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# Keep Your Eye on the Metaphor: The Framing of the Common Core on Twitter

*Jonathan Supovitz*
&
*Elisabeth Reinkordt*
University of Pennsylvania
United States

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**Abstract:** Issue framing is a powerful way for advocates to appeal to the value systems of constituency groups to evoke their support. Using a conceptual framework that focused on radial frames, metaphors, and lexical markers, we examined the linguistic choices that Common Core opponents used on Twitter to activate five central metaphors that reinforced the overall frame of the standards as a threat to children and appealed to the value systems of a diverse set of constituencies. In our research, we identified five frames: the *Government Frame*, which presented the Common Core as an oppressive government intrusion into the lives of citizens and appealed to *limited-government conservatives*; the *Propaganda Frame*, which depicted the standards as a means of brainwashing children, and

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in doing so, hearkened back to the cold war era when *social conservatives* positioned themselves as defenders of the national ethic; the *War Frame*, which portrayed the standards as a front in the nation's culture wars and appealed to *social and religious conservatives* to protect traditional cultural values; the *Business Frame*, which rendered the standards as an opportunity for corporations to profit from public education and appealed to *liberal opponents* of business interests exploiting a social good; and the *Experiment Frame*, which used the metaphor of the standards as an experiment on children and appealed to the principle of care that is highly valued amongst *social liberals*. Collectively, these frames, and the metaphors and the language that triggered them, appealed to the value systems of both conservatives and liberals, and contributed to the broad coalition from both within and outside of education, which was aligned in opposition to the standards.
**Keywords**: Education politics; issue framing; lexical analysis; issue advocacy

**Mantenga su ojo en la metáfora: El enmarcar de Common Core en Twitter**
**Resumen:** Enmarcando el problema es la forma defensores es apelar a los sistemas de valores de sus grupos de electores para ganar apoyo. El uso de la cola marco conceptual centrado en los marcos radiales, metáforas y marcadores léxicos, examinamos las elecciones lingüísticas que los oponentes fundamentales comunes utilizados en Twitter para activar cinco metáforas centrales que reforzó el marco general de las normas como una amenaza para los niños y un llamamiento a la sistemas de valores de un conjunto diverso de las circunscripciones. En nuestra investigación, hemos identificado cinco cuadros: el Marco de Gobierno (Common Core de una intrusión gobierno opresor en la vida de los ciudadanos y pidió a los conservadores-gobierno limitado); la Publicidad del Marco (las normas de lavado de cerebro los niños y los conservadores necesarios sociales para defender a los niños de la nationa); el Marco de la Guerra (el es estándar frente de batalla cultural de la nación), el Marco de Experimento (el es un nivel de oportunidad para las empresas para beneficiarse de la educación pública); y el marco de experimento (usó la metáfora de la norma de un experimento en los niños). En conjunto, estos marcos y las metáforas y el lenguaje que los provocó, hizo un llamamiento a los sistemas de valores de conservadores y liberales, y contribuyeron a la amplia coalición de dentro y fuera de la educación alineados en oposición a las normas.
**Palabras-clave:** Educación; política; enmarcando el problema; análisis léxico; defensa

**Mantenha seu olho na metáfora: Quadro Common Core no Twitter**
**Resumo:** Ele enquadrar o problema é a forma de defesa é apelar para os sistemas de valores dos seus eleitores para ganhar apoio. Usando a cauda estrutura conceitual centrada quadros radiais, metáforas e marcadores lexicais, examinamos as escolhas linguísticas que os adversários fundamentais comuns usados Twitter para ativar cinco metáforas centrais que reforçaram o quadro geral das regras como uma ameaça para as crianças e apelar para os sistemas de valores de um conjunto diversificado de círculos eleitorais. Em nossa pesquisa, identificamos cinco pinturas: Quadro Governo (núcleo comum de intrusão do governo opressivo para a vida dos cidadãos e pediu ao governo conservador-limitada); Publicidade Quadro (normas lavagem cerebral crianças e necessárias conservadores sociais para defender as crianças naci); Quadro da Guerra (o padrão é a batalha cultural contra a nação), o Quadro Experiência (ele é um nível de oportunidade para as empresas a beneficiar da educação pública); e experimentar quadro (ele usou a metáfora da norma de um experimento em crianças). Juntas, essas estruturas e metáforas e linguagem que

provocaram apelou aos sistemas de valores dos conservadores e liberais, e contribuiu para a ampla coalizão de educação dentro e fora alinhados em oposição às regras.
**Palavras-chave:** educação; política; enquadrando o problema; análise lexical; defesa

## Introduction

Those who are not attuned to the subtlety of issue framing are susceptible to adopting the framer's perspective without even realizing it. An issue frame is a subjective perspective that advocates use to direct the way in which a topic is understood in order to influence audience opinion (Brewer & Gross, 2005; Nicholson & Howard, 2003; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). Framing a debate in a particular way leads an audience's attention in one direction and not another in order to cultivate a desired response. Political scientists have identified this phenomenon in a range of political debates including welfare reform (Gamson & Lasch, 1983), government spending (Jacoby, 2000), and affirmative action (Kinder & Sanders, 1996).

While political scientists take an expansive look at the ideas and motivations underlying issue framing (Riker, Calvert & Wilson, 1996; Schattschneider 1960), cognitive linguists examine issue framing from a more nuanced, lexical perspective (Fillmore, 1976; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). They investigate the distinct choice of metaphors and words, and dissect the ways in which mental images and language choices stimulate recipients' reactions in ways that favor a particular position. Keeping an eye on the metaphor thus helps the critical message consumer understand the framer's intent. Further, and more profoundly, both policy and linguistic approaches to issue framing are tactical ways for savvy framers to appeal to message recipients' deeply held moral beliefs in order to trigger their emotions and sway them towards a particular perspective (Haidt, 2012; Lakoff, 2008).

Social media are relatively new platforms for issue framers to shape the messages about important social and political issues. Social media give issue advocates unfiltered conversation streams within which to frame issues in particular ways as they seek to influence both popular opinion and policymakers. Social media have the distinct advantage of removing professional media as the filter between the transmitter of a message and its recipients. Social media allow people to communicate directly with others in open forums.

The overriding theme of this paper is that by using a combination of macro and micro analytic techniques we can better understand how advocacy groups frame policy issues. To accomplish this, we develop a conceptual framework that integrates key concepts from the policy, linguistic, and psychological literatures to examine the frames used by actors who sought to influence the debate about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) on Twitter. We focus on a subset of tweets related to discussions about the impact of the standards on children. We examine the frames, metaphors, and linguistic choices that Common Core opponents used to activate five central metaphors that support the overall frame of the standards as a threat to children. Our analysis focuses on the language in tweets from the most prolific actors in the CCSS debate on Twitter during a six-month period between September 2013 to February 2014. This was a key time period when, according to public opinion polls, the CCSS were both losing general public support and becoming increasingly polarized along political party lines across the country. Overall, we argue the frames and metaphors used by opponents of the Common Core on Twitter tapped into the deep-seated value systems of different constituencies, which brought together a unique and disparate coalition of activist groups that contributed to the reasons why the Common Core movement generated such virulent opposition.

## Policy and Lexical Framing in the Literature

A substantial body of political science literature identifies issue framing as a powerful means of shaping public perceptions and attitudes about political issues (Brewer & Gross 2005; Nicholson & Howard 2003; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). Political actors who seek to win public backing strategically choose to emphasize the particular aspects of an issue that give their side an advantage and mobilize their constituencies (Riker, Calvert & Wilson, 1996; Schattschneider 1960). For example, proponents of affirmative action frame this issue as compensation for the past effects of discrimination, while opponents have described affirmative action as reverse discrimination when we should be seeking equity for all groups (Gamson & Modigliani 1989; Kinder & Sanders 1996). Similarly, supporters of welfare describe the issue as a "helping hand" for those in poverty, while opponents depict it as a "government handout" that encourages dependency (Gamson & Lasch 1983; Nelson & Kinder 1996). The hand moves either way.

Through repeated use of framing, ideas enter the public discourse and, eventually, can become widely accepted. Nelson and Oxley (1999) showed how political framing affects public opinion by experimentally demonstrating how the portrayal of news had a significant influence on subjects' beliefs and issue opinions. Gormley (2012) conducted several studies of issue framing in education, the most extensive of which examined how Head Start expansion was framed. Using a national sample, participants were randomly assigned newspaper articles that framed Head Start expansion as an equal opportunity issue, an economic issue, a scientific evidence issue, or a "helping hand" issue. Overall, the author found statistically significant differences between respondents' support for Head Start expansion associated with the different frames.

