input from teachers, the development of teacher leaders was all designed to improve students' achievement. Except for the congratulatory email and the brief mention of the CSTs in Steering, Thomas avoided the tension that often occurs when a principal focuses on standardized testing as the only measure of student achievement (Olsen & Sexton, 2009). The dual message of this push (noting the CSTs), pull (focuses instead on practical measures of student success) relationship is reflected in his conversation with Steering, "Quite frankly, we should ignore them [CSTs]. . . they are too late. . . but if we ignore the public relations of what they entail, we are in trouble."

Scarpa's success as a principal was not the sites' CST scores, those did improve during his tenure, it was his ability to take the brunt of the political pressure of external accountability himself. Unlike Belmont, or Allen, he saw that focusing on just the CSTs was counterproductive. He saw the reality of the CST's power, but he knew that it was not the only measure of success. Thomas focused on the multiple ways in which educators can make a difference in the life and achievements of students. And in so doing effectively mediated accountability's external pressures allowing his faculty to focus on what they deemed as most critical, their own internal accountability.

As I write this, the district is starting the process for the seventh time in 20 years to find a principal. The staff does not have much hope. When the district had a meeting for the faculty to find out from them what kind of principal the staff was looking for, 12 of the 130 teachers on the site attended the meeting. The next district meeting two showed up. Scarpa explains the reasons for the lack of consistent student achievement and staff leadership, "You can't develop cultural history and tradition with such change in leadership and demographics."

High School's Vision, Organization, and Professional Development

This discussion of Madrone's succession of principals provides another set of critical variables in the equation for improved student achievement. If the goal of a high school is to keep teachers engaged in the work that they do with students and provide an atmosphere that

encourages and supports continued growth-both educational and personal growth–then a few aspects of the school appear to need continual attention. Most significant are the school's shared vision, organizational structure, and professional development.

Somewhere in our movement from policy to the classroom a leader or group of leaders must be adept at translating those policies into viable, practical practices that do not negate current useful practices.

The directive leadership coupled with mandates in Phase III provided an initial improvement in test scores and then a drop. It proved the least effective in improving the site's test scores over time despite the concerted effort on the part of the principal to do so. In fact, the more directive the principal got, the more teachers spent their energies resisting his direction. His lack of deep understanding of his faculty and what motivated them also proved counter productive. This was exacerbated by the district's decision to redesign boundaries along the lines of vocal parents and Caucasian parents. This effectively silenced Madrone's community and hampered Madrone's efforts to work with the community to improve the school. His only vision was to improve test scores. The professional development for teachers was actually meetings to align their classroom curriculum with the tested standards. He did not address any organizational issues.

The first phase principals focused on the organizational structure of the school with a very specific vision. They had teachers from divisions whose charge was to provide interdisciplinary curriculum for students. They wanted to ensure all students were provided with the same types of courses and therefore provided only homogeneously grouped classes. They did not have a way to address the needs of the higher performing students and eventually modified that structure to accommodate homogeneously grouped honors classes. The professional development took the form of collaborative work with colleagues who had to write curriculum together. It also provided an opportunity for a group to question individual teachers to reflect on his or her practice. However, when that was not longer feasible because of budget constraints, the school did not adapt by providing an alternative form of reflection or professional development.

Phase two principals were unidirectional. Teachers were told to work only on getting scores up. Everything they focused on: classroom curriculum, student assignments, students assessments were directed toward students improving their CST scores. Everything else was secondary. This approach did not address an improved organizational structure. The vision was simple and narrowly focused; the professional development was nonexistent.

In the case of this district, when the principal (Scarpa) became the mediator between district mandates and teacher beliefs and practices, the faculty tension and focus on test scores abated, and they began to determine their own educational needs as they related to classroom practices. One could speculate on why the district left Scarpa alone, as he has indicated. Perhaps he provided a package that was not present with any of his predecessors.

Scarpa had 18 years of principal experience, he was considered kind, bordering on charming, yet he also had first hand knowledge of business models and various organizational structures. He put structures in place that were designed to support teacher and student learning. He supported the faculty professional development that resulted in teacher-selected Professional Learning Communities. He relieved faculty tensions over the pressures directly connected to test scores. He worked through the Steering Team and his administrative team to provide a collaborative model for problem solving. Unlike his predecessors, he had a 5-7 year plan for the site that he revised each year. When the district asked him to move to the district office in a principal training capacity, he was torn because he planned to be and expected to be at the site

for 5-7 years. He knew that change takes continual pressure over time and he wanted to finish the job he had started.

The combination of attributes that Scarpa had positioned him as an apt guide through the reform constraints and tensions.

There are tremendous difficulties in organizing a school around teaching and learning especially in an era of high stakes testing. Schools are organized (or not) to use student evidence to improve student learning. In Madrone's case, the school was initially positioned to use student work and teacher reflection to improve achievement. The financial restrictions and the pressure to deal with more aggregate testing data had eroded the time and resources to continue with authentic assessment and embedded teacher reflection. It was the capacity of their leaders that supported (or did not support) their ability to effectively mediate these reform pressures.
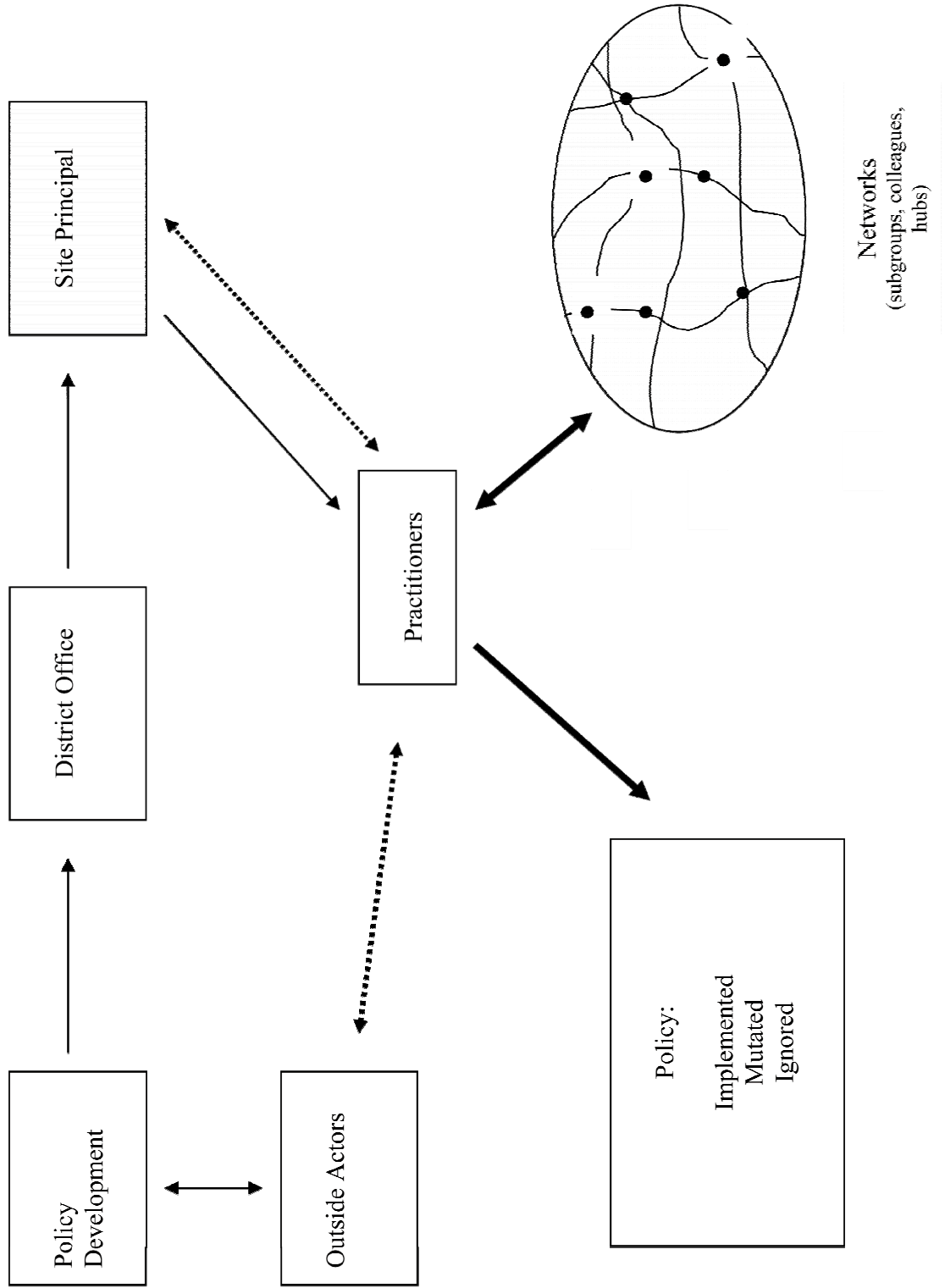
Non-Linear Reform Model

