

Aligning the Advanced Placement U.S. History Course with a Catholic Mission

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine how Catholic high school leaders balance the tension between the Catholic identity of their schools and the secular programs they often evaluate for implementation. To study this phenomenon, ten responsive interviews were conducted with school leaders from four Catholic high schools regarding how they decided whether or not to implement the 2014 Advanced Placement (AP) United States History course framework. Department chairs, building administrators, and one diocesan administrator were asked questions about how they make curriculum decisions, how the Catholic identity of their schools impacts those decisions, and how the AP U.S. History course was evaluated in light of their processes and values. These interviews were supplemented by a document review of all published communications regarding curricula from the participating schools to triangulate data gathered through the interviews. Several conclusions emerged, though one idea synthesizes them: the extent to which Catholic identity impacts the curriculum corresponds to the extent to which Catholic identity is considered by school leaders in other matters. Schools in which leaders emphasized the faith in written documents and in other aspects of the school tended to emphasize it in the intended curricula for their programs as well. However, regardless of the degree of this emphasis, each of the leaders relied heavily on their classroom teachers to integrate their interpretation of Catholic identity into the coursework, with varying degrees of support and guidance regarding how to do so.

Dedication

To my parents, who showed me what God meant when He revealed Himself as a loving Father; to my wife, who is Christ's heart broken open for my sake; to my children, who are the joy and glory of the Holy Spirit alive in my home; and to my siblings, who taught me who I was made to be.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The world of schooling is always changing as educators seek improved environments, curricula, and methods of instruction to best serve their students. For Catholic school leaders, the challenge is discerning which of these changes match the unchanging purpose of their schools. As stated in the Church document *The Catholic School*, the Catholic Church “establishes her own schools because she considers them a...center in which a specific concept of the world, of man, and of history is developed and conveyed” (Garrone, 1977, para. 8). According to this document, an understanding of human history is paramount to establishing a Catholic worldview, and, as the Church states in her proclamation on education, *Gravissimum Educationi*, the final end to which man’s life is ordered: “A Christian education...has as its principal purpose this goal: that the baptized, while they are gradually introduced the knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become ever more aware of the gift of Faith they have received” (Paul VI, 1965, para. 2).

The administrators and teachers working at the schools in this study attempted to meet the demands of parents and incorporate the best the secular educational world has to offer while remaining faithful to their interpretation of what a Catholic school should be. The task of evaluating what the various schools of thought offer regarding curriculum and instruction and taking what works seems simple; as St. Paul said, “Test everything; retain what is good” (1Thes 5:21). However, the Catholic Church says that Catholic schools have a different ultimate purpose than public schools; or, as many Catholic philosophers would say, they have a different telos. Traditionally, developing the gift of

a Catholic faith means approaching education as an end unto itself, an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ who is “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). As Blessed John Henry Newman (ed. 1982) states in his seminal work, *The Idea of a University*,

Knowledge...is valuable for what its very presence in us does for us after the manner of a habit, even though it be turned to no further account, nor subserve any direct end...[knowledge is] the very first object to which we are attracted, after the supply of our physical wants. (p. 79)

The Catholic understanding of the human person is such that people are changed by what they know, and so even information that is not necessarily useful in any practical matters can be worth knowing because of what it does to the person.

The mission statements of some of the schools that were the focus of this study reflect this approach to education. One school’s mission is stated as follows: “Our mission is to be an academic community of faith that strives to form the hearts, minds, and souls of our students in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the living Tradition of the Catholic Church” (School A, 2014, para. 1). This mission differs with the mission statements of surrounding public institutions that focus more specifically on increasing students’ learning to prepare them for their futures. For instance, a neighboring district’s mission statement is “Unprecedented academic success and unparalleled student growth” (District Z, 2014, para. 1). One might be tempted to think the differences between these missions to be a matter of semantics, but in reality pursuing higher gains in student learning is distinctly different at its core (though it may look similar on the surface) than

forming one's mind to a transcendent and objective truth. The first approach is a stepping stone to something else; the second is a destination in its own right.

Conley and McCaughey (2012) said, "The importance of all students being college and career ready is one of the most discussed issues in policy circles and secondary schools" (p. 28). Much of modern public education has this utilitarian purpose: to prepare elementary and high school students to become competent college students or productive members of the workforce. Catholic education works towards these goals as well, but as Pope Paul VI (1965) stated, the Church is concerned with "the secular part of [man's life] insofar as it has a bearing on his heavenly calling" (para. 1). So while participation and success in the secular realm is the end goal of public education, it is a secondary, though still important, concern from a Catholic perspective.

While there are clear philosophical differences between public and Catholic education, many organizations and stakeholders work in both of these worlds. The College Board, which creates and administers the SAT and the Advanced Placement (AP) college credit exam program, has a mission congruent with public schools' approach to education. Their mission statement says, "The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education" (College Board, 2014A, para. 1). Despite the secular mission focused on college preparation, over 4,000 non-public high schools offer AP courses (College Board, 2014B) and over 145,000 students from religiously affiliated schools took the SAT in 2013 (College Board, 2013).

Though college and career readiness is second to forming Catholic school students in their faith in the eyes of the Catholic Church, it is not necessarily secondary in the eyes of the parents who are choosing between an education in the Catholic or the public school systems. As stated on the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) (2014) website, “Parents choose Catholic schools for any and all of the following reasons: faith formation, high academic standards, values added education, and safe school environment” (para. 2). Many Catholic schools work to figure out how to open up access to the resources of institutions such as the College Board so as to prepare students for their futures and meet the demands of parents, who the Church sees as “the primary and principal educators” (Pius VI, 1965, para. 3) of their children, without sacrificing their dedication to the faith-focused calling of their institutions.

This tension between the secular and religious within American Catholic schools is a balance these schools have been navigating for over a century; as Weisz (1988) said about the dynamics in American parochial schools just after the Civil War, “The parish schools came into existence not only to further the Catholic faith, but...pressure to emulate public schools came from parents jealous of the educational advantage” (p. 175). Though most incorporate some or all of the secular programs of public school counterparts, some schools keep their distance from these so as to ensure fidelity to the Catholic intellectual tradition. A cursory survey of the schools of most major dioceses will reveal some buildings fully aligned to public or state standards, some with no alignment whatsoever, and a variety of philosophical and practical reasons for their decisions to operate as such. There is little guidance on how schools can best evaluate

these choices, and so at times bishops, but more often administrators and teachers, are left to make these determinations on their own.

Background

Modern educators face many challenges. In an increasingly high-stakes setting, the expectations for student learning continue to rise, the impetus to incorporate technology and 21st-century skills into lesson plans grows, and the alternatives to traditional classroom settings multiply. Faced with such a dynamic and volatile scene, many in the field try to simplify the issues. For instance, Marzano and DuFour (2012) claim there are really only four questions that need answering: what do students need to learn; How will we know if they've learned it; What will we do for those who struggle; and, How will we enhance curriculum for those who excel (p. 3)? At first glance, this prominent philosophy seems to assuage the palpable pressure mounting on all sides of school leaders.

Yet even answering these four questions is not as simple as it may seem. In particular, administrators and teachers creating a social studies curriculum would undoubtedly be overwhelmed by the first question. The content one could include in history classes by its very nature grows every day, as each passing moment shapes the global stage into something different than it was before and sheds new light on that which preceded it. Choosing amongst the billions of events in human history to determine what students need to know, in what way it should be organized, and how one should teach it is a daunting task for any educator in the field.

The struggle over content choice was at the forefront of the American educational landscape as controversy arose regarding a newly updated AP U.S. History framework in

2014. A member of the Jefferson County (Colorado) Board of Education suggested that the framework needed revision so that it would be “promoting patriotism and downplaying civil disobedience” (Superville, 2014, para. 2). She and others were worried that the curriculum framework as it was written might lead students to have a more cynical view of their country. This proposal sparked outrage and walkouts amongst the staff and students in the district who felt the board member’s proposal tantamount to censorship, setting off a long and heated debate that resulted in a much more limited, though still disparaged, proposal of revision (Superville, 2014).

Colorado was hardly the only site of such challenges. Ben Carson, a 2016 Republican presidential candidate and former neurosurgeon, said he felt students who completed the new AP U.S. History curriculum would “be ready to go sign up for ISIS” (Smith, 2014, para. 1), the radical Islamic organization known for its vitriol and violence toward those who hold traditional western worldviews. Educational leaders in North Carolina also expressed concerns with the College Board regarding the U.S. History curriculum (Smith, 2014).

Indeed, this is not the first time such a controversy has arisen in America over history curricula. As Wineburg (2001) says in his book *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, the congressional debate in 1995 over a proposed set of national history standards in the United States devolved into political skirmishes similar to those with the new AP framework: “In the barroom terms befitting such a brawl, those who wrote the standards were traitors; those who opposed them, racists. The rancor of this debate was rich soil for dichotomous thinking” (p. 4). He continues: “Sadly, the debate has become so fixated on the question of ‘which history’ that we have forgotten a more basic

question: Why study history at all?” (p. 5). This question lies at the heart of social studies curricular decisions, and different schools answer this question differently based on the values present in each setting.

Choices made regarding curriculum can influence the way students view the world, thrusting questions over the content of textbooks into the middle of a more philosophical debate regarding what lens American educators want to give their students to make sense of their current reality. As Wiles (2009) said in his work *Leading Curriculum Development*, “Curriculum work is always value-laden. Curriculum work is a matter of choosing from among many possibilities the set of values to be promoted in the classroom” (p. 2). If curriculum choices are related to values, then different persons and different schools are bound to have varying ideas on curriculum based on their differing values, and perhaps even more so with a religiously-affiliated institution such as the Catholic schools in this study.

While the headlines regarding the AP U.S. History framework make it clear that curriculum choices are highly politicized in America, the issue is of equal concern in a Catholic school system that maintains a very distinct set of beliefs. Questions of Catholic identity and fidelity to Catholic teachings are consistently debated, particularly in the area of curriculum: “Ensuring [schools’] genuinely Catholic identity is the Church’s greatest educational challenge” (Miller, 2006, p. 61). Considering the decades-long trend of diminishing Catholic school enrollments and sites, the discussion of these differing views is more relevant and vigorous than ever. The NCEA (2015) reported that there has been a net loss of over 1,300 Catholic schools and a net enrollment decrease of almost 20% since 2005 (Catholic School Trend Data). Some, such as the advocacy group The

Cardinal Newman Society, suggest that part of the decline is due to a drifting from a true sense of what a Catholic school is meant to be. They stated, “Since the 1960s, Catholics have witnessed a creeping secularism in Catholic education that has often corrupted teachings and behaviors – both inside and outside the classroom – and replaced authentic Catholic identity with bland conformity to a declining culture” (Cardinal Newman Society, 2015, para. 7).

The findings of this study shed light on some of the challenges facing Catholic educators in the United States today and could help guide others to solutions by examining how the schools studied attempted to reconcile the inherent tension in accepting a curriculum from a source whose mission is different from its own. By evaluating the processes these school leaders used within their contexts and the results they have experienced from these processes, administrators and pastors can assess their own means for resolving these tensions in an effort to arrive at either similar or dissimilar results.

Statement of the Problem

Catholic schools are often pressured by parents to maintain a rigorous academic program that affords their children all of the opportunities for college and career readiness that the public schools provide (NCEA, 2014, para. 3). However, these schools are first and foremost called by the Church to nurture the faith of their students and to approach knowledge as an end unto itself rather than only a means to a college placement or job. While the Church has stated the intended purpose of its schools, there is little guidance on how to apply the principles outlined in its documents in particular situations

such as curriculum choices. This becomes problematic when secular curricula are offered to Catholic institutions, such as happens with AP courses.

To maintain enrollment numbers and fulfill their purpose of partnering with parents in the education of their children, Catholic schools must examine programs like the AP U.S. History course that many families want their children to have access to; but schools must also ensure these programs fit the mission of the school and the common mission all Catholic schools share. If a program such as an AP course is not immediately a match for a school's Catholic identity, the next question becomes whether and how schools can modify it to meet parental wishes without sacrificing the schools' missions. Though these decisions are among the most important that school leaders make, little guidance is available regarding how administrators deal with these tensions and how they come to decisions regarding the secular curriculum options available to their schools. Failing to incorporate some of these secular programs could result in a school losing enrollment or even closing, as many Catholic schools around the country have; however, losing touch with the Catholic identity of the school could have the same result. Much is at stake.

As the Institute for Catholic Education in Ontario (1996) said at the end of a project to determine a common secondary Catholic curriculum for Canada, "What still remains, however, is some method whereby such curriculum projects can be validated by the various partners within the Catholic education community to ensure its Catholic character. At present, this process is yet to be determined" (p. 31). Archbishop Miller (2006) suggested something similar at the end of *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*, his summary of Church teaching on Catholic schools, calling for a

“collaborative and systematic exercise of assessing a school’s catholicity...to identify, clarify, and strengthen its effectiveness in its service of Christ and the Church” (p. 63).

This study was meant to shed light on the processes used by some Catholic institutions to locally make curriculum decisions with Catholicity in mind so that others can address can have a better understanding of what has and has not been effective in other contexts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the decision-making processes of four Catholic schools that chose either to adopt or not adopt the AP U.S. History course, and more specifically to examine how school leaders considered the Catholic identity of the school as they made their decisions. Through a qualitative approach that utilized responsive interviewing, the complexity of these processes was revealed and similarities and differences elucidated to enlighten others who might face similar challenges in similar contexts. This could be of some service to school and diocesan leaders as they attempt to navigate the various tensions influencing Catholic school communities trying to maintain enrollments and achieve their missions.

Significance of the Study

This study was pursued to examine how Catholic schools can stay true to their Catholic identity and mission by avoiding the utilitarian view of education that permeates modern American culture while still evaluating secular curricula. If such reconciliation is possible, it stands to benefit Catholic schools by giving them implicit permission to both seek out best practice and still maintain a thorough Catholic identity. Catholic high schools in particular could seek out a fuller implementation of resources like AP to drive the rigor of their academic programming if the institutions studied demonstrate that they

have successfully incorporated what is perhaps the most controversial AP course without contradicting the core identity of their school. This understanding could assist other leaders facing similar decisions by providing them with a comprehensive background to the questions at hand and examples of how some schools have tried to reconcile the various pressures faced. Given the dropping enrollments and closing schools across the United States, how school leaders in the Catholic educational system resolve these tensions could be the difference between longevity or termination for their schools.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to four schools and the members of their communities. Limiting the study to this few schools made it possible to examine the decision regarding implementation of the AP U.S. History course in its entirety. The study was limited to Catholic schools, since their missions and organizational structures are different from public schools and their districts, which is what makes the pressures faced so unique and this phenomenon worth studying. Interviews were delimited to individual sessions conducted face-to-face and over the phone during the 2015-2016 school year. Data were gathered by means of these interviews and background research of available literature.

Assumptions

Based on an understanding of Catholic education and the complex pressures Catholic schools face, four primary assumptions were made regarding this study. First, it was assumed that all Catholic school leaders consider their Catholic identity to some extent when making curricular decisions. Second, it is assumed that the degree of this consideration will differ based on the beliefs and priorities of the leaders, members of the institution, and the community served. These assumptions are based on the

understanding that while the Catholic Church states that schools associated with the Church are meant to support and teach Catholic doctrines and worldview, individual persons and communities may interpret how to accomplish this task differently. Third, it is assumed that all Catholic school leaders involved in the study were at least aware of and likely evaluated secular programs and practices such as the AP program to see whether they could improve the educational quality of the school's academic program. Fourth, it was assumed that the subjects interviewed gave accurate and honest information regarding the processes of their curricular decisions.

Research Questions

This qualitative study is guided by what is sometimes called a grand tour question, which is the broadest statement of the central question of the research (Cresswell, 2013, p. 138). The grand tour question for this study is, "How do Catholic schools balance the tension between adopting secular programs while trying to maintain their Catholic identity?" Several research questions, queries that "cue readers to the direction the study will take and help to delineate the scope of the study" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 6), were identified underneath the umbrella of the grand tour question. The following questions directed this study.

RQ1. In what ways do Catholic school leaders consider their school's Catholic identity when making curriculum decisions?

RQ2. In what ways do Catholic school leaders agree regarding student learning objectives or standards about human history?

RQ3. How do school leaders determine if the AP U.S. History framework is a match for their Catholic schools' history curricula?

RQ4. What process did administrators and teachers in four Catholic high schools use to decide whether to implement this course at their institutions?

Definition of Terms

Curriculum. Though most definitions of curriculum involve a delineation between the different types of curriculums, Glatthorn et. al. (2012) defined curriculum in general as

the plans made for guiding learning in the schools, usually represented in retrievable documents of several layers of generality, and the actualization of those plans in the classroom, as experienced by the learners and as recorded by an observer; those experiences take place in a learning environment that also influences what is learned. (p. 4)

For the purposes of this study, unless otherwise noted, the use of the word “curriculum” will refer to the “written curriculum” which Glatthorn et. al. (2012) said includes, “a rationale that supports the curriculum, the general goals to be accomplished, the specific objectives to be mastered, the sequence in which those objectives should be studied, and the kinds of learning activities that should be used” (p. 9).

Encyclical. An official letter from the Pope to the Roman Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Church as a whole (Encyclical, n.d.).

Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) defines the Magisterium as “The living, teaching office of the Church, whose task it is to give as authentic interpretation of the word of God, whether in its written form (Sacred Scripture) or in the form of Tradition” (para. 887).

Telos. Telos is the term used to refer to someone or something's ultimate end or purpose (Telos, n.d.).

Organization of the Study

Chapter one of this study begins with an introduction that gives a broad overview of the scope and importance of the topic. The chapter continues with a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, assumptions, and delimitations inherent to this approach. Four research questions were identified and key terms were defined. Chapter two is a review of literature related to the study, including works related to different philosophies of education and Catholic education in particular; an examination of the history of Catholic schools in America; a review of the Church's view of human history; and finally, an analysis of the Advanced Placement program and the AP U.S. History course. Chapter three defines the research design, sample, instrumentation, and data collection procedures, and chapter four analyzes the data collected. The investigation finishes with chapter five which offers insight on the implications of the study and suggestions for further research.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Chapter two is a review of the literature related to some of the many topics of concern that relate to this study. The chapter begins with an overview of the history of various teleological approaches to education, and the second and third sections focus specifically on what the Catholic Church has said about education and the history of Catholic schools in America. The chapter then contains a review of a Catholic approach to the study of human history before finishing with a review of literature about the Advanced Placement program and its United States history course.

