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DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC DISCOURSE AND SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
IN A HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

By

Lynn Marie Brice

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Teacher Education

1998

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ABSTRACT

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Lynn M. Brice

An interpretive approach was adopted in this study to investigate student discourse within the context of an issues-centered global studies course in order to describe how students participate in discussions of public issues and the nature of their discussions. Viewed through a multidisciplinary lens influenced by sociolinguistics, speech communication, social studies, literacy, and philosophy, analysis focused on students' interactions in the small group setting. Findings in this study suggest that viewing group discourse through a collaborative metaphor versus a competitive metaphor provides an analytical means of understanding group processes and dynamics as constructions of the group and how these constructions may be democratic. A key finding of the study was the multiple and diverse texts and textual relationships students constructed in their discussions and how they functioned in the students' negotiation of both social relations and content knowledge within their small groups. Findings of the study suggest that recognizing the multiple forms and functions of talk within a group's discussion can help educators assess a group's interaction and identify ways to support students' development of the communicative skills necessary for participation in deliberative democratic discussion. Findings also suggest an interdisciplinary approach provides researchers a rich analytic framework for identifying and describing discourse across speech events in relation to students' learning both about the global issue studied and the nature of democratic discourse.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all the teachers in my life, but especially my parents.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

An interpretive approach was adopted to research democratic, deliberative discussion within the context of an issues-centered global studies course to study how high school students participate in discussion of public issues and the nature of those discussions. Students' interactions in small group discussion were viewed through a multidisciplinary lens influenced by sociolinguistics, speech communication, social studies, literacy, and philosophy. This study examined forms of talk, textual references, and group norms that may foster learning that is both focused and cooperative. Understanding group discourse as a complex, layered, and contextualized interaction can help educators design tasks which foster high involvement in and sustainment of group discussion. Findings in this study suggest that viewing group discourse through a collaborative metaphor versus a competitive metaphor provides an analytical means of understanding group processes and dynamics as constructions of the group and how these constructions may be democratic.

Recent concerns with the state of democratic participation in American society have motivated educators to re-examine conceptions of citizenship and civic education. Providing a model of democratic public interaction that is reformative and educative, teaching students the skills of effective and ethical communication, is a consistent concern among those seeking to revitalize civic education. Social studies educators call for a revitalized curriculum that engages students in learning to address vexing contemporary public problems and issues. Ideally students are not merely exposed to these problematic questions, but learn to engage in them as intelligent, well-informed members of a democratic society. Concurrently, new theories of learning which focus on the social construction of meaning suggest that student talk is essential to learning, placing a new emphasis on student discourse in the classroom. Thus, educational theorists argue that it is important to provide students with opportunities to participate in public deliberation on the major concerns of society if they are to learn the norms and communication skills essential for their full participation in adult democratic civic life (Barnes, 1993).

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While educating students for their roles as citizens has been a long-standing goal of social studies education, recent conceptions of citizenship and civic education focus on students' classroom participation and critical thinking. One such model, a "participatory" model, advocates providing opportunities for practical experience and skill building designed to promote civic participation (Wexler, Grosshans, Zhang, & Kim, 1991). According to Gutmann (1987, 1990), the goal of civic education, or "democratic education" as she refers to it, is the increase in students' willingness and abilities to reason and argue in ways that are distinctly democratic. Accordingly, the ability to engage in democratic and deliberative discussion is desirable and essential for students to develop because it enables them, as citizens, to understand, communicate, and sometimes resolve civic disagreements (Gutmann, 1987). Educators should provide students with analytical resources they can use to clarify their commitments and communicate in public (Newmann & Oliver, 1970). Hartoonian (1991) argues for a civic criticism which promotes clear communication and respect for the standards of clarity, truth, and human dignity. Within such an approach, empathic listening is as important as speaking. Giroux (cited in Hartoonian, 1991) states that schools should be places which promote thinking critically about social issues on the basis of informed judgments.

The learning advocated by these educators and theorists stresses students' engagement in public discourse. But discourse is more than just talk about an issue. It is a kind of "identity kit" which is an association with a particular group or culture that has identifiable ways of thinking, valuing, and acting (Gee, 1990). In this sense, learning public discourse is the assuming of democratic, participatory citizenship. Drawing upon Gee's notion of discourse, students learn and acquire civic discourse by engaging in its social practices through a scaffolded and supported interaction with other people who have more experience with the discourse. Discourses operate within communities and encompass the talk and written texts by members of these communities to conduct their lives and work. Engaging students in the public discussion of a social issue provides a

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context in which students can interact with more knowledgeable others in a democratic community, namely the producers of the texts they speak, hear, read, view, write, and discuss. As they discover and articulate various, other diverse views on a social issue, they learn that democratic participation involves both cooperation and critique.

Learning the skills of deliberative discussion involves others in a relationship where communication skills are practiced and guided. In the classroom context, small groups are a favored setting to engage students in democratic discourse. Small groups ideally provide an autonomous context for students to socially construct personal meaning, assume ownership of their learning, and practice cooperation and communication. There are several underlying assumptions about group discussion, particularly cooperative learning structures which are a predominant structure for group discussion in the school setting. One central assumption is that group structure will promote democratic participation among group members. This is predicated on the belief that structuring the interaction facilitates the progressive development of students' communicative competencies. A second assumption is that group process complements the practicing and honing of deliberative skills necessary for independent, critical thinking. Discussion is closely related to democratic society. Bringing reason and language together exhibits some of the most unique and best characteristics of human interaction (Bormann, 1975).

Jenness (1990) notes that "citizenship" (and attendant concepts like "democratic participation" and "democratic process") is most often invoked at the level of overriding purposes of education, not the level of realization. Harris (1996) states that significant progress has been made in assessing students' ability to write on civic issues, but that there is nothing comparable for assessing their learning of oral discourse. Cazden (1986) argues that demonstrations of the relationships between event structures and academic content are rare. Much is said in various literatures about engaging students in discussion of social issues and various models are offered as to how that discussion can be structured. Little is said about how students actually engage in the discussion of public issues. (This literature

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is discussed in further detail in Chapter 1.) This study attempts to "get inside" students' discussions of public issues in order to identify and describe how students actually engaged in public discourse and the nature of that discourse.

The focus of this study was the talk of student groups in order to ascertain the ways in and extent to which learners gradually approach tasks and talk that are democratic and deliberative. We seem to lack the conceptual tools to study and describe democratic speech, particularly as it is learned and enacted by high school students engaged in small group discussion. In this study, I drew upon a collaborative metaphor (Edelsky, 1981) of group discussion through which to reconceptualize group dynamics and processes. A collaborative metaphor provided an analytical lens through which constructs of group discussion related to conceptions of democratic discourse (e.g. leadership, equitable participation, authority, and speaking turns) were viewed as collaborative, contextualized constructions of the group. This analytical lens differs from conventional models and theories of group discussion that are often undergirded by a metaphor which reifies power and competition. Viewed through a metaphor of collaboration, analysis of group talk in this study gave attention to various features of group dynamics and processes and identified how democratic deliberative discussion was enacted in the discourse of the group.

In order to study how students engage in deliberative democratic discussion, I sought a social studies curriculum purposefully designed to engage students in the public discussion of social issues in cooperative group settings. Participants in the study were high school juniors and seniors enrolled in the Hartford Global Studies course. The curriculum of this global studies course approximated the kinds of practices argued for by educators and was consistent with descriptions of a revitalized social studies curriculum. The principles of cooperative learning were infused in the course to foster the learning of communication skills for democratic participation. Small group discussion was a central vehicle in this global studies course. As students participated in small group speech events, they entered into the public discussion of the issue, exploring and constructing their own

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understandings, as well as critically exploring the perspectives of the others they read and viewed. Underlying the development of the reasoning and analytic skills fostered in the course is the idea that these are the skills students need to think independently and create their own reasoned, informed perceptions about an issue that, directly or indirectly, has consequences in their lives. An inseparable and substantial part of students' development as systematic, reasoned decision-makers was the development of the communicative skills necessary for participating in public discourse. Ideally, through a variety of reading and writing assignments and small group discussions, students engaged in democratic deliberation.

Following the Hartford Global Studies students through a full ten-week instructional unit, data analyzed included field notes of participant observation, audio tape of small group discussions, video tape of selected small groups discussions, photocopies of group written work, photocopies of the written texts students read, and interviews with some group members. Drawing from sociolinguistics, speech communication, and literacy, analysis in this study moved between what theory tells us about discourse and what students actually did in their small group discussions. The approach provided the means for addressing the complexity of group discourse and for providing thick description, triangulation, and the generation of grounded theory using the constant comparative method. Identified in the analysis were the multiple and diverse texts and textual relationships students constructed in their discussions and how they functioned in students' negotiation of both social relations and content knowledge within their small groups.

My purpose in this study was to better understand how student groups engage in public discussion of an issue and the nature of their discussions. I first sought to identify instances of group discussion in which the Global Studies students enacted behaviors resembling what others describe as democratic deliberative discussion. Identified in the comparative case analysis of two heterogeneous groups of students were several

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interwoven forms of group talk: "focused talk," "task talk," and "digressive talk". In both groups and across events, each type of talk had distinct and identifiable form and function. Participants wove these different forms of talk together in complex patterns as they negotiated both new academic content and new ways of speaking about knowledge and text. A key finding in this study was the nature of group discussion itself; that is, group discussion is not simply one thing. The forms of talk identified were not simply "on" and "off" task behaviors. Group members constructed multiple ways of speaking or forms of talk that occurred within a single speech event and across events. Each form of talk influenced the carrying out of discussion, both a social and intellectual accomplishment of the group. Figure 1 below shows the categories I developed to describe these forms of talk. These forms of talk and how they functioned within the group's discourse are described in detail in Chapter 2.

The comparative case analysis further revealed differences in the nature of the two groups' interactions across speech events. Although both groups shared the same explicit discussion task, each constructed unique norms of participation and group roles which influenced their abilities as a group to engage in deliberative discourse. The negotiation and maintenance of norms and group roles required a collaborative, cooperative effort among group members indicative of their willingness to participate. Analysis of the data revealed that Group B sustained focused talk, while Group A engaged in brief, more intermittent periods of it. The study looked closely at the negotiation of group roles and norms as a way to investigate the groups' differential success at sustaining "focused talk." Patterned relationships among "task talk," "digressive talk," and "focused talk" functioned in ways that created and sustained coherence in Group B's discourse which ultimately supported the groups' engagement in deliberative discussion.

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Type of Talk	Form/Distinctive Features
Focused Talk	• high task engagement • high conversational involvement • complex intertextual relationships • coherence and cohesion
Task Talk	• procedural • orientation to task • recontextualize task • conversational involvement
Digressive Talk: Productive	• high conversational involvement • conversationally appropriate remote from discussion topic • self-disclosure • group cohesion
Unproductive	• conversationally inappropriate • remote from discussion topic

Figure 1:   Categories of Group Talk

The array of ways of participating the group constructed yielded a kind of talk ("focused talk") that seemed consistent with descriptions of democratic deliberation. This kind of talk was characterized by the complex weaving of talk about tasks, texts, and ideas. Because these episodes of focused discussion were rich from the perspective of democratic discussion, I turned my attention to these particular episodes of talk. Three speech events of Group B in which episodes of focused and sustained discussion of the issue occurred were selected for microanalysis.

The nature of public discourse is intertextual. It is the juxtaposition of a multiplicity of perspectives and voices engaged in public discussion of an issue. Within and across episodes of "focused talk," group members engaged in a process of asking questions, making assertions, and associating ideas as they made sense of the texts together. They engaged in synthesizing textual fragments (Hartman, 1995) from various texts they read, viewed, and discussed, including their own discussion as text, to create their understanding of the issue. As the weaving metaphor suggests, the dimensions of group discourse are

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interdependent and are negotiated within the context of the group. Shown in Figure 2 below as an example of the microanalysis are kinds of textual sources based on their locations and their uses identified in the group's discussions. (The in-depth analysis of the interwoven textual, relational, and intellectual dimensions of "focused talk" are described in detail in Chapter 3.)

Each font in Figure 2 represents a kind of textual source and its use by group members as they constructed the on-going text of their own discussion. Looking at the figure, curricular texts students engaged included written texts that were read and discussed. Group members brought these texts into the discussion through processes of direct referencing or reading, ventriloquation, or paraphrasing. The varied and multiple kinds of texts located within the broader context of the Global Studies course included class discussions, videos, and various representations of the issue students studied. Group members appropriated these prior written, oral, and visual texts and used them in tool-like ways as models to create new representations of ideas they discussed. The sources of the third kind of texts group members referenced were located outside the immediate context of the group or the course. These texts were resources brought to bear on questions and ideas for which the group did not have common, shared information. These texts were appropriated and used in ways that informed other group members.

To further illustrate the weaving of the multiple texts and voices represented in Figure 2, an excerpt from one speech event analyzed in detail in Chapter 3 is given below. (See Figure 3 below.) The assigned task for the group in the excerpt was to respond to an article on ten myths of global population (Cohen, 1996), first discussing the article and then crafting a group written response to a question posed by the Global Studies teacher. In this strip of talk, group members discussed the first myth presented in the article. Illustrated in the excerpt, as students wove multiple texts together, they engaged in a process of making new

| Text Source: Curriculum
Written texts such as published texts read in Global Studies and/or the assigned task | Text Use
Brought texts into the discussion through direct reference, ventriloquation, and paraphrasing |
|---|---|
| *Text Source: Course Context*
Multiple sources within Global Studies including prior class discussions, videos, and representations | *Text Use*
Appropriate of prior written and oral texts and used as models or templates to create new representations |
| Text Source: Outside Course
Multiple other sources from outside the context including students' own prior knowledge and experience | Text Use
Appropriation of resources functioned to teach and inform others in group; making or constructing new understandings and knowledge |

Figure 2: Text Sources and Uses

understandings and knowledge. Highlighted in the excerpt are these multiple texts and their locations indicated by the differing fonts shown in Figure 2. As ideas evolved and texts were interwoven, the group began to formulate its own ideas and response, thus constructing an extension away from the multiple texts they referenced and appropriated. Highlighted by the black border is this process where students' learning occurred. Such occurrences were typical of "focused talk" and are described in greater detail in Chapter 3.

In the brief exchange shown below, as the discussion began, Shelley brought to the discussion floor the voice of Cohen (1996) the author of the article. Kate asked what "exponentially" meant and Mark, Shelley, and Steven responded as a coalition of speakers, jointly constructing a response to Kate's question. In the excerpt, Shelley appropriated a graphic representation of "exponential," recreating this representation in the discussion. In this exchange, group members engaged in talk that was deliberative and democratic as they

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Cohen (1996) "The human population grows exponentially" Thomas Steven Malthus wrote that any human population when unchecked, doubles in a certain unit of time and then keeps on doubling in the same unit of time.

Discussion Task: What do you think was correct, what was incorrect about the myths presented by Cohen?

Shelley - Um. This first one is that he's [Cohen] saying population does not grow **exponentially** He's trying to disprove **Thomas Malthus' um hypothesis** about exponential growth of human population. Do you think that's right?

Kate - What does **exponentially** mean?

Shelley - Exponentially? I'm *It means like the graph.* If you were to like
[
Mark - It means like, yeah.
[
Shelley - *graph out population over time on a thing like that. It would end up kind of going. It would kind of go like this. And like here it's like off.*
[
Steven - *Growing* exponentially *goes up*

Shelley - It kind of *goes straight up at a certain point*
[
Kate - So that's what he's saying?
[
Shelley - It *stays pretty level and then all of a sudden it goes straight up. And then it will end up leveling off.* With like **Thomas Malthus'** thing. And that's what. And that's when **population checking** goes in. Like.

Kate - Like the end of the world or something?

Shelley - No. It's just that, it means
[
Mark - Thomas Malthus.

Shelley - once there gets to be so many people on earth it, **he believes** there will be some sort of epidemic or something to start limiting growth so that people can continue living or whatever.

Shelly's drawing of exponential growth

Prior speech events -
March 21 Mr. Grant drew similar kind of graph on the board during whole class discussion; March 25 whole class event just prior to group discussion, graph depicted on video class watched

Appropriating prior knowledge: Shelley - statistics class from last semester Mark - heard/read in Global Studies about Malthus though didn't recall exactly where/when.

Mark - **Thomas Malthus** thought that like, the food would run out before *we even leveled out.*

Shelley - Mhmm. That would be a **population check** *(slight pause)* That would be **population checking** because it would be limiting the people who could live on earth.

Kate - Man would probably die when that happens.

Shelley - Mhmm. *(affirming)*

Kate - I mean really.

Shelley - So it would end up *leveling off and going down.*

Written Response to the Task Question:

As a group we feel differently on each subject he talked about.
  a. The human population does not grow exponentially. We disagree with this position. We feel that the population growth is increasing and population checking could occur as the people outgrow the food supply.

Mark - Sooo?

Shelley - So do we think that he's [Cohen] right by saying that that's not necessarily the case?

Figure 3: Excerpt March 25 Speech Event

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Cohen (1996) "The human population grows exponentially" Thomas Steven Malthus wrote that any human population when unchecked, doubles in a certain unit of time and then keeps on doubling in the same unit of time.

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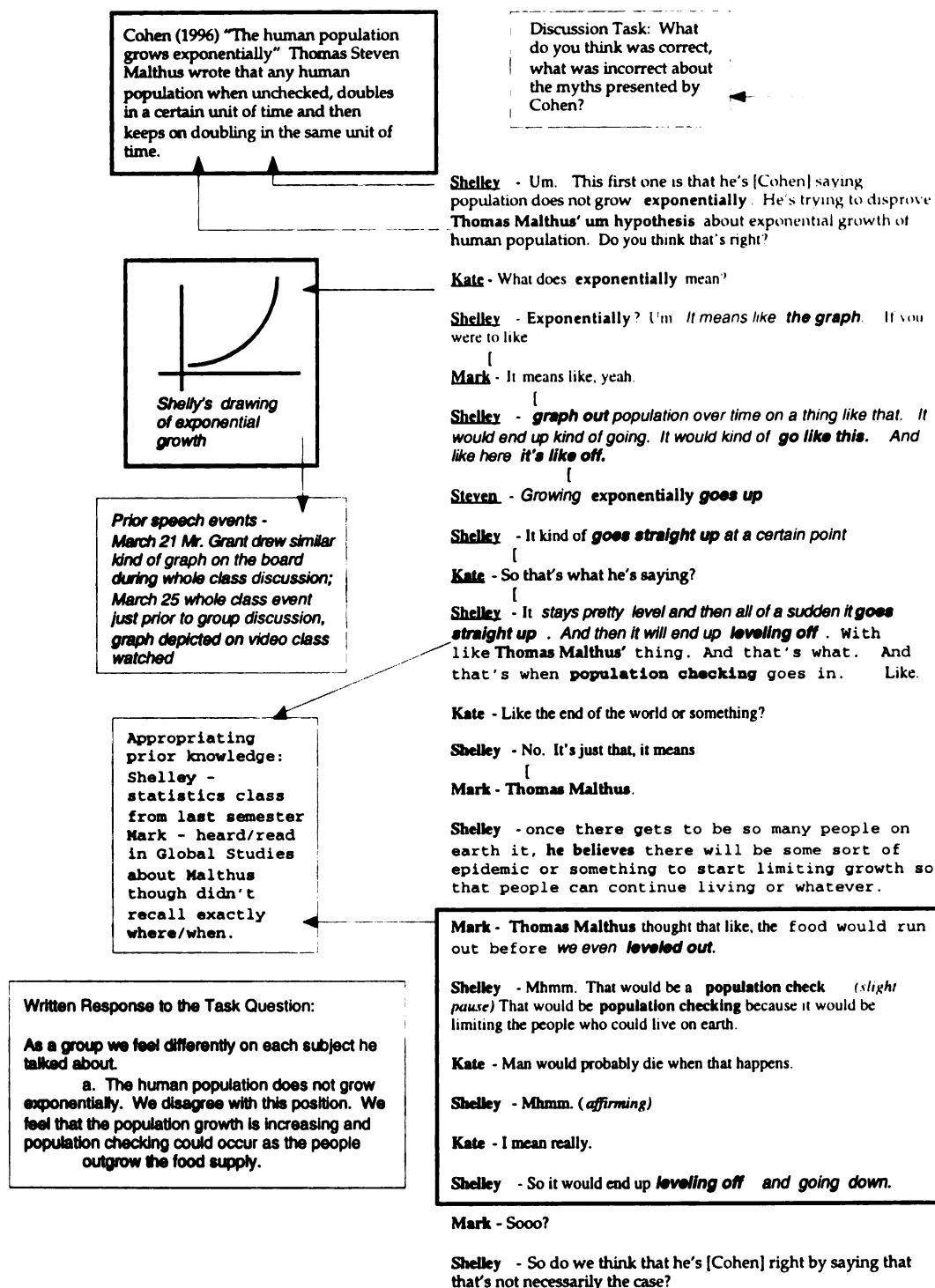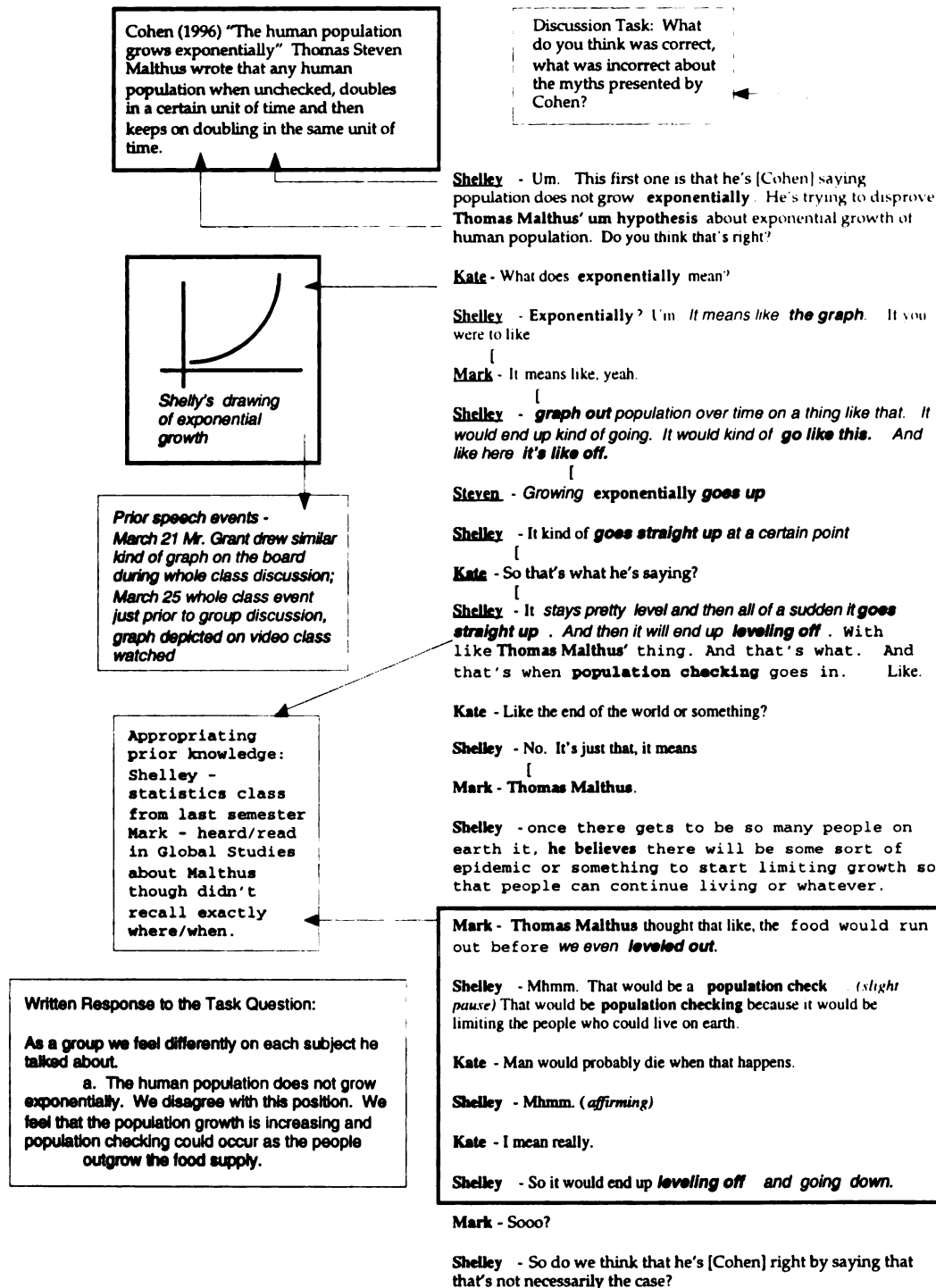
Figure 3: Excerpt March 25 Speech Event

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collaboratively engaged the assigned task. They brought the voices of Cohen (the author) and Malthus (whom Cohen cited) to the discussion floor as voices in the discussion of the issue. In so doing, they acted with autonomy from both the teacher and the expertise of the author. They weighed alternative perspectives before jointly constructing the group written response. Group members appropriated textual resources from a variety of sources, including their own prior knowledge, transforming them for their own use. The initiation of the topic and the co-construction of the explanation and response was a collaborative and cooperative effort among group members. In these and other ways described in greater detail in Chapter 3, the group engaged in democratic, deliberative discussion of the issue.

In-depth analysis of "focused talk" episodes within and across three speech events of Group B revealed the complexity of students' engaging in deliberative discussion of the issue of global population. Across and within episodes of "focused talk," group members consistently engaged in distinct intertextual discourse moves as they wove together multiple kinds of texts. These textual moves functioned as resources for the group to engage in asking questions, making assertions, and associating ideas as they made sense of the texts together. Within each episode intertextual relationships group members constructed became increasingly sophisticated and complex. The movement and flow of the discourse within each episode was greatly influenced by the structure of the explicit discussion task. The norms and group roles for democratic participation constructed by the group were sustained across speech events. The group adapted these ways of interacting to its immediate needs in order to engage in discussion of the issue that was focused and cooperative. Analysis of the "focused talk" episodes identified an intertextually discursive process of linking multiple texts, relational and intellectual, through which the group engaged in deliberative discussion of the public issue in ways that were democratic.

Findings in this study suggest that students' abilities to engage in the designed discussion task are intimately related to the emergent, socially constructed relational dimensions of discourse situated in the context of the group. (See Chapters 4 and 5 for

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further discussion of the findings and implications of the study.) Rather than emphasizing extrinsically designed rewards and roles, the design of an explicit task structure must take into account the emergent communicative group process and the learning intrinsic to discovery from enactment of that process. Viewing group discussion as an intertextually discursive process provides a theoretical framework through which the complexity of assigned tasks and emergent dynamics can be understood as textually related functions of group discourse. Thus, while this study did not include a systematic comparison of the two groups studied in order to investigate issues of, for example, gender and socioeconomic status among group members, it provides an approach which conceptualizes difference as negotiated and situated within the context of the group. This approach is similar to analyses of conversational process which do not assume essentialist views of talk, turn exchange, or power, but rather attend to the complex, contextualized, and negotiated nature of conversation and its micropolitics (e.g. Edelsky, 1981). This model can usefully be combined with views of participants' social positioning with respect to gender or socioeconomic standing in enriching rather than reductive ways that help us to see not only social reproduction, but learning and social transformation (Florio-Ruane, 1987; Davies and Harre, 1990).

This study offers educators insight into forms of discourse moves, textual relationships, and group norms that may foster or thwart learning that is both focused and cooperative. Understanding group discourse as a more complex and layered interaction can help educators design tasks which foster high involvement in and sustainment of group discussion. The analysis of "focused talk" episodes reveals a complex intertextual process through which group members construct their own voice in the discussion of the public issue. Part of the skill and dispositional development situated in learning democratic public discourse is learning to assume a civic voice in the discourse. For novices, development of civic voice must be supported through discussion tasks which take into consideration the intertextual process that includes explicitly structured and emergent dynamics of

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deliberative discussion within the context of the group. Recognizing the forms and functions of talk within a group's discussion can help educators assess a group's interaction and identify ways to support students' development of the communicative skills necessary for participation in deliberative democratic discussion.

Lastly, an interdisciplinary approach affords a rich analytic framework for identifying and describing discourse across speech events especially in relation to the negotiation of roles and norms important to students' learning both about the global issue and the nature of democratic discourse. Such an approach provides the researcher a method to analyze what goes on in a discourse event in terms of its forms and functions in relation to the construction of understanding, to identify patterns of discourse relationships, and to understand ways in which the discourse sustains important social ideologies.

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CHAPTER 1: CIVIC EDUCATION AND DEMOCRATIC DELIBERATIVE DISCUSSION

Overview

In recent years a variety of concerns regarding citizenship education have given rise to a call for revitalizing the social studies curriculum. Many argue that we, the United States, are in a state of civic crisis. Westbrook states that "American democracy is now weak and its prospects dim" evident in an "anemia of public life in the Unites States- a polity in which even such minimal practices of citizenship as voting do not engage many Americans" (1996, p. 125). Others argue the lack of political participation among American citizens is the result of a public that feels disenfranchised and disempowered to influence political decision making. What appears to be lacking is a concern for and investment in the values and social practices necessary to sustain a democratic society.

The globalization of American interests leads some educators to insist on a civic education that addresses the necessities of a global citizenry (Goodenow, 1988; Tye, 1990). Others argue an issues-centered approach to education should lead students to accept the democratic principles as the basis of competent citizenship (Carter, 1990; Evans, Newmann, & Saxe, 1996; Merryfield & White, 1996). Educators and researchers also express concern over models of public discourse conveyed in the popular media (Katula, 1991; Newmann, 1989) typified in the "talk show" genre of public interaction. The concern is that the models of public discourse students are typically exposed to consist of disputatious speech that is emotion-laden, person-centered, and often rude and divisive (Katula, 1991). Educators and scholars agree we need to provide students a model of public discourse that is reformative in nature and teaches students the skills of effective and ethical communication.

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Roche (1996) argues that creating democratic classrooms is essential to our social and educational vision of an empowered citizenry. In contrast to persistent modes of classroom interaction, where teachers do most of the talking, dispense information, and test students' learning of that information, engaging students in democratic practices are necessary if students are to learn to engage in democratic processes. Boyer (1990) states we urgently need groups of well-informed, caring individuals who bond together in the spirit of community to learn from one another and participate as citizens in the democratic process. Barber (1989), Stotsky (1991), Gutmann (1987) and numerous others argue it is essential for students to develop the abilities to participate in discussion of public issues as part of the democratic process in order to sustain a democratic society. What is called for in the social studies curriculum are methods and models of democratic discourse which engage students in the public discussion of persistent social issues.

In the following sections of this chapter, I describe what many concerned with social education advocate as the methods and means of engaging students in the public discussion of social issues in ways that are democratic. However, what constitutes the values and social practices that are "democratic" is highly debated. There is no clear definition and in fact, seems to be no one clear debate. It is easy to "get lost in the rhetorical overkill" (Goodlad, 1996, p. 112) and the politically charged "crossfire of theory and criticism" (Eller, 1997, p. 249). My purpose however, is not to attempt a resolution to the debate; much has been written in this effort by numerous others. Rather, my purpose is to briefly explore various perspectives and their implications for engaging students in democratic practices in the classroom. Drawing from across multiple disciplines, I first describe several arguments representative of the more global debate about "democracy." I outline proposals for engaging students in the public discussion of social issues and the methods and models advocated. In particular, I outline a participatory approach to democracy in the classroom which undergirds the rationale for engaging students in small group discussion, ideally fostering democratic participation in public discourse. Following

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a review of small group literature, I describe the purpose of this study, the setting and the participants, and the method of data collection and analysis.

Debated Ideas of Democracy

Individual and Community

One issue over what constitutes or what ought to constitute "democracy" in the classroom revolves around a liberal sense of individualism. The communitarian critique of liberalism is that it denies the grounding of the self in community. Pradl (1990) argues we have overemphasized the autonomy of the individual self. He equates individualism with a mind set that must be challenged and changed because it deprives students opportunities to realize other human relationships exist besides isolation and "divide-and-conquer competition" (p. 14). Individualism is seen as synonymous with egotism, competition, and self-centeredness. Yet in order to help students participate in the American democratic system, liberal concepts such as autonomy, self-determination, and self-direction seem important. Romberg (1985) argues individualism relates to students developing a sense of control over their own lives, developing an ability to act on personal needs and desires, and developing the personal freedom from social constraints that stifle one's growth.

Strike (1989) describes the liberal-communitarian debate in this way. Communitarians argue that liberals in their desire to maintain individual liberty have created a deterioration of the bonds of the individual to the community. Liberal freedom results in the self united to others only by agreement based on self-interest. The liberal insistence on the autonomy of the individual as authors of their own lives falsely remove persons from the particularity of their lives. The liberal counter-argument is that part of the freedom that comes with democracy is to have a kind of distance from the imposed roles and rules of the community in order to have self-determination and agency over one's life. Unless we can distance ourselves from the community to a degree, we can only be what others have made us and cannot critique the circumstances of our own lives.

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Bricker (1989) sees the possibilities of both for democratic education. Essentially it is an argument for individuals to govern their interactions within and by the goods of the community (e.g. generosity and solidarity). Within his conception of democracy, autonomous individuals recognize they depend on the community that provides them alternatives from which to choose. In this sense, autonomous actions are social actions. Students must be exposed to various social arrangements that teach them there are alternative views and alternative choices. The lives that individuals choose for themselves only have meaning from the alternative ways of life made available by the communities in which they live. Yet they also need to learn to disengage themselves from their inherent loyalties to societal bonds so they can determine which are worthwhile.

Bricker believes students are blind to the social nature of knowledge by the hidden curriculum. Collaboration helps illuminate knowledge through engagement in social activity that reflects this knowledge. He offers cooperative learning as an example of how the liberal and communitarian agendas can be incorporated. Autonomy is based on distinguishing oneself and the social features of one's life. This requires that students know all knowledge is based on relationships with others who also follow the community rules behind the knowledge. The notion of generosity (the motive to help someone) is a motive for cooperating and cooperative learning, and because it illuminates social knowledge, it can aid in the development of autonomy (Bricker, 1989).

Political Rights and Social Rights

A main concern and point of debate among theorists and educators is the differences in defining citizenship along the lines of political rights and social rights and their emphases on social justice, the obligations of citizens, and the principle of equality (Demaine, 1996). Kingdom (1996) states that rights discourse is primarily the official ideology of liberalism. Liberal individualism is concerned with the individual's rights of sovereignty over his or her own life. It is a perspective which views the individual as an autonomous and responsible moral agent with no required commitment to the community except to respect

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the autonomy of others. It also includes individuals working together to maintain the social systems within which individuals can strive for the "good life" however they define it (Gilbert, 1996).

The traditional approach to citizenship or democratic education has largely been critiqued as overemphasizing learning to defend one's rights rather than transforming social, political, and economic circumstances of individuals and groups. Feminist scholars and educators have been critical of the traditional liberal approach on the grounds that the focus on the rights of the individual is divisive and an obstacle to democratic participation, especially for women (Belenky, Clinchy, & Goldberger, Tarule 1986; Kingdom, 1996). Gilligan argues for an "ethic of care" as an alternative to an "ethic of justice." The activity of "care" links moral and civic development to understanding relationships, just as a conception of justice links civic development to understanding rights and rules. Within an ethic of care, problems of social equality, morality, and justice arise from conflicts of responsibility rather than competing rights among individuals. Resolution of these problems then requires a way of thinking that is contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract (Gilligan, 1982).

The criticism of the formal and abstract approach to addressing social issues is its entrenchment in ways of thinking based on assumptions of absolutism and autonomy which favor reasoning and argument. Feminists argue the traditional approach neglects qualities such as emotion and intuition as ways of knowing that are usually linked to women (Belenky, et al., 1986; Thayer-Bacon, 1998) and therefore, disenfranchises women from full participation in the democratic process. Franzosa (1988) argues for a gender-based model of citizenship that by taking women and gender seriously, acknowledges the invisibility of women's disenfranchisement and requires reconceptualizing civic education.

Others offer critiques of the feminist approach, arguing it over-simplifies the issue of democracy to men and women being treated equally or unequally. A feminist approach

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which views discourse and democracy as gendered fails to acknowledge non-gendered issues such as social class and race. Kingdom (1996) proposes giving greater emphasis to a "politics of difference" which acknowledges cultural-political differences among citizens and their implications for civic participation. According to this argument, conventional approaches to civic education seek a collective society rooted in middle-class values and behaviors that are class biased. Gordon argues we need a model of civic education that is emancipatory and holds the promise of a more responsive, socially active citizenry working to promote justice and equity. Such an emancipatory approach is "counterindoctrination against the blind acceptance of the concepts of the dominant culture... [and] a foundation on which to build models for democratic civic participation" (Gordon, 1988, p. 117).

Paradoxical Nature of Democracy

Kingdom (1996) expresses a concern for approaches to civic education which are incompatible with the development of democratic political institutions, as are some feminist and cultural approaches, because they lead to political paralysis. In having no commitment to a common, agreed upon set of principles on which to base public discussion, the political process is paralyzed. A reworking of rights discourse (which embody principles of justice, equality, and autonomy) to include and promote social rights (which embody principles of well-being, community, and care) provides the basis for a more democratic civic education. From Kingdom's (1996) perspective, social rights and civic rights should be incorporated to advance equality and social justice which are inseparable from the political values of active participation, civic duty, and social responsibility.

Parker (1996) advocates an approach toward democracy and democratic education that aims toward a participatory, creative, multicultural democracy. Within this approach the identities of both individuals and groups are viewed as socially constructed and temporarily located historically, psychologically, and socially. The challenge of a participatory democracy is to recognize individual and group identities without "etching them in primordial stone, and to unite them horizontally in a democratic moral discourse

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that is capable of embracing more than mere 'rights talk'" (Parker, 1996, p. 194). Parker (1996) holds that liberal democracy's basic principles of liberty, dignity, equality, and sovereignty need not be abandoned, but need to be extended and deepened to address the needs of a diverse society. In a similar vein, Glendon (1991) argues for a refinement of rights discourse through invoking and re-inventing the tradition of political rights that are consonant with values of justice, welfare, and dignity that are our democratic heritage. She further argues these values are persistent elements of the everyday experiences of citizens in their homes and communities. Following Dewey (1916), she asserts that problems of civic life are not found in abstract dichotomies of individual versus society, of public versus private life, or of citizen versus person, but rather in the everyday lives of people in which these concepts are experienced.

Barber (1989) describes democratic discourse as having a deeply paradoxical nature. While scholars and educators debate over the conceptions of citizenship and civic education, it is the democratic process of open deliberation that makes the debate possible. This paradoxical nature is also evident in how we conceive the relationships among individual rights and obligations to the community. For example, Callan explains that to be just is necessarily to care about others as partners in the enterprise of creating justice which is impossible without a reciprocal engagement with others. It is a mistake to dichotomize values such as care and justice. Justice is grounded in a certain kind of care and care is shaped by a sense of justice (Callan, 1997). Liberal individualism is not a pure form, but part of a complex web of democratic values and principles that goes beyond individual autonomy to include group autonomy and a collective commitment to the institutions we create through which we collaboratively make individual freedoms possible (Gilbert, 1996).

Kerr (1996) suggests civic engagement requires a dialogic sense of ourselves and that political equality results from our relationships of reciprocity, cooperation, trust, tolerance, and solidarity which occur in a civic society. Lacking such dialogue, we risk,

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according to Kerr (1996), overlooking the potential of a shared democratic heritage, the very thing that can bind us together as we pursue the mutual respect, trust, and understanding needed to recreate a civic society out of a sociopolitical clash of interest groups. Using environmentalism as an example, Gilbert suggests that the rights of a liberal individualism, the ethos of community, and a shared sense of common destiny can be interwoven into a concept of citizenship appropriate for a complex, contemporary society (1996, p. 62).

Goodlad (1984) states that lower level intellectual processes pervade the social studies and notes there generally is a place on report cards for "citizenship," but it is viewed as something one possesses to some degree rather than something one cultivates. Citizenship, however, is not only a status, but an activity or practice (Dewey, 1916; Kingdom, 1996). Democratic society depends on an interconnectedness among individuals, groups, and society. For Dewey democracy is an interactive, interrelational process in which the individual affects and is affected by the community. It is a reciprocal relationship of "associated living and conjoint communication" (Dewey, 1916, p. 110). Political democracy involves an allegiance to certain "truths" such as equality, justice, and liberty that need to be more shared and sustained across society. Political democracy, however, does not preclude social democracy which allows individuals and groups seeking to define their identities for themselves rather than principles of political democracy defining it for them (Goodlad, 1996).

Participatory Approaches

Wood (1988) acknowledges that the range of the scholarly discussion has pointed out the potentially reproductive nature of conventional approaches to civic education. Accordingly, schools prepare students to accept their place in a stratified social order. However, he challenges the reproductive arguments and argues schools can be places in which conventional practices of democracy can be challenged. Along with Giroux (1983), Wood sees critical thinking as a basis of informed judgment and the development of social

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improvement. Civic education should involve students developing critical thinking and civic courage (acting democratically in an undemocratic society) in order to create social change. Wood outlines what he sees as two major conceptualizations of democracy argued in the literature: a participatory approach and a protectionist approach. The former as an approach to democratic education has the potential to provide students the skills, knowledge, and opportunities to practice democratic participation. The latter, the protectionist approach, views civic participation of a minority elite as crucial and the nonparticipation of ordinary citizens as necessary to maintain social stability. Within this conception of democracy, knowledge is reified and agency is removed from the individual. Social issues are defined as technical problems, therefore, creative thought and critical inquiry are unnecessary. Democracy as an activity is limited to a few public spheres and left to authorities. Civic education involves students learning how the political machinery of government works and how to choose the elite leaders wisely (Wood, 1988).

A participatory approach in contrast, embraces broad participation of all citizens working collaboratively to create political efficacy and a sense of civic belonging in order to extend and enhance civic participation (Barber, 1984; Wood, 1988). Conventional theories of democracy, such as proceduralism and constitutionalism, neglect the need for on-going discussion in political life (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). A participatory approach to democracy involves citizens as participants in the public discussion of social issues that influence their lives. It is a participatory approach to democracy Wood (1988), Barber (1984), and others advocate as the approach we adopt toward civic education. Participatory democracy is not confined to constitutional processes, but occurs in any setting where citizens come together to reach collective decisions about public issues. Gutmann and Thompson (1996) describe a model of participatory or deliberative democracy grounded in three principles: reciprocity, publicity, and accountability that regulate liberty and opportunity.

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Reciprocity is a form of mutuality and asks us to appeal to reasons that are shared or could become shared. Reciprocity also asks that our claims in political argument be consistent with reliable methods of inquiry, acknowledging that these methods are imperfect. However, neither relativism nor uncertainty are reasons for abandoning reliable methods of inquiry. Using reliable inquiry methods demonstrates a commitment to strive for deliberative agreement. The dialectic of reciprocity and inquiry, or in Elbow's (1986) terms "believing" and "doubting," reflects not only the complex nature of social issues, but the nature of the democratic contexts in which they are discussed. Not only public officials, but all citizens are accountable to others when they act in a public capacity. Taken together, these principles undergird a process that seeks deliberation among citizens on social issues (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996).

For Goodlad (1996), the essence of democracy is a "multiplicity of occupations and preoccupations existing side-by-side with a multiplicity of horizontal relationships among them" (p. 105). How we manage and maintain a vision of democracy within a complex, diverse world is to talk. Talk requires a willingness and commitment on the part of individuals and groups to engage in the conversation (Goodlad, 1996). According to Gutmann (1990), the central task of civic or democratic education is not necessarily the development of political knowledge, cultural literacy, or political efficacy, but is the increase in students' willingness and ability to reason and argue about politics in ways that are distinctively democratic. Civic or democratic education then provides students support in learning to participate in the public discussion of social issues. Students need to learn how to access knowledge, skills, information, and social relationships and have the opportunities to practice participatory citizenship. A society which provides for participation among all its citizens and flexibility in recreating its institutions through the interaction of its citizens is democratic. Such a society must provide an education that incorporates social relationships with the intellectual habits of mind that secure social change (Dewey, 1916).

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Discussion and Democracy in the Classroom

The Importance of Student Discussion

Stotsky (1991) states that although development of civic character can be nurtured in other settings, for most young Americans it is most directly cultivated in school. Cultivating civic character has meant presenting concepts and principles of the democratic process without students actively engaging in either. In contrast, Parker (1989) argues rich and sustained conversation about public problems is essential in social studies classrooms. According to Barber, a central task of citizens in a democracy is deliberation. Students need to learn how to engage in public talk with others about common issues. Public talk is characterized by creativity, variety, openness, flexibility, inventiveness, eloquence, empathy, and affective expression (Barber, 1989). A revitalized curriculum views this kind of talk as essential and seeks to provide situations in classrooms that allow students to actively engage in it, thus engaging them in the democratic process (Chandler von Dras, 1993; Roche, 1996). Public talk of this nature is contextualized in the particular learning activities and situations in which students are engaged.

Dudley-Marling and Searle (1991) report that effective teachers consciously immerse their students in different kinds of language settings, challenging them to tap their linguistic resources. Immersing students in a range of activities requires different kinds of oral, written and social skills in the service of different communicative purposes and functions. Participation in a range of activities expands students' learning of a broad and rich repertoire of skills. Newmann argues students should produce discourse in their own unique ways, incorporating words, concepts and other resources used by others into coherent patterns of communication. Such discussion should be produced in response to novel, contextualized problems that challenge students to use their developing knowledge in new ways (Newmann, 1988). Discussion in the classroom should involve students producing language that goes beyond simple given information to producing original summary, interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of social issues (Newmann, 1989).

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Results of the United Kingdom's National Oracy Project indicate that students who engage in talk in their learning are more likely to explore beyond facts and into situations, causes, and consequences of the issues or problems discussed (Johnson, Hutton, & Yard, 1992). Results of the project studies show students develop richer repertoires of learning strategies and greater insight into the relationships among information presented them. They develop greater understanding of the possibilities of multiple solutions to problems or questions.

Providing students opportunities to participate in various discourse settings through which the major concerns of society are publicly discussed, and to facilitate the mastery of related communication skills, is essential for their full participation in adult, civic life (Barnes, 1993). Discussion promotes critical thinking and problem solving vital to the preservation of democratic values such as liberty and public good (Newmann, 1988) and democratic practices such as public deliberation. Guyton found critical thinking skills positively influenced students' development of feelings of political efficacy and personal control. These feelings have positive effects on political participation. He concludes that thinking skills and social processes are as important to students' development of political participation as knowledge of the political system. He suggests teachers involve students in a variety of social and language practices (Guyton, 1988).

Bridges (1988) states that discourse is pedagogy. Pedagogy of this sort is concerned with how classrooms are organized so that students not only learn the subject matter, but are socialized into a culture of discussion, a virtue Bridges identifies with the vitality and survival of a democratic society. Parker (1996) views public talk among students not only as an instructional method, but as subject matter itself and as a form of democratic action. Public talk is an essential part of the curriculum because: a) talk facilitates students learning content; b) talk reinforces the development of social perspectives fundamental to democratic citizenship; c) intelligent conversation promotes reflection critical to the preservation of democratic ideals; and d) when thoughtfully engaged in conversation about public issues, students build knowledge and higher order

thinking skills (Harris, 1996). Student talk is not simply a conduit through which knowledge is passed. It is in and through talk that understandings and knowledge are constructed by participants in conversation and are shaped by the social contexts of the interactions. Talk is an integral part of how understanding is collaboratively accomplished (Maybin, 1994; Wells, 1992).

Deliberative Discussion

In the sense that Gee (1990) defines discourse, public discourse is more than just talk about an issue. It is a kind of "identity kit" (p. 142) which is an association with a particular group or culture that has identifiable ways of speaking, writing, thinking, valuing, and acting. In this sense, public discourse is the discourse of democratic, participatory citizenship. The discourse of a democratic civic culture consists of citizens participating in public discussion around issues that influence their lives. Barnes reminds us that education is an arbitrary selection of sanctioned conventions and traditions. At its best, it embodies useful ways of communicating knowledge, generating new knowledge, and creating new ways of thinking about and acting in the world (Barnes, 1982). Imbuing students with the abilities to participate in and identify with the civic culture, grounded in the ideals of democracy, is the central purpose of civic education. Its promise is through discussion, people can construct a continuity of experience which is greater than their individual experiences, achieving a new level of understanding beyond that which any held before (Edwards & Mercer, 1987).

The development of democratic character (Gutmann, 1990) is the development of abilities to participate in public discourse. Students need to develop the capacities to think logically, argue coherently and fairly, and consider relevant alternatives before making judgments (Gutmann, 1990; Rossi, 1995; Onosko, 1996). These abilities include exploring cause-effect relationships, testing and exploring assertions, finding and weighing evidence, considering alternative explanations and evaluating them (Barnes, 1990). Merryfield and White (1996) include in-depth study, questioning and reflection, with an

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eye toward reasoned and independent decision-making. Participation in public discourse requires the development of the abilities to "assemble all the arguments that seem to have some value, without suppressing any, and then after weighing the pros and cons, decide on what, to the best of knowledge and belief, appears to be the most satisfactory solution" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, p. 41). Onosko (1996) found that when students are exposed to and examine a variety of perspectives on an issue, they begin to construct their own positions. Students are capable of analyzing an issue at the same time they develop knowledge of it (Newmann, 1988; Onosko, 1996).

Developing the ability to recognize, examine, evaluate, and appreciate multiple perspectives (Merryfield & White, 1996), learning to appreciate the complexities of the argument, and being comfortable with the uncertainty of outcomes (Evans, et al., 1996) are skills of deliberation. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971) view deliberation as a kind of reasoning that most often happens in discussion with others, enabling a person to see things differently and more clearly. In assessing and analyzing ideas and arguments addressed to others, we can best understand our own deliberation. Edwards and Westgate suggest that in hearing ourselves say what we think, however tentative, we can monitor our ideas, assess their accuracy and adequacy, and modify them when necessary. Without multiple experiences in discussion with others, we would be denied access to that "inner speech" through which we organize and come to understand our own thinking (Edwards & Westgate, 1994). Deliberation involves the rhetorical practices of practical reasoning (Polkinghorne, 1983) and necessarily involves dialogue with others.

The belief is that, whatever the problem, the capacity for intellectual autonomy is developed through the exercise of democratic participation in social situations. Young (1989) puts it this way:

A capacity for recognizing the logical contradictions, conceptual confusions, statements unsupported by evidence and so on, however valuable, does not add up to a capacity for intellectual autonomy. Whatever the problem with "capacity" as a

concept, it is clear that the idea of a capacity for autonomy is vacuous unless it is a capacity for exercise in the form of participation in forming validity judgments in actual social situations of unequal power and authority.... The former may be fully engaged in silent recognition but the latter only in participation (p. 121).

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971) present practical reasoning as the study and practice of the uses of discussion to influence people's thinking, valuing and acting. Ede (1991) states that practical reasoning, unlike logic, emphasizes the intention, context, meaning, and response of an argument. Critical discussion which engages participants in the discussion of an issue, is the most fundamental context in which reasoning can be engaged and analyzed (Bloome & Bailey, 1992). Most critical discussion within public discourse takes place in the context of argument where participants express points of view on an issue or attempt to influence others with differing points of view (Katula, 1991). Thus, understanding the nature of public talk requires understanding something about the nature of argument, as well as the context of public issues under discussion.

Intertextual Nature of Public Discourse

Carter (1990) argues that the multidimensional quality of social issues requires consideration of the perspectives of various stakeholders concerned with the issue and the interrelationship of all our futures. The metaphor of intertextuality is a useful idea to characterize the complex and multidimensional nature of public issues and public discourse. Intertextuality, simply defined, is the relationship between two or more texts (Bloome & Bailey, 1992). Texts can include for example, written texts in the media, the on-going discussion of a group, or the framework of curriculum. Bloome and Bailey view "intertextuality" as understanding relationships between and among texts, between and among events, and between events and cultural ideology. It is a key concept and beginning point for understanding education as the development of communicative competencies (Bloome and Bailey, 1992). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971) suggest the very

nature of deliberative discourse is opposed to necessity, self-evidence, or relativistic truths. A public issue is the relationship among different perspectives held and arguments presented concerning the social event or situation. There is no issue if the answers or solutions are self-evident.

Characteristic then of public discourse are the multiple voices (Bakhtin, 1986) and multiple perspectives which constitute the issue. The text of a discussion is a fabric in which each new use is intertwined with previous discussions, experiences, and knowledge. In this sense, participants in a discussion are joined to other past discussions, as well as the on-going discussion in which they participate (Burbules, 1993). Different perspectives which constitute an issue are perspectives only in relationship to one another and in this sense, are intertextual. In the case of public discourse, the multiple voices, the multiple perspectives held, the arguments presented, and the social-historical context of the issue under discussion constitute the public issue.

Barnes (1993) refers to a multiplicity of printed text that typify the "language of secondary education" (p. 57), suggesting that these media represent the discourse in which the major issues of our society are publicly discussed. From a sociolinguistic perspective, intertextual links are made among participants as they interact around these texts which focus the discussion (Hartman, 1995). As students discuss they link various texts in order to examine and construct ideas and engage in deliberation around the issue studied. In exploring and constructing multiple positions on public issues, students need access to a variety of resources and tools. They need continual practice in using and extending a variety of discussion skills to weave thoughts and ideas together to construct their understanding of the issue. An environment which fosters students expressing doubt, being comfortable with uncertainty, and the engaging in the arduous intellectual work of deliberation is necessary (Evans, et al., 1996).

