

# American Educational Research Journal

<http://aerj.aera.net>

---

## **The Geographies of Difference: The Production of the East Side, West Side, and Central City School**

Edward Buendía, Nancy Ares, Brenda G. Juarez and Megan Peercy

*Am Educ Res J* 2004 41: 833

DOI: 10.3102/00028312041004833

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://aer.sagepub.com/content/41/4/833>

---

Published on behalf of



American Educational Research Association

and



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

**Additional services and information for *American Educational Research Journal* can be found at:**

**Email Alerts:** <http://aerj.aera.net/alerts>

**Subscriptions:** <http://aerj.aera.net/subscriptions>

**Reprints:** <http://www.aera.net/reprints>

**Permissions:** <http://www.aera.net/permissions>

**Citations:** <http://aer.sagepub.com/content/41/4/833.refs.html>

>> [Version of Record](#) - Jan 1, 2004

[What is This?](#)

## The Geographies of Difference: The Production of the East Side, West Side, and Central City School

Edward Buendía

*University of Utah*

Nancy Ares

*University of Rochester*

Brenda G. Juarez and Megan Peercy

*University of Utah*

*Citywide constructs such as “West Side” or “South Side” are spatial codes that result from more than the informal conversations of city residents. This article shows how elementary school educators in one U.S. metropolitan school district participated in the production of a local knowledge of the East Side and West Side space and individual. It demonstrates how educators used these codes to name race and class, as well as to obscure the codes’ meanings. The article maps the convergence of institutional technologies and local educational knowledge whereby this knowledge resisted change and buttressed the citywide East Side–West Side relations and knowledge. The disjunctures in this knowledge base are also identified, as educators attempted to produce a knowledge of a third space that they termed “Central City.”*

**KEYWORDS:** curriculum, school knowledge, urban education.

All major cities in the United States, as well as most around the world, are marked by socially constructed boundaries that divide areas geographically along racial, ethnic, class, and religious lines. Chicago, New York, Boston, and Toronto, to name a few, all have designations such as “South Side” or “Upper East Side” that mark those spaces and their inhabitants as different from those in others parts of the city. The markers are not, as we will show, confined to the informal discussions of city residents. They are also produced and widely circulated in city institutions, including schools. Because the designations are enmeshed in a larger set of spatial relations (of people and material objects), they become, we will argue, durable constructs that order and bound how school principals and teachers envision these spaces, the people who live in them, and the practices and technologies appropriate to them.

We encountered designations of this kind in conducting evaluation research of a comprehensive school reform effort in a metropolitan school district in Salt Lake Valley, Utah. When we mentioned to a district administrator that we were finding numerous and very clear references to an East Side and West Side division in interviews with teachers, his response was, “Oh no, that doesn’t exist anymore. We took care of that when we redrew the [school] boundaries.” In light of the omnipresence of these constructs in educators’ discussions, this comment both stunned us and spurred us to undertake this study. We decided to investigate the power of the enduring race- and class-based division in the Salt Lake Valley in shaping a reform that sought to erase the impact of that very division in schools. In this article, we aim to show how the discourse of the “West Side,” the “East Side,” and the “Central City” was produced through, and operated in, the practices of teachers and administrators within schools—how it acted to define their purpose, their students, their practices, and their sense of themselves as they responded to the central district office’s reform mandates. In particular, we were interested in understanding (a) the spatiality of institutional knowledge, particularly the spatio-linguistic relation between educators’ epistemological frameworks and the race- and class-based codes that circulated within the city; (b) the durability of this knowledge among educators; and (c) the disjunctures, or slippages, in the East Side–West Side binary evidenced in the emergence of the third code, Central City. We examined the case of the dis-

---

EDWARD BUENDÍA is an Associate Professor in the Department of Education, Culture and Society, University of Utah, 1705 E. Campus Center Drive, Room 307, Salt Lake City, UT 84112; e-mail [buendia@ed.utah.edu](mailto:buendia@ed.utah.edu). He has taught in bilingual elementary and middle schools. His areas of interest are the social production of school knowledge and practices within racially and economically diverse schools.

NANCY ARES is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Teaching and Curriculum, University of Rochester, P.O. Box 270425, Rochester, NY 14627; e-mail [nancy.ares@rochester.edu](mailto:nancy.ares@rochester.edu). Her areas of specialization include sociocultural research in classroom discourse and participation, and school reform, both with particular attention to issues of race and culture.

BRENDA G. JUAREZ is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Brigham Young University, 205 McKay Building, Provo, UT 84602; e-mail [juarez@aros.net](mailto:juarez@aros.net). She works with preservice teachers at Brigham Young University and teaches multicultural education courses in the Department of Teacher Education. Her areas of specialization include research in bilingual and multicultural education and the sociocultural political foundations of education. She was a graduate student at the University of Utah while working on this study.

MEGAN PEERCY is a Faculty Lecturer at Rice University, Center for the Study of Languages, 6100 Main Street, Houston, TX 77005; e-mail [mpeercy@rice.edu](mailto:mpeercy@rice.edu). Her research interests include the connections between language and power, the social contexts and discursive networks in which language learners and their teachers are embedded, and the preparation of teachers to work with English language learners. She was a graduate student at the University of Utah while working on this study.

trict's reform effort, particularly the adoption of literacy programs, to show how the knowledge of the East Side and West Side shifted the goals of the reform so that it operated within the logic of the codes.

We claim that even when attempts are made to disrupt the race- and class-based topographies of east and west, as is the case in this reform, the durability of these constructs thwarts change. These constructs, as assemblages of local and national discourses around race, class, and schooling, both organize and are organized by material relations that are integrated into school practice, epistemologies, and technologies (e.g., funding, curriculum). Further, we argue that they serve as shorthand for the race- and class-based distinctions. They index an understood knowledge base of spatial, historical, and ontological properties that are partly produced within the Valley's schools. As a result, they obscure the basis of their definition, allowing those who invoke them to denote meanings about race and class without explicitly naming them in those terms.

For example, educators may identify themselves as serving East Side or West Side students. For residents of the Valley, these designations need no further explanation and allow those who invoke them to denote meanings about race and class without using politically charged markers (e.g., poor, Mexican, dysfunctional, White, affluent). Thus these constructs have become durable knowledge as they have come to form educators' epistemological base and are applied to school spaces and their inhabitants, facilitating the adoption of practices, programs, and technologies that seem to belong naturally in particular spaces and with particular types of students. This durability has persevered even though the socially constructed nature of these spatial constructs is transparent to residents and educators alike, as illustrated by the unwieldy and arbitrary manner in which the constructs are used in the city's various media. Even the spelling varies, appearing in newspapers and magazines as "Westside," "westside," "West Side," and so forth. The written forms that we employ in this article are "West Side" and "East Side." Readers should keep in mind, however, that the actual public life of the constructs varies in written representation.

What follows is an overview of various literatures that situate this study, a brief discussion of the research methodology that we employed for our analysis of Salt Lake Valley's east-west divide. We then provide a brief history of how these constructs were formed historically and used in public texts such as newspapers and the statements of politicians. Next, we turn our attention to the ways in which these constructs are remade, sustained, and contested within the district, and we focus on the relations between teachers' and administrators' discourses, their practices, and the technologies of schooling and reform within the three areas of the district. As we will show, attention to those spatialized relations highlights how the constructs served to help reconstruct the race- and class-based divisions in the West and East Sides of the Valley, while also illustrating their spatializing, or productive qualities, as evidenced in the emerging Central City area. Finally, we discuss what implications this knowledge holds for school reform and change. To

explain why this knowledge exists, we argue that these constructs hold meanings that help educators to make the world identifiable, safe, and, ultimately, manageable.

### Situating the Study

Discussions of the relationships between social space, educational knowledge, and classroom practice have become more prominent in the educational literature about race, class, and differentiated educational practices within the last decade. The conceptual and empirical examinations of the social construction (Foucault, 1972) and circulation of different knowledge frameworks (Collins, 1991; Fairclough, 1995; Lyotard, 1984) in other disciplinary fields has prompted educational researchers and theorists not only to ponder the racial segregation of space but also to ask questions about the knowledge that is possible within particular spaces, as well as the effect this knowledge has on these spaces. Before these discussions, very few had connected space, knowledge, and practice as integrated elements. Space and knowledge were conceptualized, for the most, as fixed and stable units, leading to little analysis of their interplay with practice.<sup>1</sup> Current discussions around resegregated schools and curriculums, as well as those focusing on the formation of institutional knowledge and practice, have sought to develop an understanding of their interrelationship.