This review establishes several premises necessary to understanding this study and why it is relevant. The first premise is that there are competing philosophies of education which influence curriculum choices. The second is that the Catholic Church has authoritatively communicated the philosophy of its schools and concepts that should impact the history curriculums in those schools. The final premise is that the Advanced Placement U.S. History course is one example of a viable and popular secular resource that Catholic schools can evaluate to determine if it fits this authoritative vision of education and history.

Philosophies of Education

The mission and goals of an educational institution direct the choices made regarding curricula for that institution. These missions and goals have changed and developed over time and across civilizations, and the study of different philosophies of education is an academic field unto itself. To fully understand the larger context of the

stated purposes of the schools in this study, an overview of some of the approaches to education throughout history is beneficial.

Educational Philosophies of the Ancient World. Education has been a part of the human story since its beginning, as parents instinctively passed on knowledge to their children that was needed for survival and communication. The first known forms of education outside the family developed independently in ancient Sumer, Egypt, India, and China as means of maintaining stratified and tenuous social structures; out of these systems, early forms of art, mathematics, medicine, religion, and language were preserved and refined over thousands of years (Sifuna, 2006). The ancient Hebrews also had a system to educate children, though due to their migratory nature, weak political structure, and monotheism, their education was more religious in tone and content and less developed than the others mentioned (Sifuna, 2006). Perhaps the most influential ancient society with regards to education, however, was the Greeks, as they forever expanded the world's understanding of what education could accomplish, a change Marrou (1956) described as, "the progressive transition from a 'noble warrior' culture to a 'scribe' culture" (p. xiv).

Ancient Greek education fell into two eras, the Old and the New, but had one common aim: producing the perfect citizen (Sifuna, 2006; Cordasco, 1976). In Sparta, this meant producing soldiers; in Athens, they took a more literary approach with a broader perspective on the life serving the State (Sifuna, 2006; Marrou, 1956). Both educations were marked to different degrees by both physical and intellectual formation and often had a religious element.

Special attention must be paid to two giants from this era: Plato and Aristotle (Heater, 2004). The famous Greek philosophers were renowned for providing the foundations of the “idealist” and “realist” schools of thought, both of which were based on the concept of an objective truth that individuals need to transcend themselves to understand. Plato was ancient Greece’s “greatest philosopher of education” (Topping, 2015, p. 15). According to Butler-Bowdon (2012) in his introduction to *The Republic*, Plato called for a system of public education geared towards “instilling the idea of the Good” (p. xvi) that leads the individual outside of themselves towards external truth (Barrow & Woods, 1988, p. 187). Plato’s idealism is most identifiable in the famous allegory of the cave in which Plato posits that ideas are forms of a true reality to which minds can conform if one has the courage to look beyond the sensory world. Aristotle (trans. 2011) outlines the idea of what moderns would call a liberal arts education in his *On the Parts of Animals* written around 350 B.C. In it he says, “We only ascribe universal education to one who in his own individual person is thus critical in all or nearly all branches of knowledge, and not to one who has a like ability merely in some special subject” (p. 1). He takes Plato’s metaphysical concepts of causes and forms and applies them to the study of the physical world, with the goal of the educated man having familiarity with each science and with the methods for studying it (Topping, 2015, p. 23). He is credited with being the founder of the school of thought known as “realism”, which gained and retained popularity because, as Power (1991) said, “it squared with what most thoughtful people believed to be true. From direct contact with reality, dependable knowledge, although never guaranteed, is possible” (p. 298). Much of the history of Western educational philosophy stems from the work of these two men.

The final notable ancient civilization relevant to this topic is Rome. The Roman Republic's education was vocational as well as concerned with passing on Roman values, similar in many ways to what was happening in Greek schools (Heater, 2004; Sifuna, 2006). As Power (1991) said, "Before Rome mustered enough self-confidence to chart her own educational course, Hellenism had been solidly welded to Roman life" (p. 51). Roman schools eventually became a means of transferring the Latin culture to youth and provided a template for much of the education throughout the developing west.

Education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Out of the Roman and Hebraic educational traditions arose the rest of the Western educational system (Heater, 2004). This most notably began with the Christian schools in the early Middle Ages (Cordasco, 1976). Though certainly influenced by their cultural and religious forebears, Christian education emphasized the moral development of man in a manner "entirely new in the history of the world and in the history of education" (Sifuna, 2006, p. 83) in large part because their focus was more on personal evangelization than schooling (Gangel & Benson, 2002, p. 77). In the early years of Christianity, many Church fathers rejected almost all things related to the Greeks and pagans, including their schools, for a clearer focus on religious faith (Cubberly, 2005, Chapter IV, Section II). A new element to the teleology of education was introduced: not a utilitarian approach, not a vocational approach, and not an approach concerned with good behavior for the good of the state, but a moral prerogative of schools now concerned with the eternal salvation of the educated. Eventually, however, the Church expanded its political reach and reconciled many philosophical difficulties with the Hellenists in the movement known as "scholasticism," pioneered by Augustine and championed by Thomas Aquinas

(Cordasco, 1976). Of Aquinas, Kreeft (1990) says, “You may not agree that St. Thomas is history’s greatest philosopher, but he was certainly the greatest philosopher for the two thousand years between Aristotle and Descartes” (p. 13). In time, the Church became the provider of almost all education in the west focused on helping man to understand himself and God with Vatican directives to establish free schools in as many towns as possible (Monroe, 1911, pp. 526-528; Woods, 2005, p. 44; Sifuna, 2006). The efforts by the monks running these schools laid the foundation for the university system soon to be developed by the Church (Flick, 1909, p. 223).

The Renaissance brought a shift in thinking regarding education. While Augustine and Aquinas had squared the Ancient Greeks with Christian philosophy regarding God and heaven, the Renaissance was marked by an interest in those same ancient texts and ideas for temporal reasons. This philosophical focus on man and his capabilities, called “humanism”, changed much in the purpose of schools. Education was now an opportunity to question and interpret ideas personally rather than learn static or objective truths from elders. Without question, this thinking has been the foundation for all modern educational theory (Sifuna, 2006).

Desiderius Erasmus, writing in 1511 as one of the most influential early humanist philosophers, sounds much like a modern educator as he decries rote memorization of grammatical rules: “For it is not by learning rules that we acquire the power of speaking a language, but by daily intercourse with those accustomed to express themselves with exactness and refinement” (Woodward, 1904, p. 164). This emphasis on the personal experience of the student and the context within which learning takes place has developed greatly over the ensuing centuries and changed the purpose of schooling from

encountering an external truth to looking inward to a personal potential, a more “constructivist” perspective that claims, “People construct knowledge socially, through collaboration and discussion” (Duffy, Lowyck, & Jonassen, 1993, p. 1).

The Effect of the Reformation on Education. Of particular interest during the era of the Renaissance was the Protestant Reformation. The first and immediate effect of the Reformation on education was the closing and disorganization of many of the educational institutions the Catholic Church was then operating (McCormick, 1915, p. 211). The Reformation returned educational efforts back to the realm of religious concern, though it did so through the new lens of personal experience provided by the humanists. The Protestant movement of Luther was founded on personal interpretation of Scripture for one’s salvation, which in the eyes of his followers increased greatly the urgency for universal literacy and the publication of the Bible in the vernacular. Luther in many ways was a champion of teachers and education in general, encouraging each city with zeal to invest in the education of its children with tracks for both vocational and higher learning (Sifuna, 2006; Cordasco, 1976). Calvin supported much the same philosophy, though in light of his harsher view of human nature, Calvinist schools focused more on discipline and curbing temptations to misbehave (Sifuna, 2006; Cordasco, 1976). In response to these developments, Ignatius of Loyola and members of his religious order, the Jesuits, seized on education as the opportunity to win back those lost to the Church, and so they established a prodigious number of schools and universities that adapted humanist ideas to the Catholic faith and educational tradition (Sifuna, 2006). This tension between Protestant and Jesuit educational efforts was felt most pertinently in the universities as Mahoney (2003) explained: “higher education in

the West operated in the context of a divided Christendom, its subsequent history formed and reformed as the reverberations of the Protestant Reformation and the Roman Catholic Counter Reformation traveled through time and space” (p. 22). The Reformation returned the focus of education to the things of God, but rival views of God’s relationship with the Church would now forever shape the educational landscape, and the use of schools as a tool for evangelization took on a new importance in light of the competition between Protestant and Catholic believers.

Modern Educational Movements. Following the renewed emphasis on the power of human reason in the time known as the “enlightenment,” the modern era eschewed traditional religious and political institutions and focused on logic and science. The work of Renee Descartes is seen by many as the beginning of the modern era, at least in philosophy, and his “rationalism,” a philosophy based on the premise of innate ideas within the person that one can access and connect, has been a turning point in human thought (Bracken, 2010, p. 1). Many prominent philosophers and philosophies fed off of each other in developing the idea that reason could perfect both man and society.

Some modern philosophies, however, were still rooted strongly in the idealism and realism of Plato and Aristotle. Immanuel Kant is a notable philosopher in the school of the Greeks; he believed in using concrete cases to have students go outside of themselves to encounter moral truth, which would in turn change them as persons (Paulsen, 1902, p. 372). G.W.F. Hegel also believed that educating students in the ideals of morality, in particular while studying classical languages, was at the heart of the purpose of schooling (Somr, 2013, p. 290).

Locke (1902) built off of Aristotelian philosophy in several works, most particularly in his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* in which he detailed his thoughts on everything from diet to dress to schooling, saying that discipline of mind and body and formation in virtue was central to the development of the person (p. 20-22). Most famous for his theory that man is a “tabula rossa” or “blank slate,” Locke believed man an empty vessel, and the sacred duty of the educator was to fill that vessel.

Rousseau (1889) is tied philosophically to Locke. In his famous *Emile*, he said, “We are born weak, we need strength; helpless, we need aid; foolish, we need reason. All that we lack at birth, all that we need when we come to man's estate, is the gift of education” (p. 12). Believing that man is educated by other men, by nature, and by reality, Rousseau claimed that all three must coincide for education to be successful in developing the child into a man, and that one must recognize the significant differences between children and men. Mortimer Adler also was a realist, though he lived and taught much later in history. He shaped this school into believing that “there are no unteachable children” (Adler, 1982, p. 7) and that education could and should not be simply vocational in nature, but rather a development of the person through a focus on the classics.

A change in educational philosophy arrived in the form of “pragmatism,” which claims, “only those things that are experienced or observed are real” (Cohen, 1999, para. 6). Dewey’s (1916) *Democracy and Education* is a seminal work in modern educational theory, as his philosophy embraced this pragmatism, moved away from a concept of objective truth, and focused more on the realm of subjective experience. He viewed education primarily as a communication of common experiences in which both the

teacher and pupil are changed (Dewey, 1916, p. 11). He believed schools should be structured to give students experiences in social settings that reflected the democratic world in which they lived by respecting their freedom and choice (Barrow & Woods, 1988, p. 134-135). In Dewey's eyes, the curiosity and sense of discovery within the student was the central element to a meaningful education (Power, 1991, p. 288).

Pragmatism was also popularly championed by the prominent philosopher William James (Power, 1991, p. 296).

Francis S. Parker is known as one of the fathers of educational "progressivism" (Power, 1991, p. 288), the theory that focuses on the growth of the learner as opposed to social development or the passing on of a culture or cultures (Standish, 1999 p. 35). Of progressivism, Power (1991) said, "The shift progressive educators promoted was from the subject-centered school, where children were expected to master a specific body of knowledge and skill, to the child-centered school, where the curriculum was shaped by the child's experience and interest" (p. 287). Progressivism was greatly influenced by educators such as Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Montessori, who reshaped the concept of early childhood education and set the stage for Dewey and his theories (Sifuna, 2006, pp. 133-140).

A response to progressivism was "essentialism," a theory that rejected the progressive concept of schools meant only for the development of the student. Essentialism asserted that schools' main purpose was that of cultural transmission (Power, 1991, p. 291). While there were many different permutations of essentialism, the foundational premise was that a basic core curriculum of reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and English should be followed with high demands for student learning and

achievement (Power, 1991, p. 291). These philosophies were competing for American educators' attention as the country entered World War II.

Finally, while Karl Marx's theories have undoubtedly shaped the political world over the last two centuries, they also had an effect on education as well. He believed the uprising of the proletariat would necessitate a return to strictly utilitarian education and away from the formal schooling that prompted capitalistic nationalism and the suppressing of the masses. Still, Marx intended that the school would also be the training grounds for inculcating Communist values (Sifuna, 2006, p. 132). Cohen (1955), a Marxist educator, summed up this approach, saying, "The fulfillment of education means...the full transformation of educational practice from its present support of the myths as well as the sins of a class society to the classless education of socialist democracy" (p. 197). The Marxist concept of class struggle, tied to the political revolutions that swept through much of Europe and Asia, became a common topic of conversation in classrooms across the globe.

Postmodernism and Educational Theory. Existentialism is a school of thought that claims reality is only meaningful in the subjective interpretation of the individual; in education, student choice and context are crucial through the existentialist lens (Cohen, 1999, paras. 8-10). The rise of this philosophy led to what is often called the "deschooling" movement in which various educators have sought to detach education from the traditional concept of a school. Some of the first proponents of this were Ivan Illich and Everett Reimer (Sifuna, 2006, p. 146). Much of their objection to schools was founded on their understanding of how schooling had impacted third world countries; in their view, the Western concept of education suppressed many of the opportunities for

learning in these places and detached it from their cultural values and heritages.

Regaining those values and expanding the horizons of how, where, and why one could be educated are at the heart of their movement (Sifuna, 2006, pp. 146-148).

The Catholic historian and philosopher Christopher Dawson summarized his perspective on the changing tides of educational philosophy in his work *The Crisis of Western Education* (2010):

The old humanist education taught all that it knew about the civilization of ancient Greece and Rome, and taught little else. In the nineteenth century, this aristocratic and humanist ideal was gradually replaced by the democratic utilitarianism of compulsory state education, on the one hand, and by the ideal of scientific specialization, on the other. The result has been an intellectual anarchy imperfectly controlled by the crude methods of the examination system and of payment by results. (p. 91)

Such a dark view of the development of educational theory and practice by such a prominent Catholic thinker could lead one to wonder: what is the Catholic Church's philosophy of education?

The Catholic Church and Education

Before evaluating whether a Catholic school is faithful to their Catholic identity in its curriculum, it is first imperative to understand exactly what the Church has officially taught about the purpose of education and of Catholic schools. If education can be oriented towards anything from forming Spartan soldiers to Platonic philosopher-kings to Marx's Communist patriots, what is the end goal of Catholic schools?

While the raising and educating of children has always been central to the mission of the Catholic Church, the phenomenon of the Catholic school has developed slowly over time. This has inspired the Magisterium to clarify her concept of what the Church's role is in education, why the Catholic school exists and has a right to continue existing, and what those schools should be trying to achieve. Beginning in 1588, the Church has maintained a governing body known as a "congregation" related in some way to Catholic educational institutions. Originally focused on universities, this congregation has changed and developed until its current form commissioned by Pope John Paul II in 1988: The Congregation for Catholic Education, which oversees universities, seminaries, and schools that depend on ecclesial authority (The Vatican, 2014). This congregation in its penultimate form of "Sacra Congregatio pro institutione Catholica" produced a document in 1977 titled "The Catholic School," a summation and explication of several Church documents that were published as a result of the Second Vatican Council (The Vatican, 2014). Through this congregation and the promulgations of popes and bishops over the years, the concept of Catholic education has been formed. Since the Church's Second Vatican Council was a historical marker in many ways, the documents on education in the Church can be divided into pre- and post-Vatican II categories.

Pre-Vatican II. In the Code of Canon Law created by the Church during the Middle Ages, there is direction from the Church hierarchy regarding schools from as early as the 7th century. However, given the turbulence of the world both before and during the Middle Ages, much of this was limited to commands from the papal offices to establish schools, rather than specific directions on how to run them (Monroe, 1911). While Canon Law references schools many times over the intervening centuries, the first

official encyclical on Catholic parish schools unrelated to the running of universities came in Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Spectata Fides* addressed to the Bishops of England in November of 1885. Though addressed specifically to the clergy in England, the occasion of the encyclical included the establishment of "voluntary schools" (Pope Leo XIII, 1885, para. 4) in many countries, the United States among them. The Holy Father praised the founding and running of these Catholic schools and encouraged their work to continue.

Pope Pius X (1905) elaborated on the topic of educating adults and children in the faith twenty years later in his encyclical *Acerbo Nimis*. The document focused less on the role of schools and more on how the Church forms and teaches its congregation in general. The Holy Father began by reminding the faithful of the need for instruction in the faith (para. 4), and then addressed priests and bishops in particular regarding their roles as teachers, saying, "the first duty of all those who are entrusted in any way with the government of the Church is to instruct the faithful in the things of God" (para. 7). Pius discussed the importance of lay catechists and teachers in Catholic schools to fill needs not met by priests and religious, and he also commanded that formation in the faith be extended to children in public schools (paras. 22-23).

Almost a quarter century later, Pope Pius XI (1929) promulgated *Divini Illius Magistri* to "summarize [Catholic education's] main principles, throw light on its important conclusions, and point out its practical applications" (para. 3). The Pope was writing in response to a new explosion of educational theories and practices, many of which he believed were purely secular in their focus (para. 6). He enjoined his audience to avoid this secularization, saying, "there can be no true education which is not wholly

directed to man's last end,” and “there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education” (para. 7). The Holy Father expounded on this, saying the education of youth is a moral imperative for the Church: “Therefore with full right the Church promotes letters, science, art...in addition to her work for the salvation of souls: founding and maintaining schools and institutions adapted to every branch of learning and degree of culture” (para. 21).

The letter also contains remarks warning against education that leads children to various sins, the danger of which reinforces in the eyes of the Church the importance of parents being the first educators of their children and Catholic schools supporting and enhancing this education (paras. 74-76). For Catholic families, non-religious public schools were to be considered at best a last resort, because, as Pope Pius quoted Pope Leo XIII (1897) as saying in his encyclical *Militantis Ecclesiae*,

It is necessary not only that religious instruction be given to the young at certain fixed times, but also that every other subject taught, be permeated with Christian piety. If this is wanting, if this sacred atmosphere does not pervade and warm the hearts of masters and scholars alike, little good can be expected from any kind of learning, and considerable harm will often be the consequence. (para. 18)

Vatican II. During Vatican II, much attention was given to the education of children and the role of Catholic schools. Two documents from this council explored the topic at length: *Gravissimum Educationis*, published on October 28, 1965; and *Gaudium et Spes*, published on December 7th, 1965.