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The Social Nature of Deliberative Discourse

·Katula (1991) argues we need to pay attention to how we talk, as well as what we talk about. If the development of democratic character is the aim of democratic education, then students need to learn how to articulate their views to others. Students must learn to not simply express themselves, but to express themselves appropriately in different settings (Tobin, 1995). Tobin (1995) holds that our practices of self-expression in the classroom are often confused and misunderstood. Typically we misrepresent self-expression as self-oriented telling of one's ideas and feelings with little concern for communicating those thoughts to others or hearing their points of view. Effective discussion depends on the establishment and maintenance of positive relationships among participants. It is a willingness or commitment to enter into a discussion with others.

Willingness to participate is more than seeking to express one's own ideas or getting others to conform to one's own perspective. Based on Habermas' theory of communicative action (Young, 1989), engaging in deliberative discussion requires a commitment among participants to coordinate their views through a negotiated set of norms and rules for participating. Negotiation in this sense is not an act of compromise, but rather an act of creating and recreating ways of interacting that are contextualized. Success in communicating depends on the competence of the participants in finding and using a common ground to communicate. Deliberative discussion includes exercising the ability to explore, critique, or construct arguments or claims, and equally important, the capacity to enter into the discussion. Deliberation moves the participant's thinking beyond simply acknowledging others have viewpoints. It involves identifying and understanding those other viewpoints, their premises, and the consequences of holding a certain perspective. Participants in the discussion must be willing to modify their thinking in response to challenges and in response to consideration of alternative viewpoints. It is through the deliberative process that one enters into the public discussion. Deliberative discussion is most productive when the needs and interests of the participants are balanced by the

commitment to the negotiated rules and norms that make claims and responses intelligible to one another (Young, 1989).

Dialogue as a process of communication, is associated with values of involvement, respect, and concern for partners in a discussion (Burbules, 1993). Trusting relationships are framed by the contexts in which participants in discussion are asked to relate, and where trusting relationships occur, exploration and learning are possible (McDermott, 1982). Values of trust, involvement, and concern are democratic, marked by an open-mindedness about considering others' perspectives. Dialogue is a sign of competence expressed in the experience of connection which is the feeling of understanding others and of being understood (Tobin, 1995). It is a mistake as Tobin suggests, to assume that willingness to express one's self and to understand others is inherent or automatic. Commitment is learned and negotiated through interacting with others. Willingness to participate does not necessarily precede discussion, but evolves and emerges within the discussion as participants develop norms and rules for interacting (Cragan & Wright, 1991).

Developing the abilities to participate in discourse draws participants into a communicative relationship (Tannen, 1989). Willingness is the commitment to participate within the norms and rules for interacting that emerge. It is also remaining committed to the discussion over time, sustained through appropriate use of discourse etiquette and involvement strategies. Habermas (Young, 1989) points out that the rules and standards (the formalized discourse) must be situated within the communicative relation. The situation grounds our norms and standards in the communicative process. Burbules (1993) states that within a discussion, rules that are plausible at a conceptual level must also be flexible to tolerate a range of ways of fulfilling them. "Rules indicate a general direction, how we pursue that direction is open to a diversity of approaches" (p. 79). Luft (1984) points out groups have a need to set goals and develop norms for interacting, finding their

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own means of communicating. Within the discourse of the group, unique and emergent patterns of interacting evolve.

Burbules (1993) relates dialogue with our capacities for deliberation. "Dialogue is also related to our capacity for thought, especially for our ability to solve problems, to think sensibly toward conclusions, to weigh competing considerations, and to choose reasonable courses of action" (p. 11). A Vygotskian conception of learning holds that students learn first in interaction with others, and secondly, internalize their learning. All higher levels of learning originate as actual relations among people (Bayer, 1990). In a sense, one cannot deliberate alone, absent of other perspectives or of context. The development of democratic character necessitates participation within a community that supports and supplements such development. Chandler von Dras (1993) argues that students cannot develop the abilities to participate in democratic discourse if the classrooms they interact in are not democratic. In democratic classrooms, students have the opportunities to develop democratic character and its related discourse practices. As students interact with one another, they share ideas and questions, explore new theories, and engage in active learning. Such interaction provides multiple perspectives from which to learn (Chandler von Dras, 1993), vital to students' abilities to deliberate.

Democratic classrooms foster a sense of community in which the conversational floor (Edelsky, 1981) is open for student talk, where students can speak and be listened to and have a choice in making decisions. To engage in public discourse, "an effective community must be realized and an agreement, in principle, of the formation of this community must be made in order to debate or discuss the specific issue at hand" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, p. 14). This formation requires students' willingness to participate as community or group members and their application of the skills of deliberation to the discourse of the group. Brown and Campione (1990) found that the democratic classroom setting forces students to engage in reasoning activities overtly so that many models of thinking emerge. In such an environment, students are apprentice

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learners of one another. The teacher is no longer the sole authority of learning (Bayer, 1990). In democratic classrooms, authority is shared in that democratic participation includes a commitment to active involvement such that any participant is able to raise topics, pose questions, challenge perspectives, and be a full partner in the discussion (Burbules, 1993). Participants in a democratic discussion must perceive authority as fluid. This perspective does not deny authority or expertise, but opens it to questioning. Viewing authority as fluid, and the roles of authority as flexible, are part of the commitment to democratic participation. Without this fluidity students' abilities to pose questions, explore ideas, challenge perspectives, and weigh evidence (essentially, their abilities to deliberate) are impeded.

Small Group Discussion as a Setting for Deliberative Discussion
Rationale for Small Group Discussion

It is evident, according to Brandhorst (1990) that in our complex and diverse contemporary society, public issues can only be addressed through collective, cooperative action. Research on moral reasoning supports students engaging in discussion of public issues, particularly in contexts which move away from teacher-centered learning (Brandhorst, 1990). Small group discussion can foster and promote the values of cooperation and the benefits of yielding personal immediate interests to group interests. Gross and Dynneson (1991) state democratic education must involve students in a level of social awareness related to a wide range of social issues. Students need to develop the necessary language skills for participation in public affairs in order to contribute to the welfare of the community. Educators should provide opportunities for students to share and contribute to the goals of a group because soci-political actions in a democratic society are primarily group actions (Gross & Dynneson, 1991).

Preskill (1997) defines group discussion as the sharing of views and participants engaging in mutual and reciprocal critique in order to construct greater understanding about a topic or issue. Group discussion can result in enhanced self-knowledge and foster

appreciation of diversity that emerges when people explore viewpoints openly. Discussion is an important way for people to become affiliated with each other and develop the skills and dispositions that make democratic participation possible (Preskill, 1997). Bormann (1975) outlines several important assumptions we hold about the power and potential of small group discussion and its implications for democratic education. Discussion is closely related to democratic society. The participant in public discussion has the right and the obligation, in a democratic society, to make up his or her own mind concerning an issue without being coerced, mislead, or manipulated. This implies participants must have the abilities to acquire and process information in ways that support sound decision-making. There is an implied ethical standard that a citizen ought to make a decision for himself or herself concerning an issue, but with the understanding of its implications for him or her as an individual and for the community. Lastly, there is an implied faith in reason and communication.

Gastil (1993) offers a theory of democracy in small group discussion that is consistent with a participatory approach to democracy discussed earlier. We most often use the word "democracy" in terms of large scale social and political systems. Little attention has been given, according to Gastil, to the relationship of the dynamics of the group process and issues related to democracy such as equal opportunity, power, or inclusiveness. These democratic elements of discussion are manifest in group talk. Group deliberation is democratic when group members have equal and adequate opportunities to speak. In our efforts to revitalize conventional understandings of democracy, the focus is often on equality. This focus can result in minimizing the deliberative process in which ideas and preferences among participants are not always fully developed. Through the collective discussion process group members' ideas and preferences are informed and formed (Fishkin, 1991). For Gastil, equal opportunity is not necessarily that every group member is able to speak at every moment. In real conversations, different group members speak more than others. The important idea concerning equal opportunity is that over time

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and across different topics of discussion, all participants have equal opportunity to speak and be listened to. It also means that participants have opportunity to listen and contemplate what they have heard. Both require cooperation and agreed upon ways of participating among group members. Gastil (1993) argues we need to recognize the dynamic quality of the discussion process and that deliberation skills and democratic values we espouse emerge through participation over time.

Also central to Gastil's (1993) theory of group democracy are the concepts of power, inclusion, and congeniality. Power in group discussion is a capacity of group members to influence the discussion. It does not necessarily imply certain group members dominate while others are subordinate or compliant. Rather, power in group discussion can signify a collective capacity of sharing influence in the discussion. Silence can be valued because it allows for contemplation and reflection. However shared power alone is not a sufficient criteria of democratic group discussion. Inclusiveness is based on the idea that those affected by the outcomes of discussion ought to have a voice within it. A dilemma of inclusiveness is the requirement of the participants' presence. In the absence of a group member the others proceed thus, inclusiveness occurs in degrees. However small group discussion in the classroom has greater potential for inclusiveness of students than other discussion arrangements. This is particularly the case when compared to teacher-led discussion in which the teacher controls who participates. Lastly, other important dynamics of group discussion such as mutuality, empathy, praise, and humor are what Gastil (1993) calls "congeniality." Congeniality is a necessary criteria of democratic discussion because it encompasses group members' abilities to identify with others. It is a necessary ingredient to healthy group relationships and is necessary for open and constructive deliberation that involves listening critically, exploring ideas, and challenging ideas (Gastil, 1993).

Many educators embrace cooperative learning as a method for structuring group discussion. The belief is through interacting in cooperatively structured groups, students

will learn and commit to the civic virtues we desire because they come to perceive their personal welfare as intimately related to the welfare of others (VanSickle, 1990). One underlying assumption of cooperative learning is that the community or group ought to take precedent as the valued social unit. Kagan (1985) believes we need only look at the modern socialization void and its negative social consequences to see the need to incorporate cooperative learning methods in classrooms. A goal of cooperative learning is to help students in their development of cooperative social behavior, social responsibility, altruism, and acceptance of diversity (Johnson, Johnson, Holubec, & Roy, 1984). Unless we consciously choose to promote cooperative structures, "prosocial development amounts to a *de facto* decision to institute a socialization program that fosters competitive and individualistic antisocial and asocial development" (Kagan, 1985, p. 366). Students must come to value what the community and necessary social interactions mean and do for them (Stahl & VanSickle, 1992). The assumption is students who engage in cooperative learning groups develop social and civic commitment in their groups and translate that commitment to other communities in which they live.

In the real world of group discussion, no set of criteria for what constitutes democracy is complete. To the extent we perceive the democratic process as a worthwhile endeavor, criteria such as that described above are a useful beginning to students' understanding and learning to engage in the process (Dahl, 1989). The foundation of democracy is a kind of faith in the abilities of citizens and in the power of pooled and cooperative experience. It is not a belief that these things are complete, but that given the opportunity will grow and generate knowledge and relationships to guide our collective actions (Dewey, 1916). A major task for educators is to find or create the spaces which permit students to experience a democratic sense of power to act with autonomy and authority over their own lives and to engage in generous, nondeferential relationships with others (Giarelli, 1988).

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The struggles for democracy in the greater spheres of social life are incomplete in themselves. While classrooms have all the elements of a social community (Gross and Dynneson, 1991), we need to be cautious in oversimplifying the dynamic and generative nature of group discussion. We should not assume that issues of democracy that appear in the greater social spheres are simply reproduced or reimplicated in small groups. That is not to suggest we ignore the issues of social life students bring to their interactions. Rather it is to view small group discussion as a place to locate democratic practices of social life that have the potential to be constructive and generative. Though we cannot overgeneralize the positive outcomes, group discussion provides a necessary starting point for civic education without which the larger tasks of revitalizing and sustaining a democratic society would be impossible (Giarelli, 1988).

Cooperative Learning and Group Discussion

Research concerned with democracy in the classroom has largely focused on whole class discussion and the interaction between teachers and students. In many cases, these class discussions are really recitations in which the teacher controls turn taking, students are asked questions, their responses are limited (Kletzien & Baloche, 1994), and subject to the teacher's evaluation (Mehan, 1979). Small group discussion, however, has the potential to engage students in discovering and using their capacities for analytical thinking and invites students to use their own language in discussion with others (Corson, 1988). Knoeller (1994) found in student-led discussions, students renegotiate authority which allows them to effectively and independently engage each other's ideas and ideas in the texts they read. In contrast to whole class or teacher-led discussion, small group discussion is open to students exchanging ideas and opinions directly with each other rather than through or to the teacher (Alvermann, Dillon, & O'Brien, 1987). In renegotiating authority within the group, group members assume authority to conduct their own discussion, thus creating autonomy from the teacher. Close (1992) found students participation in small group discussion leads to increased confidence in their thinking and

ideas and provides a setting in which they work out ideas and questions independent of the teacher.

Hillocks (1986) concludes, however, small groups are more effective when teachers structure activities than when students are allowed control over the agenda for their interactions. The concern is that problems within the group's interaction can occur that will interfere and discourage students' participation. To minimize these problems, cooperative learning researchers and educators recommend carefully structuring the group and the task (Cohen, 1986; Slavin, 1995). An underlying assumption is that structuring the group activity will promote democratic participation among group members. This is predicated on the belief that structuring the interaction facilitates the progressive development of communicative competencies of students. A second assumption is that participation in group discussion facilitates the development of higher order thinking skills and communicative abilities necessary for independent, reasoned decision making and problem solving.

Across various models of cooperative learning, five overarching principles seem to be consistent. Roles such as leadership are to be distributed among group members through structuring group tasks and interaction. This is to ensure equal and adequate participation among all group members. Group composition needs to be heterogeneous to promote diversity of ideas and opinions expressed in group conversations. Related to promoting diversity of ideas is the notion of tolerance and acceptance of other's ideas in order to develop perspective taking. Groups develop positive interdependence among members through engaging tasks structured to promote interdependence. The teaching of and acquisition of social skills related to small group interaction is essential. The last principle, that of group autonomy, is the degree to which the teacher acts as facilitator for the group. The underlying idea is that group members depend on each other and not the teacher for problem-solving and decision-making (Cohen, 1986; Johnson, et al., 1984; Slavin, 1995).

In cooperative learning structures, an individual's efforts to achieve his or her interests or goals contribute to others' achieving their interests or goals. Studies of cooperative goal structures show greater positive effects on students' academic achievement and social development than either competitive or individualistic structures (Johnson & Johnson, 1992). Interaction among students engaged in appropriate tasks increases their learning of critical concepts and values. Students engaged in structured group activities act as guides and resources for each other's learning. Cognitive theories which ground cooperative learning methods are based on the idea that cognitive restructuring or elaboration must occur for concepts to be learned. Explaining the concepts to another is an effective means of elaboration. Cooperative group activities provide students the opportunity to explain concepts to others, thereby, learning far better than they could alone (Slavin, 1995).

Research on cooperative learning groups substantiates various positive effects in relation to student achievement, intergroup relations, attitudes toward others (e.g. special education students, students of different ethnic groups), and students' self-esteem. Based on his meta-analysis of ninety studies, Slavin (1995) concludes that carefully structuring group interaction can be effective in producing higher academic outcomes. Various studies show cooperative learning positively influences intergroup relations of ethnically diverse groupings (Cohen & Sharan, 1980; Sharan, Russells, Hertz-Laraowitz, Bejanrano, Raviv, & Sharan, 1984). Johnson and Johnson (1992) in reviewing their own work conclude cooperative learning results in students' higher perceptions of self-esteem than in competitive or individualistic situations. These findings suggest cooperative learning promotes desired qualities that help students develop democratic practices and values such as cooperation, commitment to others, and tolerance and acceptance of others and their ideas.

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Dynamics and Processes of Group Discussion

Whereas cooperative learning research informs our understanding of the effects of group discussion on academic achievement and social outcomes, other researchers interested in group interaction have focused on group dynamics and group processes. Kutnick (1994) notes that the majority of American studies of cooperative groups test specific hypotheses and take experimental approaches to study groups. Educational ethnographers in the United States and the United Kingdom are adopting observational and ethnographic approaches to study group interaction. Small group communication scholars most often adopt experimental approaches, but their research typically focuses on group processes. Taken together, these latter approaches inform our understanding of small group discussion processes and dynamics.

When engaging each other in discussion, group participants socially construct a context for discussion (Hartman, 1995). Context is the situation or space of the discussion event as the participants find it and it is the roles and norms for participating in the event group members create and negotiate. Participants in small group discussion not only conform to these roles and norms and fit their talk appropriately, they actively create and change the context in and through their talk (Cazden, 1988). Cragan and Wright (1991) define group norms as the agreed upon values, beliefs, and procedures for and about participation group members construct and negotiate, though not necessarily explicitly or consciously. Roles are patterned communicative behaviors routinely performed by a group member or members (e.g. leading the discussion). Within the context of a small group discussion, participants negotiate and establish norms and roles for interacting. As they move to similar discourse events, they adopt and adapt these ways of interacting experienced in previous events. The meanings created, roles assumed, norms established, and textual links valued in one discourse event influence participation in other events (Bloome & Bailey, 1992). Thus, participation in one event is linked to participation in

other events and those engaged, while they are the creators of the event, are also caught up in them (Bormann, 1975; Bloome & Bailey, 1992).

In her study of small group discussion, in order to identify what kinds of activity affects the success of the group, Webb (1989) did not assign group roles nor structure the task to be specifically cooperative. She found that participants engage in a range of what she describes as on- and off-task behaviors that either facilitate or hinder group problem solving. On-task behaviors include asking questions and offering explanations; off-task behaviors were unrelated to the discussion task. What Webb and others (e.g. Burbules, 1993; Cragan & Wright, 1991; Walton & Krabbe, 1995) identify are the multiple kinds of dialogue or talk that occur within the event of small group discussion. A group discussion event is a complex dialogue embedded with multiple subdialogues or kinds of talk. Different theorists describe these multiple kinds of talk in different ways. Halligan (1988) found that each group is unique and interprets the assigned task for itself. Thus, the assigned task isn't simply *a* task, but a multiplicity of group tasks in which group members continually negotiate their interactions with each other, their identity as a group, and the assigned task. Halligan points out that the social relationships of the group are not simply an enabling condition for discussion, but are themselves an important dynamic of the discussion. These various tasks, intellectual and relational, are carried out in and through group talk.

Burbules (1993) also suggests that dialogue (discussion) is not just one thing. He identifies various patterns of talk which he calls "conversational genre" that are combined and overlap in multiple ways, even in one dialogue, yet have identifiable form and function. He describes the embroidery of these patterned ways of talking as means by which a group approaches knowledge and adopts stances toward one another as participants in the discussion. For example "convergent talk" assumes a consensus of ideas is constructed among group members; "divergent talk" assumes multiple possible interpretations of ideas and the group does not narrow the ideas to one answer. An

"inclusive stance" toward fellow group members is to grant provisional plausibility to what is said. A "critical stance" is a more skeptical and questioning stance about what is said. Within the dynamic and fluid interaction of group discussion participants do not hold to one particular approach or stance. Rather, they combine and overlap and occur differently at different points of the discussion or across multiple discussions depending on the nature of the group's work (see Burbules cited in Florio-Ruane & deTar, 1995).

Drawing from across various theories and studies of group communication, Cragan and Wright (1991) describe four kinds of group talk. Groups engage in what they call encounter talk and consciousness raising talk. These forms of talk are relational. Encounter talk is interpersonal talk and important to the development of positive relationships among group members. Consciousness raising talk is important to the group's sense of identity and cohesion as a group. Problem-solving talk and role emergence talk relate to the emergence of group roles and the progressive stages of group development. Communication research demonstrates that group discussion is not a simple, linear path to task accomplishment. Discussion is winding and complex. Phillips (1988) found group discussion is characterized sometimes by long exchanges without a clear indication of closure, by utterances full of uncertainties, hesitations, repetitions, and multiple subtopics which are picked up, dropped, and returned to as the moment demands. Research also shows that group talk is patterned as groups progress through identifiable stages or phases of group development (Bormann, 1975; Cragan & Wright, 1991; Fisher, 1980). These stages, however, recur in uneven patterns and because they are constructed by the group, how they occur is unique to the group.

Researchers consistently find that in the early stages of group development, participants spend time clarifying what they are asked to do and figuring out how to interact as a group. These earlier stages of group development involve the negotiation and establishment of group roles and norms of participation. Having oriented itself to a task and having negotiated the roles and norms, a group moves on to engaging in the task itself.

As group members engage in the task, they engage in a discussion process Hirokawa and Johnston describe as an "idea-evolution" process (1989, p. 502). This process involves the continual exploration, clarification, refutation, substantiation, extension, modification, and synthesis of multiple ideas drawn from across multiple sources, including the group's own knowledge and experience. Reflected in this process is the emergent, creative, and ever-changing nature of group discussion. Eventually, participants bring closure to the discussion as they complete the task or as their time to discuss ends. Although this is an overly simple version of group development, within the group event students construct, adapt, and adopt complex patterns of multiple kinds of talk in order to negotiate how to proceed with the task and actually engage in it (Burbules, 1993; Bormann, 1975; Cragan & Wright, 1991; Fisher, 1986; Fisher & Ellis, 1990; Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, 1982).

The nature of group members' interactions in their discussion is as important as what it is students discuss. Ideally, their interaction is democratic. Democratic participation in group research is often operationalized as leadership and authority. The kind of leadership that emerges within a group is central to how participants interact with one another and how they proceed with the discussion task. Research shows that autocratic and laissez faire groups are less successful in accomplishing their task, less original in their work, and less efficient than democratic groups (Luft, 1984). Traditional conceptions of group leadership equate leadership with authority in the group. Fisher (1986) presents a functionalist model of group interaction and group leadership. Unlike traditional models of leadership, such as trait, style, or control, a functionalist perspective views leadership as a construction of the group and as occurring when a group member assists the group's ability to deal with proceeding with the task. Cragan and Wright (1991) show that the emergence of several key leadership roles is essential to a group's ability to successfully engage and accomplish a task. Although other roles are important, the central leadership role is that of task leader. Until the uncertainty and tensions over who emerges

as task leader and how the group will proceed with the task are resolved, the group does not progress with engaging the task.

Based on various theories and models of group interaction, Cragan and Wright (1991) describe leadership as an emergent group process. It is a reciprocal relationship among group members. Who emerges as group leader(s) is determined through the group process of negotiating and sanctioning roles. Sanctioning is an act of authority shared by group members. Who emerges as leader is dependent upon the sanctioning and agreement of other group members and therefore, leadership is a construction of and accomplishment of the group. In this sense authority is an on-going dynamic among group members that empower them to create, negotiate, and establish the roles and norms which determine how the group interacts and engages the task. Roles are fluid and change based on the needs of the group. Leadership roles shift back and forth among group members as the group develops. Authority rests in the group and the ability of group members to exercise that authority.

Barber (1989) states that public talk is a form of public thinking and which can only happen in settings where citizens can participate in discussion. Deliberative discussion can be best taught by providing students opportunities to interact with one another as a group over a question or issue. Bridges (1988) states that small group discussion among students is more conducive to democratic participation in educational settings because it has the potential to generate the desirable democratic qualities of social involvement, cooperation, mutual respect, reasonableness, and acceptance of diversity. Conventional forms of classroom interaction, typically teacher-centered or teacher-led, cannot generate the same kinds of relationships among participants as generated in small group discussion. The belief is that the fullest and most sound understanding is a result of the group processes which engage students in collective and collaborative discussion about ideas, experiences, and beliefs. A potential of small group discussion as a democratic activity is engaging students in a cooperative endeavor to reason about social issues (Bridges, 1988).

The theoretical claims concerning democratic discourse and its learning are substantial. The promise of students' engaging one another in discussion is their learning to participate in the public discussion of social issues as citizens concerned with the community and American society. Vinson (1998) suggests that theories and models of democratic education leave many unanswered questions. Accordingly, we need to better understand that democratic character and democratic values are complex and fluid and are produced out of multiple dynamics of interaction among individuals and groups. Vinson argues we need to better understand how democratic education works and suggests a place to begin is to investigate how and where it is practiced (Vinson, 1998). This study pursues such questions in examining how students participate in small group discussions of a social issue and the nature of those discussions.

Description of the Study

The Research Question

The traditional civic education in which students hear about the discussion of public issues rather than engage in that discussion is inadequate to prepare students to assume their roles as citizens in a participatory democracy. Educating students in the practices of participatory democracy should involve a continued conversation between and among students while together, they address social issues and search for better ways of doing things, dealing with the uncertain and controversial (Engle, 1996). A revitalized social studies curriculum engages students in the discussion of social issues (Shaver, 1996). Educators emphasize the need for students to develop the values and social practices necessary to sustain a democratic society. The current movement toward discussion, particularly small group discussion as a means to support students' learning of democratic practices places a new emphasis on discourse in the social studies classroom. It also places an unfamiliar demand on students to participate in authentic public talk around social issues.

According to Armento, much of social studies research examines the correlational or causal relationships between instructional techniques and their effects on student outcomes. Social components of learning and intellectual development have not been adequately examined. How these elements operate together in the development of citizenship outcomes is not understood very well (Armento, 1996). Little attention has been given in research to the relationship of the dynamics of group processes and issues related to democracy and democratic participation (Gastil, 1993). Significant progress has been made in assessing students' abilities of writing on civic issues, but nothing comparable for oral discourse (Chandler von Dras, 1993; Harris, 1996). King and King suggest that group discussion in the classroom is a process that should develop students skills of thinking and collaborating. We need, however, a clearer sense of the processes students use to think about and discuss issues. These processes are not self-evident nor have they been widely investigated (King & King, 1998). According to Calfee, Dunlap, and Wat (1994), what is at issue in terms of investigating student discussion is not necessarily procedural categories of behaviors or social management strategies, but attention to the discourse itself.

Jenness (1990) suggests that in general, research still underattends to the complex interplay of group processes, social learning, social development, and the dynamics of classrooms. Studies which demonstrate the relationships between discourse event structures and academic content students encounter are few (Cazden, 1986). Few studies have addressed what processes within the group relate to intellectual and social outcomes (Kutnick, 1994). Pepitone (1985) suggests there is relatively little research on the complex interplay between the required tasks assigned to the group and the role relationships that evolve in the group. Evans, Newmann, and Saxe (1996) point out an approach to social studies and civic education that engages students in the discussion of public issues in ways that are themselves democratic have problems yet to be worked out. One consideration is the centrality of student discourse. Much is said concerning the importance of engaging

students in authentic discussion of social issues, as well as models offered for how that discourse can be structured. Far less is known about how students actually engage in such discourse.

The guiding question of this study was: *How do students engage in deliberative, democratic discussion of a public issue?* My purpose in this study was to "get inside" small group discussions in order to better understand the complexities of and the interplay among the various dynamics and processes at work when students engage in deliberative, democratic discussion of an issue. The small group setting ideally fosters group autonomy from the teacher and students using their own language to engage in discussing an issue. Small group discussion provides a setting in which students interact independent of the direct instruction and intervention of the teacher and therefore, are potential settings of more authentic student talk.

Multidisciplinary Approach to Research

The focus of this study was students' discussion in small groups as they engaged in the public discussion of a social issue. I adopted a multidisciplinary, ethnographic approach to study student discussions, drawing from sociolinguistics, speech communication, social studies, and literacy. Preskill (1997) suggests exploring the practice of discussion requires a synthesis of theories and models of discussion, dialogue, and conversation from across multiple disciplines. In blending different perspectives to study the dynamics and processes of group discussion, richer insights can be achieved than adopting only one relevant disciplinary perspective (Beach, Green, Kamil, & Shanahan, 1992). Bloome and Bailey (1992) characterize a multidisciplinary approach as developing a description of language (discourse) derived from both theoretical insights and from the realities of how people actually use and make language. Similarly, Walton and Krabbe (1995) suggest that the study of dialogue (discourse) should involve both the study of descriptive dialectics and formal dialectics. Descriptive dialectic studies involve the practices in actual discussions. Formal dialectic studies involve setting up systems of

precise (though not necessarily realistic or complete) rules and studying the dialogues that conform to these systems of rules. Citing Hamlin, Walton and Krabbe argue that "neither approach is of any importance on its own; for descriptions of actual cases must aim to bring about formalizable features, and formal systems must aim to throw light on actual, describable phenomena" (1995, p. 5).

Within the multidisciplinary approach I adopted, analysis moved between the theoretical ideas proposed in various theories and models described above and what occurred in the students' small group discussions. Three areas of focus supported this study of students' engaged in public discussion of an issue: the structured or formalized discourse situated in the task assigned to the group; the emergent dynamics of the students' discourse; and the elements of their interaction within and across discourse events. The interdisciplinary approach provided multiple lenses through which the complexity of students engaging in democratic, public discourse was framed and described. A variety of theoretical lenses and techniques for handling the data allowed for a broader, richer description of the complexities and a better understanding of how students participate in public discourse. I assume however, that my abilities as the analyst to say what the interaction means is partial and incomplete (Gee, Michaels, & O'Connor, 1992).

While much research emphasizes the effects of small group discussion, the emphasis of this study was to describe and analyze what deliberative, democratic discussion might look like in actual classroom practice. I adopted ethnographic fieldwork and interpretive qualitative methods (Erickson, 1986) to help me analyze and describe student talk and the contextualized, complex, and holistic nature of that talk. The face-to-face interaction of the group discussion was inherently dynamic and provided an opportunity to study students' language use and social organization as integrated components of their discourse (O'Connor & Michaels, 1993).

The Setting and Participants

Global Studies is an elective course for juniors and seniors at Hartford High School, Harford Michigan[1] where strong ties with Michigan State University were forged as part of a program of professional development schools (PDS). The Hartford High School Global Studies curriculum adopts an issues-centered approach in which students apply a discrete set of reasoning skills to contemporary social issues. In addition the principles of cooperative learning are infused in the course which ideally foster communication skills for democratic participation. Small group discussion is a central vehicle in this Global Studies course for engaging students in the reasoning and communication skills designed in the curriculum. As students participate in small group discussions, they enter into the sphere of public discussion, exploring and constructing their own understandings of the issue, as well as critically exploring the perspectives of the others they read and view.

For several years (1993-1997), I worked with the Global Studies teachers as a research assistant for the Global Studies PDS project. The Global Studies curriculum approximated the kind of revitalized curriculum educators call for and, therefore, was a strategic site to study students' practice of democratic, deliberative discourse. The belief that a citizenry of informed, competent, independent problem-solvers and decision-makers is essential to sustaining democracy shaped the Global Studies curriculum. In this particular class students practiced and applied a systematic reasoning model to contemporary, persistent global issues. Participation in small group discussion was an important aspect of students' systematic, in-depth examination of the global issues taken up in the course.

As part of the on-going PDS project, the Global Studies teachers and researchers collected and analyzed data to assess the curriculum The results suggested that the Global

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[1] Pseudonyms for all participants and other potential identifiers are used throughout the manuscript.

Studies course had a reasonable degree of success in achieving the learning goals for students intended in the curriculum. An analysis over several semesters of students' learning and application of the central reasoning skills taught in the course showed students' gains in three of the four skill categories tested (Little, et al., 1995). A systematic content analysis of students' reflective papers over several semesters revealed students' strong, positive response to the problem-framing and decision-making components of the course. Students' responses also indicated that most found value and use in what they were learning as applied to situations outside the class. These findings as well as ample anecdotal evidence offered by the teachers, their colleagues, and past Global Studies students, suggest that students successfully learn and apply the reasoning and communication skills taught in the course. Based on these findings, the teachers' observations, and my own over the course of the four years I was involved with the project, we suspected that a key part of students' learning was their participation in small group discussions. These suspicions lead to the present inquiry about how students actually engage in the discussion of an issue within their small groups in the context of the Global Studies class.

Participants in this study were high school students enrolled in the Global Studies course the second semester of the 1996-97 school year. The course was designed and sometimes taught by a team of teachers which included a university professor. However the Social Studies teacher, Mr. Grant, was the primary teacher of the course during this study. The class met the first period of the day (7:35-8:35) for approximately sixty minutes. Because Hartford is a full inclusion high school, students in the course came with a wide and diverse range of literacy and communication skills. The enrollment of the class originally began with 28 students, but over the course of the first few weeks dropped to a stable enrollment of 22. Thirteen of the students were male and nine were female. Students dropped the course to switch classes primarily, though several had dropped out of school. Hartford is a small community that is ethnically homogeneous, but economically

diverse. Hartford High School reflects the general population of the community. However, during the semester this study was conducted, the participants in the Global Studies class were unexpectedly diverse. The members of the class included a full range of varying academic ability, academic motivation, economic status, and ethnic diversity that was more diverse than the general population of the school.

The framework of the Global Studies course was consistent with the descriptions of a revitalized social studies curriculum advocated by many educators and researchers (e.g. Carter, 1990; Evans, et al., 1996; Gutmann, 1987; Merryfield & White, 1996). Within the context of the Global Studies curriculum, ideally, students began with developing and identifying alternate ways to define or frame the issue of study. They applied a set of techniques to critically analyze the manipulation of evidence and data in the texts they read, viewed and discussed. They questioned the motives, premises, and attempts to persuade in the various texts presented them. After having critically studied the range of viewpoints and related arguments, students determined what they thought was an appropriate perspective to hold concerning the issue and presented a reasoned, potential solution to the problem.

Underlying the development of these practices was the idea that these are the skills students need to think independently and create their own reasoned, informed perceptions about an issue that directly or indirectly, has consequences in their lives. In essence, the development was that of democratic character (Gutmann, 1987, 1990). Expressing one's ideas effectively both in oral and written forms, was assumed to be part of being an independent, critical thinker. An inseparable and substantial part of students' development as systematic, reasoned decision-makers was the development of the communicative skills necessary for participating in public discourse. Ideally, through a variety of reading and writing assignments, whole class and small group discussions, students engaged in democratic deliberation. Small group discussions were a major discourse event in the course.

In as much as the Global Studies curriculum approximated the kinds of democratic practices argued for, it also reflected the tensions and complexities inherent in those same practices. At the same time students were developing the skills to think independently, they were also developing skills to participate collectively. Students in the Global Studies course participated in a range of activities intended to support their development as participants in a democratic society. They engaged in the complexities of public discourse in their small group discussions in the course. For these reasons, the Global Studies course was a strategic site for studying how students engage in democratic, public discourse.

Data Collection and Analysis

Following the students in the Hartford Global Studies class through a full ten week instructional unit, data collected included extensive field notes, audio tape of whole class discussions, audio and video tape of selected small group discussions, photocopies of group written work, photocopies of the written texts students read, and interviews with some group members. Focal data were collected during the second instructional unit of the Global Studies course which began March 21, 1997. In the second unit, students were expected to apply the thinking and communications skills explicitly taught and practiced in the first unit to the student-selected topic of global population in the second unit. Students' interactions in the second unit were less dependent on the direct orchestration of the teacher. The second unit then provided a context in which, ideally, students' democratic participation in public discourse was authentically practiced.

Field Note Data

In the role of participant-observer, I began observing the class on March 7, 1997 to acquaint myself to the class and them me. I observed every class session (March 7 - May 9, 1997) but three, collecting extensive field notes throughout the second unit. Following a mini-unit on data analysis skills, the second unit began March 20. The field notes served several purposes. Because of the nature of the course, the teacher often made

instructional decisions on nearly a day-to-day basis. The general organization of the unit was consistent, however when certain activities occurred depended on the students' progress with the assigned tasks and the discussions. Therefore it was necessary for me to have on-going, informal conversations with the teacher such that I could plan for data collection appropriately as the unit evolved. Field notes served as a record of our conversations. These on-going conversations also informed my understanding of the course as a context for discussion and the selection of specific activities to be audio and video taped. Field notes collected during observations provided a view of the life cycle of the unit. Data collected focused on the overall sequence of events students engaged in, the routines established for interacting in the class, and the configurations of participants in the various speech events.

Maybin (1994) states that the idea of "events" and language practices is a useful guide to data analysis. Hymes (1972) suggests language (discourse) should be studied as it is situated in patterned communication events. This approach to analysis grounded in the activities of real people engaged in discussion, complements Bakhtin's theoretical notions of intertextual references and Vygotsky's ideas about the social and cultural nature of dialogue and thought (Maybin, 1994, p. 133). Hymes (1972) defines events as having social rules which regulate the type and amount of talk that occurs within them. Drawing upon Hymes (1972), meetings of the Global Studies class were defined as speech situations in this study. Within a class meeting (the speech situation) multiple activities occurred and in the analysis these were called "speech events."

Coulthard (1985) defines a speech event as the largest unit for which one can identify linguistic structure and these structures do not necessarily have the same scope or range of meaning. Within a speech situation, several speech events can occur successively or even simultaneously. Each convening of a Global Studies group for discussion was a speech event. Within these speech events, students constructed different ways of participating and engaging in the different discussion tasks. Each of these different events

engaged students in different configurations of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These different and multiple ways of talking in the small group speech events were an initial focus of analysis which is described further below.

Identifying the patterns and routines of the class across the various speech events documented in field notes informed my understanding of the Global Studies class as a context of democratic, public discourse. How students engaged in public discourse within the context of the Global Studies class was directly related to the kinds of speech events students participated in and the temporal relationship among those events. Field notes were a means of documenting whole class interactions, including class discussions. In addition, each whole class discussion was audio taped to provide an audio record of the discussion. Along with the field notes, audio tapes of whole class speech events were catalogued for later analysis and reporting as issues and questions emerged in the on-going analysis.

Ethnographic analysis of the data was the primary means of contextualizing student discourse in the Global Studies class. Cataloguing the class speech events included identifying and describing the sequence of speech events. The sequential and temporal relationships among events related to the coherence of the students' discourse across speech events. How students sustained the discussion of the issue across speech events was important to understanding their abilities to participate in public discourse. The record of whole class speech events served as an important resource from which references students linked in their small group discussions to prior whole class events could be identified. This analysis of field notes and whole class audio tapes served two purposes: to serve as a text source location for subsequent small group analysis; and to triangulate the data concerning students' interaction across speech events (Erickson, 1986; Florio-Ruane, 1987; Stubbs, 1983).

When doing ethnographic analysis, data are generally triangulated across sources such as interviews and discussion transcripts. Stubbs (1983) states that "triangulation" is used in different ways, but it essentially refers to collecting and comparing different

perspectives on a situation. Sociolinguistic researchers have adopted the principle or logic behind triangualiting data. In conducting microanalysis, data are triangulated across data points that are more specific to the discourse analyzed (Erickson & Shultz, 1981). In this study in which students' discussions were microanalyzed, data were triangulated across the talk in the transcripts of small group disucssions, whole class discussions, the documents students read and produced, and field notes of observation of the setting. Triangulation of the data in this study involved cross-referencing the source locations of ideas and texts students' linked within and across speech events. In addition, to the extent they were drawn upon, video tapes of the groups' discussions and interviews with group members supplemented the analysis. The description of the collection and analysis of the multiple kinds of data is continued below.

Audio and Video Tape of Small Group Discussions

Students participated in multiple, different small group speech events throughout the unit. Students were assigned to groups by Mr. Grant, but with their input. Prior to beginning the second unit on global population, Mr. Grant asked each student to list three people he or she wanted to work with and to list anyone they definitely did not want to work with in their group. Mr. Grant sought a heterogeneous mix of students in each group of five to six members, but made sure each group member was with at least one other person they listed as a desired group member. The data collection and analysis of the small group speech events occurred in three levels. These levels were not discrete; latter levels were informed by and built upon the former levels. The purpose of these different levels of analysis was to eventually identify occurrences of focused and sustained discussion of the issue and to select one group's focused discussions for microanalysis. In order to identify and describe how students engaged in deliberative discussion of an issue and the nature of the discussion, it was necessary to identify one group that seemed relatively adept at engaging in focused and sustained talk around the issue or aspects of the issue situated in

the assigned discussion tasks. Thus, the selection of the Global Studies groups as focal groups in the different levels of analysis was purposive.

Selection of Groups and Speech Events For Analysis

The four small group speech events of all four small groups in the class were audio taped and observational field notes were recorded (March 21, March 24, March 27, and March 31). Analysis of these speech events involved a preliminary cataloguing of group members' participation in the task, the topics brought to the conversational floor, the shifts in topic, and a sense of the group's relative ability to engage the task as intended. The purpose of this preliminary analysis was to identify and select two groups in order to more closely analyze their talk across several speech events. Two groups, referred to as Group A and Group B were selected. Based on the preliminary analysis of the groups' talk, Mr. Grant's observations, and my own, Group A and Group B appeared to engage in the assigned discussion task more than the other two groups. In order to study and better understand how students engaged in deliberative, democratic discussion in their small groups, it was necessary to select student groups that consistently engaged in discussion.

It is important to note that a limitation of the study was not identifying or using information about the group members social identities beyond that described above to contextualize group members' participation. The information above was gleaned from observations and informal conversations with the students and Mr. Grant, as well as my own observations of their participation, written work, and attendance. At the same time the lack of this information was a limitation, it was in some respects purposeful. Many studies set out to include aspects of students' social identities in order to describe how, for example, discourse is gendered. These studies tend to assume inequitable participation among male and female students. My purpose in this study was to identify and describe how students engaged in deliberative discussion and the nature of their discussions. Rather than presupposing certain issues of social identity existed in the groups, I sought to identify the emergent and constructed qualities of the discourse within the group context.

Speech events of both Group A and Group B were audio taped and video taped for the remainder of the instructional unit. The video tapes were used as a resource for the follow-up interviews with group members (described further below) and as data to supplement the analysis of the transcribed group discussions. Audio tapes of three speech events of both groups were selected and transcribed for analysis and reporting (March 25, March 28, and March 31). Selection of the speech events was based on two criteria: 1) both groups were engaged in the same task and in similar places in the task; 2) the assigned discussion task of each speech event differed. A comparative case analysis of the two groups across the three speech events identified several interwoven forms of talk (Erickson & Shultz, 1981). Each single speech event of each group was treated as a case, thus there were six cases. The purpose of the analysis was to explore the emergent group processes manifest in the talk, both within and across cases. Findings across cases were compared in order to identify and describe the forms and functions of group talk and the patterns of talk that that were stable and/or anomalous across cases.

Identified in the analysis of the group speech events were different patterns of turn-taking, initiating and taking up topics, ways in which the groups proceeded with the task, and how they concluded a discussion of a topic. Elements of these patterns appeared in both groups' talk across the three speech events. These patterned forms of talk were consistent with what Burbules (1993) calls "genres" and Cragan and Wright (1991) simply call kinds of talk. I referred to them as "episodes" of talk. Within these different episodes of talk, group members engaged in different ways of participating involving different kinds of intellectual and relational work (Florio-Ruane & deTar, 1995). Three kinds of episodes were identified in the analysis and are described in detail in Chapter 2.

"Focused talk" episodes were identified as long exchanges of sustained and focused talk on the issue or aspect of the issue situated in the discussion task. These episodes were characterized by high task engagement, high conversational involvement, and complex intertextual linking evident in the group talk. Although both groups engaged in the same

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discussion tasks across speech events, Group A seemed to struggle with sustaining "focused talk." Group B was more adept at engaging in talk that helped them negotiate the roles and norms for participating and navigating the task thus, they were better able to engage in sustained, focused discussion. For these reasons, the discussions of Group B were selected for close analysis.

Three speech events of Group B were selected and transcribed for close analysis based on the differences among the discussion tasks assigned by the teacher for each event and on the occurrence of episodes of sustained, focused talk (March 25, April 14, April 25). The preliminary analysis of "focused talk" episodes that occurred in both groups pointed toward several interconnected aspects of group discussion: the structure of the task as assigned by the teacher and the intended purpose of the task; the group roles and norms negotiated among group members; the texts and textual links (oral, written, assigned, or emergent) group members constructed in their discussions; and the performance of various features of democratic and deliberative discussion within episodes of "focused talk." These interconnected features of the group's discourse across speech events were the focus of analysis. Data analyzed included audio tape transcripts of group discussions, observational field notes, texts students read and viewed, and group written work.

Cragan and Wright (1991) show the emergence of group roles is essential to a group's ability to successfully engage and accomplish a task. Although other roles are important, the central leadership role is that of task leader. Until the uncertainty and tensions over who emerges as task leader and how the group will proceed with the task are resolved, a group will struggle to progress with the task. Halligan (1988) notes that each group interprets a task for itself and that there is not simply an assigned task, but multiple tasks which include negotiating roles and norms of participation. Phillips (1988) states that conversational patterns shift among different kinds of talk which demonstrates that participants are not simply operating within a preset protocol. Sociolinguistic analysis of Group B's interactions included identifying and describing the negotiation and maintenance

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of group roles, particularly leadership, and how the group adapted and adopted these roles across different kinds of discussion tasks. Intimately related to group roles are the norms for participation group members constructed and negotiated. Norms are the socially constructed, situational rules groups create that guide and constrain their interactions. Analysis of Group B's interactions included identifying and describing how the group adapted and adopted norms of participation across events and tasks as well.

The nature of public discourse as I framed it, is intertextual and implied certain dynamics would occur in students' discussions of the texts they engaged. In the Global Studies class, students read and discussed a variety of articles in their small groups. While they were consumers of these texts, they were also producers of the on-going text of their own discussion. Their deliberation of these multiple texts not only involved critically evaluating the texts they discussed, but also drawing comparative relationships and connections among texts. An aspect of their ability to participate in public discourse was their ability to deliberate and develop a more holistic understanding of the issue based on their discussions across speech events. Analysis of Group B's discussion included identifying and describing the textual links students made in their discussions.

Various theorists and researchers conclude there are multiple kinds of talk that occur within a single speech event (Burbules, 1993; Cragan & Wright, 1991; Walton & Krabbe, 1995). Group discussion as a speech event is a complex dialogue embedded with multiple kinds of talk. Within a single speech event, different patterns of turn taking, topic initiation, topic shifts, and so on occur in multiple and sometimes overlapping ways. The development of these patterns of talk and how students engaged in the task, how they were conversationally involved, and how intertextual links were constructed was central to the analysis of Group B's interactions.

Interviews With Group Members

Follow-up interviews with several group members from both Group A and Group B were conducted after the audio and video taping of group speech events was complete.

(See Appendix A for the follow-up interview questions). This was done so the interview itself would not affect group members' interactions as an intervention. Participants selected to be interviewed was in part based on their participation in their group discussions. I asked various group members to participate in the interviews, some of whom declined for various reasons or arrangements could not be made. Neil, Kristina, and Andrea from Group A and Mark, Shelley, Kate and Steven from Group B were interviewed. The interviews took place in a library conference room either before school, during Global Studies, or during the student's free period. Each interview was audio taped and lasted approximately 45 minutes.

The interviews began with the student and me watching a segment of video tape of his or her group interacting. The segments on the tapes selected were matched to exchanges of talk from audio taped discussions that were transcribed and analyzed. Having students view the video taped interaction served as a stimulated recall activity in order to obtain students' perceptions on what was occurring in the exchanges we watched and what they thought about their groups' interactions (Everston & Green, 1986). A consideration in the analysis was students' perceptions of their interaction. Students have their own theories about their interaction and what they do, however informal or incomplete (Gee, Michaels, & O'Connor, 1992).

Following our watching the video tape for several minutes, I asked the student to explain what he or she recalled from participating in the discussion. The interview method was purposefully open-ended. Some interview questions emerged from the analysis of the groups' discussions prior to the interviews and from the on-going analysis of the discourse in the class. Other questions emerged within the interviews themselves. Analysis of the first interviews generated further questions and issues incorporated into later interviews with the other participants. What students perceived their role to be in the group and what contributions they made to accomplishing the task reflected upon the nature of the group's interaction. Although the interview process was intentionally open-ended, there were

several general ideas that guided the interviews and subsequent analysis. Small group theory offers several constructs that informed the analysis: membership satisfaction, coherence, and group tension. The extent to which participants were satisfied with being a member of their group and their perception of other group members' satisfaction related to participants' willingness to interact in the group. Related was participants' sense that the group was cohesive; that is, the group members worked well together and felt a sense of accomplishment.

Each interview was analyzed in light of the questions that emerged through the analysis process, as well as the constructs mentioned above, following Glaser and Strauss' constant comparative method (1967). These analyses revealed whether students perceived the kinds of interaction that took place as democratic. They also revealed what sense students had of their own abilities to participate in democratic deliberation. Lastly, their perceptions of fellow group members were revealing of their willingness to participate with others. How and what students described regarding their own interaction illuminated how they participated in democratic, public discourse. The analysis of the interview data supplemented the analysis of the transcribed group discussions.

In the chapters that follow the analysis of students' discourse in their small groups is described in detail. In Chapter 2 I describe the comparative case analysis of the two heterogeneous small groups. Identified in the analysis were several interwoven forms of talk. In both groups and across events each type of talk had identifiable form and function. Participants wove these forms of talk together in complex patterns as they negotiated both the academic task and group talk itself. Within whole events, there appeared a patterned relationship among the forms of talk which facilitated the groups' abilities to engage in focused and sustained discussion of the issue, both a social and intellectual accomplishment.

In Chapter 3 I describe in-depth the complexity of students' engaged in focused and sustained discussion of aspects of the issue. Across speech events and episodes of

"focused talk," group members consistently engaged in several distinct textual discourse moves which became increasingly complex. Movement and flow of the discussion was shown to be greatly influenced by the assigned discussion task. Different task structures shaped different patterns of discourse which influenced the form and function of group talk. In the deep structure of the "focused talk" episodes were complex and interconnected patterns of talk that were the synthesis of intellectual, relational, and textual dynamics of group discussion.

CHAPTER 2: FORMS AND FUNCTIONS OF GROUP DISCOURSE

Overview

In this chapter, I describe the discourse of the two peer groups across three speech events. Identified in the analysis are several interwoven types of talk, each with identifiable form and functions. Group members wove these forms of talk in complex ways as they negotiated both new academic content and new ways of speaking about knowledge and text. Each form of talk influenced the carrying out of discussion. Within whole events there appeared a patterned relationship among the forms of talk which facilitated group members' abilities to engage in focused discussion of the issue, both a social and intellectual accomplishment. The purpose of this analysis was to identify the patterns of talk in student small group discussion in order to specifically identify occurrences of focused and sustained discussion about the public issue. In this sense identifying the forms and functions of group talk served a heuristic purpose (Chilcott, 1998) and was a first step in answering the more complex question of how students actually engage in focused and sustained deliberative discussion (Gee, Michaels, & O'Connor, 1992).

The analysis reveals differences in the relational nature of the two groups' discussions. Although both groups shared the same assigned discussion task, each constructed unique norms of participation which influenced their abilities to engage in deliberative discussion. Among the differences between the two groups were their relative abilities to negotiate facilitative norms and roles for participation in the discussion task. Differences in group cohesion and coherence in the talk related to the interplay of the relational, textual, and intellectual dimensions of group talk which facilitated or impeded their abilities to engage in sustained and focused discussion of the issue. Of the two groups studied, Group B was better able to sustain focused discussion of the issue and was selected for further detailed analysis described in Chapter 3. In what follows, I describe the form and functions of the three types of talk identified in the analysis and the relationships among them. I end the chapter with a summary of the differences among the

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two groups in order to highlight the complexity of the relational, intellectual, and textual work of democratic, deliberative discussion.

The Participants

Before proceeding further, I will briefly introduce the reader to the members of Group A and Group B who are referred to in this and subsequent chapters. There were two males and four females in Group A. Neil was a highly academically able Caucasian male who was consistently present and actively participated in his group. Bobby, the other male in the group, was Caucasian. Bobby was also an active participant, but was frequently absent and often absent several days in a row. Kristina, a Caucasian female in the group, was a highly academically able student. She was consistently present and actively participated. Andrea was an African-American female and was also an academically able student who was consistently present and participated in the group discussions. However, over time, it was evident that Neil and Kristina were the most consistent participants in the group. Sara, the only senior in the group, was a Caucasian female and of average academic ability. Sara was consistently present, but spoke infrequently. Amy, a Caucasian female in the group, was also of average academic ability. but seemed to be less academically motivated than other group members, with the exception of Bobby. Amy was absent frequently and at one point during the course of the unit was suspended from school for fighting.

Like Group A, Group B was a highly diverse group of four male and two female students. Mark, the only junior in the group, was a Caucasian male and an academically able student. Mark was consistently present and actively participated in the group discussions. Kate, a Hispanic/Native American female, was also an academically able student, consistently present, and participated actively in the group. Shelley, the other female in the group, was Caucasian, an exceptionally academically able student and an active participant. Hitoshi, a male student, was a Japanese exchange student with limited English (speaking) abilities. Though a highly capable student, his participation in the

group's discussions were limited. Mike, a male Caucasian student, was frequently absent and his participation was sporadic when he did attend class. Mike also had difficulties with writing and was considered to be an at-risk student by Mr. Grant. The last group member, Steven, was a hearing-impaired Caucasian male of average academic ability. Steven's attendance was sporadic throughout the second unit due to a bout with bronchitis and broken hearing aids. When he was present Steven participated in the discussions.