This study adds to the non-linear theory of policy reform (Figure 5.2). We know that state policy makers develop policy that they pass on to school districts. In this study, the policy developments throughout these three reforms point to critical educational actors in the travel of policy–more specifically classroom teachers (practitioners) and site administration (principals and to a lesser extent vice principals). Each of the three policies was developed by state policy makers and conveyed to the district office that conveyed it to the site principals. Once the policy developers designed the policy and sent it on to districts, except for any funding availability, the policy makers were no longer a direct influence in how, when or if the policy was implemented.

The district focus and pressure appeared to have varied with each successive wave of reform. Regardless of the district reform decision, it was always directed to the site principal and not directly to the practitioners. Each site principal had a different approach and pressure they used with the staff at Madrone in order to implement or convey the reform. Some were quite directive, thus the one-way arrow, others (Phase I and Phase IV) were two-way discussions that suggest a more collaborative approach. Phase IV provided a philosophical and actual buffer for the staff, so they could avoid much of the pressure and stress involved in reforms and move on with the business of teaching and learning.

The teachers (practitioners) used rather heavily their networks of colleagues (two-way arrow) including sub groups (subject departments and other *ad hoc* groups), colleagues, and hubs, in order to determine what they would use, not use or partly use from the reform push. The travel of ideas within this series of networks followed both strong and weak ties and often crossing over from one collegial group to another. The ultimate decision-makers in terms of implementation of policy in the classroom and whether it was implemented, mutated (changed to suit their beliefs) or ignored, were the practitioners. This mediating process on the part of the practitioners was neither capricious nor dismissive. It involved numerous discussions and a concerted effort to understand the ramifications of the policy to their practice. Whether the policy was implemented and the extent of that implementation depended on the departments' history (including leadership history), culture, and values about student work and evidence. This suggests that development of site leadership that includes clarity of values and an understanding of how knowledge travels through school sites would be invaluable to district, school site, and department leadership.

Figure 5.2
Non-Linear Reform Model

Site Principal

District Office

Policy
Development

Outside Actors

Practitioners

Networks
(subgroups, colleagues,
hubs)

Policy:
Implemented
Mutated
Ignored

Summary of Chapter

This chapter shows how principals grappling simultaneously with the school's history, changing demographics, and changing policy initiatives demonstrate quite different levels of capacity to supply pressure or to support efforts. The succession of principals, their focus and ability to see the macro and micro picture provided tangible benefits for the staff. But those intervening years of principals without the ability to reduce reform tensions also brought distrust and difficult years that left much of the staff feeling abandoned.

The work that the last principal did focusing on a site-developed vision, effective organizational structures, and professional development demonstrated for the staff a path through this reform movement (Figure 5.2). It allowed the faculty the autonomy to work with colleagues on topics of their own choosing while having an organizational structure in place that provided adaptability to change. This suggests that if districts could train people to provide leadership with a vision and an organizational structure designed to address reforms, they would be able to return to a world of flexible consistency. A world that forever moved with the reform tides always holding a core of what it means to be an educator. The teachers, tired of the changing principals– the soup *du jour* of the week or year, wanted consistency of vision, which generally comes with consistency of leadership. As this chapter ends, Ann's words echo in my head, "This is what we do, we move people on."

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

"... the desire to reform teaching seems to be universal, and ... reform cannot succeed without some understanding of how teachers think about their work." (Kennedy, 2002, pp. 355-356).

The purpose of this study was to examine the growing reform pressure on secondary subject departments. Specifically, how do secondary subject matter departments process and use student assessment data or mediate assessment-related educational policy?

This study was a comparative case study of two departments in a school with a history of reform activity, relying principally on interview and observation. Through multiple teacher interviews, informal conversations, and observations of teachers' work in departments and grade level teams, the study focuses on how departments and secondary schools use student evidence to inform practice.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Subject Departments: History and Culture

The study began with teacher interviews, and department and grade level observations designed to capture teachers' perspectives and experiences as members of two departments, English and social science. These departments have evolved over twenty years to have different cultures and different levels of collaborative involvement —conveyed in part in terms of the metaphors that teachers use to characterize each department. Those two cultures position the departments differently to respond to new expectations regarding the use of student evidence or to more generally respond to policy demands.

The resistance to change that is often attributed to high school subject departments has not been noted in these two departments. Both departments began with a unified focus and were initially well organized to collect and use information on student learning linked closely with the curriculum. However, over the intervening years they developed differently based on their histories, personnel turnover, values, and department and site leadership. These factors also determined their response to reforms. Because of these differences, the work that both departments do and have done in their 20-year history has not remained unified despite efforts of the veteran teachers to keep the original culture by sharing philosophy, strategies, and curriculum with the newcomers. Although the turnover of staff and principals, and the inability of the staff to provide cultural induction for newcomers became a constant, the remnants of that original culture persisted in smaller sub groups of teachers who still collaborated.