Gravissimum Educationis was written to “declare certain fundamental principles of education, especially in schools” (Pope Paul VI, 1965, para. 4). The first of these

principles was man's inalienable right to an education that both includes and transcends a traditional education in the classroom (para. 5). The document recognizes the variety of educational contexts and calls all Catholics to provide access to these learning opportunities for all persons.

The second principle established was a right to a Christian education which "does not merely strive for the maturing of a human person...but has as its principal purpose this goal: that the baptized...become ever more aware of the gift of Faith they have received" (Paul VI, 1965, para. 8). The Holy Father exhorted the faithful to make this awakening to the faith possible in all parts of the world and called pastors to take care to accomplish this in their parishes and parochial districts.

Though first mentioned briefly by the council in paragraph 11 of the first document produced by Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* (1964), the primary role of parents in educating children is a resounding theme throughout *Gravissimum Educationis*. Not only are they called to support and foster a child's learning in school, but the home itself was meant to be a kind of school for the child's learning (para. 9).

Next, the Holy Father turned his attention more directly to schools. Beginning with public schools, the document encourages the Church to support these institutions through "the witness of the lives of those who teach and direct them, by the apostolic action of their fellow-students, but especially by the ministry of priests and laymen" (para. 11). This document also calls for society to respect children's right to formation in their Christian faith.

This formation happens in a particular way in Catholic schools. Here we see the balance between the secular and religious goals of Catholic schools (the balance at the heart of this study) directly addressed by the pope:

No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth. But its proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith. (para. 13)

The balance is defined for the Church here by the Holy Father: Of first concern is helping the students grow as spiritual children, the consequence of which will be achieving cultural and human formation of the students. The document also stated that this end is not optional; it is the purpose of all Catholic institutions, despite the fact that their particular implementation of these principles might look different: “To this concept of a Catholic school all schools that are in any way dependent on the Church must conform as far as possible, though the Catholic school is to take on different forms in keeping with local circumstances” (para. 20).

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Gaudium et Spes (1965), a wide ranging declaration regarding the Church’s role in the changing world of the 1960s, addressed education often. Many of these instances were reiterations of

principles first stated in *Gravissimum*: for instance, the primacy of the family and the role of schools in partnering with them (para. 61).

New concerns were also addressed, such as changing cultural attitudes that were making the tasks of parents and teachers more difficult than those in past ages (para. 7). Also, new secular approaches to education, in particular that of Communist countries educating their students through an atheistic lens, were critiqued (para. 20). The Pope restated that access to education should be considered one of the basic rights all humans share, in particular for women (paras. 26-29), and that this access would drive cultural and social development forward (paras. 31 and 85).

Near its conclusion, *Gaudium* directly addresses the role of educators in helping maintain and develop peace in the turbulent times in which this document was produced: “Those who are dedicated to the work of education, particularly of the young, or who mold public opinion, should consider it their most weighty task to instruct all in fresh sentiments of peace” (para. 82). According to these documents, the Church views education as a social right and responsibility for all, a vehicle for change, and a part of the very fabric of properly functioning families and states. As D’Orsa (2011) said, “In various ways, all the official Vatican documents on Catholic education express the mission of Catholic schooling in terms of integrating faith, life and culture” (p. 69). These documents, and perhaps even more so later documents greatly influenced by those of the Council, have shaped Catholic schools worldwide for the last 60 years.

Post-Vatican II. *Gravissimum Educationes* and *Gaudium et Spes* were very influential in the publishing of the document “The Catholic School” by Garrone in 1977. Here the Church took the principles outlined in the Vatican II documents and expanded

them into a clearer portrait of how the Catholic school should function. As the introduction says, “The present document develops the idea of [*Gravissimum Educationis*], limiting itself to a deeper reflection on the Catholic school” (para. 1).

“The Catholic School” begins by situating itself within the context of the whole Church’s mission. According to Garrone (1977), the Catholic school cannot be understood separate from the Church as a whole, but rather as a part of her universal mission to serve man and bring him into relationship with God (para. 7). The Church establishes schools “to carry out her saving mission”, and “she considers them as a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole man” (para. 8) in the face of “a pressing need to ensure the presence of a Christian mentality in the society of the present day, marked, among other things, by cultural pluralism” (para. 11). In changing times, the Church views her schools as a means of passing on a Christian worldview.

The second section of the document discusses the difficulties facing Catholic schools at the time of its publication. There are those who believed the Church should offer witness to their faith through her individual members and not “by means of her institutions” (para. 18), which would include schools; there are also those who said “Catholic schools make use of a human institution for religious and confessional purposes” (para. 19) and take advantage of education to proselytize; others said the need for Catholic schools has come and gone, with improved public schools now providing the same services Catholic schools once were needed for (para. 20); some looked at the presence of mostly wealthy students in some Catholic schools as a form of “social and economic discrimination” (para. 21); and finally, there are those who objected not to the Catholic school as such, but rather it’s results, arguing that these schools did not achieve

their ends at all, regardless of whether they should or should not exist (para. 22). The document addresses each of these concerns in turn, reiterating the principles outlined in other documents and the need for continuing the work of Catholic schools.

In 1982, the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education issued what it called “an invitation to give special attention to the role of lay Catholics as witnesses to the faith in what can only be described as a privileged environment for human formation” (para. 4). “Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith” addresses teachers in both Catholic and public school settings to “offer some considerations which will complete what has already been said in the document ‘The Catholic School’” (para. 4). The document examines the role of the school in society, which it says “has a value and an importance that are fundamental” (para. 12); the profession of teaching, which it says is “raised to a supernatural Christian vocation” (para. 37) for the Catholic teacher; and what supports and considerations are needed in a variety of settings.

The aforementioned Code of Canon Law, which for Catholics has “the force of law for the whole Latin Church” (John Paul II, 1983), states in Book 3, Chapter 1, Canon 803 that, “The instruction and education in a Catholic school must be grounded in the principles of Catholic doctrine” (1983), such as those promulgated in *Gravissimum*, *Gaudium et Spes*, and “The Catholic School.”

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), which is the collection of official Church teaching on matters of faith and morals, restates the importance of educating children. In the section expounding the implications of the Fourth Commandment, the Church elucidates the rights and responsibilities of parents and children. It says, “The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable”

(The Holy See, 1994, para. 2221). This education includes an “education in the virtues...[and] an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery...to avoid the compromising and degrading influences which threaten human societies” (The Holy See, 1994, paras. 2223-2235). In the eyes of the Church, the home is the first school of love and life for children; parents, their first teachers.

However, the Holy See does not consider the child’s education as limited to the home. *The Catechism* goes on to say, “As those first responsible for the education of their children, parents have a right to choose a school for them which corresponds to their convictions. This right is fundamental” (2229). Part of a Catholic parent’s duty to their child includes a serious consideration of the educational opportunities available to them.

All of these teachings were summarized into a book titled *The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools* by Archbishop Miller in 2006. In it he compiled much of what has been described in this section as well as other local documents from bishops and educators into what he called the “five essential marks of a Catholic school” (p. 18). Miller said the Church teaches that all Catholic schools should be “inspired by a supernatural vision” (p. 20), “founded on a Christian anthropology” (p. 22), “animated by communion and community” (p. 28), “imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout the curriculum” (p. 42), and “sustained by Gospel witness” (p. 53). These five “marks” are present throughout the various Church documents related to education.

Redpath (2006) summed up the Catholic philosophy of education as such:

From the standpoint of Catholic education, the perfection of the human person as education’s natural and supernatural end means, first, that Catholic education’s main aim is to produce good Catholics, to produce good Catholic human beings,

human beings who love their God and neighbor as themselves and get to heaven: Christ-like individuals, saints. Any Catholic philosophy of education that forgets this aim is no Catholic philosophy of education at all. (p. 13)

Theory into Practice. For any educational entity, the process of turning educational theory into educational practice is the work of creating a curriculum. As Gosse and Hansel (2014) said, “the content of the curriculum is really like oxygen. Teaching is always about something, and that something has to be specified before any other decisions can be made” (p. 19). The Church relies heavily on the leaders of its schools in this area: “Although Vatican documents on education do not cover lesson planning, the order of teaching various subjects, or the relative merit of different pedagogical methods, the Holy See does provide guidelines meant to inspire the content of the curriculum” (Miller, 2006, pp. 44-45).

The theory of Catholic schooling is well-established; how it looks in reality is far from uniform: “beyond the sincere and often considerable efforts made by educational leaders to bring a degree of specific staff development and formation to bear on this central goal of Catholic Education, issues of interpretation and practice remain” (D’Orsa, 2011, p. 69). Manning (2013) discussed this in his evaluation of a new religious-education framework from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops when he said, “Catholic schools and religious education programs have good reason for their concern with holistic faith formation. Yet, how to achieve such educational aims in the details of the day-to-day is harder to articulate” (p. 77). The social, political, and economic climate surrounding the schools, as well as the personal experiences and

priorities of school leaders and teachers, greatly influences the practical application of these principles.

A book in 1993 examined the transformation of one Catholic school in Los Angeles over time as it responded to these influences, describing what St. Madeline's parish school was like in 1955 and again in 1985. In 1955, staffed predominantly by religious sisters and composed of mostly white, upper-middle class students, the school focused on helping these young women grow into good Catholic wives and mothers: "St. Madeline's of the 1950s was a total institution with a consistent philosophy of education in which religion played the preeminent role" (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993, p. 6). However, as demographics changed, as the Second Vatican Council put forward new emphases within the Church, and as the faculty became more heavily staffed by lay persons, the focus of the school changed. The authors described it as follows:

With the greater emphasis on personal and social responsibility, the teaching of Catholic doctrine is no longer all encompassing. The school's statement of philosophy is clear and the faculty espouses its values. As one teacher told us, the purpose of the school is 'to educate the young black woman to take her place in society. We try to empower young women through education while inculcating moral and ethical values, including a strong social conscience.' (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993, pp. 9-10)

The same institution in the same place filled different roles in different times, influenced by a variety of factors, and this led to different interpretations of how to implement an educational program rooted in the teachings of the Church. The context is so important that teachers even describe the purpose of the school differently as the

context changed. This is a snapshot of the challenge facing Catholic school leaders in the present.

Some places, such as Canada and Australia, have tried to avoid confusion over the purpose of their schools by creating common secondary curriculums for all their Catholic schools (D’Orsa, 2011; Institute for Catholic Education, 1996). In the United States, the NCEA published the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*. These are “school effectiveness standards rather than curriculum content standards, although they support curriculum development” (Robey, ed., 2012, p. 17). However, as the Institute for Catholic Education (1996) said as it engaged its task, “If there is any one place where the philosophy of Catholic education...should be clearly visible, it is in the area of curriculum. And yet, no state of affairs within contemporary education seems to be more confusing” (p. 29). There seems to be no simple solution to ensuring this fidelity to Church teaching on the purpose of schools. More work is needed to clarify these disparities in implementation.

A History of Catholic Schools in America

To understand how the principles in these documents have been put into practice and have been shaped by historical and cultural events, it is important to understand the history of the development of education in the Church, and in America in particular. This is a long and varied story marked by tension between various parties, both secular and religious.

Knowing where to begin the history of Catholic education in general is difficult, since, as Colhocker (1974) said, “the evidence provided by Scripture supports the conclusion that Jesus, and subsequently his Church, chose education as the principal

ministry to accomplish the goals of his redemptive mission” (p. 97). However, Catholic education in the United States began informally during the 1600s, with French and Spanish missions and English colonies all educating children in the faith and academics in various ways modeled after the schools in the countries from which they came (Buetow, 1970, p. 1; Walch, 2003, pps. 13-15; Hunt & Mullins, 2006, p. 75). After the Revolutionary War, the First Synod of Baltimore provided the impetus for parish schools to begin in earnest in the new country (McCormick, 1915, p. 386). Under the leadership of America’s first bishop, John Carroll, parish schools were founded throughout the northeast as a means of protecting the religious beliefs of the deluge of Catholic immigrants. The first of these parochial schools was St. Mary’s School in Philadelphia in 1783 (Walch, 2003, p. 17). Early schools in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and other major cities often struggled for lack of structure and teachers until the early 1800s, when the “Poor Clares” came from France and opened a school in 1801, the first school run by religious sisters in the United States (Burns, 1912, p. 202). Elizabeth Ann Seton and her religious order, the Daughters of Charity, soon provided a stable source of teachers to the poorest children in major urban areas, establishing over 50 schools and orphanages between 1809 and 1850 (Burns, 1912, pp. 219-224). Walch (2003) said “it would not be difficult to make the case that sister-teachers were the single most important element in the Catholic educational establishment” (p. 151). Despite the many obstacles and ever-changing landscape of American politics, religion, and culture from the colonial years until the civil war, the Catholic school system survived and grew (Burns, 1912, p. 146). As Walch (2003) said, “One cannot dispute that most colonial Catholics missionaries and

colonists alike – were willing to sacrifice their well-being for the sake of education” (p. 22).

In the years leading up to the Civil War, an increase in immigration to the U.S. by Catholic Europeans brought forth anti-Catholic sentiment from native-born Americans, particularly when the question of using public funds for sectarian schools was raised (Burns, 1912, p. 373). This provided much of the impetus for the common school, what many saw as a unifying force to help “Americanize” the immigrant population (Walch, 2003, pp. 23-28). The American bishops urged on parish schools as the protection against a loss of heritage and religion with varying degrees of success in different dioceses, and the ensuing competition between public and Catholic schools for the growing population of Catholic school-age children shaped both systems greatly (Hunt & Mullins, 2006, pp. 75-76; Carper & Hunt, 2009, p. 8). In the wake of violent clashes between anti-Catholic nativists and Irish Catholics in Philadelphia, Bishop John Neumann established the first Catholic school board in the U.S. (Walch, 2003, p. 48). The Second Provincial Council of Cincinnati provided an episcopal declaration that all parish priests were bound to establish a school in their parish, and that failure to do so could be a mortal sin (McCormick, 1915, p. 387). These steps and others like them set the tone of the importance of schools to the growing American church.

Following the Civil War, Catholic education grew exponentially: “In fact, the number of parish schools jumped from fourteen hundred in 1875 to over twenty-five hundred in less than a decade” (Walch, 2003, p. 60). To meet the growing need for schools, both Catholic and secular, for the growing population over the decades between the Civil War and the turn of the century, three different models of Catholic education

emerged: a publically supported parish school that provided religious education outside of normal school hours; an “Americanized” Catholic school that tried to help immigrants integrate more fluidly with their communities and strove to be superior academically to public schools; and finally, Catholic schools rooted in a specific ethnic culture (Burns, 1912, p. 360; Walch, 2003, pp. 67-83). Many different permutations of these relationships between common and Catholic schools emerged over the years, most notably the Poughkeepsie Plan and Faribault Plan (Burns, 1912B, pp. 253-259), though in the end the separation of public funds and private education solidified. Also, as the number of schools exploded and the bishops tried to impel Catholic parents to send their children to their parish schools, many dioceses followed the lead of Bishop Neumann and began to establish school boards, though it was not until the late 1920s that most dioceses had functioning diocesan-level governance (Walch, 2003, p. 62 and p. 102).

The late 1800s saw much controversy over which of these approaches was best and what the relationship between the Church and public schools should be. Years of conflict between various bishops over what ties they should have with public schools eventually culminated in Pope Leo XIII sending a delegate to the American bishops named Archbishop Satolli. Though this was hardly an easy solution to the questions of whether Catholic parents must send their children to parish schools, whether the Catholic schools could cooperate with public authorities in running their schools, and how hard to continue pushing for public funds to subsidize Catholic schools, eventually Satolli “outlined and emphasized the harmony that existed between the Catholic Church and the American ideals of public education” (Walch, 2003, p. 98). This helped move the American Church into a new era of education. In this changing time, Pope Leo urged

American Catholic educators to be flexible to modern ideas and theories, and assured them this was not in conflict with the faith (Buetow, 1970, p. 175).

The Catholic Educational Association, eventually renamed the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), was founded in 1904, the first major organization focused on the management of parochial schools at the national level, followed a decade later by the National Catholic Welfare Conference (Buetow, 1970, p. 180). Many issues began to play out in this and other national organizations, not the least of which was the question of vocational instruction in Catholic schools. As Walch (2003) said, “As with other issues, the progressives squared off against the traditionalists. The progressives saw the need for the introduction of some vocational education...but the traditionalists feared [it] would undermine the general curriculum” (p. 108). The early decades of the 20th century were marked by this conflict between progressives and conservatives over curriculum, as well as the practical consequences of the choices they made: “Catholic educators could not reject modern educational ideas...without risking the loss of more children to the public schools. The 1920s, a decade of modern ideas, challenged Catholic educators to modernize the Catholic school without abandoning its traditional curriculum” (Walch, 2003, p. 109).

The next challenge faced by parish schools in the U.S. was how to match the advances in public school teacher preparation, especially when most of the workforce in Catholic schools was made up of women religious with various levels of autonomy and educational background. Through compromise and creativity and the dedication of these women religious, the Church found ways to improve their teacher preparation and thus

their schools, and in many ways were leaders in the movement to improve instruction (Buetow, 1970, pp. 192-194).

The question of how Church, state, and schools interacted remained in the forefront of educational minds, both religious and secular, in the years surrounding World War II. Questions of legislation covered everything from attendance to language of instruction to classes being taught, and during this time “Almost every state assumed some sort of control over the curriculum of parochial schools” (Walch, 2003, p. 153). Most of these controls benefited private schools, but some pushed for state control even to the point of outlawing Catholic schools in favor of compulsory public school attendance (Abrams, 2009, p. 1). Such a law passed in Oregon in 1925, but before the school year began appeals made their way to the Supreme Court, which eventually ruled against the constitutionality of forcing children to attend public schools in the decision *Pierce v. Society of School Sisters* (Abrams, 2009). This was a landmark decision that provided legal support for the continuity and development of the Catholic school system, and so the attention of both parties returned to the long-disputed question of whether public funds could be used for private sectarian schools. While direct aid never materialized, two important decisions aided the Catholic school cause: the *Cochran* decision, which said that indirect aid in the form of school-books was constitutional, and the *Everson* decision, which said that indirect aid in the form of busing to Catholic schools was constitutional (Kolesnik & Power, 1965).