The bodies of literature examining segregation policy and practice have been helpful in linking spatial relations and educational knowledge. Various studies have shown how the social organization of spatial relations profoundly shapes the knowledge (high- and low-status academic knowledge) found in schools with particular racial populations. The scholars engaged in this work have cogently argued that racially segregated city spaces are produced historically and practiced daily and are not naturally emerging phenomena. Haymes (1995) and Sanjek (1998), for example, point to city-based systems of knowledge, the movement of people, and political practices that institutionalize differentiated spaces over time. Both discuss the production of city spaces as the convergence of assigned meanings on space as well as the political coordination of material resources. Meanwhile, Orfield (1996) and Lipman (2002), among others (Kozol, 1992), bring these discussions to bear in examining city schools to examine differentiated school spaces. They demonstrate how historical and contemporary patterns of unequal educational access and substandard education go hand-in-hand with citywide racial segregation. Their respective structural analyses of judicial decisions around racially segregated housing patterns, policies crafted and enacted by federal and local housing development agencies, and the fiscal and educational policies of municipalities have shown how these structural relations shape the types of educational programs and knowledge found in schools with particular populations. Their findings that current federal, state, and municipal policies have exacerbated historical patterns of inequality buttress those of others that hold that the

current distribution of knowledge and degree of educational opportunity found in urban schools reflects historical patterns of racial division (McNeil, 2000; Valenzuela, 1996).

While these structural explanations have been helpful in linking the material elements that shape the spaces of schools, other researchers have identified the cultural realm of institutional language, or discourse, as a powerful force in shaping differentiated educational practices. The early analyses of Rist (1973) and Eckert (1989) on the emergence and function of institutional expectations and social categories (e.g., jocks, burnouts) have been elaborated by others who use poststructuralist tools to build on the spatialized and practiced aspects of these categories. Many of these analyses have sought to explain how categories that denote racial and class difference are produced and sustained institutionally to organize, rationalize, and differentiate curriculums and pedagogy. Whereas structural analyses identify access to knowledge as the central problem, this other work has positioned the knowledge produced and enacted in schools by educators and society as a point of tension itself.

The writings of Popkewitz (1998) and McDermott (1996) best exemplify this analytical turn. Both demonstrate how knowledge, space, and practice are linked as educators summon and produce institutionally sanctioned knowledge of the "urban," the "rural" (Popkewitz), and the "learning disabled" (McDermott) student. They argue that these designations are underpinned by socially constructed knowledge that is both practiced by educators and specific to educational places. Popkewitz takes this further to suggest that the knowledge of urban and rural children is part of a broader social epistemology of teaching. He states that the historical continuity in the discourses of salvation, which have underpinned educational activities targeting these types of students, has led to a durability in these discourses as they organize spatial relations (e.g., bodily and material objects). Student access to particular educational experiences, he posits, hinges on the discourses that envelop students to render them institutionally eligible or ineligible for particular educational treatments. The conceptual units of space, knowledge, and practice are brought into play in many of these analyses (Buendía, 2000; McDermott, 1996) as they show how such designations are both spatial markers, fixing student identities to particular spaces, and powerful forces coordinating material relations to produce particular places.

These bodies of literature situate this present examination of the production and maintenance of spatial markers within one city's elementary schools. The structural organization of citywide relations and the cultural realm of knowledge, or discourse, about these spaces and those who constitute them encompass different interacting planes of analysis that can speak greatly about the relationship between schools and local, state, and national relations (Gitlin, Buendía, Crosland, & Doumbia, 2003). The section that follows describes the theoretical framework and methods that we employed to carry out this examination.

## Research Methodology

### Theoretical Framework

We draw from the work of Henri Lefebvre (1991), Edward Soja (1996), and Michel Foucault (1972, 1977) to assemble different yet complementary theoretical framings of space, knowledge, and processes of signification. These theorists recognize that space does not exist as an a priori dimension.<sup>2</sup> Space is not an entity that is filled but is a social construction that is produced through material relations, practices, interactions, and enunciative acts (i.e., talk and bodily acts).

### *Knowledge*

Knowledge and practice are important in understanding the production of space, in that systems of reasoning come to play in the enunciative acts about and in space. For Lefebvre, knowledge comes to bear in representations of space. He sees knowledge, signs, codes, and material relations as verbal and nonverbal systems that are imposed on and demarcate a symbolic order on space.<sup>3</sup> Foucault, meanwhile, also identifies knowledge, which he conceptualizes as discourse, as an important element in conceptualizing spatial relations. Knowledge is, for Foucault, the effect of and a node within a broad network of dispersed relations.<sup>4</sup> It is knowledge, or discourse, that demarcates, orders, and makes intelligible and, ultimately, governable the objects and people that comprise spatial relations. The enunciative acts, or talk, of individuals within particular spaces reflect the systems of reasoning that have come to exist as a result of particular spatial networks. We retain the synonymous relationship that Foucault draws between knowledge and discourse on the grounds that this relationship helps us to understand the social dimensions of knowledge (e.g., formation, sanctioning, and distribution).

### *Technologies*

The structural organization of material relations is also of great import. Nicholas Rose's (1996) concept of technologies is a constructive heuristic for discussing the integration of knowledge with structural relations. He defines technologies as "any assembly structured by a practical rationality governed by a more or less conscious goal. Human technologies are hybrid assemblages of knowledges, instruments, persons, systems of judgment, buildings and spaces, underpinned at the programmatic level by certain presuppositions and objectives about human beings" (p. 26). This conceptualization of technologies emphasizes the integration of instruments, knowledge, and people. These entities cannot be separated but are enmeshed through activity and practice. There is a relationship between them as they come to constitute a set of relations that inform, disrupt, and reinform the contours of knowledge, practice, and space.

## Practices

Practices, as both material and discursive actions, are where spatial relations (i.e., knowledge and technologies) are linked. Discursive practices manifest as both enunciative acts and bodily activity within the processes of producing space and knowledge. Enunciative acts are verbal and nonverbal processes of representation.<sup>5</sup> They involve the summoning and production of knowledge as an effect of a person's being located spatially within relations. Discourse—particular orderings of signifiers that name, bound, and impose a line of reasoning on the world—presents a representation of space that makes these relationships recognizable ontologically. This knowledge is shared, potentially reworked, normalized, and legitimated as continual interactions and activity transpire between relations (e.g., bodies and technologies).<sup>6</sup>

## The Setting

In 1997, this mid-sized school district (of approximately 25,000 students, in 37 schools) was awarded a grant from a national foundation to undertake a 5-year, whole-district reform effort. The national effort focused on “urban centers, . . . some of the toughest places in which to provoke and sustain reform” (Request for Proposals to Evaluate the Project, 1999). The district's reform was undertaken because “the successes of the past have been greatly challenged by dramatic and rapid demographic change. . . . [I]nitial study of the issues related to the increasing diversity of our students made it clear that increasing student achievement for *all students* would require a pro-active and comprehensive process of system-wide school reform” (Mid-Year Progress Report, 2000; italics in original). Schools conducted mandated, in-depth analyses of their achievement and other student outcome data (e.g., attendance, mobility) that were disaggregated according to race and ethnicity, English language proficiency, family income, and family structure (i.e., whether students lived in a single-parent or two-parent family). These analyses were the impetus for schools to examine their student populations, practices, and challenges.<sup>7</sup> Site teams of teachers, administrators, and (in 9 elementary schools out of 26) parents and community members were formed at each school to coordinate the reform. At the majority of schools (17 of 26), the site teams were staffed by principals and teachers who volunteered to serve; White teachers made up the overwhelming majority of site teams at all schools.

Student achievement, accountability, best teaching practices, community collaboration, and advocacy formed the framework for the reform. While advocacy was defined in terms of “all students,” teaching practices were to emphasize “students at risk of school failure,” and community collaboration would emphasize “the needs of families and communities” (Request for Proposals to Evaluate the Project, 1999). Clustering, or institutionalized groupings of schools on the basis of “common needs,” was implemented to address the “high mobility of our most at risk students [by emphasizing] consistency of instruction” (Addendum Report, 1998–1999). Achievement and accountability focused on data-based decision making and resource allocation. All



schools were required to adopt or develop a schoolwide literacy program and to form clusters. At the elementary level the clusters all were based on literacy programs.

### **Data Collection**

The data presented here were generated from our work as external evaluators of the reform. We presented ourselves, and were positioned by educators, as the “university evaluation team.” Furthermore, we always introduced ourselves as independent from the district and as transplants to the community. These subjectivities positioned us outside the institutional structure of the district, as well as outside the taken-for-granted norms that were part of growing up in the Valley. They also gave us a plateau, one that was both enabling and disabling, from which to appraise the cultural distinctions that have circulated historically within the valley.