Issue framing has also been used extensively in other realms of education policy. Gormley (2012) chronicled the framing of issues from the 1900s to the present in a variety of child-related contexts including child health, education, child welfare, and state child welfare policy. Stein (2004) conducted a detailed case study of the ways in which Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was framed as an extension of the Johnson Administration's efforts to reduce poverty in the United States. She detailed the ways in which a framing of the culture of poverty was embedded in the congressional debates about Title I and, by extension, the construction of the ESEA legislation. In the debates, poverty was largely framed as a consequence of the behaviors of individuals and communities, rather than as a consequence of political and economic structures. According to Stein:

> In a controversial expansion of what had been an almost nonexistent federal involvement in education, members of Congress portrayed passage of ESEA as a way to address or correct the culture that poor children received at home. This culture was not only conceived as a detriment to children born into poverty, it was also a threat to individual and national security (p. 33).

This framing allowed schools to be seen as the mechanism for removing children from poverty or, as President Johnson put it, to becoming taxpayers instead of "tax eaters" (as quoted by Stein, p. 36). Through this example, Stein argues that issue construction and the subsequent policy debates on these terms convey a set of cultural preferences that reflect a set of inherent social values.

While debates about policy can be thought of as a clash of large ideas contained within frames, cognitive linguists note that framing strategies are activated by the particular words advocates choose to convey their perspective. Fillmore (1976) identified framing as "structured ways of interpreting experience...in the communication and comprehension process (p.20)," and argued that language and framing were inseparable. According to Lakoff (2004), frames are a trap that

draws one into the worldview of their creator. As Lakoff (2004) argued, "language that fits that worldview activates that worldview, strengthening it" (p. 8). The lexical choices that come within an activated frame reinforce the message and trigger the emotional connections we make to a text. Often, those lexical choices rely on the use of metaphors.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) view metaphors as the fundamental mechanism for framing, and they "play a central role in the construction of social and political reality," (p. 159). Metaphors are used to convey new circumstances in terms of situations with which we are familiar. Lakoff and Johnson ask us to view such language in terms of source domains and target domains, where the source is the concept we are asked to draw upon in order to understand the target to which the language is being applied. For example, if an author is using the source domain of architecture to describe the functioning of the mind, activating language might include references to doors, windows, and walls, such as the "doors of perception" or the "eyes as a window to the soul." As Machin and Mayr (2012) argued, metaphors can become so familiar that they become unnoticed, and the two poetic references in the preceding sentence are common and clichéd examples of deeply rooted used of metaphor and frame.

The power of frames is not just in their perspectives and persuasive language, but in their appeal to deeply held social values and beliefs. Presupposition, or what Fairclough (1995) called "pre-constructed elements," deals with all the meanings that are assumed as given (p. 107). For example, if we take the phrase "children attend school," we operate under a presupposed notion of what "school" is, despite the fact that a school in rural Alaska might be quite different from one in urban Atlanta. Rather than delineate all the characteristics of a school, we rely on the reader to fill in the gaps of what the building looks like (if a building exists at all), what elements make it a school (students, desks, books), and so on. Machin and Mayr (2012) point out that that which does not require definition is often deeply ideological. Left undefined or presupposed, a term such as "school" can lend itself quite easily to ideological interpretation, whether the reader is conjuring up a traditional brick and mortar building in an urban location, a small one-room schoolhouse with a bell on the Plains, or an online learning environment.

Moral psychologist Jonathan Haidt (2012) argued that human morality has five foundational values: care, fairness, loyalty, authority, and sanctity. Haidt showed that these moral values are triggered every time we see images or descriptions of suffering (care), cheating (fairness), betrayal (loyalty), disrespect (authority), or degradation (sanctity). Further, Haidt's research indicated that peoples' political affiliations are associated with different moral matrices. That is, people who self-identify as liberals most heavily emphasize care, and also value liberty and fairness; but give relatively less emphasis to loyalty, authority and sanctity in their moral matrices. Social conservatives, by contrast highly value the preservation of the institutions and traditions that sustain a moral community, and therefore equally value loyalty, authority, and sanctity, along with care, liberty, and fairness. This is how people with different values can interpret the same event differently and how carefully crafted messages can be framed to arouse one of the underlying core values of an audience to garner maximum reaction.

Like Haidt, Lakoff (1996) also contended that liberals and conservatives have different frames for understanding messages and experiences. In political debates, Lakoff argues, we often use a prevailing frame of the nation as a family and the government as the head of the family. As Lakoff (1996) stated, "This metaphor allows us to reason about the nation on the basis of what we know about a family" (p.155). The family frame has all kinds of extensions, which include the president as father, government as parent, and citizens as children. Depending on one's dominant value system, according to Lakoff (1996), individuals ascribe to different conceptions of family structure: the strict father or the nurturing parent. The strict father metaphor projects the value that the parent (i.e. the

government) is the one who has the most developed morality and therefore knows how children (i.e. citizens) should behave, what is best for children, and what children need to develop and mature. The strict father value does not mean that the government (father) intrudes into the lives of the governed (children), but that its role is that of moral guide and protector. By contrast, the nurturing parent protects their children, fosters life fulfillment, promotes fairness, and values open communication and trust. In his neural theory of metaphors, Lakoff (2008) theorizes that our brains connect ideas of governance into metaphors of family, simply because these are our primary encounters with these sorts of ideas in our childhoods.

## Conceptual Framework

Our conceptual framework borrows from both the political science, cognitive linguistic, and psychology literatures and guides our analysis of both the important components of a well-framed message and the inter-relationships amongst the components. The conceptual framework depicts the theorized logic chain that connects the framing of a message and its appeal to the value systems of recipients. As shown in Figure 1, the outer layer of the conceptual framework begins with the large, overarching frame that organizes and directs the overall position of issue advocates. In our analysis of opposition to the Common Core, the overarching frame is that the standards are a threat to children.

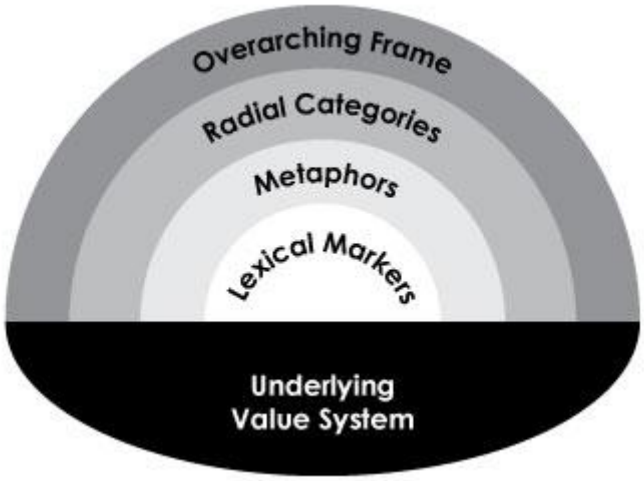


*Figure 1.* Study Conceptual Framework

The overarching frame is reinforced in a variety of ways. The most basic form of reinforcement is through what Lakoff (1996) called *radial categories*. Radial categories are commonly understood and relatable subcategories that radiate out from the central frame. Radial categories are generally ways in which the overarching frame manifests itself and builds upon and reinforces the overarching frame.

A basic means by which radial categories are understood is through *metaphors*. Our framework makes central use of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) work on metaphors and metaphor concepts as our fundamental conceptual organizers, an important indicator in our analyses. Lakoff and Johnson conceive of metaphors not only as the understanding of one thing in terms of another, but as a way of orienting one's conceptual system. Metaphors are enacted through the use of *lexical markers*. These linguistic choices serve to animate and reify the intent of the message. To make

meaning of particular words and phrases in the tweets we examined, this aspect of our conceptual framework relied heavily on Roman Jakobsen's analysis of speech events (1990). Jakobsen conceives of four major components of a speech event that occur between the communication of a message from an addresser to its reception by an addressee. First is the *context* of the message, which carries the emotive or emotional intonations of the message. Second is the *message* itself, which contains its content (and which may include the metaphor contained in the message). Third is the *contact*, which signals the basic underlying purpose of the message, be it to establish, prolong, or discontinue the communication. Fourth is the *code* of the message, which are the lexical markers that are specific to the medium that are understood by its users.

