

USING CONTRACT GRADING TO ENCOURAGE GRADE NINE BOYS' RISK-TAKING IN  
HISTORICAL WRITING

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**Abstract**

During the winter term of the 2017-2018 school year, in two History classes comprising a total of 21 boys, a contract grading system was implemented for eight weeks in the hope of answering the question: How might contract grading encourage Grade Nine boys to take risks in historical writing? The boys were asked to suspend the typical teacher prescribed grading system and help to build a contract in which they would choose their own grade and the teacher would hold them accountable for achieving this grade.

The main reason for implementing a contract grading system was to shift power in the classroom from teacher to student in order to remove the significant power imbalance barrier. Once removed, I believed that the boys would work towards being comfortable enough to think critically and wrestle with the “why and how” of what they were studying. Once able to do this, they would be able to articulate those thoughts in their writing and in doing so, be bolder in expressing their ideas.

During the contract grading period, it became clear that significant growth was taking place. Although not all of the growth that was witnessed was expected, it was clear that this growth did happen and, in many cases, in a significant way. The confidence and preparation that was witnessed almost daily and the dramatic increase in trust, created a climate where the boys became eager to adapt to taking more risks in their writing and developing as students of History.

The process and results of this action research project weighed heavily on me throughout the year. The experience was formative and significant. The depth of research, the changing of my pedagogy, the conversations with peers and a presentation to another independent school, made it almost essential for me to strengthen my voice for boys. This manifested itself through an increased presence on Twitter and a galvanized belief in what boys need for their future.

## Introduction

Over the course of the last six years, I have taught the freshman History class at Woodberry Forest School. Three years ago, we implemented a dramatic curriculum change that moved the boys out of an Ancient and Medieval history textbook survey course into a less content-focused course called *Stories and Histories: An Introduction to Historical Analysis*. In this class, we have the boys drill down into a number of stories that we, as a faculty, think appeal directly to boys. This curriculum change and deep dive into a handful of topics have dramatically increased the boys' interest in what we are studying in the class. However, we are still struggling to get the boys to take risks in their historical writing. The vast majority of the boys struggle to expand their writing outside of the who, what, when and where of the topics taught.

My hope in conducting this research was based on the work of Whitman and Kelleher (2016) who argue that giving the students meaningful choice and providing various low stakes assessments is essential for student success. Based on their work, I believed that a contract, as well as the use of various rubrics and low stakes pass/fail quizzes during the term, would help students to shift their mindset from that of playing it safe to taking risks. I was hopeful that by allowing them to lay out the pathway in a clear and succinct way on day one, they would not be worried about me failing them or giving them a bad grade. Rather, I wanted to see them embrace an environment that recognized not only high-quality work but also effort and growth in their writing ability, as well as their commitment to learning a new way to write and taking extra risks (Whitman & Kelleher, 2016).

I believe that students, especially boys, have been asked for too long to sit down and focus so that they can learn the material, get good grades, and get into the best colleges. As such, the joy of thinking has been discouraged as a valuable part of their academic experience. I think this adversarial role has diminished the relationship that most boys have with their teachers and has created an unnecessary power dynamic. I think the chance to choose their own fate and work towards a fixed target will free them from the fear of failure and embarrassment while opening them up to take some risks in their historical writing. I believe that this will also allow them to view me – their teacher – as a partner in their success. The ownership of their own grades, clear expectations from the start, regular checkups, and student investment in the process, should have great appeal to the boys who, according to Reichert and Hawley (2013), need to trust their teacher and, as such, should increase our relationship capital because it is essential to boys' success and

their willingness to take risks in class. This led to my research question for this project: *How might contract grading encourage Grade 9 boys to take risks in historical writing?*

The research problem was best addressed by using action research, which allowed me to implement a solution to a problem that I had identified in my classroom in a thoughtful and intentional way. This intentionality and forced reflection made me carve out time to think about the efficacy of how I was teaching my class. The structure of the action research process also gave me the courage and confidence to try new things and challenge my status quo.

