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RE-EXAMINING THE USE OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN K-12 SCHOOLS: A FOUCAULDIAN ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE AND POWER

A Dissertation
by
JENNIFER SLOAN WAMPLER

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Abstract

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This dissertation deconstructs the effects of power relations at play in the use of educational policy on the topic of social media use by K-12 educators. To this end, an exploration of how policy acts as discourse to produce knowledge, subjectivities and docile bodies of employees through the creation and use of instruments, such as new hire orientation and professional development training courses is completed. This research employs post qualitative inquiry and the process of thinking with theory as tools for deconstruction. Michel Foucault's theories of discourse, power relations, subjectivity and resistance are primarily used for co-reading with various texts. This study shows that power produces the discourse of educator professionalism, which works to create subject positions, particular knowledge, and the need for instruments of disciplinary power such as policy, orientation programs and professional development training courses. Thus, the nature of power is revealed as productive, fluid and

relational. Further, this dissertation argues that policy creates binary oppositions that function as a "dividing practice" to separate employees from others and from themselves. Power is exercised through policy to produce the knowledge of these subject positions and compel employees to self-regulation. By thinking with theory, power relations are exposed and thereby open to more direct challenges. In this way, this research does not suggest a *better* alternative to policy, orientation or training programs or advocate for their death, instead it calls for *different* conversations around their use and purpose. Finally, this study shows that social media use by school employees enables the discourse of educator professionalism because it provides another setting to train employees in what is proper and professional. This analysis exposes how the discourse of social media has been particularly opposed to the foundational principles of the discourse of educator professionalism, thus causing social media to be designated as a problem, rather than the limitations of the discourse itself. One of the findings of this research is that policy cannot *solve* employee use of social media issues. Therefore, if policy cannot fix problems, then educational leaders must ask, "Is policy necessary?" This research argues for the use of thinking with theory as a necessary tool for analyzing complex educational issues in new, nontraditional ways.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my girls, Markie and Sloan. Never be afraid to seek the Truth. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

This dissertation is also dedicated to my best friend and husband, Mark. Who knew so much good could come from an email!?!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

What do pole dancing, TikTok, Black Lives Matter, President Trump and "dope" all have in common? They are all recent examples of how the use of social media by school employees can result in unemployment (LeBlanc, 2021; Postel, 2021; Schwartz, 2018; Spigolon, 2020; Weir, 2020). These examples involve situations where school employees posted pictures or comments on their personal social media sites that were considered lewd, profane, racist or inappropriate, which subsequently led to their termination. In one case, a veteran teacher posted a TikTok video of himself "drinking a beer, cursing and joking that it was before school and he needed the alcohol because of the 'idiots' he worked with" (Postel, 2021). In another instance, a teacher posted videos of herself in her afterschool job as a "pole-dancing fitness instructor" (Schwartz, 2018), while in another case, a principal posted comments that were considered racially insensitive and negative towards the Black Lives Matter movement (Weir, 2020). In each example, school system officials found the posts by school employees to be "contrary to the values" of the school district (Weir, 2020). Loss of employment due to comments and photos on social media is not exclusive to school employees. In fact, job terminations stemming from social media posts are so common that the phrase "Facebook fired" has been coined (O'Connor & Schmidt, 2015, p. 1). Yet, the standard for appropriate social media use is much higher for school employees because of their status as public figures.

I am interested in the use of social media by public school employees and related policy primarily due to my work, over the past eight years, as an administrator at the district office level in human resources. Social media use by school employees has grown exponentially and become "problematic" during my time in human resources. It is one of the most common reasons for employees to resign or be dismissed. According to a 2018 survey by Career Builder, "34% of

companies saw something on the internet that made them reprimand or fire an employee" (Hayes, 2018). In addition, over the past three years the school district in which I work has been involved in policy manual revisions. In this process, I have led our school board in reviewing every policy in our old manual and every new policy offered as a model policy by the North Carolina School Board Association (NCSBA). I worked directly with our local board, NCSBA, and the school board's attorney in this process. As a result, I began to view policy differently. Specifically, I began to see policy itself as problematic (not just the topics, such as social media) because of the ways in which policy works silently to label, surveil, confine and separate.

Current Status of the Problem

Employee use of social media has been considered a *problem* in education for the past few years. For instance, social media use by school employees has made the Personnel Administrators of North Carolina conference agenda at least once every year since 2015. A quick Google search will yield thousands of articles, both scholarly and otherwise, on the use of social media by educators. These articles typically fall into two categories: either employee *misuse* of social media or a school's *appropriate use* of social media for marketing and communication purposes. In other words, employee use of social media in K-12 education can be described in binary oppositional terms. It is either good or bad. It is *good* if it promotes and enhances a school system's reputation, and it is *bad* if it diminishes or is likely to tarnish it. A binary opposition is a pair of terms that are viewed as "mutually exclusive" opposites (Klages, 2012, p. 10). In binary oppositions, the first term is privileged as normal, and the second term is othered. Derrida argued that binary oppositions are a "fundamental structure of Western philosophy and culture" because they represent the "basic 'unit' of our thought" (Klages, 2012, p. 9-10). Binary oppositions populate the literature on the topic of social media use by school employees. The most common

binary oppositions in the literature related to social media use by school employees are: legal/illegal (O'Connor & Schmidt, 2015); smart side/dark-side (Holland et al., 2016); right/wrong (O'Donovan, 2012); appropriate/inappropriate (Magid & Gallagher, 2015; O'Connor & Schmidt, 2015); and the most prevalent: use/misuse (Bon et al., 2013; Rayl, 2017; Sturgeon, 2019). Binaries are important to analyze because they can make a problem visible. For example, O'Connor and Schmidt (2015) ask: "Where is the line between appropriate and inappropriate social media interactions" for school employees? (p. 8). Because each term of a binary is mutually exclusive, then a line separates the terms. Thus, the problem is the term that is on the "wrong" side of the binary—or, opposite to the privileged term. In other words, the problem that is indicated by O'Connor and Schmidt's question is whatever is deemed *inappropriate* because "appropriate" is privileged, is normed, and is accepted.

While various binary oppositions exist on the topic of social media use by school employees, a comprehensive binary of proper/improper emerges. In this way, the overarching question of "What happens when a line is drawn between what is proper and improper for an educator to say or show or do on social media?" surfaces. This question opens up a site for deconstructing binary oppositions in the use of social media by school employees, which is one of the main purposes of my study.

In education, when a problem arises, the solution is to "fix" the problem through the creation of a policy. Policy manuals are a standard practice for K-12 educational institutions. The purpose of manuals is to define and clarify what is proper and improper for stakeholders on a host of topics. In other words, a policy answers the question "where is the line?" on a topic. Policies are typically general in nature because they cover a wide range of activities and practices, and one section of a policy manual is usually devoted to personnel expectations and

guidelines. For example, in North Carolina, there is a *Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct* policy that applies to all school employees (certified and classified) and oversees the general conduct and behavior of employees (inside and outside of school). However, employee use of social media has garnered its own policy, which further substantiates its designation as a *problem* in education. Moreover, in response to social media's rapid popularity, a policy was swiftly created. Specifically, Facebook opened to the public in 2004. By December of 2011, Facebook had 845 million users, and the NC School Board Association had drafted a model policy for school districts entitled "Employee Use of Social Media" (Yahoo News, 2013). This policy limits employees' use of social media to personal time and requires all use to be professional. Despite these limits and restrictions, this policy was not controversial when adopted in April 2020 by my district. In fact, though it was publicly presented at two school board meetings, there was little to no discussion about the new policy. I think there are a few reasons for the relative disinterest and silence related to this policy.

First, teachers and school level staff typically consider policies boring documents that reside in the background of their work. Like Skidmore (2020), many educators think, "When I hear the word 'policy,' a little part of me dies" (p. 1). Since policies are regularly passed down from the state and federal governments, there is a tendency to ignore them or accept them as the "way things are done" in education. Thus, they become normalized by those in the community who are also the intended targets of the policy. This normalization makes it easy for policies to be overlooked and developed in silence. Furthermore, due to this normalization process, policies tend to take on a status of permanence in education. For example, prior to my inquiry on this topic, I had not considered that education policy was invented. In actuality, school board policies did not become common practice until the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1922, Deffenbaugh and

the Department of the Interior put out a bulletin entitled "Administration of Schools in the Smaller Cities." One third of this 1922 bulletin is devoted to the working of school boards, yet it does not mention the need, use or creation of education policy even once. Whereas in 1959, a bulletin was published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare entitled "Characteristics of Local School Board Policy Manuals." In this bulletin, White (1959) writes, "The development of written statements of policy by boards of education is a relatively new movement. References to written policies in the literature of several decades ago are practically nonexistent" (p. 1). In actuality, the use of policy has become a common and popular strategy for school boards in my lifetime. Yet its normalization as a "best practice" has become so strong and pervasive that it seems it has been used forever and has become common sense.

A second possible reason for disinterest in this policy is that while a policy on use of social media by school employees is new, the idea that school employees must act ethically and professionally, even outside the job, is a well established norm. As Pajares (2008) wrote in his book, *The Ones We Remember: Scholars Reflect on Teachers Who Made a Difference*:

> Many of us have been deeply influenced by one or more teachers who have exercised a formative effect in our development as students and individuals. We remember these teachers with fondness, tell their stories to our own children, think of them with affection, respect, gratitude, even reverence. (p. ix)

Pajares' book is over 200 pages long, sharing more than 20 stories of excellent educators who are revered. However, most of us do not need to read Pajares' book to learn about excellent educators because we know one or more from our own experiences in school. Our memories of these favorite teachers become the ethical standard in our minds of professionalism for all educators. As Weedon (1997) explains, "No individual ever approaches a discourse unaffected

by the memory of previous discursive interpellations" (p. 98). In other words, our memories are internalized and become what is real and true. Therefore, we approach the discourse of professionalism and public education affected by our experiences. Because our experiences traditionally support professional expectations and reverence for educators, then a policy endorsing ethical and moral behavior is not surprising or concerning. In this way, the idea of a public school employee as a professional figure has been normalized, so that policies related to any professional standard are common sense, which allows this type of policy to work in silence without active resistance from educators.

Third, policies relating to professional conduct are common in many educational institutions. For example, even elementary schools have codes of conduct for students, as do universities. Therefore, it makes sense that in 1998 the NC State Board of Education created a code of ethics for the purpose of defining standards of professional conduct for educators. Our local code of ethics states: "This policy applies at all times and locations where the employee's conduct might reflect poorly on the school, the school system, the employee's status as a role model for students" (Cleveland County Schools, 2020c). In other words, for at least the past two decades, public school educators have accepted their subjection as a professional in categorizing all areas of their life as *public*. Again, the idea of a public school employee as a professional person has been so normalized that policies related to professionalism are able to work in silence without active resistance from educators.

The historian and philosopher Michel Foucault (1990/1978) writes, "Silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions" (p. 101). This means policy is not power. Instead, policy is a *strategy and instrument* employed through power relations because policy acts as a shelter by working to ensure silence and secrecy. This process also explains how policy

becomes “common sense” and normalized. Furthermore, power is productive by using policy as a “dividing practice” to divide others by way of a binary opposition (Foucault, 1982, p. 777). Specifically, policy sets up not only *what* is proper/improper, but *who* is proper/improper. In this way, power produces even as it prohibits. Through a Foucauldian analysis of discourse, power relations can be exposed and disturbed; thus, in this dissertation, I conduct post qualitative inquiry, which relies on poststructural theories, to unmask and deconstruct the power relations and discursive practices at play in a public school policy on employee use of social media.

Rationale for and Purpose of My Study

In my role in human resources, I have dealt with multiple incidents involving employees' use of social media. During COVID-19, issues and complaints related to the use of social media by school employees increased due to the controversial and political nature of wearing masks, vaccines and moving from remote to in-person learning. At the same time these issues were consuming my professional work hours, I was also learning about post qualitative inquiry, which I was not interested in at first because it occurs in an unknown, unpredictable, non-linear manner that seemed unable to produce valid, reliable results. As a chemistry major in my undergraduate work and someone who enjoys math and linearity, post qualitative inquiry seemed foreign and impossible. Yet, I could think of no useful, productive study on a social media use policy by way of traditional methodologies. My review of the literature found plenty of studies related to social media use/misuse, but these traditional studies ignored the role of policy and hinged on binary oppositions.

At the same time I was considering social media policy, I began reading Foucault and other poststructural theories on the concept of discourse. As I read and thought, ideas began to emerge that would not allow me to shake post qualitative inquiry. I did not recognize that I had

started “thinking with theory” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2017) because I had not learned as Deleuze (1983) argues that “thought does not need a method” (p. 110). Instead, I felt confused and stumped on how to make my interest in social media policy fit into a fresh quantitative or qualitative study. I was pulled and interested in what was emerging as I read Foucault, especially on the topics of power relations and discourse. Discourse is represented by the language we speak and the ways we communicate, which includes policy. As Karen Barad (2003) succinctly writes:

> Discourse is not a synonym for language. Discourse does not refer to linguistic or signifying systems, grammars, speech acts, or conversations. To think of discourse as mere spoken or written words forming descriptive statements is to enact the mistake of representationalist thinking. Discourse is not what is said; it is that which constrains and enables what can be said. Discursive practices define what counts as meaningful statements. (p. 819)

It is with this understanding of discourse that a deconstruction of educational issues and policy can occur. Specifically, policy can be analyzed not just by a review of the words on the page, but by considering how power relations produce what words are silenced and what words are privileged through revision. Further, the words of policy as discourse are not simply analyzed for linguistic meaning but as instruments of power in producing knowledge, truth and defining what is real.

Policy acts as discourse because policy constrains and enables meaning. Further, policy revision is expected, predicted and prearranged. For example, the employee use of social media policy was first developed in December 2011 by the North Carolina School Board Association and has been revised six times since its inception. This is not unique to social media policy

because policy revision is a normative process—meaning that the revision process is an accepted and expected part of all policy development. It is accepted that school board members and district administrative leaders will be involved in and initiate the policy revision process based on actual or possible issues that come to their attention as means of strengthening the policy against improper behavior. Therefore, discourse theory is a useful and fascinating way to analyze policy because its reach extends beyond the present pages of policy back to the past ideations and forward to proposed drafts. Discourse theory and analysis moves away from questions of *who* created a policy to the deconstructive questions of *how* a policy works to produce knowledge, power relations, and subject positions.

Throughout my dissertation, I reference and analyze *Policy 7335: Employee Use of Social Media Policy* for Cleveland County Schools. This policy was adopted by the Cleveland County Board of Education in April 2020. Prior to April 2020, social media use by school employees was governed by administrative guidelines, the code of conduct for employees and technology responsible use policies. Policy 7335 is based on the North Carolina School Board Association (NCSBA) current model policy, and at the end of this chapter, I include Policy 7335 in its entirety. However, I have also noted in red the modifications that have been made since the NCSBA first issued the policy in 2011. These modifications are important because they represent the nature of power in policy as relational and responsive to employee resistance in the form of noncompliance. For example, one of the most obvious additions to the employee use of social media policy is the inclusion of definitions for school-controlled and personal social media; these definitions were added in response to employee arguments and questions regarding what makes social media platforms controlled by the school system. This addition works to separate and differentiate as a means of classification for disciplinary purposes. I explore the use of these

definitions and analyze their addition to the policy in my future analytical chapters. To put Policy 7335 within a wider network of power relations, I also analyze how policy is presented in new hire orientation and professional development training courses, as well as how social media use is understood by employees through text messages and reporting.

In my dissertation, I enacted post qualitative inquiry to deconstruct the use of educational policy for social media use by K-12 public school employees. For my inquiry, I engaged in thinking and writing with theory as a process (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; St. Pierre, 2017), specifically focusing on Foucault's writings related to power, knowledge, subjectivities, discourse and pleasure. I also relied on secondary sources that examine and critique these Foucauldian concepts. The purpose of my study is to deconstruct the effects of power relations at play among policy and social media use by professional educators. The following analytic questions will guide my inquiry:

1. What is the nature of power as it is exercised through policy and social media use by school employees?
2. How does policy on employee use of social media function to both maintain and produce power relations, discourse, and knowledge?
3. How does the use of social media by school employees enable and resist the discourse of educator professionalism?
4. What happens when social media use is more pleasurable than professionalism?

Significance of the Problem: Summary of Argument and Claims

In my review of the current literature on employee use of social media and related school board policies, I found the majority of research was conducted using a case study methodology. The case studies were primarily focused on cases of misuse or unprofessional conduct by school

employees or on cases related to balancing free speech rights of educators with the compelling interest of schools in holding the public trust. The purpose of the current literature can be boiled down to three themes: (1) to define and clarify what makes employee use of social media misuse or protected speech (McNee, 2013; O'Connor & Schmidt, 2015; Vasek & Hendricks, 2016), (2) to warn educational stakeholders on the dangers of social media use (Magid & Gallagher, 2015; Russo, 2015; Will, 2020), (3) to counsel school districts in developing better, stronger and more legally robust policies that will limit loopholes when disciplinary action is needed (Bon et al., 2013; O'Donovan, 2012).

I found the literature related to the use of social media by school employees is overwhelmingly focused on the misuse and misconduct by educators that has led to termination. The goal of this literature is to define what is appropriate and inappropriate use of social media so that future misuse can be lessened, especially for the benefit of schools. In addition, the most common idea expressed in the literature is to warn and encourage educators to "think first" (Connors, 2015, p.1) before posting. In other words, educators should weigh the consequences of their actions before engaging in action. Another frequent recommendation in the literature is to consider your mother before posting. As O'Donovan (2012) writes, "If you're not sure, show your Facebook page to your mom. If she's got any concerns or problems, then so do you" (p. 36). In this way, your "mother" represents accepted norms and conservative values which will protect you from unwanted consequences. The warning is deep because it goes beyond just warning about employment status, but also about reputation and love. Finally, school districts are advised to be proactive by creating policies and providing training for employees in appropriate use. The subtitle of one article is "a lesson in doing the right thing," and in the article writes

"school leaders must take action" (O'Donovan, 2012, p. 34). The "right thing" is to create policies that require and encourage conformity to normative standards of professionalism.

The purpose of my research is not to judge the merit or correctness of these studies. Instead, it is to ask different questions that have been overlooked by the plethora of social media studies focusing on misuse, misconduct and better policies. My research has allowed questions like "what happens when the policy is the "right thing" for school districts to do? What happens when "binary branding" occurs in policy? (Foucault, 1995/1977, p. 199). Binaries not only brand educators, but they also produce resistance, which leads to the question of "where is resistance?" For example, in the work of Bon et al. (2013), "Social Media Use-and Misuse-by Teachers: Looking to the Courts for Human Resource Policy Guidance," the phrase "in response" is used eleven times. For example, they write, "in response to the human resources challenges accompanying the online and technology-rich environment in education and society" and "in response to social media misuse by teachers" (Bon et al., 2013, p. 194). As seen in the two examples, "in response" is an indication of resistance to the binary – a binary that is at play in the title of the article as *use/misuse*. If there were no resistance to the binary, then there would be no need for a response. Further, Bon et al. write, "The most impactful response, though, has been at the local level through school board policy" (p. 205). Policy is not power, but policy is an indication that power is at work and is producing resistance. Policy is an instrument and strategy of power. Therefore, the goal of my research has been to explore the power relations at work around the employee use of social media policy.

Further, my research is significant on this topic because I found no research or literature where post qualitative inquiry or even poststructural theories were used to look at the topic of social media policy. The focus of the existing literature has been exclusively to meet traditional

research goals of understanding, defining and ultimately strengthening the normative conditions that produce binary oppositions. My research is an attempt at "thinking differently" by deconstructing and exposing the power relations at work in policy around employee use of social media. The goal of my research and analysis has not been for the purpose of judging or determining whether school policies are good or bad. Instead, it has been to disrupt and dismantle binaries produced by power and to expose the dominant discourse and power relations that are alive and active around my topic.

Organization of the Dissertation

In this chapter, I explain the problem and the purpose of my inquiry. Then, in Chapter 2, I describe the theories I will use in my analysis, with specific attention to the Foucauldian theories of power/knowledge and discourse. In Chapter 3, I argue for post qualitative inquiry and thinking with theory as a useful methodological framework for analysis of the topic of educational policy related to employee use of social media. In Chapter 4, I show how methodology and theory work together, I provide a "thinking with theory" analysis of the literature from a poststructural lens, related to the discourse of educator professionalism. In Chapter 5, I deconstruct how policy is used as an instrument of power in events such as new hire orientation to produce docile bodies of school employees around the topic of social media use. In Chapter 6, I expose how policy acts as discourse to produce professional development courses and then deconstruct the power relations at work in the training course. Finally, in Chapter 7, I explain the significance and implications of my study.

Policy 7335: Employee Use of Social Media Policy

I have included *Policy 7335: Employee Use of Social Media Policy* in full at this point to assist the reader. Specifically, the reader may find it helpful to read the full policy prior to reading my analysis or may prefer to refer back to the policy during the reading as needed.

Figure 1

Employee Use of Social Media – Policy 7335

EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Policy Code: **7335**

The Cleveland County Board of Education (the "Board") recognizes the importance of incorporating current technology tools, including new methods of electronic communication, into the classroom to enhance student learning. It further recognizes the importance of employees, students, and parents engaging, learning, collaborating, and sharing in digital environments as part of 21st Century learning. The Board strives to ensure that electronic communication tools incorporated into the school curriculum are used responsibly and safely. As practicable, the Board will provide access to secure social media tools and Board approved technologies for use during instructional time and for school-sponsored activities in accordance with policy.

The Board acknowledges that school employees may engage in the use of social media during their personal time. School employees who use social media for personal purposes must be mindful that they are responsible for their public conduct even when not acting in their capacities as school system employees. All school employees, including student teachers and independent contractors, shall comply with the requirements of this policy when using electronic social media for personal purposes. In addition, all school employees must comply with Board policy when communicating with individual students through other electronic means, such as through voice, email, or text-messaging.

A. DEFINITIONS

1. Social Media

   For the purposes of this policy, "social media" refers to the various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily over the Internet to share information and resources. It includes, but is not limited to: personal websites, blogs, wikis, social networking sites, online forums, virtual worlds, video-sharing websites, and any other Internet-based applications which allow the exchange of user-generated content. For purposes of this policy, it also includes any form of instant or direct messaging available through such applications. Examples of social media include Web 2.0 tools, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, Google+, and social media components of learning management systems such as Moodle or Edmodo.

2. School-Controlled Social Media

   "School-controlled social media" are social media networks, tools, or activities that are under the direct control and management of the school system and that create an archived audit trail.

3. Personal Social Media

   "Personal social media" means any social media networks, tools, or activities that are not school-controlled.

B. SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS INVOLVING STUDENTS

Employees are to maintain professional relationships with students at all times in accordance with Board policy. The use of electronic media for communicating with students and parents is an extension of the employee's workplace responsibilities.

Accordingly, the Board expects employees to use professional judgment when using social media or other electronic communications and to comply with the following.

1. All electronic communications with students who are currently enrolled in the school system must be school-related and within the scope of the employees' professional responsibilities, unless otherwise authorized by Board policy.

2. School employees may use only school-controlled social media to communicate directly with current students about school-related matters.

3. Employees are prohibited from knowingly communicating with current students through personal social media without parental permission. An Internet posting on a personal social media website intended for a particular student will be considered a form of direct communication with that student in violation of this policy unless the parent has consented to the communication. However, an employee may communicate with a student using personal social media to the extent the employee and student have a family relationship or other type of appropriate relationship which originated outside of the school setting.

4. An employee seeking to utilize and/or establish a non-school-controlled social media website for instructional or other school-related purposes must have prior written approval from the principal and the Superintendent or designee and must verify that the social media application's terms of service meet the requirements of Board policy. If the website collects personal information from students under the age of 13, the use will not be approved unless the applicable requirements of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) are met. The employee shall ensure that the website does not include or link to the employee's personal social media footprint. The site must be used for school-related purposes only.

C. EMPLOYEE PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Board respects the right of employees to use social media as a medium of self-expression on their personal time. As role models for the school system's students, however, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not performing their job duties as employees of the school system. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of social media and other electronic communications as they are for any other public conduct. Further, school employees remain subject to applicable state and federal laws, Board policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators, even if communicating with others concerning personal and private matters. If an employee's use of social media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees are responsible for the content on their social media sites, including content added by the employee, the employee's "friends," or members of the public who can access the employee's site, and for Web links on the employee's site. Employees shall take reasonable precautions, such as using available security settings, to manage (~~restrict~~)

students' access to the employees' personal information on social media websites and to prevent students from accessing materials that are not age-appropriate.

School employees are prohibited from accessing social networking websites for personal use during instructional time (~~or with school sytem technological resources~~).

D. POSTING TO SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Employees who use social media for personal purposes must be aware that the content they post may be viewed by anyone, including students, parents, and community members. Employees shall observe the following principles when communicating through social media.

1. Employees shall not post confidential information about students, employees, or school system business.

2. Employees shall not accept (~~list~~) current students as "friends" or "followers" or otherwise connect with students on personal social media sites without parental permission, unless the employee and student have a family relationship or other type of appropriate relationship which originated outside of the school setting.

3. Employees shall not knowingly allow students access to their personal social media sites that discuss or portray sex, nudity, alcohol, or drug use or other behaviors associated with the employees' private lives that would be inappropriate to discuss with a student at school.

4. Employees may not knowingly grant students access to any portions of their personal social media sites that are not accessible to the general public without parental permission, unless the employee and student have a family relationship or other type of appropriate relationship which originated outside of the school setting.

5. Employees shall be professional in all Internet postings related to or referencing the school system, students or their parents, and other employees.

6. Employees shall not use profane, pornographic, obscene, indecent, lewd, vulgar, racially insensitive or sexually offensive language, pictures, or graphics, or other communication that could reasonably be anticipated to cause a substantial disruption to the school environment.

7. Employees shall not use the school system's logo or other copyrighted material of the system on a personal social media site without express, written consent from the Board.

8. Employees shall not post identifiable images of a student or student's family at non-public events on a personal social media site without permission from the student and the student's parent or legal guardian. Employees may post such images on a school-controlled social media site only with prior permission of the employee's

supervisor and in accordance with the requirements of federal and state privacy laws and policy.

9. Employees shall not use Internet postings to libel or defame the Board, individual Board members, students, or other school employees.

10. Employees shall not use Internet postings to harass, bully, or intimidate students or other employees in violation of Board policy, or state and federal laws.

11. Employees shall not post content that negatively impacts their ability to perform their jobs.

12. Employees shall not use Internet postings to engage in any other conduct that violates Board policy or administrative procedures or state and federal laws.

E. CONSEQUENCES

School system personnel shall monitor online activities of employees who access the Internet using school technological resources. Additionally, the Superintendent or designee may periodically conduct public Internet searches to determine if an employee has engaged in conduct that violates this policy. Any employee who has been found by the Superintendent to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

The Superintendent may establish and communicate to employees guidelines that are consistent with this policy.

Legal References: U.S. Const. amend. I; Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. 254(h)(5); Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. 2510-2522; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; 17 U.S.C. 101 *et seq.*; 20 U.S.C. 6777; G.S. 115C-325(e) (applicable to career status teachers), -325.4 (applicable to non-career status teachers); 16 N.C.A.C. 6C .0601, .0602; State Board of Education Policy EVAL-014

Adopted by Cleveland County Schools: April 27, 2020

Notes:

- This policy was originally issued by the North Carolina School Board Association as one of their model policies on December 15, 2011.
- This policy has been modified by the North Carolina School Board Association six times since its original issue date. The policy was reissued on the following dates with various modifications: August 29, 2012; March 28, 2014; September 30, 2015; April 28, 2017; September 29, 2017; September 30, 2020.
- The red text represents modifications that were made to the original policy.

Chapter 2: Discourse Theory: A Substantive Theoretical Framework for Inquiry on Social Media Policy and School Employees

In Chapter 1, I described the use of social media by public school employees as a significant educational issue. The popularity of social media both within and outside the school building, coupled with the massive audience it invites, make it a powerful tool. The use of social media by school employees has become so significant that school systems have developed policies, guidelines and mandatory training to define, monitor and even prohibit it. In this way, educational policies and professional development are indicators of perceived problems in education. As Bacchi (2016) explains, "What we propose to do about something indicates what we think needs to change and hence what we think is problematic" (p. 8). In this chapter, I share the theoretical concepts and theories I use to analyze policy and employee training as *what we propose to do* because the problem of social media use by school employees exists. Specifically, in this chapter, I provide a summary of the following poststructural concepts: discourse, power/knowledge, subjectivity and resistance. I use these concepts throughout my dissertation as a framework for deconstructing the educational issue of social media use by employees.

For poststructuralists, an analysis of discourse requires moving beyond language. Foucault (1972) described discourses as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention" (p. 149). By this, Foucault meant that language is not the key to understanding discourse, but instead, it is the practices that are the lynchpin. The practices not only form the "objects of which they speak," but also work to disguise their movements and conceal power. For poststructuralists, like Foucault, language and meaning are always unstable and always partial. Therefore, poststructuralists are focused on an analysis of discourse rather

than a linguistic analysis of language. This is an important feature of discourse that helps to explain the nature of power.

As noted, discourse is commonly understood as the language we speak and the ways we communicate. However, discourse is more than just words and utterances. Discourse encompasses our beliefs about knowledge, power relations and what we identify as "the real" (Bacchi, 2016, p. 8). Discourse includes all the rules we know and observe that identify what is true, normal, acceptable and proper, as well as what is unacceptable and improper, in our everyday lives. In this way, discourse is productive and constraining through the creation of norms and knowledge. Discourse theory is a way of analyzing "the real" by looking at the production of power relations, language and knowledge structures in the culture and history where they reside. Throughout this dissertation, I will discuss the discourse of educator professionalism, which encompasses all the written and unwritten rules defining ethical behavior for educators in their use of social media and which privileges compliance with policy as a hallmark of a positive role model for students.

This chapter will focus on the foundations of discourse theory with attention primarily on the work of Michel Foucault. For Foucault, discourse is not static and stable, but is flowing and evolving due to resistance and entanglement with power. As Foucault (1990/1978) describes, "Discourse transmits and produces power, it reinforces it, but it also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (p. 101). In other words, discourses are complex and tightly bound, yet their boundness makes them susceptible to loosening and breakage. As a result, discourse theory is a useful and fascinating way to analyze educational policy because its reach extends beyond the present text of a policy back to the past and forward beyond the present to the "not yet" (St. Pierre, 2019b, p. 4). Discourse theory allows significant

issues, such as employee use of social media, to be understood by moving beyond simply how a policy originated to how a policy works to produce knowledge and power relations. Discourse theory does not ask *where* power is located in a policy, but instead asks "What happens?" because power is produced (Foucault, 1982, p. 786). Therefore, questions like "What happens when a school district creates and implements an employee use of social media policy?" can be deeply explored and analyzed. For my dissertation, I will consider "what happens" as I analyze the following research question: What is the nature of power as it is exercised through policy and social media use by school employees? These explorations will expose and deconstruct the dominant, normative discourses in motion.