Over a 2-year period we conducted four sets of semistructured focus group interviews with 60 teachers and individual interviews with 20 administrators from all 26 elementary schools. The interviews focused on the characteristics of students, the needs of students, and the types of classroom practices employed, as well as the rationales for employing those practices. We asked about how the practices related to defining and attending to students’ needs. We also asked about the differences between East Side, West Side, and Central City schools, particularly after seeing how these distinctions were drawn in the first set of focus group interviews. We used specific school names (e.g., Lake View Elementary) to refer to these spaces—schools that the teachers themselves had employed in making these distinctions—rather than the general terms of East Side or West Side.<sup>8</sup> Our aim was to identify the knowledge, or discourse, that was summoned to name needs, practices, and purposes. Last, we asked teachers and administrators to identify the funding mechanisms, accountability measures, policies, and curriculums that were part of the technologies that aided them in identifying and meeting needs.

Reform-mandated school improvement plans, mission statements, and grant applications were also collected. We examined the discourses that were inscribed to define who students were, what they needed, as well as the school’s and teachers’ mission. Once it was evident to us that the city-wide East Side, West Side, and Central City terms were salient constructs for teachers and administrators, with a connected set of propositions, we collected current and past newspaper articles that employed those linguistic framings. We did so to determine whether a relationship existed between the discourses that were fixed in these texts and the enunciative acts of school agents and, if such a relationship existed, to determine its nature.

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis of interviews and artifacts relied on critical discourse analysis (Gee, 1999; Huckin, 1998) and elements of qualitative grounded theory. The

five focuses of the reform provided initial categories for analysis; pairs of researchers identified emergent themes within the categories and others that emerged outside them, searched for negative examples, and arrived at consensus through discussion. We identified and tracked the syntactic structure and linguistic terms of the enunciations of educators. We identified the framing of imposed knowledge propositions about practice, self, and student by their language. These discursive framings were juxtaposed to the syntactic and linguistic structure of other texts (e.g., newspapers, school documents) in order to determine the saliency and the dispersion of this knowledge—first to the transcripts of other interviews and then to the media texts. We determined points of convergence and divergence amid the different social relations.

### **Historical Formation of a Geographical Divide**

The Salt Lake Valley is tucked between the foothills of the Wasatch Mountains and a patchwork of desert tundra and white salt marshes that lead up to the Great Salt Lake. Houses that range in cost from millions to hundreds of thousands are situated up and around the rim of the eastern and northern foothills. This area is referred to by locals as the East Side or “the benches.” As you travel westward, down the foothills toward the Great Salt Lake, other East Side neighborhoods begin that are composed of more modestly priced houses and apartments, intermixed with sidewalk cafés and neighborhood restaurants. These neighborhoods gradually give way to the downtown area, a mixture of remodeled Victorian houses and skyscrapers. As you continue westward, the downtown is abruptly cut off by a maze of railroad spurs and a railroad yard that were constructed at the turn of the 20th century. Between the spurs, industrial buildings are interspersed with homeless shelters; expensive gentrified condominiums occupied by young, urban singles; and a mixture of upscale retail shops and relatively new ethnic supermarkets. An elevated freeway runs parallel to the central railroad line and cuts the city in half. It marks the beginning of another neighborhood, commonly referred to by locals as the West Side. Houses that are larger in size yet markedly less expensive than those down below the foothills are situated between the freeway and the Great Salt Lake.

While locals are accustomed to seeing the West Side and East Side as places and objects that have always been, these spaces are just as much linguistic constructs as they are real (Slater, 1997). The constructs of the East and the West Sides have a life in practice that precedes the present. The “past” of such knowledge shapes the present, yet is sometimes overrun by the present.<sup>9</sup> What follows is a brief mapping of the public life of the West Side and the East Side constructs as they are named and described in the local print media.

The use of the West Side and East Side constructs can be traced historically to the turn of the 20th century. By 1908, the terms “downtown” and “business district” were used in the local newspapers as a way to describe

the principle section of the city where merchants and saloons were grouped. The construct West Side also emerged at approximately the same time. The media employed the term as way to describe the western edge of the city, which was dissected by a multitude of railroad track spurs and was populated by the city's Greek, Italian, Syrian, and Chinese immigrant populations as a result of high property costs on the foothills and practices such as racial covenants and housing segregation (Kantor, 2003; McCormick, 2000). This part of the city was also the locale of the city's brothels. As newspapers employed the West Side construct to describe this section of the city, a degree of coherence was evident in the meanings attached to this term. The statements made by public officials and the news media continuously coupled language such as "dangerous," "criminal," and "undesirable" with the West Side signifier. For instance, one of the daily newspapers in 1918 referred to the western edge of the city as the place of "the demi-monde, the male parasite, the dope fiend, the gambler, and the beggar" (McCormick, 2000, p. 48). These racial and social class meanings have repeatedly been affixed to the West Side construct. In the early 1900s, the mayor articulated the rationale for moving the city's brothels from the downtown area to the west side of town by indicating that "most of the better class of residents were leaving the area anyway because of the influx of Italians and Greeks who live in that neighborhood" (McCormick, 2000, p. 52).

The racial and classed overtones have remained a central part of the discourse of the West Side throughout the latter part of the 20th century. With suburbanization in the 1950s greatly reducing the city's White, Mormon population to the point where their demographic presence was less than 50% of the city population (Kantor, 2003), the racial and classed signifiers generally persisted in the media and in the statements of politicians to present a picture of a group of people, as well as a space, that was "dirty," "prone to crime," and residing illegally in the United States. The two examples that follow provide a general description of the way that language is currently structured to convey this line of reasoning. The first is a news story that bears the headline, "When junk starts piling up in the yard, property values start going down" (Baltezare, 1996). The article describes how the accumulated "junk" in "West Side" residents' yards is viewed as blight and that it invites criminal behavior. The West Side signifier is deployed to identify the location of the problem. The article states, "Since taking office in 1994, [City Council member] Reid has waged a relentless battle to get West Side homeowners to clean up their properties." Just a few lines down from this, there follows a statement by the city's chief prosecutor that further couples the West Side construct with criminal behavior: "That kind of blight seems to be an invitation to criminals to the West Side. Drug houses tend to be in homes where the standard of conduct is not up to code. Dealers are putting their energies into running the drug business and not keeping up the house." The second, and last, example is a newspaper article with the headline "Westside Anger" (Loomis, 2000). What is important for our discussion is how people within the Valley typically link racial meanings to the West Side construct. This arti-

cle describes the anger and comments of a community council member of this region of the city after the city council rejected plans to locate a large shopping mall in the area. The newspaper quotes the councilman as stating, "Salt Lake City's West Side needs more English-speaking stores. We're tired of all this Spanish-speaking stuff coming in that I can't read the names on the doors. It's starting to look like Tijuana in my area." While the article closes with statements by Latino community leaders voicing their concerns over the councilman's views, statements in the article show how many in the valley define the West Side through racialized and classed signifiers.

Meanwhile, the East Side construct has had minimal presence in the media. Historically, when it has been used in the media it has been coupled with language to provide pastoral images of property. For example, one advertisement in a 1907 local newspaper exemplifies the general pattern of use of the term when it indicates, "The owner will sell direct one of the most beautiful homes in the east side. On only macadamized street in east side of city" ("For Sale, Beautiful on East Side," 1907). By 2000, the construct is given a little more attention as discussions arise in television and newspaper coverage in the area over the East Side and West Side divide. This coverage generally finds that the public's imaginary picture of each section of the city reflects the following logic: "Looking for espresso stands? Sport utility vehicles? Large houses in leafy suburbs? Head east. In search of fast-food joints? Pick-up trucks? Mobile homes? Taco stands? Go west" (Baird, 2000).

### **"We Are a West Side School With West Side Students"**

#### **Use and Production of the West Side Construct**

We begin with a description of the West Side construct in educators' talk from schools on the western side of the city. The way that this construct was at times deployed with explicit signifiers of the racial and class meanings of students, as well as in describing the identity and mission of schools and teachers, is important in comprehending what it meant when it was presented at other times without the descriptive signifiers. Moreover, identifying the durable meanings of this spatial construct facilitates an understanding of its interplay with various institutional technologies, such that attempts at altering this knowledge were thwarted.

The use of the West Side construct was principally a place marker for the racial and classed labels of school populations. Educators who identified themselves as working in West Side schools summoned the category and often coupled it explicitly with signifiers such as "the poor," "the non-White," "the non-English-speaking," "the uninterested," and "the at-risk" in order to define who their students and schools were. Like the "Othering" found in studies where authorities discussed the alleged needs of communities of color (Fine, 1995; Villenas, 1997), it functioned at the same time to describe the investments that their students and their families had in education. Such occasions made transparent the prevailing discourse of the West Side as an explicitly racialized and classed term. These representations

generally resembled the following remarks by teachers, which were articulated in two separate group interviews:

*First Teacher:*

I remember when we were designing our school. We went on a field trip down to, was it Pheasant Run [School]? After we left we kept saying, "What was funny or odd?" We couldn't quite figure out what was wrong with that school, and we got about halfway home and somebody said, "There were 19 blonde kids in that class." And we were like, "Oh, *that* was the problem." You know, because for us West Side teachers, it's just every day when you see a parent in the hall and you say a few words and then you try your broken Spanish on them and they try their broken English on you.