Assessment perspectives and practices in the two departments: judgments
about the differential utility of external and internal evidence

English and social science departments share internal assessments that they use regularly; all require student writing. The weight and direction given for those assessments differ in ways that indicate the departments' preferred practices. It also provides an indicator of their response to the more narrow and prescriptive nature of external assessments.

The writing assessments used by the English department include a variety of essay writing and student portfolios. Portfolios require continual teacher discussions and norming of practices in order to provide a department-wide approach. These discussions and practices ensure

collaborative work with continual communication among and between grade level teams. The writing process (which requires a succession of drafts) is stressed with teachers using and continuously developing various methods to teach writing. English teachers stress that writing is one of the best ways to develop and assess students' critical reading and thinking skills.

The social science department also uses writing. One process piece is taught at the 9th grade level. The piece is very prescriptive with the same topic given to all students, a template that has to be followed by all students which results in papers that are identical in structure and quite similar in content. This paper will be discontinued because the 9th grade course, Geography, is being reduced to a half-year course. The other social science teachers use writing for assignments, but they do not provide direct instruction in the teaching of writing. Their writing assignments tend to require restatement of information rather than the evaluation or synthesis writing required of the English department.

Multiple-choice assessments were used by both departments, but on a more limited scale in English. The social science multiple-choice assessments were designed to imitate the format and content of the CST. Social science saw the multiple-choice assessment as the best way to assess student knowledge especially at the end of chapters or units of instruction. The Advanced Placement (AP) teachers in both departments used multiple-choice assessments since they are a part of the AP exam the teachers were preparing students for. However, as noted by these teachers the AP exam is a rigorous external exam that did assess students' critical thinking and also requires student writing.

The English and social science departments view their respective content differently. The prescriptive nature of many of the social science internal assessments predisposed them to also accept the more prescriptive state external assessments. They perceive their subject as content based, requiring coverage of information rather than developing student skills. Their pacing guides also underscore their belief that covering curriculum was a key task of the social science teacher. Their original use of interdisciplinary authentic assessment has been almost non-existent since the accountability reform.

Ironically, despite the efforts of the social science department to align their curriculum and assessments with external assessments, their state scores were inconsistent and did not reflect a trend of improvement. Two social science teachers do not follow this prescribed approach; however, it is difficult to determine the impact of their practices on the state assessment since teachers' individual scores are not available.

In both departments, teachers' basic beliefs about their subject determine their perception of external assessments. The English department members see themselves as skills-based teachers who use literature and nonfiction as a venue to teach critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. English teachers clearly believe that incorporating external assessment evidence and applying it to their practice is not an effective or pedagogically sound teaching practice. However, when the assessment had a direct impact on students (e.g. CASHEE, EAP Exam), they felt an obligation to ensure their students were successful often tailoring or redesigning their classroom curriculum to teach to the test.

English teachers have a clear perception of the value of their own measures of student (and teacher) success. Their internal accountability aligns with their individual and subject department values and has provided specific feedback dictating classroom adjustments. It's certainly more specific and reliable than external accountability measures. It is not just that internal accountability is familiar; it makes pedagogical sense to English teachers. So, they revise their internal accountability as needed and ignore most of the direction, scope and wording of external

policies. In this study, these pressures around external forms of assessment have had little impact on English teachers' work in departments and in the classroom. Despite that, their CST scores have been improving over time. In the case of the social science department, who were more mindful of the external assessment than their English counterparts, there has been no measurable impact on students' CST scores.

The findings of this study indicate that departments play a role in mediating educational policy. Departments were more inclined to attend to assessments if those assessments were more closely tied to their perception of their subject area curriculum or with assessments that have important consequences for students. Social science had pacing guides and multiple-choice assessments that attended to their curriculum coverage, but their original authentic assessment was lost. English department members were more skeptical about the utility of evidence resulting from external standardized assessments. The pressures around external forms of assessment had little impact on students' CST scores, teachers' work in departments and in the classroom. However, these reforms have eroded the time and resources (and in the case of social science, the drive) needed to continue with more effective assessments.

Principal Leadership

Principals, in grappling simultaneously with the school's history, shifting demographics, and changing policy initiatives–and also possessing quite different capacities, demonstrate part of the non-linearity of reform (Figure 5.2). Their variable and limited influence on department perspectives and practices initially suggests that site leaders do not play a large part in reform efforts. And for the most part they had variable or limited influence. The influence they did have depended on their own insights, values and ability to act as a buffer between the district pressures in response to policy changes and the site's subject departments.

It became clear that the principal's leadership (and also the vice principal's leadership) was critical to the school's overall success or failure, especially when facing these three waves of reform. They provided guidance and direction assisting teachers, or not, in reconciling some of the contradictory aspects and unexpected consequences of the reforms. The experience and broad vision of a principal, the site's administrative staff, and department chairs appear critical to how the staff and the subject departments look at and apply any reform measures.

The first two principals opened the school with the same reform orientation as the district and teachers regarding the innovative emphasis and structure of the school. This alignment of beliefs and values provided a consistent base of operations for curricular design and collaborative work. By the end of the second principal's tenure, the Standards and Accountability movement had escalated and the English department was directed to teach specific novels using supplemental materials aligned with these new English standards. The district pressure for sites to comply slowly pressed on site leaders.

Once external assessments were introduced, first the CLAS and then the STAR, this district pressure increased and the next two principals were directed to have teachers analyze the tests scores and redesign their practice based on what they found. This generic direction without any district training for the principals did not have the impact the district wanted. These two principals did not have the capacity to assist teachers in this analysis and although they provided departments with test scores and standards' binders, they could not help with the application of CST testing data to the classroom.

The greatest district pressure was felt with the fifth principal who took his charge seriously and had teacher and parent meetings to discuss the disaggregate test scores pointing out the poor

showing of minorities and students of poverty. Again the direction from this principal was focused on alignment of the standards with the curriculum taught in the classroom. All departments designed curricular pacing guides aligned with the test contents.

When Madrone faced its sixth principal, who did not insist on a linear approach to accountability reform, teachers started to seek ways other than studying standardized test results to improve student achievement. This principal worked back and forth with teachers to assist them in determining what this policy meant in their classrooms. He did not dictate, but he did make it clear they had to determine how they were going to improve student achievement. He assisted with this improvement through his work with teacher leaders developing a site organizational structure that supported teachers' professional needs.