### **Literature Review**

Deresiewicz (2014) makes the point that families are scared for the future and this fear is leading to infantilization and an extreme amount of pressure on young people. This pressure is leading to depression, anxiety, and a growing cynicism about school itself. Deresiewicz (2014) asserts:

We mandate “activities,” so we reward joiners. We insist on “leadership,” so we reward climbers. We value those who give us what we want, so we reward manipulators. We punish those who will not play the game. We are robbing children of their childhood and teenagers of their adolescence. We have engineered a vast regimentation of youth. (p. 58)

This regimentation, Deresiewicz (2014) argues, hinges on the need for students to get good grades to get into good schools and therefore not be left behind in what parents and students perceive as an ever-changing, meritocratic economy. The reality is far different. We know from groups like the World Economic Forum (2016) that we are currently entering the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This new world order is going to bring about new technology and new jobs, which means that “65% of the children entering primary schools today will ultimately work in new job types and functions that don’t yet exist” (p. 32). This has created a desperate need for schools to realign what they do to build cognitive flexibility, creativity, and logical reasoning, as well as teaching the skills of persuasion, negotiation, and the monitoring of self and others (World Economic Forum, 2016). The report makes the case that due to the rising instability of the job market, it will be essential for teachers to educate our future generations to be adaptable and willing to change by rethinking our education systems, incentivizing lifelong learning and building cross-industry and public-private collaborations (World Economic Forum, 2016).

Additionally, we learn from Reichert and Hawley (2015) that it is essential for boys to feel as

though they have a relationship with the person teaching them. Mutual respect and fairness are paramount in making a boy feel as though he can be vulnerable enough to take risks and challenge himself in a teacher's classroom. The World Economic Forum (2016) claims that we are in desperate need of creative thinkers and those who are malleable enough to take the information from the past and synthesize it in new and compelling ways very quickly. As we as educators work to develop boys in a way that is fitting with their future, while still being beholden to the grading systems that exist within our given institution, it becomes essential to find a solution that values both needs.

This is where contract grading fits in, according to Davidson (2015):

Thus, contract grading is both an idealistic, student-centered way of writing one's own learning goals--and it is, quite overtly, a workaround, a better alternative to conventional grading and credentialing. By adding the peer review component, contract grading is also an act of community. (para 4)

Despite this, according to Kruse and Barger (1982), "contract grading is difficult for faculty and students who are comfortable with structure, however, the purpose of a grading contract is to increase student self directiveness and creativity" (Evaluation, para 2). This self directiveness is something that Jaschisk (2010) identifies as a highlight of the system. She says, "I think students were going out on a limb more and being creative and not just thinking about 'What does the teacher want?'" (para 10). As we have learned from Reichert and Hawley (2015) this collaboration or partnership is essential in helping boys succeed as well as building resilience and adaptability.

The vast majority of the boys I work with lack confidence and struggle to take risks on their assessments. We learn from the work of Whitman and Kelleher (2016) that giving the students the power to choose, as well as implementing various low stakes assessments, are essential. Students will do well to have a contract paired with the use of various rubrics and low stakes pass/fail quizzes during the term to help them shift their mindset from that of playing it safe in the hope of a good grade. Rather, they will learn to embrace an environment that recognizes not only high-quality work, but also effort and growth in their writing ability, along with their commitment to learning a new way to write and developing the ability to take extra risks (Whitman & Kelleher, 2016). It is this added value that motivated John Warner (2016) to implement a contract grading system in his writing class. He writes:

In preparing for this experiment, I wrote about how this change was forcing me to confront my ego and how much control I perceived myself having over student learning ... Ultimately, if students learn something, it must be on their own initiatives, rather than with me acting as a type of academic “Sherpa.” I believe using a grading contract helps put them in charge of that journey. (para 16)

The Industrial Revolution is over and the digital revolution has started. Driverless cars, vertical farming, smartphones, translation earpieces and countless examples of edtech permeate our day-to-day lives. We live and love the changes that the Industrial Revolution brought about. This is not to discredit the gnashing of teeth that happened while people were moving off their farms and into factories or as families sent their first child to college instead of taking over the family farm. However, the research shows that we need to look at deeper changes in the classroom than just pedagogy. We need systemic change that better serves both boys’ relational learning style and what will be demanded of them in the future.

### **Research Context**

Woodberry Forest School is located in central Virginia on a pastoral, 1200 acre tract of land that was once owned by the brother of the fourth president of the United States - James Madison. The school, which was founded in 1889 has, since its inception, prided itself on its ability to grow boys of moral character who are buttressed with self-confidence and humility. Woodberry unapologetically holds itself to a standard that sometimes seems out of place in the modern world. Two examples of this are Woodberry’s student held honor system and single sanction policy on drugs and alcohol.

The school is currently home to 395 boys who attend classes six days a week, participate in required afternoon activities, attend seated dinner three times a week, attend chapel on Mondays, and attend 120 minutes of study hall on weekday evenings.