*Second Teacher:*

This is a high-risk area, a very high-risk area. And the only chance West Side students have to break out of the poverty, underemployment thing that their parents are in is to get an education and to get more knowledge.

The West Side construct frequently showed up in educators' statements fully dressed with its racialized and classed descriptors as unquestioned knowledge.

### **Indexing a Knowledge of the West Side**

Although there were many instances in which educators in the schools spelled out the meanings of the West Side construct, there were just as many conversations where it was used as a stand-alone concept, without any of its descriptors. In these instances, educators used it to index the generally stated meanings in ways that presupposed that they were known to all as common and consensually agreed-upon knowledge. This indexical use allowed educators to link race and social class in ways that obscured the race- and class-charged connotations. Furthermore, educators employed the construct in ways that presumed that the West Side was a definitively bound place. West Side educators' use of the category as a solitary unit was primarily deployed in juxtaposition to the signifier "East Side." They used the two as poles of a binary that were understood as opposites in terms of their racial and classed meanings, as well as to denote distinct spaces of the city with very different types of schools. The following comment by a teacher represents a typical statement in which the descriptors were missing and the constructs were positioned in a binary:

It [the districtwide training] was combined as a district kind of thing, too, you know. And yet our school and what we do is so much different than an East Side school. Our needs are different, our children are different. Everything about us is different. So if we're basing our

needs on our children and what we see for West Side schools, it's not going to be the same, because they are two different kinds of schools.

In this juxtaposition, a geographical place as well as an ontology, or identity, of students was denoted, even though the meaning was not explicitly defined.

Teachers' identities were codified through this process as well. The use of possessive and spatial markers such as "our" and "here" positioned educators within a particular identity and mission. Note in the previous quotation how the possessive "our school" was linked in a seamless fashion to West Side schools. This was a stable pattern that held from educator to educator on the West Side. These uses of language tied together space, people, and purpose. They also inserted spatial and ontological differences between city spaces, schools, and people, such that clear distinctions were assumed. The juxtaposition of the East Side and the West Side schools helped to denote deficiency and superiority without ever spelling it out. Such practices helped to define and distinguish the mission of West Side teachers as saving West Side students.

### **Production**

To understand the saliency of the West Side construct, the production of the knowledge around this construct needs to be analyzed historically as well as within its current context of educational initiatives aimed at altering institutional practices that have crystallized around it. The premise that a "lesser class of citizen" constitutes the West Side—a statement articulated by the city's mayor and published in one of the daily newspapers in the early 1900s—still circulates in the local media in various forms to articulate a city-wide knowledge of the West Side. Although the media occasionally report stories that attempt to celebrate or highlight the local color of the West Side (Tuttle, 2000), deficit-based meanings of a racially and economically different group of people continue. Because of the relative silence in the media about the East Side, the point of juxtaposition in which this difference is defined is missing. Readers and viewers of such stories have to fill in that which is not West Side.

This local knowledge, as shown above, is also shared and produced among educators in terms that are, at times, more subtle than those enunciated in the past. Parallels become evident as we juxtapose the contemporary statements that are circulated in the city's media about the West Side (i.e., individuals who do not care about their living conditions, Spanish speakers who are not willing to learn or use English, criminal and at-risk behavior and life situations) with what is summoned and produced within schools (i.e., the non-English-speaking Other, the academically and socially at risk). The terms of contemporary discourses, such as the use of the signifiers "at risk," "social deficit," or "cultural deficit," preserve the meanings that other terms conveyed at the turn of the 20th century.

## Spatialized and Spatializing Qualities of West Side Knowledge and Technologies

An analysis of the discursive realm explains some of how this knowledge is historically and currently produced, but it is just as important to understand the interplay of material technologies in further spatializing, or reinstantiating through spatial relations (Shields, 1997) practices and social categories that are already spatialized. Historically, the citywide practices of racial steering by real estate agents, racial covenants built into banks' lending notes for particular neighborhoods, and inflated housing prices on the eastern side of the city—practices that continue to some degree (Kantor, 2003; McCormick, 2000)—have also contributed to the construction of a racial and class division found in the West Side–East Side dichotomy. Additionally, there are school technologies that have fortified this knowledge and position schools as one of the citywide entities involved in producing and maintaining the spatial codes. The initiation of the districtwide reform functioned as the most recent catalyst in sustaining these meanings. Throughout its different stages of enactment, the reform was both a spatialized and a spatializing technology in producing the distinctions of the West Side and East Side. That is, the reform was a set of activities and practices that were primarily aligned within the existing West Side–East Side distinction (the spatialized qualities), while also operating to organize practices and technologies so that they corresponded to this knowledge (the spatializing element).

We need to highlight some of the districtwide technologies that preceded the reform to understand how it interplayed with other technologies that spatialized it and facilitated its spatializing characteristics. Federal and state funding, as well as the discourses underpinning them, were a particularly important technology that shaped the reform's implementation and bolstered the durability of the East Side–West Side constructs. All of the West Side schools qualified for Title I and state Highly Impacted funds, with the result that these monies were concentrated on one side of the city. These schools had large numbers of students who met the federal and state guidelines of students and families who were “economically and intellectually at risk” (Title I, p. xx). Furthermore, West Side schools had to engage in extensive state and federal mandated testing and reporting as a result of receiving these funds. As part of administering the tests, teachers had to make distinctions between students by indicating which of them were Non–English Proficient or Limited English Proficient<sup>10</sup> and which received free or reduced lunch. This practice required that teachers and administrators employ state and federal categories that paralleled, in many ways, the discourse around West Side schools and students. For instance, the category of “at risk” that Title I finely defined resembled the discourse of at-risk that teachers on the West Side employed. It can be argued that the spatialized consolidation of at-risk schools on the West Side buttressed what was already discursively articulated in the media as a risky and dangerous area and population. Further examination of the impact of these monies and practices in the reform supports this argument.



## Literacy Programs and Literacy Clusters

The most prominent elements of the reform in all schools were the new literacy programs and the grouping of schools in literacy clusters. Like the federal and state funding, these reform efforts also had a geographic continuity, or a spatialized character. While the overall reform was aimed at moving educators away from the practices and presuppositions that already existed in the district, the decisions about literacy programs and clusters in schools retained and redeployed the geographical codes and meanings of the West Side and East Side. Most schools on the West Side of the city used their Title I and state High Impact monies to purchase expensive programs such as Success For All (SFA) or California Early Literacy/Extended Literacy Learning (CEL/xLL), which were driven by a rigidly prescribed phonics orientation. Only 2 of 11 schools on the West Side opted for the Scholastic Publishing program, which included text-based (i.e., whole language) literacy strategies as well as a phonics component. The purposes of funding and literacy programs were integrated as West Side schools used their federal and state monies to purchase new literacy programs that “fit” their students’ profiles. The parallel between the language of the reform (i.e., adoption of literacy programs) and the language of at-risk that underpinned the federal and state funding was central in linking these. Both the reform and the funding shared the discourse of at-risk as their organizing logic. As one principal said,

Well, federal Title I monies are targeting our at-risk students, whereas our reform grant [monies] were to be allotted for low-performing students. The two dovetailed nicely so that we could combine them to buy programs that we would have never been able to otherwise.

The effect of this overlap in their discourse was an integration of institutional structures that fortified and naturalized the framework of at-risk. The categories of at-risk and West Side became synonymous terms as used to describe students in these schools.

What was important about these adoptions was the spatial concentration of compensatory literacy programs in schools on the western side of the city, as well as the continuity in the discourse that teachers from those schools employed to describe the programs’ emphasis. First, the schools chose programs that were remedial in scope. As we will see later, schools in other parts of the city had programs with very different focuses. Second, there was an overlap in the discourse of the West Side and the rationales underpinning teachers’ selection and organization of programs within the schools on the West Side. The teachers uncritically relied on the discourse of West Side students as having social and cultural deficits for choosing these programs; they identified programs that would “fill in holes” or have a remediation emphasis, and “provide students with a structure” (to quote one teacher who was interviewed) that was allegedly missing in their lives. The teacher described the SFA program as follows:



It's a structured program, starting very phonics-oriented and keeping the children at their own levels rather than at their age groups, and they grow through the program, through the structure. We stand up and do basically the same thing, rote over and over and over, every day.

All of the programs on the West Side of the city were adopted for children who were viewed as socially and intellectually different from other children. The reform's literacy adoptions were spatialized, using the preexisting codes from the onset.