Discourse

Discourse theory has its origins in the late 1960s and early 1970s in France. Its beginnings are tied to post-structuralist thought by way of structuralism with its anti-humanist ideas. One of the important, overlapping tenets of structuralism and poststructuralism is a rejection of humanism. This stance has important implications for discourse theory. It is important to understand that posthumanism or anti-humanism ideas are not against humans. Instead, it is best to think of these paradigms as challenging what is assumed by humanism, which privileges human actions and thoughts. As Keeling and Lehman (2018) explain, "Whereas a humanist perspective frequently assumes the human is autonomous, conscious, intentional, and exceptional in acts of change, a posthumanist perspective assumes agency is distributed through dynamic forces of which the human participates but does not completely intend or control" (p. 1). In terms of discourse, this means that humans are not always in control of what they say or what they think. Furthermore, due to established norms, humans are limited in what they are even *able* to say or think. In relation to policy and social media use by school employees, this

means that the discourse of educator professionalism limits what can be said and thought in terms of appropriate social media use and policy. This does not mean that people are unimportant to educational inquiry or discourse analysis, but instead, that their words and thoughts are grounds for deconstruction because they are influenced by various, external forces, like power and cultural norms. Discourses are the socially constructed, common sense rules we follow without wondering why we follow them or where they come from. As Karen Barad (2003) explains, "Discourse is not what is said; it is that which constrains and enables what can be said. Discursive practices define what counts as meaningful statements" (p. 819). According to Foucault (1994a), these common sense rules are "unexamined" because they are unconsciously followed and govern what we think is meaningful and how we act. In schools and educational institutions, policies have become some of the unexamined rules that we follow.

It is with this understanding of discourse that I will conduct my analysis of social media policy and the discourse of educator professionalism. As mentioned previously, the words, actions and thoughts of educators are useful for analysis, but not as descriptors or interpreters of meaning and truth. Instead, it is through an analysis of what is sanctioned (and conversely unsanctioned) as meaningful words, actions and thoughts that opens up and uncovers power relations at play. In this way, what counts as knowledge and truth are revealed beyond what is obvious and conscious into what Foucault describes as "the domain of subconscious knowledge" (Ball, 2015, p. 311). In schools and educational institutions, policy is the written document that divulges and conceals the discourses in place.

By problematizing policy, which represents what is common sense and acceptable, I can reveal the forces at work and challenge what is assumed and allowed. This type of deep, post-structural analysis of discourse reveals as Ball (2015) writes, "We do not speak discourses,

discourses speak us" (p. 311). In other words, what we say and how we live is a result of the discourses within which we live. We do not exist outside of discourse, but it is through discourse that we speak (both in words and actions). This can be seen in multiple ways regarding social media policy. First, the simple creation of social media policy by school boards evidences the reality of the discourse of educator professionalism. School boards are elected bodies that represent the community where they serve. The policies they create represent the discourses that are speaking in the community. Second, the reaction (or lack of reaction) by school employees reflects the discourse at play. For example, when a policy governing an employee's use of social media is presented to employees and they respond by nodding their heads in agreement and asking no questions, their silence speaks in support of the discourse. Further, when stories of the misuse of social media by school employees are heard and employees act surprised or disgusted by the misuse, then the discourse is speaking in their reactions. The discourse of educator professionalism expects district surveillance and monitoring of social media, because the discourse is grounded in normative expectations of ethical actions by educators. As a result, employees willingly accept or agree with the implementation of a social media policy because it aligns with the current discourse.

Genealogy and Deconstruction

Foucault was interested in uncovering and disturbing what made discourse possible, and he called this study of discourse a genealogy. Foucault (1980) wrote, "Let us give the term *genealogy* to the union of erudite knowledge and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today" (p. 83). In other words, Foucault problematized history through the lens of struggles and knowledge to expose the working of discourse. On this topic, Foucault went on to write, "a genealogy should

be seen as a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledges from that subjection, to render them, that is capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse" (p. 85). Foucault's goal was not to create a historical narrative that could be trusted to answer our questions, but to use history as a tool to uncover how discourses are fabricated, altered and work to sculpt our daily life (Ball, 2015). Throughout my analytic chapters, I will consider historical ideas and documents connected to the creation of educational policy and related to social media. I will use the documents as a tool to answer my research questions by uncovering how the discourse of educator professionalism has been fabricated, altered and used to form the daily lives of educators.

Historical knowledge is emancipated by troubling it and deconstructing what has been considered finished, fixed and in the past. Deconstruction in this way is not for the purpose of rebuilding, but for use in a Derridean reading of discourse for what is lost or overlooked. As Caputo explains from his interview with Derrida:

> For Derrida, a deconstructive reading is exceedingly close, fine-grained, meticulous, scholarly, serious, and, above all, "responsible," both in the sense of being able to give an account of itself in scholarly terms and in the sense of "responding" to something in the text that tends to drop out of view. (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, p. 77)

In other words, the purpose is to expose what has dropped out of view and been lost. As Caputo expresses, this is not an easy task. It is a responsible reading that looks beyond the obvious, beyond the surface level and considers the power relations and knowledge produced. In my dissertation, I give an account of the responsible, deconstructive reading I have done by describing what has been lost and overlooked in terms of educational policy related to social media use. I also respond to the forces and practices that have enabled the governing of

individuals and people. Genealogy, as a deconstructive practice, is not a mapping of the past to stake out truth and accuracy, but as fertile soil for digging, disrupting and questioning. As Garland (2014) explains, the purpose of Foucault's genealogy:

> is to trace the erratic and discontinuous process whereby the past became the present: an often aleatory path of descent and emergence that suggests the contingency of the present and the openness of the future. Genealogy is, in that sense, ''effective history'' because its intent is to problematize the present by revealing the power relations upon which it depends and the contingent processes that have brought it into being. (p. 372)

Therefore, a genealogy of social media policy in schools will consider and problematize the use of educational policy in terms of the power relations that have been at play in educational history and the normative processes that are in place as a result of those relations. In the chapters of this dissertation, I will analyze the development of social media policy as being erratic and discontinuous. At the inception of social media, no separate, distinct policy was developed. Instead, social media use was governed under the general policies related to technology use and code of conduct. Yet, as social media use by school employees grew in popularity and ease, the lines between personal and professional use were blurred and resistance to the general policies in the area of social media use occurred. Therefore, resistance provoked a stand-alone policy. Furthermore, revisions to policy are always unpredictable and erratic, because revisions are reactionary and responsive to resistance within the power relations.

Key Assumptions of Discourse Theory

Foucault's theory of discourse and use of genealogies encompasses key ideas that are rooted in his work and concepts of power, knowledge, subjectivity and resistance. Throughout my dissertation, I will think with Foucauldian discourse theory for my analysis. Therefore, it is

important to look at the key assumptions and ideas because they directly relate to my research questions: What is the nature of power as it is exercised through policy and social media use by school employees? How does policy on employee use of social media function to both maintain and produce power relations, discourse, and knowledge?

Power/Knowledge

For Foucault, power and knowledge are always connected and inseparable. Power produces knowledge, and knowledge is bound to power relations. On this topic, Foucault (1995/1977) writes:

> We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (p. 27)

In other words, power is exercised through the production of knowledge and knowledge exists because power relations are at work. By producing knowledge, power puts into discourse what is acceptable and good. As a result, when analyzing power, the question is not about *who* is in power, but *how* power is produced and *what happens* as an effect. Power is not possessed by a person, but is exercised and "only exists in action" (Foucault, 1980, p. 89). In other words, power is not inherently tied to a position or document, but exists as it is exercised in the everyday practices of people. For example, in education, power produces knowledge through multiple strategies and techniques, such as policy, curriculum standards and evaluation processes.

Power is active when producing knowledge and reality, which precedes and sanctions judgement and classification. As Foucault (1995/1977) explains:

> We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes,' it 'represses,' it 'censors,' it 'abstracts,' it 'masks,' it 'conceals.' In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (p. 194)

It is through the production of these positive factors that power is welcomed. As Foucault (1980) explains, "What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" (p. 199). For educators, through the discourse of educator professionalism, power produces a position of respect in the community. Power produces this position through the development of knowledge, norms and discourse. This status of respect can be easily verified by considering, for example, media portrayals of educators. Verifying that educators are respected is uncomplicated because it is a mainstream idea at the heart of the discourse of educator professionalism. For example, in October of 2016, President Barack Obama made the following comments about teachers in a speech at a high school in Washington, D.C.:

> We know that nothing is more important than a great teacher….we have focused on preparing and developing and supporting and rewarding excellent educators. You all know how hard they work. They stay up late grading your assignments. That's why you got all those marks all over your papers. They pull sometimes money out of their own pockets to make that lesson extra special. And I promise you, the teachers here and the teachers around the country, they're not doing it for the pay—because teachers, unfortunately, still aren't paid as much as they should be. They're not doing it for the

> glory. They're doing it because they love you, and they believe in you, and they want to help you succeed.

President Obama's speech represents the power of the discourse of educator professionalism. The power of the discourse is in the knowledge it produces and the reality it forms. One example of the knowledge produced is the *truth* that educators are selfless and caring; thus, they stay up late, use their personal money to make lessons special, are willing to be underpaid and do not seek glory. These comments evidence the power of the discourse of educator professionalism because they are voiced as *reality* by the president. More importantly, regardless of political party, there would be little to no disagreement with President Obama's comments because the discourse of educator professionalism is conventional and represents common sense ideas about educators for all Americans. As a result, a speech commending educators is not exclusive to President Obama. Similar speeches have been regularly made by politicians, celebrities, high-profile business owners and other leaders because this discourse and knowledge related to educators is historical and enjoys social recognition. As Weedon (1997) explains, "Social recognition of their truth is the strategic position which most discourses, and the interests which they represent aspire. To achieve the status of truth they have to discredit all alternative and oppositional versions of meaning and become common sense" (p. 127). In this way, power is at work because the discourses of education have achieved a status of truth. Power has produced knowledge about education, particularly related to the subject position of an educator. Because this knowledge is socially constructed and recognized as common sense, it is able to discredit other descriptions of educators. As a result, when an educator is in the news for behaving inappropriately, it is the *individual* who is the problem, not the profession. As Foucault (1980) explains, "We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise

power except through the production of truth" (p. 93). Throughout my dissertation, I come back to the fundamental connection of power and knowledge to analyze how power is maintained and how power relations, discourse and knowledge are produced.

Additionally, for Foucault, power is fluid and in flux. In other words, there are no permanently powerful positions and no permanently powerless positions or people. On the contrary, power is "mobile, reversible, and unstable" (Foucault, 1994a, p. 292). For example, for the educator, power is available in their respected position as an educator, not because of the position, but because of the knowledge and discourse that makes a particular version of the position *acceptable*. As a respected person, an educator can subject others, such as students and parents, to rules and processes. However, the position of respect also subjects the educator to act in respectful ways. Students and parents may be subject to the teacher's processes, but they also subject the teacher by expecting and judging the teacher's actions to the standard of respect. Therefore, power is at work in the knowledge it produces (respect for an educator) and the subjection it produces for both the educator and non-educator. As Weedon (1997) writes, "Power is exercised within discourses in the ways in which they constitute and govern individual subjects" (p. 110). Thus, power is not exercised solely from one position or in one direction. It governs all because knowledge and discourse subject everyone. For educators, the pleasurable status of a respected educator requires compliance to the knowledge and expectations at the core of the discourse of educator professionalism.

The power relations involved in discourse include "an important element: freedom," and are not employed solely through physical force, but are exerted "only over free subjects" (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). This means that an educator has various ways she can behave; she is free to choose. In terms of social media policy, an employee is free to use social media in a wide

variety of ways, as long as the employee uses social media to engage in activities that the school system defines as appropriate. Freedom does not imply that all actions are available to employees. If an employee acts beyond what is designated acceptable and proper, then the employee risks not being respected or recognized as a professional by the discourse. In this way, there is a relation between power and freedom. As Foucault (1994a) explains:

> If one were completely at the other's disposal and became his thing, an object on which he could wreak boundless and limitless violence, there wouldn't be any relations of power. Thus, in order for power relations to come into play, there must be at least a certain degree of freedom on both sides. (p. 292)

Because power relations exist, then *how* power functions in discourse can be analyzed. For example, if employees are *free* to choose how they use social media, then how is power deployed to coerce employees to comply? The answer is that power works through policy to make compliance desirable. In Chapter 4, I will analyze how compliance is made desirable so that employees *freely* choose to obey. Foucault also describes the relationship of power and freedom using the term "combat," which the translator of his work notes as: "The term would hence imply a physical contest in which the opponent develops a strategy of reaction and of mutual taunting, as in a wrestling match" (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). This is an excellent way to view the relation of power and freedom in school policy. Power works through policy to subject employees, but employees resist at some point, which requires policy to respond through a revision, and so on. In this way, there is mutual taunting and various strategies of power and resistance employed on both sides. It is the strategies and taunting that I analyze throughout my dissertation. Moreover, to fully understand how policy works to maintain and produce power relations, discourse, and knowledge, it is critical to consider Foucault's view of subjectivity.

Subjects & Subjectivity

Subjectivity is how people view themselves in their situation and in relation to others. Weedon (1997) describes subjectivity as "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself, and her ways of understanding her relation to the world" (p. 32). In this way, subjectivity is both known and unknown, as well as expanding and shifting as we grow, learn and have different experiences. Discourse produces subjectivity by both allowing and limiting what one can see as possible. Foucault's (1982) genealogical work with discourse was concerned with subjectivity and sought "to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (p. 777). Foucault identified the following modes: categorization as a science, creation of binary oppositions and human participation in subjection. In each of these modes, subjectivity is both deliberate and unintentional. Furthermore, in the context of my dissertation, these modes represent ways that policy related to employee's use of social media functions to maintain and produce power relations, discourse, and knowledge.

The first Foucauldian mode of objectification relates to the status of science, because science is identified with truth, accuracy and reliability. As a result, when something is deemed scientific, it naturally takes on a privileged status and a subject can be produced. For example, educational policy claims a scientific status by grounding itself in best practices, ethics and laws. School policy related to social media is specifically connected to the fields of professional ethics and cyberethics (Rebore, 2015). As a science, policy is an effective technique for subjugation. In social media policy, the subject positions of *professional* and *personal* are created through their frequent use in policy as contrasted terms. In this way, social media policy attempts to define and confine one's subjectivity to the binary opposition of professional/personal, which is the second

Foucauldian mode. The binary opposition privileges professional over personal and defines what is outside professional and personal as unnatural or improper. In this way, the primary binary opposition of professional/personal opens up subjugation to an additional binary of proper/improper. For example, according to policy, any use of personal social media during professional hours is considered improper. The personal must be separated from the professional at all times to be proper. The identification of the proper/improper positions creates knowledge and works to coerce employees to choose the proper, normative status. By choosing the proper status, employees are self-subjected to the binary, which is the third Foucauldian mode. By choosing, an employee participates in subjection, whether in acceptance or opposition. As Weedon (1997) writes, "Everything we do signifies compliance or resistance to dominant norms" (p. 83). To put it another way, every choice made by an employee is either in alignment or opposition to the discourse in which they reside as an educator. In relation to social media policy, employees self-regulate by confining their social media activity to professional and personal use. Anything outside or between the binary is improper and requires punishment.

Like power, subjectivity is neither fixed nor permanent. Foucault (1980) asserts that individuals are not only subjects of power, but also are "vehicles of power" (p. 98). In other words, individuals are subject to power, and they also work to subject others. For example, in schools, while principals are personally subject to school policies, they also act as a vehicle of power by subjecting students and teachers to school policies. Burman (2017) explains, "Policies produce and regulate subjects who, following a Foucauldian approach, are both subject to and subjects of those policies" (p. 80). Educators are "subject to" board policy because they are employees of the school system. As the Staff Responsibilities policy states, "All school employees shall be familiar with, support, comply with and, when appropriate, enforce the

policies" of the school board (Cleveland County Schools, 2020b). Furthermore, employees are subject to policy even when outside the school, as the Employee Use of Social Media policy clearly states: "School employees remain *subject to* [emphasis mine] applicable state and federal laws, Board policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators, even if communicating with others concerning personal and private matters" (Cleveland County Schools, 2020c). When an employee acts, they move from being *subject to* policy to being the *subject of* policy. That is, when an employee makes a controversial post on social media, they become the *subject of* policy. The employee is a *subject of* the policy because their support and compliance with policy is in question. While the post may be personal and private, it is still relevant because the employee has become the *subject of* the policy.

Following Foucault, my investigation of subjectivity will not follow traditional methods. Specifically, Foucault did not conduct interviews with people to understand their conscious perceptions of their subjectivity. Instead, he was interested in what was unconscious, what was unstable and what modifications were made. In this way, Foucault rejected a humanistic stance, which saw humans acting as subjects only consciously and intentionally. As Weedon (1997) explains, "A poststructuralist position on subjectivity and consciousness relativizes the individual's sense of herself by making it an effect of discourse which is open to continuous redefinition and which is constantly slipping" (p. 102). Namely, our perceptions of ourselves are dependent on the discourse we are within, and our subjectivities are constantly being reworked as we move among different discourses. This is seen clearly with new teachers. Prior to becoming a teacher, most employees were once students. Students are not subjected to the discourse of educator professionalism and are not divided by the binary opposition of professional/personal. As a result, a new teacher takes on a new subject position when they move

from student to teacher. However, this does not mean that a new teacher is unfamiliar with the discourse of educator professionalism. They are typically aware of the discourse because they subscribed to it as students and possibly used it to judge their own teachers. They have not been subjected to it as a teacher, but they have subjected others to it. Therefore, new teachers are typically willing to self-regulate and comply with the discourse of educator professionalism because it has a common sense status for them. Yet, the discourse is not exactly as they remembered or experienced it as a student because the discourse is constantly being redefined. For example, when I was a student, all male teachers were expected to wear neckties unless they taught physical education. However, when I became a teacher, this was no longer an expectation. The discourse had shifted due to resistance and changes in cultural norms related to dress.

Furthermore, if subjectivity does not rely on a conscious choice, then subjectivity cannot "guarantee" meaning, because subjectivity is always in flux and at times mysterious to the individual. Thinking with Foucault reveals that while employees are consciously able to make some choices related to their subject position, employees are often unconsciously choosing their subject position (like the new teacher described above) due to the power and "common sense" nature of the discourses where they reside. For example, one question that often arises from new teachers related to social media policy is: "Am I allowed to keep students as friends on social media, if they were friends before I was a teacher or do I need to unfriend them?" This question surfaces because social media policy states: "Employees shall not accept current students as 'friends' or 'followers'" (Cleveland County Schools, 2020a, p. 3). This question posed by new teachers represents both their conscious and unconscious choices related to subjectivity. Consciously, the new teacher is making a choice to be subjected to the definition of proper/improper friendships on social media by seeking clarity and knowledge. Unconsciously,

the new teacher has already accepted that policy governs her work and defines what is proper/improper. The teacher has accepted the subjectification of professional/personal because she acknowledges that as a professional the rules of what is right and wrong have changed how she sees herself. In addition, while the new teacher is asking a question about policy, her question actually works to strengthen and reinforce her subjectivity to the discourse of educator professionalism because the question signifies compliance to school policy as a norm. Her question seeks knowledge, and for Foucault, knowledge and power always work together to produce subjects.

The ways in which employee social media policy fosters a compliant subject position is often through methods that encourage silence and secrecy, such as allowing anonymous reporting of misuse and asking for compliance in a large group format, where speaking out would be socially difficult. As Foucault (1990/1978) writes, “Silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions, but they also loosen its hold and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance” (p. 101). In this way, even with anonymous reporting, where power seems to be firming up its control and increasing surveillance, it is at the same time, with the same actions, loosening control because it is relying on free subjects for surveillance. This dichotomy is possible because as Foucault (1988) states, we “are much freer than we feel” (p. 10). For example, in a large group presentation such as new-hire orientation, there may be time for questions. However, it is unlikely that anyone will ask a question due to the size of the audience and peer pressure. Employees are “free” to ask questions and oppose, but the social environment makes it very difficult to speak out and more advantageous to remain silent. However, just because someone does not speak out loud, does not mean they will not resist. Resistance does not require public viewing or public acknowledgement. Resistance can also be

conducted silently. Furthermore, because power and subjectivity require *cooperation* by both individuals and societies, resistance is available and present in the power relation. I take up this analysis in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Resistance & Reverse Discourse

The word *power* often brings to mind the binary opposition of powerful/powerless. That is, power is seen as repressive and in terms of sovereignty, which produces a "dualism whose effect is to define particular social groups as monolithic entities" (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998, p. 18). Foucault challenges this rigid view of power. Thus, in Foucauldian discourse theory, power is relational, and subjects always have some degree of freedom. As Jackson & Mazzei (2012) explain, "This view of repressive power disregards the freedom and agency of people and the ways in which they resist within and against relations of power to transform their lives" (p. 51). Because power is relational, employees have freedom and agency which responds to strategies of power in the form of both compliance *and* resistance. To minimize resistance and encourage compliance, power works in silence and secrecy. As Weedon (1997) explains, "Foucault offers 'a general and tactical reason that seems self-evident: power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms'" (p. 117). So the question emerges: In what ways does power mask itself? Power disguises itself as something positive, beneficial and appropriate. For example, in his book *Human Resources Administration in Education*, Rebore (2015) names the following "advantages" for developing policies: "Policy facilitates the orientation of new board members. … acquaints the public with the position of the school board. … encourages citizen involvement. … provides a reasonable guarantee that there will be consistency and continuity. … creates the need" (p. 6). These reasons are part of the common discourse on policy, which frames policy as

advantageous to stakeholders and thus works to disguise power and the strategies of power as necessary and useful. Moreover, power seeks long term rule and acceptance, so power uses resistance along with discourse and knowledge to produce need. In this way, power will tolerate some degree of resistance as a mechanism to validate the need to tighten its grip. For example, prior to 2020, my school district did not have a formal policy on social media use by school employees. Social media use was governed by more general policies. However, as *some* employees resisted the generality of these policies by interacting with students on social media outside of school-controlled platforms, power responded through the production of an additional, separate policy, which limited the field of action for *all* employees in the realm of social media interaction between students and employees. In this way, policy revisions *respond* to those daily practices of resistance, and the field of action of power can be tightened. In turn, policy-revisions-as-response works to deter and minimize further resistance and encourage compliance.

Policies regularly *require* revision due to changes in law or the need for additional clarity. These requirements for revision are always in response to power: when policies are resisted by the actions of employees. Sometimes employees misunderstand policy, find a loophole, plead ignorance, claim free speech rights, defend their posts, or blame others or the social media platform for their noncompliance with policy. Whatever the reasons, the policy is forced to respond and react because as Foucault (1997) says, “Power relations are obliged to change with the resistance” (p. 167). As a result, “what happens” is that policy revisions become a standard operating procedure for policy manuals. But even more interesting, power relations shift. Resistance becomes powerful because it causes a change and transformation. Policy revisions exist to respond and minimize resistance; put another way, there would be no need for a revision if the policy was not resisted through people’s actions. As Foucault (1982) writes,

> In effect, what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future. (p. 789)

We see this at work with the employee use of social media policy. The action of an employee in resistance to the policy requires a reaction or "an action upon an action." In this way, even when policies are written prior to a problem, power is ready to act on actions that will arise in the future. They are also prepared to respond to resistance through a revision or by the creation of another policy or administrative regulation. In this sense, power can never be without resistance and resistance cannot exist without a power relation. Therefore, one of the ways that we can understand power relations is to "investigate the forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations" (Foucault, 1982, p. 780). Because power does not have the *power* to shake resistance, resistance can be analyzed to see where it is present and in what daily practice of knowledge it responds to. As Foucault (1982) explains:

> It would not be possible for power relations to exist without points of insubordination which, by definition, are means of escape. Accordingly, every intensification, every extension of power relations to make the insubordinate submit can only result in the limits of power. (p. 794)

In other words, any exercise of power, at the same moment, produces a struggle or insubordination, which limits its reach. Resistance keeps power circulating and requires power to change and respond. In this way, insubordination or resistance opens a door for something new. Weedon (1997) calls this newness a "reverse discourse," which "in challenging meaning and power, it enables the production of new, resistant discourses" (p. 106). This has obvious

implications for education. For example, as accountability measures and surveillance of social media have grown in popularity in education, so has the reverse discourse of teacher work-life balance. Fontinha et al. (2019) define work-life balance as "the individual perception that work and nonwork activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual's current life priorities" (p. 175). The teacher work-life balance movement is the result of perceived increasing demands on educators (Bubb & Early, 2004; Sorenson & McKim, 2014). In other words, the discourse of work-life balance is born out of the discourse of teacher accountability, professionalism and surveillance. The discursive practices—within power relations—of accountability and surveillance brought about insubordinate terms like personal and private. The discourse of work-life balance for educators was scarce before No Child Left Behind. However, the exercise of power in No Child Left Behind produced stricter teacher accountability and surveillance measures. It also birthed resistance in the form of a reverse discourse of teacher work-life balance and put it into circulation. This reverse discourse pushes back against accountability and surveillance by refusing the all-encompassing nature of the discourse of educator professionalism in defining an educator's workload and life. Specifically, work-life balance calls for less work at home and a defining line between work and non-work activity. The point is that as the reverse discourse moves into circulation, the power relation shifts. As Weedon (1997) explains, "In order to have a social effect, a discourse must at least be in circulation" (p. 107). In other words, the exercise of power produces resistance and enables a reverse discourse in educational spaces. This is an important feature of the nature of power at work in discourse. In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I analyze resistance in power relations surrounding social media use by school employees to answer my analytic question of: How does the use of social media by school employees enable and resist the discourse of educator professionalism?

Policy as Discourse

Policy is more than the words on a page or a simple text; policy *acts* as discourse. For example, over the past few years, social media use by school employees has been seen as a problem by schools and educational institutions (Bon et al., 2013; Hayes & Burkett, 2018; O'Connor & Schmidt, 2015; O'Donovan, 2012; Raths, 2017). In order to fix the problem, school systems have created policies that work to control employees' use of social media through surveillance and limiting social media use to personal time. The Cleveland County Schools (2020a) Employee Use of Social Media policy states: "School employees may use only school-controlled social media to communicate directly with current students about school-related matters. Employees are prohibited from knowingly communicating with current students through personal social media without parental permission" (p. 2). To ensure that employees comply, the policy makes a provision for surveillance by stating: "The Superintendent or designee may periodically conduct public Internet searches to determine if an employee has engaged in conduct that violates this policy" (Cleveland County Schools, 2020a, p. 4). By approving social media use by employees for professional reasons using school-controlled platforms, the problem is revealed. Bacchi (2016) writes, "Every policy proposal contains within it an implicit representation of what the problem is represented to be" (p. 1). That is, the *personal* use of social media by educators on networks that are not school-controlled is problematic because *such use is outside the control of employment*. As Ball (2015) explains, policy acts as discourse by "inviting" and "summoning" educators to "speak, listen, act, read, work, think, feel, behave and value" in specific ways (p. 307). Namely, social media policy summons teachers and school employees to behave and act in ways that are in line with the dominant discourse of educator professionalism. Ball (1993) further states:

> Thus, in these terms the effect of policy is primarily discursive; it changes the possibilities we have for thinking "otherwise". Thus, it limits our responses to change, and leads us to misunderstand what policy is by misunderstanding what it does. Further, policy as discourse may have the effect of redistributing "voice". So that it does not matter what some people say or think, only certain voices can be heard as meaningful or authoritative. (p. 15)

Indeed, this is what school policy does. The voice of policy becomes primary and authoritative. Its words are more meaningful than those of teachers, principals and the superintendent. Further, to speak meaningfully or authoritatively, an educator must speak and act as a professional in alignment with policy. Therefore, an employee's professional life is most significant and positioned above and apart from their personal life. This positioning makes it impossible to even think of professional life as anything *otherwise.* Professional is thus tied to employment and position, instead of to an individual. In this way, policy works to clarify as a means of limiting. Policy "redistributes" voice to the professional exclusively and tries to silence the voice of the other, that is the personal. In this way, personal is identified as opposed to professional, and thus, is problematic.

Policy is productive. Educational policy produces the need for professional development, training, clarity, surveillance and docile bodies, which are "the 'instruments and effects' of discourse" (Ball, 2015, p. 307). Through these instruments, policy constructs knowledge, norms and social agreement. In addition, policy forms subject positions of employees by telling employees how to behave and how not to behave. Further, through policy revisions, subject positions can be "re-formed" as needed (Ball, 2015, p. 307). These subject positions are defined by creating binary oppositions, such as professional/personal and proper/improper, which are

both created in employee use of social media policy. In this way, “policy discourses provide us with ways of thinking and talking about our institutional ourselves, to ourselves and to others; in other words, they form ‘a regime of truth’ that ‘offers the terms that make self-recognition possible’” (Ball, 2015, p. 307). Policy as discourse provides the terms for employees to use in speaking about their social media use, such as professional, personal, responsible and irresponsible. Moreover, because of the truth and self-recognition policy as discourse produces, employees can define themselves as successful when they act professionally and responsibly. Success can be felt and evidenced by employees through comments made by their supervisors or in training tests and scores. As noted above, policy generates the need for professional development, which in my school district is mandated and graded on an annual basis related to social media use. Specifically, all employees must complete a course entitled “Social Media: Personal and Professional Use” and receive at least a 70 on the end of course test. If an employee scores less than 70, then they are required to retake the course until a 70 or above is achieved. In this way, the course is an instrument of policy to teach and reaffirm discourse and reward knowledge. The creation of professional development and binary oppositions produces the need for surveillance to judge compliance and further define and improve subject positions. Through these instruments, policy works to perfect and produce docile bodies by increasing the capabilities of employees. In this way, “As [employees] get better and more competent, [they] are made more biddable” (Ball, 2015, p. 309). In Chapter 5, I analyze how docile, biddable bodies are produced by policy and through the practice of new hire orientation. Then, in Chapter 6, I examine an online professional development course on employee use of social media as an instrument of power and policy to produce knowledge, subject positions and docile bodies.

Conclusion

Through the use of Foucauldian discourse analysis and poststructural theory, alongside a post qualitative thinking with theory method, which I describe in the next chapter, I deconstruct the power relations involved in educational policy and employee training related to the use of social media by school employees. My research questions, which are stated once again here, guide my analysis:

1. What is the nature of power as it is exercised through policy and social media use by school employees?
2. How does policy and training on employee use of social media function to both maintain and produce power relations, discourse, and knowledge?
3. How does the use of social media by school employees enable and resist the discourse of educator professionalism?

In the chapters that follow, I analyze how social media policy and educational practices are used by power to produce knowledge, discourse and various subject positions for educators. I expose the strategies and power processes utilized to produce and reinforce knowledge and the discourse of educator professionalism. These chapters represent how the processes and practices of educational institutions can be plugged into Foucault's theories of discourse and other relevant poststructural theories to destabilize and problematize what is known and possible in the area of social media use by school employees.

Chapter 3: A Poststructural Approach to Inquiry

In Chapter 2, I described the poststructural, Foucauldian theories that I use in my analysis of policy as discourse surrounding the educational issue of social media use by school employees. In this chapter, I explain how I put those poststructural theories to work by engaging in post qualitative inquiry (St. Pierre, 2019a). Post qualitative inquiry is the best approach for investigating an employee use of social media policy because it allows discursive practices, like the creation and use of educational policy as a "common sense" response to problems, to be thoroughly problematized and deconstructed through a theoretical lens. In my dissertation, I expose the nature of power and the power relations that are at work in K-12 public schools in the area of social media use by employees by showing how knowledge, discourses, discursive practices, subjectivities and resistances are produced through policy and professional development. This type of deconstructive work can only be done using post qualitative inquiry.