The Discussion Task

The speech events described below occurred early in the Global Studies unit on population. The student groups had interacted only a few times prior to these speech events. Recalling from Chapter 1, each convening of a Global Studies group for discussion was a speech event. Although the topic of global population was not completely unfamiliar to many of the group members, engaging the topic as a group and applying the analytical and reasoning skills learned in the course to the topic were new to the students. In addition, the written texts the group members read and discussed were new to students. In each respective event, for both small groups, the explicit discussion task was the same. Each group read, discussed, and responded to a set articles concerning the issue of global population. In the first speech event (March 25, 1997), the groups discussed Joel Cohen's (1996) article Ten Myths of Population. In the article, Cohen outlined what he considered to be ten persistent myths about the issue of global population. Mr. Grant, the Global Studies lead teacher, directed students to ask critical questions of Cohen and the arguments presented and to respond to the set of questions below in writing as part of the assigned group task:

1) How balanced is the article; how biased is it?

2) How serious do you think the issue of population is?

3) What do you think was correct, what was incorrect about the myths presented by Cohen?

The other speech events (March 28 and March 31, 1997) group discussion focused on two Opposing Viewpoints articles. In *Population Growth Threatens Global Resources*, Paul and Anne Ehrlich (1991) argued that population is a serious global problem and left unattended will result in devastating famine, disease, and depletion of natural resources. In *Population Growth Does Not Threaten Global Resources*, Karl Zinsmeister (1991) argued that much of the alleged harm from population growth is nonexistent. Rather, Zinsmeister argued the issue is one of distribution of global resources. After reading and discussing these articles, students responded as a group in writing to the sets of questions posed by the editors of Opposing Viewpoints.

Population Growth Threatens Global Resources.

1) What do the authors see as being some of the negative effects of the population explosion on the earth and its inhabitants?

2) How do the authors respond to the theory that there is no population problem, only a problem of distribution?

3) Why do the Ehrlichs believe there are taboos against the discussion of the population crisis?

Population Growth Does Not Threaten Global Resources

1) What does the author believe are the reasons for the shift in the population debate during the 1980's?

2) What does Zinsmeister cite as some false claims regarding the negative impact of population growth?

3) Why does the author believe people are a valuable resource?

In each of these speech events, the assigned discussion task was multidimensional. The explicit task for students was to read the article together, playing the roles of the Reading Game. The Reading Game is a cooperative group reading strategy with which

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students were very familiar. This task structure is designed to help organize a group of students with various abilities to read the articles in a systematic way and to engage them in a serious discussion of the text (Little, et al., 1995). The structure of the Reading Game is intended to foster students' engagement in the analytic and reasoning skills that constitute the overarching framework of the Global Studies course. Students were to determine how the authors framed the issue of population, question the premises of the authors' arguments, and analyze the evidence presented in support of those premises. The explicit discussion task ideally provided students the structure to engage in deliberative discussion about the issue. The explicit discussion task structure did not necessarily determine for the group how to proceed with the task. Implicitly, norms and roles of participation emerged in and through group talk (Cragan & Wright, 1991). Described in the analysis of the groups' discussions, these norms and roles were negotiated within the group and therefore, were unique to each group. What made each group's talk unique was, in part, how they negotiated and sequenced their talk, and in part, what specific forms of talk they engaged in within segments of the speech event. Figure 4 below provides a timeline of one speech event (March 25) which illustrates the patterns of specific forms of talk (which are described and illustrated with examples below) unique to each group.

Types of Group Talk

Identified in the analysis of the talk in the two heterogeneous groups, across the three speech events described above, were several interwoven types of group talk: "focused talk," "task talk," and "digressive talk." In both groups and across speech events, each type of talk had distinct and identifiable form and function. "Task talk" episodes were marked by the group's discussion of how to proceed with the discussion task as compared to actually engaging in the task. "Task talk" was procedural and central to the groups' abilities to engage in "focused talk." "Digressive talk" was characterized by

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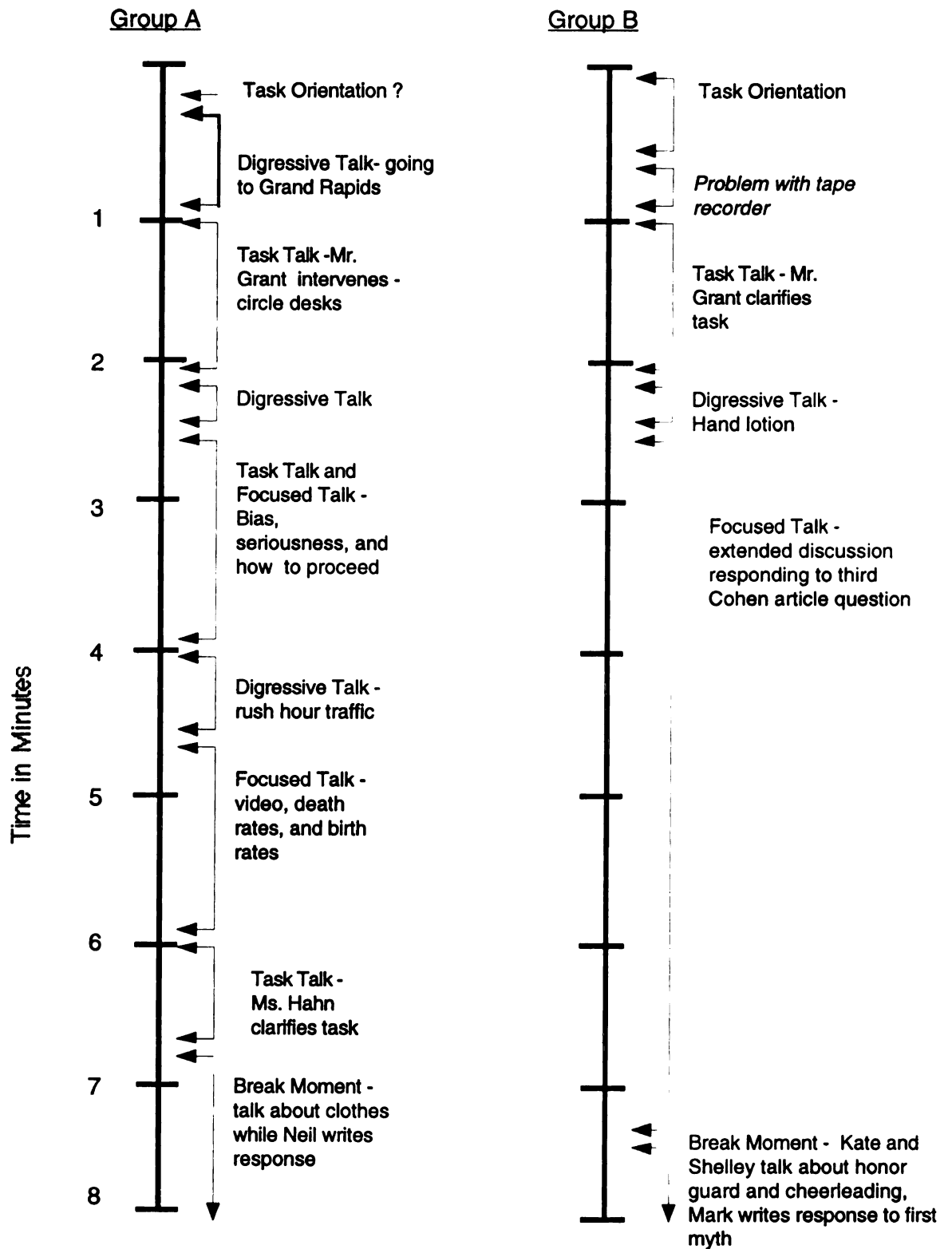
Figure 4: Patterns of Talk, March 25

high conversational involvement and coherence, but lacked the explicit engagement in the discussion task and the textual relationships characteristic of "focused talk." Illustrated in the analysis of "digressive talk," group members sometimes stepped back from the intense work of "focused talk" and "took a break" in the discussion. Phillips (1988) found that "successful" groups did not always keep to the point, the assigned task, and that digressions were an important means of the group taking ownership of its own discussion. Shown in the analysis of the Global Studies groups, these moments of digressing from the task were at times productive for the group and at other times unproductive.

"Digressive talk" often occurred at conversationally appropriate points in the discussion where the group seemed to "take a break" in their work. These "breaks" facilitated relationship building among group members and fostered a context which influenced the groups' abilities to engage in "focused talk." "Digressive talk" also occurred in instances in which the group strayed from and often interrupted the momentum of the discussion. In some instances "digressive talk" occurred in conversationally appropriate points in the discussions and was constructive or productive; in other instances it occurred at inappropriate times and was unproductive. Productive "digressive talk" occurred at juncture points in the discussion such as the conclusion to responding to a question or prior to fully engaging in the discussion. Such instances in which the group digressed from the assigned task were important moments of relationship building among group members. In contrast, unproductive instances occurred at moments when the group was engaged in "focused talk" or "task talk" and did not occur at juncture points in the discussion. Rather, this "digressive talk" interrupted the momentum and flow of the discussion.

"Focused talk" episodes occurred when the group most fully engaged in the explicit discussion task, applying the discrete analytic and reasoning skills they were learning and practicing as they read and discussed multiple texts. "Focused talk" was characterized by high task engagement, high conversational involvement, and intertextual relationships that were increasingly sophisticated over time within an episode. High task engagement was

characterized as students' concentrated attention on the discussion task, their application of the reasoning and analytic skills of the curriculum, and their effort to engage one another in the discussion of the issue (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992). Conversational involvement was characterized by the interactive, interpersonal participation of group members which included their involvement with one another as speakers and with what was being said (Tannen, 1989). In episodes of "focused talk," group members constructed intertextual links among multiple textual sources and synthesized these links to jointly construct their understanding of the issue discussed. As students engaged in the discussion task, they selected, connected, and organized information and ideas from across multiple textual sources. By interacting with one another and these various texts, they constructed a space, a context, for linking texts (Hartman, 1995).

"Focused talk" episodes appeared to be consistent with what Gutmann (1987) calls deliberation, a key feature of democratic public discourse. But participants talk was not always "focused" and other kinds of talk ("task talk" and "digressive talk") served to enable the focus of some portion of each discussion. The group that had the longest "focused talk" segments worked smoothly from "task talk" to "focused talk" to productive "digressive talk" to "focused talk" and so on with minimal talk that did not serve the group's work (i.e. unproductive "digressive talk"). Research examined the "how" and the "why" of each pattern of talk in an attempt to learn how to help groups more successfully negotiate sustained focused talk. Participants wove these different types of talk together in complex patterns as they negotiated both new academic content and new ways of speaking about knowledge and text. Across groups and speech events, episodes of "focused talk" and "task talk" occurred consistently; and "digressive talk" were variable across groups and speech events.

These three types of talk were not simply "on" and "off task" behaviors. (See Figure 5 below). Each functioned in ways that influenced the carrying out of discussion,

Type of Talk	Form/Distinctive Features	Functions
Focused Talk	• high task engagement • high conversational involvement • complex intertextual relationships • coherence and cohesion	• engagement in deliberative discussion • construction of understanding of texts • construction of understanding of the issue • exploration of ideas
Task Talk	• procedural • orientation to task • recontextualize task • conversational involvement	• determination of how to proceed with the discussion task • negotiation and maintenance of roles and norms • construction of group context in which intertextual links are made necessary precursor to engagement in focused talk • demarcation of group boundaries
Digressive Talk: Productive	• high conversational involvement • conversationally appropriate remote from discussion topic • self-disclosure • group cohesion	• break from intensity of focused talk • cohesion building among group members • demarcation of group boundaries
Unproductive	• conversationally inappropriate • remote from discussion topic	• interruption of momentum of group discussion • thwarting of facilitative norms and roles • result of resistance and/or unresolved group tensions

Figure 5: Forms and Functions of Group Talk

both a social and intellectual accomplishment. Within whole events, there appeared

patterned relationships among episodes of "focused talk," "task talk," and "digressive

talk," suggesting the relationships among these various forms of talk were important to

students' engagement in "focused talk." Analyzing the various forms of talk together underscores the importance of both task engagement and the intertextuality of "focused talk" and the relational nature of democratic discussion, including its reciprocity and engagement with others (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996).

In the following analysis, I identify characteristics and functions of these forms of talk and the relationships among them in order to describe the conditions that seem to foster sustained "focused talk." As shown in Figure 5 above, the analysis identified distinct features of each form of talk and how the talk functioned within the discourse of the group. The following analysis of "task talk" describes the processes through which group members negotiated roles and norms for how to proceed with the discussion task. In and through this form of talk, group members established the discussion floor and oriented themselves to the task.

Forms and Functions of Group Talk

Task Talk

In the section above, "focused talk" was described as a complex interplay of high task engagement, high conversational involvement, and sophisticated intertextual linking through which students engaged in deliberative public discourse. Whereas "focused talk" was the form of talk in which group members most fully engaged in the explicit discussion tasks, "task talk" was procedural. The explicit discussion tasks provided the groups a framework within which they applied the discrete set of reasoning and analytic skills which fostered deliberative discussion. However, the discussion tasks did not determine for the groups how to actually proceed with the task. Each group was unique and interpreted the assigned task for itself (Halligan, 1988) and how it would proceed. Central to a group's ability to engage in "focused talk" were "task talk" episodes in which group members negotiated norms for proceeding with the discussion tasks. How the group proceeded with the task involved a process of task orientation and task recontextualization. This process is described below.

Task Orientation

In the excerpt below (March 28, 1997), Group B picked up reading <u>Opposing</u>
<u>Viewpoints</u> they began reading the previous class period (March 27). The explicit
discussion task in this speech event was to play the Reading Game as they read together the
Ehrlich and Ehrlich (1991) viewpoint article. In the exchange below, as per usual, the
group had circled their desks to convene as a group. Steven, who had been absent the
previous speech event, initiated the discussion. Turns across speakers were short and to
the point as the group located the page and paragraph where they left off reading the
previous speech event.[1]

1   Steven - You guys know where you ended off last?

2   Mark - Page 1-0-, 203. Something like that.

3   Shelley - We ended ooonnn [on] the end of 103.

4   Steven - "Prospects of the Future" or the last paragraph?

                        [

5   Shelley - No, the last paragraph.

                        [[

6   Mark- "So there is no reasonable."

7   Steven - OK I'm sorry. Want me to read?

8   Shelley - Mhmm (*affirming*).

9   Steven - OK. "So there's no responsible [reasonable] way that the hunger

        problem called 'only' one of distribution, even though redi, redi-distibulation

        [redistribution] of food resources would greatly aggravate [alleviate] hunger

        today...." (*begins the task and reads through page 104 to the end of the*

        article)

---

[1] In the transcript excerpt above, brackets ([and [[) indicate overlapping talk.

Steven's question (1) about where to pick up the reading functioned in several ways to facilitate the group's engaging in the discussion task. He initiated re-establishing the discussion floor as the group convened. Steven asked where to pick up reading and the others' responded "the end of 103" and "the last paragraph" which read "so there is no reasonable" (3-6), orienting the group to the discussion task, an important function of "task talk" in group discussion. Orientation is an initial and necessary stage of task development in group discourse (Bales, 1950, Bormann, 1975; Cragan & Wright, 1991). In this stage of task development, groups engage in defining what is to be done and how to proceed. Illustrated in the talk of Group B, Steven initiated this orientation and group members took up the task of identifying how to proceed. The other group members flipped through the article to identify where they had left off reading in the prior speech event.

Steven (7) offered to be the reader, confirmed by Shelley (8). He then began the discussion task of reading the text. The group moved directly into the discussion task, evident in Steven's reading and Mark's later question "Does any one know what mute, 'moot'?" (10). Mark sought explanation of the term "mute," a reading skill fostered in the Reading Game. "Task talk" was brief and direct in this episode, probably because the Reading Game was very familiar to the group and the group drew upon how to proceed with the task negotiated in past speech events. For example, it was not unusual for Steven to assume the role of reader when the group read aloud together. Consistent in the interviews with group members, Steven and Kate were described as "the readers." Mark, Hitoshi, and Shelley did not like to read aloud, so reading was typically shared between Steven and Kate, and occasionally Mike. Norms for proceeding with the task such as reading turns were established early on in the group's interaction. In the exchange above, "task talk" was an important and necessary precursor to "focused talk," orienting the group to and establishing how to proceed with the explicit discussion task.

Struggles with Task Orientation

The importance of orienting "task talk" is further illustrated in Group A's discussion of the Cohen (1996) article, *Ten Myths of Population* (March 25, 1997) described below. The group reconvened following Mr. Grant's reminding the class of the discussion task. Neil (1 below) opened the discussion floor with a reference to Mr. Grant's instructions. He then initiated the discussion task, rephrasing the first question the group began to respond to in the previous speech event. Although Neil began with a textual reference to the discussion task, there was no "task talk" move made by a group member to orient the group to the task. Essentially, Neil just began the task. Kristina (2) shifted the topic on the floor twice before there was uptake by other group members. She did not take up Neil's move (1) to begin discussing the questions, but instead commented about Mark and Kate from the other group. Kristina then shifted the topic to a weekend trip to Grand Rapids with friends (4) and other group members took up the topic. In the exchange below, Neil's attempt to begin the discussion task failed to elicit uptake from other group members. The lack of orienting "task talk" seemed to limit the group's ability to take up the discussion task. Instead, the floor was open to shifts of topics unrelated to the discussion task because proceeding with the task had not been (re-)established for this speech event.

1   Neil - He didn't say we had to do anything anyways. So we don't bother 'til he tells us. OK. *(papers rustle begins to read from question sheet about Ten Myths article)* How biased do you think Cohen is? "One. Relatively so, but not enough to discredit everything he says. He does stick with one basic viewpoint throughout the article. *(reading from the written response from previous speech event)*

2   Kristina - It's so funny Mark and Kate are in one group and we're in another group.

3   Neil - Yeah. Ummm. *(looking over paper)*

4   Kristina - We're going to Grand Rapids tonight.

5   Neil - Oh, how come? *(slight pause)* How come you're going?

6   Kristina - Huh? Um, I met a bunch of people at /inaudible/. Do you remember Greg

        LaPointe?

7   Andrea - Yeah.

8   Neil - Yeah.

9   Kristina - 'Member him? He's /inaudible/ and a bunch of my friends from East

        Lansing, we're going like to Grand Rapids.

10   Andrea - */inaudible/* had fun in Grand Rapids this summer.

The group's discussion of the weekend trip was interrupted by Mr. Grant (below 12-26). The group's typical arrangement was to sit in two short rows of desks, almost like a table. Neil and Kristina sat at the "head of the table" with other group members turned in their desks to face them. Mr. Grant entered the group floor and requested the group draw their desks into a circle. Illustrated in the exchange above, the group's relative inability to become focused on the discussion task was complicated by their physical proximity to one another. Mr. Grant stepped into the group to facilitate and mediate the group's abilities to engage in focused discussion as illustrated in the exchange below (12-26).

12   Mr. G - Here. Folks. Folks, let's get in something like a circle.

13   Neil - *(jokingly)* Our group prefers not to talk. It's kinda like that.

                                        [

14   Mr. Grant - Well, let's, let's set up the group in such a way the dynamic will

        help. Amy. *(helps Amy turn her desk)*

15   Bobby - Well, I can help a little bit. *(moves desk to face others)*

16   Kristina - Let me move this so you can stay there.

17   Mr. Grant - Yeah, let's get. There are ways to facilitate that and ways to *not*

facilitate it.

18   Kristina - Did your legs get cut off? (*Bobby banged his leg on the desk*)

19   Neil - OK.

         [[

20   Mr. Grant - OK There we go.

              [[

21   Bobby - That would suck big time.

22   Mr. Grant - Now, I know Bobby's not afraid to talk. (*group laughs*)

23   Bobby - Nay. I'm cool.

24   Mr. Grant - I wouldn't get to close to him because he keeps getting sick and he's

       probably communicable, but. (*teasing Bobby*)

25   Kristina - Great.

26   Bobby - Yeah. I'm getting, nearing death pretty soon.

Intuitively, as well as empirically founded (Galvin & Book, 1994; Knapp & Hall, 1992), a circle arrangement is more open and provides greater access to group members than table-like arrangements. In contrast and shown in Figure 6 below, Group B typically arranged themselves in a circle, a more conducive pattern for discussion. As Group A reconvened, the physical configuration of the group established, in part, how group members interacted and therefore, how they proceeded with the discussion task. Mr. Grant initiated a task move in requesting the group members arrange themselves in a manner more conducive to discussion. After having the students move their desks into a circle, Mr. Grant left the group. The group briefly talked about an up-coming psychology quiz and made a few jokes about its key being on Mr. Grant's desk. Then Neil (35 below) shifted the topic on the floor to the discussion task by referencing the questions, an intertextual move. This time there was uptake by other group members (35-42 below), the beginnings of a transition from "task talk" to "focused talk." Recalling that the first discussion

question asked students to determine "How balanced is the article; how biased is it," Neil's (35) reference implied the group should proceed on to the second question. Kristina (36), however, moved to return to the first question before proceeding to the second, "How serious do you think the issue of population is?" Other group members took up Neil's move (35-42), yet Kristina insisted on completing the first question (43, 45).[2]

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[2] In the transcript excerpts brackets ([[) indicate overlapping talk. Equal signs (=) indicate latching talk where one group member completes the utterance of another. Single underlines highlight repetition, reformulation, and the development of ideas in the groups' talk. Double underlines are used in addition to single underlines in excerpts where two ideas or two functions in the talk are co-occurring. The double underline is used to highlight the second function or pattern in the talk to distinguish it from the first. For example, in the excerpt above, the double underlines highlight the moves of Neil and Kristina for task leadership. The single underlines highlight the evolving idea about how serious is the population issue.

Group B

Hitoshi   Mike

Steven   Mark

Kate   Shelley

Group A

Neil   Kristina

Bobby

Andrea   Amy

Sara   Bobby

[Bobby rotated where he sat.]
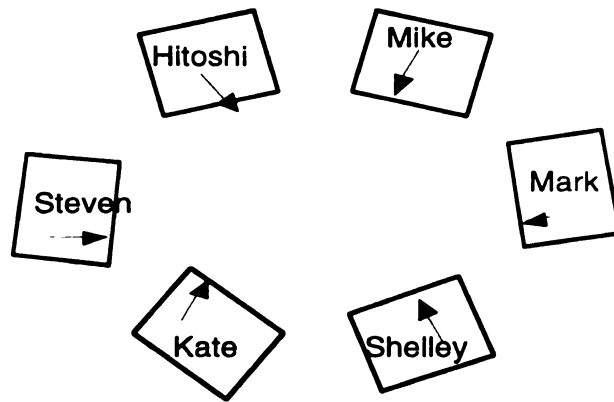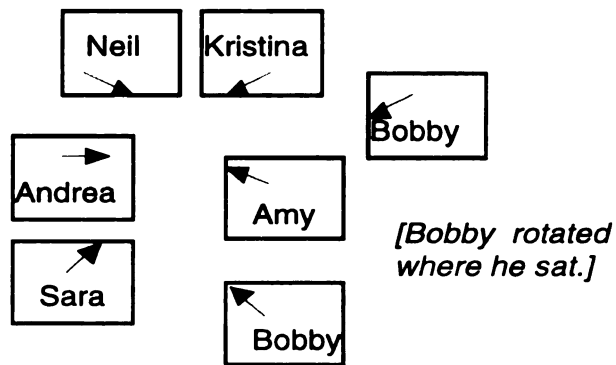
Figure 6: Typical Seating Arrangement of Groups

35   Neil - <u>Two.</u> "<u>How serious do you think the population issue is</u>?" (*reads question from sheet*)

36   Kristina - <u>We gotta. Let me read this</u>.

[[

37   Bobby - <u>I think it's pretty serious</u>. There's a lot of people hanging around.

[[

79

38   Kristina - "Relatively so, but not enough to discredit" (*reads response to Q1*

      written previous group session underneath the others' talk)

                                    [[

39   Sara - I don't think it's that serious.

40   Neil - I don't think it's that serious.

41   Bobby - There's a lot of people.

42   Neil - It could be. I could go either way.

43   Kristina - We need to talk about why

                              [[

44   Bobby - I mean I can't walk through the hallways at school. There's a lot of

      people.

                              [[

45   Kristina - We need to talk about why it's biased.

46   Neil - Why?

                        [

47   Kristina - Because that's what she said. (*one of the teachers*)

                        [

48   Neil - We do?

49   Kristina - *Yes!*

50   Neil - I didn't think it was that biased. I said relatively so. (*referring to what*

      he had written for the group). He does stick with one.

      Moving their desks in a circle seemed to facilitate the group's engagement in the
discussion task. Characteristically, the group reverted to "task talk" before engaging in
"focused talk." "Task talk" in the above exchange was evident in the textual references to
the questions and Kristina's moves to return to discussing how biased Cohen was in his

article (double underlined). Kristina's moves (43, 45) to return to the first question functioned to redirect how the group proceeded with the discussion task. Neil's reference to the second (35) question implied a different direction for proceeding with the discussion task and other group members seemed to take up Neil's direction for the discussion (single underlined). Throughout the episode of "task talk" it seemed that how to proceed with the task was never fully established because two proposals were on the floor and neither fully taken up. In the exchange below, the group began to settle in on the discussion task, however, the topic shifted easily into a digressive episode (described in detail later in the chapter).

61   Neil - OK, Bobby. *(begins to write response to Q2)* Bobby thought. Do you

         think it's a big problem or like just kinda like a problem?

                            [[

62   Kristina - Now Bobby /inaudible/ *(teasing)*

63   Bobby - It's kind of a problem. I mean, you drive down highway during five

         o'clock traffic and like

             [

64   Neil - This is true.

65   Bobby - and you're like stopped for five hours.

66   Neil - <u>I got so pissed off yesterday</u>. I was coming back from downtown

         yesterday. *(begins to tell story)*

                         [

67   Kristina – Watch your potty mouth would you please.

68   Neil. - Who cares. OK

69   Bobby – Yeah the microphone is on.

70   Neil - <u>I was coming down from Pennsylvania and I got behind</u> these two old

         farts. And they're like beat up old trucks and they wouldn't pass each

other....*(continues with story).*

Initially, it appeared the group began an episode of "focused talk" as they converged on the questions and Cohen's viewpoint. However, whether the discussion topic was bias or the seriousness of the issue was never fully clarified by the group. It was relatively easy for the discussion to shift from the discussion task to Neil's rush hour traffic story (66, 70). Although topically related to Bobby's reasoning about why population was an issue (63-65), Neil's traffic story shifted the topic on the floor and the nature of the discussion away from deliberative discussion.

Marking Group Boundaries

An important function of "task talk" that did not happen for Group A in this speech event was marking the boundaries of the forms of talk episodes. Marking clear boundaries among the forms of talk indicated consensus among group members as to what were the agreed upon norms of participation. Boundaries of the forms of talk also indicated that episodes of talk held meaning to the group. Without having clearly established for themselves what the topic of discussion was, lack of agreement and meaning lead Group A to struggle with coherence in their discourse. Not only did the discussion topics shift easily, but the transition from explicitly task-oriented talk (the movement from establishing how to proceed with the discussion task) to focused talk (that is, engaging in the discussion task) was blurred. This was typcial of Group A and atypical of Group B which was better able to sustain focused discussion of the issue.

"Task talk" was central to how the group negotiated proceeding with the discussion task. Bales (1950) found that through a communicative process, groups seek to maintain equilibrium. In part, equilibrium was established through orientation to the task, then the working out of facilitative norms to proceed with the task. This process however was not lock-step, but happened in recurring and uneven patterns of discourse (Bormann, 1975). Prior to the exchange below (March 25, 1997), Group B concluded a short episode of "focused talk." Mr. Grant had walked over near the group and Mark (6) invited him onto

the discussion floor and (8) initiated an episode of "task talk," seeking clarification of how to proceed with the third question, "What do you think was correct, what was incorrect about the myths presented by Cohen?" Mr. Grant talked the group through an approach to the third question. Then, Kate (14) shifted the topic dramatically, asking if Mr. Grant had any hand lotion. The digression from "task talk" was brief as Shelley (19) moved to begin the discussion task.

6   Mark - Mr. G.

7   Mr. Grant - Yes.

8   Mark - We can't answer number three. Because it's like, all different. There's a whole bunch of different viewpoints.

9   Mr. Grant - There you go. Then do that. I mean don't worry about being precise. But I do want you to talk about what you think is right, what you think is wrong. If you can't come to consensus, just say we couldn't come to consensus on this part.

10   Mark - So you want us to talk about each.

11   Mr. Grant - Yeah. Why don't you go ahead and just buzz through them and see what you can do. This is not a precise test.

12   Shelley - OK.

13   Mr. Grant - I mean I know which ones I think make the most sense and which I'd quibble over.

14   Kate - Do you have any lotion.

15   Mr. Grant - Geez. Ya know. I left my purse at home today. (*group laughs*)

16   Kate - We have lotion at work. (*chuckling*)

17   Mr. Grant - Do you. (*Mr. Grant and Shelley laugh*)

18   Kate - I don't carry lotion with me. (pause) I left my purse at home. (*inaudible*) lotion.

19   Shelley - So, should we look at the statements and just decide whether we think

they're correct or incorrect.

20   Mark - All right. Ummm.

In the exchange above, "task talk" occurred following a short episode of "focused

talk." Concluding that episode created a juncture in the discussion, providing the space for

the "task talk" episode above. The "task talk" initiated by Mark functioned to engage the

group in a process of redefining and reinforcing how to proceed with the discussion task.

Cazden (1988), drawing upon Lemke, Anderson, Vygotsky, and others, defined this

process as recontextualization. Recontextualization provided the group the means to "take

stock" of where they were with the discussion task. Mark had asked Mr. Grant "So you

want us to talk about each?" Shelley (19) proposed, "So should we look at the

statements," indicated a turning inward of the group which functioned to recontextualize the

task from Mr. Grant's task to the group's task. The shift from "you want" to "should we"

cued the group to shift from "task talk" to "focused talk" and marked the boundary of the

group and the forms of talk. Episodes of "task talk" typically occurred at juncture points

which marked the boundaries between the two forms of talk indicating that the episodes

had meaning to the group. "Task talk" in these instances functioned as a conduit between

"focused talk" episodes and as a resource for the group to create and sustain coherence of

the discussion.

Cohesion and Coherence

"Task talk" functioned to create and sustain the boundaries in the group.

Establishing boundaries between the "we" (the group) and the "they" (others) is an

important function of maintaining group cohesion. Cohesiveness is the bridge that socially

connects members of a group; groups must have a sense of "togetherness" and a

"willingness to belong" (Cragan & Wright, 1991). Drawing upon Goffman's dramatistic

theory of interaction, Group B constructed a discourse space that was difficult for outsiders

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to penetrate. The bond group members constructed protected the discursive boundaries they established through which they identified themselves as a group. This conception of "cohesion" is different from the linguistic definition put forth by Halliday and Hasan (1976). They defined "cohesion" as a sematic concept, referring to the relationships of meaning within a text. Cohesion occurs where the interpretatioin of some element of the text is dependent on another element (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Cohesion in this study is defined as the bond group members construct which protects the discursive boundaries through which they identify themselves as a group (Goffman, 1959) and increases as norms for interaction stabilize within the group (Cragan & Wright, 1991).

In the exchange described above (6-20), Mr. Grant was invited to enter the discussion. Mark discursively moved Mr. Grant on to the discussion floor. Shelley (19) turned from Mr. Grant inwardly to the group and said, "So, should we look at the statements and just decide whether we think they're correct or incorrect," effectively moving Mr. Grant off the discussion floor. Mr. Grant listened in for a moment, then left the group. It was not uncommon for Group B to allow outsiders onto the discussion floor during episodes of "task talk." On occasion, such as the exchange above, they extended the invitation most often seeking task clarification. Typically, however, "focused talk" episodes excluded outsiders. Thus, "task talk" episodes functioned to define the boundaries between group members and outsiders that helped the group create and maintain cohesiveness. A group's ability to navigate these shifts in talk may ultimately enable it to achieve sustained focus discussion.

Although Group A seemed to struggle with coherence and cohesion, the exchange below (March 25, 1997) illustrates another instance of how "task talk" facilitated group members in defining the social and physical boundaries between members and outsiders. Linde (1993) defines coherence as a property of texts derived from the relations of parts of the text that bear on other parts and the text as a whole. Coherence is understood as a cooperative achievement and not an absolute property of an unsituated or decontextualized

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text. In the exchange below, Group A was engaged in a short episode of "focused talk" when Ms. Hahn, a teacher, floated over to the group to listen. As Ms. Hahn approached the group, Kristina shifted the topic on the floor and the nature of the discussion, inviting Ms. Hahn onto the discussion floor. The shift seemed abrupt, not at a natural juncture point in the discussion. Rather, it seemed prompted by an outsider approaching the group.

89   Neil - Well like go to Montana too. There's like one person per fifty square miles. You know, there's no population problem there.

90   Kristina - There's no population problem here.

91   Neil - There's like no neighbor within twenty-five miles, you know and that's their population problem. *(group laughs)*

92   Kristina - Um the last question here, would you help us with it? *(to Ms. Hahn who came over to listen to group)* I don't know what they're talking about.

93   Ms. Hahn - Mhmm.

94   Neil - Yeah. What does he want us to put. Correct or wrong? One word or what? *(he referring to Mr. Grant)*

95   Ms. Hahn - Justify.

96   Neil - For what though? For every viewpoint or the whole article?

97   Kristina - I would say for the whole article. He's on track with

[

98   Neil - Well cause I don't agree with the entire article. I mean cause like some of these. Like ah which one is it?

99   Sara - Article six.

100   Neil - Article six we didn't really agree with. And which one is it?

101   Ms. Hahn - Well if there are specifics, you may want to go article by article.

It was customary for the teachers to float around to each group to listen in and occasionally ask questions about the group's progress. Kristina (92) turned to address Ms. Hahn and shifted the talk from "focused talk" to "task talk" and how to proceed with the task. The group discussed briefly with Ms. Hahn an approach to addressing question three. Ms. Hahn then left the group. In this exchange, the talk shifted as an outsider entered the group. "Focused talk" was characterized as a complex interplay of high task engagement, high conversational involvement, and intertextual linking. "Focused talk" allowed for few entry points into the discussion by an outsider. In contrast, "task talk" had avenues for outsiders to enter the discussion. For teachers, clarification of the discussion task or asking how the group was progressing were a typical entry point onto the discussion floor, both procedural. On occasion, when the outsider was another student, the entry point was often something like "So, where are you guys at?" a procedural question. In either case, an invitation from the group typically occurred first before the outsider entered the discussion. An important function of "task talk" in these speech events was marking boundaries, both those among the forms of talk and between member and outsider.

Productive Digressive Talk

Characteristic of small group discourse, groups construct junctures in the context of their discussions which Poole (1983) describes as break points in the work of the discussion task. According to Luft (1984), it is not unusual for discussion groups to regress after having made significant progress in the discussion. Digressions typically occurred when the group came to a conclusion or a point of closure within a discussion. Described in the section above, for example, these junctures occurred when groups recontextualized the discussion task. In other instances, in the exchanges described below, the groups engaged in a form of talk in which they "took a break" from the intense work of "focused talk" and "task talk." Productive digressions occurred when the group shifted to a topic unrelated to the discussion task which changed the nature of the discussion floor.

Although less frequent than "focused talk" or "task talk" episodes, digressions appeared to serve important functions in the groups' discourse.

Digressive Talk and Multiple Floors

Group A (March 31, 1997) below engaged in finalizing a written response to one of the questions about the Ehrlich Opposing Viewpoints article, concluding an episode of "focused talk." As Group A concluded their discussion about their written response, they entered into "task talk" (47-52). As Neil and Sara focused on writing the response, other group members took a break from the task. Kristina (55) mentioned to Sara she liked her pen and a moment later introduced the topic of a movie she had seen (61). As Sara finished writing the response, the group engaged in a short digression. Neil (65) took up the discussion task, marking the shift with "OK" and then began reading the article. Occupied with writing the response, Sara's (66) entering the "break moment" was delayed.

52   Neil - We got a little more room here. We'll just have one more point. And then I'll read it so. I'll finish reading, so. *(to Amy about the response they were writing)*

53   Sara - What was it?

54   Neil - There wasn't one yet cause /inaudible/ finish the viewpoint. *(reading bottom of page 103)* "so there is no reasonable way that

[

55   Kristina - That's a nice pen.

56   Sara - Thank you.

57   Neil - "no reasonable way that the hunger problem can be called only one of distribution, even though redistribution of food resources would greatly alleviate hunger today..." *(continues reading on through page 104 to end of section; reads very very fast)* OK. Here's the last point then. The human, let's see. All right. This sentence, last paragraph that starts with

"action to end the population explosion humanely" OK? And ends with "on the human agenda." Just write that part down. From action on the population to on the human agenda.

58   Sara - "Action to end the population" then what?

59   Neil - Write "action to end the population explosion humanely and start" blah blah blah until you get to "on a human agenda."

60   Sara - OK.

61   Kristina - Know what movie I saw this weekend?

62   Neil - That's the last part. *(to Sara)* What? *(to Kristina)*

63   Kristina - /Randy and the Coaster (??)/ *(unclear)*

64   Andrea - I know that movie.

65   Neil - OK. *(resumes reading page 104 next section)* "A clear choice. Of course, if we do wake up and succeed in controlling population, that will still leave us with all the other thorny problems..."

66   Sara - I know isn't it. This pen is like a great pen. *(holds up pen and admires it)*

67   Neil - Huh?

68   Kristina - Aw. *(acknowledges Sara)*

69   Neil - *(picks up reading)* "Religious prejudice or sexism; it will just buy us the opportunity to do so. As the old saying goes, whatever your cause, it is a lost cause without population control." That's an old saying?

70   Kristina - I never heard it.

Characteristic of this form of talk, the digression above occurred at a conversationally appropriate juncture in the discussion. The group completed an episode of "focused talk" and therefore, the "break" did not disrupt or interfere with the coherence of the discussion. That the "digressive talk" was bounded by two sustained episodes of "focused talk" was an

indication of agreed upon segments of meaning within the group's discourse. However, the task did not disappear from the floor as other group members "took a break."

Edelsky (1981) distinguished two dimensions of floor: who is speaking on the floor and the acknowledged what's-going-on within a psychological time/space. Illustrated above were multiple conversational floors (Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, 1982) that often occurred with episodes of productive "digressive talk." In the exchange above, Neil and Sara worked on the group's written response to the second question, maintaining the discussion task floor (52-54, 57-60, 62, 65). While they talked about the response, other group members talked about Sara's pen and a movie which functioned to created a second conversational floor (55-56, 66; 63-64). Neil (67-69) hesitated a moment and then resumed with the task of reading the Ehrlichs' (1991) text. With Neil's initiative, the group began another episode of "focused talk," evidenced by his reading and the response to "the old saying" (69-70). The digressive "break" fostered the consensual nature of the group members' involvement in the discussion and norms for appropriate shifts among topics and forms of talk.

Productive Digressions and Group Cohesion

Group B, in the exchange below (March 28, 1997), engaged in an episode of "focused talk" as they discussed Zinsmeister's (1991) thesis in the second Opposing Viewpoints article. Kate (100) summarized the point she and Mark constructed in their effort to clarify for Kate Zinsmeister's thesis. Shelley (101), satisfied with the explanation, gave a confirming "OK." Mark (103) moved to bring closure to the episode, confirmed by Kate and Shelley (104-105). There was a pause in the talk as group members wrote about the article on their matrices. (A standing task throughout the course was to complete a matrix which was structured such that students could compare the viewpoints presented on an issue in the various texts they read and viewed.)

It was at this juncture in the discussion Kate (108) introduced on the floor a topic unrelated to the discussion task. The group had finished the immediate task and "took a

90

break" from the work of "focused talk." Kate (110) introduced the topic of spring break, poking fun at the fact that she mistakenly thought it was the following week and was disappointed. Shelley (111) took up the topic and added she was disappointed too. The discussion continued, evolving into a discussion about drinking at parties. Several characteristics of productive "digressive talk" are illustrated in the exchange. High conversational involvement was evident in the overlapping turns (123-126) and in the evolution of the topic as it "chained-out" in the talk (Cragan & Wright, 1991) beginning with spring break and ending with the talk about alcohol at parties.

105   Kate - Yeah. /inaudible/

        slight pause - papers flipping - jotting down on matrices

106   Mark - I'll erase that. (*hear erasing on paper*)

107   Kate - (*reads something inaudible*)

        Pause

108   Kate - Is today the 28th?

109   Mark - Yeah.

110   Kate -- I thought that um next week was spring break. (*group laughs*) Isn't

        that great.

111   Shelley - It should be. All my friends from other schools are going on spring

        break except for us. It's so depressing.

112   Kate - I'm not going anywhere. Who cares really. It's just high school. But

        I thought that the day after my birthday I could go out and party (*Mark

        laughs*)

113   Mark - When was that?

114   Kate - My birthday was on Sunday. God, what a let down.

115   Mike - Your birthday is on Easter?

116   Kate - Yeah.

117   Mike - What are you gonna do?

118   Kate - Um, well. I'm house sitting (*groups laughs*) but um

119   Shelley - I know isn't that perfect. House sitting.

120   Kate - Yeah I know. I'm not going to do anything stupid. I told my parents
       to make me margaritas.

121   Steven - Well ya know what teenagers can do if their parents ain't home.

122   Kate - Neah. I don't party. I don't like to party like have parties and go to
       parties.

123   Steven - No. It's not bad to have parties. There's nothing wrong with it.
       It's just with people coming over with booze.

124   Kate - People are disrespectful and

                            [

125   Steven - that's what I don't like.

                            [

126   Kate - and people can get hurt.

127   Steven - Having loud music. I mean there's nothing wrong with that. But
       when they start bring over the booze things get out of hand quick.

128   Kate - I just party with my friends and my parents.

129   Steven - I'd be the first one to speak up and say get the H out of here.

"Digressive talk" was remote from the discussion task, yet was important in terms of relationship building among group members and fostered a context which influenced the group's ability to engage in "focused talk" episodes. Tannen (1989) found conversational content that appeared trivial was actually important in establishing relationships that made more risky conversation easier for participants. Talk that included disclosure of more personal information fostered trust, empathy, and comfort among participants in the discourse (Burbules, 1993). In the exchange above, Group B members discussed how

they felt about alcohol at parties, disclosing personal beliefs and values. This instance of "digressive talk" functioned as a resource for the group to disclose more about themselves, thereby fostering a group context in which members might feel more comfortable expressing, questioning, and rehearsing their ideas in "focused talk" episodes.

Unproductive Digressive Talk

Described in the analyses above, "task talk" and productive digressions served important relational and intellectual functions in terms of the groups' abilities to engage in "focused talk" episodes. In contrast, unproductive "digressive talk" was interruptive, often thwarting the group's engagement in focused and cooperative discussion. Where the other forms of talk honored conversational appropriateness, unproductive digressions violated it. Whereas "break moment" digressions occurred at juncture points of "focused talk," unproductive digressions occurred within episodes of "focused talk" and "task talk." These occurrences interrupted the momentum of the group toward engaging in focused and sustained discussion and often fragmented the coherence of the talk. In some instances, the occurrence of "digressive talk" was less disruptive than others. For example, in the exchange below, Group B was engaged in an episode of "task talk" (March 25, 1997). Mark sought clarification of the discussion task having invited Mr. Grant on to the discussion floor.

10   Mark - So you want us to talk about each.

11   Mr. Grant - Yeah. Why don't you go ahead and just buzz through them and
       see what you can do. This is not a precise test.

12   Shelley - OK.

13   Mr. Grant - I mean I know which ones I think make the most sense and
       which I'd quibble over.

14   Kate - Do you have any lotion?

15   Mr. Grant - Geez. Ya know. I left my purse at home today. (*group laughs*)

93

16   Kate - <u>We have lotion at work</u>. (*chuckling*)

17   Mr. Grant - <u>Do you</u>. (*Mr. Grant and Shelley laugh*)

18   Kate - <u>I don't carry lotion with</u> me. (*pause*) <u>I left my purse at home</u>. (*inaudible*) lotion.

19   Shelley - So, should we look at the statements and just decide whether we think they're correct or incorrect.

Mr. Grant offered the group an approach to the discussion task. In the midst of task orientation and recontextualization, Kate (14) asked for hand lotion. Mr. Grant teased Kate as they engaged in a brief exchange. Shelley (19) moved to return to the task and Mr. Grant left the group. Kate's introduction of hand lotion was unrelated to the topic and the nature of the discussion underway. The group engaged in clarifying the task, a precursor to their engagement in "focused talk." Although the digression from the discussion of how to proceed with the task was minor in this exchange, it delayed the group momentarily from pursuing the task.

In other cases, "digressive talk" more seriously impeded the group's ability to engage in "focused talk." Group A (below) was engaged in reading and discussing the Erhlichs' (1991) <u>Opposing Viewpoints</u> article. The group challenged an assertion made in the article, arguing it was a "fallacy" and an "assumption." Characteristic of "focused talk," the group questioned the author of the text, drawing upon the reasoning and analytic skills fostered in the curriculum. Their use of "fallacy" and "assumption", language appropriated from instruction early in the unit, and the rapid, overlapping talk gave evidence to their engagement in "focused talk." Seemingly from nowhere, Kristina (81 below) abruptly shifted the topic on the floor and the nature of the discussion. Neil (82), with some confusion in his voice, responded to the dramatic shift. Bobby (83) took up the topic, playing the game Kristina had introduced.

77   Bobby - But if you think about it. In 1960 the population wasn't /inaudible –

      overlapping/

                              [

78   Neil - That could be considered a fallacy

                              [

79   Kristina - It's an assumption.

80   Neil - It's an assumption if all it's saying is that you know, A is directly

      related to B. Just because you have more people you have. Which it could be

      true but you know it could be not be possible too.

81   Kristina - How are your dogs?

82   Neil - How are my dogs???? Fine.

83   Bobby - How are your dogs, Kristina? (laughing)

84   Kristina - I don't have any dogs. I have a ferret.

85   Bobby - How is your ferret?

86   Kristina - Good, /inaudible/

87   Neil - (resumes reading bottom page 104) "Or we can change our collective

      minds and take the measures necessary to lower global birth rates dramatically.

      People can learn to treat growth as the cancer like disease it is and move

      toward a sustainable society...." These are the people like save

                              [

88   Kristina - All these

                              [

89   Neil - the world, kill yourself.

90   Kristina - Yeah. (laughs)

91   Neil - (continues reading) "The rich can make helping the poor an urgent

      goal, instead of seeking more wealth and useless military advantage over one

another. Then humanity might have a chance to manage all those"

92   Andrea - <u>Did you have a good Easter</u>?

93   Sara - <u>Hmmm</u>?

94   Andrea - <u>Did you have good time at Easter</u>?

93   Neil - (*stops for a moment then continues*) "other seemingly intractable
problems. It is a challenging prospect, but at least it will give our species a
shot at creating a decent future for itself. More immediately and concretely,
taking action now will give our children and their children the possibility of
decent lives." OK, but they don't want us to have children so how is it going
to give them a decent life? These guys are whacked. OK. If - you-must -
lower birth rate. (*begins to write response*)

Kristina's (81) asking Neil "How are your dogs?" brought the discussion task on
the floor to a halt. The group was in a fairly intensive discussion when the "digressive
talk" interrupted the flow of ideas, disrupting coherence of the discourse. Neil (87)
returned to the discussion task, however, he did not return to the discussion that was
interrupted. Instead, he moved on to what seemed logically the next step had the group
come to some conclusion about whether the statement in the text was a fallacy. Neil (87)
moved on to reading the next section of the article. It appeared the group had re-engaged in
the discussion task when Andrea (92) asked Sara if she had a good Easter, interrupting
Neil's reading. Neil paused and then resumed reading the text while Sara, Andrea, and
Amy talked about their Easter breaks. Unproductive "digressive talk" functioned to
interrupt the momentum the group had constructed as they questioned the authors of the
text. The abrupt topic shift violated norms of conversational appropriateness that otherwise
facilitated the group engaging in "focused talk".

Focused Talk

"Focused talk" episodes occurred when the groups most fully engaged in the explicit discussion task, applying the discrete analytic and reasoning skills they were learning and practicing to the texts they read, viewed, and discussed. Characteristic of "focused talk" episodes were the intertextual relationships group members constructed within an episode. A high degree of conversational involvement occurred in these episodes as well (Tannen, 1989), both with one another and with the authors of the written texts they read and discussed. The excerpt below illustrates "focused talk's" intertextual nature and the links group members constructed. Group A engaged in reading and discussing *The Ten Myths of Population* (March 25, 1997) and constructing their response to the second question "How serious do you think the population issue is?"

Intertextual Links in Focused Talk

Prior to the exchange below, Kristina and Neil were haggling over their response to the first question when Neil asked who thought population was a problem. Bobby responded that he thought it was "kind of a problem" and gave the example of traffic at five o'clock. Neil took up Bobby's example and shifted the topic on the floor to a story he told about rush hour traffic. The discussion topic shifted from the task topic to Neil's story, an episode of "digressive talk" (described in the above section). In the first exchange of this episode (73-80), the group worked to re-establish the discussion task on the floor following Neil's story. Kristina initiated the discussion task by referencing the video *Zero Population* the class had watched just prior to convening in their small groups. Neil (76) took up Kristina's move and reverted back to the topic on the floor prior to his telling the rush hour traffic story. In addition, in the exchange below, the repetition of key phrases (e.g. "it could be" 76-79) signal conversational involvement among group members (Tannen, 1989).

73   Kristina - You know this <u>video we just saw</u>. Yeah, they showed us how

      population is accumulating, accumulating, accumulating.

74   Bobby - <u>Yeah.</u> Boring stuff.

75   Kristina - But. Shhhh. <u>It's my turn</u>.

76   Neil - <u>OK. Hold on</u>. Does everybody think it's not a problem, never will be a

      problem, or it's not a problem right now <u>but it could be in</u> the future?

77   Andrea - I think <u>it could be</u>.

78   Sara - <u>Could be.</u>

79   Kristina - I <u>don't think it could be</u> 'cause we could just kill people off.

80   Neil - Rest of the group, except for Kristina. *(group laughs)* Kristina.

In the exchange above were several characteristic discourse moves indicating the

beginning of a "focused talk" episode. Kristina (73) constructed an intertextual link

between the discussion topic, the population issue, and the video the class had watched.

Her reference to the video was a strong intertextual link that served an important function in

the group's ability to re-engage in the explicit task and enter into "focused talk". The

reference to the video Kristina made brought to the discussion floor a text known to all of

the group members and one which was directly related to the discussion task. This link

functioned to shift the floor back to the discussion task and opened the floor to any group

member because it was a familiar text to the group. Kristina also attempted to further the

discussion with a new idea, drawing on the video as a source to raise a question about the

seriousness of population growth. Characteristic of "focused talk" episodes, discourse

moves that launched the group into more focused engagement in the discussion task were

intertextual moves.

The social and relational functions of "focused talk" are connected, illustrated in the

dense intertextual links group members constructed and the co-occurence with thematic

coherence and conversational involvement. Neil (76) took up the discussion task and linked it to the specific topic discussed prior to his telling the traffic story. In that preceding exchange, Neil had asked "Who thinks it's a problem?" and later repeated his question (76). Repeating the question was an intertextual discourse move, linking the prior exchange to the on-going text of the group's discussion. Neil's intertextual move (76) functioned as a resource for the group to create coherence and as an entry point for involvement in the discussion (Tannen, 1995) as well. Kristina introduced the video, which linked to the prior discussion, but moved toward a new idea not yet discussed. Neil literally said "Hold on," (76) as if to first have everyone in the group "on the same wavelength" (Edelsky, 1981) before moving the discussion toward a new idea. Other group members took up Neil's question, evident in the repetition of "it could be" (76, 77, 78, 79) across speakers and turns.

Idea-evolution and Intertextual Links

Having re-established the discussion task, the group took up the topic Kristina initiated. High task engagement was evident in the exchange (below 80-91) as the group engaged in extending and modifying ideas introduced by various members. Characteristic of "focused talk" episodes, the group engaged in a process of idea-evolution (Hirokawa & Johnston, 1989) in which members introduced and explored ideas and textual fragments from various sources, including their own discourse, in an effort to construct meaning (Hartman, 1995). Ideas offered on the floor were repeated and reformulated (Tannen, 1989) as the group manipulated these ideas in ways that transformed their meaning (Rossi, 1995). The repetition of key terms and phrases (e.g. "I mean," or "no population problem"), the highly overlapping talk, and the extension of other speakers images are examples of ideas and idea fragments group members linked and are indicative of conversational involvement.

81   Kristina - Um anyways. They [the video] didn't show the death

rate on there. Like how many people per that million that survived

and it's

[

82   Bobby – Well they did have the plague on there. I mean you saw a

bunch of things that disappeared.

83   Kristina - I mean there's a lot of things that vary when it comes to population.

There's a lot of infant deaths and yeah, you can graph a lot of births but you know

maybe five percent survive out of that one year.

[

84   Neil - Well. You can't argue it. I mean population is growing, it's just whether

it's ever going to be a problem. You can't argue that population isn't growing

because it's *obvious* it is. I mean even if it's not growing super rate, it's always

growing.