The grouping of schools into clusters of "like" institutions around the literacy programs was another technology of the reform that solidified the knowledge of the West Side and East Side. This is where the spatializing qualities of the reform were most apparent. As schools on the West Side of the city adopted commercial, phonics-driven programs, they forged collaborative relations with other schools in hopes of sharing training costs. These relationships were almost exclusively with other schools that had been identified, and self-identified, as West Side schools. The rationale that educators articulated for making these choices had little to do with physical proximity. Rather, they clustered with other schools that had "similar students" and "similar missions." The West Side student and school profile, as well as the geographical continuity of identical programs, drove the configuration of clusters so that they, too, were spatialized.

### **"We Are East Side Up Here"**

The designation "East Side" served a function similar to that of the construct "West Side" in schools that self-identified, and were identified by others, as East Side. Material relations between the historically constructed meaning of East Side, educators' discourse, and technologies of schooling and the reform similarly solidified these schools' position in relation to those "down the hill."

#### **Use and Production of the East Side Construct**

The production of knowledge of the East Side was evident in how teachers and administrators repeatedly coupled discourses of the "well-prepared," "intellectually able," and "educationally invested" group with the East Side or with its synonym, "up here," highlighting the spatial dimension of the construct by referring to the topography of the Valley. Educators in the east interwove these discourses to define their students, the families of their students, and their mission as teachers, and to delineate the space identified as the East Side. These comments from two teachers in group dialogue typified how the discourses manifested:

*Teacher 1:* I think particularly at East Side schools, it's [matching content to students' experiences] not really asked or thought about very much

because kids are fairly successful no matter what you teach them. They come ready to learn. They come with great genes, you know.

*Teacher 2:* So, as far as achievement, we're lucky. We have a lot of kids who come to school here with a decent night's sleep and either really clean, or pretty clean, clothes on their backs. There's that value on education; they care about school.

This discourse of what it meant to be from the East Side had such a high degree of consensus among area educators that the propositions underlying it were generally unquestioned in educators' discussions. Notice how the ontological profile put forth by the first teacher is left unexamined by the second teacher. The propositions that the first teacher proffers occupy, it appears, the status of factual knowledge.

### **Indexing a Knowledge Base: Up Here, Not Down There**

While identifying the knowledge propositions underpinning the East Side construct tells us a great deal about its meanings, it is equally important to trace what the East Side construct signified in educators' talk through the "elsewhere" that is implied as East Side educators discussed who they were not. The binary assembled East Side parents as an intelligent and capable population, active in the education of their children, whereas West Side parents were none of these. The binary typically worked its way into the enunciative acts of educators to draw both geographical and ontological borders, as can be seen in these remarks by a principal:

Parents are going to want to have a lot of input into sex education here. Whereas in a culture or in a West Side school, where you've got more of an immigrant population, that may be the last thing in the back of their minds, simply because they're trying to figure out how to survive. So here I'm going to be a little more attentive to parent input than I might have to be down in an inner-city school. The constraints up here I think are more political in nature. I don't have stupid parents. And by stupid or uneducated or anything like that, not that the parents down there are, but these are savvy parents.

The distinctions between "up here" and "down there" are clear in this statement. Paralleling the relative silence in historical print media, explicit use by East Side educators of the constructs was not as pervasive as their use in West Side schools. Instead, the spatial synonyms made clear distinctions between the East and West Side. Geography and ontology were charted to distinguish between a type of student and family, as well as educators' relations to families.

### **Spatialized and Spatializing Qualities of East Side Knowledge and Technologies**

The East Side was also constructed both materially and discursively over time (or spatialized) as a section of the city associated with large homes,

homogeneous White neighborhoods, low crime, material wealth, and high-achieving schools. As shown above, the meanings of students, families, and schools were clear in the distinctions made when educators spoke of “our” students up here. Educators’ analysis of disaggregated achievement and mobility data supported these schools’ “not–West Side” designation, highlighting stability in families and a history of school success, strengthening the durability of the construct and spatializing their reform efforts. In a teacher focus group, one teacher said,

This is a generational school. You know you have multiple generations that live here, they get, they leave, they get married, they come back. You know. Yeah, I mean it’s, this is the way all schools should be, really. It’s a strong school.

Furthermore, the categories within which teachers and principals were directed to place students highlighted low demographic diversity in their schools, bolstering the notion that they were not the focus of reform. Here are some comments from teachers in a focus group:

*Teacher 3:* But especially here at Alta, where we don’t have that diversity as far as culture.

*Teacher 2:* Maybe that’s why those needs can be met so well, is because we have so few.

*Teacher 3:* That’s what I’m saying, we can be successful in this building, and teachers in this building expect themselves to be successful, ‘cause they don’t have a reason not to.

Thus the relations between historically constructed social space and East Side educators’ discourse about academic success and cultural diversity converged in schools to reconstitute the geographic and social divisions seen in the broader life of the Valley.

### *Technologies*

This spatialization of knowledge was bolstered by technologies associated with funding and with schools’ adoption of literacy programs as part of the reform. These schools did not receive state or federal money directed to schools according to demographic and achievement profiles. Thus East Side schools could not afford the packaged literacy curriculums that were available to other schools. Teachers in these schools developed, instead, what they defined as a “balanced literacy program,” entitled Literacy For All (LFA), that fit what they defined as their students’ needs. All of the East Side schools and two of what we will describe later as Central City schools were members of the LFA cluster. Only one of the West Side schools was involved. LFA emphasized a balance between phonics and the whole-language or literature-based strategies, unlike the phonics orientation of SFA and CEL/xLL. These technologies also naturalized the constructed East Side marker and these schools’

positions as high-achieving, stable sites appropriate for self-initiated programs built for “intellectually able” students. As one teacher said,

[LFA] stemmed from the people who knew that their schools, or had asked their schools, and knew that they weren't willing to just rigidly adopt one particular program. And so these were the schools that were already sort of ahead of things and . . . really weren't willing to give that up in favor of something in a box that you taught.

When we examine the statements of East Side principals and teachers, there is a high degree of coherence between the practices of implementing an academically enriched curriculum and the ontology of East Side students. The enactment of a rigorous, creative academic program fit spatially with the people and other relations that constituted the East Side. Furthermore, the literacy clusters reestablished the historical and material relations between discourse, practice, and technologies by institutionalizing the distinctions between East Side schools and those in the western and Central City areas.

### Central City Schools

The area of increasing ethnic/racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity that is expanding from west to east across the Salt Lake Valley can be seen as creating a spatial border that is shifting over time. A collection of eight schools caught our attention in the process of data analysis because they did not claim an East or West Side label. Further inspection revealed that they all lay physically along that corridor over which the eastward-moving line of increasing diversity was crossing. Situated between the flatter, more crowded neighborhoods of downtown and the steeper, more spacious foothills, these schools have demographic profiles similar to West Side schools but reflect changes in their student populations that have occurred recently. Self-referents in talk and in school documents used the term Central City, pointing to an emerging construct and the productive nature of teachers' and principals' discourse, in which the existing East Side–West Side binary was open to challenge. These schools represented sites of confrontation and alchemy of competing knowledge frameworks. Their struggles also captured the dynamism and messiness of the reform's evolution in the changing social space of the Valley.

The students and families served by these schools bring unfamiliar languages, socio-cultural norms, and practices to these formerly East Side schools. The roles of teachers and principals are undergoing rapid change, and educators are grappling with language to redefine their roles and identities. The fact that the existing binary was not invoked, particularly the West Side category that has historically been attached to people of color, highlights the fact that the binary functioned to do more than name students and families; educators also summon the constructs to identify themselves. One explanation for the discursive ambiguity found in Central City schools'

discourse may be that educators are seeking a new code that allows them to retain their image of themselves as “not West Side.” Their responses to the recent change in their schools involved both nostalgia and resistance, while also naming their students as different.

## Constructing a New Discursive Code

### “Schools Like This”

In the absence of use of the east–west binary, more oblique comments characterized educators’ discussions. In what may have been an attempt at self-definition, teachers at one school cited nearby schools as being like them. One teacher remarked:

One thing I’d like to see is neighborhood, neighboring schools maybe like Elkhorn, Roosevelt, and Alpine meet like once every couple of months on a grade level, you know. . . . We service similar communities and it might be very interesting to see what’s working in their classrooms and their schools, and take some of that information and use it here.

These teachers could point to other schools that fit in the same, unnamed category, within the same geographical area, that seemed to match their image of themselves and their students. The east–west binary was not invoked, however, to name this space or the type of students.