My action research project took place in my Grade Nine History class, which met five times a week. The 21 boys, who ranged in age from 14-15 years old, completed the first marking period of the year under the old system of grading, did a trial run of contract grading during the second marking period, and took part in a full-fledged run of contract grading during the third marking period.

One of the best parts about the timing of this project was that the rollout happened concurrently with our parents' weekend. This allowed me to have face-to-face conversations with most parents and gather permission slips from all parents prior to starting the project for their sons to participate in the research. Anonymity of the students was maintained by giving students randomly assigned pseudonyms.

### **The Action**

During this project, I adapted Davidson's (2015) approach by having students help me create a number of contracts (see Appendix A) at the beginning of the marking period that lay out all of the criteria a student needs to accomplish in order to get their chosen grade (A, B, C, D, NC). In contract grading, students choose which contract they will agree to and then meet regularly with their teacher to assess their progress. All assignments done within the marking period are then assessed as pass/fail according to the student/teacher generated rubric (Davidson, 2015).

The main change to my classroom was handing over the grades to the students. In the past, grades have been determined solely at my discretion. I now was allowing the boys to choose their own contracted grade and grade themselves, using the rubric, on all major assignments. I still provided feedback through written and recorded comments, as well as through one-on-one consultations. However, at the end of the day, every student chose their own grade for the course and was responsible at the end of the term to meet with me and justify how they had met all aspects of their agreed upon contract.

My day-to-day teaching was only slightly altered. I needed to carve out some time at the beginning of the term, as well as periodically throughout the term, to have a discussion with the students about the new grading system as well as to train them how to properly use the rubrics we created.

### **Data Collection**

With the intent of triangulating my data, I used the following techniques for data collection.

- Pre- & post- student questionnaire (see Appendix B)
- Direct observation and analysis of student work
- Field notes
- Interviews

Each approach had its own unique benefit and liabilities, and my hope was that this multi-faceted approach would not only peel back any bias, but also give a clear view of the effectiveness of the action implemented.

When deciding what method would be best suited for this project, the questionnaire was an obvious choice for its ability to be standardized, randomized and anonymized. Pre- and post-questionnaires using Google Docs were administered to the students by a colleague who ensured that all boys responded. This anonymity served as an added bonus in that, by him randomizing the names, I could do pre-and post-assessment comparisons whereas had it been totally anonymous I could not have compared the data.

I also kept a weekly observation journal of interesting anecdotes, thoughts, and student reactions. Looking back at these observations provided granular insight into some long-term trends. Additionally, given this was such a student driven project and students had such a strong voice in the creation and maintenance of the contracts, student interviews were conducted as part of the post assessment in hopes of gaining the student perspective and insight into the effectiveness of contract grading. These interviews were recorded to ensure adherence to the “verbatim principle” (Stringer, 2014, p. 110), whereby the words of the participants are recorded precisely.

In order to analyze the data, I coded the student interviews and observation journals by looking for the following themes: adaptability, risk-taking, student ownership, plasticity, and resilience. By using these broad brush strokes, I was able to categorize the data in a way that brought some new insights to light. During the process it was essential to stay open-minded as unexpected outcomes emerged.

Finally, I did a comparative analysis of four pieces of student work from the pre- and post-contract grading to find concrete examples of student risk-taking in their historical writing. These papers were coded to look for what I defined as risk-taking in historical writing. This definition of risk-taking was culled from a rubric from the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence Risk written by Jay Aronson (2016) and led me to code the four papers for a clear argument, compelling and accurate evidence, fresh insight into the topic, presence of counter evidence. and all evidence being cited.

## **Discussion of Results**

As I analyzed the data captured during the eight-week contract grading period, four themes emerged. It is important to note that all of these themes either show risk-taking in historical writing or lead up to risk-taking in historical writing as a result of the contract grading system.

1. An increase in intellectual thoroughness
2. An increase in pride in writing assignments
3. An increase in confidence and willingness to take risks during in-class discussions
4. An increase in willingness to take risks in historical writing

### **An Increase in Intellectual Thoroughness**

Before I started contract grading, my observation had been that the boys in my classes did not buy into the importance of intellectual thoroughness in the writing of their papers. Many of them would throw a citation in here or there when it was convenient, but seldom would a student commit to really making sure that all of their referenced material was cited. I saw a dramatic change in this practice in the four pre- and post-writing samples that I analyzed and coded. The starkest examples of this were Boys B and D who went from not citing at all pre-action to six and seven citations respectively after I introduced contract grading.