[

85   Kristina - Oh I know, but I'm just saying =

[[

86   Neil - Because not enough people

[[

87   Kristina - = they're making it look there it was just like cht cht cht cht.

[[

88   Bobby - All you gotta do is walk down the street in New York City, it's like

China

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89   Neil - Well like go to <u>Montana</u> too. There's like one person per fifty square miles. You know, there's <u>no population problem</u> there.

90   Kristina - There's <u>no population problem here</u>.

91   Neil - There's like no neighbor within twenty-five miles, you know and that's their <u>population problem</u>. (*group laughs*)

Kristina referred to the video (81), an intertextual link, the group had watched to raise a point that the makers of the video did not include death rates of infants, only birth rates. In the exchange above, Kristina (81-83) referenced birth rates and death rates, critiquing the video. Birth rates and death rates were central concepts in prior whole class discussions as key demographic indicators of population growth. Kristina linked these concepts to question the video's premise that global population is accumulating and therefore, threatening global welfare. In raising her question and drawing upon various texts to construct her point, she followed through with the reasoning and analytic skills that comprise the overarching framework of the Global Studies course. Bobby (82) also drew on the video and countered Kristina's point saying the video did show instances of death rates like the great plague in Europe. Neil (84) furthered the discussion and argued that population growth was undeniable. The point-counterpoint exchanges illustrated the increasing complexity of associations among ideas drawn out in "focused talk" episodes.

Increased Conversational Involvement

Evident in the exchange above (81-92) was not only an increase in the complexity of the ideas on the floor, but in group members' conversational involvement as well. As Kristina asserted her point, Bobby interjected that the video did show an example of death rates. As the discussion continued, the group's talk became increasingly rapid and overlapping. Ideas flowed freely on the floor as group members drew various associations about the population issue. The overlapping talk in the exchange above was not interruptive, but rather indicative of conversational involvement and cooperation (Tannen,

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1989). The idea-evolution that occurred required among group members a kind of cooperation which allowed the ideas to "chain out" (Cragan & Wright, 1991). Ideas "chained out" as group members thought of and shared ideas and other group members heard and associated those ideas with ones of their own. The high task engagement and conversational involvement in this exchange were typical of "focused talk" episodes.

Increased Complexity and Exploratory Talk

Illustrated in Group A's discussion, "focused talk" was characterized by increasingly complex intertextual linking as students explored ideas brought to the floor, both those they drew from texts they read or viewed and those they generated. Like Group A, Group B (below) seemed to experience the idea-evolution process as they discussed the Zinsmeister (1991) Opposing Viewpoint article (March 28, 1997). There appeared to be a strong connection between the complex intertextual relationships students constructed and what Barnes (1990) called exploratory talk. Barnes (1990, 1993) described exploratory talk as a process in which ideas are tentatively asserted, questioned, re-articulated and new interrelated meanings are created. The "focused talk" episode below illustrates the movement of idea-evolution as the group questioned and re-articulated Zinsmeister's thesis, leading to the articulation of their own understanding. This movement of ideas in the "focused talk" episode was an intertextually discursive process.

The following example illustrates exploratory talk. Group B had just finished reading the Zinsmeister (1991) article in which he argued that the population growth theory was incorrect and that reduction efforts had lead to violence and the collapse of Third World governments (Opposing Viewpoints, 1991, p. 105). Shelley (80) initiated a discussion about Zinsmeister's thesis. She began by referencing "the second group," the second of the two Opposing Viewpoint articles the group read. Her talk was fragmented at first as she worked to articulate her thinking to the group. She hesitated at times, frequently "ummed" as a placeholder of her thinking, and hedged with phrases like "I don't know."

102

80   Shelley - Um. The second group went. Um. The guys, the author didn't

really seem to say anything. But he didn't really think population growth was

going to be depleting any sort of resources or anything that was really bad. I

can't really agree with that. But, I don't know. Um, basically he talked

about you have to lower birth. There's a different birth rate for different

countries for different demographic standards and a lot of that. And then. I

still couldn't get from the whole thing, I didn't really understand. Even at the

end after we read it all, what he was trying to tell me. Specifically.

Shelley specifically referred to the author (Zinsmeister) (e.g. "the author didn't," "he

talked") and paraphrased what she thought was his central thesis. Her references to the

author functioned to ventriloquate (Wertsch, 1991) or bring his voice to the discussion

floor. Bringing the author's voice to the floor was an intertextual move linking his idea to

the text of the group's discussion. The voice of the author became another voice on the

floor against which the group could push its own thinking.

Shelley's move facilitated the group's engagement in the discussion task in several

complex ways. She made the shift on the floor from reading the article to discussing it, a

discourse move indicative of high task engagement. The "focused talk" episode began with

a question about the author's thesis, an application of the reasoning and analytic skills

fostered in the curriculum. Shelley paraphrased Zinsmeister's thesis and then stated she

disagreed. She went on to further struggle aloud with her thinking which functioned as an

invitation for other group members to respond.

81   Mark - He's trying to say, uh, that it's not a problem.

82   Shelley - I know that but

                        [

83   Kate - He's saying that um there's countries that are overpopulated and they

have their society together. They have money, they have. They don't have

any problems. Like he brought up Japan.

84   Shelley - Uh-huh.

85   Kate - And then he said that there's other countries that are very poorly

populated

[

86   Mark - Uh-huh.

[

87   Kate - and have a very poor life style.

Shelley's inquiry became the group's inquiry sustaining both involvement and

intertextuality in the talk. Mark (81) responded to Shelley's question with some hesitancy.

Shelley had initiated the discussion, made the assertion that she disagreed with Zinsmeister,

and ended with saying she did not understand his thesis. Mark, in an effort to respond to

Shelley, stated that Zinsmeister thought population was not the problem. She (82) pushed

the question further as Kate (83 above) took up Mark's response. Kate drew from the

article and expounded upon Mark's comment in an effort to clarify for Shelley the author's

point. Kate's explanation was her interpretation of the arguments Zinsmeister made in

support of his thesis. Not quite satisfied, Shelley (88 below) repeated back to the group

what she understood them to say and sought further clarification and explanation. The

idea-evolution process was evident in the group's efforts to clarify their understanding of

Zinsmeister's thesis.

A pattern within this process emerged in the group's discussion. A probing

question was asked, an explanation was offered, another question asked, and another

expounding response was given. Shelley continued to probe her question (below 88-102).

Following Kate and Mark's efforts to explain the author's thesis, Shelley (88) again asked

a clarifying question, restating what she understood them to say. Her question lead Kate

and Mark to expound upon their first effort, engaging them in further developing their ideas.

88   Shelley - Mhmm. So <u>he's basically saying that he doesn't think</u> that population doesn't have anything to do with resources.

89   Mark - Not *anything*. <u>He's saying</u> that =

90   Shelley - = or has limited

[

91   Mark - <u>He's saying that</u> people like. As long as we're here like to think about what we're going to do, like people. And we solve our problems like he's saying that. Like he said we're not only consumers, we're producers.

92   Shelley - (*lots of affirming mhmms*)

93   Mark - <u>He's saying</u> like we can also produce what we need to because we're. Well, we're consuming. <u>He says</u> that no matter how many people there are, there's, the more the people are, the more we're going to be able to produce. And then that's gonna even out with the amount we're gonna consume.

94   Shelley - <u>I'm trying</u>. What I'm trying to do is to figure some sort of like. What, <u>what is his thesis</u> besides the fact, you know, the local things? <u>I'm trying to figure</u> out exactly.

95   Mark - The underlined sentence.

96   Shelley - What. This right here? "The author states that the population explosion theory is incorrect?"

97   Mark - Mhmm.

98   Shelley - Just that? <u>That's all he's trying to say</u>?

99   Mark - Mhmm.

100   Kate - <u>He's saying</u> that humans work, we can hold our own.

101   Shelley - OK.

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102   Kate - You know.

Bringing the Author to the Discussion Floor

Mentioned above and highlighted in the transcript excerpts is the interplay of the voice of the author on the floor as his own voice and the group members' appropriating his voice to explain their understanding of his thesis. This subtle interplay illustrates an intertextual process in which the group moved between the voice of the author, their own evolving understanding, and their own developing voices as participants in the public discussion of the issue. The exchange above began with Shelley's initiating question which lead the group to converge on the text, voicing the author on the floor. As Kate and Mark explained their understanding of Zinsmeister's thesis, they did not claim his thesis as their own but offered their interpretations of it. Shelley had stated she disagreed with the ideas that population growth does not deplete resources. However as the discussion evolved, group members did not make statements which suggested a commitment for or against the idea presented by Zinsmeister. Commitment as a dimension of task engagement related to the ownership of ideas on the floor (Walton & Krabbe, 1995). The intertextual strategy was to bring the author's idea to the floor of the discussion for scrutiny without having to commit to his thesis. Central to the deliberative process of public discourse are abilities to assemble differing viewpoints, question and evaluate them, without suppressing any, in order to critically determine what ideas are satisfactory (Merryfield & White, 1996; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971). The intertextual strategy of interanimation allowed the group to question and discuss Zinsmeister's thesis without having to commit to his perspective nor commit their own ideas on the floor at this point in the discussion.

Commitment

Characteristic of "focused talk," high conversational involvement of group members was also evident in the overlapping speech and "chaining out" of ideas in the exchange above. Commitment can also be thought of as an involvement strategy, relating

to group members' willingness to engage in discussion (Gutmann, 1987). The exchange above began with Shelley questioning the author, a deliberative discourse move. This move functioned as an invitation to other group members and demonstrated Shelley's commitment to engaging in the discussion task. Her fellow group members demonstrated a commitment or willingness to discuss when they responded to her questions. Perhaps more subtle in the exchange was the interplay of voicing the author on the floor and members' willingness to engage in the discussion. Bringing the author's voice to the floor was less face threatening (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Lim, 1990) for group members to engage in exploratory talk (Barnes, 1993). Group members "thought out loud," speaking with hesitancy and fragmented ideas. Voicing the author on the floor opened his thesis to interpretation in a way that group members were not vulnerable to committing to that thesis nor of submitting their own tentative understanding. Voicing the author on the floor honored the requirements of the discussion task and fostered cohesion among group members without suppressing exploratory talk. The voice of the author was not brought to the floor as the authoritative voice. Rather, his was one voice and open to questioning and interpretation, thus supporting group members' engaging in exploring and critiquing ideas.

Difference in Group Discourse

Alluded to in the descriptions of the forms and functions of group discourse was a difference in the interplay of the social and intellectual work of the two groups as they read and discussed a range of perspectives on the issue of global population. The two groups were similar in certain respects. For example, both included a similar heterogeneous grouping of students with a mix of gender, race, academic abilities, and academic motivation. Both groups dealt with consistent absences of certain group members which influenced the cohesion among group members and the ability to sustain coherence of the discourse across speech events. Both groups engaged in the same explicit discussion tasks. Yet, consistently between the two groups across speech events was a difference in the nature of the discourse. The social and intellectual dimensions of group discussion

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were constructions situated within the context of the groups. The difference in the nature of their discourse can be described in light of the relationships among the forms of talk and how they functioned within each group and in terms of desired qualities of democratic discourse.

Task Talk and Leadership

"Task talk" was described as a necessary precursor to a group's engagement in "focused talk." "Task talk" oriented the group to the discussion task, established how to proceed with the task, and facilitated the group in recontextualizing the task at important junctures in the discussion. "Task talk" was not just about the mechanics of the discussion task as, for example, when Steven (below) initiated the discussion. "Task talk" was a form of talk through which the group negotiated norms for task engagement and group roles.

1   Steven - You guys know where you ended off last?

2   Mark - Page 1-0-, 203. Something like that.

3   Shelley - We ended ooonnn [on] the end of 103.

4   Steven - "Prospects of the Future" or the last paragraph?

                               [

5   Shelley - No, the last paragraph.

Inherent in group discourse, the negotiation of norms and roles creates a kind of tension within the group (Bormann, 1975). This tension is not interpersonal. Rather, it is tension over the uncertainties of how to organize as a group to accomplish the discussion task. Cohen, Lotan, and Leechor (1989) define uncertainty as the nature of a task and the degree of predictability in its performance. As Tannen (1989) suggests, at a metalevel, tension in discourse is about creating solidarity or cohesion in the group. The successful negotiation of facilitative norms and roles result in the resolution of what Bormann (1975) calls role tension which focuses on the emergence of a task leader. Fisher (1980; Fisher

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and Ellis, 1990) defines leadership as an act by a group member that facilitates the group's ability to accomplish a task or goal. Within the context of group discourse, the emergence of task leadership was central to the group's ability to move through "task talk" and into "focused talk."

For Group B, the tensions seemed to be resolved early in their interaction. In general, Mark emerged as the task leader in the group. Most often he initiated engaging in "task talk" and "focused talk" episodes. Consistent across interviews of Group B members, Mark was described as the one who always knew what the explicit task was and kept the group on track. Kate described him as the "get to work kind of guy. Yeah, you know. He was always like right on the ball." Mark typically was the first to be in the circle and have his work out ready to go. He was the group member who often sought clarification of the task from the teachers, when necessary, as he did with the third Cohen question (below).

6   Mark - Mr. G.

7   Mr. Grant - Yes.

8   Mark - We can't answer number three. Because it's like, all different. There's a whole bunch of different viewpoints.

9   Mr. Grant - There you go. Then do that. I mean don't worry about being precise. But I do want you to talk about what you think is right, what you think is wrong. If you can't come to consensus, just say we couldn't come to consensus on this part.

10   Mark - So you want us to talk about each.

Recalling the exchange above (March 25, 1997) in which Group B discussed their the Cohen article, Mark initiated an episode of "task talk" seeking clarification of the task. Mark clarified with Mr. Grant how to respond to the third question and summarized how to

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proceed (10). There was a brief digression from the task when Kate asked for hand lotion. Shelley (19) then moved to begin the discussion task (below), repeating how to proceed with the task. Mark (20) confirmed Shelley's move and she then began the discussion of the Cohen text, initiating "focused talk."

18   Kate - I don't carry lotion with me. (pause) I left my purse at home. (*inaudible*) lotion.

19   Shelley - So, should we look at the statements and just decide whether we think they're correct or incorrect.

20   Mark - All right. Ummm.

21   Shelley - Um. This first one is that he's saying population does not grow exponentially. He's trying to disprove Thomas Malthus' um hypothesis about exponential growth of human population. Do you think that's right?

In this exchange of "task talk," leadership was distributed among group members. Mark and Shelley both made discourse moves that facilitated the group's ability to engage in the discussion of the Cohen text. Mark had established how to proceed with the discussion task. Shelley repeated this procedure. The repetition functioned to re-focus the group's attention on the task and created coherence by connecting the "task talk" to the episode of "focused talk" that followed. These roles did not stem from the explicit discussion task, but from the internal needs of the group to create and maintain coherence and cohesion (Pepitone, 1985).

Across speech events, the group was assured that someone, typically Mark, would clarify how to proceed with the task for the group. And if not Mark, then another group member would take up the role, fulfilling the need for task leadership. With the resolution of task leadership, other members emerged in roles which facilitated the group's engagement in deliberative discussion. For example, the group often looked to Shelley as a

group member who understood the content of the issue well and the group often turned to her for information, explanation, and definition of the content (Bormann, 1975). Kate and Steven were often questioners in the group, challenging ideas and raising issues with the arguments presented, both by the authors and group members. These roles were not static but fluid among group members in ways that fulfilled the needs of the group. The resolution and distribution of group roles resolved tensions of uncertainty within the group and enabled them to establish norms for proceeding with the discussion task.

Struggles with Roles and Norms

Group A had difficulty negotiating roles and norms that facilitated their engagement in deliberative discussion. As Luft (1984) notes, not all groups can free themselves from the bind of their own implicit norms. In the case of Group A, it seemed that the stability and certainty that came with the resolution of group roles and norms for task procedure eluded the group. Across speech events, the group continued to struggle with tensions and uncertainties that functioned to inhibit their abilities to engage in democratic discussion. Unable to negotiate and sanction facilitative roles and norms, the tensions and uncertainties became the norm for Group A.

Group A was unable to create resolution which seemed to stem from a lack of willingness to engage in the tension. Bormann (1975) found that groups unable to resolve these tensions often withdrew. They found ways of dealing with the tension like blaming members for being domineering or they retreated to talk less riddled with tension. Left unresolved, the tension plagued the group and impeded its ability to fully engage the task. Group A members' interviews confirmed what Bormann suggested. For instance, Andrea expressed that although she didn't mind working with Neil because he got things done, "he wasn't as smart as he [thought]." Andrea commented on the "bickering" that occurred between Neil and Kristina and that she didn't want to get in to it. She did, however, feel that everyone in the group contributed equally to accomplishing the task. In contrast, both Neil and Kristina said they were responsible for completing most of the work and other

group members "didn't do that much really." Andrea withdrew from the tension and from her role in sanctioning a task leader. Bobby seemed to lean toward sanctioning Neil as task leader. Had Bobby been absent less, he may have facilitated the group's ability to resolve the tensions of role emergence. In the exchange below (March 25, 1997), an instance of leadership bids and sanctioning occurred.

71   Kristina - All right. You guys want to hear *my* viewpoint. This is mine.

                                                            [

72   Bobby - That's what happens when you get behind them and then
       like trash and junk falls out of the back.

73   Kristina - You know this video we just saw. Yeah, they showed us
       how population is accumulating, accumulating, accumulating.

74   Bobby - Yeah. Boring stuff.

75   Kristina - But. Shhhh. It's my turn.

76   Neil - OK. Hold on. Does everybody think it's not a problem,
       never will be a problem, or it's not a problem right now but it could
       be in the future?

Making a bid for leadership, Kristina interrupted the "digressive talk" (73) and moved to engage in the discussion task. Bobby (74) ignored her move, negatively sanctioning her bid and in essence, positively sanctioning Neil's as task leader. Kristina (75) continued to proceed with the discussion task when Bobby (76) moved to counteract her bid for proceeding. Neil (76) then usurped Kristina's efforts, taking the role of task leader. Bobby engaged in the process of resolving the tensions of task leadership. However, without another group member to sanction either Kristina or Neil in the role of task leader, the group remained in tension. Without the resolution and sanctioning of a task leader, other facilitative leadership roles did not emerge (Cragan & Wright, 1991).

Collaboration and cooperation among group members to negotiate and sanction facilitative norms for discussion were never fully realized in Group A. It seemed that group members engaged in group flight (Cragan & Wright, 1991), evident in the blaming of others for the tensions felt and in the frequency of "digressive talk".

In a later exchange (March 31, 1997), the negotiation of roles and norms for proceeding with the discussion task continued to plague Group A. The group was engaged in reading and discussing the Ehrlich article. Neil (21) moved to begin the discussion task following some general conversation as the group reconvened. Neil's move was not only a move to begin the discussion, it also functioned as a bid for task leadership. Kristina (22) intercepted Neil's move and made a bid of her own, asking "Where we at?" Highlighted in the transcript excerpt below is the sequence of bids and counter-bids for task leadership between Neil and Kristina.

19   Kristina - Mr. Grant? You gonna have the heat on in here by fifth hour?

20   Mr. Grant - Well we'll have to find a temperature for in here.

21   Neil - OK. Everybody all set?

22   Kristina - Where we at?

23   Neil - What do you mean where we at.

24   Kristina - (whining) Where we at?

25   Neil - Right here. No, we already read that. We're on food shortages.

26   Kristina - Where is that at?

27   Neil - Page 102 and 103.

28   Bobby - Oh boy. (sighs)

29   Neil - Viewpoint one.

30   Kristina - We're still on viewpoint one?

31   Neil - Viewpoint one. Well, yeah because we didn't do anything yesterday.

32   Kristina - <u>What about population a major factor.</u>

33   Neil - We already <u>did that part</u>.

34   Kristina - We did that. <u>All right, go ahead</u>.

The exchange above was characteristic "task talk" for Group A. While the exchange functioned to orient the group to the task at hand to an extent, it also functioned as the talk through which tensions over task leadership remained. Neil began with a move (21) to re-establish the discussion floor and have everyone "on the same wavelength" (Edelsky, 1981). Kristina (22), however, challenged his move, asking "Where we at?" The two then engaged in a series of bids and counterbids for the role of task leader. At one point, Bobby (28) reacted to the struggle between Kristina and Neil, yet neither he nor any other group member moved to sanction either one's bids. The exchange began with Neil's task leadership move; it ended with Kristina's (34) assertion of leadership when she said "All right. Go ahead." Neil then began reading the text and the tensions were never fully resolved.

Commentary

Democratic discussion is often described as cooperative, open, collaborative, and equitable discourse. It is characterized as discussion in which all group members have access and opportunity to express their ideas, raise questions, and make decisions. Identified in the analysis of two heterogeneous groups' discussions were several interwoven forms of group talk: "focused talk," "task talk," and "digressive talk". Participants wove these different forms of talk together in complex patterns as they negotiated both new academic content and new ways of speaking about knowledge and text. A key finding in the analysis was that group discussion is not simply one thing. The forms of talk identified were not simply "on" and "off" task behaviors. Group members constructed multiple ways of speaking or forms of talk that occurred within a single speech

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event and across events. Each form of talk influenced the carrying out of discussion, both a social and intellectual accomplishment of the group.

The analysis of the two groups' discussions further revealed differences in the nature of the two groups' interactions across speech events. Although both groups shared the same explicit discussion task, each constructed unique norms of participation and group roles which influenced their abilities as a group to engage in deliberative discourse. The negotiation and maintenance of norms and group roles required a collaborative, cooperative effort among group members. Patterned relationships among "task talk," "digressive talk," and "focused talk" functioned in ways that created and sustained coherence in Group B's discourse which ultimately supported its engagement in deliberative discussion.

The resolution of group roles and norms for discussion within Group B seemed to facilitate participation among group members characteristic of democratic discussion. Role functions were typically fulfilled by the same group member across speech events, yet leadership was distributed among group members. The stability of roles and norms, without being static, resolved uncertainty and tensions in Group B. Through their engagement in "task talk," Group B collectively made decisions about the task and their participation in it. These decisions, socially constructed in the context of the group, were an enactment of democratic participation and facilitated Group B's abilities to engage in deliberative discussion. Democratic participation was a construction of the group. It seemed to depend on the group's ability to create a context in which facilitative norms and group roles emerged. Whether the nature of the discourse was democratic depended upon the resolution of uncertainty and tensions around how to proceed with the discussion task and who would fulfill the leadership needs of the group. Group B was more successful than Group A in negotiating and maintaining these roles and norms. Democratic participation was not a norm, per se, but an accomplishment of the group. This accomplishment, or lack of, in turn, was manifested in the nature of the discourse within the group context.

Although Group B was more successful in constructing a context that facilitated democratic participation, it had its struggles too. As novices in the discourse, group members worked to manage the complexity of democratic public discourse. Engaging in democratic public discourse required the group to manage negotiating and maintaining facilitative norms and roles of democratic participation and navigate a range of texts, including their own discussion, in order to fully engage in the public discussion of the issue. Group B seemed to readily resolve how to proceed with the discussion task and who would fulfill the necessary leadership roles. However, they were less successful with issues of access to the discussion and equitable participation. In part, this stemmed from Steven and Mike's frequent absences during the unit on global population. For Steven and Mike, coherence of the discussion was never fully realized because they missed speech events when other group members had moved forward with the discussions tasks. Their absences also challenged the group's ability to maintain cohesion in the group. In his interview, Mark talked about these tensions. He explained that "when we had a person absent, then we all just all had to work a little harder to get it done.... Because I don't want to say they [Mike and Steven] were slackers or anything because they may have been trying just as hard as me, but they just didn't know what to do.... I think that... um, Kate, Shelley and I were like leaders or whatever. And we knew where to find everything and get it done. And like maybe Mike, Hitoshi, and Steve didn't know as much or didn't.... They all tried equally I think. Do what had to get done."

Hitoshi's participation posed a particular challenge for the group. Although he actively listened, he spoke very little in the discussions. Kate, in her interview, felt that Hitoshi "did well. It's not that he isn't smart. I think he just. Like if I were in his shoes, being very limited in the language in a different place and being cautious with, you know, what do they think of me. I probably wouldn't say much." Shelley recalled "I could tell that Hitoshi and Steven were doing things and they were thinking about things. It's just they didn't contribute for one reason or another. Um so that didn't bother me as much. It

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would have been nicer, of course, if they would have contributed more but they did what they could and that's I guess, I thought, that's all I could ask of them." As novices the group members were less able to manage the full complexity of group discourse. They seemed to be sensitive toward Hitoshi yet made few moves to directly engage him in the discussion. Perhaps for Group B, the complexity of the social and intellectual work of negotiating and sustaining democratic participation, Hitoshi's limitations with the English language aside, were as much as the group could manage.

The patterned relationships among "task talk," productive "digressive talk," and "focused talk" functioned in ways that created and sustained coherence in the discourse which ultimately facilitated the groups' abilities to engage in episodes of sustained focused talk. Although brief, moments of unproductive "digressive talk" effectively disrupted coherence, inhibiting particularly Group A's abilities to sustain deliberative discussion about the issue of global population. Group B having negotiated facilitative norms and roles, was better able to engage in discussion that was coherent. The difference in the nature of the groups' discourse was evident in the patterns of talk, as for example the March 25 speech event (See Figure 4).

Linde defined coherence as a property of texts derived from the relations that the parts of a text bear to one another and to the whole text. It was not an absolute property of a disembodied, unsituated text. Coherence, understood as drawing in and across speakers and turns to construct textual relationships, was a cooperative achievement among participants in the discourse (Linde, 1993). It was thus a democratic as well as a deliberative accomplishment of discussion. As such, it may have been the group's (and the assigned task's) raison d'etre. But its achievement required sociolinguistic work. A curriculum which presumes this work leaves the attainment of focused discussion unsupported instructionally. Perhaps this is why, as Calkins observed in peer-led writing conferences, laissez faire approaches to curriculum and instruction tend to produce a lot of talk but not necessarily much learning (Calkins, 1986).

"Task talk" was described as a necessary precursor to the group's engagement in "focused talk." Group B, having resolved tensions over roles and norms of task procedure, was able to facilitate its own engagement in "focused talk" about the issue of global population. Group A seemed mired in the tensions and uncertainties of task procedure and attendant to that, task ownership, commitment, and leadership. The group's ability to resolve these tensions seemed particularly hampered when multiple bids for how to proceed with the task and who would fulfill task leadership functions for the group. The floor shifted easily to episodes of "digressive talk" because norms and roles that facilitated how to proceed were never fully established in the group. Coherence of Group A's discourse was fragmented. The boundaries of the forms of talk and the junctures where shifts in talk would have been conversationally appropriate were unformed. Thus, the ability of Group A to engage in and sustain "focused talk" was impeded.

The focus of this study is to describe how students engage in democratic, deliberative discussion of a social issue. The analyses of Group A and Group B's discussions revealed several types of interwoven group talk. Of these three types of talk, "focused talk" occurred when the groups most fully engaged in the discussion task, applying the reasoning and analytic skills fostered in the curriculum. These episodes of talk seemed to be consistent with various models and methods of group discussion consistent with what Gutmann (1987) and others call deliberation. The analyses also showed the complex interplay of relational, intellectual, and textual dimensions of group talk which seem to coalesce into focused and sustained discussion of the issue in episodes of "focused talk." Across speech events, Group B was better able to negotiate roles and norms of participation which facilitated their engagement in "focused talk." In both cases, however, "focused talk" seemed to crystallize the give and take across speakers, texts, and ideas that operationalize the calls for deliberative, democratic education by such theorists as Evans, Newmann, and Saxe (1996), Gutmann (1987), Parker (1996), and others. For this reason, Chapter 3 takes a closer look at episodes of "focused talk." With the purpose of

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identifying and describing how students engage in deliberation of an issue and the nature of their talk, the following chapter describes the "focused talk" of Group B across three speech events.

CHAPTER 3: FOCUSED TALK WITHIN AND ACROSS THREE SPEECH EVENTS

Overview

The focus of this analysis was the complex dynamics of group discourse in the students' discussion of a public issue. In the previous chapter, I described the group discussion of public issues as "speech events" and noted the segmentation of these into episodes where talk took particular forms and served particular social and academic functions. In this chapter I take a closer look at the forms and functions of one type of talk, "focused talk," and analyze this talk in terms of the learning democratic norms as well as curricular content in social studies and literacy. "Focused talk" episodes occurred when the group most fully engaged in the explicit discussion task, applying the reasoning and analytic skills fostered in the curriculum. Within these episodes of group talk, members negotiated and adapted group roles and norms that facilitated participation in the discussion. The relational, intellectual, and textual dynamics of "focused talk" put into action many of the elements of democratic public discourse described by educators, scholars, and research in Chapter 3. Analysis of the dynamics of "focused talk" in student peer group discussions of the issue of global population reveals a complexity of democratic discourse and its learning.

Descriptions of what constitutes democratic public discourse involve a complex web of intellectual and relational work. Gutmann (1987) argued that the goal of democratic education is to imbue students with the capacity for deliberation. Students need to learn to think logically, argue coherently and fairly, and consider relevant alternatives before making judgments about public issues. Others included the capacities for in-depth inquiry, questioning, examination, and reflection (e.g. Mercer, 1995; Merryfield & White, 1996; Newmann, 1988; Stotsky, 1991). Further still, students should learn to question assumptions, their own and those of others, and identify competing arguments (Onosko, 1996). They should elaborate, clarify, and explain statements, use real information, be

willing to subject their ideas to scrutiny (Goodlad, 1996), and weigh alternatives and consequences (Parker, 1996) of potential solutions to persistent public problems. Students need to develop abilities to recognize, examine, evaluate, and appreciate multiple perspectives (Merryfield & White, 1996), learn to appreciate the complexities of the problem or issue, and be comfortable with the uncertainty of outcomes (Evans, et al., 1996).

Newmann (1988) proposed that students should produce discourse in their own unique ways. They need opportunity to incorporate language used by others into coherent patterns of speaking in order to serve the purposes unique to tasks of communicating in modern times (p. 1). Newmann further argued such discourse must be produced as responses to novel, contextualized problems that challenge students to use this language or knowledge in new ways. Parker (1996) suggested deliberative discourse is interpretive, improvisational, and deals with the local knowledge people use to meet situations of common life. These varied perspectives of deliberative discourse, related to conceptions of democratic character and civic virtues, are manifested in how we conduct ourselves in communicative relations with others (Burbules, 1993). Democratic or deliberative character (Gutmann, 1990) is fostered and developed in the kinds of communicative relations we engage in which are contextually sensitive (Burbules, 1993).

The metaphor of "intertextuality" is a useful tool to aid our understanding of the complex and multidimensional nature of public discourse in the small group (Lemke, 1985; Plett, 1991). Carter (1990) argued that the multidimensional quality of public issues requires consideration of the perspectives of various stakeholders and the interrelationships of their and our future. Understanding something about the nature of public issues was relevant to understanding how students engaged in the public discussion of global population in their small group. A public issue is the relationship among different perspectives held and arguments presented concerned with the issue. Barnes (1993) referred to a multiplicity of printed text that typify the "language of secondary education"

(p. 57) and suggested that these media represent the discourse in which the major issues of society are publicly discussed. Bloome and Bailey (1992) theorized learning happens through a process of coming to know what information is taken as relevant, how knowledge is viewed, what intertextual connections are valued, and what is the appropriate rhetoric for presenting one's ideas and oneself. When intertextuality is put in motion within social interaction, participants give voice to multiple perspectives at play in the discussion of complex social issues. This is not a disembodied exercise but a social one. Participants manage thinking collectively in their social relations. The moment-to-moment negotiating of both social norms and the textual content of talk comprise democratic public discourse. Thus, the construction and maintenance of the discourse through intertextuality depends on who makes what intertextual relationships and how they are made (Bloome & Bailey, 1992). From a sociolinguistics perspective, intertextual links are made by group members as they interact around various texts which focus their discussions (Hartman, 1995). In the analysis which follows, a process is described in which students discuss the issue of global population by linking various texts in order to construct, critique, and revise arguments. Engaging in deliberative discourse, they employ and reference many texts. These include not only print, but also the overarching framework of the curriculum, previous whole class and small group discussions, and various textual artifacts located in the material circumstances of the group context.

Global Population: Three Speech Events

Three speech events of Group B were selected for close analysis based on the differences among the explicit discussion tasks assigned by the teacher for each respective event and on the occurrence of episodes of sustained, focused discussion. The structure of the explicit discussion task influenced the movement and flow of the talk within each episode. In the very broadest sense, across speech events, inquiry of the issue was convergent in that all texts explored were tied to the overall issue (Burbules, 1993; Lemke, 1985). Within the discrete speech event, however, different task structures shaped

convergent and divergent patterns of discourse around texts the group discussed and influenced the types of intertextual relationships group members constructed. Implicitly, the roles and norms negotiated by the group shaped how the group proceeded with the task. In the first two speech events, the explicit discussion task was convergent in that group members focused on an article or set of articles and applied their knowledge and skills to examine the texts. In the third speech event, the explicit discussion task was divergent in the sense that group members did not focus on a specific text, but drew from a broad array of textual sources to construct arguments.

Each of the three speech events analyzed here deals with the unit on the issue of global population and each include instances of "focused talk." In each event the students adapt talk and textual relationships to the particular demands of the assigned discussion task. Democratic discourse is emergent and adaptable in these examples. Figure 7 (see below) summarizes the distinctive features of these three speech events within the unit on population. In the first speech event, introduced in Chapter 2, March 25, 1997, the discussion focused on Ten Myths of Population (Cohen, 1996). The group discussed the article and responded in writing to a set of questions posed by the teacher. The discussion task directed the group to converge on the Cohen text in order to examine how he framed the issue, question his arguments, and analyze evidence presented in support of those arguments. In the second speech event, April 14, 1997 group members shared articles they read and reviewed on the topic of population. Similar to the March 25 speech event, the group asked questions regarding how the authors framed the issue and questioned the arguments and evidence presented. In contrast to the March 25 discussion task, each group member was an "expert" about the article he or she read and responded to other group members' questions. The task structure directed the group to critique each article presented, placing group members in different group roles than in previous speech events. The discussion task of the third speech event, April 25, 1997, did not include a specific

Speech Event	Explicit Task	Purpose	Group/Task Roles	Nature of Democratic Discussion	Textual Resources
March 25, 1997 Discussing Cohen's Ten Myths of Population	discuss Cohen article; discuss and respond to teacher assigned questions	compare alternative perspectives; reach consensus or an agreed upon stance on aspects of the issue	task leader functions; role of collaborative participant in constructing knowledge; doubting roles	overlapping turns; repetition and latching of ideas; contrasting perspectives	Cohen text; task questions; overarching set of reasoning and analytic skills; prior knowledge
April 14, 1997 Sharing Article Reviews	share article individually read and reviewed; compare with previous perspectives read and discussed	summarize and critique written texts concerning the issue; compare alternative perspectives; apply discrete reasoning and analytic skills to the texts shared	task leader functions; role of primary speaker; role of audience - respondent; role of cooperative and collaborative participant; believing roles	extended turn on the floor; extended listening; some overlapping talk, latching in question-answer exchanges	individual texts read and reviewed; prescribed questions based on evaluation sheets; novel questions emerge in on-going discussion; previously read and discussed texts
April 25, 1997 Crafting Statements on Birth Rates and Death Rates	craft several statements from diverse textual sources to share in following whole class discussion	begin to synthesize information, ideas, perspectives toward crafting a population policy statement about country of study	task leader functions; role of collaborative-cooperative participant; doubting and believing roles	both longer turns and overlapping, latching talk; posing and modifying assertions and proposals;	texts previously read and discussed; personal and reported experiences; news media; personally held beliefs

Figure 7: Three Speech Events of Group B

article or set of articles to focus the discussion. Prior to this speech event each group in the class began a population study of one country. The explicit discussion task in this event was to craft several arguments or proposals about birth and death rate policies. The group gathered ideas from across multiple textual sources they had studied in order to begin crafting a population policy for their country of study.

Although the explicit task structures differed across speech events, within episodes of "focused talk," group members consistently engaged in discussion that resembled democratic and deliberative discourse. Across and within episodes of "focused talk," group members engaged in distinct intertextual discourse moves (see Figure 8 further below), defined and described with examples in the following sections of the chapter. These intertextual moves functioned as resources for the group to engage in asking questions, making assertions, and associating ideas as they constructed their understanding of the issue together. The text of the on-going discussion, situated in the context of the group, was negotiated and shaped by roles and norms that enabled them to engage in, and struggle with, the complexities of deliberative, democratic discussion of the public issue.

In light of the descriptions and proposals of what constitutes deliberative and democratic discussion, the following sections describe the group's performance of various features of democratic public discourse within episodes of "focused talk." The complexity and layeredness of group discourse makes it impossible to describe all features simultaneously in writing. In the analysis below, each section of the chapter takes as its focus different aspects of the same whole process (Edwards and Mercer, 1987). In the next three sections of this chapter, I walk the reader through the three speech events and episodes of focused talk chronologically, highlighting in my analysis the forms and functions of oral and written discourse as the students work to complete their academic tasks in democratic ways. Special attention is paid to five aspects of each speech event: 1) the task as assigned; 2) the intended purpose of the assigned task; 3) the group and task roles negotiated among group members to complete the task; 4) the texts (oral, written,

Form of Move	Function of Move	Example of Move
Ventriloquating Voice of Author	1) Bring author to discussion floor as another voice or participant in the discussion 2) Commitment of idea remains with author 3) Resource for group to question and interpret argument presented by author	Shelley - Um. This first one is that he's saying population does not grow exponentially. He's trying to disprove Thomas Malthus' um hypothesis about exponential growth of human population. Do you think that's right?
Juxtaposing Viewpoints of Authors	1) Resource for group to compare differing perspectives offered about the issue or aspect of an issue 2) Commitment of ideas remain with authors	Mark - Uh, the guy [Erhlich] said that overpopulation will cause famine, disease, and the depletion of natural resources. This guy [Harrison] obviously doesn't agree with that. 'Cause he's saying people use, he's saying that people are blaming population for other problems.
Appropriation of Textual Tools and Resources	1) Link prior knowledge to on-going text of discussion 2) Take up strategies and language from various sources and apply for their own use 3) Construct ideational links within and across speech events	Shelley - His data was basically just percentages. Like in different types of increase. Increase here might be 2% you know ten years ago like 2% rise per year. Kate - I know but. I think studies show that, um, people are living longer now than they were.

Figure 8: Intertextual Discourse Moves

assigned, and emergent) linked in the discussions; 5) the nature of the discussions in terms of elements of what scholars describe as democratic discourse, with particular reference to conversational strategies employed by group members. As Figure 8 illustrates, their discourse occasions for students opportunities to respond to text in ways that characterize higher order reasoning and comprehension that is critical and authentic to the task.

Discussing Cohen's Ten Myths of Population: March 25

On March 25, Mark, Kate, Shelley, Hitoshi, and Steven (members of Group B) discussed

the Cohen (1996) article on ten public myths of global population.[1]   In this episode of

"focused talk," the explicit discussion task directed the group to converge on the Cohen

text, examining each myth presented. In the "focused talk" described further below,

the group discussed the third question which directed them to the ten myths about

population presented by Cohen (1996):

> 3) What do you think was correct, what was incorrect about the myths presented
>
>   by Cohen?

Immediately preceding this episode, Mark had initiated an episode of "task talk" in

which he and other group members sought clarification of the task with Mr. Grant.

Episodes of "task talk," as described in Chapter 2, functioned to orient the group to the task

and established how to proceed. The group had previously discussed two questions which

sought more general responses about the nature of Cohen's position and about the issue of

global population. The third question given above directed the group specifically toward

examining the Cohen text.

Illustrated in the exchanges described below is the complex interplay of three

cognitive strategies supportive of and resources for social cooperation in discussion:

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[1] Mike was absent on this day. In fact, Mike and Steven were frequently absent, but for different

reasons. Mike was an at-risk student. He had difficulties with reading and writing, had a substance use

problem, and frequently missed school. Of the three speech events analyzed in this chapter, Mike was

present for April 14. Steven also missed school frequently during the unit on global population. He had a

bronchial infection for several weeks that was quite debilitating. Steven was a hearing-impaired student.

During the unit on global population, first one hearing aid was broken and then the other. Between being

ill and his hearing aid difficulties, Steven was frequently absent. Of the three episodes analyzed, Steven was

present for March 25 and April 25.

1) ventriloquation of voices; 2) idea-evolution; and 3) appropriation of textual resources. To deliberate, students need to learn to access and use a variety of resources and tools in order to weave ideas together to construct or examine reasoned arguments (Evans, et al., 1996). Within the exchanges, group members appropriated textual resources from various locations (Hartman, 1995) and applied them to their examining Cohen's position on the issue of global population.

The First Myth: Exponential Growth of Population

The Discussion Begins

Shelley (19 below) moved to begin the discussion task of the first myth presented by Cohen, facilitating the group's engaging in the task. She (19) proposed to "look at the statements," repeating Mark's suggestion in the preceding "task talk" to "talk about each" myth as a way to proceed with the task (See Chapter 2). The repetition functioned as a confirmation of how to proceed. Shelley also paraphrased the third question, an intertextual move bringing the explicit task to the discussion floor. Before proceeding further it is necessary to discuss the analytic construct of "floor." Floor can be thought of as a "commodity," control of which is vied for by individual speakers. The metaphor guided the early research on "turn-taking" in sociolinguistics (e.g. Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Subsequently, however, researchers have looked at both speaking turns and the concept floor in collaborative ways with an underlying metaphor of cooperation rather than competition (e.g. Burbules, 1993; Edelsky, 1981; Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, 1982). Looking at discussion in the Global Studies groups, this latter conception of "floor" was generative. As the analysis demonstrates, talk, especially "focused talk," was characterized by collaboratively constructed "floors." Edelsky (1981) distinguished two types of floor: who is speaking on the floor (F1) and the acknowledged what's-going-on within a psychological time/space (F2). Drawing on Edelsky's definition of floor (F2), Shelley's (19) restatement of how to proceed, and Mark's (20) confirmation, functioned to

shift the floor (F2) from "task talk" to "focused talk." Thus, the nature of the floor changed and with it, the kind of talk in which the group engaged.

19   Shelley - So, should we look at the statements and just decide whether we think they're correct or incorrect? (*rephrases Mark's earlier suggestion and the third question*)

20   Mark - All right. Um. (*confirming*)

                [

21   Shelley - Um. This first one is that he's saying population does not grow exponentially. He's trying to disprove Thomas Malthus' um hypothesis about exponential growth of human population. Do you think that's right? (*voices the author Cohen*)

Mark (20) confirmed Shelley's move to begin the discussion, making the shift to "focused talk." Shelley (21) then took up the discussion task, addressing the first myth presented in the article, "The human population grows exponentially" (Cohen, 1996, p. 42). The structure of the Cohen text and tangentially, the third question influenced how the group proceeded with the task. Cohen began his article with a brief overview statement about the issue of population, followed by his arguments myth by myth. The assigned task question asked students to determine what they thought was correct and/or incorrect about the myths, implying they take one myth at a time. The group had decided to examine the text one myth at a time, evident in Shelley's (21) reference to "this first one."

Ventriloquating the Author

Shelley (21) referred twice to "he," that is to Cohen and the point he put forth, that exponential growth of population was a myth. Her reference to "he" functioned to ventriloquate (Wertsch, 1991) or bring Cohen's voice to the discussion floor as another participant in the discussion. Wertsch (1991) described Bakhtin's notion of

"ventriloquation" as a process whereby one voice speaks through another voice or voice type. Bakhtin (1986) theorized that a participant in discourse is capable of representing someone else's ideas while at the same time preserving a distance, neither confirming the idea nor merging it with her own. Shelley did not make a statement which suggested a commitment to the idea presented. Rather the commitment to the idea remained with the author. The discursive strategy was to bring the idea to the floor, without having to commit to it, through bringing the voice of Cohen to the floor.

Commitment as a dimension of involvement, is the willingness to participate in the discussion. It is commitment to interact with other members in ways that facilitate the group's involvement with the task (Burbules, 1993; Fisher & Ellis, 1990; Gutmann, 1990). Walton and Krabbe (1995) include a different dimension of commitment that is not necessarily interpersonal, but is the willingness to commit to an idea. The idea brought to the floor was not the stance Shelley necessarily took. She (21) stated, "He's [Cohen] trying to disprove Thomas Malthus' hypothesis about exponential growth of human population." Cohen cited Malthus as a proponent of the myth of exponential growth in order to set up his counter argument. Her (21) question, "Do you think that's right?" invited other group members to respond to Cohen, but also indicated a tone of tentativeness. This tentativeness reflected her noncommitment to the idea presented. The engagement in the task at this point in the discussion was to bring the author's idea to the floor in order to examine it.

Engaging in the ideas of others is a key feature of deliberative discourse (e.g. Light & Littleton, 1994; Mercer, 1995) and the group showed evidence of this in its talk. As the group engaged the Cohen text, the other (Cohen) was socially, temporally, and spatial distant (Wertsch, 1991) from the context of the group. In order to critically examine the idea Cohen presented, Shelley brought Cohen to the discussion floor as another concrete voice in the discussion, an intertextual move. In not making a commitment to the idea Cohen presented, she (and other group members further below) did not rush to judgment (Parker, 1997). The group did not assume that Cohen had the authoritative word on the

issue, but rather brought forth his idea to critically examine it. In the process of deliberative discussion, the group first worked to identify Cohen's stance on the myth before either refuting or committing to the idea.

Linking Texts and Idea-Evolution

Shelley's move was a type of task involvement strategy that opened the floor to discussing Cohen's ideas. Following Shelley's initiating move about Cohen's argument, Kate took up the discussion task. She asked (22 below), "What does exponentially mean," an intertextual link to Cohen's articulation of the first myth "The human population grows exponentially" (Cohen, 1996, p. 42). Shelley had introduced the idea of the first myth. Kate shifted the focus of discussion to the term "exponentially." Within "focused talk" episodes, such shifts were of a different nature than shifts described earlier in Chapter 2 (i.e. "digressive talk") Kate's question was relevant to the immediate task on the floor of examining Cohen's argument. Group members were encouraged to seek clarification and definition of terms they did not understand as part of the reasoning and analytic skills fostered in the curriculum. Thus, in asking what "exponentially" meant, Kate assisted the group in developing a clearer understanding of the passage in the Cohen text (Little, et al., 1995). Within "focused talk" episodes, these shifts or associations were an integral dimension of how the group constructed its understanding of the text in and through talk.

The process of linking ideas was recursive and spiraled forward (Britton, 1990; Gavelek & Raphael, 1996; Hirokawa & Johnston, 1989) as group members associated ideas, linking multiple texts. Illustrated below, the topic of the first myth was sustained on the floor as group members engaged in a recursive process of linking ideas into an understanding of "exponentially" coherent to them. Group members jointly constructed a response to Kate's question in their verbal as well as nonverbal behavior. Shelley (23 below) began to illustrate "exponentially," drawing the graph on the margin of her copy of the article (See Figure 9). Group members leaned toward her to see what she drew. Mark

(24) repeated "it means like" and affirmed Shelley showing what the term meant. As

Shelley (25) narrated her drawing of the graph, Steven (26) latched on and put into words
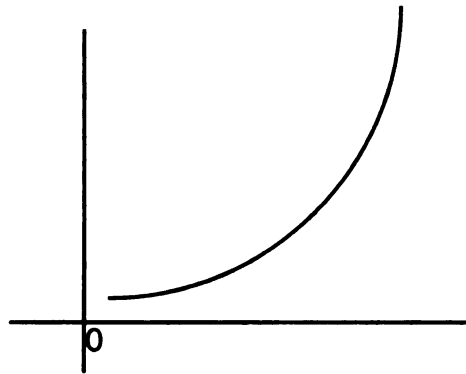

Figure 9: Shelley's Graph of Exponential Growth

what she was drawing, "Growing exponentially goes up." Shelley (27) repeated Steven's

summation. Overlapping speech was not necessarily interruptive but rather, was evidence

of participation and cohesion among group members (Tannen, 1989). In the following

excerpts, evident is the focused posture and gaze of group members also expressed in the

talk. This layering in multiple channels gives both supporting evidence to researchers'

claims but also, sociolinguists agree helps group members learn and sustain discourse in

meaningful ways.

22   Kate - What does exponentially mean?

23   Shelley - Exponentially? Um. It means like the graph. If you were to like=

24   Mark - = it means like, yeah.

                [

25   Shelley - graph out population over time on a thing like that. It would end up kind

        of going. It would kind of, goes like this. And like here it's like off. (*drew graph*

        on margin of article; group members lean in)

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26   Steven - Growing <u>exponentially goes up</u>.

27   Shelley - It kind of <u>goes straight up</u> at a certain point.

[

28   Kate - So that's what he's saying?

[

29   Shelley - It stays pretty level and then all of a sudden it <u>goes straight up</u>. And then it will end up leveling off. With like Thomas Malthus' thing. And that's what. And that's when population checking goes in. Like.

In the example above, the construction of the explanation of "exponentially" was a cooperative and collaborative effort among group members, both in a social sense and in the substance of their response to Kate's question. Repetition of the key term occurred across turns and speakers (22, 23, 26). Likewise, phrases like "it means" (23, 24) and "goes like this" or "goes up" (25, 27, 29), as well as the accompanying sketch of a graph, are examples of exploratory talk. Barnes (1976) calls exploratory talk "rough draft" thinking. Speakers are not making finalized or firm assertions nor are they challenging other speakers. They are however, questioning the ideas offered. Kate, for example bracketed the rough draft thinking (22-27), first asking "What does exponentially mean?" (22) and later "so that's what he's saying?" (28). Through talk the group manipulated ideas in ways that transformed their meaning (Rossi, 1995) into a group constructed understanding of the term.

Appropriating Textual Resources

The above exchange (23-29) illustrated how the group engaged in a process of synthesizing textual fragments from various sources to construct an understanding of "exponentially." Their joint response centered around the graph Shelley drew (See Figure 9). Shelley, Mark, and Steven did not define exponential per se, but drew upon a graphic

representation of what exponential growth looked like. The graph linked the immediate discussion of the group to a prior whole class discussion in which Mr. Grant drew and discussed a similar graph on the board (March 21, 1997). The group also viewed a video, produced by Zero Population Growth just prior to this speech event which showed a similar graph depicting the exponential growth of global population. The graph Shelley drew, and the group explained together, linked prior whole class discussions to the on-going text of the group's discussion.

The group talk was exploratory, rough draft talk (Barnes, 1993). This exploratory talk illustrated the improvisational nature of deliberative discussion (Parker, 1997). Barnes (1993) describes such talk as full of hesitations and changes of direction as students work to make sense of emerging or evolving ideas. Kate shifted the direction of the discussion to the meaning of "exponentially." She willingly showed she did not understand the term "exponentially." Parker (1997) includes a willingness to admit ignorance or not understanding as an act of deliberative discussion. Her question "What does exponentially mean?" invited other group members to share their knowledge. They took up the invitation and constructed an explanation with much overlapping talk and overlapping thinking as ideas "chained out" among the group (Cragan & Wright, 1991).

The next exchange described below illustrates that this evolution of ideas continued as Shelley expounded upon the idea of exponential. Kate (26 below) re-invoked both the initial question and Cohen on the discussion floor, saying "So what's he saying?" Shelley (27) then linked the group's explanation of exponential to Cohen's text, referencing Malthus and population checking. Cohen wrote, "Thomas Steven Malthus wrote that any human population 'when unchecked,' doubles in a certain unit of time, and then keeps on doubling in the same unit of time" (Cohen, 1996, p. 42). Mark (30) began to say something about Malthus, but waited for Shelley to finish her idea (31). Shelley (31) referred to Malthus, stating he believed some disaster would limit human population growth when it reached certain levels. Mark (32) seemed to have a similar idea and

expounded upon the reference to Malthus with a more specific example. Shelley (33) added it was an example of population checking and explained why.

25   Shelley - It kind of goes straight up at a certain point.

            [

26   Kate - So that's what he's saying?

            [

27   Shelley - It stays pretty level and then all of a sudden it goes straight up. And then it will end up leveling off. With like Thomas Malthus' thing. And that's what. And that's when population checking goes in. Like.

28   Kate - Like the end of the world or something?

29   Shelley - No. It's just that, it means

            [

30   Mark - Thomas Malthus.

31   Shelley - once there gets to be so many people on earth it, he [Malthus] believes there will be some sort of epidemic or something to start limiting growth so that people can continue living or whatever.

32   Mark - Thomas Malthus thought that like, the food would run out before we even leveled out.

33   Shelley - Mhmm. That would be a population check. *(slight pause)* That would be population checking because it would be limiting the people who could live on earth.

Gavelek and Raphael (1996), drawing on Harre and Vygotsky, define appropriation as when learners take up concepts and strategies that arise from various sources and apply them, transforming them for their own use. For instance, Shelley

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recalled in her interview having learned about Malthus' theory in a prior statistics class. Mark also mentioned having seen something about Malthus earlier in the instructional unit though he didn't recall specifically when or which article. Shelley and Mark drew upon textual sources outside the immediate speech event, constructing intertextual links of their own prior learning to the evolving text of the group's discussion. Corson (1988) proposes that meaning is clarified in the act of trying out words or ideas in new situations or hearing others apply them. Shelley's use of "population checking" illustrated the appropriation of authoritative language. "Population checking" was a term replete in the texts the group read and discussed throughout the instructional unit. "Population checking" linked Cohen's account of Malthus' argument and the group's explanation of "exponentially."