Our analysis also relied on particular lexical markers. These included metonymy, personification, and pronouns. Metonymy, according to Machin and Mayr (2012) is the "substitution of one thing for another with which it is closely associated" (p.171). Metonymy is used particularly in political discourse when a nominalized actor is used to represent a broader group, as in when Barack Obama stands for liberals, Bill Gates or Pearson for business interests, or when the Common Core itself is personified and used to stand for big government. Personification – the rhetorical process by which non-human entities are given human abilities – is another effective means by which the actors behind something can be concealed (Machin & Mayr 2012). Fairclough (2000) analyzed pronoun usage, and particularly how the use of the word "we" is slippery and vague, and therefore particularly useful in speech. A close attention to pronouns builds upon Van Dijk's (1993) concept of "ideological squaring," in which a text's lexical choices align the reader with or against the author. In our dataset of tweets, for example, we found extensive use of the possessive pronoun "our" when referring to children.

Finally, and fundamentally, our conceptual framework is embedded in a foundational dimension that pays particular attention to the underlying value system to which a framed message may appeal (Haidt, 2012; Lakoff, 1996; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This appeal to a target audience's value system reveals the underlying purpose of a message, beyond its semantic qualities. Our conceptualization of the ecosystem of the Twitter conversation is that it carries an important strain of political discourse whereby participating faction members seek to assert their value system and in this way, political debate can be understood as a mosh pit of different value systems vying for issue dominance.

## Political Context at Time of Study

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) set forth what students should know and be able to do in mathematics and English language arts at each grade level from Kindergarten to 12th grade. Their development began in 2009, and they incorporated a number of lessons learned from the earlier standards-based reform movement (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). The new standards were named the "Common Core" because they were intended to eliminate the variation in the quality of state standards experienced in the 1990s. They were developed at the behest of the state governors and chief state school officers in order to avoid the charge of federal intrusion—which came nonetheless after the Obama administration incentivized states to adopt the CCSS with the Race to the Top (RTTT) funding competition and provided the financing for the Common Core testing consortia.

In a remarkable moment of bi-partisanship, the legislatures in 46 states and the District of Columbia in 2010 adopted the CCSS.[1] Since then, the CCSS have become increasingly controversial,

[1] Alaska, Texas, Virginia and Nebraska did not adopt the Common Core, preferring their own state standards. Minnesota adopted the Common Core ELA standards, but not those in mathematics.

with Indiana and Oklahoma backing out of the CCSS and several other states (including Missouri, New Jersey, Tennessee, and West Virginia) modifying their standards to replace the Common Core. About half of the states have withdrawn from the associated Common Core aligned test consortia.

A series of important events occurred between the time of the introduction of the CCSS in 2010 and the time of data collection for this study, between September 2013 and February 2014. These events contributed to both the pace of reform adoption and policymaker and public perceptions of the CCSS. First, the severe economic recession of 2008 spurred the economic stimulus of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009, which included funding for the RTTT competition. Forty-six of the 50 states submitted applications for RTTT[2], which included a provision that states adopt rigorous standards, and eventually awarded over $4.1 billion to 19 states. This financial carrot heavily incentivized states to adopt the CCSS (McDermott, 2012). Second, a series of developments created an impression of a foundering reform movement (Supovitz & McGuinn, 2017). These events included Florida's decision in September 2013 to no longer serve as the fiscal agent for one of the two Common Core aligned assessments and to drop its plans to use the assessment. Other controversies included Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's seemingly offhand comment about suburban moms realizing that "their child isn't as brilliant as they thought they were, and their school isn't quite as good as they thought it was" (Strauss, 2013), and the head of one of the two major teacher unions, the National Education Association, calling to "course correct the standards" (Layton, 2014). By 2013, more than half the governors who were in office when their states adopted the standards (and who were members of the National Governors Association, a sponsor of the CCSS) were no longer in the governorship, loosening states' commitment to the standards. There was also growing resistance in several states about continuing to use the CCSS (McGuinn & Supovitz, 2016; Olson, 2014). In 2013, Republican legislators in 11 states introduced legislation to repeal adoption of the Common Core. Oklahoma and South Carolina dropped the CCSS in June 2014.

The timing of our data collection also coincided with a period in which public support for the Common Core was declining and becoming increasingly partisan. For example, *Education Next* survey results of support and opposition to the CCSS showed that 63% of respondents supported the CCSS in 2012, but that from 2013 to 2014, support declined from 65% to 53%. At the same time, while Democratic support remained in the low 60% range, Republican support declined 14 points, from 57% to 43%.

Another indicator of increasingly partisan public opinion was the growth in activity surrounding the Common Core on Twitter. In a study of Twitter activity covering the same six-month period (October 2013 thru February 2014), Supovitz, Daly, and del Fresno (2015) found that there were almost five times as many tweets expressing opposition to the CCSS as there were tweets supporting the CCSS.

## The Role of Social Media in Education Politics

In today's media landscape, the Internet and social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook are distinctly different from mass communication mediums of previous generations. The growth of cable television in the 1980s and 1990s was still essentially unidirectional from "elites" to general audiences because of the content control of mass media and passive forms of viewing. Social media, however, allow members to actively voice their opinions and engage directly with each other. Some researchers, like Valenzuela, Park, and Kee (2008), view social media as new opportunities for the

[2] Alaska, North Dakota, Texas, and Vermont did not submit Race to the Top applications.

free flow of information, increased political participation, and broader democratic participation. Others, like Roodhouse (2009), view social media sites as echo chambers where the fervent believers can interact with like-minded souls.

Founded in 2006, Twitter is one of the top 10 most-visited websites on the Internet, with over 645 million users worldwide. Twitter is often called a micro-blogging social network site, where users can sign up for free, display-recognizable user profiles, share messages with those who follow them, and receive the messages of those they follow. Twitter users represent only 18% of Internet users and 14% of the overall adult population, and Twitter users are more affluent, younger, and more ethnically diverse than the general population (Smith, Raine, Schneiderman & Himelboim, 2014).

Communicating on Twitter requires a distinct form of language use – a medium-specific semiotic code. Each tweet, or message, contains not more than 140 characters, including spaces, which is exactly the number of characters in this sentence. While some view the brevity of tweets as a shortcoming of the medium, others view the minimal effort as an advantage (Zhao & Rosson, 2009). Additionally, given the concise nature of the medium, Twitter users get quite creative with the construction of their tweets, using abbreviations, particular references, and links to other Internet locations, including articles, blogs, and other websites.

Twitter users can follow any other user, and receive all the tweets of those they follow. Although Twitter users can have private accounts, most are public. Tweets that contain the '@' sign and a user's name (i.e. @BenFranklin) direct a tweet towards a particular user. These tweets are not private, but they direct attention to an individual in the public conversation. Additionally, Twitter users often employ the hash or pound sign (#) to identify, or tag, messages about a specific topic. Twitter streams are searchable by hashtag, which is the basis for our research on the #commoncore.

## Data and Methods

The data for this study come from publicly available tweets downloaded from Twitter. The data were retrieved directly from the Application Programming Interface in Twitter based on tweets associated with the hashtag (#) commoncore for a period of six months from September 1, 2013, until March 4, 2014. The 189,658 tweets using #commoncore during this time period came from 52,994 distinct authors. While this hashtag was not the only indicator on Twitter of Common Core activity at the time, (others included #cc and #ccss), it was the most prevalent tag used for Common Core conversations. These data were used for Part 1 of the #commoncore project (www.hashtagcommoncore.com).

To arrive at the sample of tweets for our analysis, we first took a random sample of 3% of the approximately 190,000 #commoncore tweets, or 5,700 tweets. These included tweets, retweets, and mentions. We then conducted a word search through this random sample of tweets to identify the tweets that contained the words 'child' (therefore including the word 'children'), 'youth', 'kid' (including the word 'kids') or 'teen.' The words 'child' and 'kid' were frequently mentioned, while 'teen' and 'youth' were rare occurrences. This produced a dataset of 821 tweets, which represented 14.4% of the random sample. Extrapolating back to the population, we infer that about 15% of the tweets sent over the six-month period we examined included references to children.