Post qualitative inquiry is a radical actor on the stage of research methodologies. While it strongly resists the category of methodology, it finds itself in the methodological mix because it is a viable alternative to traditional research methodologies. Post qualitative inquiry is rooted in the theoretical perspective of poststructuralism. For a poststructuralist, what is real cannot be explained by the structure or context. Reality and truth are impossible to define and know (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). A shift to poststructuralism in research is to lose certainty. Moreover, in describing the complexity of poststructuralism, Nealon and Giroux (2012) write, "Even the deep or underlying *structures* of meaning are themselves *arbitrary*; what we take to be the *cause* of meaning or intelligibility is itself already an *effect;* wherever you think you see *nature, culture* has already been there" (p. 150). This is the type of research I am engaging in because I am troubling policy as a certainty or truth. Because policy is a natural, common sense part of

educational practice, it is prime for deconstruction. Therefore, I consider the production of power relations, language and knowledge structures in the culture and history where policy resides. Relationships and entanglements are complex and what is "real" varies. Poststructuralism has major implications for educational research because it destabilizes normative thinking and conventional categories, which opens up thought and makes space for what is possible. In Chapter 2, I described how power works relationally and through discourse to produce social recognition of what is "real" in regards to social media use by employees. But for now, in this chapter, I explain how I destabilize policy and professional development through thinking with theory alongside these normative educational issues.

Post qualitative inquiry aligns with a poststructural theoretical framework because it seeks to deconstruct and *dismember thought* by problematizing method, data, and findings—and by asking different questions about power and relationships (Jackson & Mazzei, 2017). These features are important for an analysis of educational issues because they embrace the complexity that these issues bring. Further, they acknowledge that complex educational issues, such social media use by school employees, cannot be fully understood by a simple review of numerical data, by conducting interviews, by coding data or by following any prescribed methodology. Instead, to analyze educational issues with poststructural theories requires a different type of inquiry, which Jackson and Mazzei (2017) explain as:

> Inquiry that enters and exits sideways, that begins in the middle emerging from an eruption that occurs when theory and data and problems are thought together. Inquiry that does not rely on collecting data that are outside an assemblage in which we are already enmeshed. Inquiry that eschews a use of concepts for what they *mean* and instead puts to

> use concepts to show how they work, what they do, what they allow, and what they unsettle. (p. 733)

As an educator and human resource administrator, I am "already enmeshed" in the data of educational policy and social media use by school employees. I cannot innocently start at step one of a research methodology to study an issue where I am already situated, but I can work from the middle as described by Jackson and Mazzei. Working from the middle is not a permission slip that allows me to skip over the steps that I have "completed" due to my position, and then continue on in a prescribed manner. Instead, it means discarding predetermined steps and starting the work where I am and moving onward wherever theory takes me. In this way, post qualitative inquiry has great potential for informing the educational issue of social media use by public school employees because it acknowledges positionality, but does not privilege position and presence in the middle as an insider over an outsider.

Emergences

Post qualitative inquiry emerged in the late 1990s in the work of Dr. Elizabeth St. Pierre. At the time, St. Pierre was completing her doctoral work at Ohio State University and was immersed in studies of both qualitative methodology and poststructural, posthumanism theories. It was through her deep study in these two areas, coupled with rigorous doctoral writing, that the incompatibility of the two (methodology and post theories) began to emerge. At first, St. Pierre (2019a) did not realize the two areas were "incommensurable" because her dissertation work was solidly tied to methodology (p. 2). Methodology was considered a nonnegotiable necessity for all successful dissertation work. St. Pierre (2019a) explains:

> From the beginning of my doctoral research, my methodology training in qualitative research trumped my theoretical training in poststructuralism which I confined to the

> literature review chapter of my dissertation, and I automatically leapt to methodology and implemented the qualitative research process. (p. 2)

Yet, as she continued to read and write based on poststructural theories, the impossibility of formal methodology began to surface. St. Pierre had tasted the impossibility, but she had not fully digested it or named it. At the end of her dissertation, she wrote, "I believe the persistent critique urged by poststructuralism enables a transition from traditional methodology to something different and am not too concerned at this time with naming what might be produced" (St. Pierre, 2019a, p. 3). In fact, it would be almost fifteen years before St. Pierre would present a conference paper on post qualitative inquiry or call it by this name (St. Pierre, 2021).

As her work continued, St. Pierre began to clearly expose the problematic nature of methodology as a rigid formula and pre-planned process. Methodology sets limits and rules for the work of research and inquiry and determines what counts as data. This was problematic because by setting the procedures for research, methodology also subsequently sets the results that could be produced. For example, when methodology calls for coding data for themes, then the coding procedure produces themes. In other words, the researcher always finds what they are looking to find. This is not a new phenomenon. In fact, this idea is the premise of the 1960 classic, Disney movie, *Pollyanna*. The main character of the movie is a young girl named Pollyanna who brings a positive attitude to the town by introducing the "glad game." Pollyanna explains that her father read a quote attributed to Abraham Lincoln which read, "When you look for the bad in mankind, expecting to find it, you surely will" (Swift, 1960). This quote transformed Pollyanna's father's life, because when he looked for the good in mankind, he could also find it and thus began the "glad game." The heart of the movie is based on the idea that you will always find what you are looking for. The "glad game" not only transformed Pollyanna's

father, but also her new town. By looking for the good, and refusing to see the "bad," the town became a glad, happy place to live. While this philosophy may lead to a positive lifestyle, it does not lead to productive research. I have found that methodology suffers from the *Pollyanna* effect. In other words, methodology, regardless of whether it was quantitative, qualitative, or even mixed methods, produces the results it is staged to produce by relying on preset procedures.

In this way, the core, failing attribute of all qualitative methodologies is that by structuring the work, they also inadvertently structure and limit the outcome and conclusions. This is incompatible with post theories. As St. Pierre (2019a) writes, "The goal of post qualitative inquiry is not to systematically repeat a pre-existing research process to produce a recognizable result but to experiment and create something new and different that might not be recognizable in existing structures of intelligibility" (p. 4). To put it another way, post qualitative inquiry does not set out to produce anything that can be categorized. It works to generate the unthought by problematizing normative practices and conventional thought. Therefore, in my dissertation, I do not follow a prescribed methodology nor do I code and thematize data. Instead, I read Foucauldian theories alongside my reading of policy on the topic of social media use by school employees, and then, I follow where this co-reading leads me in writing, re-reading and re-writing.

Not Qualitative Methodology

Crotty (2015) writes, "Everywhere we look, if we are looking through post-structuralist eyes, the once clear-cut lines of demarcation appear blurred" (p. 208). This includes the clear-cut lines of methodology, which become blurred and in need of refusal when looking through a poststructuralist lens. Therefore, in my dissertation, I refuse all pre-determined methodology. It is important to note at this point that post qualitative inquiry is not a new form of qualitative

methodology. Because post qualitative inquiry bears the term “qualitative” in its name, it can easily be confused as a new branch of qualitative research. It is not. Post qualitative inquiry is something different, something separate, something incompatible with traditional qualitative research. In fact at the heart of post qualitative inquiry, it flat-out “refuses methodology” (St. Pierre, 2019a, p. 3). Both conventional qualitative methodology and post qualitative inquiry resist quantitative methodology as the most reliable, valid form of research. In addition, both challenge the assumptions and claims of validity, reliability and accuracy heralded by quantitative research. However, this agreement does mean that post qualitative inquiry and qualitative methodology are aligned or compatible. In actuality, they are contradictory because the core features of qualitative research are absolutely refused and problematized by post qualitative inquiry.

Merriam (2002) describes qualitative research in this way: “All qualitative research is characterized by the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, an inductive investigative strategy, and richly descriptive end product” (p. 6). Post qualitative inquiry is irreconcilable with this definition. It does not search for meaning or understanding. Instead, for post qualitative inquiry, meaning is already present in the “data” and situations. Post qualitative inquiry is interested in what systems and relationships *made* the data and situation meaningful. Further, in post qualitative inquiry, the researcher does not take on the primary role for data collection or analysis. Theory takes the wheel and channels the thinking. Data is not subject to an “official” source or project; instead, as St. Pierre (2017) describes from the research she conducted in her hometown, “data appeared in dreams, in my body, and in memories” (p. 4). Data was found beyond, and before, her interviews and official research project was ever conceived. Data is not limited to written words or

conscious thought. Similarly, the data that I use for analysis is collected from memories and reflections of new hire orientation, as well as already existing documents, like policy and professional development course material.

Post qualitative inquiry begins with difference. In other words, post qualitative inquiry begins with what does not align, what is an aside, question or afterthought, because that is where the new and different emerge. As St. Pierre (2017) explains, "Inquiry should begin with the too strange and the too much. The rest is what everyone knows, what everyone does, the ordinary, repetition" (p. 5). Post qualitative inquiry does not discard or reject ideas that do not align or complement normative ideas. Instead, research data or texts that have been rejected as "too strange" and categorized as "too much" in previous educational studies may emerge as interesting and significant as theory is read because they *challenge conventional discourse*. In this way, data is not produced by or for methodology, because data already exists for deconstruction in policy, professional development courses, text messages and social media posts.

Something New

Post qualitative inquiry is a concept, not a methodology. This is exactly why it is termed post qualitative *inquiry*, and not post qualitative methodology. As St. Pierre (2021) explains, "For almost a decade now I have explained that post qualitative inquiry is what I *had* [emphasis added] to think after a poststructural deconstruction and overturning of the structure of conventional humanist qualitative methodology" (p. 164). St. Pierre found poststructural inquiry incompatible with traditional qualitative methodology. Poststructural theories required her to think differently and called for another process, which she termed post qualitative inquiry. She

had to think differently because the ontology and epistemology of poststructural theories were utterly and directly connected to her refusal of method.

St. Pierre is not alone in her stance that methodology is deeply connected to epistemology. Crotty (2015) links methodology and methods directly to theoretical perspective and epistemology; he writes, "Justification of our choice and particular use of methodology and methods is something that reaches into the assumptions about reality that we bring to our work. To ask about the assumptions is to ask about our theoretical perspective" (p. 2). Because St. Pierre's assumptions were rooted in a poststructural perspective, there was no justification to allow her to choose a conventional methodology. A different means of inquiry was required. Yet St. Pierre found no such methodology available to her. She observed what "every beginning researcher learns at once that all research is divided into two parts – and these are 'qualitative' and 'quantitative'" (Crotty, 2015, p. 15). St. Pierre found the binary of quantitative/qualitative insufficient and limited; neither methodology is compatible with poststructuralism. Something new had to be created.

Giving up the security of methodology is a difficult step for any doctoral student or new researcher because methodology coursework is at the heart of most doctoral programs and is treated as an indisputable process. Therefore, it is not surprising that St. Pierre was not ready to totally discard methodology at her dissertation, but she was certainly well on her way. One of the reasons that St. Pierre abandoned methodology was due to her understanding and direct participation in the rise of qualitative methodology in the 1990s. She saw its birth and steady growth into a secure, favored methodology. She remembered when qualitative methodology was considered new and unstable during her work in the late 1990s. She saw how qualitative methodology became popular and respectable through deliberate actions, such as academic

writing, university instruction, and continual use in research projects. As a result, St. Pierre (2019a) knew that qualitative research methodology, like quantitative methodology, was "invented." St. Pierre (2019a) writes "we did, indeed, *invent* qualitative methodology, we *made it up*, and we've repeated it again and again so it seems normal, natural, and real" (p. 1-2). This is an important assertion: If methodology was invented, then it can also be discarded. It can be added to and deconstructed. Post qualitative inquiry is not qualitative research. It stands apart from conventional qualitative methodology as a different, non-methodological process invented for analysis of problems using poststructural concepts.

Embracing the Posts

As I previously explained, post qualitative inquiry is situated within a poststructural paradigm. St. Pierre (2019a) asserts this regarding post qualitative inquiry: "It is not for those who don't want to study poststructuralism" (p. 5). But why? Why are poststructural theories required? One of the main reasons is its rejection of a humanist philosophy. Traditional qualitative methodology is deeply grounded in humanism with a focus on pre-given method and conscious meaning-making. Post qualitative inquiry is anti-humanist: refusing ready-made methods for inquiry and starting with philosophy, rather than centering the meaning-making practices of humans. In addition, the aim of poststructuralism is very different from the goals of interpretivism, post-positivism, and critical theories. "Post" theories are not concerned with finding meaning or emancipating individuals; instead, "post" theories deconstruct and unravel what is known for the purpose of creating something new, something previously considered impossible. Post qualitative inquiry opens a space for an analysis of what is produced as meaningful, instead of attempting to understand what something means.

Finally, post qualitative inquiry is situated with a poststructural philosophy of immanence, which is concerned with what is "not yet, the yet to come" (St. Pierre, 2019b, p. 4). Immanence is a poststructural concept, thus the *post* in post qualitative inquiry. St. Pierre (2019b) explains, "In an ontology of immanence, one becomes less interested in what is and more interested in what might be and what is coming into being" (p. 4). As a result, there can be no prescribed steps or outline of work. The process of post qualitative inquiry is produced each time it is done. It is always different, because it emerges in the process. This can be radically seen in the origins of post qualitative inquiry as described here. Post qualitative inquiry was invented through a study of poststructural philosophy. St. Pierre did not set out to produce a new process for analysis, but it emerged as she thought with poststructural theory and conducted a conventional qualitative research methodology. As she worked, the incompatibility of the two (poststructural theory and method) emerged and she could no longer resist what was coming into being, which was a new, creative approach for analysis, reading, and writing scholarship. In the end, she *had to think* with post qualitative inquiry.

Refusing Method & Plugging In

The most important feature of post qualitative inquiry is its refusal of pre-given, predetermined methods. While there is no prescribed process, there is tremendous "doing" in post qualitative inquiry (Jackson & Mazzei, 2017, p. 719). However, it is *doing* without knowing beforehand what is to be done. St. Pierre (2017) explains, "The post qualitative inquirer does not know what to do first and then next and next. There is no recipe, no process" (p. 2). While there is no pre-given method, there is purpose. Post qualitative inquiry works to enable "the intensity of philosophical concepts to re-orient thought," which generates a rigorous analysis that cannot

be achieved merely by following a prescribed method or checking off a rubric (St. Pierre, 2021, p. 164).

So what is the "doing" of post qualitative inquiry? As Foucault (1981) explains, "If I don't ever say what must be done, it isn't because I believe that there's nothing to be done; on the contrary, it is because I think that there are a thousand things to do, to invent, to forge" (p. 174). The "thousand things" emerge from intense reading, writing and thinking. However, this reading, writing and thinking is never in a prescribed order, nor is it a one time action or process. Instead, it occurs over time, but also all *at* the same time, in a complex, tangled way. It is constant reading and rereading; writing and rewriting; thinking and rethinking; inventing and reinventing; forging and reforging. In this way, analysis is a continual and persistent, rigorous reading of a topic. The inquirer cannot predict what is next, beyond additional theoretical reading, because the next step reveals itself through the reading. Reading Foucauldian theories of power and knowledge has encompassed a substantial portion of my dissertation *doing*.

This *doing* of post qualitative inquiry is referred to by Jackson and Mazzei (2012) as "plugging in," which they explain as such: "Plugging in to produce something new is a constant, continuous process of making and unmaking….to see it at work, we have to ask not only how things are connected, but also what territory is claimed in that connection" (p. 1). As I "plugged in" the problem of social media use by school employees to theory, questions emerged: *How* are power and knowledge at play? *Why* is policy making and mandatory employee training considered a reasonable, normal response to something new and "problematic"? To engage with these questions, I used Foucault's theories of power, knowledge, discourse and resistance as described in the previous chapter.

“Data” & Difference

Post qualitative inquiry’s refusal of method necessitates a rejection of a traditional definition of data, as well as traditional forms of gathering information and data. The trouble with conventional definitions of data resides not in the sources of data per say, but in the favored position given to data as the bequeather of truth, reality and knowledge. This high status of data in conventional methodologies is born out of its strict adherence to method, which ensures that data collected is factual and accurate. Post qualitative inquiry rejects the claim that any data is complete and accurate because knowledge is constructed, thus unstable and always changing. Poststructuralism decenters the human subject and challenges their ability to give a “coherent narrative (flowing from a conscious, reflective, stable subject) that represents truth” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2017, p. 723). Without the conscious, human subject as the arbiter of knowledge, data opens up to difference.

In post qualitative inquiry, data is not static and its production is not predetermined. Instead, data comes from a variety of sources and acts as a tool for thought. Data is any “text” that can be plugged into theory, which will always produce an abundance of thought and questions. Post qualitative inquiry opens up the field of data so that one form of data is not privileged over another. In this view, conversations, policies, meetings, newspaper articles and social media posts and comments are all texts that can be plugged into theory. Furthermore, in post qualitative inquiry, texts are used in a process of co-reading. As Jackson and Mazzei (2017) explain, “To co-read is to read theory alongside other texts; we read interview transcripts, field notes, news and social media and other materials *with* theory” (p. 725). It is the reading of all texts with theory—or plugging in any text and theory—that makes analysis an important *doing* of post qualitative inquiry.

In this way, texts are a vehicle for deconstruction and difference. Texts are not used to produce application, representation or repeatable conclusions. Texts do not simply "nod in agreement" with my claims (Koro-Ljungberg & MacLure, 2013, p. 220). Instead, texts expose the claims. Specifically, as texts are plugged into theory, the text exposes what is privileged and silently constructed by binary oppositions. This understanding of data makes educational inquiry on the topic of social media use by school employees prime for analysis. Policy texts and other documents will emerge in the process and are inseparable from the theories and concepts. These texts include school board policy, school guidelines, employee training, new hire orientation, social media posts, text messages, news articles, lawsuits, employee surveys and feedback systems, and other texts that might become relevant as I plug in theory and policy. This has significant implications for educational inquiry because texts that were previously overlooked or considered of secondary importance, such as social media posts, unplanned conversations and conference presentations, are no longer subordinate or hidden. In post qualitative inquiry, texts are not consecrated or separate; instead, texts are an important and useful key for exposing and highlighting difference and knowledge that have previously been closed and unseen.

Refusal of Binaries

One reason that post qualitative inquiry refuses traditional definitions of method, data and findings is that each of these terms sets up binary oppositions. For example, *method* sets up a binary of order/disorder and clarity/confusion. *Data* sets up the binary of fact/fiction, and *findings* set up a binary of answers/questions. In each binary, the first word is privileged. For example, answers are privileged and questions are diminished. Post qualitative inquiry is not interested in a simple reversal of the binary. It wants to expose the binary's logic through deconstruction, which opens up space for a third and fourth and so on "other." Somekh and

Lewin (2011) explain, “In post-structuralist theory and deconstruction binary opposites are seen as forcing oppositions and indicating hidden mechanisms of power and control embedded within language” (p. 321). Thus, post qualitative inquiry works to expose the hidden mechanisms of power and control. Binaries emerge and become visible, reflecting what is common sense and normal in culture. For example, in my analysis of employee social media use policy the following binary oppositions emerge: professional/personal, proper/improper and responsible use/misuse. However, recognizing a binary is not enough. The *doing* is in the troubling of the binaries. Burman and MacLure (2011) advise, “Worry away at them. Put pressure on them” (p. 288). How does this occur? Thinking with poststructural theories and plugging binary oppositions into theory exposes how they produce normalizations. The refusal of binary thinking is a beginning and an opening for something new.

Post Qualitative Inquiry: Texts and Theories for Plugging In

My dissertation work is not linear or predetermined. I have engaged in thinking and writing with theory not to make conclusions, but instead to disrupt and dismantle “common sense” knowledge related to educational policy surrounding the use of social media by school employees. Jackson and Mazzei (2017) write, “We use theory not to exhaust possible explanations but to open up previously *unthought* approaches to thinking about what is happening in our research sites and encounters” (p. 720). Therefore, in reading theory, I have looked for difference and challenges to my current way of thinking. Often these new thoughts and challenges come as “sparks” during the reading and re-reading of theory, while also *thinking* about a subject. In post qualitative inquiry, theory is used to change thought. This type of reading changes how I read and what “sparks.” Sparks open doors to differences; differences in my thinking, perceiving, and writing. Spivak (2014) writes that “our own thinking changes” and

reorients (p. 77). For example, post qualitative inquiry changes the way I see texts. Burman and MacLure (2011) write that we see "the world, your data, and yourself, as *text*, with all that that implies," including seeing text as "not 'natural', not self-evident, and *never* innocent" (p. 288). In other words, texts can be deconstructed, pressed and pulled.

The texts and sources that I have *thought with* on the topic of social media use by school employees are noted and explained in detail below.

State and local policies: Throughout my dissertation, I deconstruct policy as an instrument and strategy of power related to the topic of social media use by school employees. The policies that I think with are: North Carolina State Board of Education's *Policy regarding the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators* (Policy ID Number: QP-C-014), the North Carolina School Board Association's model policy *7335: Employee Use of Social Media*, and Cleveland County Schools' *Policy 7335: Employee Use of Social Media Policy*, *Policy 7000: Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct, Policy 7300: Staff Responsibilities.* I chose these texts because they represent the standard expectations for school employees and govern the behavior of school employees in regards to social media use and professionalism.

Case law: For my analysis, I read case law related to social media use by school employees and first amendment free speech, as well as law reviews of relevant case law. I chose case law for review based on its connection to social media use by employees and its use at various conferences for the purpose of training school administrators and human resource supervisors. I reviewed the following cases in detail: *Pickering v. Board of Education* (1968), *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* (1964) and *Garcetti v. Ceballos* (2006). I chose these cases because they represent landmark cases related to educator free

speech. Moreover, these cases are repeatedly referenced at conferences I have attended as an human resources administrator in presentations related to social media use by school employees. I also reviewed the following cases due to their direct relation to social media use by educators: *Rubino v. City of New York* (2012), *Payne v. Barrow County School District* (2009) and *Snyder v. Millersville University* (2008). While these cases are not mentioned by name in my dissertation, they were important in my thinking and seeing the field of action that is set and resisted.

News and journal articles: I read and considered a plethora of news and journal articles related to social media use by school employees. This included articles in newspapers from Michigan, Florida, Vermont, Georgia and North Carolina, as well as online news sources, such as *Education Week*. I chose these articles because they were current (within the last five years) and ended in an educator's employment being terminated. I also read articles from professional journals, such as from the *Journal of School Public Relations, International Journal of Human Resource Management* and *SAGE Open.* I chose professional journal texts based on their research of social media use by educators and a connection to the work of school leaders and human resource administrators. All of these texts are important for exposing the discourse of educator professionalism, the normative solutions to education problems, and the current climate and culture of social media use by school employees when co-read with theory.

New hire orientation: I reviewed and reflected on the planning process, requirements and documents used by my school district for new hire orientation, including letters, surveys, PowerPoint presentations, videos, agendas as well as the verbal presentations

and illustrations shared. Many of these texts were created by me and have been revised and reused multiple times by me and others over the past eight years.

Professional development training courses: I analyzed the professional development courses mandated on an annual basis for employees of Cleveland County Schools related to social media. In Chapter 6, I closely reviewed the online course entitled, *Social Media: Personal and Professional Use*, which is produced by Public School Works and required for all employees in the school district. I chose this training course for close analysis because it is a course that I have participated in for multiple years and have cited in termination proceedings related to employee misuse of social media.

Various other texts: This category represents a range of individual texts that "popped up" for co-reading during my dissertation and were related to the discourse of educator professionalism and social media use by employees. These texts include: the transcript of a speech given by President Barack Obama, a weekly column written by my superintendent, a text message I received from an employee reporting another employee's misuse of social media, as well as a copy of an "apology" text a teacher sent to a principal regarding their posting and removal of an inappropriate video on social media. Additionally, educational posters from *We Are Teachers* and slogans painted on school spirit rocks are texts that I used for plugging into theory.

Social media texts: In addition to texts related specifically to the use of social media by educators, I have read and thought with current texts on social media as a medium and platform for networking, specifically focusing on its systems of surveillance, attention and publication. The primary texts that I have used are: Siva Vaidhyanathan's *Anti-Social*

Media: How Facebook Disconnects Us and Undermines Democracy and Clay Shirky's *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*.

In thinking and writing with theory, I have plugged the above texts into Foucauldian concepts, which have emerged in my reading of Foucault's books *Discipline & Punish*, *History of Sexuality*, *Power/Knowledge*—and his essay, "The Subject and Power." The following is a summary of the poststructural concepts and theories that I plugged my texts into throughout my analysis.

Power and knowledge relations: There are multiple power relations at play around the topic of educational policy and employee use of social media. Throughout my dissertation, I deconstruct power relations by examining them through Foucault's (1982) points of analysis, which include "the system of differentiations, the types of objectives, the means of bringing power relations into being, forms of institutionalization, and the degrees of rationalization" (p. 792). I plug in state and local policy, case law, text messages and social media posts, along with my experiences and conversations related to new hire orientation and professional development training courses.

Discursive practices: In Chapters 5 and 6, I analyze the discursive practices that are active in the language of social media use by school employees, in policy and employee training. Specifically, I investigate the "grand narratives" and binary oppositions around my topic (Davies & Gannon, 2011, p. 312). In these analyses, I primarily use Foucault's writing on docile bodies from *Discipline and Punish*, as well as his writing on the work of institutions in making bodies into machines from *History of Sexuality, Volume 1*. These theories worked as a site for plugging in the experience of employee training, as well as the written text of policy on employee use of social media and the code of ethics.

Subjectivity: In Chapters 4 and 5, I analyze the major subjectivities that are available to educators in the area of social media use, including a review of the individual and collective nature of subjectivity. Further, I look at how these subjectivities are in flux and open to challenge. To conduct this analysis, I plug in literature and case law related to historical versions and expectations of professionalism for educators, along with current processes and experiences, such as new hire orientation. In Chapter 4, the literature I used emerged as my thinking with Foucault on discourse led to a literature review of the genealogy of the discourse of educator professionalism. In Chapter 5, subjectivities that are created and maintained were made visible through a co-reading of Foucault's (1995/1977) "docile bodies" and the experience of new hire orientation.

Disciplinary power and biopower: In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I analyze the ways disciplinary power and processes, such as surveillance, are at work in the area of policy and social media use by school employees. In Chapter 5, I closely examine the ways in which individuals govern themselves through self-discipline and self-surveillance to produce Foucault's (1995/1977) "docile bodies." I also read Foucault's (2003) *Society Must be Defended* for consideration of policy as a strategy of biopower, which is power related to population control. In Chapter 6, I deconstruct an online training course as an instrument of power for disciplining employees by plugging it into Foucault's (1982) *The Subject and Power*. The texts I plug into Foucault's theories are: employee use of social media and code of ethics policies, contemporary writings on social media as a medium for networking, and the processes and experiences of new hire orientation and professional development training.

Resistance: In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I analyze the points of resistance in the power relations surrounding an employee use of social media policy. I utilize the following texts for this examination: policy revisions to the North Carolina School Board Associations' model policy, as well as my experience with revisions to local policy, *Pickering v. Board of Education* (1968) case law, the *Social Media: Personal and Professional Use* training course, as well as various other texts, such as an employee report and a text message.

Post Qualitative Inquiry: What I Had to Think

My first attempt at post qualitative inquiry came in an Advanced Qualitative Research course with an assignment of "thinking with theory," which is one of the core *doings* of post qualitative inquiry as described previously. I was skeptical that nothing new would come out of thinking with theory on my topic of the employee use of social media policy; it was a topic in which I was fully immersed and could already answer the basic questions of who, what, when and where. However, the assignment produced a provocative analysis and changed me from a skeptic of post qualitative inquiry to an enthusiast. For my dissertation, I used a similar process to guide and document my work. I have deeply read in poststructural theory, specifically Foucault, by studying and rereading "as many primary and secondary sources" so that I have begun to "*live* the theories" (St. Pierre, 2017, p. 2). St. Pierre (2017) describes *living the theories* as the process by which theories get "in one's bones, until one's life becomes rhizomatic as it has always been, until deconstructing all the structures we create is second nature, until one is always analyzing power relations and investigating the 'history of the present'" (p. 2). In other words, life becomes a text for co-reading with theory. For my dissertation, my experiences and knowledge on social media use by school employees and policy become the texts for co-reading with Foucault. To document what was emerging for me during my reading and thinking, I used

various electronic journals and documents, as well as traditional pen and paper. I followed the "sparks" that emerged in the process of reading, thinking and writing with theory. In the next section, I explain—through two stories—how post qualitative inquiry became something "I had to think" (St. Pierre, 2021, p. 164).

Thinking with Theory: Two Stories of How I Had to Think

As noted above, my first attempt at post qualitative inquiry came in an Advanced Qualitative Research course. I was introduced to post qualitative thinking earlier, but avoided it because I was fearful that it contained "no recipe, no process" (St. Pierre, 2017, p. 2). I was not interested in uncertainty and had bought into "*methodolatry*, the worship of method" (St. Pierre, 2019a, p. 3). In other words, I felt a prescribed method was *necessary* and required for *excellent* research. As a result, when I initially approached the idea of research, I came as a *good* student, ready to perfectly follow the methods I was taught. I was comfortably situated in my educational position as a chemistry teacher with numerical data and accountability measures as my tools for producing a reliable and valid quantitative study. Yet, there were a few strands of resistance in my devotion to quantitative methodology which had developed in my work with educators in human resources and school leadership. In these roles, I found that numerical data could not represent the full picture of what was occurring in schools and required the perspective of those living and working where the numbers were collected. In this way, my subject position had shifted due to "different social situations which called for different qualities" and modes of thinking (Weedon, 1997, p. 83). I had not given up quantitative methodology, but its hold as truth had been weakened by contradictory experiences. As a result, I planned to do mixed methods research, which would combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies. I felt settled with methodology. *Then*, I read St. Pierre. She exposed methodology as unstable and vulnerable,

and so I began to question what I *knew*. Specifically, when reading St. Pierre's (2019a) story of how post qualitative inquiry emerged, she wrote, "we did, indeed, *invent* qualitative methodology, *we made it up*, and we've repeated it again and again so it seems normal, natural, and real" (p. 2). Her confidence in the invention of qualitative methodology shocked me. Every graduate student in the 21st century *knows* that qualitative methodology is one of the core, accepted methods for educational research. The shock was not so much in qualitative methodology being an invention, but in the thought that *every* methodology is created. By regulating methodology to the category of invention, it becomes open to resistance and critique. This is profound. As a result of her simple assertion, I began to think about and look for inventions embedded in my study on employee use of social media policy. I began to ask, "What is normal, natural and real?" The most glaring answer was the invention of policy itself.