The decades between 1950 and 1980 presented a series of challenges to the American Church, the first of which was how to find spots in schools for the explosion of Catholic children following World War II. This led first to a splurge in construction of

new schools, but many dioceses were then strained to the point of having to close those same schools within a few decades (Walch, 2003, p. 176). Eventually in 1968 there was a sharp drop in enrollments exceeding over a million less children in parochial schools (Walch, 2003, p. 178). The practical challenges of maintaining the schools combined with the theological issues arising from Vatican II created a difficult environment within which Catholic schools had to operate. Dissident voices began rising, one of which was Andrew Greeley. As Walch (2003) said, “For Andrew Greeley, the cause of the decline in Catholic schools was weak episcopal leadership, and his answer was to shift control of the schools to the laity” (p. 183). Other voices pointed to different problems such as changing cultural values and modern ideas. Regardless, the schools survived the ballooning population of the 1950s, the decline of enrollment and trust in Catholic schools in the 1960s and 1970s, and then were left at the start of the 1980s figuring out how to shoulder the cost of these schools to help them survive and hopefully thrive.

Also at this time there was an “outpouring of first rate studies on the nature and effectiveness of Catholic schooling” (Walch, 2003, p. 188). Many important findings emerged: students educated in parish schools tended to be slightly more successful in college and the workplace; many parents were sending their children to Catholic schools for the quality of the education rather than the religious instruction; contrary to popular opinion, Catholic schools typically are not “elitist,” rejecting students based on personal problems or ineptitude; and Catholic schools impacted the behavior of their students greatly (Walch, 2003, pp. 190-204). The 1980s brought about renewed debate and court cases over the question of public funds subsidizing Catholic schools, in large part due to

the campaign promises of Ronald Reagan in favor of supporting private schools financially.

The 1980s and 1990s were a time of changing demographics: “During the last decades of the twentieth century, Catholic schools had become increasingly non-Catholic and non-White” (Riordan, 2000, p. 34), though at the same time the disparity in socioeconomic status became more skewed towards the wealthy. This, along with a sharp drop in enrollments nationwide beginning in the early 1980s, put many Catholic dioceses in a difficult financial position near the turn of the century. The shift from schools staffed primarily by consecrated and religious to lay persons presented challenges, both fiscally and in the realm of maintaining Catholic identity (Miller, 2006, p. 5). The change to tuition models away from parish-funded schools created a dilemma in which “a diminishing proportion of the Catholic population [could] participate” in Catholic schools (Harris, 2000, p. 69). These and other factors prompted the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to publish a document reemphasizing the importance of Catholic schools which “must exist for the good of the Church” to “ensure total Catholic education in all its phases for all ages” (Carey, Ed., 1998, p. 263). The Bishops cited studies lauding the benefits in both the education and faith of students in Catholic schools. They also identified troubling trends, such as the 500% increase in costs for schools over a twenty-year period (Carey, Ed., 1998, p. 265). The end of the 20th century found the Catholic school system at a crossroads in which it must decide what of its past to retain and what to reform to meet the financial and social challenges of a changing world (Hallinan, 2000, p. 201-205).

These trends continued into the 2000s. The Congregation of Catholic Education (1999) pointed to philosophical changes in the modern world challenging the purpose and philosophy of Catholic education, most notably an increased prevalence of “subjectivism, moral relativism, and nihilism” (para. 1). They reaffirmed that in the context of these situations, the need for Catholic schools was even more deeply felt by the Church (para. 11). The USCCB said in 2005 that “it remains our duty to model the Person of Jesus Christ, to teach the Gospel, and to evangelize our culture” through Catholic parochial and secondary schools, because “our Catholic schools are a vital part of the teaching mission of the Church” (USCCB, 2005, pp. 15-16). Yet they recognized the dropping enrollments and net loss of hundreds of Catholic schools since the 1990s and the financial and mission-based challenges facing these institutions (USCCB, 2005, pp. 13-14). One dramatic example of this change came in Philadelphia, when their bishop announced the closure of 48 schools in 2012 (Brinig & Garnett, 2014, p. ix). Studies have pointed to nationwide lowering of fertility rates, declines in infant baptism, and skyrocketing tuition rates in the wake of the recession as contributing factors to these losses of students and schools (Gray, 2014). It is believed that these developments will continue for the foreseeable future, presenting challenges to the state of Catholic education in the United States moving forward.

The Catholic Church’s View of Human History

The historian Kenneth Scott Latourette described the difficulty of trying to find objectivity in a field that demands interpretation:

The historian, then, is faced with a dilemma. On the one hand he is painfully aware of the many interpretations and philosophies of history which have been

put forward and is therefore hesitant to accept wholeheartedly any one of them.

On the other hand he is confronted with the necessity of acting on some principle of selection, even though it be arbitrary, and is haunted by the persistent hope that a framework and meaning can be found which possess objective reality.

(McIntire, 1977, p. 50)

Though the current study is designed to understand the views of those leading Catholic schools, no review of human history can be conducted without acknowledging the impact of Christianity on the world. As Wells (1920), an atheist historian and author, said in his work *The Outline of History*, Christianity “play[s] a large part in our history, and...opened men’s eyes to fresh aspects of the possibility of a unified world” (p. 569). The Church has always assented to this secular perspective, but has also always viewed human history through the lens of her faith in God’s plan for humanity. In *Lumen Gentium*, Pope Paul VI (1964) summarizes how human history is viewed through Catholic eyes:

The eternal Father, by a free and hidden plan of His own wisdom and goodness, created the whole world. His plan was to raise men to a participation of the divine life. Fallen in Adam, God the Father did not leave men to themselves, but ceaselessly offered helps to salvation, in view of Christ, the Redeemer ‘who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature’...He planned to assemble in the holy Church all those who would believe in Christ...The Church, or in other words, the kingdom of Christ now present in mystery, grows visibly through the power of God in the world. (paras. 2-3)

The Holy Father makes it clear that the Church understands God as acting consistently throughout all of human history to draw men back to Himself through Jesus Christ. In the eyes of the Church, human history cannot be understood fully without these foundational beliefs.

This document and many others contributed to the publishing of a new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) in 1994. Pope John Paul II says in the *Apostolic Constitution: Fidei Depositum*, which was published in conjunction with the *Catechism*, that the CCC is “a statement of the Church’s faith and of catholic doctrine” and “a sure norm for teaching the faith” (The Holy See, 1994, para. 5). It is a collection of the official teachings of the Catholic Church, and it is interesting to note that this document begins with a prologue that speaks to God’s action in human history: “God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man” (9). This reiterates what Pope Paul VI said in *Lumen Gentium*, that Catholics believe that human history is the story of God and man, a story of sin and redemption, and that history is guided by God at all times. Similarly, the document *Gaudium et Spes* discusses man’s role in God’s plan for human history: “For a monumental struggle against the powers of darkness pervades the whole history of man. The battle was joined from the very origins of the world and will continue until the last day, as the Lord has attested” (Paul VI, 1965, para. 37). Certainly, this is a very specific concept of understanding the story of man.

Many historians, philosophers, and theologians have argued in favor of a Catholic or Christian view of history. Christopher Dawson summarizes the topic well when he

said, “Thus the Christian view of history...lies at the very heart of Christianity and forms an integral part of the Christian faith” (McIntire, 1977, p. 30). He posits that it is impossible to understand this perspective if one is not a believer, since the Christian view is one that not only believes God is guiding history in a vague sense but actually points to specific times, places, and incidents in which He has acted (McIntire, 1977, p. 31). Niebuhr (1949) said that, “The New Testament makes the startling claim that in Christ history has achieved both its end and a new beginning” (p. 139), and that this idea of a new history cannot be separated from the message of Jesus without losing the heart of the message altogether. He also makes a defense of this view from perspectives other than that of faith and more through the lens of the sciences. Latourette confirms this understanding of how Christians view history, although he says different groups or denominations will shade that understanding through their interpretation of what Christ meant when He spoke of the Kingdom of God (McIntire, 1977, p. 51-53).

Emil Brunner tried to demonstrate that a Christian understanding of history is something of a melding of the Eastern emphasis on the transcendent and eternal with the Western concept of time being a line with a distinct start and finish (McIntire, 1977, p. 85). Yet he also reiterates what Dawson, Latourette, and Niebuhr said: “There is history, an individual and a universal human history, in which God is infinitely interested. He is so intensely concerned with this history that...He himself intervenes in it” (McIntire, 1977, pp. 85-86).

In his work *The Everlasting Man*, G.K. Chesterton (1925) gives his thoughts on this Catholic perspective on the study of human history. He says, “every sane sort of history must begin with man as man, a thing standing absolute and alone” (35),

essentially stating the centrality of human dignity to a study of history. He goes on to say that the other concept critical for the Catholic to understand history is the Incarnation of God as man in the person of Jesus.

The sketch of the human story began in a cave; the cave which popular science associates with the cave-man and in which practical discovery has really found archaic drawings of animals. The second half of human history, which was like a new creation of the world, also begins in a cave...and it was here...that Jesus Christ was born. (p. 169)

Contemporary historians also attest to these claims. James Hitchcock echoes these sentiments in his introduction to *From Sea to Shining Sea*, a text produced by the Catholic Schools Textbook Project (2011): “Because the Second Person of the Trinity became man, entered human history, that history must have deep religious significance for believers” (ix). He goes on to say, “The Judaeo-Christian tradition sees historical events as governed by Divine Providence, while at the same time warning believers against thinking that they are able to read the meaning of that Providence” (ix).

In addition to understanding how the Catholic faith gives its faithful a different view of human events, many in the Church also emphasize that a Catholic education in history needs to include the various contributions of Catholics to the arts, sciences, technological advancements, and politics so as to fully understand in what ways the Church calls its members to shape human history through examples of those who have done so successfully. In his book *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization*, Woods (2005) says, “Western civilization owes far more to the Catholic Church than most people – Catholics included – realize. The Church, in fact, built Western

Civilization... What is striking, though, is how in popular culture the substantial – and essential – Catholic contribution has gone largely unnoticed” (pp. 1-2). Hitchcock (2011) speaks to the consequences that have resulted from history curricula that do not include the contributions and involvement of the Church and its members: “[Catholics] have been deprived of their history... Catholics now have little sense of... what the lived faith was like through the centuries... They have little sense that history itself has a religious meaning” (p. ix). The preceding quote is from the preface of a text from the aforementioned Catholic Schools Textbook Project, whose purpose is to counteract this very problem. “This volume... relays to students the necessary ‘secular’ historical knowledge, while giving due place to the contributions of Catholics and of the Catholic Church in the settlement and foundation of the nations of North America” (vii). It says, “Secular textbooks... often carry an anti-Catholic bias by presenting Catholic contributions in an unfavorable light, or downplaying them” (vii).

If this is how the Church and her philosophers, theologians, and historians speak about human history, it would seem that these views would have to be present within or at least reconcilable with a program such as the AP U.S. History course to be used by Catholic schools.

The Advanced Placement Program

As mentioned in the introduction to this study, the AP program is one of two main products of the College Board, the other of which is the SAT test. The AP program began in the 1950s as part of the Ford Foundation’s efforts to improve the state of American education, and the program continued to gain relevance and popularity as the College Board invested in teacher training throughout the 1960s and in expanding access

for students beginning in the 1980s (College Board, 2003). Under the “About AP” section in their *AP United States History Course and Exam Description*, it says, “The College Board’s Advanced Placement Program (AP) enables students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school...Each AP course is modeled upon a comparable college course, and...Each AP course concludes with a college-level assessment” (The College Board, 2014D).

The AP exams were designed with the goal of assessing if the student has comparable skills to a college student taking that same course. The exams are designed collaboratively by AP teachers and college professors, and the College Board adjusts their exams and courses based on the feedback they get from various stakeholder groups. The tests are a combination of objective questions and essays. The multiple choice questions are scored by machine and the free response questions by various AP teachers, college faculty members, and AP employees to arrive at a composite student score between 1 and 5. Depending on the results of the exam and the institution they want to attend, students can receive college credit based on the score of their exam. (The College Board, 2014A)

AP classes “have become the juggernaut of American high school education, expanding their reach well beyond their origins in elite private schools” (Sadler, Sonnert, Tai, & Klopfenstein, 2010, p. 3). The growth of course and exam offerings has exploded over the last two decades. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) says that “between 1997 and 2006, the number of [AP] examinees increased by 142% and the number of exams taken increased 167%” (2008, p. 8). Much of this growth is due to both private and governmental programs focusing on AP as a ready-made educational driver for their

systems. For instance, because of the many perceived benefits of the courses, the state of Washington sponsored studies to find ways to increase access to AP courses with a goal of doubling student participation (Spaulding, 2011, p. 1).

A variety of educational studies and reports laud the AP program's effectiveness in preparing students academically and financially for college and providing educational benefits beginning in the high school years. Many of these are published by the College Board. AP exam participation and performance were found to be highly credible predictors of higher performance on most outcome measures during college compared to students who do not take AP courses or exams (Willingham & Morris, 1986; Morgan & Klaric, 2007; Keng & Dodd, 2008; Mattern, Shaw, & Xiong, 2009; Murphy & Dodd, 2009). Exam participation has also been closely linked to college graduation from four-year universities (Mattern, Marini, & Shaw, 2013).

The AP program has been the subject of research by external sources as well. A study from the Thomas B. Fordham institute found that the AP program was a solid indicator of rigor and curricular worth for two reasons: "First, [it sets] high academic standards and goals for learning that are well delineated for teachers, students, and parents...Second, these programs are linked with real-world benefits" (Byrd, Ellington, Gross, Jago, & Stern, 2007, p.6). The National Center for Postsecondary Research found that AP programs have a positive correlation to college success and that AP courses are looked upon more favorably than dual enrollment courses by college admissions counselors (Speroni, 2011). Participation in math and science AP courses is linked to higher achievement in those contents in college and rates of entrance into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers after college, a focus of the

American educational and political landscape in recent years (Tai, Liu, Almarode, & Fan, 2010; Sadler & Sonnert, 2010). A 2011 study by Williams demonstrated that pre-AP and AP courses were predictors of higher GPAs and class ranks during high school, despite fears that AP courses would negatively impact these numbers due to the rigor involved in the courses (Wedhe-Roddiger et al., 2012). AP exam scores have been validated as reliable and valid for college credit and placement purposes, meaning that students who score high enough to receive credit hours seem to have achieved collegiate levels of learning and achievement (Ewing, Huff, & Kaliski, 2010, pp. 100-101). Taking and passing an AP exam has been cited as a good indicator of likelihood to graduate college (Dougherty, Mellor, & Jian, 2005). Participating in AP courses was also linked to higher first year college GPAs and higher rates of returning for a second year of college than non-AP students (Eimers & Mullen, 2003). Clearly, support for the AP program and recognition of its various benefits is widespread.

However, many have voiced concerns with the program. While there are a multitude of studies praising the AP program, many of the studies were internally conducted by the College Board or by organizations closely linked to them, which is troubling for some given the possibility of a conflict of interest (Sadler, Sonnert, Tai, & Klopfenstein, 2010). In response, many studies have critiqued different aspects of the AP program. One question raised is whether the expanded access dilutes the quality of the courses offered, though a 2009 report said that after surveying a wide base of AP teachers, they found that “AP teachers are generally satisfied with the overall quality of the program’s curriculum and courses” (Finn & Winkler, 2009, p. 3).

A different concern arose that had little to do with academics and more to do with the wellbeing of students who participated in the AP program. A 2009 study found that students had a mix of social and emotional experiences associated with taking AP courses, the positive being that students appreciated positive classroom environments, bonds with other AP peers, and better self-esteem, the negative being that many stereotypes still existed in the general school population about students who took AP classes and that the workload was limiting to students' social life (Foust, Hertberg-Davis, & Callahan, 2009).

Additionally, studies in 2008 and 2012 found that, while AP participation was linked to success, there was still a significant achievement gap between high- and low-income students, and girls were also found to be more likely than boys to take and succeed in AP courses (Handwerk, Tognatta, Coley, & Gitomer; Morris & Slate, 2012). A 2013 study by Kretchmar and Farmer found that many students were excessive in their pursuit of AP credits, with what they called "extreme high school programs" of 10 or more AP, International Baccalaureate (IB), or dual enrollment (DE) courses, providing little to no advantage in college performance while having negative effects on students' wellbeing during high school. Other studies have challenged the notion that simply taking AP classes makes a student's academic program more rigorous, claiming that only students who take and pass the exam experience any significant benefits from the program (Geiser & Santalices, 2004; Warne, Larsen, Anderson, & Odasso, 2015). Some studies claim to contradict findings of the many studies that linked AP participation and higher rates of college graduation and performance, maintaining that combining ACT, high school GPA, and high school class rank is a better indicator than AP participation

(Duffy II, 2010). Clearly, there are many links to success for students taking AP courses, but some think the program to be overvalued in the eyes of American educators.

The AP U.S. History Course and Exam

The AP U.S. History Course has undergone several revisions over the years. Originally titled American History, the first exam in this content area was given in 1956 (College Board, 2015A, para. 1). In 2006, the College Board began a redesign of the course based on feedback from teachers that there was too much content to cover in depth; the redesign was intended to focus on themes, ideas, and interpretation more so than events (College Board, 2015B, para. 1). These concerns resonated with more than just teachers. An independent study in 2007 found the course to be lacking; it's overemphasis on diversity and lack of comprehensive treatment of American values such as equality and liberty left too much open to teachers' own "personal politics and ideology" (Byrd, Ellington, Gross, Jago, & Stern, 2007, p. 34). The study found that teachers who were succeeding with this course were doing so in spite of, rather than because of, the materials provided by the College Board, though they did believe the exam to be rigorous and comprehensive. The need for a revision was evident.

The process for recreating the course started with the creation of the AP U.S. History Development Committee which wrote the first draft of the new framework between 2007 and 2010; a validation and editing process with history professors and AP teachers which ran through 2011; a pilot of the redesigned exam and publication of a draft of the framework in 2012; training on the course and exam for consultants and teachers through 2013; the official publication of the course in February of 2014; and the first implementation and testing in the fall of 2014 and spring of 2015 (College Board,

2014E, p. 7). The College Board (2014C) said in the new framework, “AP United States History focuses on developing students’ abilities to think conceptually about U.S. history from approximately 1491 to the present and apply historical thinking skills as they learn about the past” (para. 3). The emphasis was less on memorizing facts and more on using historical facts to “achieve deeper conceptual understanding of major developments in U.S. history” (College Board, 2014D, p. 9).