In other Central City schools, teachers and principals talked vaguely about “certain school settings,” or “this school in particular.” No signifiers were used that coupled demographics with geography; the focus was on demographics only. The silence about physical location suggests that a new code may be necessary for these schools to name themselves within the evolving social space of the Valley. Note the lack of a construct in the following comments by a principal:

I asked people from the state office to come down and talk about test scores for people with the demographics that we had. . . . [One of them] talked about what they were seeing in schools with demographics like ours. What are some strategies for demographics like this? . . . And they said, well, you know, for schools like this you score in a range of this to this.

Rather than using the larger east–west discourse, talk such as this pointed vaguely at typologies of students, other than East Side or West Side children, to describe these schools.

Isolated and infrequent use of the East or West Side constructs was found in one Central City school, however. This principal talked explicitly about his school as West Side: “I think if you have a good program and good teachers, then attendance shouldn’t be a problem. But, again, in these West

Side schools we have families move, come in, move.” However, teachers at that same school confounded that usage when they identified their school with terms not confined to the east–west binary. One teacher noted, “. . . we can develop [our] plan to meet our needs here in this population and with the cultures we have and we don’t have to worry about, you know, the far East Side. What their needs are aren’t our needs. And the far West Side, we have different needs.” This teacher explicitly acknowledged that a third space existed. Strikingly, she used the existing binary to identify her school as an outlying category.

### **“Where Academics Come First While Nurturing the Whole Child”**

Whereas the East Side schools portrayed themselves as academically oriented and those on the West Side focused more on social service issues, talk in the “Central City” indicated that educators were trying to maintain an emphasis on academics, while also expanding their role to provide social services. The heading above, which refers both to academics and to the whole child, was one school’s motto; it exemplified these educators’ claims (positive or not) that they played a role in both academics and social welfare. Repeatedly, educators in these schools stated that they were trying to hold onto the academic aspects of their work as they also addressed, or resisted addressing, other perceived needs. In the words of one principal,

Most of the responses we got from parents, they were really looking for child care. . . . And none of the teachers would support it. . . . [W]hat they’ve wanted to see after school is academic enrichment.

The enunciations that characterized educators’ roles coupled nostalgic talk about traditional roles with worried or defiant talk about needing to respond to other parts of students’ lives. The absence of the East Side–West Side discourses indicated that these educators were struggling to identify a body of knowledge that helped them to name their roles and those of schools.

### **“Students Are, in This Area Now, Needier Than Ever Before”**

While some features of the knowledge base about the Central City area were ambiguous, Central City educators consistently conceptualized their students as inner-city and at-risk. This use of a different set of terms that also served as shorthand for referring to race and class highlighted the tense negotiations with which teachers and principals were grappling. They invoked nationally salient terms that labeled their students with constructs whose unstated meaning was clear, but avoided using local constructs that would situate their schools and themselves spatially. The avoidance of the term West Side and the use, instead, of expressions such as inner-city and at-risk allowed them to talk about their increasingly diverse student population while shielding themselves from being identified as West Side teachers.

Given the ambiguity found in the talk of teachers and principals at Central City schools, we turned to these schools' improvement plans, literacy programs, and clusters to identify emergent categories being used to define students' and schools' purposes. Not surprisingly, given the complexity inherent in crafting a new self-identifying category within the larger community, national, and historical conversations, confusing patterns emerged in these analyses.

### *School Improvement Plans*

Our analysis revealed that the Central City schools either did not invoke any category (2 of 8 schools) or named themselves by using terms other than East Side or West Side. In 3 schools, the signifier inner-city was linked to ethnicity/race, poverty, language, and instability, thus functioning like the West Side code. Most interesting in terms of local dynamism in spatial/linguistic constructs, in 2 schools' improvement plans the term Central City was prominent in the self-definitions: "located on the edge of Central City" and "located in the Central City area." One of the schools placed its street address in the same sentence with the term Central City, locating both the school and Central City geographically. In these ways, this category was being defined both by place and by the descriptions of people who inhabited it.

### *Technologies*

The ambiguity in educators' talk and in their improvement plans was mirrored in the technologies of schooling and reform found in the Central City area. All but 2 of these schools qualified for Title I funds, reinforcing the labeling of students as inner-city. Still, Central City educators adopted a variety of literacy programs that ranged from the rigidly scripted SFA and CEL/xLL curriculums (4 schools) to more flexible programs, such as the Scholastic literacy program (1 school) and the LFA program (3 schools). There was a strong relationship between the discourses circulating within the schools about students and families and their adoption of particular literacy programs. The Central City schools that aligned themselves with SFA and CEL/xLL had in common with West Side schools a similar knowledge base about students and teachers' own roles, whereas schools that participated in the LFA program with schools on the East Side of the city articulated a complex discourse that emphasized, at times, the at-risk status of students but also the need to connect the curriculums to the strengths and insights that students and families brought to school.

The material relations among discourse, technologies, and practice in this area of the Valley showed more fluidity, tension, and negotiation than those in the other two areas. In particular, the durability of the West Side construct seemed to be challenged when educators were faced with applying the term to themselves.

## Discussion

### Spatiality of Institutional Knowledge

Current academic discussions about the effects of the language and requirements of national policy documents—such as *No Child Left Behind*—on educators' practices have prompted many in the field to focus their attention on these macro-policies and structures (McNeil, 2000; Valenzuela, 2003). Many have sought especially to understand how these national initiatives affect urban areas that have a long history of racially segregated educational institutions and patterns of differentiated curriculums. What has been forgotten in many of these analyses is the power of local systems of knowledge and the local landscape of city structural arrangements in shaping how educators envision their students, their work, and their social space. Our examination suggests that local knowledge and material arrangements matter greatly in defining educators' practices and shaping school reforms. The local knowledge of the East Side, West Side, and Central City student and school served in the Valley as an epistemological base for educators in defining their students and their work. Similar in some senses to what Popkewitz's (1998) and McDermott's (1996) studies found, the knowledge base underpinning educators' understanding of the ontology of their students, students' academic and social needs, and their own work as teachers and principals was entangled with historical institutional discourses of student and teaching. These discourses, however, were enmeshed in the local spatial constructs as well. The knowledge of the West Side and East Side spaces and individuals that historically have circulated in the local media and in the statements of local political figures has solidified as truthful knowledge, or what Foucault (1978) termed regimes of truth. These regimes informed specific pedagogical practices and curriculums that were coordinated to correspond to students' institutional identities as East Side, West Side, or Central City children.

At the same time, this local knowledge has functioned to produce space, particularly differentiated educational institutions (Popkewitz, 1998). Educators' deployment of this knowledge to organize educational technologies worked to create differentiated educational spaces that corresponded to the historical designations of the East Side, West Side, and, more recently, Central City. The interplay of this knowledge of student and space with the preexisting and newly introduced technologies of schools set up a system of difference that was evident in curriculum and educational practices. The low-status knowledge and academic programs of the West Side and the high-status knowledge and curriculums of the East Side corresponded to the broader citywide meanings of the West Side as culturally, cognitively, and morally deficit and the East Side as enlightened and capable. This phenomenon parallels the findings of other studies, even though the spatial dimensions are placed in the background in their work. For example, this can be found to some degree in the context that Valenzuela (1999) studied in documenting the subtractive practices of East End schools in Texas, Lipman's (2002) analysis of policy



mandates pertaining to geographically differentiated knowledge in Chicago schools, and Kozol's (1992) multicity study. In all of these examinations, differences in local knowledge translated into real and imagined spaces that, indeed, had distinct pedagogical programs that were real at the level of materiality, yet that were equally the product imaginary (i.e., constructed) social and historical discourses about these spaces and their inhabitants.

The social and historical status of these spatial categories as shared knowledge is important as we consider what was obscured when they were employed in their shorthand form, that is, without the list of descriptive signifiers. The ability of educators to use the shorthand, even in ways that might be perceived as genteel,<sup>11</sup> to name racial and social class meanings without ever explicitly saying anything politically charged hid the reproductive dimensions of educational practice related to race and social class. This aspect has a great deal of importance as we bring into play the local and national pattern of resegregated neighborhoods and schools (see Lipman, 2002; Orfield, 1996). While educators' social context retained class- and race-defining practices, particularly in the housing patterns of segregation and the outpouring of federal and state funding targeted at low-income families, their use of these shorthand categories allowed them to believe that they did not differentiate their curriculum based on deficit notions of students' race or class. Instead, the shorthand allowed them to make distinctions based on what West Side or East Side students needed. These constructs permitted them to appear, at one level, color- and class-blind in their pedagogical knowledge, while curricular distinctions were based on racial and class meanings that were hidden by these codes. Like the current denials by U.S. courts that they were culpable in propagating segregation between spaces such as cities and suburbs (Orfield, 1996), a pattern of negation was evident in Salt Lake Valley schools as explicit references to race and social class were obscured from public view.