The last princpal's focus on teacher leadership proved an important way to ensure that the staff stayed engaged in the inner workings of the site and paved the way for teachers of various departments to work collaboratively in professional learning communities of their own choosing. Given that freedom, it was natural that departments and teachers would look to structures that had proven beneficial in the past, including collaboration and interdisciplinary solutions, to improve students' skills. The principal ended his last interview with one final comment on teacher leaders, "I think teacher leadership is critical for schools' success. I would probably not have said this earlier in my career."

These principals responded differently based on their capacity. Some prescribed to the departments what they were going to teach and others worked with the departments buffering them from external pressures. During the tenure of the more prescriptive principals, the social science department, without questioning, complied and redesigned their assessments in the likeness of the CSTs. The English department with its solid belief in students' critical thinking skills as demonstrated through writing stayed the original course as much as possible. In doing so, the English department provided a continuous improvement model despite multiple reforms.

IMPLICATION FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Reform's the Norm

The challenges that departments, schools, and districts face in responding to the accountability reform is daunting. Although this study is not a study broadly about reform implementation, it does provide evidence that can inform schools' responses to future reform efforts.

The three reforms that provided a backdrop for this department study indicate reforms that align with the beliefs of teachers will probably have the most success. The changing landscape of educational reform does not allow school sites the luxury of staying their course for long. The restructuring reform was effectively eclipsed by the standards reform. The standards reform with its insistence on alignment of standards with curriculum taught dictated a control over teachers' classroom practice that none of the teachers in this study had experienced.

The mediating response of the last principal of Madrone allowed teachers to take stock of where they were in this reform and adjust their direction based on what they knew were sound practices. Previous principals (excluding the first two who started the school with the restructuring reform) did not appear to understand how they could assist teachers in staying a sound course of practice. Site principals need this skill. This lack of understanding and broad perspective about the educational terrain over which reforms travel needs to be recognized. This

lack of capacity contributes to the false starts and stops of reforms' efforts and contributes to the lack of continuous educational improvement.

Teachers and site leaders who are learning their craft in eras of serial reform need a singular set of skills in order to determine the utility of the reform to their practice. These skills are not generally learned in teacher education programs or educational leadership programs; most have to be learned–if they are learned–on the job. This on the job training is entirely contingent on district and site leadership, and collegial exchanges of knowledge. Since site principals, and in some cases vice principals, develop and implement teacher training, the quality of that training will vary from leader to leader and therefore school to school. This inconsistent training does not provide a wide, flexible perspective educators can use to mediate the multiple reform measures that move toward them in the course of their careers.

In this current reform, it is clear that external assessments do not provide teachers with the nuanced and fine-grained feedback they need to modify their instruction. Site leaders must guide their staff through these policies that are often motivated by political pressures rather than sound pedagogical knowledge. The external assessment scores of the current reform merely provide district offices with a bookmark of students' possible achievement. How district offices, principals, and site leaders provide direction and context for each reform determine teacher, and ultimately, student success.

The Critical Nature of Organizational Structure

The loosely coupled nature of education provides a filter for reforms. Ideally this filter would provide an in-depth review of the reform and assist implementation where it makes sound educational sense. However, this filter does not appear to be working in tandem with the primary policy makers. Instead, in the ongoing struggle to educate students in an increasingly complex world, this loosely-coupled structure allows educators to accept, mitigate or stop the reform. This was evident in the English and social science departments' response to reform and the principal leadership demonstrated at Madrone.

Often the perception of policy makers is this filter thwarts their intent and they escalate their efforts to control the process. This focus on control in lieu of efforts to capitalize on the commitment teachers have toward their profession can damage teacher commitment (Rowan, 1990). The tighter the control the more tightly coupled the system. The failure of tightly coupled systems is that they cannot and do not take into consideration all the possibilities or permutations of the current challenge. They attempt, believing that if one can anticipate all the possible directions, to control the course. They set in place specific steps to be followed to ensure success or to avoid catastrophe. Much like the failures of tightly organized systems, educational reformers build on a linear policy logic that cannot exist in a complex, loosely coupled system.

Mandated reforms with severe sanctions for principals and districts have not provided Madrone with long-term systemic educational improvement. A well-trained, well-educated leadership with adequate time and resources does.

Future Leadership Direction

All actors along the process of a reform effort must understand the history and rationale of the reform, be knowledgeable, trained, and able to apply the policy in a way that minimizes the unintended consequences and maximizes the salient aspects of the reform to improve student achievement. Part of this knowledge must be an understanding at the secondary level of subject department leaders and ultimately a deep understanding of teachers.

Teachers have a level of commitment to their students (clients) "that other organizations can only dream of with their employees" (Leithwood, Steinbach, & Jantzi, 2001, p 115). This suggests that the best school leader is one who understands this commitment and uses this understanding in working with teachers and their departments. Teachers' concerns regarding the CASHEE and the EAP Exam attest to this commitment. The preference of teachers to have curriculum-relevant assessments has implications for professional development that ensure teachers' concerns are addressed with practical solutions including a thorough understanding of the design and uses of formative assessments.

The very different positioning of the two departments in this study suggest that school leaders could be better prepared to cultivate and support department-level leadership. It also suggests that the approach California has toward the department chair position could use rethinking. Department chairs in California are usually more management-based teachers who handle the department budget, facilitate department meetings, ensure teachers share common items, and that copiers are in repair. This undervalues the significance of experienced teachers who have the requisite skill and trust of colleagues to work directly with curricular changes. They can provide the impetus for pedagogical discussions and resolutions to issues. A role model for other teachers, department chairs could function very differently with formal authority to provide coaching and supervisory feedback to their department members. They could also educate new site leaders on the culture and needs of their department to ensure a smooth working relationship with site leadership. This role is found in many states but not in California.

Forms of school leadership can serve as a buffer between government implementation strategies and the classroom. This study demonstrates various approaches site principals use when faced with governmental pressures. Because few districts have stable leadership over time, it is clear that educational leaders need a greater capacity to respond to these pressures by minimizing negative consequences and supporting aspects of the policy that improve student achievement. Because tenure of principals has dropped dramatically to an average tenure of 3.38 years for high school principals (Viadero, 2009), their training, knowledge and skills are critical to education's success. Principals who have the deep understanding of organizational systems site leadership development and the commitment of individual teachers have the capacity to leave the school in better condition than when they arrived. However, their capacity must include a working ability to integrate reforms, or not, based on sound pedagogy, logic and experience.

Future Reform Efforts

The accountability policy was designed to quantitatively measure our students' achievement and to put the spotlight on our underperforming students-typically minorities and students of poverty. Although it has produced ten years of data through standardized testing, it has not shown a marked improvement on those assessments, especially among minorities and students in poverty (Garcia & Gopal, 2003; Skerrett & Hargreaves, 2008). This evidence suggests that the ability to reconcile external and internal accountability would be much more valuable in improving student learning than the current focus. This reconciliation requires an understanding on the part of education's leaders about how teachers think, design and implement classroom practices.