Perhaps the more interesting thing about this is that during our contract grading interviews, Boy D admitted to me that, "I am not really sure why, but I had a better idea of what working harder looked like." This sentiment was further confirmed by Boy C who said, "I became more self-aware on my note taking.... I also have a deeper desire to understand the material better." Although these are only two examples, the coding of the interviews, papers, and my observation notes show time and time again that students developed a more genuine interest in being more intellectually thorough. This thoroughness added great credibility to the students' arguments and analyses as it buttressed their point of view with quality evidence and lent greater credibility to the risk-taking that I saw in their writing.

### **An Increase in Pride in Writing Assignments**

It has been a constant frustration during the last fourteen years of my teaching career that students seem to turn in their writing, eagerly await their grade, and proceed to toss the paper in the trash can. Doing revisions or proofreading of papers has been drudgery and the pride boys took in their writing directly correlated to the letter grade assigned. Contract grading has

established a new norm in my classroom. When posed with the following statement: “I was proud of the writing assignments that I turned in during History class” I saw 13 of 21 boys self-report an increase in the pride they felt from pre-action to post-action. In and of itself, this was a very exciting finding. However, when further supported by Boy E’s comments during our interview, it became obvious that contract grading helped the boy to build pride in himself. He mentioned, “I am proud of what I am doing.... I am putting in much more effort this trimester than last. I have wanted to work harder, and I have.” When I first noted this trend, I wrote the following in my observation journal:

I am seeing much more investment in the product that the boys are creating. They are very willing to make changes and are earnestly interested in meeting the standard. I can also tell that every boy put much more time into their writings as I am making significantly fewer corrections, and their mastery of the content is much stronger.

This increase in the boys’ pride for their work directly correlated to their willingness to take a risk in their writing, I believe there is a direct relationship to students’ willingness to give fresh insight into the topic and their willingness to revise, rewrite, and rethink their initial thoughts on the topic. If one is not proud of something, there would be no reason to ever re-invest in it.

### **An Increase in Confidence and Willingness to Take Risks During In-class Discussions**

This was perhaps the most surprising and the most significant finding that emerged from the data. I was first made aware of the students’ increase in confidence during the analysis of the post-action questionnaires. Fourteen of 21 boys reported a more positive response to the statement: “I felt my contributions in class added to the discussion during the contract period,” and 11 of 21 boys noted a more positive response to the question: “I was comfortable taking a risk during in-class discussions during the contract period.” I was excited to see that this theme also emerged during my contract grading interviews. Boy F told me that:

The contributions that I am making this term are much more on point and are definitely about the topic we are learning about ... I am still trying to figure it out in many of my classes, but I’ve really figured it out in this class. I think this is in large part from the relationship I have with my history teacher. I feel comfortable sharing my ideas, and I know that there is not just one answer in this class.

This confidence is an absolutely essential component of my classroom and my attempt to build a culture that encourages risk-taking and vulnerability. I first noted this growth in confidence when I journaled the following:

Noticed a significant change in the boys today. For the first time this year students had conflicting and nuanced answers to the paragraph writing prompt. In fact, the guys were comfortable disagreeing with each other on whether or not Pope Urban the 2nd's call to crusade indeed had its intended outcome. The best part is that students were able to recall ideas and facts from the text very quickly to support their arguments.

This confidence during our in-class discussions and the increased preparation for classes that the boys displayed allowed us to unpack historical nuance and have conversations in the class that dove deeper into thoughtful analysis. I found that this foundational understanding and classroom dynamic not only dramatically helped the boys with their mastery of the subject but also increased their ability to do the mental gymnastics required for real authentic risk-taking in their historical writing.

### **An Increase in Willingness to Take Risks in Historical Writing**

I identified a student's willingness to take a risk in their historical writing by coding their papers with an eye on any fresh insight into the topic, the presence of compelling and accurate evidence, and the presence of counter evidence. Of the four papers that I coded, I found that Boy A showed a slight increase in the presence of compelling evidence and fresh insight into the topic, however, he provided significantly more counter evidence to his thesis. Boy B was slightly different in the growth that he showed. His growth primarily occurred in the presence of fresh insight into the topic. He nearly doubled - in comparison to previous work - the amount of fresh insight into a topic, and, as a result, he produced an incredibly interesting and compelling paper on the downfall of Periclean Athens. Boy C's willingness to take a risk in his historical writing showed itself in a dramatic increase in both fresh insight into the topic and nearly doubling his compelling and accurate evidence in comparison to past submissions. The increased presence of these essential components of good historical writing showed that these students were much more willing to take a risk in their writing.

