The Tug-of-War Over Truth: A Foucauldian Case Study on the Interplay of Competing Discourses in Education

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The present study applies a Foucauldian critical analytic to investigate competing discourses in education that are shown to be present in one public high school in the southern part of the United States. It is revealed how these discourses intersect and collide with each other to reinforce certain values, principles and practices, but eventually loosely coalesce along with other social interactions into general rules and social norms within the high school. It is found that technology itself represents a separate competing discourse with its own set of unique truths, goals, language and tools that both overlap and challenge other dominant discourses. Foucault's concepts about power and governmentality provide the deductive design for data interpretation. Teacher and school administrator retellings are examined for signs of structures of thought and discursive truths that characterize ways of thinking that represent opposing points of views about the role of technology in education and its effect on defining the "right" way to teach. A framework is proposed for understanding and comparing the discourses based on their differing views of technology.

Keywords: Foucault (Michel), discourses, education, teachers, public policy, technology, power, governmentality

INTRODUCTION

The present study uses Foucault's critical method as a lens to uncover how different competing discourses are shaping various ways of thinking about the nature of education and the meaning of a teachers' work at a localized level. The aim is to investigate how dominant discourses in education project opposing points of view regarding the "right" or "normal" way to teach and the "ideal" way teachers ought to conduct themselves. It is believed that discourses shape relations of power in which knowledge is used to justify the integration of commonplace procedures, processes, methods, or techniques that conduct teachers' everyday work, which then become routine and taken-for-granted over time, thus producing power by determining the "order of things" in public schools (Foucault, 2004, p. xxi). The study shows how discourses collide in what Foucault (1984) calls "strategic power games" focusing on the micropolitical tug-of-war over the process of reasoning that define the present actuality of 'truths' that govern what teachers are supposed to believe and how they ought to conduct themselves processionally at work (p. 18).

There is very little research that applies Foucault's theories to education, and only a handful of poststructuralist studies based on primary research focus on how teacher conduct is influenced by wider discourses (Ball, 1994; Anderson and Grinberg, 1998; Hyde, 1998; Butin, 2003; Ford, 2003;

Zembylas, 2003; Deacon, 2006; Marsh et al., 2006; Gilliom, 2008; Bandeen, 2009; Webb et al., 2009). These studies primarily frame public policy and teacher discourses as a clash between school administrators' rational stances and teachers' personal ethics. Drawing on this prior research, the present study reveals the antagonism between public policy and teacher discourses as it plays out in the situated context of a high school. It also expands on this knowledge by critically examining the told stories of the high school teachers to illustrate how technology represents a third set of discourses that seek to construct alternate modes of thinking about and doing education.

Prior research establishes that public policy discourses frame a teacher's role in terms of accountability agendas in education (Ball, 2003; Gunzenhauser, 2006). This epistemological point of view holds that continuous data collection is needed to "meet certain criteria with respect to grades and subjects tested, the reporting of test results in aggregated and disaggregated forms, and school and district accountability for the improvement of student performance" (Marsh et al., 2006; Wellings and Levine, 2009, p. 2). For public policy discourses, technology facilitates data-driven decision-making and systematic ways to track outcomes and produce evidence of performance. Technology is seen as useful for developing information systems and accountability mechanisms to manage people and processes (Wellings and Levine, 2009). These accountability systems work to mediate data collection that facilitates the evaluation of teachers and frame their roles in performative terms to solidify political and managerial interests.

For teachers, technology is mostly understood as the practical software applications and connected electronic devices that are applied to support student learning (Bouras and Albe, 2007; Hannon and Bretag, 2010). School administrators tend to agree with teachers and appreciate the value of technology in terms of how it can effectively enhance student achievement. In this respect, teachers and administrators tend to share an interest in useful instructional technologies that save them time, make their lives easier, and allow them to easily communicate; thus, increasing their productivity. However, teachers are aware that the advantages of technology come with a catch; it mediates their work in ways that pushes them toward teaching in certain predefined ways and it also facilitates surveillance practices that makes their conduct open to the gaze of outsiders (Gunzenhauser, 2006).

As technology discourses support school administrators and teachers in realizing the practical benefits of new tools and innovations, they evoke their own competing ideology linked to essentialist notions of societal progress. They reinforce the notion that technology offers an opportunity to "revolutionize" education around the ideals of personalized, self-directed, engaging and just-in-time learning that "liberates" learning from the physical boundaries and traditional conventions of public schools (Hannon and Bretag, 2010; Groff, 2013). Underlying this view is the rationalization that technology adoption is needed to remake education into "high-tech" institutions to better prepare contemporary students for work in the digital age. They also believe the full technological-meditation of instruction is the unavoidable trajectory of education (Wellings and Levine, 2009;

Sims, 2014). However, teachers are skeptical of the hyperbolic promises of technology discourses and their aims to repurpose existing tools from the private sector to appeal to education markets (Burch, 2006; Sirota, 2011; Toyama, 2011; Paton, 2014).