All change is informative and the accountability reform is no exception. The debate on what to assess and the sanctions for non-compliance actually provides a venue that adds to educators' working knowledge and helps determine the answer to the larger question of what values will be institutionalized. Assessment has become just another chapter in the expanding book of

educational reform. 'Reform' has taken on a serial piecemeal process rather than an adherence to a "major change leading to a restructuring of core processes. . ." (Hanson, 2001, p. 637). How educational organizations address the challenge of facing 'reforms' and what past knowledge they bring to the table of understanding will determine if they provide core changes that support a continuous improvement model for our students' success or merely 'reform' again and again and again.

References

Aguirre, J. (2002). Teaching high school mathematics in a climate of standards-based reform: The influence and interaction of teachers' beliefs and department culture on instructional decision-making and practice. *Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.*

Angus, D. L. & Mirel, J.E. (1999). *The Failed Promise of the American High School, 1890-1995.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Asselin, M., Early, M. & Filipenko, N. (2005). Accountability, assessment, and the literacies of information and communication technologies. *Canadian Journal of Education, 28*(4), 802-826.

Avis, J. (2003). Re-thinking trust in a performative culture: the case of education. *Education Policy, 18*(3), 315-332.

Ball, S.J. (1987). *The Micro-Politics of the School: Towards a theory of school organization.* London: Methuen.

Ball, S.J. & Bowe, R. (1992). Subject departments and the implementation of National Curriculum Policy: An overview of the issues. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 24(2), 97-115.

Belli, Robert F. (1998). The structure of autobiographical memory and the event history calendar: Potential improvements n the quality of retrospective reports in surveys. *Memory, 6*(4), 383-406.

Bigley, G.A. & Roberts, K.H. (2001). The incident commander system: High-reliability organizing for complex and volatile task environments. *Academy of Management Journal, 44*(6), 1281-1299.

Black, P. (2000). Research and the development of educational assessment. *Oxford Review of Education, 26*(3 & 4), 407-419.

Boaler, J. & Staples, M. (2008). Creating mathematical futures through an equitable teaching approach: The case of Railside school. *Teachers College Record, 110*(3), 608-645.

Broadfoot, P. & Black, P. (2004). Redefining assessment? The first ten years of *Assessment in Education. Assessment in Education, 11*(1), 7-27.

Bryk, A.S. & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership, 60*(6), 40-44.

Carmichael, P., Fox, A., McCormick, R., Procter, R. & Honour, L. (2006). Teachers' networks in and out of school. *Research Papers in Education: Policy and Practice, 21*(2), 217-234.

Carnoy, M., Elmore, R., & Siskin, L.S. (2003). *The New Accountability: High School and High Stakes Testing.* New York: Routledge Falmer.

Celio, M.B. & Harvey, J. (2005). Buried treasure: Developing a management guide from mountains of school data. Center on Reinventing Public Education. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.

Chan, W. Lau, S., Nie, Y., Lim, S., & Hogan, D. (2008). Organizational and personal predictors of teacher commitment: The mediating role of teacher efficacy and identification with school. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*(3), 597-630.

Chatterji, M. (2002). Models and methods for examining standards-based reforms and accountability initiatives: Have the tools of inquiry answered pressing questions on improving schools? *Review of Educational Research, 72*(3), 345-386.

Chrispeels, J.H. (1997). Educational policy implementation in a shifting political climate: The California experience. *American Educational Research Journal, 34*(3), 453-481.

Coburn, C.E. (2001). Collective sensemaking about reading: How teacher mediate reading policy in their professional communities. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 23*(2), 145-170.

Coburn, C.E. (2004). Beyond decoupling: rethinking the relationship between the institutional environment and the classroom. *Sociology of Education, 77*, July, 211-244.

Coburn, C. (2005). The role of non-system actors in the relationship between policy and practice: The case of reading instruction in California. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 27*(1), 23-52.

Coburn, C.E. (2006). Framing the problem of reading instruction: Using frame analysis to uncover the microprocesses of policy implementation. *American Educational Research Journal 43*(3), 343-379.

Coburn, C.E., Honig, M.I. & Stein, M.K. (2009). What's the evidence on districts' use of evidence? In J.D. Bransford, D.J. Stipek, N.J. Vye, L.M. Gomez & D. Lam (Eds.), *The Role of Research in Educational Reform* (pp. 676-87). Cambridge: Harvard Educational Press.

Coburn, C.E. & Russell, J.L. (2008). District Policy and Teachers' Social Networks. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. 30(3), 203–235.

Coburn, C. & Talbert, J.E. (2006). Conceptions of evidence use in school districts: Mapping the Terrain. *American Journal of Education, 112*(4), 469-495.

Cohen, D.K. (1982). Policy and organization: The impact of state and federal educational policy on school governance. *Harvard Educational Review, 52*(4), 474-499.

Cohen, D. K. (1990). A revolution on one classroom: The case of Mrs. Oublier. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 12(3), 311-329.

Cohen, D.K. & Hill, H. C. (1998). Instructional Policy and classroom performance: The mathematics reform in California. Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education.

Cohen, D. K. & Hill H. C. (2001). *Learning Policy: When state and education reform works*. Yale University Press: New Haven.

Cook, D.H. & Yanow, D. (1993). Culture and organizational learning. *Journal of Management and Inquiry, 2*, 373-390.

Corcoran, T., Fuhrman, S.H,. & Belcher, C.L. (2001). The district role in instructional improvement. *Phi Delta Kappan, 83*(1), 78-84.

Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cuban, L. (1990). Reforming again, again, and again. *Educational Researcher, 19*(1), 3-13.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1993). Reframing the school reform agenda: Developing capacity for school transformation. *Phi Delta Kappan, 74*(10), 752-761.

Elmore, R.F. (1996). Getting to scale with good educational practice. Harvard Educational Review, 66(1), Spring.

Elmore, R.F. (2002). Bridging the gap between standards and achievement: The imperative for professional development in education. Washington, DC: The Shanker Institute.

Firestone, W.A., Fitz, J., & Broadfoot, P. (1999). Power, learning, and legitimation: Assessment implementation across levels in the United States and the United Kingdom. *American Educational Research Journal, 36*(4), 759-793.

Fuller, B; Wood, K., Rapoport, T., & Dornbusch, S.M. (1982). The organizational context of individual efficacy. *Review of Educational Research, 52*(1), 7-10.

Garcia, P.A. & Gopal, M. (2003). The relationship to achievement on the California High School Exit Exam for language minority students. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice, 1*(1), 123-137.

Gloor, P.A., Passivaara, M., Schoder, D., & Willems, P. (2009). Finding collaborative innovation networks through correlating performance with social network structure. *International Journal of Production Research, 46*(5), 1357-1371.