Prior to reading St. Pierre, policy was something neutral, secure and stable to me. Yet, as I read and thought with St. Pierre and Foucault, I began to see how unstable policy actually is. I could clearly see its invention and noticed multiple signs of resistance, especially in the policy *revision* process. That is, the only explanation for policy revision was resistance. There is no reason to revise a policy that is followed perfectly and is never challenged. This is something I knew firsthand because of my work as a district administrator on numerous policy revisions. I had seen that for my school system, policy revision was as *normal* and even more frequent as policy creation. I realized that troubling methodology as an invention—and power relations as productive of resistance—were things I could only think with post qualitative inquiry, and I *had* to think this way. When St. Pierre (2021) was asked what post qualitative inquiry means to her, she replied: "Post qualitative inquiry is *what I had to think* [emphasis added] after a poststructural deconstruction and overturning of the structure of conventional humanist

qualitative methodology" (p. 164). Her answer resonated with me because I found myself unable to stop thinking with poststructural theories, particularly those related to power, knowledge and discourse. Post qualitative inquiry would not allow me to exclusively look at others and outside forces, but also required me to take note of my own stance and claims. As Butler (1995) warns, I must consider "why it is we come to occupy and defend the territory we do, what it promises us, from what it promises to protect us'' (pp. 127–128). My next story shows how post qualitative inquiry has required me to notice my own subjectivity and what promises have been made so that I occupy and defend the territory where I live.

The following incident occurred at the time I was rereading Foucault's (1995/1977) writing on "docile bodies" and "the means of correct training" in his book *Discipline and Punish.* This story is an example of how I *had* to think and see my own subjectivity using post qualitative inquiry. It was early August and I was preparing for my school system's annual new hire orientation while I was reading and writing with Foucault. During the orientation, which is something I have done numerous times over the past eight years, I began to use orientation as a text that could be plugged into and read alongside Foucault's theories. As a result, sparks began to emerge and overflow. For example, in my preparation to train new hires in policy, I began thinking with Foucault's (1982) "little question" of "what happens" during orientation that produces docile bodies (p. 786)? In my initial thinking, I only considered the docility of new hires, which is visible in their respectful mannerisms and compliance-seeking actions. I began analyzing the practices and strategies used by my human resources department to produce these docile bodies of new hires. On the day of orientation, I trained employees on policy like I had done multiple times before. The new hires nodded in agreement and responded just as I had expected: with docility. After my presentation, I sat down and thought over my presentation as

the new hires listened to another district leader. As I reflected, I considered what I had just said in my presentation. I remembered saying, “I do not have social media. I am not on Facebook. However, that will not keep me from knowing if you do something inappropriate, because someone else will tell me. It may be a parent or a student or a board member or a colleague, but I will find out, because I have received reports from all of these sources in the past.” As I reflected on my statements, it occurred to me that I am the most docile person in the room. My self-regulation is something I proudly shared, which made me exactly what policy and power want—a docile body. Furthermore, while new hires are passively docile, I am actively docile and my increased, active docility is what makes me a valuable employee. During this moment, I knew this type of thinking can only happen through post qualitative inquiry. Like St. Pierre, it was what I *had* to think and do.

Chapter 4: Thinking with Theory: An Analysis of Discourse and Power in the Historical Literature

In Chapter 3, I described post qualitative inquiry and explained why it is a useful tool for deconstructing policy. In this chapter, I illustrate what my "thinking with theory" has looked like by providing an extended example of my *doing.* To explain what is done, St. Pierre (2019b) writes, "It must be invented, created differently each time, and one study called post qualitative will not look like another" (p. 4). In other words, it is difficult to "describe" what you will do. Consequently, the best way to explain how theory and methodology work together is to just do it, which is what I show in this chapter—an example of the *doing*.

Poststructural Critique of Literature

Prior to my post qualitative inquiry trial in the Advanced Qualitative Research course, I felt unable to do a literature review. I was not sure what literature was relevant for review or where to start. However, as I engaged in thinking with theory alongside my topic, as is described in Chapter 3, questions like these began to rise: "When did policy become a core, accepted, normal strategy for school boards? What happens when policy is accepted as natural and real?" The first question can be answered by a review of the literature. So I conducted one in order to create a genealogy of the problem. The second question can be answered by reading theories of power and discourse. This reveals the doing of post qualitative inquiry: One thing leads to another which leads to another and so on. I could not pre-plan it; questions emerged in all of my reading to orient me towards the next doing. My review of the literature on policy led to a further literature review on the normative status of educators as professionals who are expected to behave properly as a condition of their public status. As I show in the next section, my review of the literature on the discourse of educator professionalism includes a historical perspective,

connections to Foucault, and a review of the public nature of the discourse, as well as the nature of social media.

The Discourse of Educator Professionalism

Professionalism is a well known concept for educators. The North Carolina State Board of Education's (NCSBE) code of ethics (1998) sets its purpose to "define standards of professional conduct" (p. 1). However, the code of ethics does more than set rules; it also establishes these rules as "binding" on anyone referred to as a "professional educator" (North Carolina State Board of Education, 1998). In this way, the code of ethics produces knowledge and what counts as "real" for a professional educator in North Carolina. The code of ethics did not invent what a professional educator is, but it did make the discourse of educator professionalism more visible. Specifically, the code of ethic states:

> The educator shall serve as a positive role model for students, parents, and the community. Because the educator is entrusted with the care and education of small children and adolescents, the educator shall demonstrate a high standard of personal character and conduct. (p. 3)

This statement is a solid summary of the code of ethics because it encompasses the other standards, such as honesty and compliance with the law. Further, it passively constructs the binary of proper/improper by describing what is proper as a "positive role model." It subjects the educator to multiple judges, which are students, parents and the community. In "Teachers in Trouble: An Exploration of the Normative Character of Teaching," Piddocke et al. (1997) describe how the discourse of professionalism produces a character that teachers must play. This character is not just "the moral and psychological disposition of the teacher," but instead it is the role (i.e. character) a teacher is assigned in the "social drama" of school and life (Piddocke et al.,

1997, p. 211). The character or role of an educator is that of a professional who acts as a positive role model. In this way, the normative idea of professionalism claims more than an interest in the traits a teacher must possess; rather, it becomes the whole character of the teacher. As a result, "the teacher is going to be 'on the job' twenty-four hours a day" (Piddocke et al., 1997, p. 219). The discourse of a professional is not one that an educator can casually enter and exit, but rather, professionalism is a lifestyle that is mutually exclusive to a private, personal life.

This thinking represents my *doing* the next thing. As I read the code of ethics, St. Pierre's (2019a) claim of "we made it up" regarding qualitative methodology sparked questions like: When was the idea of a code of ethics made up? (p. 2). How did a code of ethics for educators become a normative practice? In this way, the next step emerged so that I began to review the literature related to the genealogy of educator professionalism, alongside Foucault's writing on discourse and subjectivity.

Historical View of the Discourse of Educator Professionalism

While the NC code of ethics for educators described above was generated in 1998, the discourse of professionalism and the binary of proper/improper are strongly historical in education. For example, in the seventeenth century, teachers were licensed through the church, because their moral character was their most important qualification (Clifford, 2014). Before there were any qualifications for educators related to curriculum and pedagogy, there was the expectation that educators would act properly and as an example for moral behavior. As Clifford (2014) writes in her description of the historical images and expectations of teachers:

The Old West is the quintessential home of the schoolmistress in American

> popular culture. Unlike their male counterparts—cowboys, gamblers, gunslingers, ranchers, prospectors, homesteaders, all with license to be themselves—the females come in only two packages: good (schoolma'ams) and bad (dance-hall girls). (p. 147)

In other words, educators (primarily female in the Old West) were firmly defined as "good" and represented the standard for what is proper. Further, a proper "school ma'ams" forfeited any "license to be themselves." In this way, professional was not just part of the educator's character, but the whole of it. Additionally, this historical discourse is clearly seen in the expectations of teachers even in popular media. For example, in the television show *Little House on the Prairie*, teachers must be unmarried (thus not sexual), apolitical, devoted to teaching, and a moral role model for everyone in town. Once married, a female teacher could no longer work as a teacher because the personal was made visible and the professional was no longer a viable subject position. But as Foucault explains, power relations always produce resistance. This is seen in *Little House* as the main character, Laura Ingalls Wilder, battles to be allowed to teach after marriage. In this way, the television show reveals how resistance works, but also upholds the binary of proper/improper because it is impossible for Wilder to comfortably live a double life. Even at the end of the 19th century, the professional educator must be divided inside herself by maintaining a division between her professional life and her personal life. As I plugged in Foucault to this history and these binary oppositions, my thinking led me to consider how this division is keenly seen in the area of social media use. The personal is allowed, but only when subjected to the background of a professional educator's life. The personal is hidden and silenced or in social media terms made "private" and "protected."

Foucault & the Discourse of the Professional Educator

The NCSBE code of ethics constructs the binary of proper/improper by naming requirements and prohibitions. The code of ethics states, "These standards shall establish mandatory prohibitions and requirements for educators. Violation of these standards shall subject an educator to investigation and disciplinary action by the SBE or LEA" (NCSBE, 1998). The binary is discreetly strengthened by terms like "mandatory," "binding" and threats of "investigation and disciplinary action," which represent disciplinary power. In *Discipline & Punish*, Foucault (1995/1977) describes disciplinary power by looking at the actions taken by a town during a plague in the seventeenth century. Foucault writes, "Each individual is fixed in his place. And, if he moves, he does so at the risk of his life, contagion or punishment" (p. 195). During the plague, people were confined to their house. The confinement reduced exposure and allowed for control of the disease. Likewise, as I read Foucault, the ways in which the discourse of professionalism seeks to confine an educator to their *proper* place as a professional and limit exposure to anything improper were made visible. If an educator strays to an improper place, then they do so at the risk of financial loss (loss of job or pay) and punishment. Safety is found by staying in place. Power works in this way to subject an individual to a fixed place. However, the individual is not physically forced to stay in place, but through biopower is compelled to stay in place. Interestingly, power is resisted because *risk* is available and taken when a more compelling interest arises. I see this with social media as school employees continue to use social media despite the risk of termination. As Siva Vaidhyanathan (2018) explains, the risk of unemployment is not as compelling as the "attention" that social media provides. Attention comes in the form of approval or acknowledgement through social media "likes" and comments by others. In this way, power is resisted even though risk exists, which results in what is "fixed"

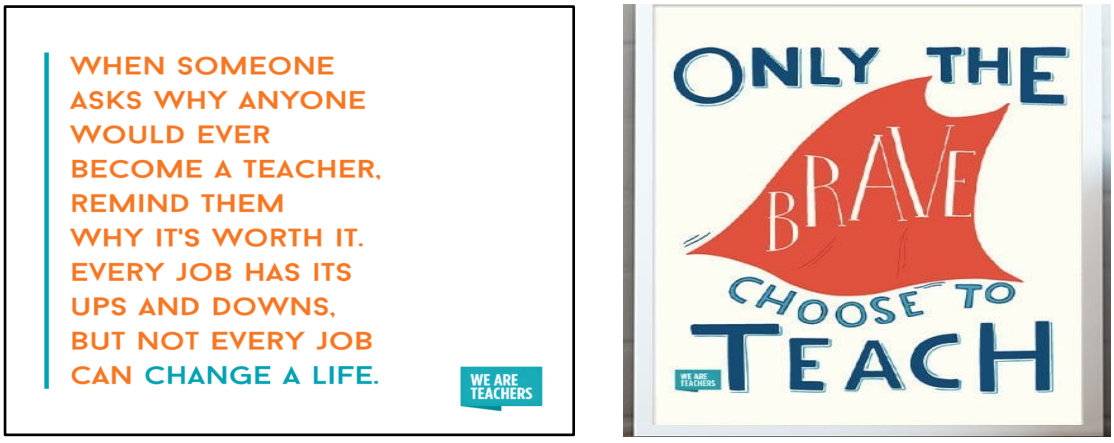
being loosened. Resistance and risk reveal the power relation. Power is not fixed nor is subjectivity. Foucault (1997) writes, “Power relations are obliged to change with the resistance” (p. 167). As a result, “what happens” is that the risk of termination must be increased to overcome the pleasure of attention from social media. One way to increase the risk of termination is through policy and professional development.

Further, I see the discourse of a professional acting as a dividing practice by working to fix an educator in a role apart from others. Foucault (1982) describes this “dividing practice,” where “the subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others” (p. 778). As in the plague, individuals are divided, separated and confined. In terms of social media, this confinement can be a division between educators and non-educators, between students and teachers, and even between oneself, since they must forfeit a “license to be themselves.” Specifically, for an educator to be a role model for others, the educator cannot be like others. The very idea of a role model is a lonely, divided status. As the code of ethics describes, educators are to be role models for students, parents, and community. So the division is between educators and these others. Moreover, the professional educator is divided within oneself by needing to limit their activities and interests to those things deemed proper and avoiding any improper activities. In thinking with theory on this concept of division, the following questions arise: Why do most educators accept the lonely, divided status of role model? What makes this status pleasurable? The answer is in the view of the divided status. If loneliness is the focus, then the divided status is not desirable, but if division makes one special or respected, then division becomes desirable. In this way, power uses the discourse of educator professionalism to focus on the division of educators from non-educators (and from themselves) as an honor and worthy goal. This can be seen in the two educational posters shown in Figure 1. These posters are part of

a group of posters produced by *We Are Teachers* to "celebrate" teachers. As I read Foucault's writing on "dividing practices," I was reminded of these posters and slogans that I had seen "celebrating" teachers. As I thought with theory, I saw how division was made desirable through celebration. This was further reinforced at a student teaching luncheon I attended recently where the speaker shared thoughts that mirrored those on the posters in Figure 1 as an encouragement and challenge to new teachers.

Figure 2

Posters to "Celebrate" Teaching



Note. From *We Are Teachers*, 2021 (https://www.weareteachers.com/free-inspirational-teaching-posters/). Copyright 2021 by Dun & Bradstreet.

The first poster in Figure 1 highlights the division of teachers from the *other*, that is, other people and other jobs. In this way, educators are viewed as special in their ability to change a life and should be celebrated. Similarly, the second poster highlights teaching as a "brave" profession. The image that goes along with the quote is a cape, which implies that teachers are heroes. Heroes are often portrayed as individuals who act individually to risk themselves for others. Thus, the hero is separated from others, yet honored, so division is welcome. Additionally, the slogan "Heroes work here" has become popular for describing teachers during COVID-19. The

photos in Figure 2 were taken by me of the school spirit rock at one of my children's schools. The rock was painted with this popular slogan on one side and the image of superwoman on the other side. The rock represents the normative view of educators as women and as heroes who are separate from other people and professions. The discourse of educator professionalism works effectively through images and slogans like these to make the divided status of teachers something that is desirable and normative.

Figure 3

Photographs of a School Spirit Rock

The Public Nature of the Discourse of Educator Professionalism

Over the years, the discourse of the professional educator has changed and stretched due to resistance. For example, female educators can now be married and raise families while continuing their career. In addition, "professional" now includes competencies beyond moral behavior to include curricular areas and subjects. Moreover, in the 1980s, attention shifted to the curriculum competencies of educators and achievement of students on standardized tests. The public discourse on education became a negative refrain of "our schools are failing," which was verified by the national report on the condition of education in America, entitled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.* As Gideonse (1992) writes of education in the

1980s, “The teacher education community [was] consistently on the defensive, seeming to play out a posture of self-interest, protecting the status quo” (p. 283). This attention renewed public interest in education and reinforced the discourse of educator professionalism and the belief that educators must act and behave properly in both moral character and pedagogical training. Furthermore, the status of a “professional educator” remains consecrated and brings both a pedestal and pleasure to those who are allowed the label. As Piddocke et al. (1997) write:

> The professional is in charge of a 'mystery' of which the ordinary person - revealingly called a 'layperson' or a 'client' or 'patient' - is supposedly ignorant. The reputation of the profession and its worthiness to be trusted by the lay (i.e., the people) must be preserved at all costs. (p. 213)

As the quote states, the reputation of the education profession is paramount and requires protection. Public employees are public figures, and “courts generally recognize the compelling interest of school districts as well as their reasonable expectations about the professional and moral exemplar of teachers” (Bon et al., 2013, p. 200). In this way, the binaries of the professional/personal and public/private are produced. These binaries place the compelling interest of the school district or profession at odds with the compelling interest of a teacher or individual. This is clearly seen in case law involving the freedom of speech of school employees. One of the foundational cases is Pickering v. Board of Education of Township High School District (1968). In Pickering, a public school teacher (Pickering) was dismissed for criticizing, via a letter to the editor of a newspaper, how the school system handled a proposal to increase school taxes. The school system asserted that Pickering’s negative comments hurt the system’s reputation. The United States Supreme Courts ruled that Pickering’s dismissal was unjustified because Pickering's right to free speech on a matter of a public concern (school taxes)

outweighed the operational interest of the school district (reputation) (Pickering v. Board of Education of Township High School District, 1968). The lasting effect of Pickering is in the endorsement of a "balancing test" when determining who (the individual educator or the school system/profession) has the most compelling interest in public speech. In other words, the law recognizes that the school system/education profession must protect and preserve their reputation, which means that even freedom of speech may not be a compelling enough reason for an educator to be allowed to speak with our employment consequences. The balancing test became a "'threshold question' through which all public employee expression must pass" when determining if it was proper/improper (Black, 2017, p. 57).

In thinking with Foucault, the Pickering case highlights two interesting points. First, the case is a clear example of power relations and how resistance and power are always intermingled. Specifically, the school board is in a position of authority, thus is able to attempt to raise taxes and dismiss Pickering. Yet, the attempt to raise taxes failed and Pickering resisted through both a letter to the editor and through a lawsuit, which he ultimately won. However, even if Pickering had not won, the power relations remain fluid. The school board does not have absolute, guaranteed power. Ultimately, even the decision by the Supreme Court is not absolute power, since they enacted the balancing test, which recognized power beyond the "state" (Foucault, 1982, p. 782). This judicial balancing test clearly shows that power fluctuates and must be considered in each matter because where the "greater" power lies in a case or moment is not solidified, but is unstable and able to shift. In other words, there is not a permanent victor. Instead, through resistance, power is forced to respond and create strategies to minimize resistance. One of those strategies is through policy. I know about the Pickering case, despite the fact that it was decided in 1968, because it continues to be taught and considered in creating new

policy and dealing with employment decisions. The purpose of the human resources presentations on Pickering are to ensure that the balancing test favors the system. In other words, school systems are still responding to the resistance of Pickering and his letter to the editor fifty years later.

Second, Pickering draws attention to the public nature of educators' work. In many ways, Pickering was a victory for public employees because it established their "First Amendments rights as citizens to comment on matters of 'public concern'" as long as the employees' interest are more compelling that the employer's interest in being able to "efficiently manage the public services it provides" (Black, 2017, p. 53). Yet, as Foucault (1982) explains, no victory is without consequences because "in effect, between a relationship of power and a strategy of struggle there is a reciprocal appeal, a perpetual linking and a perpetual reversal" (p. 794). In the case of Pickering, the "strategy of struggle" was with the specific situation of the attempt to raise school taxes. Pickering was fighting what Foucault terms "the immediate enemy" (p. 780). Therefore, while Pickering prevailed, the struggle continues because the relationship of power is reciprocal and perpetual. *Public schools need employees and employees need (and desire) public employment*. The needs and desires of both make them partners, and Foucault writes, "The term 'power' designates relationships between partners" (p. 786). This interdependent relationship is the nature of power relations. Resistance may lead to "victory," but the victory does not shift the power relation forever, it just compels a response which shifts the power relations again, which compels resistance and so on. Power relations are not only about the struggle, but also about governance. As Foucault explains, the foundational ideas of governance "did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed" (p. 790). More clearly, "To govern, in this

sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others" (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). This is exactly what is happening in the discourse of educator professionalism. Definitions, policies, reward systems and disciplinary procedures are all attempts and strategies by power to set the boundaries for the "possible field of action" by educators. The discourse of the professional educator as a public figure is a structure that sets the boundaries. The boundaries extend to the use of social media by school employees because social media is in the public domain. Because social media accounts are inherently accessible to the public, they fall within the field of action that must be governed for educators as public figures.

As noted above, the idea of an educator as a public figure was not new with Pickering. Specifically, in 1964, "the public figure doctrine was formally established by the U.S. Supreme Court" in the case of *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* (Navarrete, 2017, p. 566). While this case was not specifically about educators, it did give weight (or at least ink) to an expectation that public figures act properly. Some legal cases have relied on William Lloyd Prosser and Werdner Page Keeton's definition of a "public figure," which states:

> A person who, by his accomplishments, fame, or mode of living, or by adopting a profession or calling which gives the public a legitimate interest in his doings, his affairs, and his character, has become a 'public personage.' He is, in other words, a celebrity. Obviously to be included in this category are those who have achieved some degree of reputation by appearing before the public, as in the case of an actor, a professional baseball player, a pugilist, or any other entertainer. The list is, however, broader than this. It includes public officers, famous inventors and explorers, war heroes and even ordinary soldiers, an infant prodigy, and no less a personage than the Grand Exalted Ruler of a

> lodge. *It includes, in short, anyone who has arrived at a position where public attention is focused upon him as a person*. (Navarrete, 2017, p. 565)

This definition directly applies to educators because their work with the public's children gives the public "a legitimate interest" in their work and lifestyle. As the definition says, educators take on a "character" and "personage" in which "public attention is focused upon him as a person," which results in the "possible field of action" being marked to include every aspect of life because the field of action is the "person."

As a result, by claiming a professional status, a teacher also claims the subjection of the professional discourse by agreeing to a differentiation between a professional person and other persons. Furthermore, by claiming the status of professional, the teacher reaffirms the discourse of a professional educator as privileged over laypeople and personal life. This privileged status produces a binary because it differentiates and divides the professional from others and self. The binary subjects the professional to a special status with significant consequences for movement outside the boundary, i.e. loss of personal freedoms. As Piddocke et al. (1997) explain, to ensure the privileged status remains, "Any member of the profession who is caught in some activity detrimental to this public trust must be publicly and severely chastised" (p. 213). Power in this situation is not cemented in hierarchy, but is fluid and relational. Specifically, there is power for the professional educator in knowledge, and at the same time power for the layperson in determining the level of trust the professional will have with the public. In other words, power does not reside in a position, but is relational. The NC code of ethics works to set the field of action in this power relation by establishing this directive, "The educator strives to maintain the respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents and legal guardians, and the community, and to serve as an appropriate role model" (NCSBE, 1998, p. 1). The field is set by words like

“maintain,” “respect,” “confidence,” “appropriate” and “role model." Further, the judges are set for this field as “colleagues, students, parents, and legal guardians, and the community,” or in essence, the world is set as a judge, which is not contested because the teacher as a public figure is “common sense.”

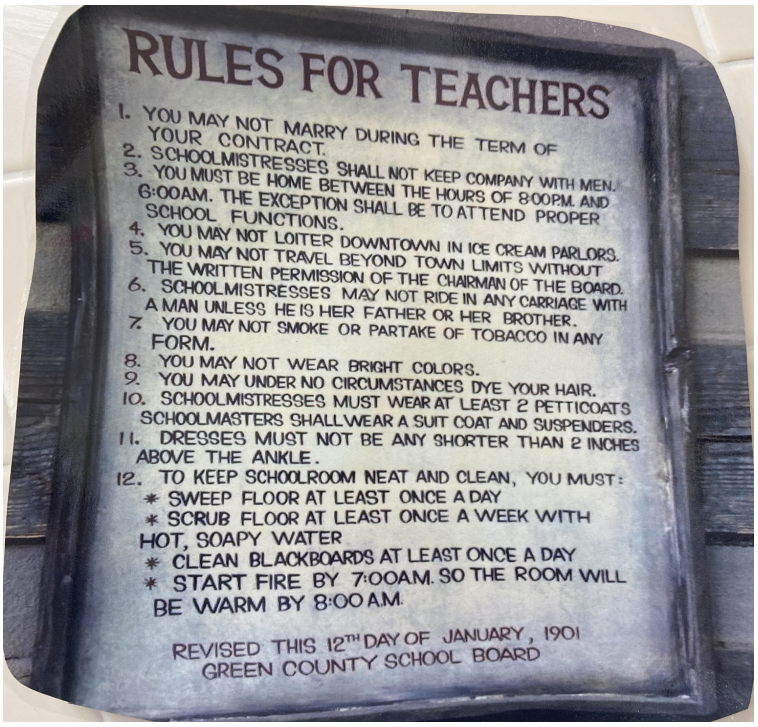
Resistance, Pleasure and a Rival Discourse

In my *doing* of post qualitative inquiry, I have investigated the discourse of educator professionalism and found the historical practices of power to have produced normalizations that appear strong because of their centering tendencies, yet are also unstable and fragile. Even more, I found that despite its subjection of educators to the binary of proper/improper, the discourse of professionalism has historically been highly pleasurable so that resistance is minimal. Or rather, acts of resistance have not historically disrupted the discourse of professionalism in education. As Foucault (1982) writes, “People criticize instances of power which are the closest to them, those which exercise their action on individuals. They do not look for the ‘chief enemy’ but for the immediate enemy” (p. 780). In this way, my research has shown that previous challenges have not entirely ruptured the discourse but have revealed cracks and have made shifts. For example, the poster in Figure 3 represents the “rules for teachers” in 1901 in Green County located in East Tennessee. These rules can be found posted in the one-room Calico Falls Schoolhouse replica located in Dollywood or as a poster in the teacher’s lounge at one of my children’s elementary schools (Beth, 2018). These rules show how discourse has shifted, but has not fully released its grip on proper/improper character. Specifically, the discourse has shifted since 1901 to allow educators to wear bright colors, dye their hair and “loiter” in ice cream parlors. However, the discourse has not significantly changed. It has simply shifted to align with the cultural norms regarding what places and clothing are deemed appropriate. While female

educators may now wear skirts shorter than “2 inches above the ankle,” this does not mean they can wear any skirt length or style they want because teacher dress codes often still limit the length of skirts and the tightness of clothing for women. In essence, resistance destabilized the discourse, but it did not destroy it. This reveals the power relationship at work: power is not one sided, but rather a partnership and reciprocal relationship.

Figure 4

Poster of Rules for Teachers in 1901



Furthermore, while the discourse of professionalism produces subjection, it continues to offer things so compelling and so desirable (like the status of hero and role model) that educators who are subjected comply individually and collectively.

As I think with Foucault and the power relationships in the discourse of educator professionalism alongside social media use, the following questions emerge: What makes social media use different? What has caused many school employees to resist the discourse of

professionalism in their use of social media, even though termination or disciplinary measures are likely? Further, why have institutions like public schools been so quick to respond with policy and strategies of surveillance? In response to my third question, the most obvious reasons are economic. Schools must protect their reputation. The school choice movement has put public schools in direct competition for students and funding with private and charter schools. This is a new and substantial challenge to public schools in North Carolina, who for many years have enjoyed little to no competition. However, I wonder if there is something more, something beyond economics, beyond the obvious. My wondering and subsequent analysis is enabled by thinking with theory. Specifically, I can ask: Is it possible that social media use is an attempt to attack the "chief enemy" and the subjection of educators to "binary branding?" (Foucault, 1995/1977, p. 199) According to Foucault (1995/1977), this binary branding produces a "constant division between the normal and the abnormal" and is used to "individualize the excluded" (p. 199). Social media allows for the production and advertisement of a character, which fundamentally resists subjection to a private, quiet life and a branding of professional/private.

Through my theoretical critique of the literature, difference emerged and questions surfaced, which require further reading and writing. This should not be surprising because writing is a *doing* of post qualitative inquiry. St. Pierre (2017) explains, "Writing is, after all, a method of inquiry. In writing, we can and do invent and reinvent the world" (p. 5). In traditional writing, the writer follows the rubric or outline and includes only what supports the predetermined core argument. Not so with post qualitative inquiry because writing *is* the inquiry. I write to open up the unexpected and the "too strange and the too much" (St. Pierre, 2017, p. 5).

The next section shows what is emerging as "the too much" in my thinking with Foucault's concepts pleasure and power, as well as contemporary writers on social media.

The New Pleasure: Social Media

Social media is a powerful tool. It allows a *character* to be produced, advertised and displayed in a way that conventional media forms have not allowed. For example, Facebook users produce a character when creating their profile page by choosing what to share and post (and what not to share and post). As Vaidhyanathan (2018) writes, "Facebook profiles are advertisements for ourselves" (p. 83). These advertisements work to do a couple things. First, they solicit responses and attention from our "friends" and others, which is pleasurable, because in social media "attention is the only currency that matters" (Vaidhyanathan, 2018, p. 79). Second, individual profiles teach Facebook (and other social media outlets) about us. As a result, "We change Facebook just a little bit with each interaction. It responds to us in subtle ways, offering us the possibility that our next interaction with Facebook will be slightly more pleasurable than the last" (Vaidhyanathan, 2018, p. 36). Social media does this by showing us ads or posts for things we like based on what we have previously liked, commented on or just viewed while using social media. In this way, social media responds to what we share about ourselves and gives us attention. It gives us what we "want" in exchange for our personal information, which we give freely and often unconsciously. Traditional media, such as newspapers, television and radio, do not allow users this type of attention. Attention is enabled briefly and conditionally through an editor and limited air time. The control is with the media. However, with social media, the control is with the user.

At the offset, the pleasure that social media provides through attention may seem irrelevant for a discussion of social media use by educators. However, because social media is a

powerful and effective mechanism for producing pleasure, it rivals the threshold of pleasure and attention that is produced by being identified as a professional educator. In other words, *if the pleasure of social media surpasses the pleasure of the role of professional, then resistance to the discourse of the educator professionalism will occur*. Social media use can only exist peacefully for an educator if its use complies with the discourse of professionalism or remains silent. However, because silence is contrary to the appeal of social media and its economy of attention, it is unlikely it will willingly be subjected. Further, social media's ability to provide instant attention and publication, in a way that traditional forms of media never could, makes it both dangerous and desirable. Specifically, television, radio and print media do not allow users to publish or advertise in a way that facilitates immediate character production. As Clay Shirky (2008) writes in his book, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*, in the world of social media "everyone is a media outlet" (p. 55). Media outlets are able to publish, edit and critique. In the past, there were many hurdles to becoming a media outlet. Specifically, it required, at minimum, special schooling, money and experience to gain access to a wide audience. As Shirky explains:

> The real world affords us many ways of keeping public, private, and secret utterances separate from one another, starting with the fact that groups have until recently largely been limited to meeting in the real world, and things you say in the real world are heard only by the people you are talking to and only while you are talking to them. Online, by contrast, the default mode for many forms of communication is instant, global, and nearly permanent. (p. 89)

It is the "instant, global, and nearly permanent" nature of social media that makes it very risky for public employees. As a result, *character* comes into question when social media is used in

ways that it did not with the use of traditional forms of media. The ability to publish and advertise quickly on social media has significant implications, such as allowing social media to be used as "evidence of a lack of fitness as an educator" (Black, 2017, p. 53). As a result, important questions begin to emerge: How does social media's difference provoke the creation of a stand-alone policy when traditional forms of media do not? For example, there are no policies governing the use of television, radio, books by school employees. How is social media different? What happens when social media is used that makes it problematic?

Social media is risky for educators because it is risky for educational institutions, specifically, public schools. Social media changes the way we communicate and share information, and as Shirky (2008) writes, "When we change the way we communicate, we change society" (p. 17). The real change has been to the parameters or Foucault's (1982) "field of action" because social media changes the boundaries. This change requires new marking of the "line" between what is proper/improper and requires an action on an action. Social media has not only fundamentally changed how we communicate, it has made the change at an unprecedented pace that "power" did not foresee. As a result, social media is defined as a problem. As Shirky explains, "Our social tools are not an improvement to modern society; they are a challenge to it. A culture with printing presses is a different *kind* of culture from one that doesn't have them" (Shirky, 2008, p. 107). In other words, social media challenges our norms and our discourses. In this way, social media does not just seek to tweak the discourse of educator professionalism, it outright challenges it.