Many of the educators that we interviewed did not engage in this process maliciously, however. The majority of the teachers and principals were caring individuals who were committed to making a difference in the lives of students. However, the diffusion of this knowledge and its enmeshment with various technologies throughout the district, as well as its correspondence to citywide relationships (e.g., housing patterns), naturalized the meanings to the point where they became common sense. The durability of these relationships (i.e., words and things) over time and across the space of the city and school district seemed to render other frameworks difficult to impose, although the reform was undertaken in part to broaden practices to embrace increasing demographic diversity.

### **Durability Through Reinstantiation**

This durability can be explained by theorizing the formation of these constructs as assemblages of discourse, practices, and material relations that helped not only to build but also to sustain these constructs. Although the

knowledge of the East and West Sides has many parallels to other national discourses about difference and reform, its enduring power continues, in large part, because it has existed locally over time and functioned at the level of daily practice to help educators and city dwellers make sense of and manage their worlds. The district administrator's comment at the beginning of this essay about redrawing school boundaries to disrupt the Valley's east-west division unveiled an overestimation of the place of the reform in the cultural geography of the Valley. Our analyses revealed the power of that geography in shaping reform as it was interjected into historically developing material relations among discourse, practice, and technologies.

In addition to the power of local knowledge and history, however, elements of the reform itself were situated within, rather than challenging, the prevailing discourse of race- and class-based division. New technologies were assembled to work within the established meanings that circulated historically, spatially, and in concert with technologies that already were in place in particular spaces. While the school district's intention was whole-district reform, the language of at-risk was prominent in the reform's initial formulation. Practices and activities such as the analysis of data disaggregated according to race and class (paralleling mandates in No Child Left Behind), the act of choosing literacy programs based on those analyses, and the clustering of schools according to literacy program adoption bolstered the constructs' durability. Thus the knowledge of the East Side and West Side, as well as the historical and spatial material relations already in place, continued to spatialize schools as places where choices of technologies (e.g., literacy programs, funding) were constrained to those that were "appropriate" for those spaces. Just as Fraser (1989) found that men and women have differential rights in the social welfare system, our study found that students and families had differential rights to education across the space of the Valley. Based on the knowledge of east versus west, they were positioned as either clients (West Side) who needed to be treated or co-participants (East Side) who were active, capable agents in their own education. The situating of East Siders as co-participants was predicated on the racial invisibility that was rendered to them through these processes of inscription. Others have discussed how an attribute of Whiteness is the lack of needing to define itself (Morrison, 1992; Roediger, 1991). The articulation of the East Side was enacted through a similar process of silence about itself, even as the practices of the East Side inscribed a self-other relationship in deeming who were the needy and the normal.

Finally, the use of the constructs as shorthand notation was critical in thwarting this reform, whose intent was to respond directly and positively to increasing demographic diversity. This finding raises fundamental questions about reforms that seek change through the adoption of new technologies and practices without examining systemically the local knowledge frameworks at work in practice. What appear to be innocuous constructs and practices matter greatly. The meanings that underpin such constructs hold together social and material relations, even when they are not articulated

publicly. A necessary step in any process of altering spatial practices may involve unveiling and examining the historical meanings that buttress practices, as well as mapping the technologies that function within those meanings. Without such an examination, the introduction of any new technology has a high probability of merely contributing to the crystallization and reification of such spatial knowledge and relations such as the East Side and West Side.

### **Disjuncture and Contested Space**

The ambiguity in the Central City schools' discourses and practices provides a vivid example of the constructed nature of the spatial knowledge embodied in the East Side, West Side, and emerging Central City codes. Central City teachers' and principals' use of nationally prominent rather than locally constructed terms as shorthand for deficit-based markers for race and class makes clear the disjuncture, or slippage, in the knowledge base as the east–west binary is placed in tension in these schools. The tension is clear in the conflicting ways that teachers talked about themselves and their schools (i.e., ambiguous), the technologies they chose (i.e., East or West Side), and the ways they talked about students (inner-city). In other words, in the Central City space, the disjuncture was focused on educators' struggles to craft new, spatialized professional identities without problematizing the naming and treatment of their students. Our data show that teachers in the Central City schools were clinging tightly to historical, nostalgic notions of their work and their mission as East Side, resisting the West Side label as a self-referent. As a result, they drew on the only other language readily available—national discourses of at-risk and urban—when local discourses were unacceptable. National and local discourses co-mingled and influenced practice and knowledge; however, the nature of those national discourses is such that the knowledge embodied in them constrained possibilities for practice and technologies in ways that were similar to the local constructs.

We should read what is transpiring in Central City schools as acts of contestation, that is, as educators struggling with the knowledge frameworks and technologies that are available. This struggle and ambiguity in the Central City space may lead to possibilities of a new institutional category and practices that might blur the East Side–West Side dichotomy. The hybridization of east–west frameworks that was enacted in this space may afford educators and students opportunities to engage in learning and interactions that are inclusive of divergent ways of being and learning that are less constrained than those in East Side or West Side schools. However, for alternative pedagogies to emerge, educators must continue to problematize and negate the prevailing binary that is incited by peers in other schools as well as in new technologies, such as reform initiatives. They may have to identify other knowledge frameworks that define families and students differently than do the knowledge frameworks currently in circulation in these various institutional spaces. They may have to rely on other sources, such as fami-

lies and communities, to define the frameworks and funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Andrade, Civil, & Moll, 2001; McKay & Wong, 1996) that contest particular institutional framings. Important models of such alternatives may already exist in Afrocentric schools and other alternative educational spaces such as Bob Moses' Algebra Project in Boston.

We are cautious, however, in deeming the Central City schools as an example of what might be interpreted as spaces of freedom. The Valley's spatial and historical features weigh heavily on our theorizing for claiming such a thesis. Alternative practices are contingent on the availability of alternative knowledge frameworks as well as other technologies that can propel ambiguity and new pedagogical formulations. There are no guarantees, as alternatives can also mask and index historical meanings of race and class. The conversion of space into place suggests that particular possibilities are foreclosed as educators attempt to designate and manage practices and technologies that correlate with the characteristics of a place. Hence, a third space may lose its dynamism and ambiguity as meanings and practices are institutionalized in the name of a place. Yet other spaces of change and hybridity may also emerge as demographic changes alter the landscape of a particular place.

Although part of the responsibility for enacting curricular and pedagogical alternatives lies on the shoulders of educators, changing the practices of the city is just as important in this process. Federal, national, and state governmental bodies have tinkered toward school reform for more than a century (Kliebard, 1986; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). The findings of our study suggest that the knowledge and structural relations that comprise the broader city also need to be examined and altered if schools are to envision their students and practices differently. These distinctions are, in part, an effect of citywide structural relations and knowledge. As neighborhoods continue to be racially segregated, and as city officials persist in discussing particular neighborhoods as safe (i.e., White and middle-class) and others as dangerous (i.e., Black and Latino) spaces (Haymes, 1998), the continuity of this knowledge across space will prevail.

## Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from this study. First, what appear as taken-for-granted spatial denotations that circulate in school spaces matter greatly in determining the knowledge and curriculum that students and teachers engage with. Second, although binary forms may seem to have a hold on what is conceivable, there may occur, in particular city spaces, shifts in the knowledge and technologies—or what we have termed disjunctures—that can offer pedagogical and curricular alternatives to students and educators. Finally, reforms that are inevitably influenced by local geographies ignore those influences at their peril.

This case, in conjunction with the findings from other studies (Delpit, 1996; Lipman, 2002; Valenzuela, 1996), leads us to conclude that the spatial

notations that are employed in cities are also produced by city schools in important ways. They are historically constructed categories that have a life in everyday social practices. Their power lies in their ability to name an ontology of student and teacher that indexes race and social class. They do this in both an explicit and an implicit fashion. Furthermore, they work hand-in-hand with material technologies (e.g., curriculum, funding) as they are deployed to meet educational “needs” that are also constructed through the spatial distinctions. These technologies seem, at face value, to correspond unproblematically to particular populations; yet they work, through discourse, to inscribe spatial identities and define a particular cultural capital as valuable. As products of history that are practiced across various spaces—school spaces, media spaces, housing spaces, and political spaces—these distinctions take on a neutral and natural aura so that they, ultimately, become a local knowledge.

Yet, because they are practiced, there are disjunctures in the knowledge and technologies that are coupled together to create spatial knowledge and relations. The convergence of changes such as population shifts, school boundary realignments, and the introduction of new technologies can place a school’s knowledge and practice in a state of ambiguity and instability. Preexisting knowledge and practice frameworks may be coupled with other frameworks to create hybrid frameworks as educators struggle to name their world. These may trouble overly simplistic binary models of knowledge that circulate within city spaces. They may provide educators and students other ontological and pedagogical possibilities that do not correlate with the prevailing distinctions.