Goldspink, C. (2007). Rethinking educational reform: A loosely coupled and complex systems perspective. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 35*(1), 27-50.

Granovetter, M.S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *The American Journal of Sociology, 78*(6), 1360-1380.

Grossman, P.L. & Stodolsky, S.S. (1995). Content as context: The role of school subjects in secondary school teaching. *Educational Researcher, 24*(8), 5-11.

Guskey, T.R. (2007). Multiple sources of evidence: An analysis of stakeholders' perceptions of various indicators of students learning. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 26*(1), 19-27.

Gutierrez, R. (1996). Practices, beliefs and cultures of high school mathematics departments: Understanding their influence on student advancement. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 28*(5), 495-529.

Hamilton, L. (2005). Assessment as a policy tool. RAND Education. Reprinted from *Review of Research in Education, 27*, 25-68.

Hanson, M. (2001). Institutional theory and educational change. *Educational Administrative Quarterly, 37*(5), 637-661.

Hargreaves, D.H. (1996). Teaching as a research-based profession possibilities and prospects. *The Teacher Training Agency Annual Lecture, 1996*. University of Cambridge.

Hargreaves, A. & Macmillan, R. (1995). The balkanization of secondary school teaching. In Siskin, L.S. & Warren Little, J. (Eds.), *The subjects in question: Departmental organization and the high school* (pp.141-171). New York: Teachers College Press.

Hill, D. (1995). The strong department: Building the department as a learning community. In L.S. Siskin & J.W. Little [Eds.], *The Subjects in Question: Departmental Organization and the High School.* (pp.141-171). New York: Teachers College Press.

Honig, M.I. (2004). Crafting coherence: How schools strategically manage multiple external demands. *Educational Researcher, 33*(8), 16-30.

Honig, M. I. (2006). Street-Level Bureaucracy Revisited: Frontline District Central-Office Administrators as Boundary Spanners in Education Policy Implementation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 28*(4), 357–383.

Honig, M.I. & Coburn, C. (2005). When districts use evidence to improve instruction: What do we know and where do we go from here? *Evidence-Based Practice* (6), Winter. Retrieved April 1, 2007. http://annenberginstitue.org/VUE/winter05/Honig. Html

Horn, I.S. (2005). Learning on the job: A situated account of teacher learning in high school mathematics department. *Cognition & Instruction, 23*(2), 207-236.

Huberman, M. (1993). The model of independent artisan in teachers' professional relations. In J.W. Little & M.W. McLaughlin [Eds.], *Teachers' work: Individuals, colleagues, and contexts* (pp. 11-50). New York: Teachers College Press.

Imants, J., Sleeger, P., & Witziers, B. (2001). The tension between organizational sub-structures in secondary schools and educational reform. *School Leadership & Management, 21*(3) 289-308.

Kennedy, M. M. (2002). Knowledge and Teaching [1]. *Teachers and teaching: theory and practice, 8*(3/4), 354-370.

Kornhaber, M.L. (2004). Appropriate and inappropriate forms of testing, assessment, and accountability. *Educational Policy 18*(1), 45-70.

Lagemann, E. (2000) An *Elusive Science; The Troubling History of Education Research.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Leithwood, K, Steinbach, R., & Jantzi, D. (2002). School leadership and teachers' motivation to implement accountability policies. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 38* (1), 94-119.

Little, J.W. (1982). Norms of Collegiality and experimentation: Workplace conditions of school success. *American Educational Research Journal, 19*(3), 325-340.

Little, J.W. (1989). District policy choices and teachers' professional development opportunities. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11*(2), 165-179.

Little, J.W. (1990). The persistence of privacy: Autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers College Record, 91*(4), 509-536.

Little, J.W. (1993). Professional community in comprehensive high schools: The two worlds of academic and vocational teachers. In J.W. Little and M.W. McLaughlin [Eds.], Teachers' work: Individuals, colleagues, and contexts (pp. 137-163. New York: Teachers College Press.

Little, J. W. (1995). Subject affiliation in high schools that restructure. In Siskin, L.S. & Warren Little, J. (Eds.), The subjects in question: Departmental organization and the high school (pp.172-200). New York: Teachers College Press.

Little, J.W. (2003). Inside teacher communities: Representations of classroom practice. Teachers College record, 105(6), 913-945.

Little & Barlett (2002). Career commitment in the context of comprehensive school reform. Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 8(3/4), 345-354.

Little, J.W., Dorph, R. Chambliss, D., Dobkin, C., Erbstein, N., Gebhard, M., Kirtman, L., & Sullivan, D. (December, 1998). *Lessons About Comprehensive School Reform: California's School Restructuring Demonstration Program.* SB 1274 School Restructuring Study University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley, California.

Lortie, D.C. (1975). *Schoolteacher.* (2nd ed.) Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Marsh, J.A., Pane, J.F. & Hamilton, L.S. (2006). Making sense of data-driven decision making in education. RAND Education, Occasional paper.

McLaughlin, M.W. & Mitra, D. (2001). Theory-based change and change-based theory: Going deeper, going broader. *Journal of Educational Change, 2*(4), 301-323.

McLaughlin, M.W., Talbert, J.E. & Bascia, N. (Eds.). (1990). *The Context of Teaching in Secondary Schools: Teachers' Realities*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Meyer, J.W., Scott, W.R. & Deal, T.E. (1981). Institutional and technical sources of organizational structure: Explaining the structure of educational organizations. In H.D. Stein (Ed.), *Organization and the Human Services: Cross-disciplinary reflections* (pp. 142-179). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A. M., (1994). *An Expanded Sourcebook: Qualitative Data Analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mintrop, H. & Trujillo, T. (2007). The practical relevance of accountability systems for school improvement: A descriptive analysis of California schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 29*(4), 319-352.

Moller,J. & Eggen, A.B. (2005). Team leadership in upper secondary education. *School Leadership and Management, 25*(4), 331-347.

National Academy Education (2009). Teacher Quality: Education Policy White Paper. Washington, D.C.: www.naeducation.org.

National Center for Educational Statistics (2003). *Overview and inventory of state education reforms: 1990-2000*. (NCES 2003-020). Washington: U.S. Department of Education Institute of Educational Sciences.

National Research Council (2001). *Knowing What Students Know: The Science and Design of Educational Assessment.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub.L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).

O'Day, J. (2002). Complexity, accountability, and school improvement. *Harvard Educational Review, 72*(3), 293-329.

O'Dell, C.W. (1928). *Traditional Examinations and New-Type Tests*. New York: The Century Co.

Olsen, B. & Sexton, D. (2009). Threat rigidity, school reform and how teachers view their work inside current education policy contexts. *American Educational Research Journal, 46*(1), 9-44.

Olson, L. (2007, May 2). Homegrown tests measure core critical-reading skills. *Education Week, 26*, 35.