The development of our coding framework was an iterative and emergent process, informed by our conceptual framework, which attenuated us to the particular metaphors, and linguistic choices made by the tweet authors. We first conducted an initial reading of the random sample of tweets to identify emerging meaning and a set of categories began to arise. These included the main actor of the tweet, the purpose of the actor, the action of the actor, the scope of the action, the

target of the action, and the consequence or effect of the action. Using a visual mapping process advocated by Miles and Huberman (1994), we sketched out these relationships and began to recode our tweets based on these emerging groupings. As we began the recoding process, we noticed that the actors and purposes could be organized into a set of topical themes, which formed the radial frames that we ultimately used to organize our analyses. As five radial frames (government, business, war, experiment, propaganda) began to emerge, we subsumed the initial categories (actor, purpose, action, scope, target, and consequence) within each of the radial frames. We then restarted our coding process, methodically color coding the tweets by the five radial frames, and reaffirming our assessment of the initial categories. We then combed through the resulting coded tweets as a series of themes and points emerged to illustrate the metaphors, including metonymies, linguistic enablers of the metaphors, and the value systems these sets seemed to best represent. As we engaged in this process, we carefully attended to the metaphors, metonymies, pronouns and other linguistic markers that substantiated or refuted our emergent themes. We then picked about five to 10 exemplars from each of the five radial categories that provided strong and diverse examples of the radial frame, which we used as exemplars in the results that follow.

Finally, as we developed our coding frameworks, we also noted a set of veiled references embedded within the hashtags of the tweets that we thought were important to explicate. Twitter, even as a young mode of communication, has developed a semiotic code unique to the medium. The semantic patterns of Twitter allow for a new type of meaning-making, especially with technical features like the ability to use hashtags to insert an author's tweet into broader conversations. Zappavigna (2012) focused on microblogging environments as "constrained environments," due to the character limitations imposed by the medium (p. 27). Investigating hashtags, Zappavigna found what she calls "searchable talk," as users transform a typographic convention into "affiliation via 'findability'" due to the ability to search for particular hashtags (2011, p. 789). Relevant to our work, she also found evidence of Twitter users using hashtags to connect with others with shared values (Zappavigna, 2011).

## Results

Overall, the tweets that we analyzed framed the Common Core as a threat to children. The language of the tweets raised awareness of this threat through five particular radial frames that reinforced the overarching theme of the CCSS as a threat to children. These were:

1. The Government Frame: Government controlling children's lives through the CCSS.
2. The Business Frame: The use of the CCSS for corporate profit at the expense of children.
3. The War Frame: The CCSS as an enemy to be fought, and as a weapon in a culture war.
4. The Experiment Frame: The CCSS as an experiment on children.
5. The Propaganda Frame: The CCSS as a way to brainwash children.

As we will show in our analyses, each of these frames enacted a metaphor and used particular language to reinforce both the metaphor and the overriding frame of the Common Core as a threat to children. The effect of these radial frames was not only to raise alarms about the CCSS as a threat to children, but to position the target audience as the defenders against this existential threat. We further argue that each radial category appealed to the value system of a different constituency that coalesced to bring together a unique transpartisan coalition around this issue, which contributed to

the trends of rising public opposition and declining political support that we noted in the context section.

Within these radial frames, we observed an interplay of metaphor and metonymy in the language of the tweets. In some cases, a named actor stood in to represent a broader concept, therefore triggering an association that reinforces the authors' intent. In some cases, it is the Common Core itself that becomes the actor, a metonymy in which the Common Core is personified and acts as a proxy for transmitting ideology. Sometimes metaphor and metonymy worked in conjunction, or metaphors were mixed together in ways that activated multiple frames within the same tweet. Tweets also posed questions about the authority, and even legitimacy, of the government to know "what's best for kids." In each section below we analyze each of the radial frames, provide example tweets to illustrate the argument, and analyze the metaphors, lexical markers, and their underlying meaning.

**Radial Category 1: The Government Frame: Government controlling children's lives through the CCSS**

The government frame is omnipresent in the tweets about the Common Core. Perhaps this is inevitable given the long-standing and often heated debate about the appropriate level of governmental involvement in the life of citizens in America's democracy generally, and in education more particularly. In this frame, the government—or a metonymy for the government—takes on the role of the central instigator of acts 'on' children, with mostly negative consequences.

Table 1 provides a set of illustrative tweets that exemplify the way that government is portrayed in CCSS tweets. Focusing first on the central actor (identified in bold/italic), we can see that sometimes the government is represented as the institution, as in "Big Government" (1.1) or the "Feds" (1.2). Other times, a tweeter uses a metonymy to represent the government, as in 1.3 (Obama), 1.4 (@JebBush), 1.5 (#obama), or 1.6 (Pres O). In other cases, as in tweet 1.7, the tweet personifies the standards themselves as the one taking action.

Table 1
*Tweets Illustrating the Government Frame*

| No. | Tweet |
|---|---|
| 1.1 | I bet #Democrats & #Republicans agree: ***Big Government*** can't experiment on our kids. Stop #CommonCore Pls RT http://t.co/9GTtv485Xp |
| 1.2 | #***CommonCo***re fails children. Keep ***Feds*** out of our schools. #stopcommoncore http://t.co/sBrYrnFrVC |
| 1.3 | @drscott_atlanta @PAC43 #CommonCore ***Obama*** says: "if you use common core, you can keep your kids dumb and controllable". |
| 1.4 | Hey ***@JebBush*** ! This is what u are shoving down OUR CHILDRENS throats! You should be ashamed of yourself. #CommonCore http://t.co/bNSwSeyfO1 |
| 1.5 | Stop trying to teach OUR children your urban, socialist values, ***#obama***. #CommonCore #falseflag #publicmiseducation right @JimDeMint? |
| 1.6 | Read w fear and trembling ***Pres O***'s Ed Proclamation. NOTE terms 'Cradle to Career'- all of child's life! http://t.co/fOhzDG0VWd #CommonCore |
| 1.7 | oped: ***#CommonCore*** violates & invades our private lives thru data mining...children are not common. They are unique. http://t.co/4QUKoqbscI |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.8 | Cookie Cutter #CommonCore Crony Curriculum. ***Corruptocrats*** crushing children. #BillWhittle @FoxNews @Drudge https://t.co/5Zbj3bDBuN |
| 1.9 | Why saying all kids belong to the government is not just a slip of the tongue http://t.co/cAf9i6f6sw #CommonCore |

Text in ***bold/italic*** indicates the actor/metonymy
Text in reverse highlight shows the lexical indicators of the metaphor

In order to emphasize the metaphorical enabling in the tweets, the actions that government or its stand-ins take, is shown in reverse highlight in Table 1. It is the use of alliteration and the neologism "corruptocrats" that makes tweet 1.8 stand out in the sample – language play that draws the reader's attention to the idea that the Common Core is "cookie cutter," an accusation of the tendency of government programs to apply the same strategy to all without regard to individual needs. Further, the use of "crony" and "corruptocrats" mix both government and business interests in the metaphor of the oppressive government "crushing" children. In 1.7, we see an extension of this same logic, wherein children are described as "not common" and "unique." In the context of the government-as-family metaphor, this subtly reinforces the ideological opposition to the government-as-parent, implying the country is too big, has too many children with different needs to parent them all effectively.

In tweet 1.4, we find a nice twist on the parent metaphor, as the author effectively scolds Jeb Bush as one would a child, in addition to the mixed metaphor with the Experiment frame (further discussed in Frame 4) regarding the physical harm done to children by "shoving [the Common Core] down OUR CHILDRENS throats." The verbs in the tweets, such as "shoving" and "crushing," represent the actions taken by the government. They serve to activate the metaphor in the tweets and also, on a deeper level, stimulate a response in accordance with American cultural values.

In tweet 1.6, the "fear and trembling" reaction to the idea of an oppressive, all-encompassing government-as-parent is spelled out in referring to Obama's education proclamation using the phrase "cradle to career." It is a phrasing progressives who see government as a nurturing parent might view positively, with government playing a supportive role in a child's journey into adulthood through early childhood education, K-12 schooling, post-secondary education and training, and more. But the same phrase takes on a menacing tone in this tweet, implying control, not support. This notion of control, which will be elaborated on further in the Propaganda Frame (Frame 5), also appears in tweet 1.5, which uses the hashtags "#falseflag #publicmiseducation" to suggest the Common Core is a tool to teach "urban, socialist values" – a false flag in that the standards are masquerading as public education policy, but in fact have an ulterior motive.