Both technology and public policy discourses have the effect of diverting attention away from and dislocating traditional teaching practices. The overlapping rationales and goals of technology and public policy discourses are presented as neutral, separate, and distant from pedagogy, yet their tactics clearly aim to determine the order of things, which in turn shifts understandings of what it means to be a teacher. In response, teachers join in solidarity to criticize the standardization and technologization of education and oppose reforms. They are concerned that change driven by accountability ideology and the oversimplified essentialist claims of technology will reduce their autonomy, compromises their professional integrity, and actually harm schools by fostering bad teaching (Shepard, 1991; Hoffman et al., 2001). The present study posits that their personal struggle against both the governmentality of public policy and the controlling functions of technology characterize teacher discourses. As Ball (2003) argues, public policy and technology discourses "are mechanisms for reforming teachers, [who], as ethical subjects, find their values challenged or displaced by the terrors of performativity. . .this is the struggle over the teacher's soul" (p. 217).

In an environment of increasing technology-mediation of teachers' work that coincides with widespread accountability practices encoded into public policy, the key premise of the present study is that public policy, teacher and technology discourses represent competing political interests that are engaged in a tug-of-war over which truths are legitimated. They reinforce and produce absolute concepts of ethics, values and morals that can and do exist because of social rationalizations and normalizing constructs linked to them. Each is composed of different truth claims and essentialist notions regarding education that are constructed as alternatives to each other, but eventually loosely coalesce into rules for governing education. It is around these contradictory views that tension emerges over the purpose and nature of education. The present study is not concerned with investigating whether any of the points of view reflected in these discourses are true or not; rather, it employs Foucault's philosophy to investigate, without passing judgment, how these discourses hold up their knowledge as reliable and valid to influence the course of education and the conduct of teachers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study's approach considers the told stories of a group of embedded units (i.e., school administrators and teachers) working in a single setting (i.e., one public high school in the southern region of the United States). The specific case is defined by the physical boundaries of the high school. Even though this study focuses on the individual representatives of a group of educators and understanding their emic points of view, it aims to achieve a holistic understanding of the environment – on

deconstructing the context in which discourses mediate various aspects of the self in society (Foucault, 1980a, p. 215).

Following Creswell's (2007) recommendations, an interview protocol was designed to guide data collection. Interviews were conducted in teachers' private classrooms during their daily free block of preparation time (90 min) or in an administrator's office in the high school. Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed into word processing software. The transcripts were imported into NVivo contextual analysis software and coded. Other sources of data include follow-up interviews, classroom observations, email conversations, field notes and document collection.

In total, data collection comprises interviews that were conducted with fourteen high school teachers and administrators with diverse backgrounds, experience levels, and perspectives. Pseudonyms were created to protect the identity of participants and any identifying information was removed from the data. Four of the high school's administrators and ten teachers participated in the study. One of the administrators works at the district-level, but was formerly a teacher at the high school. All the administrators had teaching experience. Teachers ranged in experience from 2 years to over 40 years and taught subjects including English, Calculus, Chemistry, Reading, Foreign Language, Government, History and Business Technology. About half of the teachers were tenured. Even though two teachers had nearly a decade of experience, they were new to the high school and had transferred in from a different school within the past 2 years.

The practical approach employed in this study for data interpretation includes Foucault's analytical process as suggested by Dreyfus and Rabinow (2016). Foucauldian research focuses on exploring the "codes of language, perception, and practice" that are observed in the present and represent a system of thought that supports an "order of things" (Foucault, 1971, p. xxi). His method is to organize statements that comprise "serious speech acts" according to the discursive representations (strategies, modalities, concepts, etc.) they appear to characterize (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 2016, p. 48). Foucault's model for discourse analysis also emphasizes the search for 'silence' in textual data – that which cannot be said or thought in a location and under a particular regime of truth (Hook, 2001, p. 13).

Analysis of transcripts in this study focuses on interactions that represent discursive themes instead of the "talk" that characterizes individuals. Data was coded by similar spoken statements that included common phrases, views or beliefs were grouped together into general themes without a preconceived coding set. Through this inductive process, emergent themes, broad topics and specific ideas were identified that reflect the material elements of recorded texts. Specifically, four discursive formations are explored that theorized to characterize discourses in education and frame how teachers think about and relate to technology. First, it is described how discourses constitute accepted forms of knowledge or truths. Second, the differing goals or aims of the discourses are considered. Third, the language of discourses is shown to reflect certain values, beliefs and situated realities. Lastly, it is discussed how the discourses shape understandings of technology tools and guide their applied use.

Together, these discursive formations create a framework used to compare the discourses.

RESULTS

Truths of Public Policy Discourses

Public policy discourses relate the purpose of education to the economic imperative of adequately preparing students for the workforce. Halle, an administrator at the high school, asserts that the purpose of education is so that students "can go into the workforce, pay taxes and be a contributing member for our society." She continues: "The way schools are judged is on whether kids are prepared to go do anything after they graduate. Are they prepared to go to college or enter a career?" David, another administrator, reiterates this view: "In discussions with business and industry, they want kids coming out who are prepared to work."

