

Who gets to decide?

Recently there's been some news regarding the Iraq War.

You read that right.

20 years after Congress authorized the Iraq War, some Senators are leading an effort to repeal its authorization.

As the heart of the war is already finished and basically all troops are currently home or deployed elsewhere, it's largely a symbolic gesture.

But, it reveals some important implications educators can use to inform the decisions we make every day (and I'm not just talking about changing your mind, which I've covered [elsewhere](#)).

The heart of this debate is a political one. According to our Constitution, it's Congress who decides we go to war with. The President may command the military, but he or she should do so based on who Congress authorizes war against.

The thing is though, a lot has changed since our Constitution was first drafted. Most importantly: Nuclear weapons. If an enemy of the United States were to lead a nuclear attack against our country, the President would have seconds, maybe minutes, to decide whether or not to attack back. It would be entirely impractical to convene the Congress to make such a formal authorization. Congress authorizing war sounds practical when warfare looked as it did in the 18th Century. But as times have changed, the President has assumed more and more responsibility as Congress has abdicated its own. Some of this may have been for practical purposes (such as the whole nuclear war thing), but some of it may also be the type of power arguments the executive and legislative branches have been debating about since our country's inception.

In the fight over repealing the Iraq War authorization, Congress is reclaiming - a little bit - its authority to make wartime decisions.

So what implications does this have for educators?

It's a reminder that many of the decisions we make involve other people. In [this previous edition](#), I urge you to consider who your stakeholders might be in any given decision.

In this edition, I want to share a strategy you can use to better determine the role you or others play in any given decision. It's called the RAPID framework, and it's an acronym. It will ask you to consider: Who needs to **R**ecommend an action be taken, who needs to **A**gree with the decision, who needs to **P**erform the action, who needs to provide **I**ntput, and who makes the final **D**ecision.

This could be helpful in determining whether you are stepping on someone's toes, doing too much, or doing too little. Your individual contexts will of course vary, but here are a couple of examples: It's likely that in determining what you teach on any given day, you make the final **D**ecision. But most teachers don't have universal **D**ecision-making power over curriculum adaptation, for instance. That could be helpful to remember. You might have the opportunity to provide **I**ntput, but you won't be on the hook for the final **D**ecision. You could see that as a loss of power if you'd like, and certainly there are times when you can advocate for alternative roles if the decision is super important to you. But it could also be freeing to know you won't be making the final **D**ecision.

From my experience, the biggest tension usually isn't from someone who plays one role wanting to play another but being unable to. More common is the tension that comes from *ambiguity*. That is, without clearly-defined roles, it could feel frustrating not knowing who makes the final call, or assuming you have one role when you do not.

Make good choices, -Kevin

Bad decision of the week: Teacher leads middle school student to role play a "seducing hooker," charter networks says teacher will be "retrained."

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