O'Reilly, T. & McNamara, D.S. (2007). The impact of science knowledge, reading skill, and reading strategy knowledge on more traditional "high stakes" measures of high school students' science achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 44* (1), 161-196.

Orton, J.D. & Weick, K.E. (1990). Loosely coupled systems: A reconceptualization. *Academy of Management Review,15*(2), 203-223.

Pedulla, J.J., Abrams, L.M., Madaus, G.F., Russell, M.K., Ramos, M.A., Miao, J. (2003). Perceived effects of state-mandated testing programs on teaching and learning: Findings from a national survey of teachers. *National Board on Educational Testing and Public Policy*. Boston: Lynch School of Education.

Perrow, C. (1999). *Normal Accidents: Living with High-Risk Technologies*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Porac, J. F. & Thomas, H. (1989). Competitive groups as cognitive communities: The case of Scottish knitwear manufacturers. *Journal of Management Studies, 26*(4), July, 397-416.

Powell, A.G., Farrar, E.F., & Cohen, D.K. (1985). The Shopping Mall High School: Winner and Losers in the Educational Marketplace. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Reeves, D. [Ed.] (2007). Ahead of the Curve: The Power of Assessment to Transform Teaching and Learning. Bloomington, Indiana: Solution Tree Press.

Resnick, D. (1982). History of educational testing. Wigdor, A.K. & Garner, W.R. [Eds.] *Ability testing: Uses, consequences, and controversies: Part II*. Documentation section. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Resnick, L.B. (2006). Making accountability really count. *Educational Measures: Issues and Practice, 25*(1), 33-37.

Rowan, B. (1990). Commitment and control: Alternative strategies for the organizational design of schools. In C. Cazden (Ed.) *Review of Research in Education, 16*, 353-389.

Rupp. A.A. & Lesaux, N.K. (2006). Meeting Expectations? An empirical investigation of a standards-based assessment of reading comprehension. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 28*(4), 315-333.

Rusch, E. A. (2005, February). Institutional barriers to organizational learning in school systems: The power of silence. *Educational Administrative Quarterly, 41*(1), 83-120.

Schwarz, N. & Oyserman, D. (2001). Asking questions about behavior: Cognition, communication, and questionnaire construction. *American Journal of Evaluation, 22*(2), 127-160.

Scott, W.R. (1995). *Institutions and Organizations*. Thousands Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Siskin, L.S. (1991). Department as different worlds: Subject subcultures in secondary schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 27*(2) 134-160.

Siskin, L.S. (1994). *Realms of knowledge: Academic departments in secondary schools*. Washington, DC: The Falmer Press.

Siskin, L.S. (1995). Subject Divisions. In L.S. Siskin & J.W. Little [Eds.], *The Subjects in Question: Departmental Organization and the High School.* (pp.23-47). New York: Teachers College Press.

Siskin, L.S. & Little, J.W. (1995). The subject department: Continuities and critiques. In L.S.Siskin and J.W.Little (Eds.). *The Subject in Question: Departmental Organization and the High School*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Sizer, T.R. (1992). *Horace's School: Redesigning the American High School*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Skerrett, A. & Hargreaves, A. (2008). Student diversity and secondary school change in a context of increasingly standardized reform. *American Educational research Journal, 45*(4), 913-945.

Spillane, J.P. (1998). State policy and the non-monolithic nature of the local school district: Organizational and professional considerations. *American Educational Research Journal, 35*(1), 33-63.

Spillane, J.P. (2002). Local theories of teacher change: The pedagogy of district policies and programs. *Teachers College Record, 104*(3), 377-420.

Spillane, J.P. (2004). *Standards deviation: How schools misunderstand education policy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Spillane, J.P., Reiser, B.J. & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of Educational Research, 27*(3), 387-431.

Stein, M.K. & Coburn, C. (2008). Architectures for learning: A comparative analysis of two urban school districts. *American Journal of Education, 114*, 583-626.

Stodolsky, S.S. (1993). A framework for subject matter comparisons in high schools. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 9*(4), 333-346.

Stodolsky, S.S. & Grossman, P.L. (2000). Changing students, changing teaching. *Teachers College Record, 102*(1), 125-172.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stringfield, S. (1995). Attempting to Enhance Students' Learning through Innovative Programs: The Case for Schools Evolving into High Reliability Organizations. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 6*(1), 67-96.

Stringfield, S. & Teddlie, C. (1991). Observers as predictors of schools' multiyear outlier status on achievement tests. *The Elementary School Journal, 91*(4), 357-376.

Supovitz, J.A. & Klein, V. (2003, November). Mapping a course for improved student learning: How innovative schools systematically use student performance data to guide improvement. Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Togneri, W. (2003). Education policymaking and implementation: The role of school districts as intermediaries in school improvement. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA.

Tyack, D. B. (1974). The one best system: A history of American urban education. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

U.S. General Accounting Office. (2002). *Title I: Characteristics of tests will influence expenses; information sharing may help states realize efficiencies* (Publication GAO-03-389). Washington, DC: Author.

Viadero, D. (2009, October 28). Turnover in principalship focus of research. *Education Week, 29*, 9.

Wayman, J.C. & Stringfield, S. (2006). Data use for school improvement: School practices and research perspectives. *American Journal of Education 112*(4), 463-468.

Weick, K.E. (1995). *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Weick, K.E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 21*(1), 1-19.

Weick, K.E. & Roberts, K.H. (1993). Collective mind in organizations: Heedful interrelating on flight decks. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 38*(3), 357-381.

Weick, K.E. & Sutcliffe, K.M. (2001). Managing the Unexpected: Assuring High Performance in an Age of Complexity. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems. *Organization, 7*(2), 255-246.

Wigdor, A.K. & Garner, W.R. *Ability testing: Uses, consequences, and controversies: Part II*. Documentation section. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Wiliam, D. & Black, P. (1996). Meanings and consequences: a basis for distinguishing formative and summative functions of assessments? *British Educational Research Journal, 22*(5), 537-548.

Wirt, F.M. & Kirst, M. W. (2005). *The Political Dynamics of American Education* (3rd ed). Richmond, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Young, V.M. (2005). *Teachers' use of data: Embedded contexts and institutional logics*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA.

Young, V.M. (2006). Teachers' use of data: Loose coupling agenda setting, and team norms. *American Journal of Education, 112*, August, 521-548.

Zeuli, J.S. (1994). How do teachers understand research when they read it? *Teaching & Teacher Education, 10*(1), 39-55.

APPENDIX A

Interview Question Protocol Teachers/Department Chairs
Phase I

<u>Introduction to interviewees:</u> I am working on my dissertation study regarding subject area departments and their use of student evidence. I'd like to record what you have to say so I don't miss any of it. I don't want to rely just on my notes. If at any time in the interview you would like to turn off the recorder, just press this button and the recorder will stop.