This theme was prevalent in the contract interviews, where seven of the 21 students in the study said they thought they did much better; six specifically said they took more risks; three said they increased their effort; and two said they pushed themselves really hard. When I quizzed Boy G about why he thought he worked harder, he told me, “I like it because I feel like it is more of a man to man and that I am not just dropping off my work and having the teacher put a B- on it. Rather, I am in control and I feel much more respected.” This sentiment expressed by Boy G highlighted a consistent theme that emerged out of the interviews. Fourteen of twenty-one boys mentioned that they felt like they had much more control and power which made them want to try harder because they knew exactly what the expectations were. I think Boy F said it best when he stated: “I was more comfortable putting my own opinion into my paper and not just trying to figure out what Mr. LaVoie wanted. Although, it did take me three sets of revisions to get the paper to an A standard!”

Sometimes taking a risk is a willingness to dare bravely from the beginning, and sometimes - for a student - taking a risk is admitting that one’s first draft is not good enough and that with some revisions and feedback one can make it better. This aspect of risk-taking that emerged is what I am most proud of. Of the 21 boys that I teach, 19 of them did at least one set of revisions.

Despite this success, I think it is important to note that not all boys found contract grading to be helpful, nor was it a panacea that impacted all of the boys. This was made clear when I asked Boy G why he was not going to do any revisions, and he told me, “I really wish I would have gotten a concrete grade on my paper and not just suggestions.” Ultimately, he found the vagueness of the system frustrating and preferred to re-negotiate for a B rather than going back and re-working the paper.

### **Conclusion**

The implementation of a contract grading system in my class chartered a path forward for me to be more critical of the explicit and implicit way I teach my students. From the beginning of this project, there was a palpable change in the attitude of my students and classroom climate. The power shift was immediate, and yet it required yeoman's work on my part throughout. At the beginning, the boys loved the novelty of it all. They reveled in the chance to tell the teacher what it meant to get an A, B, or C and the fact that they got to fix the standards for in-class participation, daily homework and assessments. This novelty, however, waned as the rubber hit the road. The boys became nervous about what their grade was and how they were stacking up

against their peers. They would often beg me to tell them where they stood and even if I could not give them a concrete grade, just a guess would do. This reality laid open, what I see as a huge problem in my past practice and my students' educational upbringing. My students lacked confidence. Their worth as a student was inextricably tied to my daily and weekly judgement of their value and ability as shown by a letter. This was causing a calcification of thought and a paralytic caution in their classwork. Their lack of risk-taking was deeper than just my pedagogical skill; it was systemic in my day-to-day judging and assessing.

This project forced me to confront how much control I perceived myself having over student learning. To a large degree, I had bought into the myth that my students' grades were largely a reflection of how effective I was as an instructor or how inherently motivated the students I was teaching were at the time. I have now stepped away from that. I now look at how I teach from the students' eyes with a focus on building relationships. Action research has shown me that if I want to prepare boys for their future, I need to assess not only my pedagogy but the deep systems within my classroom. I need to look inward at the classroom climate and create a space where the boys have ownership, we work together to meet goals, and they advocate for themselves. This shift in power creates more dynamic, plastic and interesting young men.

As a result of this project I am hopeful that future researchers might look at how contract grading might bridge the gap between letter grading and the move towards Mastery Transcripts that is gaining steam in independent schools. Additionally, I see contract grading useful in other academic disciplines as well as the student life and discipline.

### **Reflection**

A few days ago, I was looking in my journal at an entry from before I started this process. In it, I wrote about how this change and research was forcing me to confront my ego and how much control I perceived myself having over student learning. To a large degree, I had bought into the narrative that my students' grades were largely a reflection of how good of a teacher I was or how inherently motivated the students I was teaching were at the time. I've now stepped away from all of that, I now look at myself as a farmer (not a sage on the stage, not a guide on the side), but someone who is in the thick of it adding water, trimming weeds, and providing the best environment I can so that my students can do what they designed to do. Grow! I believe wholeheartedly that if a student is going to be ready for their future reality, I need to stop talking

and get in the dirt with them, rather than act as an academic “Sherpa” whom they are dependent on to get to the top of our academic Everest.

Finally, I would like to thank Woodberry Forest School and Headmaster Dr. Byron Hulsey for the generous support and encouragement of this project. Additionally, I’d also like to thank Dr. Matt Boesen, Erik Born and Rebecca LaVoie for their support in varying capacities throughout the action research process.