The curriculum framework was broken into four parts: historical thinking skills needed for the course, thematic learning objectives that reflect what colleges expect students to know in an equivalent course, a summary of the concepts typically taught in college U.S. history courses, and a description of how the AP exam will assess students’ mastery of the concepts and objectives (College Board, 2014D, p. 10). Four types of historical thinking skills and nine skills within those types were described, seven themes within U.S. history are listed along with learning objectives related to those themes, nine historical periods are delineated within which teachers can choose much of their factual content, and six parts of assessment are described in preparation of the exam. The concept outline was left intentionally vague for teachers to be able to choose what they think to be most relevant within the periods because the concepts are open to interpretation, a skill that the exam is meant to allow for and test within students (College Board, 2014D, p. 10). The College Board explicitly states, “the curriculum framework is not the complete curriculum” (College Board, 2014E, p. 3) since teachers have the flexibility to make many choices on content within the framework. Teachers were also provided with a “Curriculum Framework Evidence Planner” (College Board, 2014E). The new exam included an excerpt from a primary document for each multiple-choice

question to assess these skills, worded and structured questions to encourage students to look at more than one side of any given issue, and tried to allow for more selection of local or national events to be explored by students (College Board, 2014F).

When the framework was published, however, it was met with a strong backlash in many conservative circles. Notable controversies erupted in Jefferson County, Colorado (Tumulty & Layton, 2014); Atlanta, Georgia (Associated Press, 2015); and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (Powell, 2015), involving school boards, senators, and governors, in addition to many concerned citizens on both sides of the question. Walkouts, demonstrations, debates, and proposed legislations dotted the United States as many proposed outlawing, revising, or simply ignoring the new framework based on claims that, as one AP U.S. History teacher put it, the course was “pushing a revisionist view of American history that elides heroic individuals and emphasizes oppression and conflict” (Levy, 2014).

The reaction against the course swelled over time, eventually reaching a level of national concern. On August 8, 2014, the Republican National Convention (RNC) published a resolution recommending that the College Board delay implementing the course for at least a year and convene a new committee to review the framework before republishing, and the convention committed to withholding funding for the College Board until the course was rewritten (RNC, 2014, p. 1-2).

It was not just politicians who opposed the framework. On June 2, 2015, a group called “Scholars Concerned about Advanced Placement History” published an open letter through the National Association of Scholars (NAS). The group was comprised of over 120 college professors and administrators. The letter criticized the exam, saying it

“shortchanges students by imposing on them an arid, fragmentary, and misleading account of American history” (NAS, 2015, p.1). They called the framework “a lengthy 134-page document which repudiates that earlier approach, centralizes control, deemphasizes content, and promotes a particular interpretation of American history...[that] downplays American citizenship and American world leadership in favor of a more global and transnational perspective” (NAS, 2015, p. 2).

The authors of the framework published an open letter defending their work, claiming that the new course would lead to a better and more rigorous experience for students than the framework preceding it and urging an end to the debates and controversy (Byrne et al., 2014, p. 2). However, the controversy did not end. Coleman (2014), president of the College Board, responded to the conservative concerns in an open letter published on the AP website, saying that he believed them to be the result of misunderstanding but also promising a clarification of the course (p. 1-2). Eventually a revision of the new framework was released in the fall of 2015 by a new AP U.S. History Development Committee comprised of seven teachers and college professors (College Board, 2015C, p. v). The main changes to the framework included a reformatting of the concept outline, a consolidation of learning objectives from 50 to 19 more general objectives, a refining and clarifying of various content, a new section on different instructional approaches one could use with the framework, and new rubrics aligned to the exam (College Board, 2015B). This eased many concerns, though some individuals on both sides of the question were still dissatisfied, either thinking the revisions had gone too far towards assuaging conservative critiques or not far enough. Even so, historian Jon Butler was quoted by EdWeek as saying, “The vast majority of readers will say this is

very evenhanded, rather neutral, and could even be described as a colorless guide to teaching American history, which is what it should be" (Heitin, 2015, para. 4). The controversy had quieted, though the larger conversation over curriculum and historical viewpoints continues.

Summary

The literature reviewed provides an overview of several key points. The first is that education itself can serve many different purposes, and those different purposes are evident when studying both past and present cultures. The second point is that the Catholic Church has articulated that its perspective is such that education is an end unto itself and is good because of what it does to the person rather than what it can do for the person. The third point found in the literature is that the AP program approaches its educational programs through an utilitarian lens, building their materials as a college equivalent to open up access to the practical benefits college credit provides to individuals. Despite this approach being different than that which the Catholic Church proposes for its schools, many religiously-affiliated schools still utilize AP and desire to provide its practical benefits to the parents and students in their community.

Chapter Three

Methods

The purpose of this study was to understand the decision-making processes of Catholic school leaders with regard to the possible implementation of the AP U.S. History course and how the Catholic identity of the school influenced this process. This chapter is an explanation of the methodology used to arrive at this understanding: more specifically, it includes a description of the research design, the participants in the study and the means used to choose them, and how the data were collected and analyzed. Study limitations and ethical considerations are also included.

Research Design

A qualitative design was chosen for this research to explore the process used by Catholic school leaders to make curricular decisions with regard to secular programs, in particular the AP U.S. History course. This approach was chosen over a quantitative method because “Qualitative research is suited to promoting a deep understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 27). The researcher employed a phenomenological approach to help demonstrate the richness and complexity of the decisions made by the school leaders participating in the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012), and responsive interviews were conducted to gather the data (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Interviews help the readers understand the perspective of the school leaders as they approached the question of the AP U.S. History course by allowing the respondents to explain their unique perspective on the lived experience of making these decisions with the type of richness needed to appreciate such complexity.

The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that there was a limited number of questions created in advance by the researcher with an understanding that additional questions would be asked during the course of the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 31). Three different question types were used over the course of the interviews. The main questions were written in advance and reviewed by an expert panel; follow up questions were asked to ensure thoroughness, clarity, and credibility; and probes were used to urge depth of answers and keep the focus of responses on the study (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 119). These three types of questions were employed to engender depth, candor, and richness in responses.

While quantitative research has clearly defined variables, qualitative research is aimed at “examining how a variety of factors have interacted over time...to describe and explain a complex situation or process without simplifying it” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 17). Some of the factors considered at the outset of the study were the size, location, and population of the school; the interpretation of Catholic identity by school leaders in the various settings; and the interpretation of the merits and demerits of the AP U.S. History course by the school leaders in these settings.

Selection of Participants

Purposive sampling was used to select a variety of Catholic high school settings that could provide insight and understanding as to the phenomenon of evaluating the AP U.S. History course in a Catholic environment (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The leaders that were a part of this study had to meet the following criteria:

1. Be employed at a Catholic high school.
2. Be involved in curricular choices at the school.

Participants were selected by purposive sampling based on the investigation of the researcher. In order to provide various school perspectives, schools within or near the American Midwest were identified who met certain criteria. The study was delimited to states near the Midwest so that cultural and educational norms amongst those studied would be similar. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (1994) identified three types of Catholic schools: parochial schools, diocesan schools, and private order schools (para. 1). Since parochial schools are almost always elementary grades, the researcher contacted schools in the other two categories, diocesan and private order, to participate in the study. Additionally, since “The school systems in low-SES communities are often under-resourced, negatively affecting students’ academic progress” (APA, para. 1), an additional diocesan school was contacted from a lower socio-economic area. Finally, because the study is concerned with curriculum choices, a school with a classical Catholic curriculum was contacted since these schools try to avoid what they term the “crisis of modern education” by focusing on the “ancient tradition of liberal learning” (Institute for Catholic Liberal Education, paras. 1-5), meaning that their curriculum is divided differently and approached through a different lens than most modern schools.

This methodology led to the identification of schools in these four categories: a suburban coeducational, diocesan school; an inner-city coeducational, diocesan school with a highly diverse population; a single-sex, non-diocesan Catholic school associated with a religious order; and a school that employs a classical Catholic curriculum. These four perspectives provided a basic overview of the various settings within which Catholic high school leaders operate, though it is not an exhaustive examination of all possible

Catholic school settings. Also, in selecting the sample institutions, the researcher ensured that some of these schools offered the AP U.S. History course and that others did not. By selecting these sites, the researcher postulated that themes from interviews with these school leaders might help describe the broader social processes of secondary Catholic curriculum choices (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 55).

Leaders from schools A and B were the first two among the original six contacted who consented to participate. The principal from School A consented in person, and the assistant principal from School B consented over the phone. Two other school principals did not reply to requests for participation. The headmaster of School C was the fourth leader of a school with a classical Catholic curriculum contacted. The headmaster of one other school declined to participate via email, and two others did not respond. The headmaster of School C forwarded the request to the assistant principal, who was the researcher's contact for the remainder of the time. School D was the last to be asked to participate; originally a different school had agreed to be in the study, but to avoid any ethical breach the researcher decided to select a different school. School D was contacted through a member of the school that the researcher knew, and that staff member connected the researcher with the assistant principal who agreed to participate. The following is a brief description of each participating school, with their names removed to protect the identities of the schools.

School A is a small urban Catholic school that does not offer any AP courses, but instead has a partnership with a local Catholic college to provide opportunities for college credit. The student body is diverse; the majority of the student body is Hispanic, and the students are typically from families with a low socio-economic status (State A

Department of Education, 2014). The principal and social studies department chair were interviewed.

School B is a large, single-sex, urban Catholic school associated with an order of women religious. It offered many AP courses, but not the AP U.S. History class. The student body is largely Caucasian, and the socio-economic statuses of families are varied (State B Department of Education, 2014). The social studies department chair, assistant principal of curriculum and instruction, and principal were interviewed.

School C is a small, suburban Catholic school that operates from a classical Catholic curriculum. The student body is largely Caucasian and covers the spectrum of socio-economic statuses (State C Department of Education, 2015). Their assistant principal and history teacher were interviewed.

School D is an urban Catholic school with a population of approximately 360 students grades 9-12 (School D, 2016). Roughly half of the student body is Caucasian and a quarter of the student body is Hispanic (State D Department of Education, 2015). An assistant principal and chair of the social studies department were interviewed.

Measurement

Interviews are used to “describe the meaning of central themes in the life world of the subjects” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 91), and this form of measurement was the best method to arrive at an understanding of the complexities of the lived experience of Catholic school leaders in making curricular decisions given their various levels of autonomy, missions, populations, and yet their common Catholic faith. Document analysis was used as a secondary form of measurement for triangulating data collected during the interviews (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008).

Data Collection Procedures

This study was conducted using a qualitative research methodology for data collection. Data were collected using telephone and in-person interviews. The following steps were followed for collection:

1. The schools' curriculum leaders were emailed and telephoned to request their participation in the study. They were given a summary of the focus of the study, a brief explanation of why their school was chosen as a participant, an assurance of the confidentiality and anonymity for their school in the writing of the results, and a request for confirmation of participation.
2. Once four schools from the various categories gave preliminary agreement to participate, an Internal Review Board (IRB) approval was received.
3. When official confirmation of participation was received, a time and method of interviewing was established with each individual involved.
4. At the predetermined time, the interview was conducted, and responses were recorded using the GarageBand application on a MacBook Pro computer as the interviewer took notes on Microsoft Word. Backup recordings were created using various tools, including the Audionotes function of Microsoft Word, the Voice Memos application on an iPhone, and a handheld digital recorder.
5. Interviews were transcribed by the researcher within approximately two weeks of the interview. All interviews were transcribed in the same style by the same researcher, and notes related to important cues were listed in parentheses next to the line of dialogue in which they occurred to help with

clarity and accuracy in understanding (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009, p. 180).

The transcriptions were created verbatim, including verbal pauses, though some of these were left out of quotes used in the study.

In addition to the interviews, data were gathered by document analysis, which is defined by Lunenberg and Irby (2008) as “analysis of documents for significance, meaning, and relevance within a particular context and phenomenon” (p. 94), to help triangulate the data. Triangulation is important to qualitative research to help avoid misinterpretation and to reinforce important themes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). All published resources from the participating schools related to the topics of study were considered part of the document analysis. Participants from the schools were solicited for any published information regarding their curriculum and school mission or philosophy, and their websites were reviewed to ensure completeness of the documentation. None of the participants identified pertinent documents other than those published online, so all documents referred to in the study were accessed through the websites of the schools or their dioceses.

Analysis and Synthesis of Data

To analyze and interpret the data gathered from the interviews, the seven step process outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2012) was followed by the researcher with additional steps and details added. Below is a list of the process used for this study:

1. Transcribe and summarize each interview shortly after completing it.
2. Upload the transcriptions onto a password protected and encrypted account on the online software Dedoose.

3. Create an outline of anticipated concepts and themes and organize them into categories.
4. Find excerpts that have relevant concepts, themes, events, or examples and code them for referencing.
5. As trends emerge, add and amend the list of codes and categories.
6. From across all interviews, sort excerpts based on their code and summarize the contents of each coded selection.
7. Sort the material within each coded selection and summarize the results of the sorting process.
8. Integrate and synthesize coded responses from the different interviewees to create a comprehensible depiction of the themes present in responses.
9. Combine concepts and themes to generate a theory that explains the connections between responses, testing the theory against the contents of the individual interviews.
10. See if results generalize past the individuals in the study.

The interview recordings and transcripts were examined thoroughly for themes and common concepts. To analyze and code the responses from the interviews, the Dedoose Research Analysis software was used. The interviews were first transcribed into text and then uploaded to the Dedoose website; all materials were password protected and encrypted a second time. Rubin and Rubin (2012) said, “By enabling you to bring together all passages on a similar topic, systematic coding forces you to look not just at what you remember from the interviews but also at the passages that might modify your ideas or indicate when and how your ideas might be true or not true” (p. 192).

Through personal reading and the work of the software, interviewee responses were separated into events, examples, concepts, and themes, starting first with those that were already present in the research questions, and then coding a second time for those that interviewees emphasized that had not already been considered (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 193-195). These themes and categories in responses were used to arrive at conclusions.

Data was also collecting by analyzing documents produced by each of the participating schools in order to triangulate data and provide reliability to the study. The schools were solicited for any published documents related to their curriculum or the topics of study (such as curriculum handbooks, course offerings, mission statements, etc.), and their websites were reviewed for additional information. These documents were read and the contents coded. The coded excerpts were then compared to the responses gathered during interviews as an additional way to examine emerging themes and concepts.

Researcher's Role

Because a phenomenological study seeks depth and complexity in responses, the researcher and/or interviewer is an active participant in the study (Rubin & Rubin, p. 72). The researcher's role in this study was simply that of "student" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 74), someone seeking to understand and learn from the experiences of the research participants. This role was explained to the interviewees to help them understand the type of conversation and data desired for the project and to help engender honesty and open dialogue (Ruben & Rubin, 2012, p. 74). The goal of this role and of the responsive interviewing approach was for the researcher to help guide the thought process and responses of participants in a way that elicits the fullest responses without influencing

what those responses might be, thereby “encouraging conversation, reacting to what interviewees say, and asking detailed questions to follow up initial answers” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 72). The transcripts demonstrate what prompts and interactions were used by the interviewer to facilitate the conversation.

Limitations

Some of the limitations of this study would be a desire by school personnel to represent their perceptions of their process of making curricular decisions and their perceptions of the influences on curricular decisions rather than the reality. This could be a temptation given the natural desire to represent one’s work and one’s institution well.

Summary

The current study was done to examine the complex influences of making curricular decisions in Catholic schools, particularly with regards to history curriculums and the AP U.S. History course. To arrive at an understanding of this phenomenon, a qualitative approach was chosen and responsive interviews were used to gather data. Purposive sampling was used to choose the four participating schools based on predetermined criteria meant to provide an overview of various settings within which Catholic schools operate. The use of an expert panel to review interview questions and document analysis to triangulate data provided validity and reliability to the study.

Chapter Four

Results

The results of this study are described in this chapter. They are separated into findings related to the four research questions, and each finding has a description of what the major finding was, a key trend that emerged related to the finding, and a summary of the responses separated by setting. The grand tour question of this study was, “How do Catholic schools balance the tension of adopting secular programs while maintaining their Catholic identity?” The study looked at the decision making processes of leaders in four schools related to the AP U.S. History course to gain insight into how this tension can be handled. After conducting ten responsive interviews with employees of four Catholic high schools in four different dioceses, several trends emerged. The first finding was that the suppositions inherent in the grand tour question were validated by the interviewees: all school leaders interviewed adopted or utilized some secular educational resources and programs in their curricula; all school leaders interviewed consider their Catholic identity important, though they had different interpretations of what Catholic identity meant and ascribed varying levels of importance to this identity; and most school leaders interviewed recognized there was or could be a tension between the secular and Catholic educational elements in their schools.

The other finding related to the grand tour question is that school leaders’ approach to balancing curricular tensions is a reflection of their emphasis on Catholicity in general. As Table 1 demonstrates, the schools whose leaders most

considered their Catholic identity in the curriculum also communicated their Catholicity more often in what they published for stakeholders. In addition to these preliminary considerations, there were four additional findings related to the four research questions.

Table 1

Perceived Emphasis Given to Catholicity in School Communications

	School A	School B	School C	School D
Mission Statement	2	1	3	3
Course Catalogue	0	0	3	3
Course Description	0	0	0	0
Academic Vision Statement(s)	NA	0	3	3
Written Curriculum	0*	0	1*	1
Taught Am. Hist. Curriculum According to Princ./Ass. Princ.	1*	1	3	2
Taught Am. Hist. Curriculum According to Teacher/Dept. Chair	1	1	2	2
Taught Am. Hist Curriculum According to Ast. Superintendent	NA	NA	NA	2

Note: 0 = not referenced; 1 = named; 2 = important; 3 = main focus. *Goal for the following year.

Finding 1

Major Finding. The first research question for this study was, “In what ways do Catholic school leaders consider their school’s Catholic identity when making curriculum decisions?” The interviews showed that there were noticeable differences from school to school in how the leaders considered their Catholic identity, but those interviewed within

each school were consistent with each other. The researcher measured the importance each school placed on Catholicity within the curriculum based on the number of times they referenced it in their interviews, as well as the perceived significance communicated through the actual content of their responses. These responses are summarized below.