Social media is complex. It not only challenges the discourse of professionalism but also enables and supports it. The most noticeable way is through surveillance. Social media makes surveillance easy for all stakeholders because of its public nature. In addition, social media itself

is involved in surveillance. As Vaidhyanathan (2018) writes, “Facebook has grown into the most pervasive surveillance system in the world. It’s also the most reckless and irresponsible surveillance system in the commercial world” (p. 55). Facebook surveils so it can give you what you want and get you to buy what is being sold, but it also allows others to surveil you though your likes and dislikes. This surveillance occurs discreetly on a larger scale than ever before. In traditional forms of media, surveillance on employees was generally confined to in-person, on-site monitoring. However, social media is like Bentham’s panopticon, “Inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere” (Foucault, 1995/1977, p. 195). The “gaze” of the panopticon worked because the confinement of prisoners made everything visible. Social media widens the employer’s gaze, so even what an employee does at home and in their personal spaces is made visible. Furthermore, visibility is no longer limited to the employer so that inspection functions ceaselessly and by unknown sources. Social media has made surveillance normative. As Vaidhyanathan (2018) writes, “Surveillance is so pervasive and much of it so seemingly benign that it’s almost impossible for the object of surveillance to assess how she is manipulated or threatened by powerful institutions gathering and using the record of surveillance” (p. 67). Because attention is the currency of social media, surveillance is enabled and desired. While there is no way to distinguish who is looking and what their intentions are, the pleasure of attention is more compelling than the possible consequences.

I have dealt with many employment situations related to social media and school employees in my role in human resources that make visible the discourse of educator professionalism. For example, I received a complaint from an employee regarding another employee’s use of their personal social media account to advertise and sell handmade drug paraphernalia. This complaint was made because the reporting employee recognized that the

actions of the other employee were not in keeping with the professional standards of the discourse for educators. However, when confronted with this complaint, the accused employee was unwilling to remove her posts and discontinue her personal business because she reported making more money online than working for the school system. The employee felt her private business was outside the bounds of her job as an educator. Further, she claimed to have customers from all over the United States due to their use of social media. Ultimately, the risk of termination was not constraining because the attention and subsequent business from social media was more compelling. Further, the employee shared that she was only working in the school system for health insurance. As I read this employee situation as text alongside Foucault, many "sparks" emerge. The power relation between mutual subjects emerges as an employee reported another employee, thus subjecting others to their subjection. Further, through the discursive practice of reporting another employee as unprofessional, the reporting employee is able to view herself as professional. These terms are made possible through policy as discourse. Further, freedom and agency are open to both employees, but the outcome is different for them because one exercised her freedom within the field of action set by power through discourse and policy and became more useful, while the other exercised her freedom outside the field of action and lost her job.

One other "spark" emerges for me as I consider the discourse of educator professionalism and the nature of power related to social media use by employees and the technology behind it. The employee who lost her job for inappropriate conduct on social media garnered a lot of attention on social media. This attention is attributed to the employee's unprofessional behavior because social media and technology are seen as neutral. This is discursive because the unprofessional behavior separates the employee from the discourse of educator professionalism

and produces the knowledge that employee behavior is due to an individual, and whatever is considered unacceptable by the discourse will result in separation. According to Rebore (2015), "the neutral nature of technology" means "it is humans who are capable of using technology for good or bad purposes; the technology itself is only an instrument" (p. 34). As a result, Rebore implores human resource administrators to develop policies that restrict the use of social media and Internet technologies. Yet, post qualitative inquiry pushes me to problematize what is conventional wisdom, which makes it possible for the following question to emerge: What happens if social media technology is not neutral, but instead is political? According to the *Washington Post*, Facebook's algorithm determines "a post's position on the news feed based on predictions about each user's preferences and tendencies. The details of its design determine what sorts of content thrive on the world's largest social network, and what types languish" (Oremus et al., 2021). In other words, the technology of Facebook determines what is visible, and thus, what posts get attention, not which humans. How problems and technology are viewed has major ethical implications for educational leadership, and post qualitative inquiry is an essential tool for deconstructing what is *known*.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. First, it is to illustrate what *doing* post qualitative inquiry looks like when texts, such as policy, case law, presidential speeches, educational posters and slogans, and a variety of literature on the history of education and social media platforms are plugged into Foucault's theories to open up new thoughts. It introduces the process of plugging in or "reading-the-data-while-thinking-with-theory" that I use in the next two chapters to guide my analysis of social media use by school employees (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 4). Second,

this exploration into the discourse of educator professionalism is necessary as a foundation for understanding my analysis of my research questions, which are:

1. What is the nature of power as it is exercised through policy and social media use by school employees?
2. How does policy and training on employee use of social media function to both maintain and produce power relations, discourse, and knowledge?
3. How does the use of social media by school employees enable and resist the discourse of educator professionalism?

In the chapters that follow, I show what power produces through policy as discourse and the wide circulation of the discourse of educator professionalism. In Chapter 5, my analysis shows that power produces "docile bodies" of employees by treating them as machines useful for manufacturing the type of schools desired by communities and stakeholders (Foucault, 1995/1977). In Chapter 6, my investigation demonstrates how professional development is produced by policy as discourse for the purpose of forming and reforming subject positions and ensuring employees are trained in how to speak, act and think.

Chapter 5: Docile Bodies

The purpose of this chapter is to consider my research question: "What is the nature of power as it is exercised through policy and social media use by school employees?" To answer this question, I think with Foucault (1982) and investigate what happens when the "whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, pyramidal hierarchy)" are exercised through policy and social media use by school employees? (p. 787). To begin to answer this question, it is necessary to examine how the topic of social media use is first introduced to school employees and to analyze how the introductory process works to produce docile bodies using all types of "power processes." According to Foucault (1995/1977), "A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (p. 136). The bodies of school employees are made docile through the subjection to district policies and educational discourses, including policies on employee use of social media. These docile bodies are used to ensure efficient operations and produce a normalized reputation for educators and schools in a community, which reinforces dominant educational discourses. Docile bodies are transformed and improved through various strategies and "best practices" in education, such as orientation, policies, training, professional development, observations, evaluations, recognition and reprimands.

In this chapter, I will specifically analyze how docile bodies are produced, encouraged and perfected in the area of social media use by employees through the utilization of educational policy as a strategy of both disciplinary power and biopower. In describing disciplinary power, Foucault (1995/1977) writes:

> It defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the

> speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies. (p. 138)

In other words, disciplinary power wants more than *acts* of compliance, it wants compliance in thoughts, ideas and judgements. Likewise, school systems want more than employees who will comply with social media policies. School systems want employees who agree, embrace and champion social media policies. Specifically, school systems want employees who will only post and "like" school system approved messages and will feel obligated to monitor other employees and report those who do not comply. While disciplinary power works at the individual level to gain compliance and self-regulation, biopower works at the larger, population level to govern and control the bodies of all educators. Biopower includes "the management of life in the name of the well-being of the population as a vital order" (Rose, 2007, p. 52). Policy is an instrument of biopower because it is used to govern a *population* of educators—not just a select few—for the good of society in training children. This is evident in the existence of state and federal policies that govern educators, their licenses to teach, and their work. In this way, both disciplinary power and biopower are at work in self-regulation because as employees choose to conform their bodies to school system policy, they also subject themselves to the larger cultural norms for educators (Pylypa, 1998). Policy is an instrument of disciplinary power and biopower because it trains educators to act properly within society for the public good. Through self-regulation and training, docile bodies are perfected. For instance, when an employee makes their social media account private and decides not to accept "friend requests" from students, the employee is involved in self-regulation. This self-regulation increases an employee's docility and subjects them to the discourse of educator professionalism. In this way, disciplinary power and biopower work together to produce knowledge that leads to norms and the production of docile

bodies. Norms and discourses are effective at producing docile bodies because they produce the desire within individuals to conform and comply.

For Foucault, biopower represents a shift from disciplinary power by moving from the level of the individual to the level of a population. In my research, the population encompasses all educators. Biopower is visible in the creation and development of common policies, such as the employee use of social media policy. The policy adopted by my school district was created by the North Carolina School Board Association (NCSBA) and has been endorsed by the majority of school board attorneys in the state. As a result, most school boards adopt the model policies created by the association. Further, superintendents, human resource administrators and principals are regularly trained on these policies at their annual conferences because the policies are championed by their separate organizations. There are 115 public school districts in North Carolina and 113 of them subscribe to the NCSBA's model policies and format for creating their policy manuals. Because these model policies are widely used and accepted by almost all of the school systems in North Carolina, these policies are able to create docile bodies of more than just individual educators in my county, but are able to create a "vital order" of the whole population of educators (Rose, 2007, p. 52). The NCSBA has become the "go to" source for school districts on policy issues and updates, which further strengthens and widens their influence and makes their model policies normative documents to order a large population of educators. Both disciplinary power and biopower work primarily at the level of threat. In other words, employees comply not due to physical restraint but because discipline is threatened and possible. Because policy is normative for all educators, then the threat is increased beyond the local level to all educators, and thus strategies of biopower become effective.

Policy in education is often used to teach and establish norms. Yet, policy is more than just an instructional document; policy acts as discourse. Policy is used strategically by school systems to discipline, surveil, and punish the body of educators to "produce the types of bodies that society requires" (Pylypa, 1998, p. 22). Policy is an effective technique of power in educational settings due to its positioning. Because policy is written outside of specific situations and is a common technique used widely by many institutions, policy is able to masquerade as a neutral document and appear non-threatening. Further, policy is often cited as a means to provide clarity as a *service* to employees. In the analysis that follows, I will deconstruct how policy is positioned as a technique of power by school systems to produce, encourage and perfect docile bodies. Through events such as new hire orientation and the processes for selecting mentors and promoting employees, I will show that social media policy is an effective strategy for disciplining employees and producing docile bodies that can be used and transformed to meet the goals of the school system.

New Hire Orientation

To begin, it is important to consider how educators are first introduced to policy, which is typically at a new hire orientation meeting led by district administrators. For me, this thinking and writing comes at a prime time, because it is August, and I am starting a new school year and am currently engaged in new hire orientation for my school district. This is the eighth time I have led a new hire orientation. New hire orientation is not an arbitrary, chance event, but instead, it is a highly planned and carefully crafted event to meet the *needs* of new hires as determined by the school district. This is significant because while a new hire orientation can be analyzed regardless of effort and intentionality, it can be more critically analyzed when it is known that school leaders have made purposeful decisions during planning. For example, there are over

three hundred policies in my school system's policy manual, but only four policies are selected by the chief district office administrators for discussion during new hire orientation. Clearly, those four policies have special significance for both new hires and the school system, which causes questions like these to emerge: What makes the selected policies more significant than other policies? What happens when the chosen policies are elevated and publicly reviewed with new hires?

The four policies that are reviewed at new hire orientation in my district are the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct, Staff Responsibilities, Staff and Student Relations, and Employee Use of Social Media. The first two policies are umbrella policies that set the field of action for school employees and can be used in conjunction with all other school policies. As Foucault (1982) explains, the foundational ideas of governance "did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed" (p. 790). More clearly, "To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others" (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). This is exactly what is happening with the Code of Ethics and Standard of Conduct and Responsibilities of School Staff policies. These policies broadly define and produce knowledge and norms, as well as reward systems and disciplinary procedures, which are strategies of power to set the boundaries for the "possible field of action" by educators. Policies also allow employees to "calibrate themselves in relation to 'where they should be' and devise ways of getting from one state to the other" (Rose & Miller, 2010, p. 285). Policy works in this way to nudge employees towards self-monitoring and self-regulation because it describes what is proper, professional and successful. The choice of policies for formal review is reactionary, in that policies are chosen based on previous administrative experiences, as well as proactive, in that policies are chosen to avoid

administrators' worst *possible* nightmares. In essence, these policies are chosen by chief district administrators because they work to effectively produce docile bodies by producing knowledge and defining the field of action for surveillance. In this way, additional docile bodies are produced with new hires and existing docile bodies are perfected through the use of district employees in teaching the policies. Moreover, the last two policies are more specific in nature and represent infractions that currently pose the largest threat of detriment to the school system's reputation. Therefore, noncompliance with these policies puts the district and students most at risk. To minimize risk, these policies are highlighted and discipline is explained. These policies work within the larger field of action set by the first two policies, but further narrow the field of action concerning employee use of social media and relationships between staff and students. Stories are used to reinforce the normalcy of the boundaries set, to re-emphasize the possibility of discipline for disobedience, to make known the constant "gaze" of inspection and to highlight reward for compliance (Foucault, 1995/1977, p. 195). Because these policies are publicly discussed by district leaders with new hires, these policies are elevated in importance, which makes surveillance more accepted.

As noted earlier, one of the frequent reasons given to explain the importance of school policies is the need for clarity. Specifically, school policies are often portrayed as an effective way to provide clarity on behavioral expectations for employees and students, as well as a guarantee to parents and the community that high expectations are held. As St. Pierre (2000) describes, clarity works to authorize what is acceptable and "to keep the unfamiliar at a distance and illegitimate" (p. 478). The employee use of social media policy clarifies what is acceptable and the possible consequences for unacceptable use. In other words, policy promises transparency and knowledge for employees. Employees do not have to *fear* the unknown or

worry about what they are allowed to post on social media because the policy tells them. In actuality, binary oppositions are produced in policy as a technique of disciplinary power. Through social media policy, the binary oppositions of acceptable use/unacceptable use and knowledge/ignorance are produced, which work to separate and divide the lives of employees. Under the guise of clarity, the "enemy" becomes fear and ignorance, and knowledge is created by the binaries. Further, governance and subjection are hidden under the pretext of transparency and clarity. In this way, the policy keeps the unfamiliar at a distance by ignoring how the policy can be a hindrance and focuses attention on what is deemed legitimate to "save" employees from fear or harm. In this way, power acts in what Foucault (1982) refers to as the new pastoral form where "salvation" ensures "health, well-being (that is, sufficient wealth, standard of living), security, protection against accidents" (p. 784). These assurances are all examples of how the employee use of social media policy promises to *save* employees from problems and allows them to keep their employment.

While the policies chosen for review are visible and intentional, there are numerous other decisions that are not as visible, but are nevertheless intentional and part of the disciplinary assemblage used by districts for disciplining employees and creating docile bodies. For example, the new hire orientation agenda includes a formal introduction to district staff, a review of the policy manual, information on payroll, a presentation on benefit enrollment and retirement savings, as well as practical topics, like getting a school badge and turning in required paperwork. The topics and order of the agenda are intentionally organized to most effectively maximize the attention and engagement of the new hires. Therefore, topics that might be considered boring are interspersed with more exciting topics. Moreover, numerous *small* decisions are made regarding the setting, from date and time to food to decorations to gift bags.

Each decision is carefully made with the new hire in mind. The goal is for the new hire to be physically comfortable, because a comfortable employee is more likely to be a docile employee. As Foucault (1980) explains, power "produces effects at the level of desire—and also at the level of knowledge" (p. 59). In this way, power creates the knowledge that comfort and customer service are the positive consequences of employment and compliance, which creates a desire for continued conformity and continued employment.

At the same time, the setup of the room used for new hire orientation is lecture style and does not invite discussion or questions. The space setup is reminiscent of traditional schooling environments where the "sage is on the stage." Further, the only attendees are new hires; thus, socializing between attendees is low because they do not know each other well and will work at different locations. Therefore, new hires are isolated from what they know and may not be comfortable emotionally. As Foucault (1995/1977) explains, "Discipline sometimes requires *enclosure*…. The aim is to derive the maximum advantages and neutralize the inconveniences (thefts, interruptions of work, disturbances, and 'cabals')" (p. 141-142). The setting of new hire orientation effectively maximizes advantages and neutralizes inconveniences, by providing friendly greeters to direct new employees where to go and offering physical comforts like food and gifts, which allows interruptions and disturbances, like hunger and confusion, to be effectively minimized. Furthermore, through enclosure and separation from friends and veteran, "cabalistic" employees, distractions and conversations are neutralized, resistance is minimized and inspection for compliance is improved. In this way, docile bodies are produced and are readied for subjection, inspection, use and transformation by the system.

Docile Bodies as Machines

My school district's Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct states, “All school system employees hold positions of public trust; they are responsible for the education of students and also serve as examples and role models to students” (Cleveland County Schools, 2020c). Therefore, the school system must work to produce and transform the bodies of educators into docile bodies that will meet the standard of public trust and the normalized definition of a role model for students. Foucault (1990/1978) wrote that institutions treat bodies as machines by focusing on “its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls" (p. 139). In my reading, thinking and writing with theory, I have clearly seen how new hire orientation and policy work to prepare and transform the bodies of school employees into machines as described by Foucault for the purposes of creating the type of professional educator promised to stakeholders and described in policy. In the sections that follow, I will break down my analysis to specifically examine how the bodies of school employees are treated as machines through the techniques of social media policy and new hire orientation. By *disciplining,* employees are trained in the norms of the school system through instruments of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and examination. By *optimizing capabilities*, employees are subjected and obligated to the normative discourses of employment and professionalism through the use of dividing practices. By *extorting forces*, employees engage in self-regulation and the regulation of others. By *increasing usefulness* alongside docility, employees' bodies are perfected and promoted. Finally, by *integrating*, employees join a collective subjugation through strategies of confession, memory and desire, which work jointly to make educators more useful and docile. Through the use of universal techniques, biopower

produces docile employees who are prepared to be beneficial, self-disciplined agents for the advancement of education as an institution.

Disciplining the Employee

School systems treat the bodies of employees as machines by focusing on "its disciplining" (Foucault, 1990/1978, p. 139). The disciplining process starts immediately, even before an employee is hired. For example, to be considered for employment, an applicant must apply in the system's application system. Applicants who do not apply in the appropriate way will not be considered for hire. In addition, an employee must be interviewed. The interview process requires future employees to arrive at an appointed time (even if virtual) and answer questions. If an applicant does all these things in the **most** acceptable way, then they become an employee. At orientation, an employee is also required to come at a specified time, to a specified location, to sit in a seat, to listen to speakers and to comply with the demands and processes set forth. The disciplining of employees in these ways is relatively unnoticed and anticipated by most because this is a method of discipline employed by most institutions. Because the hiring process is a cultural norm, resistance is very low and docility is easily produced. The hiring process is important in the creation of docile bodies because it subjects applicants to a school process. Those who do not comply are weeded out, but more importantly, those who comply are made employees and have passed the first test of docility. Through the hiring process, the bodies of educators are made ready for future subjection and increased demands of docility. For Foucault, this is how biopower, or biopolitics, works to control populations. Specifically, Foucault (2003) writes:

> Biopolitics' other field of intervention will be a set of phenomena some of which are universal, and some of which are accidental but which can never be completely

> eradicated, even if they are accidental. They have similar effects in that they incapacitate individuals, put them out of the circuit or neutralize them. (p. 244)

In other words, the hiring process has become a universal norm because it is used by most institutions and organizations. It "incapacitates" applicants because they are either not considered for hire, which in effect puts them out of circuit, or they comply with the hiring guidelines, which in effect neutralizes them. Compliance with the hiring process is high and little to no resistance is expressed verbally because the hiring process enjoys the effects of biopower as a normative process.

Through biopolitics, docility and subjugation can also be generated by policy because policy's arm extends beyond a single individual to the "global mass" (Foucault, 2003, p. 242). Every public school district in North Carolina has a policy manual. The idea of a policy manual is a cultural norm for schools and institutions, regardless of whether they are public or private. The use of policy is even expected and encouraged by employment websites. For example, Indeed.com is a popular, international employment website, which is used by many institutions, including educational ones, to find employees. Indeed encourages employers to create social media policies for their organizations. Specifically, Indeed (2021) claims: "Social media policies are becoming ubiquitous in employee handbooks because social media use is often integral to personal and professional life." In other words, social media policies are a standard practice that should be expected and *accepted* by everyone who wants to be employed. Further, policy should be expected on any topic that is "integral" to life. The phenomena of policy has become powerful for producing docile bodies because its use has become universal and applies not just to educators, but to the "global mass." When a technique of power, like policy, becomes universally applied, it creates a norm, which in turn creates knowledge. In other words, because the use of

policies is mainstreamed, policies can be viewed as neutral and natural, which allows them to work out of sight and be unverifiable. Foucault (1995/1977) described disciplinary power in terms of the panopticon when he wrote: “Power should be visible and unverifiable” (p. 201). Likewise, power is productive in policy because it is both visible and unverifiable. Policy is a written, visible document that employees can see and find on school websites with words that promise surveillance. Yet, educational policy is unverifiable because the technique applies to the masses and is usually enforced by people who did not create it. Furthermore, surveillance of policy is conducted not only by school administrators, but also by the “public” which is largely unverifiable. As a result, it is very difficult for policy to be refused completely because it boasts a “ubiquitous” position.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1995/1977) writes, “The chief function of disciplinary power is to ‘train’” (p. 170). In order to complete the mission of training, disciplinary power employs three instruments to create docile bodies; these three instruments are: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and examination. These instruments treat employees as machines because they work to “train” individuals and “levy” their abilities for the purposes of the institution (Foucault, 1995/1977, p. 170). These three instruments are exercised throughout employment starting with new hire orientation to introduce policy and to begin the process of correctly training employees.

Hierarchical observation is implemented through the space and setting of new hire orientation and by the people conducting and presenting information. Specifically, new hire orientation occurs at the central office building and the presenters are all district administrators and supervisors. Both the building and the presenters represent the top level of surveillance and enforcement of policy. As Foucault (1995/1977) writes, “Discipline is an art of rank” (p. 146). In

his description of rank, Foucault explains how space is more than just a matter of architecture and function, but it is also hierarchical. He writes, "[Spaces] mark places and indicate values; they guarantee the obedience of individuals" (Foucault, 1995/1977, p. 148). Rank is embodied in the district office building where the superintendent's office and school board meeting room are located. Furthermore, the school board meeting room provides both a large space for meeting with new hires, as well as communicating order, surveillance, power and law because the space represents hierarchical observation. The mechanism of power is visible and represented in the boardroom, but it is not *verifiable* in that no one is sitting in the board members chairs or seen in an observational role. Hierarchical observation is also communicated through position titles. For example, the speakers at new hire orientation have position titles such as superintendent, board chair, payroll supervisor, assistant superintendent of instruction, assistant superintendent of human resources, as well as directors of elementary education, secondary education, athletics, personnel, professional development, and so on. These titles communicate that observation is present in every area, from human resources to instruction to athletics. Names tags designating position titles are more than simply helpful to new hires; they work to subtly communicate rank and surveillance and demand the obedience of individuals.

Furthermore, the concept of rank is interwoven in the presentation of educational policy at new hire orientation in multiple ways. In school systems, policies are called "board policies" and are set by elected officials of the school board. The school board represents the top level of rank and is the level most separate from employees. Board members are separate from employees in how they arrive at their position; they are elected instead of hired. Further, their role is not a full-time role and rarely do they have an office in the district; therefore, they are not as accessible to employees and in this way are unverifiable. More importantly, the idea of rank is

connected to educational policy because surveillance is connected to those with rank. For example, the Cleveland County Schools (2020a) Employee Use of Social Media policy says, "The Superintendent or designee may periodically conduct public Internet searches to determine if an employee has engaged in conduct that violated this policy" (p. 4). In this way, hierarchical observation is promised and visible in the rank of superintendent, but unverifiable due to the uncertainty in the terms "designee" and "periodically." Interestingly, even those who rise to the rank of superintendent or designee are under the gaze of the policy they present and subsequently subject themselves to the policies they enforce and teach.

Normalizing judgement is another instrument of disciplinary power, which is employed to produce docile bodies. In describing normalizing judgement, Foucault (1995/1977) writes, "Disciplinary punishment has the function of reducing gaps. It must therefore be essentially *corrective*" (p. 179). In other words, the purpose of normalizing judgement is to assess behavior against the norm and then to close any gaps between the norm and behavior through corrective practices. The purpose of orientation is to train employees on the school system's rules by making the norms known (policies, procedures and processes) and sharing the consequences for gaps (punishment) for the purpose of reducing gaps without using punishment. The idea of a constant gaze is subtly, but purposely, introduced for the corrective purpose of reducing gaps. This aligns with a major objective of Foucauldian disciplinary power, which is for employees to internalize self-control through the simple idea of a constant gaze. In other words, the purpose of orientation is to produce knowledge that will produce desire in employees leading to compliance and self-regulation. The desire and subsequent compliance may be due to the reward for compliance or to avoid negative consequences. Overall, the reason is unimportant; it is the production of docility that is sought. In this way, norms work to control the behavior of

employees by setting the field of action. Norms are communicated in policy as expectations and coupled with consequences for the purpose of producing, encouraging and perfecting docile bodies. For example, the Employee Use of Social Media policy states, “Employees shall not post confidential information about students, employees or school system business…. Any employee who has been found by the Superintendent to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal” (Cleveland County Schools, 2020a, p. 3-4). The expectation of confidentiality is established in law and policy. The purpose of this policy expectation is to establish a norm for teaching employees what is improper to post on social media. One way confidentiality is established as a norm is through repetition across multiple policies. Specifically, confidentiality is mentioned, explained and demanded in over 35 policies in the Cleveland County Board of Education Policy Manual. Through continual use, the idea of confidentiality becomes common and natural. Once an idea or concept becomes normative, then judgement can be applied for the purpose of correction and closing gaps between behavior and expectations. This judgement is not only in terms of formal disciplinary action and dismissal. In reality, the goal of disciplinary power in implementing normalizing judgement is to avoid the formal use of disciplinary action. The goal is to use “subtle procedures” to achieve compliance and create docile bodies (Foucault, 1995/1977, p. 178). At new hire orientation, peer pressure is a subtle procedure that is used. By having other employees (peers) teach policy and champion compliance, subtle pressure is applied to encourage compliance. Policy is read aloud and compliance is stated as the expectation, which works to close gaps between prior understanding and produces new knowledge. Because the policy and expectations are presented publicly as a norm, then if an employee fails to comply by posting confidential information, then disciplinary action can be used with the consent and support of others. Consent and support are indicators of

normalizing judgement. This example illustrates how policy sets what is normal and defines what is right and wrong and who is to blame. Therefore, employees are disciplined to produce compliance and docility. The process or policy acts as the judge over the situation.

Foucault (1995/1977) writes, “The power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels” (p. 184). This is clearly seen in the example above. All employees are expected to refrain from posting confidential information, therefore, if an employee does not comply it is easy to identify the gap in compliance. Another example is seen when the Employee Use of Social Media policy states: “School employees may use only school-controlled social media to communicate directly with current students about school-related matters” (Cleveland County Schools, 2020a, p. 2). The policy imposes homogeneity by requiring all employees to use “school-controlled” technology for communication. School employees are made docile through their internal acceptance and obedience to imposed restrictions. Restrictions make it possible to determine where gaps are, because only school sanctioned social media is permitted. Therefore, non-school approved platforms can be labeled as inappropriate, as can the individuals who use them. Through normalization and homogeneity, the policy works to make docile bodies of educators.

Examination is the third instrument of disciplinary power. Foucault (1995/1977) describes examination as a combination of normalizing judgement and hierarchical observation when he writes, “It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates and judges them” (p. 185). In policy, expected behavior is communicated and a normalizing gaze is established. For instance, the Cleveland County Schools (2020a) Employee Use of Social Media policy states, “School employees are prohibited from accessing social networking

websites for personal use during instructional time." The clear expectation is that employees will not access personal social media sites during the school day. Examination will allow the superintendent or designee to monitor compliance and classify employees as proper/improper. This examination occurs throughout employment. Employees are reminded of expectations and examination through their mandatory review and acknowledgement of policy as part of their annual employee training. Policy also deputizes other employees and even parents, students and community members, who might view an employee's social media page with the task of examination. Because employees do not know who is visiting or policing their social media pages, they are compelled to self-regulate their social media behavior. In this way, policy utilizes the instruments of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgements and examination to produce docile bodies that act as machines to produce proper educators.

As described above, through careful disciplining and training in policy, the process of making employees into docile bodies is begun. Discipline continues its work beyond new hire orientation by encouraging and rewarding docility through observation and judgement. Policy acts as a technique of biopower to reduce resistance by claiming a natural, normative position, which works to perfect docile bodies through examination. Thus, disciplined bodies become useful machines primed for optimization.

Optimizing the Capabilities of Employees

A second way that school systems produce docile bodies, and treat the bodies of employees as machines, is by focusing on "the optimization of its capabilities" (Foucault, 1990/1978, p. 139). In other words, school systems work to make the most effective use of employees' abilities to meet the goals of the school system. As described above, one way that the capabilities of new hires are optimized is by isolating them from veteran teachers at new hire

orientation. However, it would be impossible to isolate beginning teachers from veteran teachers forever, so formal mentor relationships are established and required by North Carolina state board policy. These relationships are set and controlled by school and district administrators. Mentors act as an extension of the hierarchical gaze and allow for surveillance beyond new hire orientation because they are selected based on *successful* experience as defined by performance ratings on their summative evaluations, which are determined by school administrators. Mentors must have at least all proficient ratings, with preference given to those who are rated "accomplished" and "distinguished." However, if a selected mentor only has proficient ratings, then the school system must formally document why the proficient teacher is "the most appropriate mentor" (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2021, p. 29). In essence, only the teachers who have achieved the most compliant behavior are *appropriate* mentors. Further, to ensure optimization, mentor teachers must complete the approved mentor training. This training and selection criteria works to produce and transform veteran teachers into useful, docile bodies whose capabilities are optimized through the role of mentor. Thus, mentors can be used to effectively aid in transforming and optimizing the capabilities of beginning teachers into additional docile bodies. Both the mentor and the beginning teacher are subjected to the roles dictated by the state and school system. In this way, subjectivity is effective at optimizing the capabilities of employees through the use of policy. As Freie and Eppley (2014) describe:

> Subjectivation is the way people are "invited or incited" to recognize moral obligations (Foucault, 2000, p. 264). Subjectivation is about choices. For example, individuals make particular political choices or aesthetic choices, which Foucault calls "a beautiful life," in order to be recognized in a particular way or to have authority over others. *Because I am this, I am obligated to choose this*. (p. 657)

Policy works to obligate the bodies of school system employees and educators. The employee use of social media policy "invites" employees to recognize their role as an educator as separate from their personal life. In Cleveland County Schools' (2020a) Employee Use of Social Media policy, the word "personal" is used 22 times, in contrast to "professional" and "employee," which are used more than 65 times. What happens when the word "personal" is used significantly less and in contrast to "employee"? The answer is that a division occurs and a binary opposition is produced: employee/personal. Through this opposition, the term "employee" is optimized and elevated in prominence by repetition and separation from the lesser used term of "personal." Thus, policy defines, encloses, prioritizes and divides. Policy defines personal as anything not controlled by the school and outside employment as an educator. Employee becomes a superior, yet isolated, subject position, which is opposed to the personal. Therefore, the employee becomes subject to the idea of *Because I am this* (an employee), *I am obligated to choose* (or not choose) *this.* In this way, power is productive by using policy as a "dividing practice" to divide others by way of a binary opposition (Foucault, 1982, p. 777). Policy sets up not only *what* is proper/improper, but *who* is proper/improper. Power produces even as it prohibits. Further, the policy defines school-controlled social media as platforms "that create an archived audit trail" (Cleveland County Schools, 2020a, p. 1). In other words, school-controlled is always visible. This visibility further divides *employee* from *personal* by subjecting the employee to surveillance. Surveillance is not just in effect the moment action occurs, but rather surveillance is always present, even after the action is over because there is an "*archived* audit trail."