Juxtaposing the Voices of Cohen and Malthus

Throughout the "focused talk" episode, the floor was jointly maintained by group members (F2) and jointly held (F1), evident in the overlapping talk and thinking of group members. Characteristic of deliberative discussion, the group jointly engaged in identifying, defining, and examining alternative perspectives about the issue (Light & Littleton, 1994). The group maintained Cohen's voice on the floor as another voice in the discussion. In the exchange above (27-33) Shelley and Mark also brought Malthus' voice to the discussion floor, evident in their saying "he [Malthus] believes" (31) and "Thomas Malthus thought" (32). Bringing Cohen and Malthus to the floor functioned as a resource for the group to juxtapose two alternative positions on the myth of exponential population growth. In juxtaposing the ideas of Cohen and Malthus, group members appropriated the reasoning and analytic skills fostered in the curriculum. Examining how an author or authors, participants in the public discussion of an issue, frame the issue was a central skill taught in the course. In juxtaposing Cohen and Malthus, the group examined the alternative frames of exponential growth Cohen presented, his own and that of Malthus, in order to assess his position on the issue.

Jointly Forming a Response

The talk shifted at this point in the discussion (33-42 below), explicitly addressing the task requirement by constructing a response to Cohen's position on exponential growth as correct or incorrect. Pauses and hesitations are frequent in exploratory talk where meaning is jointly constructed (Edwards & Westgate, 1994). While silence or long pauses in discourse sometimes indicate discomfort, interpersonal difficulty, or "silencing" speakers (Jaworski, 1993), silence, like talk, must be looked at in context in order to interpret how it is functioning in that context and the local meaning made by speakers (Erickson, 1986). The next analysis looks at student pauses and silences as they function within the rough draft talk of the group. According to Barber (1989) one healthy measure of public talk is the amount of silence it encourages, indicative of reflective thinking. Conclusions or formulations reached by the group were not held or proposed in advanced (Barnes, 1993) and the group worked through their thinking together to construct a response to the third question. Consistent with deliberative discussion, the group members re-thought and re-formulated their thinking on the first myth in light of the line of thought they constructed (Preskill, 1997). The analysis below illustrates that the extended silences and pauses functioned to sustain high participant involvement (Jaworski 1993; Tannen, 1989). The hesitations and pauses in the group talk were indicative of shared meaning, the what-was-going-on in the group (Edelsky, 1981) among group members.

As the group examined the alternative positions, the commitment to the ideas remained with Cohen and Malthus, respectively. In moving to craft a response, group members shifted to expressing their own ideas which functioned to discursively move Cohen and Malthus off the floor. Kate (24) asserted that were population checking to occur, "man would probably die when that happens." She put forth her own idea, one linked to the on-going topic, but not directly to Cohen or Malthus. Shelley (37) generalized that if population checking were to occur, the population would level off and decline. Her generalization, a summation of the exchange, created a juncture point in the discussion.

Mark moved to shift from discussing the ideas to formulating a response to the task question, marked by "Soooo?" Shelly (39) repeated Mark's "so" and paraphrased the task question, helping the group to shift focus to the question.

33   Shelley - Mhmm. That would be a population check. *(slight pause)* That would be population checking because it would be limiting the people who could live on earth.

34   Kate - Man would probably die when that happens.

35   Shelley - Mhmm. *(agreeing)*

36   Kate - I mean really.

37   Shelley - So it would end up leveling off and going down. *(summation of what has been said)*

38   Mark - Sooo?

39   Shelley - So do we think that he's right by saying that that's not necessarily the case?

      (pause)

40   Mark - No. Um.

      (pause)

41   Kate - Let's see. Um.

      (slight pause)

42   Shelley - Um.

43   Kate - I think it's. I think it's um =

44   Mark - = doubling?

45   Kate - Yeah. I can see that a lot. Know what I mean? At least what's in front of us.

             [

46   Mark - Yeah. I think that too. I think that, that if we don't do something by then. Um, population checking may occur. After a long time. Ya know?

47   Shelley - Mhmm. *(agreeing)*

48   Mark - Is that what you think?

49   Others - Yeah. Yeah.

(as Mark writes down answer for group, group reads through article)

Following the shift in the discussion, group members paused before venturing a response to Shelley's restatement of the task question (37-49 above). Mark (40) responded "no," but hesitated to offer reasons why. The hesitancy and pauses in the group's talk were indicators of high task engagement. "Ums" functioned to maintain the floor as group members thought through their ideas. Kate (43) began to venture a response. Mark (44) latched on to Kate's response and suggested that population was "doubling," an idea aligned with Malthus' thesis. Kate (47) agreed. Mark (46, 48) expounded upon the idea and then sought confirmation from other group members. Group members confirmed Mark's summation of the discussion with "mhmms" and "yeahs," indicating agreement.

Consistent with Edelsky's (1981) re-conceptualization of floor and turn in small group discussion, Parker (1997) describes the deliberative art as using the common space (the context of the group) to forge positions with others rather than using this space as a platform for expressing one's opinions alone. Shelley (39) began the exchange with an invitation to exploration by the group, asking "do we think." She combined the interrogative and the inclusive "we" to move the group to its task without either direct imperative or nomination of a single speaker. With the shift to formulating a response to the third question, group members offered their own ideas on the floor, indicated by "I" language. As group members put their ideas on the floor, they sought confirmation and affirmation from other group members. They offered ideas and followed with "know what I mean?" or "Ya know?" Seeking and receiving personal affirmation and confirmation of

ideas from others facilitated the group in asserting their ideas and jointly constructing a response. Above, as Mark and Kate (43-46) jointly formulated reasons why they disagreed with Cohen about the first myth, they affirmed one another. That group members were willing to offer ideas on the floor and affirm each other was an indication of a cooperative and supportive group context.

Establishing boundaries between the "we" (the group) and the "they" (others) is an important function of maintaining group cohesion (Cragan & Wright, 1991). Cohesion is the bond group members construct which protects the discursive boundaries through which a group identifies itself as a "we" (Goffman, 1959). The use of "we" language in the group's talk was an indicator of the group's sense of cohesion. It also illustrates the group's relative autonomy from the authority of the teacher and of the authors. In dialogic or democratic discussion, authority can have legitimacy, but it is situated within the on-going relations among participants in the discussion (Burbules, 1993). As noted above, they did not take Cohen's word as the authoritative word on the issue. In the "focused talk" above, group member's brought the voices of Cohen and Malthus to the discussion floor as other participants in the discussion of the issue. In turning to respond to the task question, the use of "I" and "we" language discursively moved Cohen and Malthus off floor. Consistent with the text of the discussion, Mark (below) wrote the group's response to the first myth which illustrated their reasoning and disagreement with Cohen. Also evident is the group's sense of cohesion and autonomy, particularly in the opening sentence of the response.

3. As a group we feel differently on each subject he talked about.

   a. The human population does not grow exponentially. We disagree with this position. We feel that the population growth is increasing and population checking could occur as the people outgrow the food supply.

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Cohen (1996) argued that population growth was a myth because it had slowed from a doubling time of 35 years to 45 years. Group B concluded Cohen was incorrect, drawing upon prior knowledge and Malthus cited in the Cohen text. They reasoned that human population was doubling and left unchecked would lead to some form of population checking. Deliberating involved assembling different arguments without suppressing any, and then weighing them against one another to decide on what, to the best of knowledge and belief, appeared to the most satisfying or convincing (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971). Students learn not to just behave in accordance with authority, but to think about it critically (Gutmann, 1987). In the "focused talk" described above, authority did not inhibit the exploratory talk of the group. Cohen's perspective was taken as one among other possibilities and open to interpretation and critique. In the end the group disagreed with Cohen, unconvinced by his argument about a decrease in doubling time.

Leadership in the Group's Discourse

Recalling from Chapter 2, fulfillment of task leadership functions was necessary for the group to engage in deliberative discussion. Akin to the reconceptualization of the construct "floor" discussed above, it is important here to discuss the concept of group leadership. Traditional conceptions construe leadership as a trait or state inherent in the personality of an individual (Fisher, 1980; Barge & Hirokawa, 1989). Leadership behaviors under such conceptualizations are identified as the person's talkativeness, her speaking turns on the floor, and how she controls the floor (i.e. authoritarian, democratic). These notions relate to the idea that the floor is a commodity to be vied for and controlled. Unlike these traditional conceptions of group leadership which emphasize influence, power, and control, Fisher (1980) views leadership as a function of the group that is situationally or contextually bound. Leadership occurs when a group member assists the group's ability in adapting to situational demands, group composition, and development in the group. Viewed this way, leadership is a construction of and dynamic of the group, not characteristics of an individual nor the degree to which a member controls the group's

interaction on the floor. Leadership is constructed and maintained through the processes of group interaction and communication (Fisher, 1980) and thus, can be shared and distributed among group members.

An important function of task leadership was making discourse moves which cued the group about the discussion task, thus maintaining coherence in the discussion. Throughout the "focused talk" episode, group members made discourse moves which cued the group as to where they were in the process of the discussion task. For example, after having juxtaposed Cohen and Malthus' ideas, Mark's "Sooo?" was a procedural cue to shift to forming a response which was taken up by the group. Mark often fulfilled the role of task leader throughout the "focused talk" episode, facilitating the group's navigation of the task. However the functions of task leadership were shared among group members and were adapted to the situational needs of the group. For example, Shelley's move (19 described earlier) "look at the statements and just decide whether we think they're correct or incorrect" was an instance of task leadership.

Mehan (cited in Cazden, 1986) raised questions about whether students learn the structure of the speech event or simply learn to read participation cues in the event. In the context of the group, discourse moves which functioned as cues for task procedure and participation were necessary to the group's ability to navigate the discussion task. A collaborative context is marked by a sense of order or coherence (Linde, 1993). Coherence is a cooperative achievement and not an absolute feature of discussion (Linde, 1993). The explicit discussion task directed the group to proceed myth by myth. However, the group constructed an ordered or patterned means of discussing each myth, thereby creating coherence in the discussion (See Appendix B).

Having formed a response to the first myth about exponential growth, the group paused as Mark wrote their response. In the exchange below (50-60) the group moved on to Cohen's second myth, "Scientists know how many people there will be 25, 50, and 100 years from now" (1996, p. 42). Mark (52) initiated the discussion of the second myth,

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stating "Scientists are inaccurate about population," a link to Cohen's text and a function of task leadership. Throughout the discussion of Cohen's article, Mark routinely initiated the discussion of each consecutive myth as he did the second myth below.

(pause in talk as Mark writes response and others look over article)

50   Mark - These are uh, <u>inaccurate</u>.

51   Shelley - Mhmm?

52   Mark - <u>Scientists are inaccurate</u> about population.

                          [

53   Kate - <u>Yeah</u>. <u>I think that</u>, um.

54   Shelley - <u>I</u>. <u>Yeah</u>. <u>He's saying</u> that people, scientists won't know like it's an absolute. Like how many people there are going to be and they don't because.

               [

55   Kate - <u>Yeah</u>.

56   Shelley - <u>They use</u> the example there being, of having an <u>outbreak of war or um like an epidemic</u> or something like that that <u>you can't really predict</u> those kind of things happening.

57   Kate - <u>I think they're crazy if they think they can do that</u> because

                    [

58   Shelley - Mhmm. (affirming)

               [

59   Kate - <u>I mean really</u>. More and more teenagers are having babies. And plus the adults who are having them. Plus if <u>a war were to break out</u> or whatever.

60   Shelley - Mhmm. (affirming)

slight pause while Mark writes - others look through article

Discussing Other Myths: An Abbreviated Pattern

Noticeably, the exchange above about the second myth was brief in comparison to the first. It was abbreviated, yet included high conversational involvement, high task engagement, and intertextual links characteristic of "focused talk." The pattern of engaging the text was consistent. Group members stated the myth Cohen presented, ventriloquated and juxtaposed the voices of the participants in the discussion, articulated their own ideas, and came to a conclusion about Cohen's position (see Appendix B). Mark (50 above) initiated the discussion with a position in place, "scientists are inaccurate about population." Kate and Shelley agreed. Shelley (54) brought Cohen's voice to the floor and restated his position. She (56) then referred to "they," the scientists, bringing their position to the floor. Shelley refuted the scientists' abilities to make accurate predictions, thus substantiating the position Mark put forward. Kate (57) confirmed the position and repeated and added to the reasons why scientists could not be accurate. The group again paused while Mark wrote the following response:

> b. Scientists are not accurate. We agree with this since plagues ect. [sic] cannot be predicted.

Cohen wrote "most demographers no longer believe they can accurately predict the future growth rate, size, composition, or distribution of population.... Researchers could not and cannot predict changes in birthrates...." (1996, p. 42). The brevity of the group's discussion of the second myth was likely related to prior speech events and the overarching curriculum. An aspect of the reasoning and analytic skills fostered in the curriculum was the questioning of statistics and their use to persuade. In a prior whole class speech event (March 7), for example, the class read and discussed The Numbers Game (Adler, 1994) which illustrated the fallibility of and the misleading use of statistics. Through prior speech events, in conjunction with the overarching reasoning skills of the curriculum, the group

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had already achieved consensus on the second myth. The group agreed with Cohen and reiterated the evidence he cited. Shelley (56) reiterated that scientists cannot predict disasters such as wars or epidemics. Kate (59) expounded upon the idea of birth rates. Again, group members appropriated textual resources from various locations (Hartman, 1995) and applied them to their examining Cohen's text.

With the myths that followed, the brevity of discussion continued. Cohen's third myth, one she refuted, "there is a single factor that limits how many people Earth can support," (1996, p. 44) was also an idea well established in prior speech events. A fundamental idea within the reasoning and analytical framework was that all issues involved multiple factors and what factors were seen as important depended on how the issue was framed. A key feature of deliberative discourse is the ability to recognize and appreciate the complexity and diversity of perspectives concerning public issues (Merryfield & White, 1996). It was likely, again, that consensus had already been achieved in prior speech events and therefore, extended discussion was deemed unnecessary. The group agreed with Cohen that there was not one factor regarding population growth.

Productive Digressive Talk and Simultaneous Floors

It was at this point in the discussion Shelley and Kate engaged in an episode of productive "digressive talk" (See Figure 5 in Chapter 2.) While the group waited as Mark wrote the response agreeing there was no single factor, Kate said "I'm tired really today." Shelley took up Kate's comment as an invitation and commented she was tired and sore from a competition over the weekend. The two began a conversation about their involvement with honor guard and cheerleading. The brevity of the discussion over certain myths that seemed already agreed upon created a break point or juncture in the "focused talk." The shift to a "break moment" was not disruptive. Achieving a context that facilitates deliberation is influenced by such factors as a sense of membership (Perelman & Obrechts-Tyteca , 1971). Although, as Parker (1997) argues, students must learn the

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difference between discussion and "blather" (p. 18), "frivolous" talk is not always unimportant and often contributes to a smooth working and indispensable social mechanism (Perelman & Obrechts-Tyteca, 1971).

The juncture in "focused talk" resulted in the construction of two simultaneous floors (Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, 1982). Shelley and Kate constructed a floor for their conversation. Mark continued to write and look over the article as did Steven and Hitoshi, maintaining the discussion task floor. Although, Steven and Hitoshi listened in on the "break moment" conversation too. The pattern of addressing each myth remained consistent and took precedence in the group's discourse. Shelley and Kate readily moved to the discussion task when necessary as shown below. Noted in Chapter 2, productive digressions were conversationally appropriate and related to a group's sense of cohesion. For Group B, this digression was one of the first moments in which group members publicly self-disclosed. In this speech event, the "break moment" digression was a resource for group members to interpersonally interact, potentially further building trust and solidarity within the group (Cragan & Wright, 1991; Tannen, 1989).

End of Digressive Talk

The "break" ended with Mark's (99) bringing another myth to the fore, "The United States has no population problem" (Cohen, 1996, p. 46). In contrast to several preceding myths, this myth appeared to be less redundant with what group members had previously done. It was an opportunity to construct a new understanding or new knowledge about the issue and high task engagement was fully resumed. Mark (99) restated Cohen's myth and drew the focus of the discussion to the task, a function of task leadership. He turned to Shelley and asked "Do you agree with that?" effectively returning Shelley and Kate's attention to the discussion task. Shelley (100) took up Mark's invitation to respond and offered her assessment of the argument stating she thought population was a problem in the United States. Mark (101) then stated "so we agree with this," which functioned to invite other group members to respond.

High task engagement and high conversational involvement were evident in the use of "I think" (100, 102, 104), in their overlapping talk (100-102), and in the repetition and evolution of the idea that population is a problem (99, 100, 102, 105, 106). Mark began to explore the myth further, linking the idea of abortion to the problem of population in the United States. Shelley (104) modified her initial assertion (100) stating she agreed to an extent. Kate (102) stated she thought the problem was bad. Mark and Shelley (105, 106) concurred. The group began to explore the myth further when Mr. Grant interrupted. The bell was about to ring ending the class period and other students were already packing up their things. That Group B did not disengage from their discussion even though the bell was about to ring was also an indication of their high engagement in the discussion.

98   Shelley - Do you guys go to NCA camp?

99   Mark - The <u>United States has a population problem</u>. <u>Do you agree</u> with

that? (*specifically to Shelley*)

100   Shelley - No. Because I've read, er, up to seven. And so <u>I did believe</u>

that one. <u>I think</u>, I think they've got a <u>population problem definitely</u>. But

I don't know. I don't know if it's exactly right.

             [

101   Mark - <u>So we agree</u> with this.

             [

102   Kate - <u>I think</u> it's really bad.

103   Mark - Because. What are we gonna say about the abortion thing.

104   Shelley - <u>I agree</u> with it to some extent, I guess. But not all. You know

what I mean?

105   Mark - It's <u>getting worse</u>. *(slight pause - Mark writes)*

106   Shelley - It's <u>not like it's gonna improve</u> by itself.

(lots of noise - discussion ends - bell about to ring Mr. Grant interrupts groups)

Doubting and Deliberative Discourse

Throughout the episode of "focused talk" described above, as the group discussed the Cohen text, they engaged in a process of examining and critiquing the arguments presented consistent with models of deliberative discussion. Group members identified, questioned, and determined the "correctness" of each myth Cohen presented. In the process, group members ventriloquated and juxtaposed various authors and texts in order to contrast the relative merits of the positions presented in order to judge which position was the strongest in their view and determine if they collectively agreed or disagreed with Cohen. This process of discussion was akin to what Burbules (1993) and Belenky and her co-authors (1986) characterize as separate and critical knowing. Elbow (1986) called this kind of thinking and discussion "doubting" which is a systematic questioning of propositions and uses of reason. Doubting heightens awareness of dissonance and relates to resisting authority. In ventriloquating the authors and juxtaposing various perspectives in the public discussion of the issue, group members extricated themselves from the assertions presented so they could reveal and identify weaknesses in the argument. Similar to doubting, Burbules (1993) describes this kind of discussion as dialogue as inquiry in which participants investigate alternative viewpoints and weigh and test different potential solutions or consequences within a discourse structure that encourages a range of approaches to the issue at hand. The process is directed toward determining reasons, weighing evidence, and making judgments.

In the group discussion described above, the explicit discussion task directed the group toward engaging in what Elbow (1986) calls the "doubting game." The discussion task directed the group to converge on the Cohen text in order to examine how he framed the issue, question his arguments, and analyze evidence presented in support of those

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arguments. More specifically, the third question asked the group to determine if they thought Cohen was correct or incorrect about each myth presented. Convergent discussion assumes a consensus and a correct, though tentative, answer (Burbules, 1993). Evident in their talk, the group made judgments about the correctness of Cohen's position. They decided whether they agreed or disagreed with Cohen on each myth, an achievement of agreement within the group.

For example, after discussing the idea that scientists are inaccurate, the group agreed with Cohen, evident in the response Mark wrote for the group: "Scientists are not accurate. We agree with this since plagues ect [sic] cannot be predicted." Even though the group agreed with Cohen, they engaged in deliberation about the idea he presented as a population myth. They engaged in doubting Cohen before coming to a conclusion, evident in the evolution of the idea in their talk. Mark (50, 52 above) proposed the idea "scientists are inaccurate" a direct link to Cohen's text. The idea "chained out" as Shelley (54, 56) extended the idea to include epidemics, wars, and things "you can't really predict." Kate (57, 59) concurred, adding "they're crazy if they think they can" accurately predict things like wars and birth rates. Together they examined Cohen's statement and drew upon further ideas before making a judgment about the "correctness" of his argument. They did not simply agree with Cohen nor accept his statement as the authoritative word even though, in the end, they agreed with him that scientists are inaccurate.

Descriptions of roles thus far have focused on the group's ability to navigate the discussion task. Based on Elbow's notion of doubting, the group also engaged in "doubting roles." For example, a group member stated Cohen's position or tentatively offered a position about each myth presented, without necessarily committing to the idea, which the group questioned and interpreted. Other group members took up doubting, responding with counter evidence or arguments voiced by other authors. They asked questions and offered their own perspectives. Group members fulfilled the doubting functions of questioning, juxtaposing, and analyzing in order to engage in deliberative

discussion. These doubting functions were flexible and fluid among group members, enabling the group to jointly construct their assessment or judgment about the arguments Cohen presented.

Sharing Article Reviews: April 14

In this next speech event (April 14, 1997) described below, Mark, Kate, Shelley, Hitoshi, and Mike reconvened to share their reviews of articles on global population. Steven was absent. Prior to this speech event, the class spent several days in the library researching articles. Each group member found an article about the issue and prepared a written review to be handed in at a later date. Students were given an article review form with guiding questions to help them focus their reading and writing. The questions were as follows:

1. How does the author(s) frame the issue/problem of population? Be specific.
2. List and describe the data the authors(s) used to justify the main point. List numbers, facts, ideas. This is the most important part of the task.
3. Discuss why you think the author's framing or information may be accurate.
4. Discuss why you think the data may be misleading or inaccurate.

Prior to reconvening in groups, Mr. Grant instructed the students to share their articles. In addition to the above questions, group members were to complete two evaluation sheets: one about the presenter and one about each group member as a respondent (See Appendices C and D.) The explicit discussion task in this speech event differed from other tasks group members had engaged in thus far in the unit. Recognizing that to be the case, Mr. Grant structured the discussion task more specifically than in prior instances (Conversation, April 4, 1997). The format of questions for the review functioned to structure the presentation each group member made in the discussion. In addition, the evaluation sheets prompted other group members to ask questions of the presenter about how the issue was framed, the evidence presented, and solutions offered.

The presenter was to take note of the questions asked. An additional question on the presentation evaluation form directed the presenter to relate the article reviewed to the three articles the group had read and discussed in prior speech events (i.e. Cohen, 1996; Erhlich & Erhlich, 1991; Zinsmeister, 1991).

Group discussion involves external constraints imposed from outside the boundary of the group and internal dynamics socially constituted within the group context (Hirokawa & Johnston, 1989). In the April 14 speech event described below, the explicit discussion task was structured such that it prescribed certain roles which formalized how the group proceeded with the task. In a Bakhtian sense (Wertsch, 1991), the floor was jointly constructed by the group, but in the role of presenter, each group member had a privileged voice in the discussion. Other group members took on the reciprocal roles of listener and respondent as each took their turn as presenter. Within the formalized structure of the explicit discussion task, group members engaged in talk characteristic of "focused talk": high task engagement, high conversational involvement and the construction of intertexual relationships. As shown in the analysis of the April 14 discussion below, the group engaged in idea-evolution, appropriation of textual sources, and ventriloquation of voices, three cognitive strategies that supported deliberative, cooperative discussion within a task structure which differed from converging on the Cohen (1996) text. Deliberation necessarily requires interaction with others (Burbules, 1993; Rossi, 1995). Participants in a discussion do not simply conform to rules and fit their talk appropriately to a pre-existing context. Rather, in and through talk, they create and change the context (Cazden, 1986). The intellectual work of deliberation is not separate from the relational work of group discussion. In fact, this analysis shows how they can be interdependent. Highlighted in the analysis of the April 14 speech event, group members adapted group roles (e.g. task leadership) and norms for proceeding with the discussion task to the explicit task structure of sharing their article reviews.

The Discussion Begins

Taking A Turn: The Role of Presenter

The "focused talk" episode below followed an episode of "task talk" initiated by Mark. As in prior instances, the "task talk" exchange functioned to re-establish the discussion floor and orient the group to the task (see Appendix F for a timeline of the April 14 event). Having clarified the explicit discussion task, Mark (20 below) offered to present first. The group members paused to fill in the evaluation forms with each group member's name. Mark (22) offered again and other group members confirmed his going first. Evident in Mark's offer of "taking my turn" was the sense the group had about the nature of the discussion floor. The notion of turn-taking was not something overtly articulated in other speech events with the exception of taking reading turns when the discussion task required the group to read aloud. Within the assigned discussion task, the floor (F2) was structured such that each group member, as he or she presented, was the privileged member or voice on the floor (F1). In this sense, though jointly constructed, the floor (F1) was not jointly held by group members as in the "focused talk" episode involving the discussion of the Cohen article described earlier. Thus, other group members listened as Mark spoke for an extended time. Illustrated in the analysis below, the group adapted roles and norms for participating to this change of floor.

20   Mark - I'll start it if no one else wants to go. (*slight pause - group filling out evaluation sheets*)

21   Kate - What's your last name Mark? (*filling out names on the evaluation forms*)

22   Mark - Schwanebeck.
         (*pause*)

22   Mark - Should I take my turn? (*other group members OK his going first - head nods and mhmms*) All right. Um. My article is about the blame game.

Mark had read *Beyond the Blame Game: Population-Environment Links* (Harrison, 1990). In this article, Harrison argued that those who blame population for environmental decline neglect other important factors such as technology, lifestyles, and social justice. He believed only by confronting all the factors involved are we likely to make progress in saving the environment. Accordingly, blaming population for the wrong things or as the only thing is futile. Mark (22 below) took the first turn as presenter.

22   Mark - Should I take my turn? (*other group members OK his going first*) All right. Um. My article is about the blame game. Basically, it told about how people used uh environmental problems, or uh, what do I want to say. (*pause*) They used the population problem to, as a blame for what they're. For what they want to accomplish. Like um, for example. Like if someone wanted to control families sizes, they would say that population is getting too big. So, the size has to go down through government regulation or something like that. So there's a lot of different groups that want, that are using population to try to control what they want by saying its a problem. Or this guy is saying there's a lot of other factors that play a role in population. Or that play a lot in the problems that people are saying that population is the main problem.

In the role of presenter, Mark took an extended turn on the floor uninterrupted by other group members. Mark began by explaining and summarizing what he understood as the main idea presented in the Harrison (1990) text. As Mark took his turn as the privileged voice on the floor, other group members adopted the role of listeners. As he spoke, they gave him their full attention evident in their head nods, occasional "mhmms," and eye contact throughout his turn. The adaptation of roles was a sign of cooperation among group members. They listened attentively as Mark worked through his explanation. Mark's extended turn on the floor, and later presenters' turns, were not "rough draft" talk.

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The presentation was rehearsed in the sense that Mark spoke from a written draft of his article review. Thus, the nature of the floor during the extended turns was "formal" and group members adopted appropriate listener roles while he spoke.

Intertextual Moves of the Presenter

As Mark (22 below) presented his article, he followed through with the explicit discussion task, describing how the issue was framed and giving specific examples from the text. In the process of sharing the article with the group, Mark (22) ventriloquated (Wertsch, 1991) the voice of the author, an intertextual discourse move, bringing Harrison's voice and his idea on to the discussion floor, evident in his saying "or this guy."

22   Mark - Like if someone wanted to control families sizes, they would say that population is getting too big. So, the size has to go down through government regulation or something like that. So there's a lot of different groups that want, that are using population to try to control what they want by saying its a problem. Or this guy is saying there's a lot of other factors that play a role in population. Or that play a lot in the problems that people are saying that population is the main problem.

Mark (below) paused for a moment, then shifted the focus of his presentation. Sustaining the privileged voice, Mark moved from explaining Harrison's key argument to articulating his analysis of the various viewpoints the group had read and discussed. In his analysis, prompted by the discussion task, Mark engaged in the intertextual process of juxtaposing the various authors and their positions on the issue.

(pause - thinks for a moment)

23   Mark - Oh boy. OK, with a viewpoint one. Uh, the guy [*Erhlich*] said that

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overpopulation will cause famine, disease, and the depletion of natural resources. This guy [Harrison] obviously doesn't agree with that. 'Cause he's saying people use, he's saying that people are blaming population for other problems. Like a lot of other factors that play a role. So I'd say that he [Harrison] would think that the uh, famine is using the depletion of natural resources and they have other factors besides population growth. Uh. Let's see. He [Harrison] kind of agreed with viewpoint two [Zinsmeister] 'cause viewpoint two is saying that population isn't really is as big a problem as people thought. Cause he's [Zinsmeister] saying that people are not only consumers, they're producers. (slight pause) He's [Zinsmeister] taking other factors in play. Um, ten myths of population [Cohen]. I'd say he [Harrison] agrees with that too because basically he [Cohen] talks about a lot of, a lot of different um, factors that play a role in problems that are happening. And, uh, that's about all there is to it. Any questions?

Mark compared the positions the various authors took on the issue of population. Within juxtaposing the various authors, he made several intertextual links to previous group discussions. For example, Mark referenced Zinsmeister and that he thought "population isn't really is as big a problem as people thought. 'Cause he's saying that people are not only consumers, they're producers." In the March 28, 1997 speech event, the group discussed the Zinsmeister text. In that discussion, the group concluded "He's saying like we can also produce what we need to because we're. Well, we're consuming." Another example is the link throughout Mark's explanation to the idea that there are multiple factors to consider regarding the population issue. This idea was an idea in the March 25 discussion of the Cohen text and a key idea in the reasoning and analytic skills in the curriculum. In his above explanation of Harrison's (1990) article, Mark linked understandings the group had constructed in prior speech events to the on-going text of the

group's discussion. Across speech events, meanings created and the textual links valued in one speech event influenced the participation in and text of the discussion in other related events (Bloome & Bailey, 1992).

Adapting Roles: Listeners to Questioners

Mark concluded presenting his article and invited other group members to ask questions. He (23 below) indicated he was finished and ready for questions, saying "And, uh, that's about all there is to it. Any questions?" Shaped by the explicit discussion task Mark explained how the author framed the issue, described the evidence, and demonstrated understanding of the text. In the same way, the explicit discussion task shaped, initially, the kinds of questions group members asked. These questions were prescribed in that the questioner drew specifically on the language and prompts given on the evaluation forms and fostered in the overarching curriculum (see Appendices C and D).

23   Mark - I'd say he [*Harrison*] agrees with that too because basically he [*Cohen*]

        talks about a lot of, a lot of different um, factors that play a role in problems that

        are happening. And, uh, that's about all there is to it. Any questions?

24   Kate - Did you say how the author framed the population issue as a problem?

25   Mark - That's what I tried to start with. About how like there's a lot of other

        factors that play a role in, uh. Like in Latin America besides population.

26   Kate - Mhmm. OK.

        (slight pause)

27   Mark - Any other questions? Ask me a question *somebody*. *(laugh)* *Nobody*

        wants to ask a question. *(pleading teasingly)*

Shelley (23 above) asked how the author framed the issue, a prescribed question prompted on the evaluation form. Mark responded to Shelley's question as the privileged

voice on the floor, reiterating the idea that there are multiple factors. To an extent, Mark responded to the questions prompted on the evaluation forms. Group members may have felt their prescribed questions were redundant and paused to think of other questions to ask. The different nature of the task may also have given group members pause as they worked through how to proceed with the task in this first turn of presenting. Mark (27) overtly invited questions from the group which facilitated the group engaging in the task, fulfilling the necessary function of task leader. Like Shelley, Kate (28 below) responded with a prescribed question. The evaluation form prompted questions about the solutions proposed by the authors of the articles shared.

28   Kate - What were <u>the author's solutions to the population</u> problem?

29   Mark - All right. Big question. (*Shelley laugh*) <u>His so-lu-tion</u> would be- to-

stop the believing everything that you hear about the population problem because

a lot of people are, um, trying to use it as a scapegoat. To the problems - or some

big problem.

Another kind of shift in the talk, intertextual in nature, occurred as group members asked Mark questions. The initial questions group members asked were prescribed, linked specifically to the language and prompts on the evaluation forms. As the group worked through their questions, they began to move away from the prescribed questions to questions more novel in nature. Novel questions extended the ideas on the floor beyond those prompted on the evaluation forms. For example, Hitoshi (30 below) expounded upon the idea of how the author framed the issue and asked "Does the author say it a problem or not?" Recognizing that an issue can be framed as no real problem was part of the analytic skills of identifying how an issue is framed. In his presentation, Mark stated Harrison's key point, that people inappropriately blame population as the source of other issues. He did not say whether Harrison stated population is a problem. Hitoshi probed

further as to how the author framed the issue, linking an analytic skill learned in prior speech events to the on-going discussion of the Harrison (1990) text. His question moved beyond the prescribed questions prompted on the evaluation forms and in that sense, the question was novel. Shelley (33 below) also asked a novel question which further probed how the author framed the issue.

30   Hitoshi - Does <u>the author say it a problem or not?</u>

31   Mark - <u>He's saying</u> that it isn't a problem for a lot of things people are blaming it on.

32   Hitoshi - Oh, OK.

33   Shelley - Does <u>he think this is not a problem in just like the United States</u> or like just in general.

34   Mark - Yeah, just in general.

35   Shelley - OK.

After Mark prompted Mike to ask a question (described more specifically in the section below), Mike too asked a novel question. He (43 below) asked whether technology was a factor the author discussed. Mike had read an article which associated the rise of technology with the rise of global population. His question functioned as a link between his knowledge from the article he read to the discussion of the Harrison (1990) article.[2] Given that Mike was frequently absent, he was less familiar with the on-going text of the group's discussions. Yet he drew upon his prior knowledge to construct a

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[2] Mike did not present his article as time ran out during this speech event. He was absent the next several days. Even though he had read an article and had worked on the article review form, he never finished the actual paper.

textual link that helped make sense of the Harrison text. Mark (44) responded, confirming Mike's idea that technology was an important factor. He linked Mike's idea about technology with the idea Harrison presented, that many factors need to be considered.

43   Mike - With <u>all the different factors</u> that mess with population growth, does

technology, is that what he says? <u>He says here</u> that it, um.

44   Mark - Right. <u>He's just saying</u> that basically <u>there's a lot of different ones.</u>

Um, there's a place where he talks about, talks about <u>all the different reasons</u>

that people use. He says, let's see. Oh, religious some times. Uh, rights for

women, women's freedom. People get that and ethnically /inaudible/. And then

uh ethnic leaders, or did I already say that. Anyways, but it doesn't really list all

the factors. But good question.

Humor, Care, and Adaptation

Bormann (1975) found that tensions related to roles and norms for proceeding with a task recur as groups enter into new phases of group discussion. He also found that in these recurrences of negotiating and adapting group roles and norms, humor often plays an important role in facilitating the change. Mark (26 above) invited other members to ask him questions. When no one responded, he teasingly offered again. Kate (28) took up his invitation and asked if the author suggested a solution. As a requirement of the discussion task, each group member assumed the role of presenter and lead the discussion by first presenting and then responding to questions from other group members. Although group members took turns as presenter, it was not a shared nor distributed as were other kinds of roles. Each presenter held the floor for an extended turn, a more face-threatening (Brown & Levison, 1987) role than the roles that were the norm in previous discussions. Humor in this speech event seemed to facilitate the group's ability to engage in the discussion task.

Although they did not overtly talk about it, the group seemed to be sensitive to the uncertainty of a new task and how group members participated. In particular, Mike was frequently absent and therefore, probably unaware of the nuances of the norms and roles of participation the group had constructed in previous events. Adapting to the different discussion task of this speech event included adapting to Mike's presence and his participation in the discussion. Below, Mark specifically encouraged a question from Mike. He handed Mike his paper to facilitate. Mike (39) made a joke saying Mark was the author and the group laughed. The joke was on Mark, one he appreciated, when he realized the play on authorship of his paper. The group paused to fill out the evaluation forms which functioned to give Mike time to formulate a question.

36   Mark - <u>Wanna ask a question</u>? (*to Mike*)

37   Mr. Grant - Um, hang on. (*to another student outside the group*) Mark.
        (*hands Mark forms*)

38   Mark - <u>Just ask me a question</u>. Say, who was the author (*to Mike*). Look over
        it and then just <u>ask me a question about it</u>. (*gives Mike his paper to look over*)

39   Mike - <u>Well that's the author. My name is Mark, M-a-r-k.</u>

        (*group laughs*)

40   Mike - <u>Oh, oh right.</u> (*laughs*)

        (*pause - writing on evaluation for respondents*)

41   Mark - What's the date? (*filling out evaluation forms*)

42   Kate - The 14th.
        (*pause*)

43   Mike - With all the different factors that mess with population growth, does
        technology, is that what he says? <u>He says here</u> that it, um.

44   Mark - <u>Right</u>. <u>He's just saying</u> that basically there's a lot of different ones.

Um, there's a place where he talks about, talks about all the different reasons that people use. He says, let's see. Oh, religious some times. Uh, rights for women, women's freedom. People get that and ethnically /inaudible/. And then uh ethnic leaders, or did I already say that. Anyways, but it doesn't really list all the factors. But good question.

45   Kate - Mhmm. *(affirming)*

In "focused talk" episodes, the relational work among group members was visible in talk that functioned as praise, encouragement, or agreement. Such talk cannot be understood as merely commenting on the substance of the discussion, but should be viewed as creating and maintaining the bonds of mutual concern, trust, respect, or appreciation that are crucial to the maintenance of a democratic context (Burbules, 1993). Mark (45) affirmed Mike, complementing him on his question. Kate (45) affirmed him with an "mhmm" as well. Recalling Fisher (1986), leadership is an act by any group member which facilitates the group's ability to engage in a task. In the exchange above, the group exhibited socio-emotional leadership functions (Cragan & Wright, 1991) which involved negotiating and maintaining the well-being of the group through expressions of concern and care for group members. Mark initiated this function in encouraging Mike to ask a question. Other group members took up the role with Mark, giving Mike time to think. Both Mark and Kate offered affirming comments to support Mike's participation. The group adapted norms and roles to facilitate Mike's ability to participate in the discussion task. Mike employed humor to facilitate participation. Deliberative discussion is not safe; it is unpredictable and arduous work (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1992). Expressing concern and care for fellow group members was an important indication of the supportive and cooperative nature of the group context (Chandler von Dras, 1993; Gilligan, 1982; McDermott, 1982; Noddings, 1992) and accordingly, facilitated group members' abilities to engage in deliberative discourse.

Kate's Turn as Presenter

In the exchange below (46-49), Kate took her turn as the privileged voice on the floor. Mark (46) initiated the transition, asking "who wants to go next?" Kate (49) took up the task and shared with the group her article, "*A Holocaust of Girls*" (Hilditch, 1995). In the article, Hilditch condemned China's one child policy, blaming it for the abandonment and abortion of baby girls. In an informal conversation in the library (April 4, 1997) Kate said she was outraged by this article and that she could not understand how anyone would throw away a child.

45   Kate - Mhmm.

46   Mark - All right. Who wants to go next?

47   Kate - I will.

48   Mark - All right.

49   Kate - OK. Mine was called "the holocaust for girls' and they talk about in China how really a lot of women, childs are abandoned and most all families want males because males are like the dominant sex. And um, so these reporters, and these people. Actually the people who wrote this article went there to, went to China. Went to an orphanage and they walked in and they describe what they saw. And like how they came across death rooms. And this one guy went and. These are the rooms where babies are left to die. And this one reporter, um it said that fif - 90% of 50 to 60 girls who arrive each month will die in an orphanage. And like there's so many kept there. And they say that some disappear and they won't say where those girls are. They go to the dying room, but they say they just disappear and they don't explain. And they, um, like the only amount of boys who are in the orphanage are those who are retarded. Then, you know, if they have something, if they are handicapped or if there's something wrong with them, then their parents get rid of them and try again. But the majority of it is girls. And um.

(slight pause)

Kate (49 above) followed through with the explicit discussion task in her presentation. She discussed how the author framed the problem and drew upon specific examples and evidence cited to support his claims. The author, Hilditch, told the story of what he witnessed in the orphanages. Kate ventriloquated (Wertsch, 1991) the voice of the author on the floor, retelling the story. Having the benefit of working through one presentation together, the group established how to proceed with the task. The pattern followed that as presenter, Kate shared her article with an extended turn on the floor and then group members asked questions in response.

Joint Response to a Novel Question

As Kate paused, Mark (50 below) asked about the dominance of males in China as the reason for girls in orphanages. His question was a query rather than a clarifying or information-seeking question. He reiterated Kate's explanation, a textual link to her presentation in which she said "they talked about in China how a lot of women, childs are abandoned and most all families want males because males are the dominant sex." His query launched the group into the discussion of Kate's article. The norms for participating were flexible as Mark did not hesitate in raising his question before she had "officially" finished. That is, before Kate indicated she was finished presenting as Mark had when he said "that's about all there is to it. Any questions?" She seemed comfortable with Mark's novel question and the change of floor, responding and linking the idea Mark brought to the floor to China's one child policy.

49   Kate - ...then their parents get rid of them and try again. But the majority of it is girls. And um. *(slight pause)*

50   Mark - So there's like a lot of girls because for the reason that the males are the dominant sex?

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51   Kate - Mhmm, yeah. And there's only, its a one child policy.

Mark's query (50) functioned to move the discussion from Kate's presentation to an exchange in which the group began to jointly clarify the claim made in the article. The change from a single presenter to multiple speakers on the floor who together took up Kate's topic was an indication that group members were highly engaged and involved in what Kate said. That Mark asked his novel question before Kate had "officially" ended her presentation illustrated the improvisational nature of deliberative discussion (Parker, 1997) and the fluidity of norms of participation.

The flexibility of and collaboration among students with respect to group roles was also evident in the exchange below. Although Kate remained the privileged voice on the floor, other group members joined her in explaining the consequences of the one child policy (55-58). Centered around Mark's query, the group jointly constructed an understanding of the claim Hilditch made concerning the one child policy resulting in "a holocaust for girls." Kate (51 above) linked the question Mark raised to China's one child policy. Mark (52 below) reiterated that if the child is a girl, she is taken to an orphanage. Kate (53), drawing from the Hilditch text, further explained that some girls are drowned instead. Mark (54) seemed somewhat taken aback at the idea, saying "*wow.*". Together, Kate and Shelley (55-58) extended the description of the consequences of China's one child policy for girls. Mike (59) added an apt analogy that girls in the orphanages were put away on a shelf.

52   Mark - So like people will have a kid and they'll be like its a girl so they take it
        to the orphanage?

53   Kate - If they do that at all. Farmers usually drown their daughters in buckets
        of water on the farm.

54   Mark - *Wow*.

55   Shelley - If they, if they have a child and they have a, get rid of the girl. They

        can have another a chance at having a kid.

                [

56   Kate - Again. Right. If they /inaudible/.

57   Shelley - Mhmm.

58   Kate - And they're so over crowded. They'll sit a girl down in a chair and tie

        her arms and legs. So she'll be sitting there all day.

59   Mike - Sit them on the shelf like.

60   Kate - Mhmm.

Characteristic of "focused talk" and illustrated in the exchange about the orphanages is the co-occurance of social and intellectual functions of group discourse, thematic coherence, and conversational involvement. These connected dimensions of the group's talk were evident in the repetition and evolution of ideas and the imaging of a scenario of what happens to girls as a consequence of the one child policy. Chafe (cited in Tannen, 1989) found imagery and imaginability to be key indicators of conversational involvement. Tannen argues it is often through the creation of shared images in conversation that ideas are communicated and understanding is achieved. In some circumstances, images can be more powerful than abstract propositions (Tannen, 1989). In this episode of "focused talk," Kate's presentation involved imagery rather than proposition talk as she shared the article with the group. Her presentation was shaped by the text in that Hilditch told a vivid story of what he saw to support his claims. In ventriloquating the voice of Hilditch, Kate retold his story. In the exchange above (52-60), initiated by Mark's query, the group took up the imaging Kate had begun in her presentation and the image of the consequences for girls under the one child policy evolved. Mike's (59) analogy of "sitting them on the shelf like" summarized the image of girls in orphanages Kate had begun. Seeming to have

satisfied Mike's query, the talk shifted to the assigned questions (below), fulfilling the explicit task requirement, and group members returned to the more formalized roles of presenter and respondents.

Intertexual Complexity in the Talk

Characteristic of "focused talk," the intertextual relationships group members constructed were increasingly complex as illustrated in the exchange below. Following the discussion of Mark's query above, the talk shifted (below 79-85) toward more prescribed questions. Shelley (79) asked what solutions the author suggested, a question prompted on the evaluation forms. Kate (80) responded that Hilditch did not offer a solution, but rather his purpose was to bring the situation to the public's attention. She extended the idea of Hilditch's purpose and directly stated from his text that "about 15 million girls have disappeared since the one child policy went in." Shelley (81) asked "where is that from," a reference to what source Hilditch took that information.

79   Shelley - Mhmm. So what did the author say and what is <u>his solution</u>?

80   Kate - They <u>didn't say any kind of solution.</u> They were just trying to um bring it

        out in the open. They <u>don't have any solutions</u> as to what to do. They already did

        what, and brought it out. And. What else to tell you? (*slight pause*)

        Here it says about 15 million girls have disappeared since the one child policy

        went in. (*directly citing the Hilditch text*)

81   Shelley - <u>What is that from?</u>

82   Kate - I don't know. I don't think it said. It. (*slight pause looks over notes*) It

        wasn't that long ago though. It been going on though for a long time. (*slight

        pause*) It mentions here 1979.

83   Mark - How would you <u>relate that to the ten myths of population</u> where he says

        population problems are <u>entangled with economics, the environment, and culture?</u>

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84   Kate - The population is?

85   Mark - That population problems are <u>entangled with economics, and the</u>

        <u>environment, and culture.</u> Do you think that your guy would agree with that?

Shelley's (81) question further illustrates the appropriation of the reasoning and

analytic skills fostered in the curriculum. Questioning the sources of factual and statistical

information used as evidence in the texts students read and viewed was an analytic skill

fostered in the curriculum. Mark (83-85) extended a prescribed question, linking several

texts to the on-going discussion. He asked Kate how she related the Hilditch (1995) text to

the Cohen (1996) text and linked ideas from the Harrison (1990) text he had read. Linked

to the requirements of the discussion task, Mark prompted Kate to juxtapose Hilditch's

position to that of the other authors the group read and discussed. The discussion of the

Hilditch text continued until interrupted by an outsider bringing more evaluation forms

around to the groups. The interruption created a juncture point in the "focused talk,"

ending Kate's turn as the presenter.

Shelley's Turn As Presenter

Not surprisingly, Shelley took her turn next as the privileged voice on the floor.

The analysis of Group B's "focused talk" suggests that difference of participation is

influenced by group roles and norms that are negotiated and maintained, resulting in the

patterns of interaction within the group context. As illustrated in the analysis of "focused

talk" episodes, group members often linked ideas and skills learned in prior speech events

and roles and norms of participation were adapted to new discussion tasks. Cohesion

among group members and coherence in the discourse were influenced by the consistency

of group roles and norms of participation within and across episodes of "focused talk."

Shelley, Mark, and Kate seemed to be the cohesive core of the group. They were group

members who were consistently present and readily engaged in the discussion tasks. They

were best able to sustain coherence of the group's discourse, both relationally and

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intellectually. Steven and Mike were absent a number of times throughout the unit on population and thus, were inconsistent members of the group. Hitoshi was present as were Shelley, Mark, and Kate, however, his English skills limited his participation in the discussions (Hitoshi's participation will be discussed in a later section of this chapter). Obviously when absent Steven and Mike could not participate. However, their absences and others' consistent presence influenced the group roles and norms for participation that were negotiated and maintained in the discourse of the group.

Following Through with the Discussion Task

Shelley presented an article by Joel Cohen, the same author of *Ten Myths of Population* (1996). In *Maximum Occupancy* (1996), Cohen argued that population growth is inevitable, but can be slowed if people on the planet are willing to change. He suggested people become more technologically advanced, more productive in their work, reduce material wants, and adopt better manners toward one another to live harmoniously together. Following the interruption on the floor by the outsider, Mark (99) moved to return to the discussion task. Shelley (100) took her turn.

99   Mark - All right.

100   Shelley - My article is called maxi, maximum occupancy. Um, and the author

        frames the problem of population in his article, um saying that earth will not

        support, um only a fourth of all the trillion people on the planet. Unless, it won't

        support that many people unless some changes are made. And the author

        believes that to undergo, to even hold as many people on earth as we, as is totally

        possible, um we're gonna have to like make changes about the price of things that

        we do on earth. Like people need to, what he said was that people needed to

        increase levels of technology and reduce material wants and encourage better

        manners. And he believes um, without that thinking, he's stating that if people

        got better manners, that would be easier for people to live with one another. And

that if people are nicer to one another essentially more people would be able to live here. It's an interesting theory. I guess I never thought about it that way. but, um. He believes, seriously believes that, that um, people learn to get along with one another better that more people would be able to habitate in one area.

Shelley began her turn voicing the author on the floor, describing how he framed the problem of population. She drew from the article Cohen's arguments for the kinds of changes he believed need to occur. Shelley shifted the voice on the floor quite fluidly, perhaps from having the benefit of listening to two prior presentations. She specifically commented on Cohen's theory of better manners, saying with skepticism, "It's an interesting theory. I never thought about it that way." She continued to explain Cohen's ideas about the relationship of technology to population, birth rates, and reducing material wants. Shelley then referenced the other articles, juxtaposing their various positions with Cohen's, included juxtaposing Cohen's two articles as she compared the perspectives presented.

100   Shelley - ... Even in like all the other three articles, it talks about that technology goes up um, there becomes more people because of more jobs. And people will drop the number of kids. And as population goes up the standard of living goes down to get people ready for that, they're saying we should reduce our material wants. So that once we get to a time when not everybody can have everything they want, no one is going to be completely devastated, you know. And everything. It's not, we have to gradually get to some sort of point where everybody's living at sort of a similar level. Um. And in the other article [Cohen's] it's the same way. He says that as more people, um, things like technology go up there seems to be somewhat of a declining rise in percentage of

growth and I'm not really sure why he didn't believe. He didn't point out an

explanation for that. But it said that in Viewpoint one and two of these other

articles we've read that like there's been, it's gone from a 2% increase per year to

a 1.5% increase. There's still an increase happening, it's just getting smaller.

Um, and that happened in the /inaudible/ population. They talked about that too.

Um. The author's solution which I just presented were we need to be nicer to

each other, we need to. He basically said that people need to like learn about

what kinds of changes we need to be made. And we should teach each other how

to make these changes. Um, and I don't really know, he didn't really explain

what he meant by that. But, he, basically, everyone needs to figure out on their

own how they're going to survive and they need to figure out how they're going

to learn better then and how to teach their children better then. Or things, or I

guess he considered survival skills.

Appropriation of Textual Resources

Shelley's turn as the privileged voice on the floor illustrated the appropriation of

authoritative language characteristic in "focused talk" episodes. Terms and phrases such as

"declining rise in percentage growth," "technological growth", and "a 2% increase per year

to a 1.5% increase" were common across the articles the group read and discussed. The

use of statistical language was replete in the articles. When group members appropriated

the technical language of the issue in the articles, they linked the discussion of the public

issue to the text of their own on-going discussion. Appropriation functioned as one

resource for the group to engage in the public discussion of the issue. Shelley also was

explicit in using language from the curriculum, prompted by the evaluation sheets. For

example, she was explicit in stating "my article is called maximum occupancy and the

author frames the problem of population" and "the author's solution which I just

presented." Shelley ended her turn summarizing what she understood as Cohen's

conclusion about resolving the population issue. Mark (101 below) took up the task of responding to Shelley and asked if she compared her article to the ten myths.

101   Mark - Um. Would you compare him to the ten myths of population? Or did you

        already. You did.

102   Shelley - I did.

103   Kate - Yeah.

104   Mark - And you compared him to viewpoint one and two.

105   Shelley - Mhmm.

106   Mark - You did a good job. Good. Um, is there any data in there?

Shelley (100) concluded her turn as presenter, indicating the end of her turn by repeating her summation, "But he, basically, everyone needs to figure out on their own how they're going to survive and they need to figure out how they're going to learn better then and how to teach their children better then. Or things, or I guess he considered survival skills." She then set down her paper and looked up to the group. Both her verbal summation and her nonverbal behavior cued the group that she had finished. Mark (107 above) initiated the task of asking questions. Shelley had addressed the prescribed questions in her presentation, indicated by Mark (101-104) asking about comparing authors and deciding she had answered them. Shelley confirmed she had.

Mark (106) congratulated Shelley on her presentation and then asked about the data in the article, also a prescribed question. Both the review guide and the evaluation form prompted the presenters, and listeners, to list and describe the data the author used to justify his/her position. Shelley (107 below) described Cohen's data, appropriating language from the article. She also applied the analytic and reasoning skills fostered in the curriculum in her explanation of the data. She noted (107) that Cohen only reported percentages and (109) that he did not report the sources of his data which she found

misleading. Her use of these analysis skills was a link to prior speech events. For example, prior to the unit on population, Mr. Grant taught what he called a mini-unit on questioning the numbers and examining logic errors (March 7-13). Students in whole class discussion with Mr. Grant learned to question the use of percentages and sources of information.