Table 2

Catholicity in Curriculum by School

	School A	School B	School C	School D
Number of Interviews	2	3	2	3
References to Catholicity	3	6	13	6
Average Weight of References	5.7	3.2	7.9	8.5

Note: Information retrieved from Dedoose Chart 1

Emerging Trend. The general trend that emerged after all interviews were completed was that the extent to which the Catholic identity of a school is reflected in decisions regarding the school's written curriculum is related to the culture of the school. The emphasis placed on the Catholic faith in mission statements, curricular philosophies, and other published statements related to academic programs tended to correspond to the emphasis in the school leaders' interview responses regarding curriculum. This correspondence, along with the consistency of responses among employees within each setting, indicates that each school has an expectation, either spoken or inferred by the employees, regarding how and to what extent the Catholic identity of their school should

impact the teaching in social studies courses. The findings in each individual setting are described below.

School A. Leaders from School A identified incorporating Catholic identity into the curriculum as an area of improvement. While the two interviewees from this school referenced Catholicity the fewest number of times, they still communicated a sense of value for that element of the curriculum. The department chair said that the Catholic element of the history curriculum was found in “trying to kind of take on that empathy of putting yourself in [historical figures’] shoes and hopefully being able to apply that to [students] lives” (Department Chair A, personal communication, February 16, 2016). The principal said that while there was not currently much consideration for Catholicity in their curriculum, her plan for the following year was to have a teacher with a background in theology work with each department to “take a lesson and infuse the faith and have it be more than just ‘we’re going to start this class with a prayer’” (Principal A, personal communication, February 23, 2016). She said that she desired for the school to be “more Catholic” (Principal A, personal communication, February 23, 2016), but said that different individuals have different comfort levels with their knowledge of the faith and their ability to incorporate Catholicity into lessons. From both the principal and the department chair, it was clearly communicated that it was important to incorporate the Catholic identity into the written and taught curriculum beyond the activities of school life, though the ideas about how they were already doing that or how they might do it in the future were absent from the answers.

These responses coordinated with the mission statement on the school’s website. It said, “[School A] provides a quality, Catholic, college-preparatory education in a

Christ-centered community that nurtures the body, mind, and soul of each student” (School A website, 2016). While the education is described as Catholic, there is no formal documentation available to describe what that might mean in this setting. The course catalogue did not include any philosophy statements for courses or for the academic program as a whole, and neither the Catholic faith or Catholic perspective on history were mentioned in the American History or Honors American History courses (School A Course Catalogue, 2016). On the page regarding “Spirituality and Stewardship” in their student handbook, there is no mention of academics outside of “teaching theology” (School A Student Handbook, 2016, p. 5). These documents seem to coordinate to the responses of the interviewees: there is a sense that the Catholic identity affects academics, but few, if any, specifics on how it should affect them or in what ways that influence should be seen.

School B. This school’s interviewees gave the least consideration to Catholicity in their responses to questions regarding curriculum. The department chair said, “I wouldn’t say [the Catholic identity] comes in the narrowing process for what we teach in world history. I don’t think we pick different chapters because we are a Catholic school” (Department Chair B, personal communication, January 25, 2016). The assistant principal for this school said, “The Catholic element probably comes in more in the teaching of it, but as far as the content and what is chosen, probably isn’t much different from a public school” (personal communication, January 20, 2016). When asked to clarify what was meant by “the teaching of it,” she replied, “It’s just knowing that maybe they can discuss many topics that can’t be discussed in a public school as much, and that might not come up very often but it’s just, it’s there” (Assistant Principal B, personal

communication, January 20, 2016). The principal corroborated this idea. When asked if the Catholic identity of the school came into consideration for any of the content areas or history in particular, she said, “[The Catholic identity] influences the curriculum in that it is an underlying foundation we all believe in and follow, but do I think it comes into conflict? No” (Principal B, personal communication, February 29, 2016). All three of this school’s leaders indicated that the Catholic element of the curriculum was a general sense of freedom to incorporate the faith as the teacher sees appropriate, especially when students ask questions about various topics, but that it did not influence the written curriculum.

The school’s published documents regarding education aligned with the responses of the interviewees. School B’s (2016) website said, “The mission of [School B] is to commit all its resources to the college preparatory education of young women, teaching them to be leaders and lifelong learners in a society where their talents and faith will give hope to the world.” On this same page, “Spirituality” is listed as the fifth of six “Core Values,” and it says that “This Core Value is truly intertwined with our Theology curriculum” (School B website, 2016), but no other academic field is mentioned. The “Academics Overview” page lists “a total college preparatory curriculum, including Advanced Placement and dual enrollment course work...a competent, caring, and professional faculty...and the best facilities” (School B website, 2016) as the keys to success for their students. There is no mention of faith or Catholicism on this overview page or on the social studies page of the website. The school’s Curriculum Handbook also does not reference the faith other than in the course descriptions of the theology classes (School B Curriculum Handbook, 2016).

School C. The leaders from this school referenced the Catholic element of their curriculum the most and implicated its importance more than the other schools' leaders. While the other three schools' interviewees named the state standards as the starting point for building their curriculum, Assistant Principal C said, "If you're a liberal arts classical school, you have to believe in the narrative of western civ, and if you're a Catholic classical liberal arts school you integrate Christ as a, as the ordering principle of history" (personal communication, February 27, 2016). Teacher C said, "All we're oriented towards, you know, is the objective truth in any of these classes" (personal communication, February 18, 2016). He did not mention state standards until specifically asked about them. This is a different perspective than that described by the other interviewees who saw the Catholic faith as an addendum or additional element to the state curriculum rather than the starting point itself.

Even though the responses of employees in this setting described a different starting point for their history curriculum, the approach to history described by the assistant principal and referenced by the teacher was not in the written curriculum of the Honors American History 18 course at that school. The teacher said that he is "constantly bringing into [the class] Catholic principles...like Just War Theory and Catholic social thinking" (personal communication, February 18, 2016), but when asked if he brought these ideas in on his own or if they were built into the curriculum, he replied, "It's not built into the curriculum at all" (personal communication, February 18, 2016). This was corroborated by the assistant principal who said that world history and American history "are the two classes remaining in our humanities program we haven't disassembled...just because of the faculty member who teaches that and navigating that relationship"

(personal communication, February 27, 2016). This difference between the two teachers of American history in the school was clear to the teacher interviewed as well. He said, “I would say that the AP class, the other teacher that teaches here probably leaves some of that stuff out and I put more of an emphasis on it than he would” (personal communication, February 18, 2016). So even in a school with a philosophy that is different from the others interviewed when it comes to Catholic identity in curriculum, the practical hurdles of putting that philosophy into practice still place the burden on the teacher to incorporate this philosophy.

The plan was for this perspective on history to be more formally included in the written curriculum moving forward. The assistant principal said that he was looking into new resources for the course for future years: “The books that are used are typical to any AP U.S. History or any European History text...and so we’re going to adopt books that are more closely aligned to the mission and the vision” (personal communication, February 27, 2016). He described that their grade school was already using a text from the Catholic School Textbook Project for their American history class and that he was very pleased with it.

School C’s published documents are compatible with the philosophy described by the interviewees. Under the section titled “Our Mission” on their website, it says,

From the educational philosophy and curriculum to the cultural and aesthetic environment, [School C] is built upon a commitment to Christ and His Church. Our school seeks to instill in students a desire to know, love and serve God in this life and the next. We achieve this by uniting the pursuits of both faith and reason: providing a Catholic education grounded in a challenging, integrated

liberal arts curriculum coupled with excellence in fine arts, service and athletic competition. (School C website, 2016)

The curriculum overview page uses some of the same language. It states, “The curriculum underlines the unity of faith and reason and seeks to form students into confident, intelligent and faithful young adults” (School C website, 2016). This phrasing is also in the front of their course catalogue. This consistency within the published documents and interviewees’ responses indicates a commitment to approaching history with the teachings of the Catholic Church as the starting point for the curriculum, even though the written curriculum and the taught curriculum in one of the two American history classes do not totally reflect this philosophy.

School D. The three interviews from stakeholders in School D talked about the Catholic identity of their curriculum a total of six times, but each time it was given a significant sense of importance. School D’s approach to their curriculum was something of a blend of the approaches of the other schools: they did start with secular standards, but the teacher interviewed built Catholic elements and Church documents directly into the scope and sequence itself. School D was also the only school studied to receive a curriculum framework from the diocesan level, and the assistant superintendent interviewed said that within this framework, “We always try to have a philosophy statement...that we need to work from a Catholic worldview and that has to penetrate everything, so we do work very hard to make sure that that’s included in some aspect of the strands” (personal communication, March 8, 2016). The assistant principal said that after receiving the curriculum framework from the diocese, their school process clarifies further where the Catholicity is incorporated: “We started to have curriculum mapping

for each course now...which means the requirement is it has to be integrated with the Catholic teaching” (personal communication, January 28, 2016). When asked where in the curriculum it was written, the assistant principal answered, “We usually look at lesson plans to see what kind of lecture or activity is there in your classroom to see if the Catholic teaching can be embedded into those sessions or hours” (personal communication, January 28, 2016). After other clarifying questions, she said that the Catholicity was found more in how teachers write their lessons rather than in the written curriculum at the school level, though it certainly is considered in the written curriculum as well.

The findings of the interviews were similar to the content of the school’s published documents. The mission statement on the website says, “our mission is to be an academic community of faith that strives to form the hearts, minds, and souls of our students in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the living Tradition of the Catholic Church” (School D website, 2016). Forming the minds of students presumably refers to the academic program of the school which is here connected directly to the Catholic faith. The “Academics” page of the site makes no reference to the faith, however; it says, “The college preparatory curriculum at [School D] is designed to prepare students for their academic futures, eventually placing them in the college that is the best fit” (School D website, 2016). Listed below this statement are several academic accomplishments, including, “86% of our students passed the AP History Exam” (School D website, 2016), indicating that the AP tests are important indicators of their academic success.

Though the front Academics webpage didn’t reference Catholicity, it did contain a link in its sidebar titled “Catholic Intellectual Tradition.” On this page, a different

philosophy statement than that on the Academics front page can be found. These statements speak more directly to the Catholic faith under the title “Vision Statement for Educational Renewal at [School D]”: “The Catholic Intellectual Tradition encompasses a Catholic Worldview that sees Jesus Christ as the source and summit of all learning and study” (School D website, 2016). This sentence is reminiscent of the vision described by the assistant principal of School C who named Jesus as “the ordering principle of history” (personal communication, February 27, 2016). Further down the page, one of the “Belief Statements” listed says, “We believe the Catholic Faith must be incorporated into every aspect of the school in order to foster ‘love for wisdom and truth’ and to ‘integrate faith, culture, and life’” (School D website, 2016). Under “Social Studies” in the school’s course catalogue, it says, “Integrating Catholic Identity and social teaching of the Catholic Church within the total school program that cultivates academic excellence, the curriculum of history and social sciences will prepare students to become the future faithful and knowledgeable citizens of our nation and our world” (School D, 2015, p. 24). The course description of the AP U.S. History course does not include any reference to the faith.

Another part of School D’s site is devoted to its Center of Academic Resources, which “provides students with the academic support that they need to succeed in high school and college...The advisor identifies students who struggle academically and guides these students to the appropriate support” (School D website, 2016). The philosophy statement for this center states that it “incorporates the Catholic Intellectual Tradition at appropriate times during a student’s interaction with his/her advisor” (School D website, 2016).

Though the interviewees did not mention it, these different pages would suggest that there is a “renewal” process or reevaluation of the academic program of the school that has a more classical liberal arts philosophy than what is currently implemented. The inconsistency of language used from one part of the website to the next could be indicative of this process.

Finding 2

Major Finding. The second research question was, “In what ways do Catholic school leaders agree regarding student learning objectives or standards about human history?” What was found in this study was that there was little agreement amongst the schools. There was only one school, School C, whose leaders both identified any specific standard or concept as the most important during the course of their responses, while the other interviewees each either had no answer as to what their priority objectives were or named something different than what the other interviewees from their institution named. Still, as is described below, even School C’s interviewees’ responses did not align exactly to the published documents related to the history curriculum in the school, and though they may not have been referenced or described in any responses, each school had some published documentation regarding the content of their American history courses.

Key Trend. The overall emerging theme from the responses related to this research question was the differing values placed on the schools’ respective state standards. While respondents from Schools A and B said that the state standards were the foundation of their curriculum and covering these standards was a high priority, the interviewees from School C indicated something of a disdain for the state standards and described various Church teachings or concepts as the basis of their curriculum. School

D, in both the responses of those employees interviewed and in its published documentation, indicated a need to have both the secular elements such as state or AP standards and the “Catholic intellectual tradition” as central for student learning. No consensus amongst the schools was evident, which seems to indicate that the state standards are a dividing line with regards to incorporating Catholic identity into the curriculum. The following is a summarization of findings separated by setting.

School A. In School A, the principal said she could not identify any particular points that were most important, while the department chair said that the concept of cause and effect was most central to their curriculum, as well as “making history a story so its not segmented” (personal communication, February 16, 2016). School A’s Course Catalogue (2016) states, “Students' skills and abilities in reading, analyzing, and interpreting events and movements will be fostered by independent research and reports, as well as by classroom participation” (p. 29). No other documentation from the school was available regarding the content of the American history courses, and the interviewees did not elaborate on what objectives were used other than to say that the state standards were the starting point for creating their curriculum.

School B. In School B, the department chair and assistant principal both agreed that the most important thing in the curriculum was to prepare students for the next level, while the principal didn’t name any points as particularly important but rather alignment to the state standards and the offerings of other local schools as critical factors in the curriculum. The department chair also named the skills of deciphering “primary and secondary sources and citations” (personal communication, January 25, 2016) as central to the social studies curriculum as a whole. The social studies tab on the school’s website

says, “Recognizing the need for all individuals to have a command of information and an understanding of modern conundrums, the Social Studies Department actively engages students in conceptual learning and information processing” (School B website, 2016). This statement is followed by a description of faculty qualifications and more specific goals of the department, such as synthesizing information and accessing databases. The Curriculum Handbook (2016) says of its Honors American History course, “a detailed chronological survey of American History from the colonial period to the modern period with additional work on the concepts of leading American historians and study of key historical documents using an advanced placement textbook” (p. 32). Overall, the points of learning for School B appear to be determined by the state standards, vertical alignment within the school, and the review of other schools’ offerings conducted by the principal.

School C. School C’s leaders identified a Catholic perspective on history as the most important point of learning, with the assistant principal naming Christ as an ordering principle of history and the teacher naming objective truth as the end goal of the class, language found in many of the Church documents and Catholic literature reviewed earlier in this study. The teacher also mentioned “states rights versus federalism,” “subsidiarity,” and “the history of Catholics” (personal communication, February 18, 2016) as critical points to the course from his perspective.

However, as mentioned before, this approach had yet to be fully implemented into the written curriculum at the school, and instead the teacher was relied upon to decide how and when to incorporate Catholic concepts. In the course catalogue for School C, each department has a philosophy statement listed above their course offerings. The

history department's philosophy statement reads in part, "The primary goal of the History program at [School C] is to immerse students in the history and culture of Western civilization in order to enable and ennoble them with a working historical knowledge and cultural literacy of their own society" (School C Course Catalogue, 2016, p. 29). It is worth noting that there is no mention of Christ as the ordering principle of history or objective truth as such as were stated in the interviews. The Honors American History class is described as "a writing and speaking intensive course focusing on the history of this great nation from its inception to the present...students may elect to take the Advanced Placement examination in United States History for possible credit at their chosen colleges" (School C Course Catalogue, 2016, p. 30). The clear link to the AP test is noted here, and both of the employees interviewed indicated that the content of the AP exam was very influential in the content choices of the other American history teacher. This was seen as a problem by the assistant principal who said the course would be less aligned to the AP test "when we are finally able to navigate and finish that relationship [with the teacher], which I won't get into, because it's challenging!" (personal communication, February 27, 2016).

School D. In School D the department chair named the Church document *Rerum Novarum* as a prime example of what he considered to be the most important point of learning in the U.S. history class: "You know the kids just don't realize that there's such a close connection between the Catholic Church and what's going on in society...and that the Church and history aren't two separate things...and I try to do that" (personal communication, March 1, 2016). His assistant principal answered differently. She said, "The content, especially in the AP class, we have to use the state standards. However, it's

up to the teacher to make sure that the students do not, what they learn should not be biased” (personal communication, January 28, 2016). When asked a follow up question, she also named the difficulties of being Catholic in the Kennedy era as an important topic.

School D’s 2014 Course Catalogue (the most recent available) says in the course description for AP U.S. History that “This course enables students to analyze, in-depth, using extensive reading and writing exercises, the issues and problems in the history of the people of the United States” (School D Course Catalogue, 2014). The website also has a page for each content area, and the social studies page has a list of ten social studies themes covered in their courses. Additionally, it lists five elements incorporated into each course, one of which is “Contributions and teachings of the Catholic Church” (School D website, 2016). Furthermore, the course catalogue states underneath the heading of “Social Studies”: “Integrating Catholic Identity and social teaching...within the total school program that cultivates academic excellence, the curriculum of history and social sciences will prepare students to become the future faithful and knowledgeable citizens of our nation and our world” (School D Course Catalogue, 2014). These excerpts align with the responses of the department chair regarding the importance of the Catholic identity within the written and taught curriculum.

The curriculum guide from the diocesan school office begins with an introduction and philosophy statement that includes language about the Catholic faith. It states that the curriculum guidelines are intended to “assist students to view their world with an ever broadening vision, so that they can understand their place and their influence on the activities and events in the world” (School D’s Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools,

2016, p. 4). The first bullet under the heading “The Social Studies curriculum enables students to:” says, “explore and apply the growth and influence of Catholic traditions, principles, and values to all aspects of political, personal, and spiritual life” (p. 4), indicating that primary importance is given to the faith. The document finishes with the statement, “The ultimate goal of Social Studies in education is to prepare students to make a significant contribution to society and make the world a better, more Christ-like place for the human family” (p. 4).

Finding 3

Main Finding. The third research question was, “How do school leaders determine if the AP U.S. History framework is a match for Catholic schools’ history curricula?” As with the other research questions, there was a high level of variability in the approaches of the schools’ leaders with regard to how they decided whether to implement the AP U.S. History course or not. Despite the fact that all four schools interviewed maintained some relationship to the AP program, comments coded “Against AP” occurred 14 times and comments coded “For AP” occurred 10 times (Dedoose Chart #1, 2016). However, the reasons against the AP U.S. History course were more often related to practical concerns than any philosophical or political reasons, as Table 3 demonstrates.