In tweet 1.2, the author declares the CCSS are failing children, a subtle reference to the ways in which teachers give grades in school and transferring this role to the federal government ineffectively taking over the teacher's role. In tweet 1.3, the quote attributed to Obama is written in such a way as to suggest the President is giving parenting advice. The unspecified "you" could refer to teachers, but also could imply that the Common Core is a strategy for parents to "keep your kids dumb and controllable."

These tweets provoke many thorny questions about the role of government – as well as society – in the rearing of children, in that "our children" are being everything from controlled (1.3) to crushed (1.8) to experimented on (1.1) to having things shoved down their throats (1.4). The use of "our children" presupposes a collective group of children, but is it all American children, or is this a subset of children that is different from "their children"? Are "their children" the children of the poor that have been the target of federal education interventions since the 1960s? Stylistically, it is notable that "OUR" and "OUR CHILDREN" appear in all-caps, strongly reinforcing opposition to

the idea that the government might have ownership of children. The different applications of the possessive pronouns, i.e. the use of 'our' and 'your' to denote the positionality of children, are a common theme in the tweets, which will become more apparent in our subsequent analyses.

The final tweet in this set, tweet 1.9, is particularly interesting in raising questions about the government's role vis a vis children and education. In the tweet, the author links to a blog rebutting an argument that political philosopher Amy Gutmann (now the President of the University of Pennsylvania) made in *Democratic Education* (Gutmann & Ben-Porath, 1987), which argued for the collective role of the state in educating—and the tweet author argues, de facto parenting—children. In this formulation, however, it is characterized as "not just a slip of the tongue" to state the government has a sort of ownership stake in children, i.e. their education, is at the root of the fundamental ideological divide – and one of a few cases where we extract a tweet as much for the substantive argument it raises as for the metaphor it evokes.

**Radial Category 2: The Business Frame: The use of the CCSS for corporate profit at the expense of children**

In the business frame, the domain of business is used to describe the Common Core as a means for corporate interests to make money from the education market. This frame directs our attention to schools and children as a marketplace for extracting profits; as a source of private profit rather than public good. Table 2 provides a sample of tweets representing the business frame.

Table 2
*Tweets Illustrating the Business Frame*

| No. | Tweet |
|---|---|
| 2.1 | ***Pearson+Gates***= #Education Monopoly=Not good for Kids or Teachers. http://t.co/QHRz8gUVe0. #stopcommoncore #CommonCore #edreform |
| 2.2 | ***Gates Foundation*** thinks it can buy a halt on #CommonCore rollback in TN. OUR KIDS ARE NOT FOR SALE. http://t.co/t07UzDGUeZ #StopCommonCore |
| 2.3 | Must wtch on #CommonCore ***@BillGates n wifey*** pumped 100s of millions to destroy kids- hold States hostage http://t.co/t5ePRVodEi |
| 2.4 | ***Money*** should not trump our children. Do you honestly want a country full of communists? That's what you'll breed with #CommonCore Wake up! |
| 2.5 | ***@glennbeck*** just attended a #CommonCore teacher/parent meeting... best analogy I came up with... Everyone is whoring out the kids for money. |
| 2.6 | @TsLetters2Gates @HuffPostEdu ***#CommonCore*** Stdized guidelns,stdized tests,stdized gov ctrl = stdized children, oops, I mean stdized consumers |
| 2.7 | .***@GovernorCorbett*** Please do not sell our kids down the #CommonCore river. @crafty1woman @dcepa http://t.co/ma5xDlZR0o |
| 2.8 | How ***Publishers*** Take Advantage of the #CommonCore Educational Standards, ie, how to make $ on the backs of our kids. http://t.co/yexT454iaa |
| 2.9 | ***@USChamber*** You have to be stupid to Believe the Crap in this Tweet #CommonCore Will Destroy our kids and turn them in to robots slaves! |

Text in ***bold/italic*** indicates the actor/metonymy.
Text in reverse highlight shows the lexical indicators of the metaphor.

The actors in this frame, shown in bold/italic in Table 2, are often representatives of business, and the language of the tweets that activate the metaphor are commonly expressed in the language of business. Some actors are clearly identified, such as in tweet 2.1 where the author stipulates that two corporations in the business market (Pearson+Gates) produces (=) and education monopoly (#Education Monopoly). Bill Gates, as the CEO of Microsoft and one of the richest people in the world, comes to stand for business interests in education and most readers of the tweets no doubt know that Gates, through his Foundation, is a big supporter of the Common Core, meaning this metonymy feeds into their skepticism of his motives for supporting the standards movement. In tweet 2.2, the Gates Foundation is personified, as the author claims it can "buy a halt" on the Common Core rollback, going on to proclaim "OUR KIDS ARE NOT FOR SALE." And in tweet 2.3, "@BillGates n wifey," which (derisively, through the word "wifey") presupposes knowledge about the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, activates not just the business metaphor – through the use of the phrase "100s of millions" (of dollars) – but also uses the words "pumped" and "destroy" in a way that reinforces the notion that money is redirected to corporations outside of education without benefits for children; it also conjures images of physical harm being done to children. The image in this tweet of "holding states hostage" subtly references the financial incentives to states to implement the Common Core, and the idea of hostage taking implies both that states had no choice and that they are at the mercy of corporate interests.

While metonymies such as Pearson and Gates standing for business activates the frame of thinking about education as a market for profits, the logic of the metaphor is reinforced by further use of business-oriented language. The words "monopoly" (2.1) and "trump," (2.4) and the more colorful "whoring out the kids for money" (2.5) all tap into transactional language. Perhaps most artfully, the author in 2.6 uses a sort of lexical aside, slipping in an "oops, I mean" to indicate an inadvertent (wink, wink) slip of the tongue, while revealing the author's belief that the true intention of the Common Core is to create a generation of consumers—in essence, the commodification of education through standardization.

Some of the tweets extend the business metaphor into a more troublesome frame, namely that of slavery. The phrase "sell down the river," seen in tweet 2.7, has its origins in the slave trade (Gandhi 2014), as does the phrase to make money on the backs of someone, as in tweet 2.8. (Of course, tweet 2.5's "whoring out for money" is a slavery metaphor of a different sort.) And while those idiomatic constructions may be subtle or obscure, one is left to wonder just what is meant by the author of tweet 2.9, who writes in reference to an unidentified tweet that the Common Core will turn children into "robots slaves." In tweet 2.9, too, we see an explicit call-out of the US Chamber of Commerce, an early and ardent supporter of the Common Core and representative of business interests writ large.

Meaningfully, the business metaphor enabled in these tweets enacts the negative aspects of the role of for-profit companies and business philanthropists in education, as opposed to the more positive notions of competition increasing the quality of education and stimulating the creation of better products for educators, or the idea of creating a more educated workforce with which to compete in the global marketplace. This is a good example of how metaphors can focus people in one direction rather than another. It also exemplifies how framing can enact one set of values in a target audience over another. The choice of framing business as an exploiter of this education reform, rather than its champion, is done in order to appeal to the values of an audience that is skeptical of the role of private enterprise as a force for good in the public sector.

**Radial Category 3: The War Frame: The CCSS as an enemy to be fought, and as a weapon in a culture war.**

In the third radial category, we examine a subset of tweets that use war metaphors to position the Common Core as an enemy to be defeated, or as a weapon being used in a culture war. War metaphors are very common in political discourse (i.e. war on poverty, war on terror, etc.), so it is no surprise that the Twitter debate about the Common Core is no exception. The war metaphor is useful for opponents of a reform because it raises the specter of unwanted intrusion, positioning opponents as defenders and victims of aggression, while casting the aggressors as less civilized and morally in the wrong. In our analyses we found a plethora of tweets that utilized the war metaphor, and some examples are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
*Tweets Illustrating the War Frame*

| No. | Tweet |
|---|---|
| 3.1 | ***#CommonCore***: Marxists Seem to Have Infiltrated our Educational System and are now Proceeding to Brainwash/Indoctrinate our Children. #tcot |
| 3.2 | oped: ***#CommonCore*** violates & invades our private lives thru data mining...children are not common. They are unique. http://t.co/4QUKoqbscI |
| 3.3 | Parents need to know! ***#CommonCore*** destroying education & our children's love of learning. Get the truth from teachers http://t.co/6btB9bqmA9 |
| 3.4 | ***#CommonCore*** will attack the very gender of our children. It is Satanic. http://t.co/mo57fjRCRT #WAAR |
| 3.5 | MT ***US Ed Sec Arne Duncan***'s war on women and children http://t.co/dYucuSNM9s via @michellemalkin #FedEd #commoncore |
| 3.6 | A huge THANK YOU to ***@TwitchyTeam @michellemalkin*** and so many warriors fighting for our children in the battle against #CommonCore Press on! |

Text in ***bold/italic*** indicates the actor/metonymy.
Text in reverse highlight shows the lexical indicators of the metaphor.