Foucault (1982) describes this "dividing practice" as the moment when "the subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others" (p. 778). In terms of social media, this

confinement can be a division between educators and non-educators, between students and teachers, and even within oneself. Specifically, for an educator to be a role model for others, the educator cannot be like others. The very idea of a role model is a divided status. As the code of ethics describes, educators are to be role models for students, parents, and community. This produces an elevated status, which works on the level of desire, and compels employees to comply and subject themselves to division from others and within themselves. In this way, division is not resisted, because the elevated norm makes it desirable. An employee's capabilities are optimized because resistance is low and self-regulation is desired. As a result, the professional educator is divided inside herself by needing to limit her activities and interests to those deemed proper by policy.

In the case of social media policy, the *employed* educator must choose to comply with the policy by limiting "friends," posts, "likes," and even the type of social media they use. In the subject educator position, an employee must think: *Because I am an educator, I am obligated to choose to use social media as defined by policy*. By this thinking and choosing, the employees' capabilities are optimized. Moreover, Foucault described subjectivity beyond an invitation as when employees are "incited." Employees are incited to comply by both the threat and the actuality of discipline. By sharing stories of previous infractions and disciplinary consequences, employees are urged to comply. For example, the social media policy encourages employees to make their personal pages private and insists that student information not be shared. To incite employees to comply, short stories of non-compliance are shared by district human resource administrators. One story that is shared is of an employee who wrote disparaging comments about a student and parent on her personal page. The parent was not a friend of the employee, but someone who was a "friend" shared a screenshot of the post with the parent who made a

complaint to the principal. As a result, the employee is no longer employed with the school district. This story is effectively used to urge compliance through the reminder of the ever-present administrative gaze and fear of punishment and termination. Yet, the power of the urging is not only repressive, but also productive because "it operates by producing 'knowledge and desire'" (Pylypa, 1998, p. 23). In other words, the sharing of stories is viewed as the sharing of knowledge, which produces the desire in employees to avoid the consequences of those in the story and thus optimizes their capabilities. It also produces the desire to be a good employee and not be someone who a story would be told about in subsequent new hire orientations as a warning. In a nutshell, every time an educator chooses and desires to comply, their capabilities as an employee are optimized because they become more docile and more the type of employee needed by the school system.

Extorting an Employees' Forces

The third way that school systems treat the bodies of employees as docile machines is by focusing on "the extortion of its forces" (Foucault, 1990/1978, p. 139). School systems extort the forces of employees by channeling an employee's strength and energy towards the aim of the system, which is to be the best choice for families and the community for educating students. In order to be the best choice, educational institutions must closely guard their reputation, and thus the reputation of their employees. The guarantee made to parents and the community is clearly stated in the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct as:

> An unswerving commitment to honorable behavior by each and every employee is expected…. This policy applies at all times and locations where the employee's conduct might reflect poorly on the school, the school system, the employee's status as a role model for students….Employees shall perform their jobs in a competent and ethical

> manner without violating either the public trust or applicable law, policies, and regulations. (Cleveland County Schools, 2020c, p. 1)

The code of ethics promises stakeholders that school employees will be honorable, competent, ethical and professional people at all times or face punishment. How can a school system make and fulfill such a guarantee? The answer is through the use of biopower. Educational institutions regularly make and maintain these types of promises because through techniques of biopolitics they are able to effectively create docile bodies who work like machines to produce and sustain an excellent reputation for school systems. To do this, school systems coerce employees' into subjecting themselves and others in alignment to policies which support the normative discourse of educator professionalism. In this way, as Foucault (1990/1978) wrote, biopower is marked by "the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" (p. 138). Because biopower works on populations, as opposed to individuals, knowledge and common sense expectations are created, which can work unconsciously to extort employee's forces. As Foucault (1991) writes, "[People] obey rules which are not given to their consciousness" (p. 71). In other words, employees do not typically follow policy because they have given it careful thought and consideration, rather, they comply with policy because it is a common sense response for school employees. As a result, employees subject themselves and others to policy because they have embraced the mindset of "*If I want this*, *I must do this*" (Freie & Eppley, 2014, p. 657).

This mindset is an example of how an employee's forces can be extorted for subjugation to policy. Specifically, a few weeks after new hire orientation and the review of social media policy, an inappropriate Tik Tok video of a new teacher was reported, which led to the principal asking the teacher to take the video down. The teacher immediately complied and sent a text to the principal which read: "Sorry about that. Posted it before I got the job and forgot to take it

down. Won't happen again." This situation presents multiple ways that employee's forces are used to produce compliance and subjugation. First, the Tik Tok video was reported by a peer of the teacher. The peer's forces were extorted for the purposes of monitoring and surveillance. Second, the new teacher is made into a subject by dividing practices, which Foucault (1982) explains as: "The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others" (p. 777-778). The new teacher is divided by multiple binary oppositions, such as professional/personal, teacher/non-teacher, and proper/improper. The teacher notes these oppositions in her short text by noting "before I got the job." The *job* divides and produces the subjectivity of professional, teacher and proper. It also produces the subjectivity of personal, non-teacher, improper, which notes the "other" that the new teacher was prior to the *job*. Finally, the new teacher subjects herself by saying "won't happen again." In this way, the teacher is promising to self-regulate her posting of videos on Tik Tok now that she is a teacher. Foucault explained that "subjectification is the way people are 'invited or incited' to recognize moral obligations" (Freie & Eppley, 2014, p. 657). For example, the text message displays this new teacher's "incitement to confession" (Burman, 2017, p. 66). She confesses that the video was not proper by removing it and expressing sorrow in her text. She does this because she wants to be viewed by the principal and herself in a particular way, specifically as a proper educator. Thus, she adopts the mindset of *If I want this* [to be viewed as a proper educator], *I must do this* [remove the video and self-regulate]. In this way, the new teacher is made into a docile body through the extortion of her own forces and the forces of the reporting employee, which works to produce the type of proper educator (one with a positive moral reputation) needed by the school system. Furthermore, as situations like this one become known they work to reinforce the disciplinary gaze for all employees and improve self-regulation.

In summary, an employee's own forces are extorted through self-regulation and the self-motivated monitoring of others. Thus, the employee becomes a self-made docile body. Regulation and docility are not the results of sovereign rule, but are produced and encouraged through the extortion of one's own forces by way of biopower and dividing practices. Docile bodies are perfected as employees extend regulation beyond self to monitoring and policing others. Consequently, the usefulness of employees increases as their individual forces are extorted.

The Parallel Increase of an Employee's Usefulness and Docility

The fourth way school systems treat the bodies of employees as machines is by focusing on "the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility" (Foucault, 1990/1978, p. 139). When policy is presented at new hire orientation, the connection of *usefulness* and *docility* is communicated through both nonverbal and verbal means. Nonverbally, the connection is made through the use of district staff to present and teach policy. District staff could be considered the most useful people to the system because they have the highest levels of rank and docility. For example, as assistant superintendent of human resources, I present policy at new hire orientation. The Employee Use of Social Media policy is one of the four policies that I personally cover. Moreover, I represent the highest state of docility because I do not have any personal social media accounts, nor does the superintendent; therefore, it is impossible for us to ever be noncompliant with that policy. In fact, we have reached the height of docility by not even engaging in social media. In the "elaboration of ourselves," we have not just complied with the policy, but we have taken a self-forming step of deeper docility, which makes us more useful. In this way, it is not a matter of compliance, but of usefulness.

Verbally, the connection to usefulness and docility is shared, and thus *increased,* during my presentation through my stories, examples and support of the policy. For example, I typically tell new hires that I do not have any personal social media accounts, but that I will have no problem finding out if they do something inappropriate online because it will be forwarded to me by someone else. I disclose that on a weekly basis I receive screenshots of social media posts or videos posted on social media by school employees that someone feels is inappropriate. By revealing these things, I am communicating multiple layers of information. First, I am communicating that the highest levels of usefulness to the district are most docile by not even engaging in social media. I am also communicating that the keys to rank are in going beyond the policy in compliance. Second, I am embodying and performing what Foucault (1995/1977) wrote in *Discipline and Punish*: "Inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere" (p. 195). Even without my own personal social media accounts, I am still able to function as part of the gaze. This is seen in the previous example regarding the new teacher and the Tik Tok video. I did not have to look for the video; it was sent to me by another employee. The "inspection" and "gaze" were active and alert even on the weekend and without a formal process. The employee who shared the video is a useful employee because her docility has increased. She is not only personally docile, but her docility is increased as she makes others into docile bodies too. In related literature, Carpenter and Harvey (2019) looked at the use of social media for professional learning by educators and as part of their study found: "Twenty-one participants (43.8%) mentioned their disapproval of some content that other educators posted because they did not consider it sufficiently professional in character" (p. 6). As a result, the educators "unfollowed" or "defriended" the educators they felt acted inappropriately. Succinctly, almost 50% of the educators in that study noticed and were willing to report (at least to the researchers) that other

educators were insufficiently professional. The increased docility of participants is seen in their self-motivated "unfollowing" and "defriending," which parallels their usefulness in reporting others as unprofessional. This further evidences the constant presence of inspection and surveillance from various sources, even when the use of social media is for professional reasons.

Third, the new teacher becomes more useful as she becomes more docile. She is useful when she takes down the video and commits herself to self-regulation by saying, "Won't happen again." The teacher's response shows that she has been effectively disciplined. She has accepted the subjection of the job as a norm and sees that the job of educator will not allow such videos as was allowed before. The dividing effect is in action, and the division makes her more useful. She becomes a useful role model by removing the video and ensuring her online presence and reputation is docile. The entire situation was handled in less than five minutes, which is an example of how powerful and effective discipline and norms are.

It is important to note that I, as a high-level administrator, was not asked by the school system to refuse social media activity. I did it on my own as an act of self-regulation. However, my self-regulation and docility were rewarded by my becoming more useful. Bodies are perfected by promotion. The more docile or compliant an individual the more likely to be promoted. I argue that the most docile of all positions in education is my position: the one of human resources director. This was recently reinforced through a conversation with a professor regarding my dissertation topic. The professor commented that it is *surprising* that a human resources professional would look to deconstruct power relations. I later wondered, *why* is it surprising that a human resources professional would want to study power, resistance, and docility? The rhetorical answer is that human resource professionals are typically rule followers and role models of docile bodies who would not recognize or oppose power in policy. Human

resources administrators *increase* their own personal subjection through their subjection of others. Yet, they also are keenly aware of how employees resist subjection and are able to *know* ways to most effectively resist. As a result, sometimes the "over the top" compliance of human resource administrators is actually an act of resistance. For example, most human resource administrators might agree with Foucault (1995/1977) in his description of the panopticon as a strategy of disciplinary power in that "visibility is a trap" (p. 200). So while I am docile in my lack of social media use, I am at the same time resistant to power by not being visible. District and school administrators are more conscious of inspection and "the gaze" because they handle the situations that are reported and often play a role in surveillance and investigation. As a result, they may resist by remaining well hidden or invisible on social media. This may account for why more district and school administrators avoid the active use of social media than teachers and entry-level employees do. Without a doubt, one strategy of power that is used effectively by school systems and policy is the parallel increase of usefulness with docility.

The Integration of an Employee into Systems of Control

Finally, school systems treat the bodies of employees as machines by focusing on "its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls" (Foucault, 1990/1978, p. 139). In this way, employees are not only subject to the system's controls, but they become integrated to the point that they become *part* of the system of control. This integration is most effective because it does not rely on coercion, but on a desire to conform. As Pylypa (1998) explains:

> This desire to conform leads people to sustain their own oppression voluntarily, through self-disciplining and self-surveillance. Self-monitoring is achieved on two interacting levels: practice and discourse. Individuals feel compelled to regulate their bodies to

> conform to norms, but also to talk about what they "should" and "should not" do and to "confess" any deviation from these norms. (p. 24)

Furthermore, this *confession* is not only of their own deficiencies but also a confession of the deficiencies of others. Therefore, employees move in an additive manner from subjected to subjecting. This is seen clearly in relation to the Employee Use of Social Media policy. Employees are not only subjected to the policy, but they are also "compelled to regulate their bodies" and their speech to the norms established in policy. Speech encompasses both words supporting the policy, as well as words in judgement of those who do not comply. As described earlier, a Tik Tok video was deemed inappropriate by another employee and reported to me as the chief human resource administrator. As a result, the system does not need a special system devoted to monitoring social media. All the system needs are employees who are integrated into the system's policies and controls. This is because power relations are between mutual subjects. As Foucault (1980) wrote:

> Moreover, in speaking of domination I do not have in mind that solid and global kind of domination that one person exercises over others, or one group over another, but the manifold forms of domination that can be exercised within society. Not the domination of the King in his central position, therefore, but that of his subjects in their mutual relations: not in uniform edifice of sovereignty, but the multiple forms of subjugation that have a place and a function within the social organism. (p. 96)

This explains how the employee social media policy is enforced in my district. Specifically, most "failures to comply" are "found out" because an employee is reported by another employee. Most employees assume issues are found by monitoring that occurs at the central office level. However, in our system, *no* monitoring occurs of an employee's social media use by a

technology platform or by a person. In fact, it would be impossible for the school system to effectively surveil all school employees' social media accounts (we have over 2000 full time employees). However, employee social media **is** monitored. It is monitored by the individual and by the public (community) and other school staff. Reports are regularly made not by a "king in his central position," but by "subjects in their mutual relations." As a result, employee social media use is monitored in a totally informal, non-centralized, yet successful, way. This informal method has those who are subject to the policy also subjecting others to the policy. In other words, employees become so integrated into systems of control that they become the system of control themselves. As Foucault describes in *Discipline and Punish*, it is not a constant, formal process of monitoring that makes disciplinary power effective. On the contrary, it is the intermittent *threat* of monitoring that makes it successful.

Additionally, while we do not monitor employee use of social media through a formal system, we are totally okay with employees *thinking* we do. In Foucault's (1995/1977) analysis of the panopticon, he writes: "Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable" (p. 201). For the panopticon, the inmate could always see the watchtower, but could never see who was in the tower. Therefore, the inmate was left to assume a guard was in the tower watching and was compelled to practice self-regulation. For school employees, policy is the watchtower because it is visible. Multiple strategies are employed to make the policy continuously visible. For example, every employee in my system must annually certify that they have read the Employee Use of Social Media policy in our online professional development system and will comply. However, there is not one person who is designated to monitor policy, so employees do not know who is watching or if anyone is watching. The source of surveillance is unverifiable. As Foucault goes on to explain:

> The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad…. It is an important mechanism, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes…. Consequently, it does not matter who exercises power. Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine. (p. 201-202)

Policy acts in a similar manner. Like the panopticon, the see/being seen dyad is disrupted and cannot be verified. Therefore, it does not matter who exercises power. Power can be effectively exercised at all levels of rank. For instance, a teacher can report misuse of social media by a principal. In this way, power is exercised by all employees on all employees. Further, Foucault wrote: "Bentham was surprised that panoptic institutions could be so light: there were no more bars, no more chains, no more heavy locks; all that was needed was that the *separations should be clear and the openings well arranged* [emphasis added]" (p. 202). Policy works to make separations clear and openings well arranged. Specifically, policy works to separate professional from personal by contrasting the terms in policy. By emphasizing "personal" in policy, it highlights the separation between personal actions and employee actions. Policy supports and strengthens the discourse of educator professionalism by relying on cultural norms and local expectations. Further, policy makes the openings for reporting infractions well known. As a result, power enjoys a "perpetual victory" by integrating employees into systems of surveillance and control as both subjects and subjectors (Foucault, 1995/1977, p. 203).

The integration of employees into systems of control are also effective because of the previous memories that employees have as students. School systems are well known to employees because they have typically spent at least thirteen years in educational institutions prior to employment. As a result, one of the primary factors that invites docility and integration

into systems of control and keeps resistance low for new employees at new hire orientation is what Weedon calls "memory" and "collective subject." In describing journalistic writing, Weedon (1997) writes:

> No individual ever approaches a discourse unaffected by the memory of previous discursive interpellations. Yet press articles use specific linguistic techniques to close off possible paths of resistance to the forms of subjectivity and the meanings and values which they articulate. The most common of these is the implicit assumption of a collective subject: we are the reasonable, moral individuals for whom the text speaks. This is a strategy which is hard for the reader to resist. (p. 98)

At orientation, we are initiating employees into a discourse—the discourse of an effective employee in our district. As we train and present policy, we focus on the ideas of team and family, both of which are ideas of collective subject. We use videos, speakers and gifts/tokens to orientate new hires to Team CCS. Even more, through the presentation of policy, the idea that by taking the job of educator, employees are "now one of us….now a professional educator….now a role model for students….now looked up to in the community" takes root. These are ideas that are very hard for employees to resist, especially at the start of the job. Moreover, employees do not resist because of their own memories. Employees find the high expectations and subjection of the school system to be reasonable because they had high ideals for their teachers when they were students. The discourse of the professional is a well ingrained discourse. In fact, the training in this discourse started long before our new hire orientation. It started when these employees were students in schools. The discourse is larger than just our school system or our state; it is historical and mainstream. As a result, the memories of our new hires make the system's governance seem common sense and acceptable, which works to transform employees

into docile bodies.

Conclusion

School systems use policy to transform educators into docile bodies and useful machines for publicizing the superiority of schools as institutions for the education and training of children. Biopower works effectively through policy because the usefulness of a docile educator is bound not only to a specific school or district, but to education as a universal institution. Foucault (1995/1977) quoted Guibert when he wrote:

> Discipline must be made national...the state that I depict will have a simple, reliable, easily controlled administration. It will resemble those huge machines, which by quite uncomplicated means produced great effects; the strength of this state will spring from its own strength, its prosperity from its own prosperity. (p. 169)

Policy is an effective strategy because it is simple, reliable and easily controlled and employed by school systems to discipline employees. Because policy is a national norm, discipline is also nationally accepted. Through the use of norms, docile bodies are created and the bodies of educators can be maximized as machines for the production of positive role models and the retention of the public trust. Yet power is not without challenge. As a result, power works in connection with desire to respond to resistance and produce docile bodies. As Foucault (1980) explains, “What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (p. 199). As a result, biopower works to produce norms that not only enclose educators, but that elevate educators as role models. Recognition and rewards are offered to those who comply and are docile, which reinforces and strengthens the traditional discourse of educator professionalism.

At the beginning of this chapter, I stated my purpose to consider my research question: "What is the nature of power as it is exercised through policy and social media use by school employees?" To answer this question, I have employed thinking and writing with Foucault (1982) to investigate what happens when the "whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, pyramidal hierarchy)" are exercised through policy and social media use by school employees. My analysis in this chapter has revealed how biopower works subtly to produce knowledge and norms that work on the level of desire to produce, encourage and perfect docile bodies of employees. This is accomplished initially through new hire orientation, where the field of action is set by an introduction to policy. Policy is coupled and layered with multiple power processes through setting, stories and the production of binary oppositions. The subjectivities of employee and professional are presented and touted as highly desirable, natural and achievable through docility. However, it is not only new hires who are invited and incited to docility. The bodies of current, veteran employees are treated as machines for the purpose of training new hires in policy, as well as for continuous implementation, self-regulation and monitoring of others.

Chapter 6: Professional Development: An Instrument of Policy as Discourse

Every year, school employees participate in mandatory training on a number of *important* topics, such as bloodborne pathogens, sexual harassment, critical incident responses, fire safety and social media use. These topics are deemed important by governing bodies at the federal, state or local levels for health, safety and professional development reasons. In this chapter, I analyze and deconstruct the required online training offered in some North Carolina school districts on the topic of social media use by employees through the use of a Foucauldian analysis of power, discourse, and subjection. As I described in Chapter 2, policy acts as discourse to produce the need for professional development. In this way, policy on social media use has precipitated the need for employee training on social media use. In Chapter 4, I looked at the development of the discourse of educator professionalism and showed how the discourse works to define, through the use of binary oppositions, what is proper/improper and professional/personal. The binary opposition works to create a dividing practice, which separates employees from themselves and others. Professional development training courses act as instruments of discourse and power to produce knowledge that establishes the field of action for employees. In this chapter, I will address the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of power as it is exercised through policy and social media use by school employees?
2. How does policy and professional development training on employee use of social media function to both maintain and produce power relations, discourse, and knowledge?
3. How does the use of social media by school employees enable and resist the discourse of educator professionalism?

School employees participate in annual training that is mandated by multiple levels of government through policy for various reasons. For example, employees are required to participate in bloodborne pathogen training, which is required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in compliance with both federal and state legal requirements. The purpose of this training is to teach employees about the risk of infectious diseases associated with exposure to blood and bodily fluids and to educate employees on how to protect their health by avoiding exposure and decreasing risk. In the bloodborne pathogens training, employees are encouraged to practice "universal precautions" by "treating *all* bodily fluids as if they contain an infectious pathogen; and treating *every* person as if they are infected with a contagious disease" (Public School Works, 2021, p. 10). In other words, safety comes through *full* compliance, even beyond what is necessary. While training related to bloodborne pathogens may seem totally unrelated to training on social media use, there is a subtle, common discourse that is present in most professional development courses, which is the promise of safety in full compliance and the desirability of division from anything that could be infectious, whether that is a physical or theoretical disease. This is important because one way that a discourse produces truth and knowledge that is socially recognized and accepted is in its ability to permeate all areas of life so that it becomes normal and universal. In relation to professional development, the *truth* that is put into circulation is that compliance with policy is desirable because it benefits employees by keeping them safe. This strategy of power is further exposed by the subtle title of the suite that contains all the employee training modules offered by Public School Works, that is, Employee**Safe**. "Safe" is in bold to highlight what is desirable. This title is displayed in the upper right-hand corner on every slide of every training module. Its consistent presence on every slide, regardless of course topic, makes it almost unseen and unnoticed. Foucault (1995/1977)

describes this unnoticed repetition of safety as a "subtle procedure" of power for disciplining employees and creating docile bodies (p. 178).

Unlike bloodborne pathogen training, annual training on social media use by employees is *not* required by state or federal law. However, most school systems choose locally to require employees to complete training on social media use every year to ensure the expectations of local policy are clear and widely circulated. School systems require this *extra* training as a strategy similar to the method described for preventing transmission of an infectious bloodborne pathogen: training acts as a *universal precaution.* The bloodborne pathogen training defines a universal precaution as "specific actions intended to minimize everyone's exposure risk" (Public School Works, 2021, p. 10). For school systems, annual training is a specific action taken to minimize employees' risk of job loss due to *social media use*. This is significant because loss of employment is costly to both the employee and employer (Hall, 2019). While bloodborne pathogen training claims to protect an employee's health by helping the employee avoid exposure to infectious materials that can lead to death, social media training claims to protect an employee's reputation by helping the employee avoid exposure to criticism and judgement that can lead to loss of employment. In this way, training is provided as a *service* to employees because it protects them from loss. Foucault (1990/1978) writes, "'Power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms'" (p. 86). Power in professional development training hides its own mechanisms by disguising itself as a service and help to employees. However, professional development really acts in service of policy as discourse by forming and reforming (through revision and updates) subject positions and ensuring employees are trained in how to behave (speak, act, think).

In order to form and reform employees into the docile bodies needed, policy governs by defining the field of action that is possible for employees. Foucault (1982) writes, “To govern … is to structure the possible field of action of others” (p. 790). One way that policy sets the field of action is through professional training. This is clearly seen in the online training course used in Cleveland County Schools. For example, one section of the social media training for employees is entitled “Online Etiquette—*Simple Rules to Follow*” (Public School Works, 2017, p. 20). According to Merriam-Webster (2021), etiquette is defined as “The rules indicating the proper and polite way to behave.” In other words, one purpose of the training course is to tell employees how to behave properly. By *telling* employees this, the field of action is set and the boundary line is defined so that employees are enabled to see and label themselves and others as proper or improper. Furthermore, the training course encourages employees to embrace the field of action by statements such as this: “It’s better to accept the boundaries of acceptable Internet behavior than to test them. It pays to be careful while online” (Public School Works, 2021, p. 21). This statement is highlighted in the training module by being placed in a separate box and highlighted with an exclamation mark. This statement is excellent grounds for deconstruction, because the strategies of power are clearly seen. Specifically, “boundaries” refers to the field of action that is set, while “it’s better” and “it pays” refers to the strategy of desirability that power uses to produce compliance and self-regulation. In addition, this training slide also states, “Don’t communicate or post when emotions run high. You can be disciplined for speaking out against your employer, gossiping about co-workers, or complaining about students online” (Public School Works, 2017, p. 21). This statement makes the path for self-regulation clear—“don’t communicate or post when emotions run high.” However, this statement uses the threat of

discipline to encourage employees to comply by highlighting what is outside the *professional* discursive field of action.

Regulated Communications & Power Processes

As an instrument of power, professional development training on social media use for employees is a strategy produced by policy as discourse that enables knowledge and provokes obedience. Foucault (1982) describes this type of strategy as:

> The activity which ensures apprenticeship and the acquisition of aptitudes or types of behavior is developed there by means of a whole ensemble of regulated communications (lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, differentiation marks of the 'value' of each person and of the levels of knowledge) and by the means of a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, pyramidal hierarchy). (p. 787)

In thinking with Foucault, I am able to analyze the goal of social media training as "ensuring" that employees acquire the aptitude and behavior deemed *proper* and *professional* by policy. In this section, I use each of Foucault's power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, pyramidal hierarchy) to deconstruct the use of an online social media training course, showing how policy works to regulate communication and produce docile bodies.

In order to form an apprentice, training is required by a skilled worker. The online training course works as the skilled worker to produce apprentices—that is, docile bodies. This is done through annual training and by means of the "whole ensemble" of communication strategies. Specifically, the training course is a lesson in *Social Media: Personal and Professional Use*, which is indicated by the title. The course ends with a test, which requires employees to answer questions. In order to receive credit for the course, employees must take

and pass the test. In this way, we see orders, exhortations and obedience at play. The test is scored, which evaluates each employee's level of knowledge. If their level is below 70%, then they must repeat the course and test. Through these regulated communication strategies, apprentices are trained and reformed into skilled, docile workers.

Foucault (1982) theorizes that a "whole series of power processes" are used alongside "regulated communications" as a means of exercising power. The power that is exercised is relational and "exists only as it is put into action" (p. 788). Enclosure is a power process that is put into action and sustains the binary opposition of professional/personal in the social media training course. This is seen in the title of the course as mentioned above, which is *Social Media: Personal and Professional Use*. As the title indicates, personal and professional are separated. This separation is explained in the training course when it states, "Some parts of your life should be kept private. Although public opinion has changed about what information is appropriate to share, this change is not necessarily good for education. People *will* hold you to a higher standard" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 21). The statement reinforces the binary opposition because private is a function of personal and should "be kept" separate. The statement also exposes the relational nature of power by noting that "public opinion has changed what is appropriate." In this way, power is "obliged to change with the resistance" (Foucault, 1997, p. 167). Resistance to the common sense definitions of "appropriate" have forced a change, which can only occur because power is relational. However, the social recognition of the discourse of educator professionalism is evident in the statement that educators *will* be held to "a higher standard." Therefore, while resistance may have *shifted* the definition of "appropriate," it has not substantially *disrupted* the discourse.

Another power process that is made visible in employee training on social media use is surveillance. Surveillance in employee training takes various forms, such as completion reports, pass/fail test results and time and date stamps. Because the training is online, surveillance is easily documented and widely accessible. Surveillance acts to record and report what an employee has done (or not done). Completion is rewarded with a certificate and a proclamation of success by positioning employees as competent and professional. Specifically, the following message is displayed after a passing score is achieved: "Congratulations, you have completed all requirements for this course. A record of your accomplishment has been added to your transcript." (Public School Works, 2017). This message is an example of an ordinary discursive practice that produces ways for employees to think and talk about themselves. For example, an employee can claim competency because they have completed all requirements and have written documentation of accomplishment on their record. The test record also "places individuals in a field of surveillance [which] also situates them in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them" (Foucault, 1995/1977, p. 189). The written record works to "capture and fix" employees by identifying them as skilled or unskilled apprentices based on their test score. These written records are kept and can be used by supervisors when evaluating employees' job performance. Further, the congratulatory message makes surveillance desirable because through this *written* "record of your accomplishment" an employee can be viewed as competent by themselves and their supervisors at the school and district levels. In this way, professional development acts as an instrument of policy that "offers the terms that make self-recognition possible" (Butler, 2005, p. 22).

Surveillance of social media use by school employees is a process of power that produces normalizations. In the training module, statements are made related to privacy and reporting:

"School employees have no legal right to privacy when using district technology. Schools can monitor every keystroke you make on a computer, and they're legally required to save your emails" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 6). This statement normalizes surveillance by claiming a legal requirement; the school system is engaging in surveillance because the school system is subjected to laws. In other words, the school system is not doing anything special or "extra" that should be resisted; the school system is simply obeying the law. Through this type of reasoning, surveillance is normalized as a *natural* response to law. Further, surveillance is constant, or as Foucault (1995/1977) writes, "Inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere" (p. 195). Specifically, emails are archived and are forever available for inspection. The gaze is alert with "every keystroke." Yet, surveillance is not one-sided. School districts and school employees are *both* subject to surveillance and subject others to surveillance. For example, two slides in the training course relate to reporting by school employees. The slide states, "If you're a mandated reporter, you must apply 'real-life' mandated reporting laws to information you see students share on social media" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 10). In this way, school employees are subject to "the gaze" but also must be "the gaze" when viewing students' social media use. Surveillance in this way is beyond just seeing; it also includes documenting, saving and reporting.

Reward and punishment are also power processes that can be seen in the training course on employee use of social media. As I noted above, reward and punishment are tangible in the score report. By completing the course and passing the test, an employee is rewarded with a certificate of accomplishment and is deemed responsible. If an employee does not pass the test, they must retake the course until they pass. In addition, reward and punishment are directly and indirectly implied by statements in the course. For instance, the very first slide of the

introduction shares three stories of educators who lost their employment due to online content that was "not illegal" but showed "poor judgment" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 2). One of the stories says, "A high school teacher in Florida was forced to resign when school administrators discovered online photos of her modeling swimsuits" (Public School Works, 2017, p.2). This story implies punishment for photos that are considered inappropriate by school administrators. Further, the training course says, "To avoid these types of situations, be careful during your online interaction" (Public Works, 2017, p. 2). In other words, by avoiding the "poor judgment" described in the stories that are shared, employees are rewarded by not being forced to resign or being fired.