107   Shelley - His <u>data was basically just percentages</u>. Like in different types of

        increase. Increase here might be 2% you know ten years ago like 2% rise per

        year.

                            [

108   Mark - Mhmm.

        [

109   Shelley - In population. But now it's only 1.5 as we got a bit more

        technologically advanced. Um. It's just like <u>he reviewed a lot of studies</u>. And I

        don't like. <u>He doesn't tell where the studies came from which is sort of</u>

        <u>misleading</u> I think. <u>So</u>.

110   Mark - <u>Well</u>, basically, <u>he sounds</u> <u>kind of fruity</u> to me.

111   Shelley - Yeah. <u>He sounds like</u>

                  [

112   Mike - <u>He sounds</u> just like

              [

113   Shelley - <u>He has interesting ideas</u> about how the population issue should be

        handled. *(laughs)*

114   Mark - <u>Yeah but not a lot of them will work</u>. *(group laugh)*

115   Mike - *<u>Too much caring</u>*, mmm just *<u>be nice</u>*.

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Shelley (109) explained how Cohen used data in his article and offered her assessment of his argument, suggesting not reporting the sources was misleading. She ended her explanation with "so," which cued the group she was finished explaining. Mark then (110) commented he thought Cohen's solution was "kind of fruity" and the group took up the humor agreeing that Cohen's argument was not very compelling. Mike (115) added a satirical comment about "just being nice." Characteristic of "focused talk" and illustrated in the exchange about Cohen's article is the co-occurance of social and intellectual functions of group discourse. These connected dimensions of the group's talk were evident in the repetition of "sounds like" (110, 111, 112), the overlapping talk and evolution of the idea that "he has interesting ideas" but "they won't work" and the imaging of a scenario of "being nice to each other" (110-119) solving global population issues.

They continued (below) to engage Shelley's article with a bit of levity. Kate (117) asked Shelley why she picked this article (a novel question), seemingly spawned by the criticism given above. Mr. Grant had instructed students to puruse several articles and choose one they found informative and interesting, not to simply choose the first one they found. Shelley (118) explained how she chose the Cohen article. Kate's question was different in nature than other questions. Her question shifted from addressing Cohen to addressing Shelley. That Shelley readily responded further illustrates the fluid nature of roles and norms within the context of the group. In her response to Kate, Shelley (118) returned to the idea that Cohen's argument was not compelling, emphasizing her doubt that "being nice to each other" would resolve the population problem. Kate (123) mentioned Habitat for Humanity and Jimmy Carter, a link to a textual source outside the group context. She seemed to be willing to give Cohen's argument further consideration, but her idea was not taken up by the group. Mark (124 below) shifted the floor to Hitoshi, asking if he wanted to take a turn, perhaps taking the levity on the floor as a cue that discussion of

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the Cohen article was completed. Hitoshi nodded and took a moment to read over his paper.

117   Kate - Mmmm. So why'd you pick that article?

118   Shelley - I chose this article because. At first it sounded interesting. I, the only parts I read were the thingies like a summary and they talked about technological growth and um, material wants per captia and things like that. And I thought well that sounds pretty good. Probably a lot of interesting data in there and I read it and I'm going *this guy is telling us to be nice to each other.* Not that I wouldn't but, it's *OK*.

119   Mike - See if we didn't /inaudible/ then more people could live on it. Hey friends.

                                            [

120   Kate - Well, you're gonna strange people (*group laughs*)

                                            [

121   Shelley - Yeah. Hey friends, let's build an apartment building together.

122   Mike - Yeah, really.

123   Kate - Oh well. There's habitat /inaudible/ and Jimmy Carter.

124   Mark - You gonna go Hitoshi?

125   Hitoshi - Yup. (*looks over his paper for a minute*)

126   Kate - What is the weather supposed to be like today?

127   Mike - 94 and sunny.

128   Kate - Oh yeah. (*disconfirming*)

129   Shelley - You didn't watch the weather channel this morning.

130   Kate - Yeah, I know. I tried.

Hitoshi's Turn As Presenter

Following Through with the Task

Mark shifted the floor for Hitoshi to take his turn as the privileged voice on the floor. He took a moment to look over the paper he had written. Group members discussed the weather, which functioned to give him time to prepare (above). Hitoshi reviewed a chapter in Newton's (1992) book Population: Too Many People. In the chapter, Newton presented the position of the National Research Council which reported that population growth is probably not the main cause of problems in less developed countries, but it is more likely to slow their progress. In the chapter, Newton describes the Council's position in some detail, debunking arguments which suggest population growth is the primary cause of global problems. Hitoshi (131 below) indicated he was ready with an "OK" and group members turned their attention to him.

131   Hitoshi - OK. (reading from his article review form) The author think that problem of population is kind of exaggerated. And according Simpson, who is professor of economics of University of Mayle, the amount of food available per person worldwide has increased since 1945. And land, natural resources and energy are not in short supply. Uh, pollution has not increased as a result of population growth. Uh, also, even the number of children are increasing. Someday will be workers, inventors, artists, taxpayers, products, productive members of the country. So, it, it's not gonna be a problem. It's kind of better. Um, I don't really like this idea, but a greater population surely has a large number of geniuses who could come up with solution for the problems. (group laughs). Also that Wattenberg points out people living in those nations dropped from 22% in 1950 to 15% in 1987. So he say in some place the population decreasing. Um.

(pause)

Hitoshi followed through with the explicit discussion task as did other group members. He brought the voice of the author on to the discussion floor and explained how the author framed the issue. He gave evidence presented in Newton's article, including other authors whom Newton cited. Hitoshi also shifted the voice on the floor fluidly and commented that he did not agree with Newton that increases in population would result in more geniuses who could solve global problems. He paused and Mark (132 below) took up the task of responding.

132   Mark - OK. Um. How about. Mhmm, hmm, hmm.

133   *(group laughs over Mark's response)*

134   Mark - So how

        [

135   Shelley - I didn't like it. I hope it doesn't /inaudible/ any thing.

136   Mark - So <u>he obviously wouldn't agree</u> with over population causes famine,

        disease, and depletion of natural resources. *(reference to Ehrlichs' article)*

137   Kate - I think <u>he agrees on</u> that not everybody's gonna be a consumer but a

        producer. *(reference to Zinsmeister)*

138   Mark - Yeah, yeah.

        [

139   Hitoshi & Shelley - Mhmm.

140   Mark - Yeah, especially with the geniuses.

141   Shelley - *(laughs)* Yeah, I know.

142   Mark - Um, <u>He probably wouldn't agree</u> with population causes any thing since

        <u>he's saying population isn't a problem</u>. OK, OK.

        (pause)

Mark concluded the turn on the floor with "OK. OK." The group responded to Hitoshi differently than they had the other presenters. The prescribed questions were implied and Mark stood in as proxy for Hitoshi on the floor. Other group members linked Newton's ideas to those of the authors the group had read and discussed. Nodding frequently, Hitoshi agreed to what the others said. Group members had exhibited a certain sensitivity toward Hitoshi, a Japanese exchange student. In his interview, Steven said, "It isn't that he isn't smart. He's a real smart guy. But he can't just jump in like that, ya know." Hitoshi's English skills were limited. Although he was an active listener and contributed written text to the group, he did not speak very often. His presentation to the group in this speech event was read from his written text which gave him opportunity to rehearse what he wanted to say. The article review form did not include comparing the article to those the group had read and discussed. Comparing articles was prompted on the evaluation forms and Hitoshi did not have opportunity to rehearse speaking about the other authors' ideas.

A Dilemma of Participation

Across speech events, group members exhibited a certain consideration toward Hitoshi. They seemed to not take advantage of Hitoshi as an intellectual resource and made efforts to mitigate his vulnerability as a speaker on the floor. Group discussion involved not just the negotiation and maintenance of ideas, but also the social dynamics of the group's discourse. It seemed more important to the group to maintain group cohesion than to put Hitoshi in a compromising social situation. Not wanting to put him "on the spot," a face threatening act (Brown & Levison, 1987; Lim, 1990), evolved as a norm of participation. Although this norm seemed to be protective of Hitoshi, it also functioned to limit what he contributed to their discussions.

Participation was complicated by the relational, textual, and intellectual dimensions of the group's interaction. The group engaged in discussion that was often "rough draft"

and exploratory (Burbules, 1993) and improvisational in nature (Parker, 1997). Hitoshi, as Steven noted, was not able to "jump in" as were other group members. Shelley, in her interview, commented that Hitoshi must be frustrated at times for having to continually flip through his translation dictionary to find the words he wants to say. Other group members expressed sympathy and sensitivity toward Hitoshi's language difficulties, but seemed unsure how to bring him into the flow of the discussion. While the group seemed to protect Hitoshi from being "on the spot," they also in effect limited his opportunities to participate. The dilemma for the group, from the analysist's perspective, was establishing norms and roles which balanced the improvisational nature of deliberative discussion while finding ways to facilitate Hitoshi's participation.

Doubting and Believing: The Nature of Deliberative Discourse

The explicit discussion task in the April 14 speech event directed group members to engage in the "doubting game" (Elbow, 1986). Similar to the March 25 speech event, group members discussed how the authors of the articles they shared framed the issue of population and they questioned the reasoning, evidence, and solutions presented. However, analysis of the relational, intellectual, and textual relationships constructed within the context of the group discussion suggests a more complex and interwoven dynamic of what Elbow (1986) calls "believing" and "doubting." Before proceeding further, it is necessary to briefly discuss these constructs.

"Doubting" is consistent with what others include as capacities for deliberative discussion: identification of and weighing of alternatives, questioning, examination, and reflection (e.g. Mercer, 1995; Merryfield & White, 1996; Newmann, 1989; Stotsky, 1991). Elbow (1973, 1986) describes "doubting" as a kind of thinking process in which participants in discussion extricate themselves from the assertions in question and run the assertions through a logical transformation to reveal the premises and necessary consequences of the assertion, thereby bringing out into the open hidden errors. This process is facilitated and amplified when differing assertions are held up to each other and

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their respective merits are weighed against each other. In contrast, when "believing," (Elbow, 1973, 1986) participants do not extricate themselves, but insert or involve themselves in finding potential perceptions and experiences in the assertion. Participants in discussion need not hold to one or other kind of thinking exclusively. But according to Elbow, neither "game" is played at the same time (Elbow, 1973, 1986). Burbules (1993) extends the conceptions of "doubting" and "believing" and describes four views of dialogue: convergent, divergent, inclusive, and critical. Convergent views of dialogue assume a consensus and determination of a "correct" answer. Divergent views of dialogue assume multiple possible interpretations rather than a narrowing to a "correct" one. An inclusive stance is a stance toward fellow participants, granting plausibility to what they are saying. A critical stance emphasizes critiquing the accuracy of what is said, testing it against evidence and logical consistency.

The discussion task assigned to the group directed them toward engaging in the "doubting game." Similar to the March 25 speech event described earlier, group members adopted a critical stance (Burbules, 1993) toward the authors. While the group engaged various article texts, group members ventriloquated the voices of the authors, an intertextual process of bringing the voice and idea of the author to the floor in order to identify how the issue was framed, examine the data and evidence, and weigh the relative merits of the arguments presented. In voicing the authors of the texts, group members did not commit to the idea presented, temporarily extricating themselves from the idea in order to examine and critique. The group engaged in "doubting' (Elbow, 1973, 1986), adapting a critical stance (Burbules, 1993) toward the authors.

However, because only one member had read the article, the presenter, other group members also engaged in "believing." "Believing" entails listening, cooperation, and a willingness to explore (Elbow, 1973, 1986). Group members adopted an inclusive stance toward the presenter (Burbules, 1993) granting plausibility to what he said as he shared his article. This inclusive stance was also evident, for example, in the group's efforts to jointly

explain to Mark the consequences of the one child policy during Kate's turn as presenter. The group brought the voice of the author to the discussion floor, providing a resource for the group to question and critique the ideas, a "critical/doubting" stance, without interrogating the presenter, an "inclusive/believing" stance.

Doubting, believing, critical, and inclusive stances are different learning orientations in discussion (Burbules, 1993). In their talk, the group was able to weave these ways of discussing which permitted them to explore the ideas and link multiple texts. Whereas Elbow (1973, 1986) suggests for analytic purposes, doubting and believing should not co-occur. However, in the analysis of "focused talk" above, it was the group's ability to interweave these ways of talking, to simultaneously play doubting and believing on the floor that enabled them to deliberate about the issue presented and sustain a democratic context. Analysis of "focused talk" in the April 14 and March 25 speech event illustrated how the group adopted and adapted a constellation of doubting and believing stances, or in Burbules (1993) terminology, a constellation of critical, inclusive, divergent, and convergent discursive strategies to engage in deliberative, democratic discussion. In the next section, analysis of the April 25 speech event illustrates the group's adapting this constellation of discursive strategies to a different discussion task.

Crafting Statements on Birth and Death Rates: April 25

The Discussion Task

For several days prior to April 25, 1997, the group had been in the library conducting their population study on Germany (April 17-23). They completed a population information worksheet which required members to find statistical and descriptive information which provided a profile of Germany's population situation (see Appendix E). Germany experienced a decline in population growth which posed a different population problem than many other countries faced. With everyone present on April 25, the group discussed whether there should be birth and death rate policies for Germany and the globe. Mr. Grant wanted the groups to begin pulling together information they had gathered thus

far in the unit for a later presentation to the class on their country of study (Conversation, April 25). In the whole class discussion prior to this speech event, Mr. Grant prompted them to think about the multiple political, economic, cultural, and moral considerations and implications of policies that control birth and death rates. He directed students to craft a few "good arguments" concerning birth and death rate policies and then be ready to share them with the class.

In contrast to the two prior speech events analyzed above (March 25 and April 14), the explicit discussion task in this speech event did not include a specific text or set of texts to focus the discussion and its purpose differed as well. In the March 25 speech event, the discussion focused on the Cohen text and deciding if he was "correct." The task requirement and the textual organization of the article influenced how the group proceeded with the task. In the April 14 speech event, the discussion task required group members to take turns presenting their articles which shaped how the group proceeded with the task. Similar to these previous speech events, the floor was jointly constructed by group members and roles and norms for participation were adapted to the different task structure of April 25. In this speech event, however, the explicit discussion task was to frame several arguments of their own. This task was more open-ended in its purpose and offered the group more latitude in negotiating its structure. (See Appendix G for a timeline of April 25.)

As in previously described episodes of "focused talk," however, group members did some similar things with text. They engaged in ventriloquation of others, appropriation of textual resources, and idea-evolution. However, how group members accessed and used the variety of resources and tools in their talk to weave ideas together to construct and examine arguments differed than in past speech events. These different strategies will be described below. In addition, the analysis sheds light on the democratic norms for participating in the discussion task which, though adapted to the particular task at hand, are maintained even in this loosely-structured assignment. The analysis below highlights the

adaptation of norms and roles to the different task, the varied textual links constructed, and the conversational strategies employed by group members in order to engage in deliberative, democratic discourse.

Engaging in Focused Talk To Frame Arguments

As the group gathered and circled their desks, Mark, who had a horrible cold, was at Mr. Grant's desk getting a tissue. In the exchange below (59-72), the group worked to find its focus of discussion. Their talk was marked by short, sometimes overlapping turns as they oriented themselves to the task. Unlike prior episodes of "task talk" in which the group readily oriented itself to the task, the group seemed to struggle to get "on the same wavelength" (Edelsky, 1981) and locate the topic and themselves in the discussion. Shelley (59 below) began by asking, "OK. What do we need to be doing?" Kate (60) responded they were to talk about policy. Mark joined the group (61) making a comment about how poorly he felt. He then (64) proposed birth rates as a topic for discussion. Kate (65) "ummed," an acknowledgment of Mark's move and an indication of involvement. Steven (66), overlapping Kate, took up Mark's initiating move and linked the idea of birth rates to prior discussions about Germany's population situation. Kate (67) repeated Steven's "how," and seemed to be taking up the topic of Germany's birth rates. Shelley (68), however, asked whether they were discussing the world or Germany. Steven (70) repeated his proposal of what they had "talked about." Mark (71) began to craft a statement about birth rates and linked the idea of birth rates to "certain levels of population." Several ideas were on the floor that lacked coherence until Steven (73) proposed a birth rate policy.

59   Shelley - OK. What do we need to be doing?

60   Kate - Talking over that policy I think.
        (pause waiting for Mark)

61   Mark - I don't feel like doing much today *(bad cold)*. Oh I'm never going to
        /inaudible/ What's the date?

62   Shelley - 25th.

63   Kate - Yup, the 25th.

64   Mark - All right. _Birth rates_.

65   Kate - Um.

            [

66   Steven - Well we talked about how low is the birth rate.

67   Kate - How.

68   Shelley - For the whole world or Germany?

69   Kate - The whole world.

            [

70   Steven - Like talking about.

71   Kate - Ummmm.

72   Mark - Ummm. The population reaches the level in which we need, we can't,

        um... (*trails off*)

73   Steven - I think we should limit it to um maybe two kids per family.

Functions of Leadership

Leadership functions have been discussed thus far as instrumental, facilitating the group's navigation of the task and negotiation of the relational dynamics of group interaction. In this event, leadership seems to be both less individual and explicit and was shared and implicit. For example, above Shelley (59) said, "OK. What do we need to be doing?" a procedural move which began re-establishing the floor, fulfilling a task leadership function of initiating the orienting process. The interrogative form is used to serve both an inquiry function and also an inviting one. She lead not with an imperative, but with an unimperative that mitigated her authority as self designated task leader while inviting others to participate and perhaps lead as well.

In speech communication literature, group leadership is often described in terms of a designated person in the role of leader who possesses certain traits or styles of leadership ability. In cooperative learning literature, leadership is often described as part of the explicit task structure and leadership roles are appointed by the teacher. In contrast to these conceptions, Fisher (1986) views leadership as occurring when a group member assists the group's ability in adapting to situational demands, group composition, and development in the group. Viewed this way, leadership is a construction of and dynamic of the group, not characteristics of an individual nor the degree to which a member controls the group's interaction on the floor. Leadership is constructed and maintained in the group's interaction and communication (Fisher, 1986; Fisher & Ellis, 1990) and thus, can be shared and distributed among group members.

Steven (73 below) ventured an assertion, that families should be limited to two children. His proposal was a function of leadership, facilitating the group's ability to engage in discussion. It functioned as a point around which other group members could agree or disagree, providing a focus and an idea to explore. Steven willingly put forth an idea to be examined, an act of deliberative, democratic discussion (Preskill, 1997). Kate took up his idea (74 below) and argued against a limit on children per family. She drew upon the Hilditch article she read and shared, an intertextual link to the April 14 speech event, providing a reason why she disagreed. Steven made an assertion which Kate took up and challenged. His proposal on the floor in and of itself did not define the focus of the discussion. Kate's uptake on Steven's idea was a necessary cooperative move which illustrates her acknowledgment of Steven's proposal and that they were "on the same wave length" (Edelsky, 1981). According to Tannen, previous research on topic initiation and control assumes that whoever initiates a topic dominates or controls the conversational floor. However, a topic becomes the topic through a collaborative move of another participant's uptake (Tannen, 1990), and this is especially apparent in groups accomplishing open-ended tasks. Following Kate's counter-assertion (74), Steven (75)

responded in turn. Both offered ideas on the floor around which the discussion evolved. Their point - counterpoint was a joint effort, a co-construction, which defined the focus of the discussion. Illustrated in their talk below, leadership in the form of initiating the topic of discussion was a shared act between these two group members.

73   Steven - <u>I think we should limit it</u> to um maybe two kids per family.

                                                                                [

74   Kate - <u>I know, but what does that do</u>? When you put a limit on that like that then

        farmers are drowning their children. Children are killed every day and their put

        in orphanages and they're treated like crap because of that and that's not right

        either. I mean that's what they're doing in China right now.

75   Steven - So are you saying that the birth rate policy on that like if parents don't

        get the kid they want their going to drown them or throw them in an orphanage?

Ideational Conflict and Cooperation

This sharing of leadership co-occurs with participants critically and constructively engaging one another's ideas (Mercer, 1995). Described in the following analysis is the idea-evolution process in which group members jointly developed meaning, accomplished in their talk as individual members contributed ideas that are linked into a coherent understanding (Edelsky, 1981). Idea-evolution in this exchange is an example of ideational conflict. Conceptualizations of group conflict range from theories which view it as "unhealthy" to those that view it as a necessary element of constructive change (Pavitt & Curtis, 1990). Early conceptions view conflict as competition among group members' interests and goals. However, more recent conceptions recognize that conflict can occur in cooperative situations (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Pavitt & Curtis, 1990). Conflict in cooperative situations exist when group members ideas, information, conclusions, theories, and opinions are incompatible (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Conflict in these

circumstances is not ideally interpersonal, but ideational. Speakers observe norms of etiquette to achieve this distinction as is illustrated in the following example.

Steven (73 below) proposed limiting families to two children. Kate (74) disagreed and cited the consequences of the birth rate policy in China. Kate (74, 78), in support of her counter-point, appropriated the Hilditch text she shared on April 14. Hilditch (1995) reported that girls were put in orphanages and left to die as a result of China's one child birth rate policy. Steven (75) responded paraphrasing Kate which functioned to clarify and elaborate her statement. O'Connor and Michaels (1993) describe a process they call revoicing. Revoicing links the intent of speakers and is a resource for heightening clarity and elaboration on the initial idea offered. In a Bakhtian sense, reformulation or revoicing is a process of simultaneously juxtaposing and linking multiple ideas in a discussion. Tannen (1989) suggests repetitions and variations function to build coherence in discussion even when the repetition is used evaluatively.

Steven linked his idea of a birth rate policy that limited the number of children and Kate's assertion of the negative consequences of such a policy. His reformulation functioned simultaneously to clarify and challenge Kate's assertion. It functioned to bring the idea in conflict they had constructed together to the floor and shift the idea in conflict from a point-counterpoint exchange between he and Kate to a more "public" statement (O'Connor & Michaels, 1993). Thus, his move (75) was also an inclusive discourse move. The idea brought to the floor became the group's idea and facilitated group members critical examination of the idea without being critical of each other.

73   Steven - I think we should limit it to um maybe two kids per family.

                                                                    [

74   Kate - I know, but what does that do? When you put a limit on that like that then

        farmers are drowning their children. Children are killed every day and their put

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in orphanages and they're treated like crap <u>because of that</u> and that's not right either. I mean that's what they're doing in China right now.

75   Steven - So are you saying <u>that the birth rate policy</u> on that like <u>if parents don't get the kid</u> they want <u>their going to drown them or throw them in an orphanage?</u>

76   Kate - Because

            [

77   Shelley - A lot, <u>that's what happens a lot</u> of the time when <u>they set a limit.</u> People <u>set limits</u> and =

78   Kate - = <u>Since 1979 when,</u> when it went into effect in China. <u>There's orphanages filled with girls</u> because they want boys. I mean <u>kids are going to die</u> because. It's horrible. I don't know. I don't like it.

79   Steven - I'm not taking it that way. But I'm saying that, um

                                       [[

80   Kate - I know that you may not, but tons of other people are doing that. You know what I mean? That will be a side effect of that.

Evident in the group's talk above were high task engagement, high conversational involvement and intertextual links generally characteristic of "focused talk." High task engagement and high conversational involvement were evident in the repetition of key terms and phrases across speakers and turns like "limit" or "set a limit" (73, 74, 77, 78) and "orphanages," "drowning," "children/kid" (73, 74, 75, 78), as well as in the latching and overlapping turns of speakers (73-74, 76-78). In prior episodes of "focused talk" described, the discussion focused on examining ideas of various authors through the intertextual processes of ventriloquation and juxtaposition. In the "focused talk" described here, links to the texts of authors were appropriated to challenge and support assertions made as the group engaged in ideational conflict. Kate (76) began to respond to Steven

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(75) as Shelley (77) joined the discussion supporting Kate's assertion. Kate (78) latched on to Shelley's idea, reiterating the consequences of the birth rate policy in China. She (74, 78) appropriated information from the Hildtich text, for example, "Since 1979," in support of her argument against a birth rate policy that limits children per family. The evolution of the idea is further illustrated below (79-86).

79   Steven - I'm not taking it that way. But I'm saying that um =

                                        [[

80   Kate - = I know that you may not, but tons of other people are doing that. You
        know what I mean? That will be a side effect of that.

81   Shelley - It could be a side effect.

82   Kate - That will be a side effect. Right.

83   Steven - That could be a side effect of maybe one or two places but not all. I just
        think that, you know?

84   Kate - I know. I know what you mean.

Steven (79) sought to clarify his position, asserting that he did not condone disposing of children. Kate jumped in before Steven was able to articulate his point fully. She (80) acknowledged that he would not condone disposing of children, but continued to assert it was a consequence. Shelley (81) offered a more tentative position, saying disposing of girls *could* be a consequence of a birth rate policy. Kate (82) asserted again that it *was* a consequence. Steven (83) took up Shelley's idea that disposing of children *could* be a consequence but it may not be a consequence in all cases. Kate argued it was a consequence of birth rate policies and that she "didn't like it." It seemed that to Kate any circumstances that resulted in situations like the orphanages in China was reason enough to object to birth rate policies. Steven, and Shelley as she modified her stance in the

discussion, seemed to argue that birth rate policies were not necessarily the causal link to disposing of female children when a limit on children is in effect.

Group members were willing to commit ideas on the floor to be explored and questioned. Preskill (1997) argues one defining characteristic of democratic discussion is a willingness of participants to offer even tentatively held views with an open mind and be flexible enough to adjust those views in light of others' ideas. He adds that such discussion includes the courage and freedom to hold to one's beliefs if counter evidence and argument fall short. In the exchange about the consequences of a policy that limits birth rates, Steven put forth an idea that Kate challenged. As the idea evolved, they challenged each others ideas and modified their assertions. The exchange, bracketed by Steven's initial proposal (73) and Kate's (84) response to his closing "you know" was "I know. I know what you mean." Thus the exchange ended not with agreement, but an acknowledgment of, and perhaps an appreciation for, each others viewpoints.

Relational Work of Ideational Conflict

When participants in discussion engage in critically exploring each other's ideas, knowledge and beliefs are made more publicly accountable and reasoning is more visible in the talk (Mercer, 1995). In prior speech events described earlier, the task was structured such that group members engaged in critically exploring the ideas of others represented in the texts they read and discussed. The critique of ideas through ventriloquating and juxtaposing the ideas of the authors was a less face threatening (Goffman, 1959) discourse process in which ideas were explored through the voices of the authors. In this episode of "focused talk," group members brought to the floor their own ideas to be explored and thus were more vulnerable to criticism. The potential for ideational conflict to evolve into interpersonal conflict in which participants see the ideas of others as "wrong" and participants feel "attacked" is a concern. Participants in deliberative discussion need to be able to disagree with one another while confirming each other's personal competence (Katula, 1991; Rossi, 1995). Illustrated in this episode of "focused talk," ideational

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conflict required of group members a great deal of facework (Brown & Levison, 1987) as they acknowledged their differing positions and affirmed each other as persons.

Examples of group members' efforts to acknowledge and affirm one another are evident in the exchange about the consequences of China's birth rate policy above. The exchange began with Steven (73) saying, "I think we should limit it to um maybe two kids per family" in which he tentatively owned the idea he proposed. Kate (74) responded "I know" acknowledging Steven's idea. She continued arguing that "when you put a limit on that" children suffer negative consequences. As she argued against a limit on children per family, she shifted from "you" to "they," a move which allowed Kate to disagree with the idea and not disconfirm Steven as a person. Steven (75) reformulated Kate's argument, beginning with "so are you saying," an indirect discourse move. Indirect moves are less face threatening then directly contradicting another's idea. Throughout the exchange Kate and Steven used phrases like "I mean," "I'm saying" and "you know" which functioned as redressive moves that mitigated face threats (Brown & Levison, 1987; Lim, 1990). For example, Kate (78) asserted that children die because of birth rate policies saying, "It's horrible. I don't know. I don't like it." Kate strongly asserted her viewpoint, yet tempered it with "I don't know," a move to mitigate the potential face-threat to Steven. Steven (79) responded "I'm not taking it that way. But I'm saying that um," which allowed him to disagree with Kate without disconfirming her. In the end, Kate and Steven disagreed but acknowledge each other's viewpoints and affirmed each other as persons, evident in Steven's (83) "I just think that, you know?" and Kate's response (84) "I know. I know what you mean."

Struggles with Finding the Topic

The exchange about the consequences of a birth rate policy ended with Kate's acknowledgment "I know what you mean" creating a juncture point in the discussion. Mark (85 below) began to redirect the discussion toward the task requirement of crafting a few statements about birth and death rates to share with the class. At that moment, Mr.

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Grant interrupted (86) the class, reminding the groups of the task and foreshadowing how they would share their ideas in the whole class discussion to follow. The interruption emphasized the juncture point and momentarily disrupted the momentum of the group discussion.

85   Mark - How 'bout, um.

86   Mr. Grant - *(to class)* Now folks, let's take oh fifteen, twenty minutes on this. Develop some really good arguments. And then we're going to get the four groups back together and do a round robin and ah ah each group will give their ideas.

Following the interruption, Mark (87 below) moved to formulate a response to the birth rate question and offered a proposal. He repeated an idea he made earlier (72) when he said, "Ummm, the population reaches the level in which we need, we can't...." His two statements (72, 87) also bracketed the exchange about the consequences of a birth rate policy, an indication that the exchange was a segment of discussion that held meaning to the group. Below, the group seemed to experience some confusion and engaged in clarifying what topic was on the floor. A transition from the discussion about China's birth rate policy to directly addressing the task requirement was unclear. In prior episodes of "focused talk," group members often said things like "So should we just look at the statements" (Shelley, March 25), "Should I take my turn?" (Mark, April 14), or "You guys know where we ended off last?" (Steven, March 28). Discourse moves like these helped the group determine where they were in the task and how to proceed from there. Mark often fulfilled the role of task leader and perhaps because he was feeling so poorly, the norms previously established which included his fulfilling task leadership functions were out of sync. Also, prior discussions were more constrained by the requirements of the discussion task than in this speech event. In prior speech events, the tasks employed reading and discussion skills (e.g. the Reading Game) in which group members were more

practiced. Below, the group struggled with re-orienting themselves to where they were in the task following the birth rate discussion above (73-84).

Several topics were on the floor simultaneously. Mark (87) began with the idea that when population levels reach the limit of what resources can support, population needs to be leveled off by controlling birth and death rates. Mark's statement was an intertextual link to prior speech events in which the carrying capacity of resources and population levels were discussed. This idea appeared in a number of the articles the group read and discussed, including the Harrison (1990) article Mark shared with the group on April 14. In the follow up interviews with group members Mark was described as the "one who knows what we are supposed to do" and "the one who keeps us on track." Illustrated in the exchange below, Mark began to engage the task requirements more directly. He began to synthesize textual fragments, specifically linked to prior speech events, to craft a few statements about birth and death rates. He referenced ideas like medical care (95) and government funded education (96) which linked to the individual country population worksheet the group had completed in their library research (April 17 - 22). (See Appendix E.)

87   Mark - All right. How about when people equal resources then we need to start to level off the population. And control the birth rates and death rates. (*pause while Mark writes some notes*)

88   Kate - How are we going to level it off?
      (*pause*)

89   Mark - What kind of position do you think Germany is in?

90   Kate - About what ?

91   Mark - What do you think we should do with Germany?

92   Kate - I don't know though.

93   Shelley - I, I think it's good that they don't have a rate or a limit cause that's only

going to help because Germany only has. It, it's going to even things out a little bit. People gotta see the broader scope but. I don't know, I'm not sure what's that going to mean for the country if it needs to go down low.

94   Mark - Well. If Germany's uh, if Germany's um population decreases enough um. Then, uh, we'll try to increase birth rates and decrease death rates.
long pause

95   Mark - So, um. Better medical and
(long pause as Mark writes - group waits)

96   Mark - OK. And government pays all of child's education. /inaudible/
(long pause - much background noise very hard to hear - Mark had bad coughing spell)

97   Kate - Mark, what are you writing?

98   Mark - I got. I just got Germany down. We need to decide what to do for death rates in general.

99   Shelley - Umm.

100   Mark - How about we just offer where government pays, uh. Pays for first child and a little less for the second child and don't pay at all for third child. It'll lower birth rates in general.

101   Kate - OK.
pause - Mark writes

Mark seemed to move the task ahead without the group being "on the same wavelength" (Edelsky, 1981). Their talk was disjointed in a way characteristic of what Barnes (1993) has called "exploratory talk" where multiple ideas are voiced as participants brainstorm. Mark (87) proposed that when population levels reach the capacity of resources a policy controlling birth and death rates be implemented. Kate (88) seemed unsatisfied with the proposal and asked how population would be leveled off, a link to the

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exchange before the interruption. In the previous exchange, Kate was fairly insistent that limiting the number of children per family was an unacceptable means of controlling birth rates. There was no uptake on her question.

The group paused as Mark wrote down a few notes and then (89) shifted the topic on the floor to Germany. Shelley (93) took up the topic and linked global population to Germany's particular situation. Mark (94) proposed a solution for Germany, taking up Shelley's point. Again there was a long pause in the talk. Mark seemed to move forward with the task without the benefit of the group discussing. It was uncharacteristic of him and the group. It may have been the result of his feeling so poorly. It may have been a result of the loose structure of the discussion task and the need to reach some closure in the time Mr. Grant told them was remaining. What exactly was being discussed seemed unclear and the discussion lacked coherence. Confused, Kate (97) asked Mark what he was writing. Mark (98) responded he had notes down about Germany and proposed "we need to decide what to do for death rates in general."

pause

102   Steven - <u>What was the second question</u>?

103   Mark - It was birth rates and death rates.

104   Steven - What <u>did we put</u>?

105   Mark - <u>For what</u>?

106   Steven - The second question. <u>The answer.</u>

107   Mark - <u>I didn't put one</u> yet.

108   Steven - Oh.

The disjointed nature of the talk is further illustrated in Steven (102 above) asking Mark where they were with the task. Steven asked (104) "what did we put?" and Mark (107) responded "I didn't put one yet." The confused nature of talk continued for a few

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moments longer as Mark seemed to move ahead with the task while other group members were unclear of what they, as a group, were doing. Missing from their talk were the overlapping turns and repetition of ideas among speakers characteristic of exchanges which included high task engagement and high conversational involvement. In this exchange, the silences and pauses were indications of the confusion and lack of coherence in the discussion (Jaworski, 1993).

Finding Its Rhythm Again

The exchange began with Kate (109 below) reinitiating the topic death rates which was taken up by the group. There was a pause, an indication of task engagement, as group members worked through their ideas (Tannen, 1989). Steven (113) then proposed there should be no death rate policy because when "it's time to go, it's time to go." He willingly committed an idea on the floor, providing the group with an idea to explore. The group seemed to find its rhythm again, having an idea initiated and taken up and evident in the overlapping speech and the flow of ideas on the floor, a return to the norms of participation that facilitated their engaging in deliberative discussion.

The exchange continued as group members engaged in the deliberative process of idea-evolution. Having found its rhythm, a lengthy discussion of the implications and consequences of controlling death rates ensued. Illustrated in the excerpts from that exchange that follow, group members engaged in making assertions, offering reasons and evidence, questioning and weighing the consequences of their ideas, and modifying their ideas as they constructed their understanding together. Similar to the relational work described above and illustrated in Steven's assertion is a shift in talk that facilitated other group members taking up the idea. His use of "I" and "we" language illustrates the delicate work of asserting an idea without imposing that idea on others. Steven began saying "we should make," and then shifted to "I don't think we should," providing group members an avenue to agree or disagree.

109   Kate - What about the death rates, er?

110   Mark - Yeah.

        pause

        Hitoshi asked Steven a question - inaudible

111   Mark - Um. Death rates um.

112   Kate - Death rates? Um. What about, um.

113   Steven - We should make the. I don't think we should be able to make a

        policy on death rates because um. When God says it's time to go, it's time

        to go.

        Mark (114 below) took up Steven's idea and questioned his point about not having

a death rate policy. Mark, in response to Steven, also used a redressing, indirect move

saying "so you're saying we shouldn't," reformulating and expounding upon Steven's idea

and making it more public. This type of discourse move, also described earlier in this

chapter, was an inclusive move. In revoicing (O'Connor & Michaels, 1993) the idea, it

was no longer just Steven's idea. The idea belonged to the group and therefore, criticism

of the idea was less face threatening (Brown & Levison, 1987) for everyone. Mark linked

the idea of life sustaining medical care to controlling the death rate. He suggested that in

proposing deaths occur naturally, medical life support would be ruled out under such a

policy. The idea was taken up and "chained-out" (Cragan & Wright, 1991) among group

members.

114   Mark - So you're saying we shouldn't use machines then, so that would

        be a policy. Cause you're saying that everything should be natural?

115   Kate - Steven, it, right on.

116   Steven - Well, uh then in that case then there'd never be in hospitals or no

doctors around or nothing. And that's not.

117   Mark - Well then if that happened, well.

118   Kate - I, no, I think that's too strong

                              [

119   Shelley - Yeah.

                  [[

120   Mark - Yeah.

              [

121   Kate - because if we didn't have any. See if we didn't have any machines

       to keep people alive, then we wouldn't have a birth rate policy because

       there wouldn't a problem.

              [

122   Shelley - Yeah people would be. Yeah, mhmmm.

              [

123   Kate - People would be living. People would be dying. You know.

124   Shelley - Yeah, right.

       Discussion that is deliberative and democratic includes the capacities for

questioning, examination, and reflection upon assumptions, our own and those of others,

and identifying competing arguments. Participants in discussion should elaborate, clarify,

and explain statements, use real information, be willing to subject their ideas to scrutiny,

and weigh alternatives and consequences. (Goodlad, 1996; Mercer, 1995; Merryfield &

White, 1996; Onosko, 1996; Newmann, 1989; Parker, 1996; Stotsky, 1991). Illustrated

in the exchange above, Steven (113) proposed a policy that deaths occur naturally and the

group explored the idea and a potential consequence. Mark (114) suggested that one

consequence would be no medical life support. Steven (116), in light of Mark's

suggestion, modified his original idea, saying "in that case then there'd never be in hospitals or no doctors." As the idea evolved, group members modified their views and their understanding of the position. Kate, for example, first supported Steven's original idea (115) but then, in light of Mark and Steven's (114, 116) changed thinking, changed her position (118) and suggested a policy of naturally occurring death was "too strong." Evident in the overlapping talk and the confirming "yeahs" and "mhmms" (118-123), group members agreed the policy was too strong. Kate (121-123) qualified the change in her thinking and extended the idea Steven and Mark initiated.

Intertextual Links and Appropriation of Sources

As the discussion continued, group members made increasingly complex intertextual links. Described below, they appropriated textual sources to support their ideas and substantiate their assertions. These texts included ones they had read, as well as prior knowledge and experiences. For example, below, Kate (131) made an intertextual link as she referenced studies which showed people live longer.

131   Kate - I know but. I think studies show that, um, people are living longer now than they were.

132   Shelley - Oh yeah. Mhmm.

133   Mark - Um, how 'bout. (*begins to write a response*) Mmmm. I don't know. The only thing I can think of would be to take off. Take people off machines that aren't really, that are never really going to live.

134   Shelley - Life support, mhmmm.

135   Steven - But I just wonder if your saying against or for.

136   Kate - I know but that's what it is now. Like China.

137   Shelley - That's what it is, yeah.

138   Steven - But then like make a limit as to how long they stay on. Because I thinking, um, Gary Keiler that was in a coma, got /inaudible/ and then he was normal.

139   Kate - Yeah. But see that's like

[

140   Shelley - But that's why <u>life support is used for surgery</u>. But usually if there's a

good chance they'll come out of it, they would have them on life support. If they

think they would.

141   Mark - OK. How about. How about this. Like she was saying about assisted

suicide? If we let people do that, you know. That they want to die but they don't

want to like blow their head off, you know.

142   Shelley - Mhmm.

143   Mark - That would increase the death rate. And

As the group discussed medical life support and the implications of controlling

death rates, Kate commented that studies show life spans have increased, an intertextual

link to her prior knowledge and a source outside the context of the group. Mark (133),

having had the benefit of some discussion by the group, proposed that people be taken off

machines if they were terminal. Shelley (134) identified Mark's idea as "life support,"

appropriating technical language. Steven (135) probed the issue further, asking Mark if he

was for or against taking people off life support. Kate (136) took up the idea and linked it

to the earlier discussion about the birth rate policy in China. Steven (138) offered a

modification of the proposal and supported his idea with an example of a person familiar to

the group, also an intertextual link to a source outside the context of the group. Shelley

(140) extended Steven's example to clarify that in some cases life support was appropriate.

Shelley (140) and Mark's (133) comments are examples of the complex linking of

ideas within the text of the group's discussion. She provided a condition under which life

support would be appropriate in light of Mark's (133) proposal that life support should not

be extended to terminally ill persons. Mark (141) moved to synthesize the proposals on the

floor and linked the idea of life support (euthanasia) to assisted suicide, suggesting that

allowing both would be a death rate policy. The "she" Mark referenced was a link to a comment made in the prior whole class discussion. Illustrated in the exchange, as group members made assertions and counter-assertions about assisted suicide, they engaged in a process of extending and modifying their original proposals. This process was collaborative and open-minded, indicative of democratic discussion

The Nature of the Floor

Similar to the pattern of engaging ideas in the March 25 "focused talk," the group first worked to identify and clarify the idea illustrated above (111-124). Having identified the idea, they moved to examine and critique the idea. Characteristic of "focused talk," high task engagement and high conversational involvement were evident in the overlapping turns of speakers and the repetition of key ideas across speakers and turns as they explored the idea together. However, as the discussion evolved, group members also took longer speaking turns on occasion. These longer turns coincided with group members reformulating an idea, qualifying a position, or offering explanations or stories as supporting evidence of a point. The longer turns illustrated the group adapting norms of participation and the cooperative nature of the group. Group members were willing to "hear out" the ideas of other group members. Britton (1990) found that at most coherent points of group discussion, the mutually supportive roles members play make it possible for the group to exert a more intense effort at understanding. An open and supportive context provides a group with resources to engage more deeply in the discussion of an issue (Chandler von Dras, 1993; Singleton & Giese, 1996).

Kate (144 below) shifted the idea on the floor when she asked Mark if he believed in assisted suicide. He (145) responded "not really" but reasoned why it might be something someone else would choose. Kate asked Mark to disclose a personal belief and Mark responded, without hesitating, taking a longer turn on the floor. That Kate felt free to ask and Mark openly responded was an indication of the group's willingness to commit their personal ideas or beliefs on the floor and have other group members respond to them.

Mark's longer turn on the floor also illustrated the cooperative nature and the high degree of trust and solidarity among group members. It was overlapped by Kate who repeated "go" and finished the phrase "go out alone."

143   Mark - That would increase the death rate. And

[

144   Kate - <u>Are you for that</u>?

145   Mark - <u>Not really but</u>. I mean if people. If someone wants to do it and it's set in their mind that you know, I'm going to kill myself. <u>You know I guess it's better to have someone do it for you</u> than to go =

[

146   Kate - = <u>go out alone</u>. You know what I mean?

147   Shelley - Mhmm.

148   Kate - Like you, we want them to, you know. Um. <u>I heard about this lady</u> who had breast cancer and it went below in her lungs and everything. And um, she, she was. There was so much pain and her husband was giving so much for her. You know, because she was so sick that she um, she committed suicide. And she did it without any one knowing so, so she died with out anybody beside her side. You know what I mean?

149   Mark - Mhmm.

In the exchange above, group members were highly involved in the discussion indicated not only by the overlapping and latching talk and the movement of ideas on the floor, but the longer turns taken by Mark (145) and Kate (148) as well. They disclosed their personal beliefs about assisted suicide, whether for or against, as other group members listened. They made efforts to understand why someone would choose assisted suicide even though they might not agree with the choice. The above exchange illustrates the group's willingness to suspend their judgment and explore possible other viewpoints.

Kate had asked Mark if he believed in assisted suicide. Mark responded that he did not but he seemed to appreciate someone else making the choice. A defining characteristic of democratic discussion is the willingness to enter into conversations with an open mind and the flexibility to explore one's viewpoint as well as develop sympathies for others (Preskill, 1997).

Illustrated in the exchange about assisted suicide (144-157) is the complex intertextual linking students constructed in the on-going text of their discussion. Mark (145) stated his viewpoint concerning assisted suicide. Kate (146) latched onto Mark's comment, the beginning of her asserting her own viewpoint. She (148) went on to tell the story of a woman who was terminally ill and committed suicide. Her story was a link to someone's experience, a textual source outside the group context. Kate expressed sympathy for the person and offered the story as evidence in support of assisted suicide.

Steven (150 below) agreed with Kate that a person should not die alone, but qualified his point adding he did not agree with "that doctor's" approach to assisted suicide. "That doctor" presumably was the Michigan physician Dr. Kevorkian, a proponent of assisted suicide and a nationally know controversial figure. Steven linked the Kevorkian controversy, an outside text, to the text of the group's discussion. The idea-evolution process was evident as Kate (151) took up Steven's idea and disagreed saying she supported physician assisted suicide over other alternatives to suicide. Steven (154) responded with further support for his viewpoint, referencing how the newspapers portray physician assisted suicide, another intertextual reference. Like Mark, Steven (157) expressed understanding the viewpoint of another even though it was not one he shared.

150   Steven - I don't think that one should. I think it's better that someone is at their side if they commit suicide. Not like a doctor, but their spouse or something like that. I don't really believe in that doctor you know the way he does it.

151   Kate - I believe in the way he does compared to the way people do it.

[

152   Shelley - Yeah, mhmm.

[

153   Kate - I mean otherwise

[

154   Steven - <u>That way I do but</u>. I don't know, just. I think the /inaudible/ right here

and the newspaper. It makes him, it makes him look like they call. /They call and

talk him into it ?/ At least from what I hear. (*difficult to hear Steven - somewhat*

muffled)

155   Shelley - Like people go to him.

[[

156   Kate - Yeah.

[[

157   Steven - You wouldn't think nobody. <u>You wouldn't think nobody would do</u>

<u>something like that. I don't understand</u>. But people make these decisions.

The exchange about assisted suicide illustrates the complex weaving of relational,

intellectual, and textual dimensions of group discussion. There were many confirming

"mhmms" from group members as others offered their ideas on the discussion floor. For

example, Kate (146, 148) asserted that those who choose to committee suicide should not

be alone, followed with "you know what I mean?" She tempered her point which

countered Mark and Steven's disapproval of assisted suicide. The evolution of ideas in the

exchange include ideational conflict. Disagreement over personally held beliefs was a more

face-threatening (Brown & Levison, 1987; Lim, 1990) type of discussion for group

members. Group members made redressing moves throughout the exchange, maintaining

group cohesion and sustaining a context in which group members could express their ideas

and beliefs openly without risking personal criticism. Kate' story and Steven's references

to Dr. Kevorkian further illustrated the idea-evolution process in which group members linked textual fragments to construct their understanding.

Doubting and Believing

Recalling the discussion of the March 25 and the April 15 "focused talk" episodes, "doubting" and "believing" (Elbow, 1973, 1986) are useful metaphors to describe group discourse. Burbules (1993) extends these metaphors to include critical, inclusive, divergent, and convergent discourse strategies participants employ in discussion. In the March 25 event, the task overtly directed the group to play the "doubting game" (Elbow, 1973, 1986) in which they ventriloquated and juxtaposed various authors and texts in order to contrast the relative merits of the positions presented in order to judge which position was the strongest in their view and determine if they collectively agreed or disagreed with Cohen. Analysis of the April 15 event showed a more complex dynamic as the group engaged in critical examination of the articles shared while "believing" the presenters and granting them plausibility in their interpretations of the texts they read. Analysis of "focused talk" in the April 14 and March 25 speech events illustrate how the group adopted and adapted a constellation of doubting and believing stances, or in Burbules (1993) terminology, a constellation of critical, inclusive, divergent, and convergent discourse strategies to engage in deliberative, democratic discussion. Although the explicit task structures differed, high conversational involvement, high task engagement, and complex intertextual relationships characteristic of "focused talk" were evident across all three episodes.

In contrast to the two earlier speech events, the explicit discussion task of April 25 did not direct group members toward any specific texts. Rather, as group members worked to construct an argument on birth and death rate policy, they explored their own viewpoints and drew upon a broad array of textual sources to explain, question and support the ideas they put forth. Whereas the other explicit discussion tasks of March 25 and

April 14 directed the group toward convergent textual relationships, the task structure of this episode directed students toward divergent textual relationships. However, implicit in the instructions to craft a "few good arguments" about birth and death rates, the group was directed toward playing the "doubting game." The explicit task implied that the group identify and weigh the relative merits of several alternatives suggestive of a birth and death rate policy in order to judge which positions were the strongest in their view and then collectively decide which to present in whole class discussion.

Analysis of the group's discussion revealed a highly complex web of both "doubting" and "believing" discursive strategies that enabled the group to engage in deliberative discussion of their ideas in ways that were democratic. "Doubting" involves participants extricating themselves from the assertions made in order to run the assertions through a logical transformation to reveal the premises and necessary consequences of the assertion. Group members engaged in "doubting" when they questioned and challenged the assertions made by fellow group members. The complexity of the constellation of critical, inclusive, divergent, and convergent discursive strategies was particularly evident in segments of "focused talk" in which ideational conflict was prevalent.

An example of the "doubting game" began with Steven's assertion that they should not have a death rate policy because "when it's time to go, it's time to go." Mark challenged Steven's assertion, pointing out that a consequence of a policy of only natural death would eliminate the use of medical life support. Steven revised his thinking based on Mark's questioning his original proposal. The group went on to discuss in greater detail the implications of a policy that controlled the death rate. In that exchange of "focused talk," Mark reformulated or revoiced Steven's original position. Revoicing the position shifted the idea from being Steven's idea to the group's idea. Revoicing extricated Steven from the idea such that the group could critically explore the idea without being critical of Steven. In this sense, Mark's move was both a critical and inclusive discourse move that

enabled the group to engage in playing the "doubting game" in a way that was cooperative and collaborative.

While the discussion task implied and the point-counter point exchanges in segments of ideational conflict embodied "doubting," the group also engaged in "believing" strategies. "Believing" involves participants inserting or involving themselves in finding potential perceptions and experiences in the assertions (Elbow, 1973, 1986). Group members made efforts to stand in another's place to try to understand his/her point of view. Several examples in the exchange below illustrate the group engaging in "believing."

144   Kate - Are you for that?

145   Mark - Not really but. I mean if people. If someone wants to do it and it's set in
        their mind that you know, I'm going to kill myself. You know I guess it's better to
        have someone do it for you than to go =

                                            [

146   Kate - = go out alone. You know what I mean?

147   Shelley - Mhmm.

148   Kate - Like you, we want them to, you know. Um. I heard about this lady who
        had breast cancer and it went below in her lungs and everything. And um, she, she
        was. There was so much pain and her husband was giving so much for her. You
        know, because she was so sick that she um, she committed suicide. And she did it
        without any one knowing so, so she died with out anybody beside her side. You
        know what I mean?

Kate (145) asked Mark if he supported assisted suicide. He responded "not really," but tried to understand how someone else might choose to commit suicide. He involved himself in trying to find the experience of another in the assertion, an act of "believing" and, according to Preskill (1997) and others, an act of democratic discourse. Kate (148),

in support of her position for assisted suicide, reported a story about a woman who committed suicide and died alone. Other group members listened attentively to the story, allowing Kate a long turn on the floor. In listening to her story, other group members engaged in the "believing game," granting Kate plausibility of her story. They did not question or challenge the story. Through the story Kate told and others listened to, the group put itself into the place of another in order to transform the assertions they made about assisted suicide (Elbow, 1986). As the discussion continued, Steven who initially was against assisted suicide, revised his thinking.

Both Elbow (1986) and Burbules (1993) agree that the doubting game has monopolized intellectual discourse. Illustrated in the analysis, group members engaged in discourse that was characteristically both "doubting" and "believing" within the same episodes of "focused talk" and at times simultaneously. Analysis of the "focused talk" episodes identified an intertextually discursive process of linking multiple texts, relational and intellectual, through which the group engaged in democratic deliberation. Group members consistently engaged in distinct intertextual discourse moves as they wove together multiple kinds of texts. These textual moves functioned as resources for the group to engage in asking questions, making assertions, and associating ideas as they made sense of the texts together. The norms and group roles for democratic participation constructed by the group were sustained across speech events. The group adapted multiple ways of interacting to its immediate needs in order to engage in discussion of the issue that was focused and cooperative. The analysis of group members actually engaged in the discussion of an issue and they way in which they employed multiple strategies calls into question some of the assumptions we hold about what constitutes democratic, deliberative group discussion. The focus of the following chapter considers these assumptions in light of the analysis of students actually engaged in focused and sustained discussion of a public issue.