In this series of tweets, the actor or initiator of the frame (shown in bold/italic) most frequently mentioned is the Common Core itself (as in tweets 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4). Tweet 3.5 uses former education secretary Arne Duncan as the stand-in for the government, thereby framing the government as the aggressor.

Carefully chosen words in the tweets activate the war metaphor, positioning the Common Core or its supporters as an enemy to be fought. The use of words such as "infiltrated" (3.1), "violates & invades" (3.2), "destroying" (3.3) and "warriors fighting…in the battle" (3.6), vividly raise war images in the reader's mind. In these tweets, the war imagery is quite jarring, in contrast with qualities typically associated with education – thinking and learning and measured discourse, rather than brutish actions. Tweet 3.2 is particularly notable because it flips the script of the war metaphor and has @twitchyteam (a conservative news outlet) and @michellemalkin (a pundit known for her virulent opposition to the standards) as the "warriors" in the "battle against #commoncore."

In tweet 3.5, the oft-used construction "war on [insert evil here]," hearkens back to Johnson's War on Poverty and Nixon's War on Drugs; yet it is repurposed to refer not to a war on an evil, but a war on women and children, led by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Of course,

in none of these cases is an actual war happening, but the metaphor is strong: we see the debate as two sides opposed to one another, no room for compromise. In this framing, it seems that the destructive Common Core must itself be destroyed. The collective tweets reinforce the notion that the government is exercising too much power, and activates foundational concepts in American mythology, such as citizens taking up arms against tyranny.

Many tweets depicted the Common Core as the aggressor or the instrument of violence, and children as the victims. In tweet 3.4, wherein the Common Core will "attack the very gender of our children," and is then described as Satanic, the author awakens two of the most basic core elements of humanity: biology and religion. The personified Common Core is thus positioned as an aggressor and threat to both the physical and moral constitution of children. By coupling frames of the CCSS as a threat to the bodies and souls of the most vulnerable members of society, this tweet activates the deepest instincts of those who see it as a moral responsibility to defend the youth of the nation against depravity and sin.

As Lakoff noted in his 1996 book *Moral Politics*, the war frame is particularly effective because it cues a battle that is recognizable to every political activist – the battle for influence over the nation's cultural values. As schools are the places where children are in their formative years and their basic belief systems are being formed, the cultural battle over influence of education is particularly acute. While we might proclaim that schools should not teach values, it is unavoidable that schools are the place where children are introduced to and experience many of the issues that form their value systems. In Lakoff's (1996) view, the underlying battle for values is exactly where the strict father and nurturant parent views of paternalism are in conflict. As the mind is the place where morality resides, and education trains the mind, "it is the highest moral calling to defend the moral system itself from attack" (Lakoff, 1996, p. 228). Thus, because education is such a powerful influence on peoples' belief systems, the nationalization of standards becomes a battleground for moral contestation.

**Radial Category 4: The Experiment Frame: The CCSS as an experiment on children**

The experiment frame positions education leaders or government as an illegitimate scientific authority by comparing children to experimental subjects, with physical and psychological effects attributed to the Common Core. The frame is activated by using language associated with laboratory experiments and serves to undermine the legitimacy of rational and empirical policy.

Table 4 shows a selection of tweets that frame the Common Core as an experiment on children. In almost all of the tweets in this sample, the CCSS is metonymized as the experiment itself, with children as the subjects of the experiment. In one case, tweet 4.4, the standards are activated as the experimenter itself, removing human agency and suggesting that the standards themselves could directly cause harm to children with no human intercession.

Table 4
*Tweets Illustrating the Experiment Frame*

| No. | Tweet |
|---|---|
| 4.3 | I'm pretty sure ***#CommonCore was designed*** purposely 2 make parents insane, in addition 2 making kids need therapy. http://t.co/91yGKe1Bep |
| 4.1 | Education Experts Also Oppose Core http://t.co/nzW1gqKbpb Wake up ppl ***#CommonCore*** is an experiment,kids=guineas #stopcommoncore #education |
| 4.2 | @donttreadonfarm @michellemalkin The ***Parents' Manifesto on #CommonCore*** "our children will not be guinea pigs 4this education experiment" |

| | |
|---|---|
| 4.4 | ***#CommonCore*** makes kids pee, poop, puke with anxiety, say principals: http://t.co/qIeH46eNSW #edreform #childabuse #PostTraumaticStress |
| 4.5 | @StudentsFirstNY ***#CommonCore*** is mental child abuse Who ever wrote lessons should be held accountable. ***#ObamaCORE*** |
| 4.6 | Parent Alert! Principals say ***#CommonCore tests*** make little kids vomit, pee their pants: http://t.co/JzbKOmn6FR #StopCommonCore #tcot |
| 4.7 | If there's poison in your meat, do you still serve it to your kids? http://t.co/Mq4ddh3Nbz #stopcommoncore #education #CommonCore |

Text in ***bold/italic*** indicates the actor/metonymy.
Text in reverse highlight shows the lexical indicators of the metaphor.

The metaphor of the CCSS as an ill-fated experiment is activated by vivid language of both experimentation and the negative effects of the experiment. Children are seen as the subjects of the experiment in both tweets 4.1 and 4.2, which uses the term "guinea pigs" to activate the image of children as harmless animals who are being tested upon. Moreover, the notions of scientific experiments and guinea pigs undermines the credibility of the standards – if they are based on evidence, then we would not need to test them and use children in experiments to see if they are effective. Of course, this sidesteps the fact that few, if any, large scale education policy initiatives have experimental evidence to support their widespread adoption.

The metaphor of unethical experimentation is further triggered by the effects of the experiments jarringly described in the tweets in Table 4. These include causing physical bodily harm (tweets 4.4 and 4.6) and psychological effects like making "kids need therapy" (4.3), "mental child abuse" (4.5); and the hashtags "#childabuse #PostTraumaticStress" (4.4). These terms all reify the image of the Common Core as a dangerous experiment being conducted upon children, and that children are thereby victims of maltreatment. In tweet 4.3, the connection to psychological maltreatment is not only explicit, it extends to parents, too, as it "was designed purposely 2 make parents insane." Notably, the "designer" in 4.3 is not nominalized, but the intent is clear ("purposefully") and the math problem (linked in an image to this tweet) has nothing in it that attaches it explicitly to the Common Core. Finally, in 4.7, it is simply through juxtaposition and implication that the Common Core is physically dangerous, as it is compared to tainted meat. In 4.1, the headline "Education Experts Also Oppose Core" is used to strengthen the author's argument, implying that the unnamed experimenter is not within education, yet also leaving it obscure from whom the experiment might originate.

**Radial Category 5: The Propaganda Frame: The CCSS as a way to brainwash children**

While many tweet authors who use #commoncore disagree with the standards, one subset of tweets takes issue with them by framing them as a mechanism for transfusing ideology into children. As shown in the tweets in Table 5, the actors are largely obscured in these examples. But we can see shades of agents, in such tweets as 5.1, where Marxist Control and a Marxist program are supposedly behind the Common Core. So too in 5.2, where Agenda 21 (the United Nations sustainable development plan, which is viewed in some conservative circles as a plot to redistribute wealth from rich to poor countries) and NWO (a conspiracy theory speculating the emergence of a totalitarian world government) are described as "entwined" with the Common Core.