As these conclusions emerged from our examination of Salt Lake Valley schools, other questions about citywide knowledge and its relationship to schools surfaced. Most dramatically, the silence about religion in our data is curious. The religious history and existing relationship of the Mormon church to public institutions in the city is unique, as the Valley is the center of that faith. Historical research (cf. Kantor, 2003) indicates that schools have become more secularized as national and state policies have oriented educators toward the social administration of social class. However, given the salience of religion in debates in the media and elsewhere about, for example, local and state politics, the lack of mention in our data seems to be an anomaly. We recognize that our social positioning as transplants may have limited our understanding of some of the local religious nuances. Further research is needed to explore such local knowledge and map how local distinctions work to order the social hierarchies in schools.

## Notes

The faculty and research assistants who compose the University of Utah Eccles/Annenberg Research Team contributed greatly to the collection and analysis of data for this study. The authors would like to convey their gratitude to Douglas Hacker, William Smith, Chad Rhinehart, Herlina Prenata, Vianey Moreno, Al Schademan, Richard Garcia, Shane Koller, and Karen Waldburger for their work in the project. The authors also thank Andrew Gitlin, Harvey Kantor, Frank Margonis, and Audrey Thompson for their insightful comments on early drafts of this manuscript.

<sup>1</sup>Henri Lefebvre (1991), among others (Harvey, 1996; Soja, 1996), has linked the conceptualization of space and knowledge as fixed, stable, and absolute entities to the philosophies of Kant, Descartes, and the logical positivists.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Soja (1996) provides an insightful interpretation of the points of convergence and divergence between Lefebvre and Foucault in the chapter "Heterotopologies: Foucault and the Geohistory of Otherness" (pp. 145–162).

<sup>3</sup>Lefebvre (1991) identifies these as "Arcane speculation about Numbers, with its talk of the golden number, moduli and 'canons'" (p. 38) that are deployed by planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers, and social engineers.

<sup>4</sup>Chris Philo (2000) insightfully points out that Foucault's analytical field encompasses a wide variety of categories of objects. He notes that as Foucault looks across the field of the social, he does not see the modes of economic production defining the working class or the clinic but sees, rather, a multiplicity of social and spatial relations that encompass everything, from small towns to academic journals.

<sup>5</sup>"Enunciative acts" is a concept that Michel Foucault develops in *Archeology of Knowledge* (1972). We reframe this concept so that we are able to discuss the shared qualities of language that M. Bakhtin (1986) describes in explaining the dialogic properties of language. We retain Foucault's focus, nevertheless, on the relations in which particular statements are made—that is, a focus on the sites, positions, and technologies that are interlinked in the production of discourse. Where Bakhtin's philosophy of language merges with Lefebvre's is on the coherency and order-imposing dimension that language brings. For Lefebvre this is the realm of representations of space. Bakhtin, meanwhile, refers to the centrifugal elements of language. The intersection between Bakhtin, Lefebvre, and Foucault is on this dimension of a shared language.

<sup>6</sup>Homi Bhabha (1994) makes the case that discourse is reworked in processes of movement and enunciation. He writes about the hybridization of discourse as a result of transnational translations, or movement, of diasporic groups. He refers to this reworking as the Third Spaces.

<sup>7</sup>Many of these analyses took more than 2 years for most schools.

<sup>8</sup>All names of particular schools and individuals in this article are pseudonyms.

<sup>9</sup>Randal Kennedy (2002), among others, has made this argument in demonstrating how the construct "Nigger" has held some of its semantic coherence over the course of time, while at the same time its meaning has been inverted, or altered from a negative term to a positive one, in different settings. He points to how contexts, or what might be read as spatial relations, stabilize or destabilize these meanings. The life of the local constructs East Side and West Side can similarly be traced.

<sup>10</sup>These designations typically manifested through the administration of the Idea Proficiency Test. It made differentiations as Levels A, B, or C. Level A was seen as the least proficient; Level C was seen as Limited English Proficient.

<sup>11</sup>The authors would like to thank the reviewers for pointing out this reality of the "genteel" perception that surrounds the use of such constructs.

## References

- Baird, J. (2000). Across the great divide. *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 21, A1.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). *Speech genres and other essays* (M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Baltezare, J. (1996). When junk starts piling up in the yard, property values start going down. *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 15, D3.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Buendía, E. (2000). Power and possibility: The construction of a pedagogical practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16(2), 147–163.
- Collins, P. H. (1991). *Black feminist thought*. New York: Routledge.
- Delpit, L. (1996). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: New Press.
- Eckert, P. (1989). *Jocks and burnouts: Social categories and identity in the high school*. New York: Teachers College Press.



- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media discourse*. New York: E. Arnold Press.
- Fine, M. (1995). Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The qualitative research handbook* (Vol. 2, pp. 70–82). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.
- For sale, beautiful on East Side. (1907, November 22). *Salt Lake Evening Telegram*.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *Archeology of knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. London: Allen Lane.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *History of sexuality, Vol. I*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Fraser, N. (1989). *Unruly practices: Power, discourse, and gender in contemporary social theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*. New York: Routledge.
- Gitlin, A., Buendía, E., Crosland, K., & Doumbia, F. (2003). The production of margin and center: Welcoming–unwelcoming of immigrant students. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(1), 91–122.
- Gonzalez, N., Andrade, R., Civil, M., & Moll, L. (2001). Bridging funds of distributed knowledge: Creating zones of practices in mathematics. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 6(1–2), 115–132.
- Harvey, D. (1996). *Justice, nature and the geography of difference*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Haymes, S. N. (1995). *Race, culture and the city: A pedagogy for Black urban struggle*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Huckin, T. (1998). Critical discourse analysis. *Journal of TESOL–France*, 2(7), 95–110.
- Kantor, H. (2003). *Notes on race, class, space, and the organization of schooling in Salt Lake City, 1960–1990*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Kennedy, R. (2002). *Nigger: The strange career of a troublesome word*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Kliebard, H. M. (1986). *The struggle for the American curriculum, 1893–1958*. New York: Routledge.
- Kozol, J. (1992). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York: Perennial.
- Leave No Child Behind Act of 2001, Title I: Improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged, 107th Cong. (2001).
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Lipman, P. (2002). Making the global city, making inequality: The political economy and cultural politics of Chicago school policy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 39(2), 379–419.
- Loomis, B. (2000). Westside anger: Community council leader saw mall as bulwark against “Spanish stuff.” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 29, A1, A3.
- Lotard, J. F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- McCormick, J. S. (2000). *The gathering place: An illustrated history of Salt Lake City*. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books.
- McDermott, R. (1996). The acquisition of a child by a learning disability. In S. Chaiklin & J. Lave, *Understanding practice: Perspectives on activity and context* (pp. 269–305). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- McKay, S. L., & Wong S. C. (1996). Multiple discourses, multiple identities: Investment and agency in second language learning among Chinese adolescent immigrant students. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(3), 577–608.
- McNeil, L. (1987). *Contradictions of control: School structure and school knowledge*. New York: Routledge.
- Morrison, T. (1992). *Playing in the dark*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Orfield, G. (1996). Turning back to segregation. In G. Orfield, S. E. Eaton, & Harvard Project on School Desegregation (Eds.) *Dismantling desegregation* (pp. 1–22). New York: New Press.
- Philo, C. (2000). Foucault's geography. In M. Crang & N. Thrift (Eds.), *Thinking space* (pp. 205–238). New York: Routledge.
- Popkewitz, T. S. (1998). *Struggling for the soul: The politics of schooling and the construction of the teacher*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Rist, R. (1973). *The urban school*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Roediger, D. (1991). *The wages of Whiteness: Race and the making of the American working class*. New York: Routledge Press.
- Rose, N. (1996). *Inventing our selves: Psychology, power, and personhood*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sanjek, R. (1998). *The future of us all: Race and neighborhood politics in New York City*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Shields, R. (1997). Spatial stress and resistance: Social meanings of spatialization. In G. Benko & U. Strohmeier (Eds.), *Space and social theory* (pp. 186–202).
- Slater, D. (1997). Geopolitics and the postmodern: Issues of knowledge, difference, and North–South Relations. In G. Benko & U. Strohmeier (Eds.), *Space and social theory* (pp. 324–335). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Soja, E. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Tuttle, R. (2000). West Side Story, Part II: Population growth has shifted from East to West, meaning big changes for a once ignored community. *Salt Lake City Weekly*, September 7, pp. 18–20, 22–23.
- Tyack, D., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia: A century of public school reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling*. Ithaca: State University of New York Press.
- Valenzuela, A. (2003, October). *High-stakes testing in Texas*. Keynote address, Annual meeting of the American Educational Studies Association, Mexico City, Mexico.
- Villenas, S. (1996). The colonizer/colonized. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(4), 711–731.

Manuscript received October 6, 2003

Revision received March 19, 2004

Accepted July 8, 2004