CHAPTER 4: THE ENACTMENT OF DEMOCRATIC DELIBERATIVE DISCOURSE IN STUDENT TALK AND TASK

Overview

My purpose in this study was to better understand how students engage in public discussion of an issue and the nature of their discussions. I first sought to identify instances of group discussion in which students enacted behaviors resembling what others describe as democratic deliberative discussion. The analysis of two groups of students' talk across three speech events identified three forms of group talk interwoven in complex patterns as the groups negotiated both new academic content and new ways of speaking about knowledge and text. Of these types of talk, "focused talk" was identified as talk consistent with what numerous scholars describe as democratic deliberative discussion. In order to further describe how students engage in focused, sustained discussion of an issue, I selected for analysis episodes of "focused talk" of Group B across three speech events. Based on the analysis of talk across groups, Group B was better able to negotiate and sustain "focused talk." Identified in the analysis of these episodes of "focused talk" is a complex web of intellectual, relational, and textual dimensions of group discourse that suggest a more complicated and layered discourse than many theories and models project. My purpose in this chapter is to examine several key assumptions underlying various prevalent theories and models of group discourse in light of the analysis of students in small groups actually engaged in focused and sustained talk about a public issue.

Imbuing students with the abilities to assume the role of participatory citizen in a democratic society is the central concern and a special responsibility of the social studies (Jenness, 1990; Parker, 1989). Educators argue rich and sustained conversation about public problems is essential in social studies classrooms. Democratic participation requires a command of public language in order to fully participate in social, political life (Barnes, 1990). Accordingly, the ability to engage in democratic and deliberative discourse is desirable and essential for students to develop because it enables them, as citizens, to

understand, communicate, and sometimes resolve civic disagreements (Gutmann, 1990). Deliberation is what Jenness calls a kind of creative and critical thoughtfulness. It involves negotiation and validation among others, and dealing with and being aware of others (Jenness, 1990).

However, learning the skills of deliberative discussion involves others in a relationship where communication skills are practiced and guided. In particular, group processes support the learning and practice of deliberation (Hanson, 1981). Yet Jenness (1990) notes that "citizenship," (and attendant concepts like "democratic participation" and "democratic process") is most often invoked at the level of overriding purposes of education, not at the level of realization. We lack the conceptual tools to study and describe democratic speech, particularly as it is learned and enacted by high school students. What follows, then, is a discussion of several key concepts which were helpful in analyzing the talk of student groups in this study to ascertain the ways in and extent to which learners gradually approach tasks and talk that is democratic and deliberative.

A Generative Conception of Floor

Floor as a Collaborative Construction

Overwhelmingly, studies of classroom discussion have found talk that is characterized by students speaking to and through the teacher. Classroom talk typically consists of the working out of power relationships between teacher and students in which student talk is highly constrained (Edwards, 1979). These discussions, in which there is little exploratory talk, tend to take place in highly formalized ways (Barnes, 1993). The typical structure is a sequence of turns in which the teacher asks a question, students respond, and the teacher evaluates or comments on the response (Mehan, 1979). Underlying this structure of classroom talk is a perceived single floor for which people vie for access and upon which speaking turns are evaluated. Characteristically, one person speaks on the floor at a time and everyone listens. There are few pauses in the discussion,

little overlapping talk, and turns are allocated so that time on the floor is equitable. Who speaks, what and how much is said is formalized and controlled (Edwards, 1979).

Bridges (1988) states classrooms should be organized so that students not only learn about subject matters, but also become socialized into a culture of group discussion. He describes the face-to-face interaction of group discussion as not only good education, but also central to the survival and vitality of democratic society. Ideally, small group discussion is a more democratic approach to classroom discussion because, in the absence of a teacher, students engage one another in face-to-face interaction. The asymmetrical power relationship between teacher and students is delimited, enabling students to act with greater autonomy. However, it is not simple to move from the highly structured ways of interacting in classroom discussion described above toward more democratic ways of speaking and of orienting to knowledge in the small group. Often, when researchers and educators proffer models and theories of small group discussion, they use the language and assumptions of conventional models of classroom discussion. This poses difficulties in identifying democratic discussion, one of which is an underlying view of floor for which speakers are in competition. The analysis of the Global Studies group demonstrates that talk, especially "focused talk," was characterized by collaboratively constructed "floors." The differences in how floor is conceived, as a commodity vied for or a collaborative construction, has implications for what we perceive as constituting democratic deliberative discussion in student group discourse.

Many models and theories of group discussion prevalent in social education literature emphasize the intellectual dimensions of discourse. What is democratic in these models is the freedom of the individual to speak, explore, and critique ideas within a civil discussion. Evans, Newmann, and Saxe (1996) describe what discussion of social issues ought to encompass. Their description exemplifies many of the theories and models that advocate practical reasoning as a method of group discussion. They argue models of issues-centered discussion should lead students to accept democratic principles as the basis

of competent American citizenship. They say that this talk should have the following features: 1) issues discussed must be truly problematic; 2) students work out well-reasoned positions on issues using a variety of resources and tools; 3) students continually practice using and extending oral and written language; 4) students learn to weave thoughts and evidence together to construct reasoned and well-grounded arguments; and 5) teachers foster an environment in which students express doubt, are comfortable with uncertainty, and approach discussion with tolerance and open-mindedness (Evans, et al., 1996). In principle, the models of discussion they promote embody things we want students to learn and be able to do. We want students to be able to identify issues, examine and question arguments, evaluate and appreciate multiple perspectives, and deal with the uncertainty and controversy of public issues (Merryfield & White, 1996; Rossi, 1995). Typically, however, most models do not enter into the level of realization and explain what this kind of talk looks like in the group.

One model that does is Harris' (1996) model of assessing group discussion of public issues. Harris states that the criteria he proposes should be taught so they become a natural part of the activity of discussion in the classroom and not viewed only as assessment criteria. He includes as criteria students use complex language to express ideas when thoughtfully engaged in conversation about public issues. They must speak not in single words or short phrases but in sentences and paragraphs. Students share ideas that are not scripted or controlled as in teacher-led recitation. They must explain themselves, ask questions, and respond directly to comments of previous speakers (Harris, 1996). Harris categorizes his criteria along three dimensions: substance; positive procedural; and negative procedural. The substance of students' discussion should include stating and identifying the issue or problem clearly. Students should elaborate statements with explanations, reasons, use evidence, and recognize values or value conflicts. Positive procedural criteria include group members inviting contributions from others which function to broaden participation and validate others. Members should acknowledge

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statements of others, as well as challenge the accuracy, logic, and relevance of the statements made. Group members must also summarize points of agreement and disagreement in the discussion.

Although Harris' (1996) model promotes a kind of intellectual work we want students engaged in, implicitly floor is viewed as a commodity for which speakers are in competition. This is clearly seen in the negative procedural criteria Harris (1996) includes. Negative procedural behaviors are unproductive and detrimental to group discussion. Group members should not obstruct or interrupt what another student has started to say. They should not interfere or seize the floor while another group member is speaking. However, Harris qualifies this somewhat, suggesting some interruptions are constructive as attempts to get a person to be more relevant or brief. No group member should monopolize the floor or overpower others by not yielding the floor. No one group members should dominate the floor. Personal attacks are also negative and unproductive behaviors (Harris, 1996).

The floor is presumed to pre-exist the group and is not seen as something constructed and negotiated in and through talk. Within this conception of floor, speakers are to be concise and brief, taking equal time on the floor to state their ideas. Underlying the criteria is an emphasis on turn-taking and equitable turns of the floor. Speakers are in competition to express their ideas on the floor, therefore speaking turns are regulated. Of course, domination of the floor or personal attacks are unacceptable and undemocratic group behavior. However, the model emphasizes desirable intellectual dimensions of group discussion, but minimizes the complexities of the relationships among intellectual and relational dimensions of group talk. Models which view floor as a commodity implicitly view relational dynamics of group interaction through a lens of competition, minimizing the complexity of group discourse (Edelsky, 1981).

Analysis of the Global Studies groups reveals a kind of engagement that was quite different from classroom talk proposed by conventional models. Group members jointly

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constructed and jointly held the floor as they reasoned and argued about the issue of global population. The floor did not pre-exist the group as a platform upon which they expressed ideas and opinions (Parker, 1997). The collaborative construction of the floor was evident in talk through which group members oriented themselves to and recontextualized the task. In jointly constructing the floor, the group negotiated and adapted norms and roles of participation to the needs of the group and various task requirements. Floor in this sense was the acknowledged "what's-going-on" (Edelsky, 1981) that evolved and changed within and across episodes of talk. In order to participate, students need to interpret relationships between ways of speaking and their intended functions that are situational and relational, complicated by the shifting nature of social life and activity (Florio-Ruane, 1987). Negotiating and adapting roles and norms indicated a sense of shared meaning about the on-going talk in the group. The group established boundaries which fostered its autonomy from the teacher and its own sense of "groupness." Also marking clear boundaries among the forms of talk indicated consensus among group members as to what were the agreed upon norms of participation and indicated that episodes of talk were meaningful to the group. Looking at the Global Studies group, the conception of a collaboratively constructed floor was generative.

Multiple Ways of Speaking

As the analysis demonstrates, group discussion is far more complicated than most conventional models suggest. These models, with an underlying conception of competition for the floor, take us only so far. They tend to view group discussion through concepts and structures that narrowly define democratic discussion. Group discourse is complicated, yet organized and patterned in various configurations and this variation is important to students' abilities to engage in democratic, deliberative discussion. Analysis of the Global Studies group shows multiple, recurring patterns of talk that constituted cooperative, collaborative discussion. Within and across episodes of "focused talk," group members synthesized intellectual, relational, and textual dimensions of discourse into

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multiple ways of speaking about knowledge and text as they worked to accomplish the assigned intellectual tasks.

These multiple ways of speaking involved sets of norms and roles of participation, participation structures (Shultz, et al., 1982), that enabled the group to reason across multiple texts and multiple tasks. In the March 25 speech event for example, as group members read and discussed the Cohen (1996) text, they engaged in the process of identifying the issue as presented by the author. This process involved constructing intertextual links through ventriloquating the voice of the author and bringing his/her idea to the discussion floor. As students engaged in this process, norms of participation included latching and overlapping talk, hesitations and pauses as members jointly explored and constructed their understanding of the ideas presented. Analysis of the "focused talk" episodes shows that exploratory talk in which speakers' ideas are often incomplete, fragmented, and tentative, is an essential part of the group process of constructing knowledge and understanding. Within segments of exploratory talk, speaking turns were obtuse as members linked textual fragments and associated ideas in constructing their understanding of the text. The democratic potential of exploratory talk, where floor is viewed as collaboratively constructed, is the forming of connections and understanding and the building of coalitions in which group members jointly advance ideas and points of view.

Evident in the analysis of "focused talk," the group had multiple ways of organizing themselves conversationally to accomplish the requirements of various discussion tasks. These multiple ways of speaking were marked by cooperation among group members, but of different ways of cooperating in order for the group to accomplish the assigned task. In some segments of "focused talk," norms of participating included overlapping talk, short turns, and much repetition of ideas. At other times, the group accomplished the task with very different kinds of conversation. For example, in the April 14 speech event, each group member had a single, extended turn as the privileged voice on the floor in which no

talk overlapped. Group members adapted the norms and roles of participation to become presenter and listeners in order to meet the requirements of the discussion task. Within these extended turns, speakers engaged in constructing intertextual links through ventriloquating and juxtaposing the voices of the authors as they had as a coalition of speakers in other speech events.

Recalling from Chapter 3, ventriloquation and juxtaposition were intertextual, discursive processes in which group members brought the voices and the ideas of an author or multiple authors to the discussion floor without having to commit to the ideas themselves. For example, in the April 14 speech event, Mark took his turn as the privileged voice on the floor. As he shared his article review he brought to the floor the voice and idea of the author of the text he read and juxtaposed it with the voices of other authors the group had read. An excerpt of Mark's turn is given below to illustrate.

23   Mark - Oh boy. OK, with a viewpoint one. Uh, the guy [*Erhlich*] said that overpopulation will cause famine, disease, and the depletion of natural resources. This guy [*Harrison*] obviously doesn't agree with that. 'Cause he's saying people use, he's saying that people are blaming population for other problems. Like a lot of other factors that play a role. So I'd say that he [*Harrison*] would think that the uh, famine is using the depletion of natural resources and they have other factors besides population growth.

Within the April 14 speech event, the group adapted their way of speaking following the presenter's extended turn to a question-response segment which included multiple speakers on the floor, overlapping and latching talk, and further construction of intertextual links. In the question-response segments, group members jointly linked prior knowledge and appropriated textual resources (e.g. the reasoning and analytic skills of the curriculum) to examine the points of view in the articles presented. These various ways of

participating have in common norms of task engagement, conversational involvement, and complex intertextual construction. For example, following Kate's turn as the privileged voice on the floor, the group's talk shifted to shorter speaking turns, some overlapping talk, and joint development of the idea on the floor. Shelley offered confirming "mhmms." Kate drew from the article she had read to respond to Mark's question and Shelley added to the point. These ways of speaking did not occur during the extended speaking turns of each presenter, but as the talk moved to the question-response segment, they were the norm.

52   Mark - So like people will have a kid and they'll be like its a girl so they take it
        to the orphanage?

53   Kate - If they do that at all. Farmers usually drown their daughters in buckets
        of water on the farm.

54   Mark - *Wow.*

55   Shelley - If they, if they have a child and they have a, get rid of the girl. They
        can have another a chance at having a kid.

                [▪

56   Kate - Again. Right. If they /inaudible/.

57   Shelley - Mhmm.

58   Kate - And they're so over crowded. They'll sit a girl down in a chair and tie
        her arms and legs. So she'll be sitting there all day.

59   Mike - Sit them on the shelf like.

60   Kate - Mhmm.

When viewed through a collaborative metaphor of floor, these multiple ways of speaking were democratic in the sense that floor was a collaborative construction of the group rather than a scarce commodity for which speakers competed. The examples above

illustrate the fluid and generative nature of the floor, adapted and adopted to meet the needs of the group from moment to moment. In this sense, power lay in the group's ability to jointly construct and negotiate the floor versus power in who controlled the floor and the ideas. Across these ways of participating, democratic participation took on different surface feature appearances (e.g. turns on the floor, initiating topics), but underlying were the fundamental qualities of collaboration and negotiation of norms and roles of participation adapted to meet the needs of the group in order to accomplish the tasks. The negotiation and adaptation of roles and norms of participation required of the group a cooperative and collaborative effort.

The construction within the group of multiple ways of participating suggests that although models and methods of structuring group discussion such as Harris' (1996) model or cooperative learning methods are useful, they are limited in several ways. The analysis shows that within episodes of "focused talk" when the group was most highly engaged in the discussion task, group members negotiated multiple dimensions of discussion that facilitated their ability to accomplish the task. With each different task assigned, the group interpreted the task which involved, in a sense, a multiplicity tasks. An assigned task isn't simply one thing, but a multiplicity of group tasks in which group members continually negotiate their interactions with each other, their identity as a group, and the assigned task (Halligan, 1988). The analysis also showed that roles and norms of participation were emergent and a construction of the group and were renegotiated across different task structures. In assigning a prescribed set of roles and norms for participating, essentially a set participation structure, such methods limit the possible, multiple participation structures constructed by a group that facilitate its accomplishing various discussion tasks.

The Interweaving of Relational Dynamics of Group Discourse

Democratic participation is often described as cooperative, open, and collaborative where speakers have opportunities to express ideas, raise questions, and make decisions.

The analysis illustrates how the group collectively made decisions about how to proceed with the task and their participation in it. As illustrated in the analysis reported in Chapters 2 and 3, democratic participation is a construction of and an accomplishment of the group. Group discussion that is democratic not only involves abilities to communicate about ideas, but also involves cultivating positive and productive social relationships. Talk about ideas is not disembodied talk. When floor is viewed as a collaborative construction, the context of the group is more than a set of variables that surround the talk. Context and talk are mutually reflexive. Talk about ideas and the relational work of group discussion shape the context as much as the context shapes the talk (Goodwin & Duranti, 1992).

Many scholars (e.g. Belenky, et at., 1986; Noddings, 1992; and Thayer-Bacon, 1998) are concerned with aspects of relationships that practical reasoning or "doubting" does not consider. They state that practical reasoning is premised upon liberal conceptions of democracy which emphasize reasoning over other ways of knowing and on conceptions of self-interest. "Doubting" seeks "truth" by seeking error. To "doubt" one extricates himself or herself from the assertions questioned. "Doubting " is a sensitivity to dissonance among ideas (Elbow, 1973). Elbow (1986) states most education is premised on a "doubting" model of thinking that tends to stand in the way of other forms of learning that are important and powerful. One other way of knowing, and thereby learning, is "believing." "Believing" involves inserting oneself into another's experience, to believe all assertions and grant plausibility to what is said (Elbow, 1973). Burbules (1993) and Elbow (1973) say both doubting and believing are stances we can adopt educatively.

When talk is democratic, trust, empathy, support, and listening as well as speaking are interwoven with the intellectual work of group discussion. Thayer-Bacon suggests that being sensitive toward others does not necessary help one to be a better thinker. It does, however, help one to be receptive to others' ideas and attend to what they have to say before judging or critiquing their ideas (Thayer-Bacon, 1998). As the Global Studies group engaged in examining various arguments and ideas, including their own, the

relational work of the group was evident in talk that functioned as praise, encouragement, support, self-disclosure and invitation. This relational work helped the group create and sustain a context in which they were willing to commit ideas on the floor, ask questions, and challenge ideas.

The relational work was an integral dimension of democratic discussion, interwoven with how the group engaged the ideas and authors of the texts they read and discussed. In the March 25 and April 14 speech events in which the group discussed a variety of texts, through the intertextual processes of ventriloquation and juxtaposition, group members examined and critiqued ideas of the authors. This approach to knowledge enabled the group to examine and critique ideas in ways that mitigated their vulnerability in bringing ideas to the floor to be critiqued. As they brought the voice and argument of the author to the discussion floor, commitment to the idea remained with the author. In a sense, the idea took on a life of its own such that the idea could be examined independent of the person who initiated the idea on the floor. Collaboratively, the group constructed a response of agreement or disagreement to the authors through which they constructed their understanding of the ideas and arguments presented.

Analysis of the "focused talk" across different task structures shows a highly complex web of both "doubting" and "believing" stances. Burbules (1993) suggests that these various approaches to discussion, or genres as he refers to them, are not neatly connected to any particular speech event except in narrowly formalized talk. However, they fall into regular patterns and are combined and overlap in multiple ways. In the talk of the Global Studies group, this complex overlap of discursive strategies was particularly evident when the group engaged in ideational conflict. As described in the analysis of the April 25 episode of "focused talk," as they disagreed ("doubting"), they also made efforts to understand the other's point of view (believing) and tempered their assertions with affirming and supporting talk.

In the April 25 episode of "focused talk," group members offered their own ideas on the floor which were questioned and over which they disagreed. The cooperative effort to engage in disagreement was illustrated in Steven and Kate's exchange about China's birth rate policy. They critically and constructively engaged each other's beliefs and ideas as they and other group members worked together to accomplish the assigned task of crafting several policy statements. Interwoven with the ideational conflict was talk that was mutually affirming and supportive. Their disagreement was a collaborative construction evident in the revoicing and reformulation which functioned to bring the idea to the floor in ways that mitigated the relational risks of disagreeing.

Other group members gave the floor over to the disagreement between Kate and Steven (April 25), allowing them a joint extended turn on the floor. However, other group members were also free to join the discussion, as Shelley did for example. The group engaged in idea-evolution and ideational conflict without needing to agree or abandon the disagreement. They were willing to conclude the disagreement without resolution which is indicative of their willingness to grapple with the complexity and uncertainty of public issues (Evans, et al., 1996). Disagreement that is accomplished both relationally and intellectually is democratic. When disagreement is viewed as a cooperative and collaborative construction, as the disagreement in the group's talk was described, it is an act of "speaking" and "listening" where commitment to ideas is tentative and speakers can influence and be influenced by others' ideas.

Slavin (1995) states that cooperative learning methods are important to counteract the detrimental effects of the conventional, competitive classroom structure. In such a structure, students must compete for the teacher's attention, for grades, and for peer acceptance. Most cooperative learning strategies are based on Deutsch's (1959) theory of competitive and cooperative goal structures. Deutsch found that students who worked under cooperative conditions had greater achievement than when working under competitive conditions. Johnson and Johnson (1975) extended Deutsch's theory to include

individualistic goal structures. Based on these theories, cooperative learning methods carefully structure group members' interactions to ensure cooperative goal structures and thereby, equal participation and interdependence. An underlying assumption is that students will naturally or inevitably act in self-interested, competitive ways (Jacob, 1998; Schaps & Solomon, 1990) because competition is the norm in classrooms (Slavin, 1995). Based on this assumption, various approaches to small group discussion attempt to control for this kind of behavior through structuring access to the floor by limiting speaking turns. In essence, cooperative learning models are grounded in a metaphor of competition because the fundamental assumption is students will naturally act competitively, not cooperatively, and therefore, their interactions must be constrained. What these models seem to want to take advantage of is the inherent relational work of face-to-face interaction, yet they seem to neglect or ignore the socially constructed, emergent nature of group relational dynamics and the interconnection to the intellectual work of group discussion.

What is shown in the data is that students are capable of both "believing" and "doubting" without their interaction being highly structured by a cooperative task (Slavin, 1995) or a set of discussion criteria (Harris, 1996). What is shown in the data is that students may strongly voice their ideas and beliefs while also being caring and supportive of other group members. This was illustrated in Chapter 3 in the analysis of the April 25 speech event when Steven and Kate disagreed about a birth rate policy and later when the group discussed assisted suicide. While group members disagreed with one another, they also offered comments which encouraged and supported one another's committing their ideas on the discussion floor (see 74, 75). An excerpt is given below to illustrate.

73   Steven - I think we should limit it to um maybe two kids per family.

                                                                [

74   Kate - I know, but what does that do? When you put a limit on that like that then

        farmers are drowning their children. Children are killed every day and their put

in orphanages and they're treated like crap because of that and that's not right

either. I mean that's what they're doing in China right now.

75   Steven - <u>So are you saying that</u> the birth rate policy on that like if parents don't

get the kid they want their going to drown them or throw them in an orphanage?

76   Kate - Because

[

77   Shelley - A lot, that's what happens a lot of the time when they set a limit.

People set limits and =

A view of the metaphor of floor as a collaborative construction does not begin with
the premise that the natural state of interaction is competitive. Rather such an approach
opens the floor to multiple ways of speaking that embody "doubting" and "believing."
This embodiment is the deeply paradoxical nature of democratic discussion (Barber, 1989)
and the essential dialectic of participatory democracy. Data suggest that students can reason
and argue while caring. It is not only a more useful approach for researchers and educators
in identifying and fostering democratic talk, it is a more democratic orientation toward
students as participants in that talk.

Leadership, Group Roles, and Democratic Discussion
The Emergence of Group Leadership

The concept "role" is a central idea in communication and education theories and
models of small group discussion. The focus on roles of leadership is linked to a group's
ability to successfully engage and accomplish a task or goal. Theories and models of group
discussion often associate leadership with issues of control, efficacy, status, and influence.
Good discussion requires that key leadership roles be fulfilled by group members,
particularly that of task leadership (Cragan & Wright, 1991). The importance of group
leadership is related to our notions of power among group members. Gastil defines power
in small groups as the capacity to influence, to do something, or prevent something from

being done. For a small group to be democratic, according to Gastil (1993), everyone must have some form of influence or control, and all members ultimately have equal power with regard to the group's interaction.

Conventional perspectives on group leadership (e.g. trait, style, and situational theories) assume leadership is centered in the person who occupies the leader position in a network of static group roles (Fisher & Ellis, 1990; Pavitt & Curtis, 1990). Often leadership is ascribed by an outside authority to a group member or members who control the discussion floor, direct the taking of turns, and set the agenda for the discussion. For example, Slavin recommends the teacher select a leader for the discussion group and that this leader should insure everyone participates and the group stays on task. Selection of the group leader should be based on his or her leadership ability and organizational skills, as well as academic ability (Slavin, 1995). Others suggest all students should have a turn in the leader role regardless of ability so they learn the skills of leadership. However, as Mortensen (1966) discovered, assigning leadership roles exerts little influence on whether the assigned leader actually achieves the role.

In contrast to conventional models of leadership, a functionalist approach shifts the emphasis from the person to clusters of communicative behaviors performed by multiple group members. Barge and Hirokawa (1989) critique conventional approaches of group leadership which emphasize behaviors such as talkativeness, turns on the floor, and how the floor is controlled. They conclude there are no one set of task and social functions unique to leadership in the conventional approaches. Instead, they propose that leadership involves actions that assist the group in overcoming barriers to task achievement and are exercised through interaction within the group. Within this functionalist approach, leadership is an act performed by one or more group members that facilitates the group's ability to accomplish a task or goal (Fisher, 1986; Fisher & Ellis, 1990). In this study of small group discussion, I extend a functionalist approach to identify and describe small group leadership.

Through several years of trial and error, the Global Studies teachers learned that roles and norms of participation emerge within the group and that they could model practical reasoning as a method of deliberation and foster positive group relations without structuring group roles and norms. Thereafter, the Global Studies groups were essentially groups in which leadership was not ascribed, but emerged (Bormann, 1975) and might change with the nature of the group's task or even with the forms and functions of talk within a single task-oriented group discussion. Roles and norms were not imposed by an authority outside the group. A key theory of group communication is role emergence (e.g. Bormann, 1975) which views leadership as an achievement of the group. Role emergence is a process in which group members contend for and are sanctioned by other group members until one member emerges as the group leader. Role emergence theory also holds that there are different kinds of leadership shared among group members. However, the task leader is a central role in that the ability of the group to negotiate other leadership roles and norms is dependent on the emergence of a task leader (Cragan & Wright, 1991).

Communication research has amply demonstrated that tension over leadership, particularly task leadership, is a necessary issue to be resolved in group discussion. The analysis of the Global Studies groups' interactions supports this idea and illustrates how the resolution of task leadership facilitated the group's ability to proceed with the task and engage in focused and sustained discussion. Tensions early in the groups' interactions revolved around the uncertainty of how to organize themselves as a group and how to proceed with the discussion task. At a metalevel, negotiation of these tensions related to the group's sense of cohesion and solidarity (Tannen, 1989). The analysis shows that Group A struggled to resolve these tensions over the emergence of task leadership. Without the resolution of these tensions, the group struggled to engage in sustained, focused discussion.

For Group B, Mark most often negotiated the task leadership functions smoothly. Who emerges as task leader, the person who most often fulfills the procedural functions

which help the group navigate the discussion task, is a result of cooperation among group members. Mark often initiated talk through which the group oriented itself to the task, recontextualized the task, and monitored its progression through the task. Other group members took up the talk with Mark, confirming his fulfilling the task leadership functions. Across speech events, his consistent fulfilling these functions evolved into the role of task leader. Through the emergence of a task leader, as well as other roles and norms of participation, the group constructed a participation structure (a constellation of participatory roles and norms) that provided a degree of certainty and coherence within and across speech events. This helped to support and sustain focused talk about global issues with its attendant intertextual references and multi-voiced participation.

This sense of emergence contrasts with the conventional view that the task leader "wins" control of the floor. Mark often initiated the discussion task, but without the uptake of other group members and their agreement with his proposals to engage the task, he could not have emerged as the task leader. In addition, he did not hold the role exclusively. Other group members at various times also fulfilled the functions of task leadership. Although role emergence theory views leadership as an achievement of the group, underlying is the notion that group members vie or compete for the role of task leader. The analysis extends the functionalist approach and role emergence theory through conceptualizing emergence as a collaborative construction of the group versus a competition. The fulfillment of leadership functions by members of Group B was democratic, not because the style of leadership was democratic per se, but rather because it was an enactment of democratic pratices.

Theories of group discussion espouse different points of view regarding how leadership is enacted and shared within the group. Consistent among communication theories is the idea that leadership is shared when different group members take turns in leading the discussion or different group members assume different leadership roles. In contrast to communication theories which view group roles as emergent, cooperative

learning ascribes these roles to insure democratic participation and shared leadership. An underlying assumption of cooperative learning methods is that the conventional structure of most classrooms is competitive and this structure naturally transfers to small group discussion. To overcome the competitive structure of group interaction, members are assigned task-related and group roles, such as leadership, to create interdependence and equity among group members. The method (e.g. Jigsaw) applied ideally structures the interaction of the group through role assignments so that leadership is equitably distributed and shared (Aronson, Blaney, Stepham, Sikes, & Snapp, 1978).

Wood (1988) outlines two major theories associated with our conceptions of democracy: protectionist and participatory. The protectionist sense of democracy involves civic participation of a minority elite crucial to maintaining societal stability. Despite the goal of participatory democracy, most models and theories of leadership are deeply rooted in contemporary protectionist theories of democracy which view the emergence of leadership resulting from competition and shared leadership as individuals taking turns in the leader role. Participatory democracy, in contrast, encompasses a broader kind of participation in which people jointly create efficacy and a sense of belonging in order to extend and enhance civic participation (Wood, 1988). Although task leadership is important to a group's ability to engage a task, conventional models and theories of group roles tend to overplay the power of the leader's role. The collaborative construction of leadership in Group B suggests that the group member who typically fulfills the role does not necessarily have greater efficacy than other group members. In jointly constructing and sharing the functions of task leadership, all group members influenced the leadership of the group.

The analysis also suggests that models of group discussion such as cooperative learning which are grounded in a metaphor of competition, may be misaligned with their aims to promote participatory democracy in small group discussion. McCaslin and Good (1992) argue when we promote certain sets of values and behaviors within a greater context

of differing values and behaviors, we send students mixed and confusing messages. Jacob (1998) states that our societal notions of competition impact how we view what students in classrooms will do and we assume students act competitively and with self-interest. Cooperative learning methods aim for shared leadership and equal participation in the group by carefully constraining the interaction of group members in order to overcome competition. An alternative is to view leadership as a group constructed and emergent dynamic and that leadership has multiple forms and functions.

Multiple Kinds of Leadership

Analysis of the episodes of "focused talk" shows different kinds of leadership emerged within the group. Various models and theories of group dynamics and role emergence suggest multiple kinds of leadership emerge in successful discussion groups. For example, Cragan and Wright (1991) in their integrated model of group discussion suggest at least five leadership roles must emerge for a group to successfully engage in discussion: task leader; socio-emotional leader; information provider; "devil's advocate;" and tension-releaser. Other models include roles characterized by their communicative function such as analyzer, questioner, or synthesizer (Pavitt & Curtis, 1990). The analysis of "focused talk" episodes shows that group members fulfilled multiple kinds of leadership roles in various ways. Sometimes the multiple leadership functions were performed by one person. For example, in the April 14 speech event, Mark elicited a question from Mike which was both a task-related and a social function of leadership. In other instances, leadership functions were shared among group members. Mark typically fulfilled the role of task leader, yet on various occasions, Shelley initiated the task. Other group members monitored the group's progression with the task as Steven did when he clarified which question the group was on in the April 25 discussion. These instances of enacted leadership are consistent with small group theories that define democratic discussion as involving shared leadership. Shared leadership implies that group members take turns

fulfilling leadership roles according to the needs of the group and the requirements of the assigned task.

In addition, as the analyses in the previous chapter show, different kinds of leadership emerged in the group that are linked to the multiple ways group members engaged in discussion. As described above, the group created multiple ways of participating in the task at hand. The management of these ways of participating provided the group a degree of consistency and coherence within and across speech events. The analysis also reveals a kind of intellectual leadership that seems more encompassing and more complicated than the categories of leadership in communication models. Within episodes of "focused talk," the group constructed multiple ways of entering into discussion and engaging the text. The ability of the group to enter into discussion in part depended upon the facilitation of task leadership. It also involved other kinds of leadership functions related to the ways group members engaged ideas and how these ideas evolved.

For example, in the March 25 speech event, Shelley initiated the group's engagement in the discussion by repeating Mark's earlier suggestion of discussing the Cohen text myth by myth, a task leadership move. In the same episode of "focused talk," Mark lead the group in addressing the requirements of the discussion task. These examples illustrate shared leadership in which group members took turns at leading the group in proceeding with the task. In other instances of "focused talk," leadership was enacted by a coalition of speakers who advanced an idea. Recalling the April 25 speech event, Mark had initiated the topic of birth rates. As the group took up the topic, Steven proposed that families should be limited to two children. Kate countered Steven's proposal. They both offered ideas on the floor which functioned as a point around which the discussion evolved. Their point-counterpoint exchange was a joint effort which defined the focus of the discussion and illustrates a different kind of shared leadership.

The above example from the April 25 speech event illustrates a kind of leadership that moves beyond taking turns to perform instrumental task functions. Leadership in this

sense was not simply initiating topics and other group members following by taking up the topic. Rather, leadership was dispersed among a coalition of speakers who had multiple speaking turns as they advanced an idea together. Kate and Steven's exchange lead the group into a deeper discussion of the consequences of birth rates. Within the exchange about birth rate policies, the group negotiated roles and norms for disagreement, resulting in a participation structure which the group adapted to the later topics of assisted suicide and euthanasia. This kind of shared leadership seemed to co-occur with group members critically and constructively engaging the ideas presented in the texts they read and discussed, as well as their own ideas.

Cragan and Wright (1991) include in their model, which integrates multiple theories of group discussion, categories of "leader" and "follower" communicative behaviors. Among the leadership behaviors they list are: contributing, seeking, evaluating, and seeking evaluation of ideas; visualizing abstract ideas and generalizing from specific ideas; setting goals and agendas; seeking, clarifying, and summarizing information. In addition to these task-related behaviors, they include relational behaviors such as regulating participation, climate making, and resolving conflict. They define discussion participation as the enactment of communication behaviors that positively move the group in the direction of accomplishing a task or goal. Positive followership behaviors include listening attentively, assisting on procedure, observing, and compromising.

Leadership functions consistent with those described above were enacted by group members in episodes of "focused talk." These included initiating topics, marking the boundaries of exchanges of talk, and creating transitions or juncture points. However, behaviors such as clarifying, extending, and summarizing ideas were enacted in ways that suggest a different sense of how leadership is shared and power is distributed among group members. Within segments of "focused talk" in which the synthesis of the intellectual, relational, and textual dimensions of discussion was most concentrated, there occurred a degree of erasure between leadership and followership. In episodes of "focused talk,"

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consistent with descriptions of democratic deliberation, features of talk typically attributed to leadership were not merely shared, but dispersed among group members. In these occurrences, the ability to influence and shape the discussion was dispersed. Leadership that is dispersed, as well as shared, seems to be a fuller enactment of participatory democracy.

Issues of Status in Group Discussion

How leadership is achieved within a group depends upon the interaction of group members. The emergence of leadership roles is the first step in the development of a status hierarchy in the group (Fisher, 1980). Fisher states that status hierarchies are not necessarily incompatible with democratic discussion methods. Status hierarchies exist in all groups, but this does not necessarily imply that some members are more valued participants than others. Typically in cohesive groups all members contributions are valued (Fisher, 1980). This seemed to be the case for Group B members. Within Group B, it was clear that Mark, Shelley, and Kate most often assumed leadership roles in the group. In follow-up interviews with group members, they were identified as leaders in the group. However, they also stated they valued the contributions of all group members and in fact, Shelley wished Hitoshi, Steven, and Mike had participated more.

Cohen (1990) attributes inequitable participation to status differences among students in how they rank one another on academic ability and differences in social standing and popularity. Johnson and Johnson (1992) hold that equitable participation depends on the structuring of mutual goals, division of the task, and division of resources for which roles are assigned. In so doing, ideally, the status hierarchy that forms within the group is equalized. Preparing rich, multiple ability tasks and teaching students skills of cooperation will do much to engage students in civil and constructive discussion, but these steps are not sufficient to address problems of social status (Cohen, 1990).

I did not observe the Global Studies students over an extended period of time in order to identify the social status among class members. Social status and other variables

of personal identity of the group members such as gender or ethnicity, which may affect the development of status hierarchies within the group, were not the focus of this study, but merit future research in the context of democratic discussion and its learning in social studies. The two groups selected for study were highly diverse in terms of academic ability, ethnicity, gender, motivation, and other variables related to issues of status. I did not compare the two groups except in terms of their negotiation of "focused talk," "task talk," etc. Comparison of the two groups in terms of variables such as gender, ethnicity, etc. would provide more ethnographic information in terms of which to interpret the experiences of the two groups. It may be that Group A's inabilities to resolve tensions over role emergence and readily engage in focused and sustained discussion of the task were related to issues of social status. In Group B, language proficiency was an issue with Hitoshi and limited his abilities to participate. This and other circumstances within the group could be construed as issues of status that reflect upon the interaction among group members and are areas of further research.

Tasks, Text, and Intertextuality

The Tasks and Intertextuality

Across "focused talk" episodes, the group's talk was explorative of texts. These texts included the articles the students read and discussed, the text of their-on-going discussion, the analytic and reasoning skills of the curriculum, and textual sources such as prior discussions, and prior personal knowledge and experience. The group moved in and out of different ways of participating within episodes of "focused talk" in order to meet the requirements of the various discussion tasks. Across the three speech events analyzed, the assigned discussion tasks differed, yet each directed the group toward playing the "doubting game" (Elbow, 1986). In the March 25 event, the task overtly directed the group to contrast the relative merits of the positions presented in the Cohen (1996) text in order to judge if a position was strong in their view and determine if they collectively agreed or disagreed with the author. This was accomplished in part through the intertextual

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processes of ventriloquation and juxtaposition. Recalling from Chapter 3, ventriloquation involved group members bringing the voice of an author and his or her idea to the discussion floor without having to commit to the idea themselves. Juxtaposition involved group members voicing multiple authors and their ideas in order to examine and determine which argument was more reasonable. For example, in the March 25 speech event, Shelley initiated the discussion of the first myth and ventriloquated the voice of Cohen, bring his idea to the floor without her committing to the idea.

21   Shelley - Um. This first one is that he's saying population does not grow

        exponentially. He's trying to disprove Thomas Malthus' um hypothesis about

        exponential growth of human population. Do you think that's right? (*voices the*

        author Cohen)

In the later speech events, the group adapted to the different discussion tasks a constellation of "believing" and "doubting" skills or what Burbules (1993) describes as critical, inclusive, divergent, and convergent discourse strategies. The tasks called upon group members to do different things, but normatively the group engaged in constructing certain intertextual relationships. The conversational realization of the different tasks included various ways of participating described earlier that depended on the nature of the task and how the group organized itself to fulfill the task. Episodes of "focused talk" were the arena for constructing intertextual connections, and for democratic participation, characterized by the interweaving of multiple voices and multiple ways of participating (Florio-Ruane & deTar, 1995).

Most theories and models of group discussion acknowledge that the process is not a simple linear move toward consensus. Research tends to emphasize either the relational or the intellectual aspects of group discussion. These aspects are typically described in terms of task and social behaviors performed by group members to accomplish a task or goal.

These categorical distinctions are useful, but limited in terms of identifying what constitutes democratic deliberative discussion and understanding what it is students actually do when they engage in that discourse. When the task for group members is to collectively deliberate on an issue in democratic ways (Gutmann, 1987), the work is simultaneously intellectual and relational. As shown in the analysis of "focused talk," how the group negotiated the task was inherently relational and the ways in which the group proceeded with the task was inextricably linked to the structure of the task.

A key finding in the analysis of "focused talk" episodes is group discussion that resembles democratic deliberation (as described in the literature) has certain intertextual features. Most theories and models recognize the importance of the relational and intellectual work of group discussion. Missing in them, however, and discovered in the analysis is that how students engaged in the tasks involved the complex construction of intertextual links. When the task is to collectively deliberate over an aspect of an issue in ways that are democratic, the task involves the complex weaving of intellectual, relational, and textual dimensions of group discourse. As revealed in the analysis, these dimensions take on a variety of forms, but consistently occur in focused and sustained discussion of the issue.

An overarching aim of democratic deliberation is the ability to assemble multiple viewpoints that seem to have value, weigh the pros and cons of the arguments, decide on what appears to be the most satisfactory to the best of knowledge and belief (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971). Deliberation moves the participants thinking beyond information or simply acknowledging others have viewpoints to examining and understanding them. Through a variety of tasks, the Global Studies group engaged in practicing the reasoning and analytical skills fostered in the curriculum which directed them toward identifying how an author framed an issue and the supporting arguments presented. Recalling these tasks described in Chapter 3, through ventriloquating the voice of the author, group members identified various viewpoint and arguments. A key aspect of deliberative discussion is to

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examine ideas with the ability to suspend judgment until having the opportunity to explore the idea and its implications.

Ventriloquating the voice of the author was an intertextual process in which group members brought the author's idea to the discussion floor to examine. In so doing, group members represented someone's idea without having to commit to the idea (Wertsch, 1991). Voicing an external perspective different from their own broadened the group's understanding without their having to commit to or embrace the idea or let it supersede their own thinking (Burbules, 1993). As discussed above, "doubting" and "believing" can co-exist in the same discussion. Within the intertextual processes of ventriloquation and juxtaposition, "doubting" was not of another group member, but rather the text-based knowledge of the "expert," the author. Therefore, group members could explore their own ideas and understanding, however tentative, and grant one another plausibility ("believing"). Through ventriloquating the voice of the author, the idea brought to the floor was shaped and developed within the text of the group's discussion, spawning new ideas (Wertsch, 1991). The group linked their own ideas to the ideas of others, the an idea-evolution process, incorporating the ideas into a complex and multifaceted form of understanding (Burbules, 1993). This process was increasingly complex as group members engaged in identifying, defining, and examining alternative perspectives about the issue.

Across episodes of "focused talk," group members brought multiple voices to the discussion floor which functioned as a resource for the group to juxtapose alternative viewpoints. In juxtaposing multiple perspectives, group members drew upon various textual resources from various locations and linked textual fragments to construct their understanding of the issue discussed. Within these intertextual processes, students dealt with a multiplicity of voices in various configurations, not as voices simply in competition for control of the argument, but to fulfill the task and ultimately, to deliberate. Bringing multiple voices and ideas to the discussion floor was at times convergent in that group

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negotiated consensus in order to accomplish the discussion task as they did in the March 25 speech event. At other times the process was divergent and group members explored a multiplicity of voices and ideas, including their own, not to resolve them necessarily, but to understand the complexity of the issue or aspect of the issue better. This was the case in the April 25 speech event in which the discussion task did not require the group to address a specific article or set of articles. In a broader sense, both kinds of tasks were convergent in that all tasks and texts were part of the overall inquiry of global population (Burbules, 1993, Lemke, 1985) and all were important to students practicing the reasoning and analytic skills fostered in the curriculum. In another sense, the practical reasoning students engaged in across speech events was a process of converging the multiple voices and perspectives about the issue within a context of exploration of ideas versus a debate model in which ideas are simply resources to win.

Authority, Autonomy and Textual Appropriation

Gutmann (1987) proposes a framework for democratic education (civic education) that emphasizes imbuing students with the capacities to engage in deliberation in democratic ways. Students need to develop the abilities to make sound decisions about social issues that, directly or indirectly, influence their lives. Democratic participation is often equated with electoral politics (Beyer, 1996) consistent with a protectionist view of democracy in which a minority elite makes decisions for the common good. In contrast, a participatory democracy espouses a critical approach to contemporary social issues, collective decision making, and commitment to public discussion as central to democratic life (Barber, 1984 Beyer, 1996; Gutmann, 1987; Wood, 1988). A participatory approach advocates discussion in which participants engaging "doubting," in weighing alternatives and making reasoned judgments, but do not base their "doubting" on competition. Rather, "doubting" is a collaborative endeavor and not in opposition to, but complemented and completed by "believing."

These ideas about democracy have implications for educational practice, as for example, how we view leadership in small group discussion. Much of the literature promoting a participatory approach to democracy in the classroom emphasizes the teacher establishing a democratic environment in which power is shared with and among students, and students are empowered to have a voice. In such an environment, the teacher (or the text) is not the sole authority about knowledge. Bercaw and Bloome (1998) suggest an issue for research is to explore classroom discussions in ways that redefine knowledge as locally authorized and students create social relationships based on more equitable distributions of power. Power, knowledge, and authority are linked.

The analysis of episodes of "focused talk" revealed several important relationships among knowledge, authority, text, and autonomy. A potential of small group discussion and a reason why it is often advocated is the promise of student autonomy from the authority of the teacher. In classrooms, teachers always retain a degree of authority through the assigned tasks, monitoring, and assessing the group's interaction. However, when the group has autonomy from the teacher, it can act within its own context with authority. Authority of some sort is inescapable. The analysis showed Group B was better able to engage in and sustain focused discussion and was also better able to create the group boundaries between itself and outsiders such as Mr. Grant. The construction and maintenance of these discursive boundaries enabled it to create autonomy. The data showed that within the context of the group, roles shifted back and forth, topics changed fluidly, multiple ways of participating were created, and leadership was distributed. These sorts of shifting patterns do not imply there was no authority in the group, but rather that authority could not be attributed to one person (Burbules, 1993).

Within the context of the group, various aspects of participatory democracy were enacted. For example, in and through role emergence, the group constructed a distributed leadership. In constructing multiple ways of participation, the group also engaged in "doubting" and "believing" approaches or orientations to knowledge and text, which are

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essentially multiple ways of knowing and constructing knowledge. Through the intertextual processes of ventriloquation and juxtaposition, the group also enacted aspects of participatory democracy in their approach to knowledge and authority represented in the texts they read and discussed. In ventriloquating the voice of multiple authors (others), the commitment to the ideas remained with the author as group members brought the ideas to the floor to explore. The group's own thinking was not superseded by the author's voice or expertise. Rather, in an act of "doubting," the group separated themselves from the authority of the text and the expertise of the author and assumed the authority to question the arguments presented. For example, in the March 25 speech event the group read and discussed the Cohen (1996) article on the ten myths of population. The group discussed Cohen's argument for each myth and decided whether they agreed or disagreed. In some cases they agreed with Cohen and in others they did not. They did not simply take Cohen's arguments as "fact." Similarly, in examining multiple perspectives through juxtaposition, the group acted with autonomy of their own thinking and with authority or power to exam and question ideas. Illustrated in these intertextual processes is the enactment of students assuming a degree of autonomy and authority of their own ideas.

Within episodes of "focused talk," group members synthesized textual fragments from various sources, including themselves, to construct their understanding of the ideas and the issue. Gavelek and Raphael (1996) describe this process as appropriation in which learners take up concepts and strategies from various sources and transform them as they apply them for their own use. Appropriation is not only relevant to understanding how the Global Studies group constructed meaning, but also how they used these concepts and strategies with authority. In the "focused talk" of March 25, for example, Shelley, Steven, and Mark, as a coalition of speakers, appropriated various textual sources of their prior knowledge to explain the meaning of "exponentially." In the April 25 speech event, Kate appropriated information from the Hilditch article on China's one child policy and used that knowledge in support of her position to counter Steven's proposal. Similarly, later in that

speech event, she and Steven appropriated the experiences of others outside the group. This not only represented their learning, but also their abilities to use the skills and knowledge they appropriated in authoritative ways. Deliberation requires a familiarity with authoritative knowledge, but students should use and produce language in their own ways. They need to learn to incorporate words, concepts, skills, and strategies used by others in ways that serve the purposes of communicating in modern times within a democratic society (Newmann, 1988).

Across the theories and models drawn upon in this study is a common emphasis on students learning to engage in public discussion of social issues. A participatory approach to democratic education necessarily involves students in discussion. This is consistent with contemporary views of knowledge and learning as social constructions (Kutnick and Rogers, 1994), particularly Vygotskian theory which holds that learning does not occur in isolation. Learning is an effect of communication and interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1962). Dewey (1916) believed that democracy is not simply a matter of freer interaction, but a matter of change in social habit which results from varied interactions with others. Knowledge and interaction are inseparable; there is a vital social link between knowledge and activity with others. The focus of learning, for Dewey, is the process. This process does not happen in isolation from others (Dewey, 1916).

What can be taken from both Dewey and Vygotsky is an understanding that we learn in interaction with others in real social contexts and that this learning happens especially through talk. Within a participatory approach to democracy, public talk is essential. One conclusion is that engaging students in discussion of social issues with others is central to their developing civic competence and democratic character (Gutmann, 1987). A major role of teachers is providing students the settings for practicing democratic and deliberative discussion. In particular, engaging students in small group discussion coincides with both contemporary theories of learning and goals of participatory
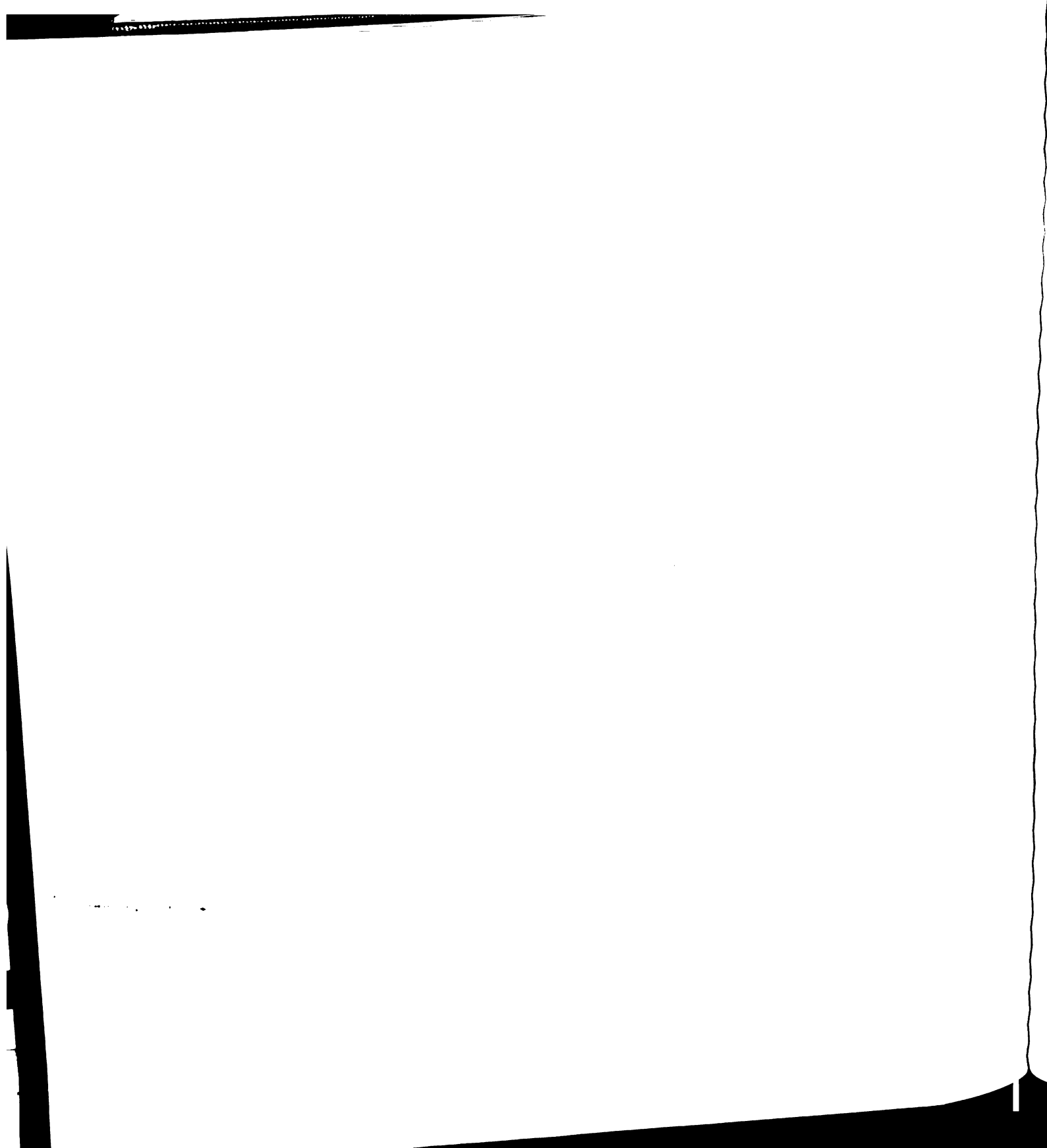
democracy. The insights for teachers and researchers described in Chapter 5 below assume

a participatory approach to democratic group discussion.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Overview

Teaching about issues of democracy in a social studies classroom is challenging. When one takes into consideration the debate over democracy's definition and its constitution, the term is controversial and elusive. As Warren (1988) puts it, some educators and theorists emphasize democracy as a curricular concept and democractic education as a pedogogy in order to build social cohesion and stability. Others see it as the means of inculcating values of self-determination and self-fulfillment. Others want democracy to be both. Further still, others see democratic education as emancipatory, involving students in "counterindoctrination against the blind acceptance of the concepts of the dominant culture" (Gordon, 1988, p. 117). It is easy to feel caught up in the theoretical and philosophical crossfire (Eller, 1997) of debate. However, teachers must move beyond teaching *about* democratic principles and virtues. Pratte (1988) states the question is one of determining what counts as democratic practice and suggests the place to begin is the public spheres where it is reflected in practice.

My purpose in this study was to identify and describe how students engaged in the discussion of a public issue and the nature of their discourse. The findings offer a number of insights for teachers about the interconnected dynamics and processes of democratic discussion in a curriculum centered on the small group discussion of social issues. Studying democratic discussion in the group context where it is ideally practiced poses certain challenges for researchers. In dealing with issues of democracy in the classroom, the theoretical and analytical frameworks we choose to study democratic discourse are inescapably complex and incomplete. Despite such complexity, this multidisciplinary study offers several insights about democratic, deliberative discussion in the small group setting that are of interest to researchers and teachers.