Pyramidal hierarchy is the final power process mentioned by Foucault and is subtly indicated throughout the online training course by references to supervisory positions at the top of the hierarchical pyramid, such as school administrators, law enforcement, courts and the district. Pyramidal hierarchy is always connected to surveillance and while it does indicate a "head," this does not mean that power is only top down. Instead, Foucault (1995/1977) writes, "The power in the hierarchized surveillance of the disciplines is not possessed as a thing or transferred as a property; it functions like a piece of machinery" (p. 177). In this way, while there is a top, power is also working from "bottom to top and laterally" (p. 176). It is because power is relational and flowing from every part of the hierarchy that it is so effective because it is "both absolutely indiscreet, since it is everywhere and always alert … and absolutely 'discreet,' for it functions permanently and largely in silence" (p. 177). This is seen in the story above, where "school administrators discovered online photos." Pyramidal hierarchy is indicated by the position of the administrator, but the method of discovery is discreet and unknown. In my work in human resources, I have found that the "discovery" of inappropriate social media content

typically occurs in the pyramid from the bottom to the top or laterally, meaning that the discovery is made by a colleague or community member and then reported to a school administrator who *must* address the issue. The administrator must address the issue because power "constantly supervises the very individuals who are entrusted with the task of supervising" (Foucault, 1995/1977, p. 177). School administrators are responsible for supervising those "below" them in the pyramid, but what makes power effective is its relational nature that ensures that those below are also supervising those above for proper compliance and enforcement of rules. The online training course also includes a slide related to electronic communications *between* employees and makes visible the relational nature of power. The course indicates, "Apply rules for appropriate workplace behavior to your online communications with co-workers. Your social media sites and online communication could become evidence during an investigation or lawsuit" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 14). This statement highlights the relational nature of power and surveillance because the interactions are between co-workers. The threat of an "investigation or lawsuit" encourages self-regulation and compliance. It also discreetly reminds employees of surveillance by others when stating online communications may become "evidence" if improper conduct is alleged. In this way, hierarchy works to reinforce the binary opposition of proper/improper by aligning with surveillance to encourage compliance.

The online training course on social media works as an instrument of policy as discourse to regulate communication and produce knowledge for the purpose of creating docile bodies of employees. In this section, I have shown how the power processes of enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, and pyramidal hierarchy are at work in the online training course. These power processes work together to effectively support and reinforce binary oppositions, like

proper/improper and professional/personal, which are created by the discourse of educator professionalism. Knowledge produced through advice, warnings, stories and threats of discipline throughout the course makes clear the separation between proper/improper and professional/personal use of social media, which produces docile bodies by improved surveillance of others and self. Proper and professional are clearly marked as the privileged terms of the binary. In this way, the online professional development training course on social media use by employees is a regulated communication strategy that works to strengthen the discourse of educator professionalism.

Redistributing Voice: Positioning What Counts as Meaningful

Policy as discourse enables employees to think a certain way and determines what counts as meaningful (Barad, 2003). One of the ways policy does this is by redistributing voice. As Ball (1993) further explains:

> The effect of policy is primarily discursive; it changes the possibilities we have for thinking "otherwise". Thus, it limits our responses to change, and leads us to misunderstand what policy is by misunderstanding what it does. Further, policy as discourse may have the effect of redistributing "voice". So that it does not matter what some people say or think, only certain voices can be heard as meaningful or authoritative. (p. 15)

Through professional development courses, policy is able to redistribute voice. This occurs in various ways related to employee use of social media policy. For example, through the continuous repetition of policy expectations and the assurance that policy is helpful, voice is effectively redistributed so that what policy does is misunderstood. This misunderstanding is established through annual review of policy, which works to define what is meaningful and true

for educators by ensuring that the voice of policy is heard above all other voices. Policy speaks loudly because it is the first voice heard at new employee training and is heard singularly thereafter. Specifically, after new hire training, employees hear policy through online training courses, where other voices are muted because the training occurs individually; no mechanisms for disagreement are offered and completion is required. In Cleveland County Schools, repetition of policy occurs annually through professional development mandated in opening school faculty meetings and through online training. The online training platform requires employees to complete two courses related to social use every year. In addition, the employee use of social media policy is formally presented annually at the athletic coaches meeting, new administrators training, beginning teacher training and new hire orientation. In this way, all employees are reminded of social media expectations formally at least three times every school year, but in settings that are isolated or not conducive to questioning or disagreement.

As noted, two professional development training courses are required annually related to social media use. The first course requires employees to read 16 school board policies, including the employee use of social media policy. To complete the course and receive credit, employees must answer "yes" to this question: "I acknowledge receipt of the policies presented within this course and my responsibility to read and abide by the Board-adopted policies" (Public School Works, n.d.). This course works to redistribute voice by making policy the authoritative and meaningful voice on multiple issues, one of which is social media use. By lumping social media use policy with multiple other policies for approval and review, the governing of social media use by policy is made a norm. The second course, *Social Media Use: Personal and Professional Use,* is devoted to training on employee use of social media. This course redistributes voice as Ball (1993) describes by causing employees to misunderstand what policy does. The professional

development course includes multiple statements that characterize social media policy and guidelines in a way that can be viewed *only* as desirable and helpful to employees. For instance, the introduction to the course says, “This course will help you protect your online reputation, your career, and offer guidance about how to use social media in a safe and responsible manner” (Public School Works, 2017, p. 3). In this way, employees are disciplined to misunderstand policy as only protective and guiding. There is no indication that policy separates educators from others or that it limits. Further, employees are enabled to see themselves and others as responsible and safe *only* when following policy.

Starting with the introduction, the voice of policy is redistributed as helpful and protective, so that policy is easily understood (or misunderstood) as only beneficial by employees. For example, the presentation features of the training course work discreetly to make policy positive and helpful to employees. The online training course is presented visually and verbally to employees. As employees look at the slides, the written words on the slide are read by a narrator. I would describe the narrator’s voice as male, calm, serious and friendly. Prior to my analysis here, I had not noticed the gender of the narrator’s voice and could only have described it as an unimpressive, normal sounding voice. However, as I think with Foucault, the narrator’s voice becomes visible and I find the choice of the narrator in perfect alignment with the goal of the online training courses to keep employees *safe*. Specifically, the use of a male voice implies protection and safety, since protection is a traditional feature of the discourse of masculinity, according to Young (2003). In this way, the narration is a subtle but effective method for creating docile bodies of employees because it reinforces the conventional subject position of educators in the discourse of professionalism by leaning on the normative discourse of masculinity.

Beyond the presentation features of the training course, there are many additional statements made by the narrator, which generate the knowledge and feeling that policy is helpful and protective. Here is a sampling of such comments:

- "Many educators have faced challenges because of content they've shared online" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 2). This comment implies that the course and policy are helpful to employees because challenges can be avoided by limiting or regulating their content shared online.
- "One bad decision can last a lifetime" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 9). This comment is shared as a warning to protect employees from long term mistakes, which makes the warning helpful and desirable.
- "Avoid online friendships with students. By forging such relationships, even educators with the best of intentions are risking their careers" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 16). The comment makes avoidance desirable because it can lower risk of career loss. Further, the comment implies that intentions are not a guarantee of safety, even good intentions, but separation (avoidance) is beneficial and best.
- "Even unjustified rumors of an inappropriate relationship may damage, or end, your career" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 16). This comment subtly teaches employees that public opinion is *truth*. Therefore, even an untrue rumor in the court of public opinion can take on a status of truth that may have significant, negative consequences. Moreover, disciplinary power is shown in the consequences that are mentioned.
- Section title: "Safeguarding Your Online Reputation" (Public Schools Works, 2017, p. 19). This title promotes self-regulation because it implies that an employee can guard

> their reputation. This is both in contrast and in agreement with the comment above that implies the "best intentions" are not enough to save an employee.

These statements show how voice is redistributed as helpful and beneficial, thus sustaining a discourse of educator professionalism and subject positions of docility that make self-regulation and strict compliance with the binary opposition of proper/improper desirable and reasonable. Through this process, possibilities of resistance are subdued due to what Weedon (1997) calls "collective subject" (p. 98). In describing journalistic writing, Weedon says:

> Press articles use specific linguistic techniques to close off possible paths of resistance to the forms of subjectivity and the meanings and values which they articulate. The most common of these is the implicit assumption of a collective subject: we are the reasonable, moral individuals for whom the text speaks. This is a strategy which is hard for the reader to resist. (p. 98)

The strategy of collective voice is used in professional development training courses through the redistribution of voice. As employees engage in the training course, a voice of *us* versus *them* emerges. The collective *us* is assigned to those situations with "reasonable, moral" use of social media and a good online reputation, whereas those who have violated the expectations and have suffered employment issues are *them*. Being part of the "us" is highly desirable to employees and thus they are incited to compliance and docility through following the rules of the training. In this way, professional development is used as an instrument of power to motivate employees to self-regulation and sameness.

Dividing Practices

Policy as discourse acts through the instrument of online professional development to divide, separate and confine educators. As Foucault (1982) writes, this "dividing practice" is

where “the subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others” (p. 778). The employee training course, *Social Media Use: Personal and Professional Use,* vividly promotes division by its title as the reasonable and moral responsibility of employees. In broad terms, this professional development course produces a division between educators and others because only school employees are required to undergo this social media use training. The training is not mandated for parents or community stakeholders, because unlike educators, they are not divided by the discourse of educator professionalism and subjected to school system policy. Furthermore, school employees are divided within themselves into categories of professional (work) life and personal (home) life. This is seen in the following excerpt from the social media use training module:

> Most people use social media at home and at work. In fact, educators are finding new and exciting ways to use social media in the classroom. However, a clear separation must exist between the professional and personal use of such technology. (Public School Works, 2017, p. 4)

As the excerpt says, most people use social media in multiple areas of their life, but for an educator, “a clear separation” must exist. In this way, the educator is divided from others who do not have to maintain “a clear separation,” as well as being divided within because life must be separated into professional and personal categories. Further, the training course states, “Always maintain separate professional and personal email accounts” (Public School Works, 2017, p. 6) and “Some parts of your life should be kept private” (Public School Works, 2017, p. 20). In other words, educators are expected to be divided and have “private” and “personal” accounts due to their subjection to the discourse of educator professionalism, which is presented as a reasonable and moral responsibility for all educators. The professional requires separation and produces the

personal. This requirement of separation is compelling in part because it is not directed towards the individual, but towards the collective subject of educators. As Foucault (1982) writes, "Every relationship of power puts into operation differentiations which are at the same time its conditions and its results" (p. 792). This means that binary oppositions are put into operation due to a relationship of power. The binary opposition of professional/personal sets both the conditions and the results as separated, divided spaces; professional is in opposition to the personal, and the two cannot mix. The results *are* the division, which is created by self-regulation (self-division) or resistance. Resistance, though, guarantees the loss of professional status and formally separates professional from personal.

Foucault (1982) writes, "The exercise of power is not a naked fact, an institutional right, nor is it a structure which holds out or is smashed; it is elaborated, transformed, organized; it endows itself with processes which are more or less adjusted to the situation" (p. 792). Power adjusts itself throughout the social media training course in a variety of ways as it responds to resistance. One comment in the course states, "As an educator, you have the same rights as everyone else to use social media. Nevertheless, you may receive unfair scrutiny" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 15). In this comment, power acknowledges that educators have the "same rights as everyone else," but then subtly elaborates with the threat of "unfair scrutiny" to reinforce the discourse of educator professionalism which separates educators from other professionals. Therefore, power is not to blame; it is the "unfair scrutiny" that bears the blame. In this comment, power adjusts itself to appear not opposed to freedom, but as a *helpful* reminder that while freedom is available, it may not be beneficial. In addition, a dividing practice is strategically implemented by comparing the employee to "everyone else" and focusing on unfair

treatment—which provokes the idea that *others* are treated fairly. So the division from others is present.

Another example of a dividing practice (and how power processes are always unique to each situation) is present in the social media course through this statement: "Before sending a message, check it for anything that could sound rude, mean or sarcastic.… Proofread online communication for errors. Many people believe the rules of grammar don't apply to electronic communication. This is not true—especially for educators" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 21). Again, division is at work. Educators must be conscious of public perception, so they must "proofread" and "check" messages for tone and grammar. This expectation is not only for language arts teachers, but is required of *all* educators due to the discourse of educator professionalism. Furthermore, this statement implies that educators are separated by attitude and are expected to be kind, understanding and friendly, which are qualities that are bound to the discourse of educator professionalism. The course suggests that educators "choose a respectable screen name—but not your real name—for all online interactions. Don't choose a screen name like 'SexyTeachingGoddess' or 'SchoolStud'" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 21). Educators are divided from others and within themselves because "sexy" and "stud" are terms that act as moral signals of what is improper or outside what is proper and professional for educators. In this way, the binary oppositions of proper/improper and professional/personal are reinforced. This division is rooted in the discourse of educator professionalism and policy, which works to produce an employee training course that "'invites and incites' employees to recognize moral obligations" (Freie & Eppley, 2014, p. 657).

Resistance: An Instrument and Opposing Strategy of Power

Dividing practices are active in various modes, including resistance. Resistance is an undercurrent throughout the social media training course for employees. The function of resistance in the discourse of this online course is both as an instrument of power and as an opposing strategy. Resistance is an instrument of power because it works as a warning to employees of the negative consequences of resistance and creates the need for division. However, resistance is also an opposing strategy because it challenges power and requires power to respond. Power responds by producing binary oppositions or revising policies and rules. Foucault (1990/1978) writes, "Where there is power, there is resistance" (p. 95). In the online training course, there are no slides dedicated to naming resistance, yet resistance is seen in the background of various slides as the initiator of warnings and advice for employees. Resistance is evident from the very first slide of the professional development course which shares three scenarios where school employees lost their jobs for "poor judgment" in their online interactions (Public School Works, 2017, p. 2). These stories are examples and warnings of what happens when employees resist the discourse of educator professionalism. The situations tell of educators who wore improper clothing, made improper statements and drank improper beverages. In each episode, the employee did not engage in illegal behavior, but in improper behavior as defined in the discourse of educator professionalism. Power responds to the resistance with a strategy of separation and division. Professional/personal and proper/improper binary oppositions are produced through the *possibility* of resistance. These separations are a function of power processes; there would be no reason for a separation if there was no resistance. In other words, if obedience to the discourse of educator professionalism is present in professional and personal life, then no separation is required. However, because of potential resistance to the discourse, a

dividing practice occurs as a strategy of power. That is, power must strategically respond to possible resistance by inciting the dominant discourse of educator professionalism, and in doing so produces a dividing practice and limited range of subject positions: *either* proper *or* improper. In addition, the course says, "Choose a respectable screen name—but not your real name—for all online interactions. Don't use a screen name like 'SexyTeachingGoddess' or 'SchoolStud" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 21). The training course would not mention the importance of proper screen names or share inappropriate examples unless there had been issues with screen names in the past.

Resistance acts as an opposing strategy of power because power must respond to it. In order for compliance and docility to be achieved, then these examples of resistance must be addressed. Therefore, the training course is obligated to mention them to minimize possible future resistance. If resistance was never present, then no reminder or additional training would be necessary. In this way, all professional development is a response to past, present and even future imagined resistance.

In addition, employees do not always take the training "seriously" and may not complete the course in the time frame specified or may fail the course. This type of resistance also requires a response. For example, employees receive automatic emails reminding them to complete the mandatory training courses. Once the time period has lapsed, school system administrators are sent a list of employees under their supervision who have not completed the training. The administrator is to ensure the employee makes time to complete the training. If an employee fails the course, they are required to retake the course and are treated as if they have not taken the course at all. In this way, resistance triggers additional surveillance and discipline. This is an example of resistance to the discourse of educator professionalism, which expects employees to

act properly by completing the required training in the designated time period. The reminders and encouragement by email and administrators work to reinforce the division of proper/improper because only improper behavior is noted and addressed. This resistance is moderately tolerated in that employees do not immediately lose their jobs for failure to comply. They are first reminded and given additional opportunities to comply. In this way, resistance acts as an opposing strategy of power to "loosen its holds and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance" (Foucault, 1990/1978, p. 101). The failure to comply with the time frame for completion is an example of resistance loosening the hold of power because perfect docility and total compliance are not achieved. Piddocke et al. (1997) explain that the goal of the normative discourse of educator professionalism is to protect the reputation of educators as those who follow rules and behave properly. They write, "A fair amount of 'deviation' will be allowed to occur, provided that it is discreetly and quietly done and respect for authority is at least apparently preserved" (Piddocke et al., 1997, p. 210). Power is obliged to loosen its hold and accept tardy completion of professional development training as a "deviation" because it is done quietly and without publicly disturbing the reputation of the school district or educators. Therefore, resistance acts not only as an opposing strategy of power by loosening its grip on strict compliance to completion dates, but also as an instrument of power by using stories of resistance that resulted in termination as a warning to nudge employees towards docility.

Modes of Subjugation in Social Media Use Training

Foucault's genealogical work on discourse looked at how subjects are created. According to Foucault (1982), human beings are "transformed" into subjects through the use of the following three modes: categorization as a science, creation of binary oppositions and human participation in subjection (p. 777). As I have described in this chapter, one way our current

educational system makes educators into subjects is through policy as discourse, which produces the instrument of professional development. This subjectivation can be seen through the use of the three Foucauldian modes in professional development courses.

First, professional development is billed as a science by falling under the category of "best practice." According to Bretschneider et al. (2005), "The term 'best practice' implies that it is best when compared to any alternative course of action and that it is a practice designed to achieve some deliberative end" (p. 309). Therefore, a best practice is reliable and privileged. As Bretschneider et al. explains, best practices are only valid when "great care" has been given to their identification by applying scientific practices and focusing on comparability and completeness of data (p. 311). In other words, the claim of a "best practice" is a claim of science. One section of the training course on social media use is entitled: "Electronic Communication—*Best Practices*" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 13). The following statement is made as a best practice: "Only use district technology to communicate with students. Message students from your district email account exclusively" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 13). This scientific, best practice subjects educators to district surveillance and to the discourse of educator professionalism. This best practice makes an indirect claim of protection for employees through subjection to district surveillance. By citing best practices, the training course is claiming a scientific stance and can be trusted to provide what educators need to know related to social media use. Further, the goal of the training has a deliberative end—that is, to produce subjects who will use school-controlled technologies and to create teachers as docile bodies.

The second mode is the creation of binary oppositions. As discussed previously, the binary opposition of professional/personal is prevalent in the social media use course. In addition, the following binary oppositions are also present: respectable/unrespectable,

private/public and appropriate/inappropriate. All of these binary oppositions intersect to strengthen the discourse of educator professionalism to create a subject position of "professional" as respectable, private and appropriate. The third Foucauldian mode of subjection is human participation in subjection. This is seen in multiple ways in the online course. For example, one section is entitled "Preparing Students" and employees are directed to "talk to students about technology" and to report any issues that are found (Public School Works, 2017, p. 9). In this way, employees are engaged in subjecting others (students) to the rules of social media use. In addition, the course states, "Monitor your identity by searching for yourself online" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 19). In other words, employees subject themselves through self-regulation and self-surveillance. Further, the course says that in regards to privacy settings, employees should "Take time to read and understand the privacy policies of any websites or social-media sites you use" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 12). Employees are reminded by this statement that they are further subjected to additional policies through their use of any websites and social media platforms they use. As a result, employees are subjected to policy through their use, as well as through a refusal to use, because policy has set the field of action for compliance and employment.

What's the Problem?

Bacchi (2016) explains, "What we propose to do about something indicates what we think needs to change and hence what we think is problematic" (p. 8). Professional development on social media use is what school systems propose to do because policy is not followed perfectly—it is *problematic*. As a result, professional development is a power-laden response to employees imperfectly following policy. The use of professional development assumes that lack of knowledge about how to be a proper professional is part of the problem; therefore, training is

used to provide knowledge and direct employees toward proper behavior and self-regulation. Further, professional development anticipates that what is most problematic is non-compliance and non-docile behavior. So professional development courses include statements and best practices for "inviting and inciting" employees to comply. In the following paragraphs, I analyze statements that are made in a social media use training for employees and ask, "What does the training propose to do?" and "How does that doing reveal what is considered problematic?"

One statement made in the social media training course is: "Only use district technology to communicate with students…. any communications that appear 'private' or 'secret' will likely be deemed inappropriate" (Public School Work, 2017, p. 13). What does this training statement propose to do? It proposes the use of district technology exclusively for communication with students and invites employees to make communications public. What is revealed as problematic is any technology use that is not school-controlled and unseen. Similar to Foucault's (1995/1977) description of the panopticon, school-controlled technology "arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly to recognize immediately" (p. 200). Therefore, the problem is visibility. Visibility is required if schools are to determine what and who is proper/improper. Further, invisibility will "likely be deemed inappropriate" by the policy. According to Foucault (1995/1977), the panopticon was used "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assure the automatic function of power" (p. 201). Foucault further wrote, "power should be visible and unverifiable" (p. 201). School-controlled technology works like the panopticon. It is owned and controlled by the school system, so it is always visible. This is evident in subtle ways like a school email address that contains @schoolsystemname.edu in the address; the email address alone is a reminder of visibility. Thus, ownership and power are visible, yet power is not verifiable because *who* can see and *when* they are looking is unknown.

Further, their looking and seeing are timeless because of archiving. As the training reminds employees, “Schools can monitor every keystroke you make on a computer, and they’re legally required to save your emails” (Public School Works, 2017, p. 6). Because power is visible, but unverifiable, it is effective at producing self-regulated, docile employees.

These ideas are also seen in the last statement made on the final slide of the course, which states:

> The “life is not fair rule” applies to the Internet. There will always be educators who post inappropriate information, yet receive no complaints. Conversely, there will always be educators who live upstanding, responsible and private lives, but who wind up in trouble (and perhaps even unemployed) because online comments and photos are misunderstood or unfairly scrutinized. But in this case, life always tends to favor the cautious. (p. 21)

What does this training statement propose to do? It aims to be helpful and honest by providing knowledge about the risks of Internet and social media use to help keep employees from *winding up* in trouble or being unemployed. In other words, it invites and incites employees to refrain from posting and making comments that could be viewed (correctly or incorrectly) as inappropriate. Therefore, what is revealed as the problem? The problem is predictability. The problem is whatever cannot be predicted and controlled through self-regulation or other disciplinary measures. This statement promotes the “automatic functioning of power” through self-regulation by proclaiming that power is visible, but unverifiable. Specially, visibility is inherent in use of social media and online platforms. Yet, power is unverifiable and unpredictable because some educators are caught and some are not. Furthermore, the misunderstanding of social media posts, photos and comments and unfair scrutiny of educators' social media accounts may be unverifiable and unpredictable. Therefore, caution is the only safe

and *favorable* option. In this way, the training course promotes self-regulation for the production of docile, *cautious* bodies.

> Another statement that is made in the training course is the following:
>
> The courts have ruled that schools can regulate a staff member's off-campus speech when it has an adverse impact on the campus, so be cautious in all of your online activities.
>
> Your free-speech rights are only protected when:
>
> - You speak out on matters of public concern.
> - Your speech does not disrupt the school.
>
> (Public School Works, 2017, p. 15)

What does this training statement propose to do? It aims to teach employees that their speech can be controlled by the school system. The goal is to produce knowledge that will incite employees to silence or muted speech. Therefore, what is revealed as the problem? Employee "free speech" or any speech that could negatively impact the school system is the problem. To further *help* employees with this problem, the training course offers this advice: "To better protect yourself, use privacy settings which allow you to limit unwanted access to your personal social-media sites" (Public Schools Works, 2017, p. 17). In other words, employees are advised to self-regulate. Self-regulation is desirable because it is coupled with protection and peace of mind. Peace of mind is available to employees if they avoid attention and "limit unwanted access" to their personal sites. The discourse of educator professionalism values conformity to societal norms, so educators who conform can experience peace of mind because their reputations and jobs are secure. However, conformity and limited attention are not necessarily aligned with the goals of social media use, as I analyze in the next section.

Social Media Features

Social media is problematic for the discourse of educator professionalism because the discourse works in an economy of privacy, but social media works in an economy of *attention.* Social media success can be measured by the numbers of "friends", the number of likes, and the number of comments. The algorithm of social media is set up to give more attention to things that are surprising and controversial. Therefore, the goal of social media use opposes the goal of the discourse of educator professionalism, which aims to hold high the normative ideals of proper educators in the community. In alignment with this discourse, the social media use training course says, "If possible, adjust privacy settings so that your profile can't be found using Google or other search engines" (Public School Works, 2017, p. 18). In other words, being unseen and invisible is desirable. Yet, this is the opposite goal of social media. As a result, there is a deep, intense struggle for school employees between the discourse of social media and the discourse of educator professionalism. This struggle has produced immense resistance to the discourse of educator professionalism, which has resulted in policy formation and the creation and requirement of employee training on social media use.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed how power is exercised through policy on the topic of social media use by employees to produce professional development training. Through training, knowledge is produced and employees are both invited and incited into compliance. Compliance produces docile bodies aligned with the discourse of educator professionalism. Compliance is made desirable by promising employees safety and protection, maintaining and producing power relations. Through dividing practices and redistribution of voice, the online professional development course on employee use of social media maintains and produces employee self-

regulation. In this way, policy acts as discourse through the instrument of professional development training for employees on social media use. Policy as discourse creates and maintains the docile bodies of employees by regulating communication and the production of knowledge. The nature of power in policy is thus productive and works in secrecy by veiling itself as training that is helpful and protective of educators. As I have shown through the deconstruction of the social media training course, employees are invited (through helpful advice and positive encouragement) and summoned (through warnings and surveillance) to "speak, listen, act, read, work, think, feel, behave and value" in ways that are tightly aligned with the discourse of educator professionalism (Ball, 2015, p. 307). Power processes of enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment and pyramidal hierarchy invite and summon employees to compliance through creating and reinforcing the binary oppositions of proper/improper and professional/personal. Yet, at times and in various ways, employees resist the discourse of educator professionalism. This resistance compels a response via continual revisions to policy, additional disciplinary measures and mandated professional development training courses. In this way, resistance acts as both an opposing strategy and an instrument of power.

Ultimately, the discourse of educator professionalism is at odds with the discourse of social media in substantial ways. Power is at work in both discourses to create allegiance and desirability. Weedon (1997) writes, "Discourses, located as they are in social institutions and processes, are continuing competing with each other for allegiance of individual agents" (p. 93). In the discourse of social media, power works to create allegiance by promising users access to large audiences with few restrictions, as well as widespread attention, influence and connections. In the discourse of educator professionalism, power is at work to create docile bodies by promising respect and a privileged status in the community for upholding and modeling

normative values. In each discourse, power is working discreetly and competitively to become and remain the most desirable. This is an ongoing challenge between discourses, which explains why the discourse of educator professionalism has produced the need for and the instrument of professional development as a strategy for increasing knowledge, desirability and disciplining employees.

Chapter 7: Significance and Implications for Educational Leadership

The goal of my research was to deconstruct the effects of power relations at play in the use of educational policy on the topic of social media use by educators. To this end, I explored how policy acts as discourse to produce knowledge, subjectivities and docile bodies of employees through the creation and use of instruments, such as new hire orientation and professional development training courses. To guide my deconstruction, I focused on four research questions.

In this section, I review each of my research questions, explain how the questions are answered by my inquiry and explain why my inquiry is significant for educational leaders. My first research question was: *What is the nature of power as it is exercised through policy and social media use by school employees?* My research shows that power produces the discourse of educator professionalism, which works to create subject positions, particular knowledge, and the need for instruments of disciplinary power such as policy, orientation programs and professional development training courses. Thus, the nature of power is revealed as productive, fluid and relational. In Chapter 1, I described the problem of social media use by educators and showed how policy is produced by power as the normative, natural response to educational issues. In Chapter 3, I described how post qualitative inquiry can be used to disrupt and deconstruct the use of educational policy. Thinking with theory reveals policy as an invented tool. Because it is invented, it can be re-invented, changed or discarded. In Chapter 4, I argued that power works through the discourse of educator professionalism to produce binary oppositions, such as proper/improper and professional/personal, which create knowledge and produce subject positions of educators. In Chapter 5, I claimed that new hire orientation is used as an instrument of policy and power to create docile bodies of employees who will act as machines to ensure the

efficient operation of schools and produce a normalized reputation for educators and schools in a community. This is accomplished by disciplining employees, optimizing their capabilities, extorting their forces, and increasing their usefulness with docility and integrating employees into a collective subjugation as an educator. In Chapter 6, I concluded that policy acts as discourse to produce the instrument of professional development training and further perfect and form docile bodies of employees.

My research on the nature of power is important because it destabilizes the practice and production of educational policy. It exposes policy as an invented instrument of power and as discourse. In this way, policy can no longer be viewed as a neutral document. Instead, policy can be seen as more than a written document; it is exposed as a political tool of power that produces problems, rather than solving them. And because power is fluid it can be resisted; thus, policy must compel individuals to comply and work to prevent resistance. This has significant implications for educational leaders who interact daily with policy because it changes how problems and current issues are viewed. In Chapter 2, I explained how poststructural, Foucauldian theory transforms the questions leaders are able to ask; leaders move from asking, "What are the proper and improper ways employees use social media?" to asking, "What happens when social media by educators is classified as proper and improper?" These questions solicit different thinking and different answers. The first question is *solution-focused* so that possible answers will come from knowledge produced by cultural norms for the purposes of monitoring and stopping improper behaviors. Thus, policy produced based on the first question will approve and prohibit certain behaviors. However, the second question is *problem-focused* so that possible answers will challenge the normative discourse and disrupt common sense by questioning how the problem came to be a problem. Thus, if policy is produced based on the

second question it will be after reviewing the ethical implications and will work to produce ‘‘as little domination as possible’’ (Foucault, 199b, p. 298).

By disrupting and shifting the questions that can be asked by educational leaders, thought is “re-oriented” so that different ideas and different problems emerge (St. Pierre, 2019a, p. 2). Niesche and Gowlett (2014) write, “A post-structuralist politics elicits new ways of thinking about the field. It works to reconceptualise boundaries without fixing them” (p. 12). Likewise, my research works to elicit a new way of thinking about educational policy and leadership by disturbing the preset boundaries, which situate policy as the solution to problems. Bacchi (2015) writes, “We need to direct our attention away from assumed ‘problems’ and their ‘solutions’ to the shape and character of problematizations, posing a major challenge to the current, dominant paradigm of evidence-based policy” (p. 132). My research disrupts the “problem-solution” approach to educational policy and directs attention to the problematization of social media use by employees.

My second research question was: *How does policy on employee use of social media function to both maintain and produce power relations, discourse and knowledge?* To recap, I argued that policy creates binary oppositions that function as a “dividing practice” to separate employees from others and from themselves. Specially, the binary oppositions of professional/personal and proper/improper are tools for producing knowledge that work to separate the activities in an employee’s life into categories. The professional is privileged over the personal. Proper and improper activities are created and put into discourse as normal and common sense through policy. For example, the employee use of social media policy writes, “School employees may use only school-controlled social media to communicate directly with current students about school-related matters” (Cleveland County Schools, 2020a, p. 2). In this

way, proper and professional communication is produced as that which uses school-controlled technology and is school-related. Improper and personal communication is created as use of non school-controlled technology on matters unrelated to school. In Chapters 2 and 5, I explain how policy acts as discourse by setting the field of actions for educators in terms of social media use. Through the discourse of educator professionalism, the subject positions of professional and proper are created. Power is exercised through policy to produce the knowledge of these subject positions and compel employees to self-regulation. Through the use of policy, power relations, discourse and knowledge are maintained. Policy creates instruments of disciplinary power, such as professional development training and new hire orientation, which are used to produce, improve and maintain docile bodies of employees. In Chapter 6, I explain how a professional development training course on employee use of social media employs the power processes of enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment and pyramidal hierarchy to meet the aims of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1982). Power uses policy to produce the need and methods of surveillance, which ensure that no employee escapes Foucault's (1995/1977) "inspection" and "gaze" nor is any employee immune from inspecting others.