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**Appendix A:  
Grading Contracts**

Chart A<sub>1</sub>

A Contract	Name	Mr. LaVoie
<b>Daily Work</b>		
	Completes nightly reading and does one of the following	
		takes at least 3/4 page of reading notes
		answers all of the reading questions
		earns 100% on the online quizzes (if available)
<b>Assessments</b>		
	<a href="#">Assessments meet the requirements for an A on the assessment rubric (grading rubric link)</a>	
		Students are allowed to re-do the assessment up to 1 week from the original due date
	All assessments are turned in on time	
<b>Participation</b>		
	Is regularly on time or early	
	Has no unexcused absences	
	Contributes at least four times on his own volition to the in class conversation	
	Takes his notes, text and pencil out without being asked.	
	Schedules and participates in at least two consultations per trimester	
	Student regularly checks Canvas for assignments	
	Student takes diligent in-class notes	
	Students cell phone is never out in class	

Chart A2

B Contract	Name	Mr. LaVoie
Daily Work		
	Completes nightly reading and does one of the following	
		takes 1/2 page of reading notes
		answer some reading questions
		earn 80% on the online quizzes (if available)
Assessments		
	<a href="#">Assessments meet the requirements for a B on the assessment rubric (grading rubric link)</a>	
		Students are allowed to re-do the assessment up to 2 week from the original due date
	Most assessments are turned in on time	
Participation		
	Is usually on time	
	Has no unexcused absences	
	Contributes at least two times on his own volition to the in class conversation	
	Schedules and participates in at least one consultation per trimester	
	Takes his notes, text and pencil out after being asked.	
	Student regularly checks Canvas for assignments	
	Student takes diligent in-class notes	
	Students cell phone is periodically out	

Chart A3

C Contract	Name	Mr. LaVoie
<b>Daily Work</b>		
	Completes nightly reading and does one of the following	
		takes minimal reading notes
		does not answer the reading questions
		earn 70% on the online quizzes (if available)
<b>Assessments</b>		
	<a href="#">Assessments meet the requirements for an C on the assessment rubric (grading rubric link)</a>	
		Students are allowed to re-do the assessment up to 2 week from the original due date
	All assessments are usually late	
<b>Participation</b>		
	Is often late or unprepared	
	Has a unexcused absences	
	Contributes at least four times but has to be called on to participate	
	Schedules and participates in zero consultations per trimester	
	Student has to borrow paper and or pencil for class	
	Student has to email instructor for assignments	
	Student take few in-class notes	
	Student has to be asked to put cell phone away regularly	

**Appendix B:**  
**Pre-Post Questionnaire**

Table B<sub>1</sub>

Mr. LaVoie's History Pre-Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your answers will be collected by Mr. Born and you will be assigned a pseudonym so that I will have no way of knowing your answers. To be clear, this is completely anonymous.

Your email address (**first\_lastname@woodberry.org**) will be recorded when you submit this form.

**Scale: Not at All (1) Absolutely (10): \* Required**

I was comfortable taking a risk during in class discussions the first marking period. \*

I was comfortable taking a risk when writing my papers the first marking period. \*

I was committed to understanding the nightly readings the first marking period. \*

I felt my contributions in class added to the discussion the first marking period. \*

I felt I was graded fairly the first marking period. \*

My contributions in class were valued by Mr. LaVoie during the first marking period. \*

I was proud of the writing assignments that I turned in during the first marking period. \*

I was confident in my mastery of the material during the first marking period. \*

What grade did you earn during MP 1? \*

What grade did you contract for? \*

How would you rate your overall confidence as a student of history? \*

Table B2

Mr. LaVoie's History- Post Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your answers will be collected by Mr. Born and you will be assigned a pseudonym so that I will have no way of knowing your answers. To be clear, this is completely anonymous.

Your email address (**first\_lastname@woodberry.org**) will be recorded when you submit this form.

**Scale: Not at All (1) Absolutely (10) \* Required**

I was comfortable taking a risk during in class discussions the contract period. \*

I was comfortable taking a risk when writing my papers the contract period. \*

I was committed to understanding the nightly readings the contract period. \*

I felt my contributions in class added to the discussion the contract period. \*

I felt I was graded fairly the contract period. \*

My contributions in class were valued by Mr. LaVoie during the contract period. \*

I was proud of the writing assignments that I turned in during the contract period. \*

I was confident in my mastery of the material during the contract period. \*

What grade did you earn during the contract period? \*

What grade did you contract for? \*

How would you rate your overall confidence as a student of history? \*