Table 5
*Tweets Illustrating the Propaganda Frame*

| No. | Tweet |
|---|---|
| 5.1 | @FoxNews where's your epic exposure of Marxist Control-takeover of Our Children through #CommonCore. Marxist program squashes free thought! |
| 5.2 | 5* ***#COMMONCORE & #AGENDA21 ENTWINED!*** EDUCATION UNDER #NWO FOR KIDS! TO PROGRAM THEM YOUNG! SSTOP! #CommonCore programming! @TavernKeepers |
| 5.3 | Stop trying to teach OUR children your urban, socialist values, ***#obama***. #CommonCore #falseflag #publicmiseducation right @JimDeMint? |
| 5.4 | ***#CommonCore***: Sounds like Totalitarianism/Marxism is being taught to our Children: http://t.co/1dEdfSfejA Dem Strategy: Brainwash Kids early? |
| 5.5 | ***#CommonCore***: Marxists Seem to Have Infiltrated our Educational System and are now Proceeding to Brainwash/Indoctrinate our Children. #tcot |
| 5.6 | #commoncore and the liberal indoctrination of children! http://t.co/vN2IRrdkr0 |
| 5.7 | Porn at Buena High School in Sierra Vista: ***#CommonCore*** http://t.co/ckdctRnhLo YET EVEN MORE TRASH 4 KIDS 2 READ UNDER CC #StopCommonCore |
| 5.8 | Money should not trump our children. Do you honestly want a country full of communists? That's what you'll breed with #CommonCore Wake up! |
| 5.9 | Give me four years to teach the children and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted.- ***Vladimir Lenin*** #CommonCore @GlennBeck @TheBlaze |
| 5.10 | Dirty mouths come from dirty minds. Don't American kids need a good #Brainwashing? http://t.co/VvHIZzKi8F via @Heritage #CommonCore |

Text in ***bold/italic*** indicates the actor/metonymy.
Text in reverse highlight shows the lexical indicators of the metaphor.

The propaganda frame is activated with the multiple mentions of the Common Core being aligned with un-American ideologies, such as tweet 5.3 where the CCSS are teaching "urban, socialist values," tweets 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, which claim the standards are transmitting "Totalitarianism/Marxism," and tweet 5.6, which charges that use of the CCSS are resulting in "liberal indoctrination." Indeed, the word "indoctrination" appears several times, and arguably harkens back to the larger frame of the government, standing in for parent, teaching values to children. Again, the lexical choices here rely heavily on the possessive "our" children to reinforce the us/them dichotomy where the messengers are positioned as protectors.

Indoctrination and ideology are not limited just to politics, as the author of 5.7 adds pornography into the alleged moral corruption enabled by the standards. The presupposition behind "YET EVEN MORE TRASH" is that Common Core reading standards have brought new materials into classrooms that are corroding the minds of youth.

Paradoxically, in 5.8, the business and ideology frames combine as money should not trump children, but the Common Core will also breed a country full of communists, two political ideologies seemingly in opposition to one another. This tweet also activates the frame of government as family through use of the word "breed."

Tweet 5.9 only mentions the Common Core with the hashtag reference. But it ties the standards to indoctrination by quoting Lenin's famous statement about using education ("teach the

children") to implant ideas ("seeds", "sown", "never uprooted") in their minds. The agricultural metaphor reinforces the power of ideas, which once introduced can never be removed. As Lenin was the founder of the system of government that is the antithesis of democracy, the tweet ties the Common Core to a value system of America's nemesis.

The ideology, experiment, and business frames all come together in the use of the words "programming" (5.2) and "brainwashing" (5.10). The idea that brains can be programmed, like computers, raises many sinister connotations related to transmission (another computer metaphor) of ideology through technology, which also connects to the thinking within the business frame about data mining and the involvement of the Gates Foundation.

## The Semiotics of Twitter: Codes in the Tweets

The final segment of our results section focuses on the codes that are embedded within the tweets through the use of hashtags that that allow people to search for others who use the same hashtags and in doing so connect with like-minded others. As noted by Zappavigna (2011), hashtags provide a form of "searchable talk" that allow people to affiliate with others shared outlooks. In this way, the lexical choices we make, and the semiotic codes in which we communicate, serve as a means of expressing our worldview and aligning ourselves with compatible others in a broader discourse, or, conversely, positioning ourselves in opposition to those with whom we disagree. Interestingly, the medium of Twitter, wherein hashtags can be used to filter messages, opens up an interesting question about the formation of coalitions in opposition to a piece of public policy. While the #commoncore hashtag may serve only to filter messages about the topic itself, it opens up the possibility that authors from across the ideological spectrum find themselves united in opposition, particularly through subsequent hashtags such as #stopcommoncore. And while some coalitions may form in opposition to the CCSS along close ideological lines, it is possible that other coalitions from very different ideological positions are united in this opposition, despite ideological difference, through the online space in which they coexist.

Sometimes, the transmission of meaning comes not through explicit metaphor, but through association. We found authors who implied association in what amounted to non-verbal asides or lexical juxtaposition. Other authors used links or images to convey meaning through juxtaposition of a few words or a quote with an associated image, a retweet of another author's writing, or a link to an article.

In the case of hashtags being used as verbal asides, rather than for their functionality as topic filters, we found many examples of a medium-specific form of wordplay. For example, the hashtag #obamacore, in one short neologism, encapsulates 1) that the Common Core is an initiative of Obama, 2) that the CCSS is comparable to the Affordable Care Act, often referred to derisively as Obamacare, and 3) thereby conjures up the discourse around U.S. health care policy and the role of government in another domain of public life, one arguably far more discussed than the Common Core. In another example of wordplay, the hashtag #publicmiseduation, a simple play on public education, interjects the idea that the CCSS is a means by which the project of American public education is being used to intentionally improperly educate the country's children.

Other times, a hashtag is used as shorthand to connect one idea to another. For example, the hashtag #falseflag being added to a tweet indicates the authors desire to characterize the Common Core as a covert operation, that the standards are obscuring their true intention. (A false flag, a term historically derived from ships disguising themselves by using another country's flag rather than their own, has become common in many conspiracy theories about government.) In another example of

hashtags as shorthand, the tag #FedEd is used to mark tweets that deride federal involvement in education.

The single unifying factor in our dataset is the use of the hashtag #commoncore. This hashtag serves as a very coarse filter for extracting tweets relating to one topic from the entirety of tweets about any number of topics. In some cases, the use of this hashtag is the only thing within a tweet that gives any indication that a tweet is about the Common Core at all.

For example, see tweet 5.10:

Give me four years to teach the children and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted.- Vladimir Lenin #CommonCore @GlennBeck @TheBlaze

In this tweet, the author attributes a quote to Vladimir Lenin, hashtags Common Core to place the tweet into the Twitter conversation on the topic, and then mentions political commentator Glenn Beck and online news outlet New American Heartland. The implication by association is that the Common Core is a tool for ideological indoctrination, and a step further, perhaps, in the context of other tweets in this stream, that Barack Obama is another Lenin.

Beyond the #commoncore hashtag, we found several other recurring hashtags being used to affiliate the author with an ideology or movement. For example, #**tcot** is a hashtag that stands for Top Conservatives on Twitter. The hashtag #WAAR stands for We Are American Refugees, and is used by people who feel that they have become outsiders in their own nation. Agenda 21 is a non-binding, voluntarily implemented action plan of the United Nations help poor nations sustain development, and much like with #falseflag above, the insertion of #AGENDA21 indicates an author's shorthand association of the CCSS with Agenda 21.

Particularly with the #tcot hashtag, we see examples of authors affiliating themselves with a specific chain of conversation, namely of self-identifying as top conservatives. As this hashtag is not unique to the Common Core discussion, but an alternate sorting mechanism for the same content, it functions to add tweets about the CCSS into the broader discourse of conservatives on Twitter. And within the #commoncore discourse, the use of #tcot clearly demarcates the author's ideology – if, that is, the reader understands the meaning of the hashtag.

## Limitations

As this research was an emergent process, possibly other frames would emerge with a reading of a different sample of tweets from the full dataset. We also noted that there were many examples in the sample of tweets that were supportive of the Common Core, they did not seem to group together within coherent frames as did the tweets that opposed the standards. Therefore, our analyses focused on the frames of those who were opposing the Common Core.

We also note some of the limitations of Twitter as an expression of discourse. The highly truncated form of the medium (140 characters, including spaces) encourages users to be both direct and dramatic. This is both a feature of Twitter and a constraint to more expansive expressions by participants. Additionally, nuances of other forms of spoken discourse that are central to forming meaning, including tone, irony, satire, and other literary techniques may be lost in both the transmission and reception of communication by this medium.