<u>Purpose Statement and interview structure:</u>

The purpose of this interview is to get information that will help educators determine what information is important for English/social science teachers in the classroom. As someone who has extensive experience in the subject, you are in a unique position to describe how English/social science teachers determine what and how their students know or understand something. More specifically, I'm interested in the way you determine how your students are learning.

To provide a time frame we have approximately eight questions we will address in the next 60 minutes.

Belief Questions:

- Think back in your career to a student who truly benefited from your class and one who did not. What do you think the student(s) gained or did not gain from the class? What was the biggest reason for their performance? Did you seek out or receive any support for either student?

Reform question:

For English

- What are your thoughts on the requirement that all students must pass an exit exam in English? How does this impact students, teachers, the department?

For social science:

- What are your thoughts on the requirement that all students must meet social science standards and that all students must continually improve their social science scores on the CST? How does this impact students, teachers, the department?

Department focus:

- How would you describe a typical department meeting? Can you think back to a particularly interesting discussion or challenge your department faced and how they dealt with it?

- Can you come up with a metaphor that describes your view of your department (Hill, 1995)?

Teaching Issues:

- How did you get your teaching assignment this year? Is this the way courses are usually assigned in this department? Are courses rotated?

- How familiar are you with your colleagues' use of student evidence in these courses? *[probe here for multiple ways to assess]*

Department chair questions: (Some may be asked during the informal check in meetings)

- How important is the role of department chair? [*probe for support provided, expertise, political understanding, helps facilitate their teaching, hinders. . .*]

- What other formal or informal leadership is in this department?

- When there is disagreement, how is it addressed/handled in your team, in your department? [*ask for examples*].

- What kinds of conversations have you had with your colleagues about student evidence as it relates to (the exit exam or the tested standards)? Do you and your colleagues agree on what student evidence is valid or more useful?

- What other opportunities do you get to talk with your colleagues about student evidence?

- Can you describe an ideal person to hire for your department? Explain.

Basic Biographical information:

- I have just a few quick factual questions: How long have you been teaching and what specific subject(s) are you currently teaching? How long have you worked in this department? Have you taught at other school sites? Where? In what department(s)? For how many years? What one thing do you enjoy most about teaching English/social science?

- Was teaching what you expected? What concepts met your expectations? What were different?

I welcome any follow up thoughts that might arise later from this interview. Feel free to email or ask me to stop in.

APPENDIX B
Follow up questions for Phase II Interviews

Questions

1) In the past week, who have you spoken to regarding teaching and learning?

2) When you do have questions about curriculum or pedagogy or anything related to teaching who do you generally speak with? (*Get at specifics. Who would you go to and why?*)

3) Who do you talk with and/or work with to make decisions about the design or implementation of student assessments?

4) What student evidence both formal and informal do you use most in your classrooms? If you had to pick only one or two you could use, which one would it be? Why?

5) Do you believe that the department's stake in standardized assessment –three years of assessment and CASHEE exams for English; two years of CST for social science have an affect on the messages you get (or attitudes of colleagues) concerning assessment policies?

6) What role do department or team meetings have on the connection you make between assessments you use and decisions to improve instruction? What role do informal interactions have on your assessment decisions to improve instruction?

7) Do department interactions influence what you do to prepare your students for standardized assessment tests? (*Determine if these interactions are with individual department members or informal conversations or in team meetings*). Does your department, team members, or individuals in your department require or strongly suggest any specific practices? If so, what and who?

8) What steps/process/procedure do you usually take to improve instruction?

9) Using the list below choose what concepts you spend much of your time discussing in your department meetings, teams meetings or smaller subgroups meetings, and with colleagues? What other things do you discuss with your colleagues? What information do you seek out that helps you most in your own classroom?

Topic	Items Discussed
Reporting out	Examples: district budget information, CST scores for last year, changes in classes offered, the evaluation structure and process
Discussing curriculum	Examples: pacing guides-who is adhering to the guide and how can we all keep up, putting information used by a teacher on the server so other teachers can use it in their classes, discussion of future development of lessons
Sharing classroom ideas/lesson ideas and its merits	Examples: report out of what is on the server and its use in the classroom. Report out in a department meeting about peer observations-all positive and some lacking specifics for the value judgment
Sharing student work	Examples: norming and scoring with subsequent conversations about what this information tells them about their students' skills

Using Evidence	Examples: using practically relevant student evidence to inform and modify teacher instruction
Other Items	

10) You provided a metaphor to describe your department in your first interview. What metaphor would you use now that describes your view of your department (Hill, 1995)?

APPENDIX C
Summary of Data Sources and Timeline

Data Sources	Type	Data Quantity	Dates Collected
Interviews	Phase I – • Department Chair Interviews • Teacher Interviews (5 English, 5 social science)	2 department chairs =2.5 hours 10 teacher interviews = 11.2 hours Total =13.7	August 2008 - October 2008
Informal Meetings	Department chair check in - informal meetings	2 department chairs 8 check ins with each = 10 hours total	August 2008- December 2008
Interviews	Phase II – • Department Chair Interviews • Teacher Interviews	2 department chair interviews = 3.5 hours 12 teacher interviews 14.2 hours = 17.7 hours total	Jan 2009- April 2009
Informal Meetings	Department chair check in - informal meetings	4 check in with social science=3.5 hours 13 check in with English = 13 hours =16.5	Jan 2009- April 2009
Phase I and Phase II Informal meetings with teachers	Informal meetings with English and social science teachers	English teachers 38 28.5 hours Informal meetings with social science teachers 25 18.75 hours =47.25	August 2008 – June 2009
Follow Up Interviews and informal conversations with Teacher Leaders	Teacher Leader Interviews	8 = teacher leaders who had been with the school 19 or 20 years. 10.5 hours	June – October 2009
Interview and informal conversation with principals	Interview with current principal and informal conversation with the first principal	Current principal 2.5 hours First principal 0.5 hours =3.0 hours	May 2009-June 2009
Total Hours			
Observations of meetings and events	Department (6 English, 3 social science) HLC (History Learning Community) Expository Writing Grant Team meetings: • 9th grade English • 10th grade English	9 (2 departments) = 14.25 hours 1 (1.5 hours) 1 (1.5 hours) 4 3	August, 2008- April 2009

	• 11th grade English • 12th grade English • Geography • World History • US History • Government/Economics Open House	4 1 2 2 1 2 =19 hours 1 (2 hours) =38.25	 Sept. 2008
Total		=156.9 hours	
Documents	• Course syllabi • Course schedule • Master schedule • WASC Report • Policy documents • Professional Learning Communities' Agendas • Meeting Agendas • English and social science textbooks and ancillary materials • Grade level student work • Teacher handouts, power points		August 2008- June 2009