The interdisciplinary approach adopted in this study offers researchers a rich analytic framework for identifying and describing discourse across speech events,

especially in relation to the negotiation of roles and norms important to students' learning to participate in democratic discourse. Such an approach provides the researcher a method to analyze what goes on in a discourse event in terms of its forms and functions in relation to the construction of understanding, to identify patterns of discourse relationships, and to understand ways in which the discourse sustains important social ideologies. Understanding group discourse as a more complex and layered interaction can help educators design tasks which foster high involvement in and sustainment of group discussion. The analysis of "focused talk" episodes revealed a complex intertextual process through which group members constructed their own voice in the discussion of the public issue. For novices, development of civic voice must be supported through discussion tasks which take into consideration the intertextual process that include the explicitly structured and emergent dynamics of deliberative discussion within the context of the group. Recognizing the forms and functions of talk within a group's discussion can help educators assess a group's interaction and identify ways to support students' development of the communicative skills necessary for participation in deliberative democratic discussion.

Implications and Insights For Researchers

Power and Group Discourse

Various scholars and educators believe that the potential of democratic education with an eye toward participatory democracy rests upon the idea that classrooms are a microcosm of society. A wide range of scholarship points out that much of what schools do is reproduce our stratified social order (Wood, 1988). Others such as Giroux (1984) argue schools are a context in which the dominating social ideology can be challenged and changed. Edwards and Westgate (1994) state that research has long-time focused on the outcomes of teaching, but rarely about the complex interaction through which knowledge is transmitted, dispensed, impeded, or avoided. In a similar vein, Ellsworth (1980) speaks negatively of reasoned discussion as a method of classroom discussion. She argues

democratic deliberation in its conventional sense is impossible because the power relations of society at large are unjust and these injustices cannot be overcome in the classroom. Burbules (1993), however, disagrees and states that the discussion which pursues mutual understanding or agreement can allow for engaging other's viewpoints (or difference). If participants arrive at some common point of understanding from beginning at different points, or even if they fail, they will at least enhance their understanding of one another. There is no reason to assume either results are imposed or monolithic outcomes (Burbules, 1993).

The differences among the above perspectives are well represented in the literature on democratic education and democratic discourse. A parallel discussion in this study was the difference in viewing group discussion through a metaphor of collaboration rather than one of competition. I drew upon Edelsky's (1981) reconceptualization of "floor" and "turn." She found in her study, which began as an inquiry into gendered discourse, that conventional models of "floor" and "turn" (e.g. Sacks, et al., 1974) did not adequately account for the nature of the discussion she observed. Setting aside gender as the focus of her analysis temporarily, she turned her attention to investigating the nature of the conversational "floor." She found that gender differences existed, but these differences were related to the nature of the "floor." Extending Edelsky's notion "floor" to group discussion, collaboration is the joint construction of meaning among participants that has an emergent form and cannot be reduced to separate knowledge of individual members (Buber, 1970). This collaborative metaphor complements and extends small group theories which view group discourse as an emergent process (Cragan & Wright, 1991; Fisher, 1986; Luft, 1984). Inquiry into group discussion has focused on the formation and development of the group as a group, its patterns of interaction, and the emergence of roles and norms of participation within the group context. These theories view the group as an entity rather than a collective of individuals.

A collaborative lens through which to view the data differed from conventional approaches that are grounded in a metaphor of competition. Within a competitive metaphor, a central issue is how power is circulated in society. Power in this sense refers to the asymmetrical relations among individuals based on differences in their possessions and characteristics (Cherryholmes, 1988). Within this approach, group discourse is viewed primarily as raced, classed, and gendered. Various studies that employ a lens of power show that students in classrooms and small groups can reproduce the social inequalities or stratifications of their communities (e.g. Gee, 1990; Lensmier, 1994). McCarthy (1995) however, criticizes theories of power for their essentialist tendencies, stating they underestimate the nuance, contradiction, and heterogeneity within and between racial (as well as gender and social) groups. Such criticism does not minimize nor deny the importance of issues of power (defined in terms of race, class, and gender). Rather it calls for a shift to viewing difference as a resource in order to overcome the limitations of approaches grounded in a metaphor of competition. Public spheres need to be understood as spaces for the negotiation of power where differences complement each other and people have opportunity to expand their discursive reportoires (The New London Group, 1996).

Imposing a more essentialist lens of power (i.e. race, class, and gender) a priori on the data that would have lead down a path I chose not take for this study. My purpose was not to deconstruct the group discussion based on constructs of power, but to understand what was democratic in the discursive event itself as it was constructed in the context of the group. For the purposes of this study, issues of power as defined above were bracketed. If we only view discourse through a metaphor in which individual differences of race, class, and gender are in competition, we miss the nuanced elements of the discourse that may be generative and transformative.

To illustrate a potential difference in viewing issues of power such as gender through a collaborative metaphor and point toward future research, I offer the following example drawn from the discussions of Group B. Kate, a Hispanic/Native American

female, was described as a member of the group who actively participated in the discussions. Recalling the description in Chapter 3 of the April 15 discussion, Kate shared an article which framed China's one child policy as an issue of gender, power, and culture (Hilditch, 1995). In sharing her article, Kate appropriated the text to teach her fellow group members about the consequences of China's one child policy. In the later April 25 speech event, she appropriated information and the perspective of this article to articulate her position in the disagreement with Steven over birth rate policies. In that same disagreement, Shelley joined the discussion and performed a mediating role, a role often equated with feminine ways of interacting. Steven stated he did not approve disposing of female children, but argued that birth rate policies did not necessarily result in the abandonment or abortion of female children. Though simplified and speculative, this recount of the group's discussions suggests that the "genderedness" of the group's discourse was layered and complex and more than a characteristic of the participants. In contrast to conventional views of gendered discourse, the "genderedness" of the group's discourse in these discussions was relational (e.g. Shelley's mediating role), intellectual (e.g. the issue of birth rates discussed was gendered), and textual (e.g. Kate appropriated a text which framed China's one child policy as a gender issue). A lens of collaboration potentially offers ways to see power as relationships of difference and move beyond its limitations to view it as a resource for the group to construct meaning.

Findings in this study suggest viewing group discussion through a metaphor of collaboration is potentially more useful toward understanding what constitutes democratic deliberative discussion. Assuming that discourse is a collaborative construction and that roles and norms are negotiated within the context of the group, the status, gender, ethnicity, and social class students bring to the group are not simply reproduced or reimplicated. The interaction among group members is assumed to be generative. Future research in this direction could help us better understand power and potentially identify what it contributes to the discourse of the group, as well as understand how it may impede

or deny students opportunities to fully participate. Burbules (1993) suggests it is a question of whether we view differences as potential barriers to dialogue or whether we view them as opportunities for creating relationships of understanding and cooperation across these differences.

Reconceptualizing Group Concepts

A collaborative metaphor of group discussion provided an analytical lens through which concepts related to group dynamics and processes linked to democratic discourse were reconceptualized. Viewed through a collaborative lens, constructs of group discussion related to concepts of democratic discourse (e.g. leadership, authority, speaking turns, and participation) were seen as contextualized constructions of the group. From the analysis emerged a picture of group discussion that is more complex and layered than accounted for in most theories and models of group discussion. The findings of this study, which suggest group talk is a complex weaving of intellectual, relational, *and* textual dimensions, add to theories and models of group discourse an intertextual lens useful in understanding the discourse of student peer groups.

Drawing from multiple disciplines provided a richer analytic framework which had the potential to describe the complexity and layeredness of group talk. Analysis moved between the theoretical ideas proposed in various theories and what occurred in the students' small group discussions. Theory informed the analysis and analysis informed the theoretical framework in an on-going inductive analytical process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The approach was guided by an ethnographic perspective of discourse and therefore, concepts drawn from across the disciplines had a social view of group discussion rather than a focus on the individual. One advantage of such an approach is a description of language derived from both theoretical insights and from the realities of democratic deliberative discussion in practice in the small group.

Discussion in this study is the most frequently used term in exploring the theory and practice of group talk. It is a blend of descriptions and theories of discourse, dialogue,

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conversation (Preskill, 1997). Drawing from sociolinguistics, speech communication, social studies, philosophy, and literacy related to identifying theoretical concepts such as role, leadership, participation, deliberation, patterns of talk, and emergence. This process was generative as insights gained in one field concerning a concept informed another in the analysis process. For example, role emergence theory was a useful place to begin to understand roles and norms of participation and the group process of engaging the discussion task, particularly the role of task leader which was central to the group's ability to proceed with the task. Blending role emergence theory and Fisher's (1986) functionalist approach provided a view of leadership as a function of the group rather than a trait or style of an individual. The concepts of "role" and "leadership" are well established in speech communication, derived from experimental studies over the past forty years (Cragan & Wright, 1991; Fisher and Ellis, 1990).

However, the approach does not look at the talk of participants in context. Sociolinguistics offered a perspective and approach to describe how roles are constructed in and through talk within the context of the group. Role emergence theory is limited in that it views group members as in contention for leadership. Within this view, floor is a commodity vied for among group members. Adopting Edelsky's (1981) metaphor of a collaborative conversational floor informed the analysis of leadership emergence which lead to discovering how leadership is a function of the group and how it can be fluidly shared and dispersed among group members to meet the needs of the group in the moment. The sociolinguistic analysis that moved among theoretical insights and the data resulted in a richer description of democratic discussion of the Global Studies group. Drawing from multiple disciplines allowed me as the analyst to take advantage of ways to think about discussion that a single disciplinary approach may not have taken into account.

One challenge in adopting a multidisciplinary approach is adopting concepts that are accepted in one discipline and rejected in another. The concept "role" is an example. In speech communication role is viewed as an emergent process that is manifest in the talk of

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the group (Cragan and Wright, 1991). Davies and Harre (1990), however, reject the concept of role in favor of the concept "positioning." They view role as static, formal, and ritualistic, and instead choose "positioning" because, they argue, it can be used to facilitate linguistically oriented social analysis of talk in ways a static view of role cannot. In crossing disciplinary lines, I made choices of concepts informed by the data and by multiple theories in order to construct an analytical framework to analyze the data in an effort to provide a richer description of group talk. The challenge and the potential is reconciling theoretical differences and subtitles to remain true to the theories drawn upon, yet construct something new.

Theory is not limited within a multidisciplinary approach to one school of thought. Findings in the analysis and findings across disciplines concerning the same social phenomena can inform and substantiate one another. A richer description is afforded in this process where concepts from one discipline can build upon others. As for example, linking the metaphor of a collaboratively constructed floor (Edelsky, 1981) to concepts such as leadership and group context was generative and lead to a richer description of the group's interactions. Adopting a multidisciplinary approach to studying group discussion is consistent with the a social constructivist view of knowledge and learning and the metaphor of intertextuality drawn upon in the analysis. These views coincide with a participatory approach to democracy in which multiple voices and multiple perspectives are the vitality of public discourse.

Task Structure and Group Discourse

The analysis of the Global Studies groups showed that the structure of the task was closely linked to the nature of the talk when students engaged in focused and sustained discussion. The tasks required of the group were a complexity of intellectual, relational, and textual work for which the group constructed multiple ways of participating. The nature of the activity in which people are engaged influences the nature of the discussion and group members interactions (Cohen, 1986). Lensmier (1994), for example, found that

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when students were left to their own devices in choosing topics for a writing workshop, they reproduced the social structures of their communities. Left to their own devices, they turned to what essentially was a default model of public discourse. A goal of democratic education is imbuing students with the abilities of effective and ethical communication. The educative goal is not to leave students to interact in a default mode which leaves them to interact in ways that reimplicate the social structures of society, especially those of concern that perpetuate social inequalities. Rather the goal is to teach students and provide opportunities for them to practice communicating in ways that move from reification and conventional stuctures of difference to talk that is generative and transformative.

The Global Studies curricular tasks required the group to cooperate and collaborate in order to sustain focused discussion and accomplish the tasks. An implication drawn from the analysis is that tasks should be purposefully designed to foster a group environment which supports rather than constrains the group's abilities to negotiate facilitative roles and norms of participation. Task structures can be constraining in ways that disable the group's ability to act with autonomy and authority in its own discussion such as imposing group roles. It can also be constraining in that the structure is amorphis and leaves the group to operate within a default mode of discourse much like Lensmier (1994) found. The analysis showed that when groups have a complicated task (e.g. questioning the perspective of an author) but have autonomy (power) to respond to the task, they can negotiate norms and roles that ascend things like group member's absences or varying expertise among group members on a topic. Tasks which require a group to cooperate and collaborate to do the task and not simply operate within a constrained model of communicating, can move from reifying or reimplicating the default model of public discourse and move toward discussion that is generative and transformative.

In this study, the tasks analyzed were limited to a particular kind of activity focused on exploring texts on the issue of global population and on applying the specific reasoning model of the curriculum. The study of a broader range of tasks requiring students to

engage a greater variety of texts, or genre of texts, could enrich our understanding of the dimensions of group talk highlighted in this study. These tasks might involve students engaged in different subject areas such as History in order to learn how students construct intertextual links across texts of different times, places, and peoples or texts in which the authors' viewpoints are not as explicit as the Global Studies articles. Other kinds of tasks might involve students engaged in decision-making or problem-solving in which the texts they appropriate and examine are less academic and discussion relies more on the students' own resources. Given the relationship between the structure of the assigned task and the on-going text of the group's discussion, investigating multiple kinds of tasks could illuminate further the dynamic interplay of the multiplicity of texts in group discourse.

Implications and Insights for Educators

The insights drawn from the analysis of the Global Studies group engaged in deliberative discussion are not so much about how to organize or structure groups, but are suggestive of ways teachers need to think about and understand the complex and emergent nature of group discussion. Given the nature of the conventional social studies classroom, engaging students in group discussion places both students and teacher in unfamiliar circumstances. For teachers, this requires a willingness to adopt a less authoritative role in the classroom in order to foster democratic participation among students. Teachers in discussion-oriented settings must be willing to let the group determine its own path to a larger extent than is typical in the conventional classroom, yet balance this independence with their mentoring. These are not new ideas. Social educators and researchers who adopt a constructivist, participatory stance toward classroom discourse have made similar arguments. Findings in this study lend support to these claims.

Just as the students cannot know in advance what will unfold in their discussions (Barnes, 1993), neither can the teacher. Teachers are asked to manage the uncertain and unfolding nature of group discussion. This is not to imply that as the more knowledgeable other and the designer of the discussion tasks, the teacher has no sense of where the

discussions will lead. Rather, for the discussions to be democratic in the participatory sense, the teacher grants students autonomy in their interactions and plausibility to they say within the framework of the discussion task. This is not to imply that teachers naively trust the discussion process, but that they can have greater faith in it when they have knowledge of the dynamics and processes of group discussion at work.

Viewing Democratic Group Discussion as a Process

A participatory approach assumes group discussion is a process to be learned and by which to learn. Teachers need to grant groups the necessary time and space to negotiate the roles and norms of participation and recognize the multiple kinds of talk groups construct in their interactions. The comparative case analysis of Group A and Group B identified several interwoven types of talk, each with identifiable form and functions. Group members wove these forms of talk in complex ways as they negotiated both new academic content and new ways of speaking about knowledge and text. Within whole events, there appeared a patterned relationship among the forms of talk which facilitated group members' abilities to engage in focused discussion of the issue, both a social and intellectual accomplishment. The analysis showed group talk is patterned and evolves over time within the context of the group. The findings suggest that task engagement is complex and dynamic. It cannot be simply parsed into "on" and "off" task behaviors as was popular several decades ago in research following the Carroll model of learning (Carroll, 1963).

Identified in the analysis reported in Chapter 2, "task talk" was an essential kind of talk through which the group negotiated the roles and norms of participation and how they proceeded with the task. For teachers, learning to hear and recognize "task talk" as an important dynamic in the group process is important. Recognizing how the group orients itself to the task through questions like "What are we supposed to be doing?" is recognizing in the talk the group's engagement in a necessary process. As teachers, our inclination is to step into the group and re-tell the instructions for the task, easily interrupting the group process. The processes involved in "task talk" were shown to be crucial in the group's

interactions and influenced its ability to establish group boundaries, negotiate participatory roles and norms, and sustain focused discussion. The analysis showed, for example, engaging in "task talk," the group recontextualized the teacher's task and transformed it into its own task. It is important for teachers to be willing to listen to the talk and at times, let the group struggle through negotiating the roles and task before intervening or mediating. If a goal is students' learning to deliberate in democratic ways, autonomy from the teacher is essential. Misunderstanding this "task talk" and stepping into the group prematurely to intervene could effectively usurp the group's autonomy and group members' abilities to negotiate the task, texts, and their involvement with one another.

In a similar vein, recognizing productive moments in which the group digresses from the arduous work of focused discussion and distinguishing them from unproductive moments which effectively disrupt the moment of the group's talk is important. On the surface, both may appear to be "off" task. Talk that is not directly about the academic content is often equated as "off" task behavior (e.g. Webb, 1989). However, the analysis shows "digressive" talk was at times an important part of the group's development of cohesion. These moments of talk were moments of self-disclosure and relationship building among group members, occurring at conversationally appropriate times in the discussion. Phillips (1988) found that "successful" groups' did not always keep to the point, the assigned task, and that such talk was an important means of the group taking ownership of its own discussion. If a goal of democratic discussion is developing the virtues of trust, respect, acceptance, and tolerance toward one another, it is important for teachers to recognize these moments of talk and their importance to the group's building cohesive relationships and taking responsibility for their own discussions. This suggests when teachers listen in on group discussions, they assess how the talk is functioning in the group before mediating or intervening versus monitoring the talk only for academic content and simple cooperative behavior. The skill for the teacher is knowing when and how to facilitate the group without usurping the process.

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Understanding that group discussion is a complex, multi-layered process relates to the significance of the group context. In negotiating roles and norms of participation, recontextualizing the task to be the group's task and negotiating group cohesion, a group constructs its own unique environment for interacting. Context is constituted by who the people are and what people do - where, when, and how they do it (Erickson, 1986; Erickson & Shultz, 1981; Florio-Ruane, 1987). In the analysis of the Global Studies groups, both groups shared the same assigned discussion task, yet each engaged in the task in unique ways. The importance of this finding for teachers is again recognizing and acknowledging the group process. Group members jointly constructed a context shaped by the intellectual, relational and textual dynamics of their own talk.

The comparative case analysis of the two groups' discussions was not a comparison of the groups' interactions (each speech event was a case, not each group). It's analytic purpose was to identify occurrences of focused discussion. Although both groups engaged in such talk, Group B was selected because it was better able to sustain focused discussion. Studies of group discourse which looked closely at groups that engage in focused discussion, yet seem to struggle to sustain it could be a direction for future research. Such studies might offer teachers further insight into how to mediate and facilitate a group that struggles to sustain focused discussion. Future research which looked across groups could provide a more detailed description of how the intellectual, relational, and textual dynamics of the group's discourse influences the construction of each unique group context. This could also be extended to investigate the roles and norms unique to each group and how it approaches the discussion task.

The analysis of students' discussions in this study suggests that various dynamics of discussion in one event are strongly linked to other events. For example, in the group discussions analyzed, group members negotiated roles and norms of participation within and across speech events. Participation in one event influenced participation in the next (Bloome and Bailey, 1992). Teachers need to be attentive to the multiple dimensions of

group discussion that link across speech events and view group discussion as a process. In viewing group discussion as a process, teachers can better understand how students engage in discussion of an issue, including the dynamics of discussion that occur within and across speech events. Group members brought to each speech event ways of participating and speaking about knowledge and text constructed in their prior interactions. An important finding in this study is that the text of the group's on-going discussion evolved within and across speech events. An implication of this finding is that groups be given multiple opportunities to interact as a group in order to support their abilities to construct and reconstruct their understanding of the issue and hone their communication skills for public discussion.

The development of a group also relates to our notions of equal participation and inclusiveness. Equal opportunity does not necessarily imply that every group member has equal turns on the floor to speak in every speech event. In the discussion of Group B, some group members spoke more than others. The important idea concerning equal opportunity is that over time and across different speech events, all participants have opportunity to speak and to listen. As teachers, we need to recognize the dynamic quality of the discussion process and that deliberation skills and democratic values we espouse emerge through participation over time (Gastil, 1993). In viewing group discussion as a process, across multiple interactions group members negotiate and establish important group dynamics of cohesion, commitment, and inclusion. Time to develop as a group provides the resource to negotiate these dynamics such that participation is fluid and flexible and not necessarily dependent on a group member's presence. This is an important point, given the absences of Steven and Mike in Group B. Illustrated in the analysis, Group B was able to negotiate the roles and norms of participation in ways that allowed the group to proceed in their absence, yet included Steven and Mike when they were present. It implies teachers look beyond speaking turns on the floor within single speech events as the primary site of equal participation among group members and instead, view equal

participation as negotiated within the context of the group across mulitple speech events and as an accomplishment of the group.

## Rethinking Roles in Group Discussion

Viewing democratic participation as a process in context, we need to think about the dynamics of group discussion in and through which democracy is learned and practiced. Illustrated in the analysis of the Global Studies group, roles emerged through group talk. In most conventional models and theories of group discussion, role is viewed as a static trait or style of communicating. Above I described the limits of this view for teaching. Within a functionalist approach, roles are defined as patterned clusters of communicative functions which emerge within the group context (Cragan and Wright, 1991; Fisher, 1986; Gee, Michaels, and O'Connor, 1992). This is a different view of role than in many models of group discussion recommended for teachers. In particular, cooperative learning methods are prevalent in education literature and recommend teachers carefully structure and assign task-related and social roles to group members.

Structuring and assigning roles to individual group members is intended to ensure cooperative behavior and distribution of the intellectual work required in the task. A stress is placed on role-related interdependence to ensure task-related roles (e.g. recorder, reader, questioner, and leader) and social roles (e.g. listener, supporter, and helper) are enacted within the group (Pepitone, 1985). The aim of such an approach is to assure that all role functions necessary for cooperative and collaborative group work are performed by group members. As reported in Chapter 3, analysis of Group B's discussions showed that, in the absence of highly structured task-related roles, students were capable of conducting discussions in which they critically discussed ideas, including their own, and behaved generously toward one another. These findings are consistent with similar findings of Florio-Ruane and deTar (1995), and Webb (1989).

In most cooperative learning models of group discussion (Aronson et al., 1978; Slavin, 1995), roles are viewed as a static set of functions that can be assigned to individual

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group members. Findings in this study suggest teachers view roles as patterned sets of communicative functions that can be modeled and fostered, but not assigned. The analysis of focused discussion in Group B shows that task roles and social roles are intertwined. Structuring and assigning task-related and social roles to group members as distinct behaviors may undermine the goal of students critically engaging ideas while acting generously toward one another. The Global Studies teachers in the first semesters of the course had assigned task-related roles to individual group members such as reader, analyzer, questioner, synthesizer, and respondent (Little, et al., 1995). They found assigning roles to individual group members didn't work because as group members fully engaged in the discussion, they forgot to play the assigned roles. As a result, the teachers assigned the task-related role functions to the group. As the data in this study shows, task-related roles and social roles are intertwined and dispersed among group members in episodes of "focused talk." Across episodes of "focused talk," various group members asked questions, constructed generalizations while they invited others to speak and offered supportive and affirming comments.

A key finding in this study is the joint construction of ideas among group members which suggests the functions of task-related roles are diffused among group members at various times and in various ways in focused discussions. For example, recalling from Chapter 3 in the March 25 speech event, Kate asked what "exponentially" meant; she fulfilled the task-related function of "questioner." The "respondent" was a coalition of speakers who jointly constructed a response to Kate's question. Thus, the task-related role functions were dispersed and fulfilled jointly by group members. This suggests that a teacher's assigning role functions to individual group members and holding students to these roles may inadvertently squelch the discussion process. Assigning roles to individual group members works against the grain of the fluid conversational nature of group discussion. Appointing roles to group members is meant to ease the execution of the task (Pepitone, 1985) rather than foster the group's abilities to negotiate roles and construct its
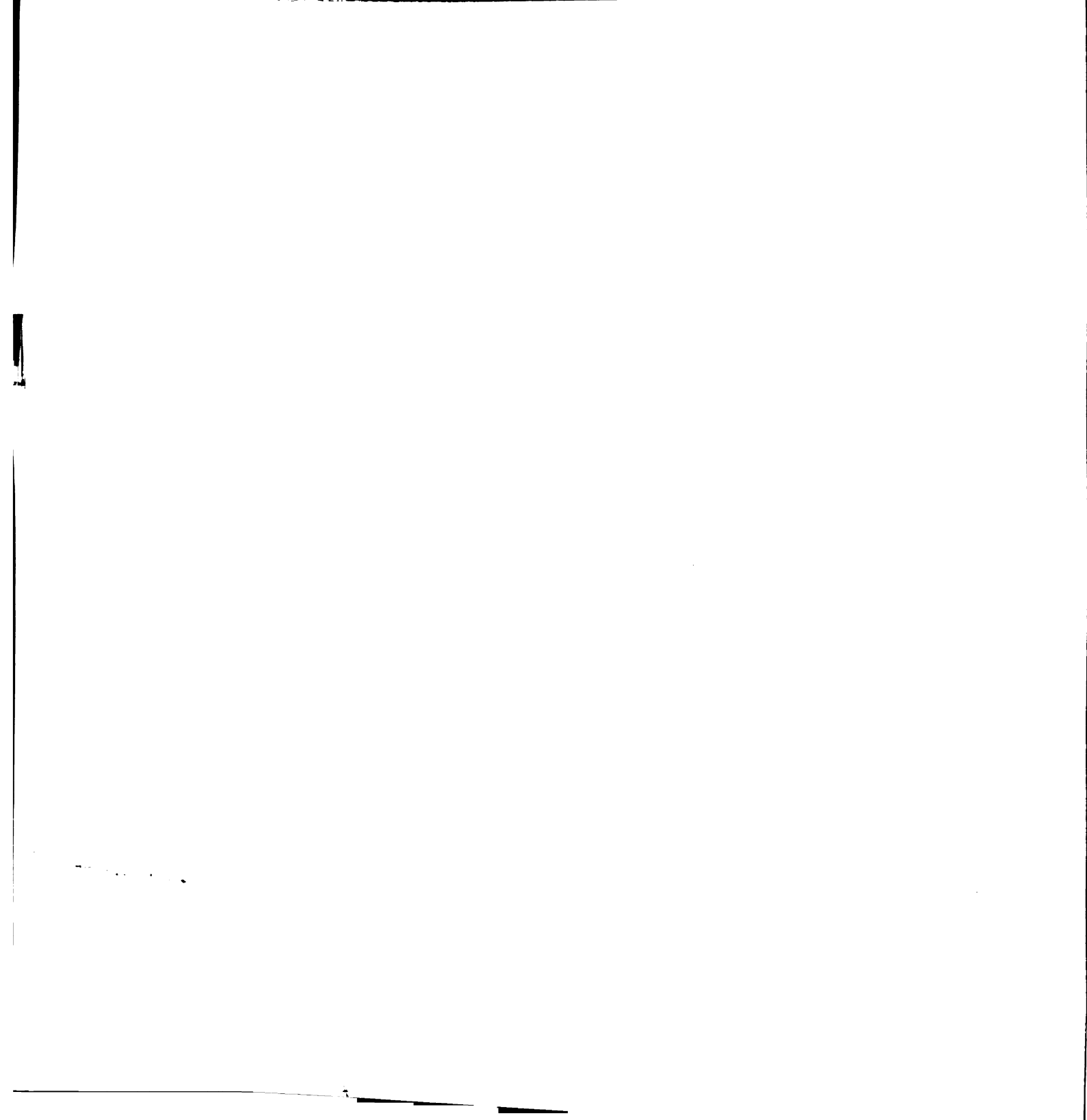
own path for engaging in the task. In assinging roles to group membes, the authority of the teacher is maintained through the role assignments, but there is no transfer of control (Garcia and Pearson, 1994) from teacher to learner as the students acquire and practice new ways of speaking and thinking together.

Of particular focus across models and theories of group discussion is the central role of task leader. The analysis reported in Chapter 2 of both Groups A and B shows that the emergence of this role within the context of the group is important to the group's abilities to sustain focused discussion. The data show that within episodes of "task talk" which preceded episodes of "focused talk," group members negotiated the role and functions of task leadership. This again suggests assigning leadership roles to group members may undermine the necessary process of the group negotiating the role in its own terms, and therefore, participants learning and practicing democratic discussion.

The analysis illustrates that the emergence of the task leader role was important to the group's abilities to proceed with the task. Group A struggled with this process whereas Group B was better able to negotiate the group tensions and uncertainty of how to be a group together and proceed with the task. Mark was the group member who most often initiated the discussions and aided the group in proceeding with the task. However, as the group progressed from "task talk," (in which Mark often fulfilled the role of task leader) to "focused talk," the functions of task leadership were dispersed among group members. Multiple group members initiated topics, raised questions, asked for explanations of others, suggested ways to proceed, and monitored the group's progression in the task. Thus, these functions associated with group leadership were shared and dispersed among group members, suggesting leadership is an on-going dynamic in group discussion. The democratic ideal that power and leadership in the group is shared seemed to be enacted by Group B in the absence of an assigned discussion leader.

What the above discussion of group roles suggests is that teachers model the talk of task-related and social functions of group roles rather than structure and assign them to

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group members. However, it is important to acknowledge that the participants in the discussions studied were juniors and seniors in high school. In this study, my analysis focused on group talk in which participants were relatively successful in negotiating facilitative roles and norms, thus insights into groups who struggle or fail in this negotiation process are limited. It is likely that as older students, the Global Studies participants brought with them to the context knowledge and experience in cooperating and collaborating. As Corson (1988) points out, older students often have worked out a few rules for conducting "good" discussions. Studies which look closer at the subtitles of the negotiation process among groups could illuminate dynamics of group talk that inhibit a group's ability to negotiate facilitative roles and norms, and thus better inform teachers in mentoring and intervening when necessary. Younger students may not have the skills of cooperation and collaboration the Global Studies students were likely to have as older students. Younger students or students just beginning such a curriculum may need more mentoring in learning how to interact with autonomy within the group context. Future research which looks at younger and less skilled students' abilities to interweave the relational, intellectual, and textual dynamics of group discussion identified in this study could inform our understanding of students' development in participating in democratic, deliberative group discussion.

Viewing Deliberative, Democratic Discussion as Textual

The analysis of episodes of focused and sustained discussion reported in Chapter 3 identified a complex synthesis of intellectual, relational, and textual dimensions synthesized in the group's discussion around the issue of global population. Identifying the importance of texts and intertextual references in group discussion is a key finding of this study. It offers teachers further insight into the complex and multiple ways of speaking group members construct as they engage in democratic, deliberative discussion. Learning that is democratic in style and content happens through a process of 1) engaging information and deliberating collectively on how knowledge is viewed, 2) what intertextual connections are

valued, and 3) what is the appropriate rhetoric for presenting one's ideas and oneself (Bloome and Bailey, 1992). Illustrated in the analysis of "focused talk" episodes, as group members constructed intertextual links within and across events from among multiple textual sources, they gave voice to multiple perspectives at play in the discussion of the complex issue of global population. An implication of the findings is that teachers view the content of group deliberative discussion as the on-going text of the discussion constructed within the context of the group. Viewed in this way, the content of the discussion is how students use and connect information and concepts, including their own ideas, to deliberate about the issue under discussion.

The analysis of focused and sustained discussion identified a process in which students linked various texts in order to engage in deliberative, democratic discussion. This process was textually layered and complex. For example, in the March 25 speech event described in Chapter 3, group members read and discussed Cohen's (1996) article on the ten myths of population. The article was organized myth by myth and influenced how the group proceed with the task of answering the assigned question. The question required the group to determine whether they agreed with Cohen. The task structure provided a framework within which the group could explore the ideas about global population. However, the task structure did not determine for the group how to proceed with that task.

As illustrated in the analysis in Chapter 3, the group constructed and negotiated how to proceed with the task and constructed multiple participation structures to engage in the discussion of the text. They appropriated the reasoning and analytic skills of the curriculum in order to examine the ideas Cohen (1996) presented and to respond to the assigned task question. Throughout their discussion of the text, they appropriated ideas from various textual sources as they engaged in examining the text. They engaged in an idea-evolution process (Barge and Hirokawa, 1989) through which they linked prior class discussions, personal knowledge, and the on-going text of their own discussion. The group jointly determined whether they agreed or disagreed with each consecutive myth and

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crafted a written response. This work was complicated and required of the group the ability to synthesize multiple texts in order to fulfill the task requirements and engage in deliberative, democratic discussion. This suggests that teachers give attention to the complex textual dimensions, as well as the interrelated intellectual and relational dimensions, of the tasks they assign groups.

A key finding in this study was that students adapted talk and textual relationships to the particular demands of the assigned discussion task and that across discussion tasks, group members consistently constructed certain kinds of intertextual links. These intertextual links functioned as resources for the group to engage in asking questions, making assertions, and associating ideas as they constructed their understanding of the issue together. Through the intertextual processes described in Chapter 3, group members brought multiple voices and multiple perspectives to the discussion floor to explore and examine. Within episodes of "focused talk," group members synthesized textual fragments from various sources, including themselves, to construct their understanding of the ideas and the issue. Gavelek and Raphael (1996) describe this process as appropriation in which learners take up concepts and strategies from various sources and apply them for their own use.

These finding are relevant to teachers' understanding the discussion process and how students appropriate textual resources from multiple sources as they deliberate on the issue. It may be that groups that struggle to engage in focused and sustained discussion have the necessary relational skills to participate in democratic ways; that is, to cooperate and collaborate with peers. It may be that their struggle to engage in focused and sustained discussion of an issue, both within and across speech events, is the lack of the ability to construct intertextual links from among varied sources. Teachers need to listen for and identify whether groups are constructing these links in their talk. The findings suggest that teachers view student's abilities to construct intertextual links as an important intellectual skill or competency of deliberative discussion. Further study of these intertextual

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processes across multiple kinds of tasks and with students from different age groups could further our understanding of their importance in students' abilities to engage in deliberative discussion of social issues and further our learning about the acquistion and comprehension of complex discourses (Gee, 1990).

Concluding Remarks

In the social studies classrooms, democracy is a key subject matter concept, a practice, and a guiding principle. Within a participatory approach to democratic education, engaging students in deliberative discussion of social issues in settings in which they use their own language in unique ways (Newmann, 1988) is central to their learning the discourse of a democratic society. The best setting, according to Corson (1988) is one that invites students to use their own language and engage in dialogue with others so that they engage in the uses of knowledge and talk to understand issues of importance to them and to society (Rossi, 1996). Campbell (1996) suggests that the classroom is one arena where democratic practices can find expression within the local setting. Concurrently, recent changes in both approaches to teaching and learning in social studies classrooms and approaches to research that are descriptive and interpretive reveal the complexity of classroom interaction.

Given the importance placed on student discussion of social issues as central to their developing civic competence and democratic character and given the importance of discussion in social constructivist theories of knowledge and learning, a multidisciplinary approach was adopted to study students' democratic, deliberative discourse in the small group setting. The purpose of the study was to describe how students participate in discussions around public issues and the nature of their discussions. An interdisciplinary approach provided a lens through which the complexity of students' discourse was framed and described. A variety of theoretical lenses and techniques for handling the data allowed for a broader, richer description of the complexities of group discussion and a better understanding of how students participate in public discourse. The findings of this study

offer a number of insights for educators and researchers about the interconnected dynamics and processes of democratic discussion in the small group setting. Preskill (1997) argues that "because democracy, education, and discussion are interrelated and seek to promote human growth, we must find ways to involve both children and adults in frequent discussions that are respectful, mindful, critical, and hopeful. Although it is very difficult to carry on good discussion and although our practices always fall short of our ideals, we must keep trying because discussion is such an integral part of being human" (p. 316).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
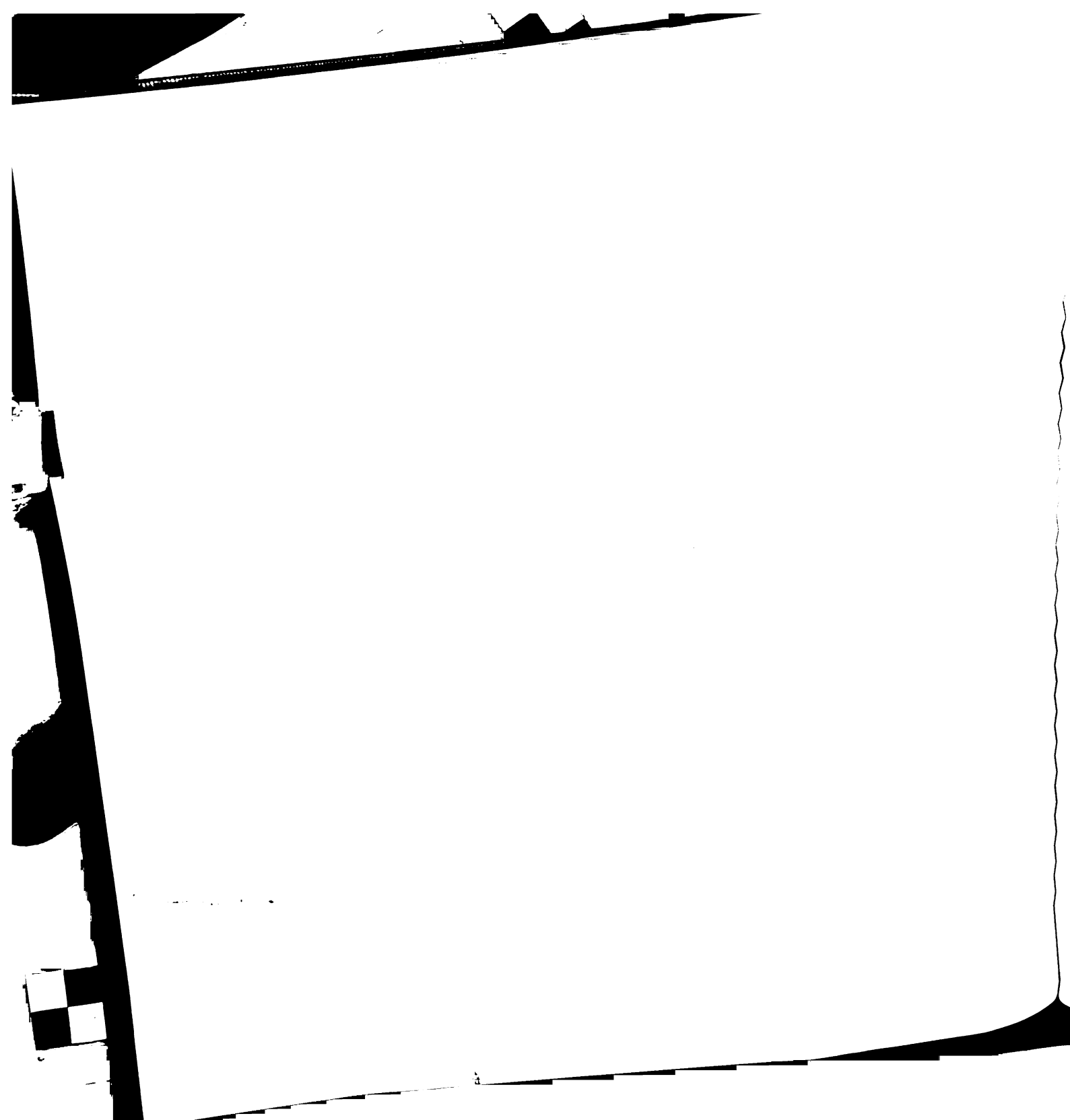
APPENDIX A

Follow-up Interview Questions

Interview Questions
Date:
Who:

April 25 clip - Groups are to answer: Should there be a policy on birth rates globally? For your country? Should there be a policy governing death rates globally? For your country? What should they look like?
April 28 Clip - creating a policy to report out; use data found to clarify the problem; begin DM matrix

Describe each member of your group.

What role do you think you played in the group?

What role did each other member play?

Were you satisfied with how your group worked together?

What was the task - what were you to do as a group in this clip?

How did the group figure out how to do the task?

How did the group decide to do things Mr. G. asked for?

Who seemed involved in the group? Who did not?

How well did you know each other - do you think this changed over time?

Did you like being a member of this group?

Did you like working with other group members?

Who would you choose to work with again and why?

Did you feel you were important to the group's efforts? How/why?

Did you feel other group members felt you were important contributor?

In the clip, what was the group trying to figure out? How did that happen?

Where did the ideas come from in the conversation?

What made you think of that connection?

APPENDIX B

Group B March 25, 1997
"Focused Talk" Episode: Ten Myths of Population

Minutes

1

Task Orientation -
One myth at a time

*Problem with tape
recorder*

Task Talk - Mr. Grant clarifies task
with group - Mark "talk about
each" task orientation

2

Digressive Talk - Hand lotion

Discussion Begins -Exponential Growth

3

Ventriloquating the Author

Linking texts and idea evolution
Explaining exponentially - graph

4

Juxtapose Cohen and
Malthus

Forming a Response

5

6

Mark writes group response
Other read over article

Abbreviated Pattern -
Mark asserts scientists are inaccurate

7

Shelley ventriloquates voice of Cohen
and juxtaposes with voice of scientists

Kate begins to form response "I
think..."

8

Group agrees; Mark writes
response

8

Myth -Not One Factor

9

Break Moment - Two
Simultaneous Floors

*Myth - Colonize
Space*

10

11

End Break Moment Talk

*Myth - US Not Have a
Problem*
Mark poses myth

12

Others assert ideas

13

Bell about to ring; Mr.
Grant interrupts

14

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Presentation Evaluation Form

Who was the presenter: _____

Your name: _____

Did the presenter

1. show or tell how the author **framed** the population issue or problem?

2. include facts, ideas, concepts and data?

3. present the author's solution(s) to the population problem?

4. show how the article related to the three articles read in class?

5. Did the presenter appear to understand the article?

Cricle one

1. Yes   No   2 pts

2. Yes   No   2 pts

3. Yes   No   2 pts

4. Yes   No   2 pts

5. Yes   No   2 pts

Write a short paragraph evalutating the presentation.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

Presenters Evaluation of the Group

Name: _____

1. Who are the members of your group?

    A.

    B.

    C.

    D.

    E.

2. Did everyone ask a question? This question can be general or specific. Who asked questions that helped the group understand the article?

    A.

    B.

    C.

    D.

    E.

3. What questions were not asked that could have been asked?

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E
Global Studies Individual Country Information Worksheet

Country:

Population:
Area in square miles:
Population density:
Population growth rate:
Population doubling time:
Percentage of women under age 20:
Male life expectancy:
Female life expectancy:
Crude death rate:
Crude birth rate:
Fertility rates:
GPD:
PCI:
Literacy rate:
Years compulsory education:
Percentage of land arable:
Other (choose 3): *Group B members included the following as "other" electricity, transportation, infant morality rate, urban/rural population distribution, industrial/agricultural labor force, physicians per capita*

Gross Domestic Product
Growth rate (%)
Inflation

Political
Who is the leader?
What kind of government?
How many parties?
Political conflict?
Non-official political groups?
Social stability?

Demographic
People per square mile
Ethnic groups
Religions
Population growth rate (births v. deaths)
Life expectancy

Economic
Balanced budget
Per Capita Income
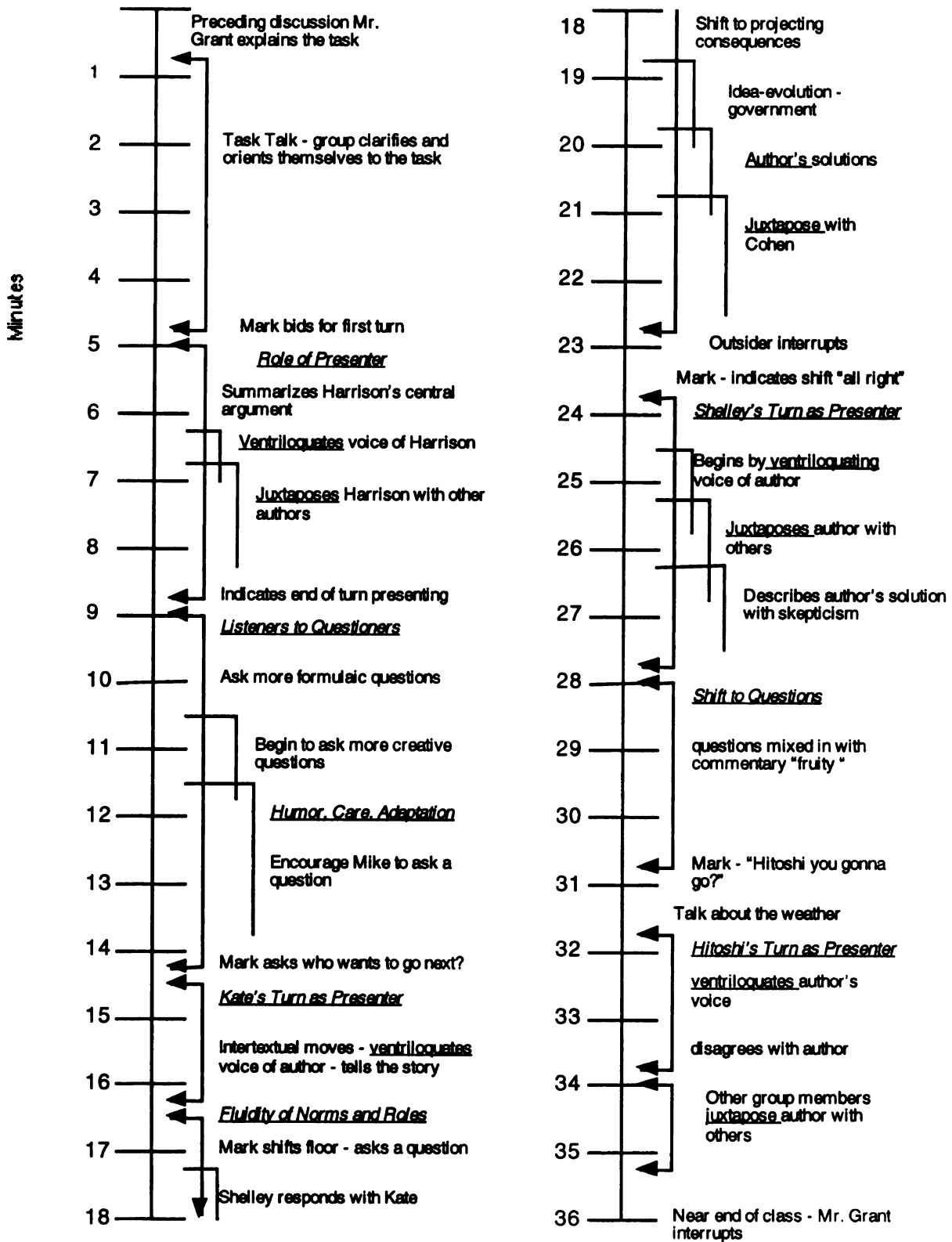Imports/exports
Monetary unit
Diverse economy

Geographic
Area in squares miles
Location on globe
Renewable resources
Topography (mountains, deserts, etc.)
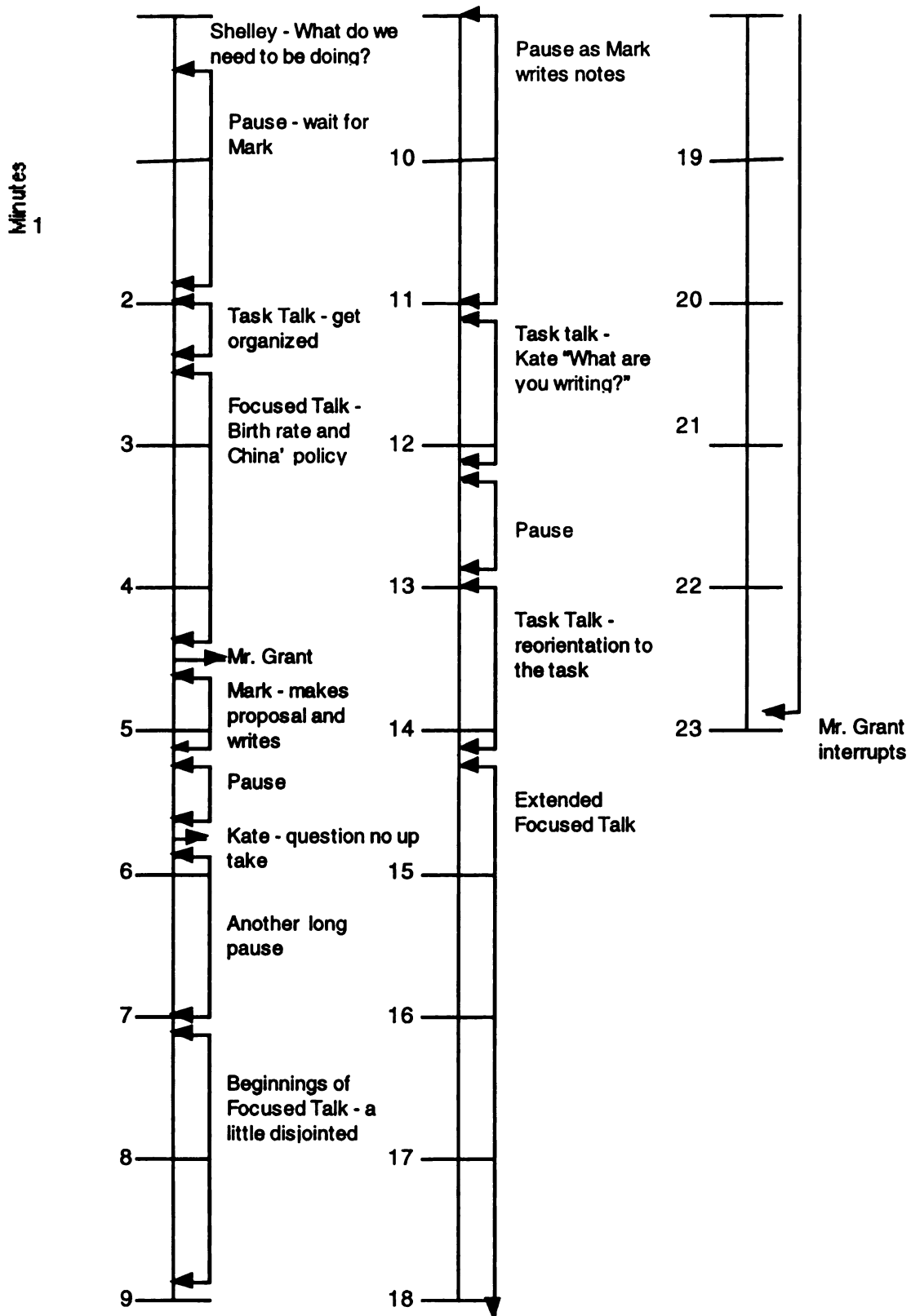Resources
Climate

APPENDIX F

Appendix F

Group B April 14, 1997 "Focused Talk" Episode:
Sharing Article Reviews

Minutes

1 — Preceding discussion Mr. Grant explains the task

2 — Task Talk - group clarifies and orients themselves to the task

3 —

4 —

5 — Mark bids for first turn

Role of Presenter

6 — Summarizes Harrison's central argument

Ventriloquates voice of Harrison

7 — *Juxtaposes* Harrison with other authors

8 —

9 — Indicates end of turn presenting

Listeners to Questioners

10 — Ask more formulaic questions

11 — Begin to ask more creative questions

12 — *Humor, Care, Adaptation*

13 — Encourage Mike to ask a question

14 — Mark asks who wants to go next?

Kate's Turn as Presenter

15 —

16 — Intertextual moves - *ventriloquates* voice of author - tells the story

Fluidity of Norms and Roles

17 — Mark shifts floor - asks a question

18 — Shelley responds with Kate

18 — Shift to projecting consequences

19 — Idea-evolution - government

20 — *Author's* solutions

21 — *Juxtapose* with Cohen

22 —

23 — Outsider interrupts

Mark - indicates shift "all right"

24 — *Shelley's Turn as Presenter*

Begins by *ventriloquating* voice of author

25 —

Juxtaposes author with others

26 —

Describes author's solution with skepticism

27 —

28 — *Shift to Questions*

29 — questions mixed in with commentary "fruity"

30 —

31 — Mark - "Hitoshi you gonna go?"

Talk about the weather

32 — *Hitoshi's Turn as Presenter*

ventriloquates author's voice

33 — disagrees with author

34 — Other group members *juxtapose* author with others

35 —

36 — Near end of class - Mr. Grant interrupts

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APPENDIX G

April 25, 1997 Group B Small Group Speech Event

Minutes

Shelley - What do we need to be doing?

Pause - wait for Mark

Task Talk - get organized

Focused Talk - Birth rate and China' policy

Mr. Grant

Mark - makes proposal and writes

Pause

Kate - question no up take

Another long pause

Beginnings of Focused Talk - a little disjointed

Pause as Mark writes notes

Task talk - Kate "What are you writing?"

Pause

Task Talk - reorientation to the task

Extended Focused Talk

Mr. Grant interrupts

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