## Discussion

When writing a paper about message framing, it is hard to use any word without triggering (to wit!) a metaphor that leads to a mental image that puts one in a frame of reference that directs

the mind towards a particular conception. While the use of the word 'trigger' does notinevitably lead to images of conflict, a second word in the same context reifies the metaphor. Triggering a clash leads the mind to a very different place than triggering an idea.

There are three important points here. First, we unavoidably think in metaphors. Second, metaphors corral our frame of reference and direct our understanding to the idea the metaphor awakens. Third, and most importantly, the frame that is enacted by the metaphor activates a set of deeply held values that we hold dear and which are the pillars of our moral beliefs about the world. Most frames and metaphors in political discourse seek to tap into these value-laden conceptions so that we may find affinity with the values of the messenger.

However, value systems are complex and different ones are often intertwined. We sometimes categorize belief systems, and the groups that hold them, with convenient labels—like liberal and libertarian and conservative, or religious and progressive—but the realities of affiliations are more complicated than these labels imply, because on different issues we may form our opinions based upon different principles. This is evident in the shifting alliances that we see in American politics in every election cycle. Issues and constituencies long held by one party may shift—slowly or suddenly—to another.

To illustrate this point about the appeal to underlying value systems and the choices that these calls represent, let us review a few of the radial frames that seek to reinforce the overarching frame of the Common Core as a threat to a core value system that holds our children as a precious resource that must be protected from threat.

The business frame is a good example of this. The tweets we examined largely activate the negative impression of business exploiting education for profit. The theme of these tweets is that education is being commodified and children are being sold, or sold out, for commercial interests that are are anathema to educative interests. The particular metaphors chosen by the tweeters enact powerful images that provoke our aversion to harmful business practices. Importantly, while the tweets stimulate an anti-business frame, they could just as easily have been crafted to produce a pro-business frame by evoking themes of private enterprise, innovation, and national and international competition. So who are these tweets intended for? It is unlikely that this framing of business would appeal to libertarians, fiscal conservatives, or other free market advocates who tend to see business as a positive means of unleashing dynamism into the system. Rather, these messages are more likely to appeal to the values of more liberal opponents of the Common Core who are suspicious of the misalignments between business interests and educational goals.

By contrast the tweets that typify the government frame are designed to appeal to the value system of a very different audience than that of the business frame. The tweets of the government frame emphasize the intrusion of the federal government into education. These tweets, which sometimes use the metonymy of President Obama or Secretary of Education Arne Duncan as stand ins for government, use metaphors of government interference and privacy invasion. Some of these tweets intermingle with the ideology frame, whereby the government is the instrument of efforts to inculcate children with liberal values. These tweets appeal to those whose value system contains a deep distrust of government. They appeal to what Lakoff (1996) refers to as the 'strict father' metaphor, which emphasizes that the role of government should be limited and directed towards the preservation of conservative values.

The audience for the tweets using the government frame is very distinct from the intended audience of the business frame tweets. These tweets seem more likely to appeal to those who are wary of the government role in education, particularly the federal government. Thus these tweets are more likely to appeal to more libertarian-minded opponents of the Common Core who desire minimal government intrusion in the lives of citizens. Interestingly, people who hold the values that

the government frame would appeal to would not be impressed with the appeals evoked by the business frame as it was constituted. To appeal to values of the constituency, the business argument would need to be reframed to appeal to values of private enterprise and market advantage.

The propaganda frame appeals to a slightly different set of constituent values. While the government frame activates the defense of minimal government involvement in people's lives, the propaganda frame is intended to appeal to those who hold a particular view about what should be America's dominant social and cultural values. By evoking images of the cold war, and the US's ideological campaign against the Soviet Union, these tweets speak to social conservatives who view America as holding a distinctive cultural set of values that convey a sense of moral hierarchy in the world, where western values are seen as superior to other cultural systems, and education needs to be protected from the infiltration of these foreign value systems.

While the propaganda frame may raise notions of international ideological skirmishes, the war frame takes on the imprint of a battle for influence over the nation's cultural values on the home front. The images awakened in the war frame call to mind the struggles over who should dictate what is taught in America's schools. While standards might seem like a non-controversial set of statements of what children should know or be able to do at particular educational junctures, they cannot be separated from questions about what content should be used to teach the standards and who should make these decisions. The centralization of 50 sets of state standards into one 'common' set of standards effectively meant that the local battles for hegemony over curricular influence were combined into one national battle. From this perspective, it is not hard to see the standards as a battleground for influence over the nation's cultural values. It is precisely because education is such a powerful influence on peoples' belief systems that the nationalization of standards became ground zero for social contestation. Framing the Common Core debate as a battle for influence over social values appeals to social and religious conservatives who seek to protect traditional cultural values.

Thus, by examining the different frames and metaphors used by opponents of the Common Core, and looking closely at the metonymies, vocabulary, and textual references that made particular arguments for their opposition, we can see a different pattern starting to emerge. By tracing the values systems that each frame was designed to appeal to, we can see that each of the different radial categories appealed to different interest groups across the political spectrum. From liberals to libertarians to social and religious conservatives, at least some framing in the #commoncore tweets appealed to this diverse set of value system. By viewing the range of appeals to deeply held values of different constituency groups, it is easier to see how groups with seemingly little in common could find common cause in opposition to the Common Core.

In education, the Common Core debate is yet another skirmish in the long running battle for influence over the direction of social policy. Education is a particularly important arena because it is a central place where different conceptions of the purpose of society converge. Education embodies both the formation of children's worldviews and the passing along of cultural traditions and precepts. With these stakes, there will always be heated debates about major education reforms. The Common Core in particular activates such a debate because of its central role in directing educational ideas and resources. While the idea of academic standards may be uncontroversial, the means and ends to accomplish them cuts to the quick of the social purposes of our education system. Twitter, and its hashtag feature that allowed us to hone in on a single issue, provided a conveniently bounded arena for us to conduct this study. But sophisticated issue framing occurs in the wider political discourse as well, and what we have explicated in this study is important for policy audiences to become better attuned to how these techniques may be used more broadly to influence the political debates within which consequential policies are formulated.

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## About the Authors

**Jonathan Supovitz**
University of Pennsylvania
jons@upenn.edu
Jonathan Supovitz is a Professor of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education and the Co-Director of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE). Dr. Supovitz is an accomplished mixed-method researcher and evaluator and has published findings from numerous educational studies and evaluations of state and district reform efforts. His areas of specialty include education policy, school leadership, professional development, data use, classroom formative assessment, and state and district standards and accountability systems. He is the Executive Director of the CPRE Knowledge Hub (cprehub.org), a virtual space that brings researchers, policymakers, and practitioners together to learn and collaborate on challenges in the education field.

**Elisabeth Reinkordt**
University of Pennsylvania
reine@upenn.edu
Elisabeth Reinkordt is an editor, documentary filmmaker, writer, and community organizer. Her graduate research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln investigated the relationship between mass media coverage of education and the crafting of education policy. She also studied Modern Culture & Media at Brown University. She works as a writer/editor at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education.

## About the Guest Editors

**Jessica Nina Lester**
Indiana University
jnlester@indiana.edu
Jessica Nina Lester is an Assistant Professor of Inquiry Methodology in the School of Education at Indiana University, US. She teaches research methods courses, with a particular focus on discourse analysis approaches and conversation analysis. She focuses much of her research on the study and development of qualitative methodologies and methods, and situates her substantive research at the intersection of discourse studies and disability studies.

**Chad R. Lochmiller**
Indiana University
clochmil@indiana.edu
Chad R. Lochmiller is an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in the School of Education at Indiana University and a faculty affiliate of the Center for Evaluation & Education Policy. He teaches graduate and certification courses to students in the Educational

Leadership Program. His research examines education policy issues broadly related to human resource management, instructional supervision, and school finance.

**Rachael Gabriel**
University of Connecticut
rachael.gabriel@uconn.edu
Rachael Gabriel is an Assistant Professor of Literacy Education at the University of Connecticut, and is an associate of the Center for Education Policy Analysis (CEPA), and the Center on Postsecondary Education and Disability (CPED). Her research interests include: teacher preparation, development and evaluation, as well as literacy instruction, interventions, and related policies. Rachael's current projects investigate supports for adolescent literacy, disciplinary literacy, state policies related to reading instruction and tools for teacher evaluation.

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