The fourth research question is closely related to the third. It was, “What process did administrators and teachers in four Catholic high schools use to decide whether to implement this course at their institutions?” There were four codes under the category of “decisions,” which is to say there were four themes that emerged related to how the

schools made curricular choices. Table 3 depicts the overall occurrences of the codes in the decision category.

Table 3

Reasons Given for Not Using the AP U.S. History Course

	Number of Occurrences
Catholicity	3
Pedagogy	1
Politics	2
Practicality	8

Note: Retrieved from Dedoose Chart #1

Key Trend. The overall theme that emerged is that curriculum decisions are ultimately made at the building level, with administrators and teachers collaborating to sort through a variety of resources to determine what will be used in their courses. A general implication in the responses was that, for all but School C, it was assumed that an AP course would be a fit for the school and the question most often considered was whether the practical elements could be organized in such a way to be able to offer the class. This assumption made it likely that AP classes would be approved, but how they were delivered was considered even more important. In responses about curriculum decisions, teacher influence outweighed that of administrators because of the changes, adjustments, and choices made in the classroom during the course of lessons or over the course of a year. This is a key trend because, while this study focuses mostly on the written curricula, the taught curriculum often goes beyond that which is written or

changes from that which is written because of the needs or desires of the particular teacher and students involved. Below is a summary of the interview responses and document review related to research questions three and four.

Table 4

Decision-Making Factors

	Number of Occurrences in Decisions Category
Administration	18
Diocesan	10
Other Stakeholders	9
Outside Sources	11
Teachers	30

Note: Retrieved from Dedoose Chart #1

School A. The principal of School A described their process for choosing curriculum as follows: “Well, state standards, I think we start there, and then look into each department and what’s been done in the past and how that aligns with the state standards and the state assessments and the ACT test” (personal communication, February 23, 2016). When asked about how changes to the curriculum are made, she answered, “The department head and I kind of talk about it and then I meet with all the department heads...and then I talk with [the president of the school] and the administrative team and then, not necessarily asking for board approval, it’s more like telling them ‘this is what we’re doing’” (personal communication, February 23, 2016).

For the courses that students receive college credit for, she said, “If I’m the classroom teacher and I’m teaching Spanish III and that’s going to get [college’s name] credit then I work directly with that college professor that offers that course and we mesh our syllabi” (personal communication, February 23, 2016). No process was described for how courses for dual credit were chosen by the high school, and little was said regarding the AP program.

School A does not offer the AP U.S. History course and likely will not in the foreseeable future. The department chair said that he thought offering the course “would be a great thing, though logistically speaking I don’t think we’re in a position to be able to offer it” (personal communication, February 16, 2016). Principal A did not even bring up any AP courses as a possibility, focusing instead on their current partnership with a local college to offer dual enrollment opportunities. When asked about whether she could foresee tension in a partnership with AP or another organization of that ilk, she said she had no philosophical reasons for not entering into those partnerships but that practically speaking it made more sense for them to focus on collaborating with local colleges for cost effective offerings for students. Despite the fact that neither the principal nor the department chair described any relationship with the AP program, the school’s course catalogue says under its Honors American History course, “This course may be taken for Advanced Placement (AP) credit” (School A Course Catalogue, 2016, pg. 21). No other social studies course in the catalogue had that descriptor. Based on this sentence in the catalogue and the responses in the interviews, this school’s leaders had not really considered whether the AP U.S. History course was a match because of practical concerns, but they saw no reason why it wouldn’t be a fit.

School B. School B has offered AP courses for years, but never the AP U.S. History course. This particular institution was in the middle of a curriculum audit by a new principal which included conversations with staff and students, surveys of recent graduates, and reviews of local and national trends in course offerings to determine how the current catalogue of courses matched up to the research of the principal. The AP U.S. History course was targeted by the school's leaders as a potential future offering during this auditing process. The assistant principal said that the reason for not offering the course up to that point came down to logistics: the school needs to have a teacher interested and qualified enough to teach the course, and there needs to be sufficient student interest for the course as well. The principal said the school is planning on adding the course for the 2016-2017 school year since alumni surveys and the principal's review of surrounding schools' course offerings indicated that it was a course the school should offer. When asked about the process used to decide to add the course, the principal said, "We did not have it and I thought it was a gap in our social studies curriculum...girls were asking for it too...I would have the entire [social studies] department look at it, and that's a need they also saw" (personal communication, February 29, 2016). To summarize, the process for determining whether the course was a fit for the school involved the principal seeing a gap between what their school offered compared to what other schools were offering and confirming that there was a desire to have the course based on input from students and staff members. The department chair corroborated this, saying that she had also compared their course offerings to surrounding schools and wanted to "better prepare our students for college" (personal communication, January 25, 2016).

School C. School C offers the classical Catholic curriculum but does not avoid the AP program altogether. While interviewing the assistant principal, he said “We do offer an honors section of world history and American history that are AP preparatory, but we want to have our own curriculum that is determined by us” (personal communication, February 27, 2016). He went on to say, “You kind of have to play the game of working with some of these secular outfits to display rigor and offer some of these benefits post-secondarily, but you don’t want to do it to sell out your soul...as a Catholic school” (personal communication, February 27, 2016). He described the thought process behind calling the class AP preparatory but not an “AP” class as follows:

We have a statement on our website that says, ‘Look, these are our classes, we’re not going to sign our classes on with AP.’ There’s no actual benefit that’s being lost...the kids produce the test score, whether the class is certified through AP doesn’t matter. To us, if we certify through AP, you could be at our school or another...and what’s the difference? You should be getting something unique and different that embodies our values and beliefs. (personal communication, February 27, 2016)

When asked if there were specific things within the AP history courses that he thought were not a fit for his school, the assistant principal said, “There’s clearly a more progressive agenda pushed by these humanities programs within AP, and so we want to avoid those narratives; they’re just there” (personal communication, February 27, 2016). Despite this separation described by the assistant principal, the relationship of the Honors American History course to the AP test was close enough that the other teacher often referred to the class as “the AP class” (personal communication, February 18, 2016)

during his interview, a subtle acknowledgment that the link between the class and the AP test was significant.

Assistant Principal C described the curriculum setting process for his school first in very philosophical terms, describing how the liberal arts approach differs from the more common approaches to curriculum in education today.

Well it first starts off with some purpose of language, and from a Catholic perspective as well as a liberal arts or classical perspective...there's an approach to the core that is unique to that kind of education. It's the liberal arts, so it's about creating a beautiful human being, right? And then you add the Catholicism piece on top of it and you're dealing with sanctity. Ultimately the areas that are going to be able to explicitly through the materials express this are going to be in the humanities. (personal communication, February 27, 2016)

This philosophy then feeds a process he described as teachers and administrators collaborating to look through possible texts that most closely align to this perspective while also using the state standards as a guide. Regarding the state standards, he said, "We want to be better...if we're not better than the basics of the state standards, if we don't offer more, then what's our reason for being, in an educational regard?" (personal communication, February 27, 2016). He also said, "You know, I don't sit around and consult and say, 'Gosh, I need to go see what the state standards say'" (personal communication, February 27, 2016).

The curriculum process for this school also includes a lot of freedom for the teachers. Teacher C said, "There's a basic timeline to this class that I really need to talk about, basically from the founding of the nation until now, but I've felt and basically I've

been able to...[take] the class wherever I want to go with it” (personal communication, February 18, 2016). He described getting support from the administration on this approach, although as described before, there was significant discord between this teacher’s approach and that of the other American history teacher in the school.

School D. School D does offer the AP U.S. History course. When asked whether she saw a tension between the curricular philosophy of the diocese and AP curriculum, the assistant superintendent of School D’s diocese said,

We can’t control what the AP course looks like, what they’re requiring for the test. And so you know I do think there’s a natural tension that exists there, but parents are not complaining to us about that new [AP U.S. History] framework because what they’re concerned about ultimately is those credits I think.”

(personal communication, March 8, 2016)

The practical concern of parents wanting their students to get college credit was seen as weighty enough to continue offering AP courses despite admitting a tension with Catholic schooling, although the assistant superintendent pointed out that in their diocese the decision to offer an AP course was made at the school level.

This was the only school studied that started their curriculum process at the central office level of the diocese. As the assistant superintendent said, the diocese’s school office provides “general curriculum guidelines in all academic areas...to ensure that there’s nothing missing in a child’s full education in the Archdiocese of [city name]” (personal communication, March 8, 2016). As described by the assistant superintendent, each content area is reviewed on a five-year cycle by a team of “master level teachers in the different areas” (personal communication, March 8, 2016) from pre-K through high

school. This team begins with examining the most recent research related to that content area and then reviewed state standards from several areas in the country to ensure “a national perspective” (personal communication, March 8, 2016). Then the team looks at the curriculum strand by strand and gives feedback on what they think has or has not been effective over the last five-year cycle. Finally, they review textbooks and make recommendations to schools regarding what texts match the new framework best. With this framework and the list of recommended texts, the team also provides “a philosophy statement in all of our curriculums that identifies that...we need to work from a Catholic worldview and that lens has to penetrate everything” (personal communication, March 8, 2016).

The assistant principal from the school said that after receiving all of this information from the diocese, the administrators and department chairs review the textbooks on the list from the diocese and then create curriculum maps for each course. As described earlier, the maps do include a requirement for Catholic faith infusion, and the administration looks at teacher lesson plans to see how the faith is being incorporated in their courses.

The assistant principal for School D described the process of evaluating the AP class. She said, “We look at the AP content, then we compare with our guidelines from the diocese. Then we see if there’s anything that would contradict, and then we would have to take out anything that would contradict to the guidelines” (personal communication, January 28, 2016). She also stressed the importance of the teacher’s instruction. When asked if the school’s leaders had to take anything out of the AP U.S. History course, she replied in the negative, but followed by saying, “It depends on how

the teacher delivers it. You know, [two teachers] could be teaching the same subject, but it depends how they deliver it. The teacher has to be objective...but at the same time be the defender of the faith” (personal communication, January 28, 2016).

Summary

These three findings can be summarized to answer the grand tour question of the study: “How do Catholic schools balance the tension between adopting secular programs while trying to maintain their Catholic identity?” In the case of the AP U.S. History course, most schools rely on the classroom teacher to strike that balance. None of the teachers in the schools studied said that they had a written curriculum that included Church teachings or concepts, though two schools had administrators that described how Catholicity was considered in their American history course’s scope and sequence or curricular framework. The school whose stakeholders indicated the least emphasis on Catholicity in curriculum decisions did describe how the teacher may be asked questions about the faith or about events related to the Church and that it was their responsibility to not contradict Church teaching. Regardless of the setting, the most prominent theme that emerged from the interviews is that schools rely most heavily on their teachers to put the leadership’s priorities into action.

In all four settings, the school maintained some relationship with the AP U.S. History program, either through offering the course or through giving guidance on how to take the exam at the end of the course. Keeping the course aligned with a Catholic worldview, or at least avoiding contradiction with official Church teaching, was ultimately a task with which administrators trusted teachers to accomplish with varying levels of support structures in place to help them achieve this goal.

Chapter Five

Interpretation and Recommendations

The goal of this study was to examine how Catholic high schools balance the tension of maintaining their Catholic identity while adopting secular educational programs such as the AP U.S. History course. To study this question, the researcher used a qualitative approach, conducting responsive interviews with ten school leaders from four Catholic high schools in four different dioceses with differing populations and governing styles. Chapter Five begins with a summary of the study, including a review of the problem and methodology followed by a summary of the major findings, and concludes with suggestions for further research and concluding remarks.

Study Summary

The following is a review of the major sections of the study up to this point to provide context for the conclusions and suggestions for further research.

Overview of the problem. Different schools exist for different purposes. The same can be said about educational programs. The Catholic Church has stated that the purpose of its schools is to foster the faith of its pupils and the community and to help children grow into the persons they are called to be through baptism (Pope Paul VI, 1965). Modern American education, however, is geared towards creating an “inextricable link between high school exit expectations and the intellectual challenges that graduates invariably will face in credit-bearing college courses or in high-performance, high-growth jobs” (The American Diploma Project, 2004, p. 1). Though these purposes are not necessarily contradictory, they are different, and as Catholic

schools attempt to meet the needs of parents and students in the educational marketplace, they often evaluate secular educational programs to include in their curriculums. This can create a tension between the Catholic identity of the school and the program being used.

The AP U.S. History course is an example of one such secular program being utilized in many Catholic schools in the United States today. Because of the popularity and benefits of AP courses and the declining enrollments of Catholic schools, many school leaders implement the program to add value and rigor to the educational program of their schools. However, there is little guidance for these leaders as to whether this course and others like it could be detrimental to the Catholic mission of the school.

Purpose statement and research questions. The purpose of this study is to examine in-depth the decision making processes of school leaders in four different dioceses to gain insight into how they evaluated the AP U.S. History program. Through the course of responsive interviews with leaders from each school, the thought processes were examined to give insight to other school leaders on what different approaches have been used in various settings to make this decision.

A grand tour question guides qualitative studies to give direction to the interviews while allowing for the flexibility needed for the responses to be able to direct the conclusions. For this study, the grand tour question was, “How do Catholic schools balance the tension between adopting secular programs while trying to maintain their Catholic identity?” Under the scope of this overarching question, several more specific research questions were identified to help organize the interviews and define the breadth of the study.

RQ1. In what ways do Catholic school leaders consider their school's Catholic identity when making curriculum decisions?

RQ2. In what ways do Catholic school leaders agree regarding student learning objectives or standards about human history?

RQ3. How do school leaders determine if the AP U.S. History framework is a match for Catholic schools' history curricula?

RQ4. What process did administrators and teachers in four Catholic high schools use to decide whether to implement this course at their institutions?

Review of the methodology. The researcher used a qualitative approach to examine the decision making processes for the administrative teams and teachers when they evaluated the AP U.S. History program. The approach allowed the researcher to discover the processes used in evaluation and what role the Catholic identity of the school played in those processes. This reflected the complexity of the influences that inform a school leaders' decisions on such matters, a complexity which cannot be expressed in purely numerical form. Combining interviews with administrators and teachers with a review of the literature on the topics of Catholic education, educational teleologies, and AP programs should help the audience of the study understand why Catholic school leaders would be motivated to implement the program, why some parties might object to its implementation, and how a school might attempt to resolve the friction inherent to the situation and make a decision on how to move forward.

The research participants were administrators and teaching staff of four Catholic high school communities. To answer the research questions, the researcher relied on data regarding what the mission and objectives of Catholic schools in general are, as well as

those of the schools being studied; what the mission and objectives of the AP U.S. History framework are; who made the decision on whether or not to implement the program in the schools being studied and what factors influenced those decisions; and whether any of the schools' leadership teams planned to modify the curriculum, and if so, how and why they chose the modifications they did.

To gather this data, the researcher reviewed the published documents from the Magisterium of the Catholic Church regarding education, major works of Catholic philosophers and theologians on the topic, and many publications on Catholic education in America; the researcher reviewed the study schools' published documents on their mission and vision and any available materials published regarding academics in the school; the researcher reviewed the documents published by the College Board on the mission and objectives of AP courses, as well as all materials published as part of or as supplements to the new U.S. History framework; and the researcher interviewed a selection of administrators and teachers from each of the school communities to gain insight into what factors motivated the schools' leadership teams to make the decisions they made regarding the course.

The individuals selected for the interviews were selected by means of a "typical case sampling" (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012) strategy and were meant to give the reader a sense of the thoughts and motivations of the school staff involved in this process.

Major findings. The first major finding of the study is related to the first research question regarding how Catholic school leaders consider their Catholic identity when making curriculum decisions. It was found that different schools consider this identity to different degrees when making decisions, ranging from a school whose leaders said that

Catholic identity impacts curriculum only in theology classes to a school who considers the Catholic identity the starting point for the curriculum in all content areas, particularly those in the humanities. The key trend was that this difference appears to be related to the overall culture of the school; the extent to which Catholicity was considered for the curriculum was consistent amongst the stakeholders interviewed within each setting and corresponded to the extent to which it was written into the mission statements, handbooks, and websites of the school.

The second finding was related to the second research question that asked to what extent school leaders agreed on the most important learning objectives in the history curricula of their school. On this question, there was little agreement either within each building or among the four schools. State standards were a common theme in all responses, although each school's leaders placed different value on those standards. Three of the schools considered the state standards as a starting point for determining curricula, while one considered them a reference tool, but a seemingly unimportant one. Each school had published documents such as course catalogues that identified key objectives or purposes of its history classes, but these descriptions were largely inconsistent with the responses of those interviewed. There appeared to be an overall lack of clarity on the main objectives of the courses.

The third major finding connected the third and fourth research questions which asked how schools determined if the AP U.S. history course was a match for the school's curriculum and what process was used to arrive at this conclusion. As was the case with the first two findings, there was much variance from school to school regarding how and why the leaders decided whether or not to implement the course. For three of the

schools, the leaders appeared to begin with an assumption that the class would be a fit for the school, even though one of those schools did not offer the course and had no plans to do so in the future. The leaders of the fourth school made a decision to not offer the course because they believed it did not match their curricular goals, yet they still communicated to stakeholders that their Honors American History course was preparatory for the AP U.S. History test. The course was referred to on multiple occasions by the teacher interviewed as “the AP class,” which indicated that there was still a close alignment of this course to the goals of the official AP course.

These three findings can be summarized in order to answer the grand tour question of the study: “How do Catholic schools balance the tension between adopting secular programs while trying to maintain their Catholic identity?” The summary of the findings is that each school has a different approach to balancing their Catholic identity with secular programs, but the common theme throughout each of the schools studied is that it is ultimately up to the teacher to determine the degree to which the faith is incorporated. Even those leaders who considered the Catholic identity to be of the utmost importance did not have objectives or standards related to this identity in the written curriculum, though their teachers were aware of the emphasis on the faith in their settings. While there was a great deal of variability from school to school, the fact that there was so much consistency in the answers within each building indicate that each school’s culture influences how much the teacher does or does not choose to incorporate elements of the Catholic faith or a Catholic perspective on history.

Findings Related to the Literature

One of the most important statements found in the literature related to this project was a quote from the Institute for Catholic Education in Ontario (1996) at the end of their project to create a Catholic secondary curriculum, “What still remains, however, is some method whereby such curriculum projects can be validated by the various partners within the Catholic education community to ensure its Catholic character. At present, this process is yet to be determined” (p. 31). Miller (2006) identified the absence of and need for a Catholic accreditation agency to validate the catholicity of such curricular projects. These statements were reinforced by the findings of this study. There was no common process or determining criteria used by the school leaders studied in their efforts to evaluate the AP U.S. History course. Each school had a different approach and a different set of values guiding their curricular choices.