The purpose of my research is not to condemn the use of online professionalism development courses or new hire orientations. Instead, it is to expose how power works through policy to produce these normative processes, which ultimately create the problems they are supposed to solve. By thinking with theory, power relations are exposed and thereby open to more direct challenges. In this way, my research does not suggest a *better* alternative to orientation or training programs or advocate for their death, instead it calls for *different* conversations around their use and purpose. Foucault writes, "Theory does not express, translate or serve to apply practice: it is the practise" (in Niesche, 2011, p. 139). Likewise, my research is

significant because it illustrates how Foucauldian theory can be used by educational leaders to re-position thought around the common practices of policy and educational programs.

Gillies (2013) claims, “The principal tools that Foucault brings to educational discourse are scepticism, critique, and problematization” (p. 22). Given the lack of research and literature challenging the use of policy in addressing the issue of social media use by school employees, the tools of skepticism, critique and problematization are timely and necessary for educational leaders. In my research, I used these tools to analyze my own position and work with policy and discourse, as well as the use of policy in my district and the education profession as a whole. Through theory, I was able to see my position (and positionality) as a machine and instrument of power for the training and production of docile bodies of other employees and how my usefulness as an instrument of power was parallel to my personal docility and self-regulation. Because my positioning is visible to me through theory, my work with policy changes and I move from accepting policy to doubting policy. This type of reflection and thought is different and important work for educational leaders, because through skepticism, critique and problematization, new ideas and insight emerge.

My third question was: *How does the use of social media by school employees enable and resist the discourse of educator professionalism?* Social media use by school employees enables the discourse of educator professionalism because it provides another setting to train employees in what is proper and professional. In Chapter 2, I described discourse as the unexamined, common sense rules that are followed. For educators, policy acts as discourse by stating the rules that everyone knows and agrees to follow in an unexamined, natural way. Policy produces and reaffirms employee’s knowledge of what is proper/improper and professional/personal. Without policy, an employee cannot describe their use of social media as

professional or personal because no field of action is set. Policy sets the field of action and makes visible the rules of the discourse. Therefore, employees are made into docile bodies by compliance and self-formation with policy. Specifically, social media policy lays out how an employee can be identified as proper and professional. Therefore, employees are motivated to comply with policy as a means of forming themselves into proper and professional educators.

While power works through policy to produce docile bodies of employees, it also reciprocates resistance to the discourse of educator professionalism. In Chapter 5, I explained how the new hire orientation program works to train employees in the discourse of policy and reinforces the discourse of educator professionalism through hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and examination. Yet, as I showed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, resistance is visible in policy revision and active in the way some employees respond to policy and training. Resistance exposes discourse as a "constructed reality, and so contingent, provisional and fallible" (Gillies, 2013, p. 25). Policy revision is an indication that policy is constructed and fallible because it highlights areas that need to be *fixed* or *improved* through revision. This is important because if discourse and policy can be seen as provisional, then they become vulnerable, unstable and open to disruption. Therefore, my research is significant because it exposes policy as invented and vulnerable and begins the process of disrupting policy and its standing in educational settings as common sense. If educational leaders begin to critique the common-sense assumptions of educational policy, then policy would turn its attention away from the goal of prohibiting the misbehavior of individuals to focus on the ethical implications of policy. Because social media policy is currently focused on lessening improper behavior, at times it impedes proper behavior. For example, a student may have suicidal thoughts which are revealed on social media sites, but school staff are unable to help because they are prohibited, by

policy, from communicating with the student on social media. Ethically speaking, in this situation, the improper behavior is not the use of social media to communicate with the student, but is the absence of communication with a student who is contemplating suicide and seeking help. Suppose a school employee reaches out to the student in this situation and provides assistance, did the employee engage in proper or improper behavior? The answer is both. Policy wise the employee engaged in improper behavior by communicating with a student on social media, but ethically speaking the employee engaged in proper behavior by assisting a student when necessary. This illustrates how a critique of policy by educational leaders can change the view of employee resistance from misbehavior or insubordination to a positive, necessary disruption to subjectivity and discourse.

My fourth research question was: *What happens when social media use is more pleasurable than professionalism?* In Chapter 4, I described the history of the discourse of educator professionalism. I explained how resistant and reverse discourses have resulted in shifts in the dominant discourse of educator professionalism, but have failed to fundamentally change it. I argued that the discourse of social media has been particularly opposed to the foundational principles of the discourse of educator professionalism, thus causing social media to be designated as a problem, rather than the limitations of the discourse itself. Specifically, one of the primary pillars of the discourse of educator professionalism is the requirement for educators to act as role models by strictly adhering to the dominant societal norms. In the discourse of educator professionalism, pleasure is derived by being separated and elevated from others as a role model of proper and professional behavior. Yet, in social media, pleasure is derived by being separated from others due to uniqueness and at times controversy. In other words, pleasure is achieved in education through sameness and commitment, whereas social media values

difference and change. Despite the dramatic differences in these discourses, educational institutions cannot ignore social media because it has gained a wide circulation and a social status, which give it "social power" (Weedon, 1997, p. 107). Further, social media can be a useful tool for the discourse of educator professionalism for the promotion of positive, *approved* messages on schools, teachers and employees. Therefore, power works to set the field of action related to social media where its benefits are increased and its difference is minimized. This has substantial implications for educational leaders because policy cannot *solve* employee use of social media issues. Policy cannot fulfill its promise to control individual behavior because if an opposing discourse is more pleasurable to an individual, then their behavior will follow. If policy cannot fix problems, then educational leaders must ask, "Is policy necessary?"

My research has shown that employees at times find the discourse of social media more pleasurable than the discourse of educator professionalism and are willing to forfeit their status as professional and even lose their employment. This has significant implications for education, because if employees do not find the discourse of educator professionalism pleasurable then they will leave the profession. Currently, there is a teacher shortage in America (Garcia & Weiss, 2020). While the shortage is complex and many factors contribute to a teacher shortage, questions should be raised as to how the discourse of educator professionalism is implicated in the shortage. Thinking with theory is a necessary tool for analyzing this complex issue in important, nontraditional ways.

Personal Reflection

This work has been rigorous and important for me as an educational leader. It was an unexpected process that precipitated from a desire not to do what I have always done, which is to follow the rules to produce something neat, tidy and perfect. As Foucault (1985) wrote, "There

are times in one's life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all" (p. 8). Foucault's words resonate with me and describe one of the motivations for my analysis. This dissertation represents my pursuit to "think differently" and "perceive differently" the world of educational leadership that I have been a part of for more than 20 years. To do this, I push back against policy as a normative, expected response to educational problems. This "pushing back" is possible because power is relational and educators are not without freedom and agency. Foucault (1988) reminds us that humans are "freer than they feel" (p. 10). In other words, we are governed because we allow ourselves to be governed. Likewise, I can question and resist the ways I am governed because these ways are created and invented. This dissertation has been an exercise in curiosity and suspicion related to social media use by school employees. In this way, everything I have known as an educator has become uncertain and in need of questioning. Through deconstructive practices, I follow Foucault (1994b) in making "harder those acts which are now too easy" (p. 456). As I have shown throughout this analysis, policy making and revising are "too easy" and have therefore become the go-to response to educational problems. I have participated in this "easy" response to educational issues by leading my district in revising and creating new policies. My research has sought to problematize policy and question its frequent use in order to open up new thought about what it means to be an educator. In this way, my research is a step in pushing back on my own work with educational policy and problematizing its invention and status as common sense and omnipresent.

My position as an educational leader has shifted during this work so that I am now engaging in "counter-conduct," which is a term penned by Foucault (2007) to refer to "the sense of struggle against processes implemented for conducting others" (p. 200-201). One of the

primary ways I engage in counter-conduct is through questioning the solutions I have suggested for dealing with educational problems in my role as a human resources administrator. My questioning of the use of policy does not stop with this writing or with the topic of employee social media use. Foucault (1982) wrote that people often think of power as a "mysterious substance" and questions raised about power "seem to suspect the presence of a kind of fatalism" (p. 785). As a result, analyses of power typically focus on questions of "who" and "what." Foucault proposes a different way to analyze power by asking questions like: By what means is power exercised? What happens when power is exerted? Specifically, Foucault (1982) writes, "The little question, What happens?, although flat and empirical, once scrutinized is seen to avoid accusing a metaphysics or an ontology of power of being fraudulent; rather, it attempts a critical investigation in the thematics of power" (p. 786). As a human resources administrator, much of my work involves training employees in compliance to policy and dealing with issues of noncompliance by creating solutions at a very fast pace. However, counter-conduct requires me to slow down and "flip the script" by refusing to ask, "How do we fix this or that problem?" to instead ask, "What happens as a result of this or that being deemed a problem?"

Counter-conduct resists easy solutions by making them problematic. Concerning educational leaders, Ball et al. (2012) write, "In relation to the pressure of performance, in response to constant change, there is little space or time or opportunity to think differently or 'against" (p. 138-139). This is an accurate description of the reality that educational leaders are working in, which has only intensified since written by Ball et al., due to increased accountability measures and the unexpected arrival of COVID-19. Pausing and making space to think against is dangerous for a school leader. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) argue, "The dangers of exercising leadership derive from the nature of the problems from which leadership is necessary"

(p. 30). In this way, the increased busyness of education makes pausing an important counter-conduct move for educational leaders. To pause is not to do nothing; instead, the purpose of the pause is to make room for *doubt*. I must doubt as Gillies (2013) describes:

> Doubt as to the value of stated aims, objectives, and goals, doubt as to the effectiveness of chosen means, doubts as to the accuracy and veracity of claims, doubt as to the declared motivation, interest and purpose of relevant persons, doubt as to the value and coherence of chosen beliefs, concepts, doubt as to the nature and status of knowledge, and doubt as to the nature of reality. (p. 22-23)

Doubt is a useful conceptual tool that educational leaders can employ in "doing leadership differently" (Niesche, 2011, p. 136). For example, as I plan for new hire orientation this coming August, I will review our processes in a new and different way. In the past, one of my main goals has been to provide good customer service. Counter-conduct makes a way for me to doubt the goal of good customer service. Specifically, by thinking with theory, I can ask: *What happens because we provide good customer service? How are employees made into docile bodies through good customer service? What is the nature of power in good customer service? What problem is good customer service supposed to solve?* These are examples of the types of questions that are emerging beyond the dissertation and are important for me to continue to ask. These questions are complex and lead to very different ideas than my previous solution-seeking questions, like "How can I make customer service better?" The primary difference in my new and old framework for asking questions is doubt. Questions that come from thinking with theory doubt accuracy and value, as well as a linear problem-solution process in which normative questions asked by educational leaders focus on solutions and improvement (Gillies, 2013). My analysis related to new hire orientation has shown that I employ many strategies that encourage and train

employees to be silent. So while I verbally ask employees if they have questions, I rarely have any questions asked because my processes discourage questions. Further, when employees do ask questions, it is almost exclusively related to ensuring compliance. This type of thinking provokes different conversations in the planning of new hire orientation and has significant implications on how educational leaders work.

The type of work that I have described and sought to do in this dissertation is only possible through the use of post qualitative inquiry. Post qualitative inquiry did not provide me with a checklist of what to do or how to do it, but it provided tools for thinking and writing with poststructural theory and the freedom to "do something different *from the beginning*" (St. Pierre, 2019a, p. 5). As noted in Chapter 1, previous research on educational policy related to social media use by employees has been primarily focused on how employees have failed to follow policy or how to develop *better* policies that are able to withstand future legal challenges (Bon et al., 2013; Magid & Gallagher, 2015; McNee, 2013; O'Connor & Schmidt, 2015; O'Donovan, 2012; Russo, 2015). In other words, previous research has not questioned the use of policy, but has focused on strengthening power through policy so that resistance is lessened and unsuccessful. My research has sought to consider and problematize the "chief enemy." Foucault (1982) wrote, "People criticize instances of power which are the closest to them, those which exercise their action on individuals. They do not look for the 'chief enemy' but for the immediate enemy" (p. 780). Foucault describes the "immediate enemy" as a technique or instrument of power, whereas the "chief enemy" is "an institution of power, or group, or elite, or class" (Foucault, 1982, p. 781). In my research, some of the immediate enemies were processes and professional development courses, whereas the chief enemy is policy as a normative discourse, which produces the need for processes and professional development. Further, my research does

not seek to name or investigate "who" exercises power. Instead, I have sought to investigate how power is exercised through the employee use of social media policy and what power produces as a result.

Contributions to Post Qualitative Inquiry

In their book, *Leadership on the Lin*e, Heifetz and Linsky (2002) encourage leaders to "get on the balcony" to obtain a different perspective and practice reflection "even in the 'fog of war'" (p. 51). Specifically, they compare the leadership environment to a dance floor where leaders are among other dancers on the floor. It is very difficult for a leader as a dancer to see what is occurring everywhere on the dance floor while also dancing. Therefore, leaders (dancers) are encouraged to move their viewpoint to the balcony for a more universal view of what is happening on the full dance floor. By moving to the balcony, the leader exchanges their perspective as a dancer for that of an observer. Heifetz and Linsky describe the purpose and challenge of the balcony to "see the subtleties that normally go right by us" (p. 52). In other words, they call for a questioning of what is normal and known. However, one of the limitations of their leadership theory is that I can never totally leave the dance floor or the "fog of war" because my past experiences and current position in leadership are still in place. Even if I move to the balcony for a different vantage point, I am still seeing everything with *my* eyes.

Heifetz and Linsky challenge leaders to *improve their* viewpoint, but thinking with theory argues for a *change* in viewpoint all together by taking on the perspective of theory. This may seem like a slight difference, but it is critical and significant. It is the theory that leads, not my perspective. This type of research cannot be done through a pre-given method. It requires that pre-planning be refused because what surfaces from thinking with theory must lead to what is next; nothing can be done that does not come first from that theoretical reading and writing. As I

described in Chapter 2, my literature review grew as I read theory, and questions emerged that required a review of the literature. Further, my literature review was not confined to a step in my research; it occurred throughout my work as provoked by thinking with theory. Chapter 5 was one the first full chapter I wrote because it developed as I read Foucault and while I conducted our annual new hire orientation. This is one of the reasons my study is significant because it argues for a new approach to inquiry, which rejects a predetermined method. In my study, I analyzed policy, not solely from the perspective of a human resources administrator or a veteran educator, but through the concepts of poststructural theory. This does not mean I denied my own subjectivity; instead, I used my perspectives and experiences as texts (not as truth) to be deconstructed through Foucault's theories of power, knowledge, discourse and resistance.

The purpose of my research is to provoke new thought regarding policy and social media use by school employees. As St. Pierre (2019a) explained, post qualitative inquiry is "not intended for application to lived human experience but for *re-orienting thought*" (p. 2). In this way, my research does not provide solutions for the problem of social media use by educators. Instead, it illustrates how the tool of post qualitative inquiry can be an effective means for opening up new thought and different conversations around policy and educational problems. This is difficult work for educational leaders, because as I discussed in Chapter 5, veteran educators, like myself, are typically docile, disciplined employees who have been promoted and rewarded for their docile behavior. Educational leaders are also typically people who have learned to successfully navigate the system by understanding how the system works and where it fails. This vantage point is a prime position for "provocation" to post qualitative thinking. My dissertation is a beginning point for opening up conversation related to the use of policy to address educational issues and concerns related to social media use by school employees. Gillies

(2013) encourages educational leaders to use Foucauldian analysis "to challenge and to test the assumptions and received wisdom which populate" educational discourses (p. 26).

As an educational leader, I found energy in this type of analysis due to the very nature of poststructural theories, which reject truth and facts. As a veteran educator of more than twenty years, I have witnessed the rise and fall of many educational truths. These truths are part of the continuous parade of programs and measures promising to solve educational problems. Yet, I have often found the answers lacking and have wondered if the problem was not the never-ending parade. Thinking with theory has provided me with a useful tool for examining and resisting what counts as truth, what gets identified as a problem and what methods are used for solving problems. More importantly, Foucault's theories have exposed how power functions through policy as discourse to develop knowledge that produces the very problems it is created to solve.

Implications for Policy & Leadership

Deleuze said, "Thinking begins in provocation" (in Nealon & Giroux, 2012, p. 8). As an educational leader, I have been provoked to think through this dissertation and the use of post qualitative inquiry about my work with policy, especially around the issue of social media use by school employees. As this paper ends, the question of "What now?" emerges. For educational leaders, the perspective of poststructural, Foucauldian theory allows for a different type of engagement on the dance floor of education, which is not solution focused but problem and power focused. Further, a poststructural change in perspective is not for the purpose of producing better understanding and better outcomes, but to disrupt and dismantle what is conventional and easy. This is a very different type of engagement in education. It will require educational leaders to be on the balcony of theory, while also being on the dance floor where educational issues are

faced. Heifetz and Linsky write, “The goal is to come as close as you can to being in both places [the balcony and the dance floor] simultaneously” (p. 53). This process of being in two places at once is messy and uncertain, much like the work of post qualitative inquiry. It does not have a prescribed process, but is responsive and fluid. In this dissertation, I have practiced being in two places at once. As I have thought and written with Foucault’s theories regarding educational policy and social media use by employees, I have also been immersed in my daily work as a human resources administrator monitoring and enforcing policy. Through this deconstructive thinking, I have been invited and incited (often in “real time”) to question and disrupt normative ideas, as well as my role in the process, for the purpose of “re-orienting thought” (St. Pierre, 2019a, p. 2). This re-thinking does not end with this paper, but with a duty to continue to put theory to work in my leadership life. Foucault (2001) describes this duty as “parrhesia” or “free speech” (p. 11). For Foucault, *parrhesia* involves five key elements, which are frankness, truth, danger, criticism and duty:

> *Parrhesia* is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In *parrhesia*, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy. (p. 20)

Educational leaders can engage in *parrhesia* as another *doing* of thinking with theory. As new critiques emerge, those must be courageously explored and shared. This dissertation is meant to be a provocation to think and speak otherwise through the use of theory. This does not mean that educational leaders must be negative or angry. Instead, as Nealon & Giroux (2012) write, “The

point [of theory] is never that everything is 'bad'. ...Rather, the point of theory might be better stated as 'everything is suspicious'" (p. 6). Therefore, educational leaders must become suspicious of whatever is agreed upon as the *right* answers and common sense solutions to educational problems. Suspicion requires doubt and curiosity. Suspicious educational leaders will ask questions about the creation, use and revision of policies, training programs, professional development courses and other standard practices. This does not imply that educational leaders need to reject and discard these programs or methods. The goal is not the outcome. The goal is rigorous engagement in thinking and rethinking what counts as meaningful and necessary in education.

Thinking with theory invites and incites change, but not as predetermined or one-size-fits-all solutions. Change occurs as power relations are disrupted and questioned, so that what was invisible is made visible. Foucault (1995/1977) described the impact of lighting and surveillance in the panopticon when he wrote, "visibility is a trap" (p. 200). Visibility allowed for improved monitoring and discipline of prisoners. In this way, visibility is also a trap for power because through post qualitative inquiry the productive nature of power and the working of power relations are made visible. In my research, I make visible the nature of power and how power functions through policy by way of a variety of instruments. The nature of power is productive and relational. When the nature of power is visible in this way, it opens up the possibility for change because power is no longer fixed in a leadership position or belonging to a policy or ruling document. As educational leaders recognize the "webs of power" that are active, then new ways of examining policy and social media use by employees are opened up. For example, educational leaders do not have to solely engage board members to change or challenge

policy. Because power is webbed and exists everywhere, leaders can and should involve students and teachers in questioning and challenging policy.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I focused heavily on how power works through the instruments of new hire orientation and professional development training courses, but I also showed in those chapters how policy is enacted in various smaller, less noticed ways through conversations, observations, reports and even text messages. I exposed multiple artifacts of policy and discourse-at-work that are often unnoticed in schools, such as posters and painted spirit rocks. Making policy, power and discourse visible for educational leaders is critical because it is impossible to effectively change what you cannot see as problematic. This is why power seeks to work in secret and silence (Foucault, 1990/1978). If educators can view policy as I do, then it changes what is problematic. Policy shifts from being the solution to being the problem. This viewpoint changes everything and allows educational leaders to see how policy creates and maintains problems.

I have shown how social media use policy makes subjects by producing professional educators and proper educators. Yet, these subject positions of educators only exist neatly on paper. For example, a teacher may comply with social media policy by not "friending" students on Facebook (visible), but at the same time may not comply with policy by using Facebook during instructional hours (invisible). In other words, a teacher can be both proper and improper at the same time, disrupting fixed binary oppositions. Policy seeks to produce strict categories and subject positions for educators, but what occurs in schools is much more complex. Ball et al., (2012) write, "Policy making and policy makers tend to assume 'best possible' environments for 'implementation': ideal buildings, students and teachers and plentiful resources. Policy makers do not necessarily take into account the reality of school" (p. 148-189). Perfect environments and

fixed categories do not exist, and when they are assumed, as in social media policy, it is problematic because normative ideals exclude the realities of specific, local contexts. When policy is made problematic, then the normativities produced by discourse and power become visible. Social media policy is crafted around normative ideals, and thus does not consider the complexity of subjectivity, and as a result has to respond with policy revisions. For example, prior to the most current revision of the Employee Use of Social Media policy, employees were deemed unprofessional if they "friended" any current students on social media, which included family members. Because policy was structured on a normative ideal, rather than written from "the reality of school" in a small, close-knit town, the subject position of professional was tight and fixed. However, through resistance and the introduction of the complex reality of schools and employees' subjectivities, policy was forced to shift, change and expand the definition of professional to include the "friending" of students who were family members or whose parents gave permission. This is an example of what might change if educational leaders view policy as a created instrument of power, power as relational, and subjectivity as fluid.

Because policy is unstable, change is possible through resistance. Further, it is important that educational leaders who are in positions for creating and revising policy "give serious attention to the messy complexity of schools and not impose a 'theory from above'" (Ball et al., 2012, p. 149). In order to give serious attention, educational leaders will have to slow down and make space and time to think differently. This is one of the significant changes that can occur if educational leaders will think with theory. One of the "subtle procedures" of power in educational leadership is to equate effective leadership with quick response time to problems (Foucault, 1995/1977, p. 178). This subtle procedure minimizes resistance and shortens the window to think differently because a quick response requires a leader to lean on what they

already know. Therefore, one way an educational leader can engage in fearless speech is by slowing down, refusing the "too easy" (Foucault, 1994b, p. 456) answers and instead asking "what happens" (Foucault, 1982, p. 786). For a human resource administrator, this may happen when an employee's behavior resists the intent of a policy, but their behavior is not directly specified as improper in policy. The "too easy" answer is to revise the policy so that the behavior is directly specified as improper and future resistance is minimized. Fearless speech occurs when a human resources administrator asks questions like this: What happens when policy is revised to respond to an instance of employee behavior? How has policy actually *created* the improper behavior? Fearless speech changes conservations and the possible solutions to educational issues. Thus, post qualitative inquiry is a useful tool for making normative processes and the nature of power visible and open to critique.

Throughout Foucault's writings on power, he reminds his readers that freedom and agency are always at work in power relationships, which is why resistance is always present. An educational leader's freedom is a responsibility and a call to listen and speak. Foucault (2001) explains, in *parrhesia*, "The orator [is one] who speaks the truth to those who cannot accept his truth … and who may be exiled, or punished in some way, [and] is *free* to keep silent" (p. 19). The orator does not speak because she is physically compelled, but because she is morally compelled. Silence would be optimal because she speaks knowing that the truth she speaks will not be accepted. Yet, she has a duty to speak because she knows the truth. By truth, Foucault does not mean a universal truth or truth that requires proof or scientific evidence. Instead, this truth is identifiable because it is spoken at great risk to the speaker, but is spoken nonetheless because the speaker has critiqued power and made visible the truths that had been hidden. A leader has the duty to see and speak against what is normative and privileged. Thinking with

theory *is* a key leadership skill. Questioning and disrupting what everyone already knows is the skill that requires fearless leadership. Fearless leaders pause, think and rethink before jumping into action, even when the refusal to act quickly may put their reputation, competency and job in jeopardy. There are multiple practices that fearless leaders can engage in to disrupt policy. These practices may be simple and informal, such as engaging colleagues in conversations that position policy as problematic and the role of leaders in surveillance and self-regulation around policy. This is a simple practice that I have engaged in during my dissertation with varying effects. This practice is likely to produce discomfort and confusion, which is an indication that the practice is effective because when what we know is disrupted, it is uncomfortable. Leaders can engage in more formal practices for thinking with theory by changing meeting agendas to include reading and discussion of critical theory related to current policy or problems at hand, thereby disrupting the practice/theory binary. Leaders can also practice refusal by refusing to approve or support the easy solutions of policy revision or creating additional professional development training for employees to address problems.

Educational leaders are surrounded by policies, accountability measures and "best practices," which are hailed as the *right* solutions to educational issues. To question these normative solutions is to speak a truth most others cannot accept or hear. This type of speech puts an educational leader at risk. Yet, as Foucault (2001) described, without risk, *parrhesia* is not really present. Risk does not require the risk of physical death, but instead may risk death to one's reputation, popularity or competence. In translating Foucault's writing, Joseph Pearson described *parrhesia* as "fearless speech" not because the situation is fear-free, but because the speech is made courageously in a fearful situation. Educational leaders who engage in fearless speech are needed to re-orient thought regarding the use of policy as the right solution to

educational issues like social media use, low performing schools and teacher retention. Policy does not solve problems; instead it omits conversation related to issues by employing rules and practices that claim to fix the problems. For example, policy on teacher retention suggests that by easing licensure requirements and raising salaries, retention issues will be solved. In this way, power works through policy by pretending to solve the problem of retention, which silences further discussion and pushes leaders to focus on other problems that still need solving. Social media policy defines professional and proper behavior, which enables leaders and others (students, parents and other employees) to surveil and identify themselves and others. This produces the self-formation of docile bodies by employees and increases the risk in speaking against policy because policy is known and accepted by the majority. Foucault (2001) writes, "The *parrhesiastes* risks his privilege to speak freely when he discloses a truth which threatens the majority" (p. 18). In other words, educational leaders practice parrhesia when they speak against policy because policy threatens what is normative and accepted by the majority of people.

Foucault (2001) describes the "speech activity" of *parrhesia* as taking on the form of frankness and ownership by saying, "I am the one who thinks this and that" (p. 13). In other words, to speak with frankness, an educational leader must own their words and thoughts. They must speak clearly "by avoiding any kind of rhetorical form which would veil what he thinks" (Foucault, 2001, p. 12). This is contrary to the way educational leaders, especially those in the central office positions, are traditionally trained to speak. As a school administrator, I was taught to engage in *Crucial Conversations* and seek "win-win" solutions that "defuse hostility" and lead to consensus (Rebore, 2015, p. 323). At times, I was told this would mean biting my tongue for the great good of agreement. While Foucault is not advocating for rudeness or carelessness, his

point is that frankness is not concerned with buy-in or agreement, but with truth as it relates to power. Further, for Foucault, *parrhesia* is not possible if agreement is likely. As described in Chapter 2, an educator's usefulness is parallel to their docility or compliance with dominant norms. Therefore, when an educational leader speaks frankly in opposition to the dominant norms that make their position secure, it is an indication of *parrhesia* because the leader is engaging in truth-telling in a dangerous situation. Finally, *parrhesia* is a "form of criticism, either towards another or towards oneself, but always in a situation where the speaker or confessor is in a position of inferiority" (Foucault, 2001, p. 17-18). In other words, it is not enough that educational leaders speak fearlessly to their staff or their students where there is little risk. They must also speak fearlessly publicly to themselves and to those in positions of authority. For educational leaders, this involves questioning traditional, accepted practices at times and in places where parents, board members and other school leaders are present. For human resource administrators, it may mean disagreeing with the creation of a policy or questioning why a policy revision is required. It is the practice of verbally drawing attention to how policy and instruments of power produce subject positions of school employees, which causes employees to be divided inside themselves and from others. Moreover, it means speaking without seeking a win-win result or working for buy-in. Instead, as Gilles (2013) writes, "Parrhesia is a mechanism by which the powerful can be served some kind of moral reminder, some advice which they need to consider in relation to themselves" (p. 63). In this way, this dissertation represents my step in *parrhesia*. For it is certainly dangerous for a human resources leader to question the use of policy to others or to themself. Yet, through this dissertation, I question my use of policy as a school leader and challenge other educational leaders to join me in considering "what happens" because policy is widely used in schools. I agree with St. Pierre

(2019a), when she wrote "At some point, what 'cannot be thought and yet must be thought' is no longer optional but an ethical obligation" (p. 5). For me, the point for re-thinking the use of policy is now.

Recommendations for Future Research

My research is a snapshot of how policy can be deconstructed and destabilized when thinking with theory is employed in research. While my research focused on the employee use of social media policy and the production of the binary oppositions of professional/personal and proper/improper, there are various other binary oppositions that can be explored that also subject employees. One binary opposition that is maintained in the background of social media policy and the online training course, but that I did not explore, is masculine/feminine and how gendered roles in education play into the role and use of policy. This would be an interesting and important future inquiry. Further, my research looked closely at the new hire orientation process as an employee's introduction into policy and reviewed one online training course. However, there are many other instruments and processes that are used to train and discipline employees in policy. For example, policy works through many school levels processes, such as beginning teacher programs, faculty meetings, district wide emails, and professional learning communities, to subject, train and monitor employees in the discourse of education professionalism. These areas are part of a school system's "deliverology" that "gets policy 'done' in very effective ways by creating an economy of visibility which brings students, teachers and school directly into the gaze of policy" (Ball et al., 2012, p. 139). My work could also be expanded to analyze the instruments of surveillance that are produced and used to train and monitor employees' use of social media. My research is a starting point for further thought on the topic of social media use by school employees and exposes many openings for further research.

Educational issues are complex and cannot be solved simply by the implementation of a new or better policy. My hope is that more school administrators will begin to question the use of policy as the go-to solution to educational problems. As educators resist policy as the easy solutions to problems and employ poststructural theories for thinking about policy and educational issues, then new thought and new ideas will emerge that can create a better education system that has “not yet” been possible (St. Pierre, 2019b, p. 4).

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Vita

Jennifer Sloan Wampler was born in Louisiana, to Dr. John and Martha Sloan. She graduated from Kings Mountain High School in North Carolina in June 1994. The following autumn, she entered Appalachian State University on the North Carolina Teaching Fellows scholarship, and in May 1998, she was awarded the Bachelor of Science degree. In the fall of 1998, she accepted a position as a science teacher at Wake Forest-Rolesville High School in Wake Forest, NC, where she taught for six years. During this time, she earned her National Board Certification in Adolescent Science. In August 2004, she returned to Appalachian State University on the Principal Fellows scholarship to study school administration, and in May 2006 she was awarded the Master of School Administration degree. Following graduation, she worked as an assistant principal for two years in Gaston County Schools and as a principal for five and half years in Cleveland County Schools. In December 2013, she was promoted to Executive Director of Human Resources. She completed her Educational Specialist Degree at Appalachian in August 2014. She currently works as the Assistant Superintendent of Operational and Human Services in Cleveland County Schools. She completed her doctoral work at Appalachian State University in May 2022.

Jennifer has been a member of the North Carolina Beta Chi chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa for more than 16 years. She is an active member of First Baptist Church Kings Mountain. She resides in Kings Mountain, NC with her husband and two daughters.