Additionally, the study supports the literature that depicted the tension between secular and religious goals of Catholic schools over the course of the history of the Church and its schools. In particular, the different approaches of the leaders in these schools with regard to secular programming was reminiscent of the relationship between Catholic and public schools in America described by Walch (2003) and the different schools of thought amongst Catholic educational leaders as to how close this relationship should be. The fact that the different schools’ stakeholders placed different emphases on the secular standards and had different feelings towards them indicates that the disagreements amongst Catholic educators in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are still present in the twentieth and twenty-first.

A third finding is that the language used in published documents and official teachings of the Catholic Church (Pope Paul VI, 1965; Garrone, 1977; The Holy See, 1994) was often absent from the responses of those interviewed, as was the Catholic view of human history described by Latourette and Dawson (McIntire, 1997) and Niebuhr (1949). The exceptions to this finding would be the stakeholders interviewed from School C, who described Jesus Christ as the ordering principle of history and the goal of encountering objective truth as goals of their history curricula, as well as the assistant superintendent of the diocese of School D who stated that the utilitarianism of the standards of secular education were not a fit for the schools in their diocese. The other responses indicated a significant alignment between the curricular approach in their schools with that of public standards, though often accompanied by an inclusion of some Catholic teachings or ideas.

The research indicating the increased emphasis on AP courses in schools was also verified by the schools involved in this study. The work of Sadler, Sonnert, Tai, and Klopfenstein (2010) and ETS (2008) that indicated a sharp rise in participation in AP programming was reinforced by the fact that all of the stakeholders interviewed were looking for further opportunities to incorporate AP courses in their curriculums and were aware of other schools who were doing the same. The perceived benefits of AP participation described by Byrd, Ellington, Gross, Jago, and Stern (2007) and Speroni (2011) were echoed on numerous occasions during the course of the interviews.

The next finding is related to the AP U.S. History course itself. The schools in this study experienced none of the controversy described by Tumulty and Layton (2014), the Associated Press (2015), and Powell (2015). Little tension was felt from outside

sources in any of the schools regarding the course. Much of what the College Board (2014E) explained regarding how the framework was not the complete curriculum was reiterated by participants in the study. The focus of those in the study was on the delivery of the teacher more than on the framework from College Board.

Conclusions

Education is one of the oldest and most important social and cultural institutions in the world. In each time and place, the purpose of education differs. Over the centuries, the Catholic Church has taught that its schools exist to develop the faith of their students and help conform them to the call of their baptism, namely, eternal salvation. Admittedly, the cultural and personal aspirations of all stakeholders in the Catholic school are important, though for these institutions, those goals are situated within the context of God's plan for humanity and His plan for each individual person to come to know and love Him. How this effects the operation of these schools varies depending on the context of the school and the values of the culture in which it exists. For American Catholic schools, one of the main questions answered by school and Church leaders is how to achieve the goals set forth by the Church while meeting the demands of an educational system that exists within a capitalistic society heavily influenced by the market forces of supply and demand. How can these schools supply an education that meets the demand of parents and students while not changing its product in such a way that the main objectives of Catholic schools are compromised?

This study is an insight into how that tension is played out in the modern American landscape in which college and career readiness are the main focuses of the cultural milieu. Programs like AP are perceived to provide many financial and

educational benefits to students, and so Catholic educational leaders seek to provide these advantages to their constituents. However, the goals of the program are different than those the Church has communicated for its schools. As leaders evaluate these programs for implementation in their settings, they demonstrate an implied set of priorities.

The schools studied displayed a range of approaches to the AP U.S. History course. All leaders consider their Catholic identity an important part of the school; however, not all consider it a major influence on curricular decisions in areas outside of the theology classroom. Whether the Catholic faith serves as a starting and ending point for curriculum or instead a general set of common values and behavioral expectations are determined by the leaders in each school, and in particular by the teachers in the classroom. Regardless of the approach, all schools studied maintained some relationship with the AP U.S. History course or exam and use secular programming as resources for their school.

Implications for action. Finding one of this study suggests that if schools want to build a curriculum rooted in Catholic identity, it needs to be a school-wide effort beginning with the mission statement and vision of the diocesan- and building-level leaders. Not all Catholic school leaders see this as a necessity, but for those that do, emphasizing the Catholic identity intentionally in mission statements, curricular documents, and school communications appears to impact the likelihood that it would be incorporated into the taught curriculum, if not the written curriculum.

Finding two indicates that the main objectives of classes may not be clear or may not be visited frequently enough to be internalized by the teachers and administrators responsible for the class. While perhaps understandable that a building administrator

would not know the main objectives for each course in the building, the fact that there was inconsistency between the course catalogue and the teacher's or department chair's responses implies a lack of clarity. For any course, knowing the main objectives is important, and if one were to try to incorporate the central teachings of the Catholic Church regarding human history, it would be critical for at least the teacher to be clear on what those teachings are and understand that they are among the main objectives for the course.

The third finding implies a lack of common procedures for evaluating whether an educational program matches Catholic worldview or a Catholic mission. Again, for some schools this may not be a priority, in which case incorporating the class based strictly on demand of students or families does not require a process beyond assessing the practical aspects of implementing the course. However, if it is a priority for Church or school leaders to incorporate the main teachings of the Church regarding human history, then build the curriculum around those tenets. The Catholic Textbook Project is one such possible approach. Writing texts that are a match for modern classrooms and which purport to approach history through a Catholic lens would provide a significant resource to aid in creating a written curriculum built on these principles. A simpler method would involve Church or educational leaders creating a checklist of these elements for the use of diocesan or school administrators to use when evaluating texts. Were the elements not to be found, as would likely be the case in most texts, suggestions for how to incorporate them could accompany the checklist.

The main implication for action is related to the grand tour question of the study. If the Catholic Church has communicated clearly what its teaching on history is and the

schools being run by that same Church are not incorporating these teachings in any meaningful way in their history curriculums, then steps could, and perhaps should, be taken to close the gap in communication that exists between the Magisterium and the schools. It is possible that some or all Church leaders do not see this inconsistency between Church doctrine and classroom practice as a problem, but if they do, strong leadership from the diocesan level is needed. Schools C and D in this study had the strongest commitment to incorporating Catholic identity into the written curriculum and most often used the language and concepts found in the Church's documents on history and education. They are also the schools with the most diocesan involvement in curriculum. School D receives curriculum guides from the diocese's central office, and School C recently went through a restructuring process by the diocese which led to its adoption of the classical Catholic curriculum. All dioceses operate differently, but the strong central leadership appears to have impacted the emphasis placed on a Catholic worldview in the curriculum. This becomes more complicated when one considers that many American Catholic schools, including School B in this study, are run by religious orders whose duty of obedience to the bishop or other diocesan authorities is mitigated through religious superiors. Even so, a movement towards stronger involvement and collaboration at the highest levels regarding school curricula could lead to an increase in the understanding and teaching of the worldview described in Church documents.

Recommendations for future research. In order to build off of the findings of this study, researchers could extend the study to schools outside of the Midwest to evaluate whether the cultural differences of the American coasts impact the extent to which the tension with secular programs is experienced by school leaders. Since the

findings of the study indicate that the culture within the school impacts the focus on Catholicity in the curriculum, examining how the culture outside of the building effects this part of the curriculum could be informative to those looking at this tension in other regions.

Further research opportunities would be to study whether students from Catholic schools have significantly different AP scores than those from public schools. Though there could be many factors that influence the results one way or the other, further study would be necessary to examine how attending a Catholic school impacts a students' ability to get college credit for their AP exams. Similarly, one could study whether schools that have a classical Catholic curriculum have significantly different test scores on the AP U.S. History exam or any other AP test than scores in public schools or Catholic schools with a more common approach to curriculum. Since the school in this study with the classical curriculum was the only school that indicated a desire to use the Catholic faith as the starting point for curricular decisions, it would be informative to know whether that seems to impact access to the financial and educational benefits the AP program is meant to provide.

Another trend worth studying would be the increase in classical Catholic curriculum schools in the United States. Through the course of this study, some sources described a rise in this approach to education. Examining if that is true or to what extent is is true, as well as what some of the motivating factors are for this rise, could provide further evidence as to the trends of Catholic education in the U.S.

Concluding remarks. Catholic schools are an integral part of the American educational landscape. In their current context, the need to maintain enrollments and

display rigor often lead these schools to evaluate programs like the AP U.S. History course for inclusion into their curriculum even though these programs approach education from a different perspective than that which has been taught by the Catholic Church. After conducting ten responsive interviews and interpreting the themes that emerged, it was found that schools relied most heavily on the classroom teachers to maintain the Catholic character of their school, however that is interpreted in their context, while implementing or at least acknowledging the AP U.S. History course and exam. Differing interpretations of what relationship a Catholic identity should have to curricular choices, different levels of diocesan support, and different relationships with the local states and their standards affected the decisions made in each of these schools.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Form



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
GRADUATE DEPARTMENT

Date: _____
IRB PROTOCOL NUMBER _____
(IRB USE ONLY)

IRB REQUEST
Proposal for Research
Submitted to the Baker University Institutional Review Board

I. Research Investigator(s) (Students must list faculty sponsor first)

Department(s) **School of Education Graduate Department**

Name	Signature	
1. Dr. Harold Frye	_____	Major Advisor
2. Dr. Phil Messner	_____	Research Analyst
3.		University Committee Member
4.		External Committee Member

Principal Investigator: Shane Rapp _____
Phone: 913-396-1716
Email: srapp@sjakeepingfaith.org
Mailing address:
1045 N. Troost Ave.
Olathe, KS 66061

Faculty sponsor: Dr. Harold Frye
Phone:
Email: harold.frye@bakeru.edu

Expected Category of Review: ___Exempt ___Expedited ___Full

II: Protocol: (Type the title of your study)

Aligning the Advanced Placement U.S. History Course with a Catholic Mission

Summary

In a sentence or two, please describe the background and purpose of the research.

The purpose of this study was to arrive at an understanding of the decision-making processes of four Catholic schools that chose either to adopt or not adopt the AP U.S. History course and to frame that understanding against the backdrop of the Church's philosophical approach to education. The schools involved were Midwestern Catholic schools that cover a variety of educational formats.

Briefly describe each condition or manipulation to be included within the study.

There are no conditions or manipulations included within this study.

What measures or observations will be taken in the study? If any questionnaire or other instruments are used, provide a brief description and attach a copy. Will the subjects encounter the risk of psychological, social, physical or legal risk? If so, please describe the nature of the risk and any measures designed to mitigate that risk.

Data will be gathered through interviews in person and over the phone. The questions are related to schools' decision-making processes related to social studies curricula and how their schools' Catholic identity is involved in the process of evaluating curricular decisions. See the attached list of questions. The subjects will not encounter psychological, social, physical, or legal risks.

Will any stress to subjects be involved? If so, please describe.

No stress to any subjects will be involved.

Will the subjects be deceived or misled in any way? If so, include an outline or script of the debriefing.

No subjects will be deceived or misled in any way.

Will there be a request for information which subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive? If so, please include a description.

There will be no request for personal or sensitive information.

Will the subjects be presented with materials which might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading? If so, please describe.

Subjects will not be presented with materials which might be considered offensive, threatening, or degrading.

Approximately how much time will be demanded of each subject?

Approximately 1-2 hours will be demanded of each subject.

Who will be the subjects in this study? How will they be solicited or contacted? Provide an outline or script of the information which will be provided to subjects prior to their volunteering to participate. Include a copy of any written solicitation as well as an outline of any oral solicitation.

The subjects in this study will be school leaders in four Midwestern Catholic schools. Preliminary contact was made via email; see attached for the email and a copy of the interview questions that will be used to gather data.

What steps will be taken to ensure that each subject's participation is voluntary? What if any inducements will be offered to the subjects for their participation?

To ensure that each subject's participation is voluntary, emails sent to participants include statements that indicate the voluntary nature of the study. No inducements will be offered to the subjects.

How will you ensure that the subjects give their consent prior to participating? Will a written consent form be used? If so, include the form. If not, explain why not.

A written consent form will be used. The form is attached.

Will any aspect of the data be made a part of any permanent record that can be identified with the subject? If so, please explain the necessity.

No aspect of the data will be made part of a permanent record that can be identified with the subject.

Will the fact that a subject did or did not participate in a specific experiment or study be made part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher or employer? If so, explain.

The fact that a subject did or did not participate in this study will not be made part of any permanent record that is available to a supervisor, teacher, or employer.

What steps will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the data? Where will it be stored? How long will it be stored? What will be done with it after the study is completed?

The participants and their employers will be blinded throughout the study. Data will be stored on the researcher's computer using the application GarageBand and an external hard drive until the study is completed. One year after the study is completed, the interview responses will be destroyed.

If there are any risks involved in the study, are there any offsetting benefits that might accrue to either the subjects or society?

There are no risks involved in this study.

Will any data from files or archival data be used? If so, please describe.

There will not be any data from files or archives used in this study.

Appendix B: IRB Consent Letter



Baker University Institutional Review Board

January 6, 2016

Dear Shane Rapp and Dr. Frye,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your research project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested

for IRB as part of the project record.

Please inform this Committee or myself when this project is terminated or completed. As noted above, you must also provide IRB with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If you have any questions, please contact me at CTodden@BakerU.edu or 785.594.8440.

Sincerely,

Chris Todden EdD

Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee Verneda Edwards EdD

Sara Crump PhD Erin Morris PhD Scott Crenshaw

Appendix C: Consent to Participate Form

Consent to Participate

Research Title: Aligning the Advanced Placement U.S. History Course with a Catholic Mission

Researcher: Shane Rapp

Advisor: Dr. Harold Frye
School of Education
Baker University
8001 College Blvd.
Overland Park, KS 66210
(913)-344-1220
hfrye@bakeru.edu

My name is Shane Rapp and I am a doctoral student at Baker University in Kansas. I am conducting research on how Catholic schools make curricular decisions, with my focus being the AP U.S. History Course.

You will be asked to answer approximately 15-20 questions on your role in making curricular decisions at your institution, how the Catholic identity of your school impacted your decisions (if at all), and how the AP U.S. History class was evaluated by your school leadership. You may decline to answer any question at any time. Moreover, you may discontinue your participation at any time for any reason.

All personally identifiable information will be kept confidential. Interview transcripts will be password protected and only the research advisor and analyst will have access to the raw data.

Consent to Participate:

I understand that my participation in this research study is completely voluntary. I also understand that I am able to discontinue my participation within this study at any time for any reason. I understand that the principal investigator can be contacted at srapp@sjakeepingfaith.org should I have questions or wish to discontinue my participation.

I have read and understand the above statement. By signing, I agree to participate in the research study. The Baker University Institutional Review Board approved this study on January 6, 2016, unless renewal is obtained by the review board.

Participant Signature

Date

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Grand Tour Question: How do Catholic schools balance the tension between adopting secular programs while trying to maintain their Catholic identity?

RQ1. In what ways do Catholic school leaders consider their school's Catholic identity when making curriculum decisions?

1. What is your role in making curriculum decisions at your school?
2. How do you decide on the curriculum for your academic program?
3. What factors impact your decision-making?
4. What elements do you think constitute a Catholic identity for a school?
5. Does the Catholic identity of your school come into consideration during this process? If so, how and why? If not, why do you think that is?
6. Who, if anyone, is responsible for issues related to Catholic identity at your school?

RQ2. In what ways do Catholic school leaders agree regarding student learning objectives or standards about human history?

1. What do you consider the most important points of learning regarding human history in general for your students?
2. What do you consider the most important points of learning regarding the history of America for your students?
3. How, if at all, does the Catholic identity of your school impact what you believe students should learn about human history and the history of America?
4. How, if at all, does the Catholic Church's teaching on the human person and God impact your school's beliefs about teaching and learning?

RQ3. How do school leaders determine if the AP U.S. History framework is a match for Catholic schools' history curricula?

1. Did you consider implementing the AP U.S. History course at your school? Why or why not?
2. If so, did you implement the course? Why or why not?
3. If you implemented the course, have teachers or students had any difficulties reconciling the content or framework with their Catholic faith or beliefs? Why or why not?
4. If you implemented the course, what modifications, omissions, or additions, if any, did teachers make to the curriculum while implementing the AP framework?

RQ4. What process did administrators and teachers in four Catholic high schools decide whether to implement this course at their institutions?

1. Who makes the social studies curriculum decisions in your school?
2. Do you follow a process for determining curricula for social studies courses? If so, where does that process come from?
3. Was that process applied to the AP U.S. History course? If so, how? If not, why not?

Appendix E: Initial Email Requesting Participation

My name is Shane Rapp, and I am an Assistant Principal at St. James Academy in Lenexa, Kansas. I am also currently a doctoral candidate at Baker University in the early stages of writing my dissertation. My general topic is how Catholic schools make curriculum decisions, and I am using the AP US History course as a case study. I noticed that School C offers AP courses, but not the US History course, which would make you guys a perfect fit for my research! I was wondering if you and/or a few other teachers and administrators from your school would be willing to do a phone interview regarding why you don't offer this course. The interview wouldn't be for several months, but I am trying to find a few schools who will agree to participate now before I get too far into the process.

Just let me know when you get a chance, or let me know if there is someone else I should speak to about this. The study would "blind" all the participants, so no one will know it is School C, just in case that is a factor in your decision. Thanks for considering this, and thanks for the work you do passing on the faith to our youth.

Sincerely,

Shane Rapp

srapp@sjakeepingfaith.org

913-254-4289

Appendix F: Dedoose Chart #1 (Partial)

	Against AP	Catholicity	Pedagogy	Politics	Practicality	Catholic Identity	Culture	Curriculum
Against AP		3	1	2	8			
Catholicity	3							
Pedagogy	1							
Politics	2							
Practicality	8							
Catholic Identity							12	13
Culture						12		2
Curriculum						13	2	
Sacraments/Prayer						4	1	2
Curriculum						2		2
Catholicity						2		2
Diocese								
Other Schools								
Preparation								
Rigor								
Secular								
Decisions								
Administration								
Diocese								
Other								
Stakeholders								
Outside Sources								
Teachers								
For AP	2	1			1			
Catholicity								
College Credit	2	1			1			
Finances								
Rigor	1	1						
History						2	1	1
Catholicity						2	1	1
Secular						1	1	
Tension						2		2
Adapt								
Avoid								
None						1		1
Teacher						1		1
Totals	19	6	1	2	10	42	18	27