Public policy discourses use the economic imperative argument to justify the tracking of performance measures that demonstrate teachers' performance in preparing students to successfully enter the workforce. The clearest manifestation of this is the States' shifting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) policy that is the way schools are publicly rated based on students' aggregate standardized test scores. David explains that teachers "live in an age of accountability. He thinks it is 'good' because: "We want to know our students are learning and how we can reach the needs of students when they are not learning." Continuing to speak for the collective "we," David says that "educators want our students to succeed and so we put the greatest pressure on ourselves to start with. Sure, there are outside forces that want us to do well. No parent wants to send their child to a failing school." David suggests the measures are essential to the survival of the school by proving to the public that they are not failing.

The administrative challenge for Halle and David is how to organize teachers to be more productive as demonstrated by the data, and thus project the image a high-performing school: "I am for accountability, there is increased pressure to do well, and everyone wants to be a part of a successful school." He assumes this need for accountability is self-evident: "I think we need to understand where we are. For too long, we have not looked at our data to see where we are." The "things" seen in the data are measures that show how teachers individually and the high school overall is performing "good" or "bad" in certain areas relative to established benchmarks.

Public policy discourses institute a kind of business speak of standards, objectives, and measures that represents "progress" as a set of numbers and computations. Rachel points out that the "focus on statistics that measures of performance" is the "paradigm I have been under since I started teaching." In keeping with the business-like practice of continuous improvement, Rachel says that the AYP bar is systematically raised every year to drive schools to do better: "...there is this idea that we will magically always get better." She continues: "I see all sorts of infiltration of business models like the idea of measuring us based on the AP test results...but the idea of continual improvement

is not always going to happen." She suggests that practice of measuring teachers based on accountability standards, "impacts what we do – there is no help for it – we teach to the test, and this is going to impact the test itself." Like David, she explains why she needs the data to prove she is making a difference:

> We need to bring up our students' scores and you can see that there is a correlation with a lack of core skills and a lack of ability to perform in those higher-level classes. The tests pushed them in the direction of hiring me because there was a need to make sure we made AYP.

Even though Rachel is often critical about accountability practices, she still is not openly against them. Like many teachers, her reaction to policy discourses is restrained. She is cautious about how data can be misused or misinterpreted, but she believes, even though they are flawed in many ways, the statistics still have an essential purpose of validating her accomplishments although she understands the standards are continuously shifting. Production measures render the quality of her work as the output of the system, which compels her to do what is needed to affect better statistics. It "conducts her conduct" by showing her an image of herself in the outputs of her work relative to the accountability standards imposed by administrators.

Goals of Public Policy Discourses

Public policy discourses use shifting economic priorities to justify continuous changes to educational goals and present them as distant from education's traditional values so they will not be opposed. These changes in the form of public policy reforms are usually dropped on schools with little notice or regard for teachers. John, for example, says that sometimes the State will just "throw something else out and you will just pick it up." Kim believes the state keeps changing direction: "Once the Department of Education decides what they are going to do; we are trying all these different things but have not settled on anything yet." When referring to the latest policy update, Kourtney explains that adjustments to the common standards are delivered altogether in one "package" near the end of the school year and this is how they discover what has changed: "We are just now unpacking the standards seeing what is new." David, an administrator, suggests that he responds to the policy dictates as they materialize: "We will deal with the issues as new laws are passed, we will adjust and move forward."

When policy is released with little advanced notice, teachers are not given a say in the changes. The top-down design of policy delivers unquestionable edicts against a background of expected silence. Despite some antipathy toward policy that imposes more rules and more rigidity, the "right" way to deal with sporadic policy changes is to say nothing – just accept it, adjust, and move on. This "silent" position reflects a power relation in which policy discourses subdue teachers through their own self-restraint. As Kim notes: "People may complain about different policies or things that we are trying, but they will just do it for the most part." After experiencing many rounds of reforms, some teachers begin to see policy change as indifferent and disjointed, which encourages them to silently dissent from policy when it is imposed. For example, Kourtney credits the numerous "whims" of administrators with compelling teachers to just ignore what is requested of them:

> I think everyone is silent because there is so much that they expect of us. This is where a lot of the frustration. It comes on a whim. They are like: "This is what we want you to do," you do it and then they say, "oh, that was so last Thursday; there is something new to do now, here, fill out these fifteen forms." It is because there is so much change going on that we will silently resist; because if they are not going to use it anyway or make us do something different next time, then why should we do it now.

Even though Kourtney might otherwise be open to change, the ceaseless barrage of reforms and incoherence of change is crushing and drains her of her obligation to comply. Similarly, other teachers are silent about policy shifts because they see the changes as a recurring trends or political cycles that reflect the mood or pendulum of public policy interests. Susan notes:

> I've noticed that the pendulum in education swings one way and then it swings back the other way. So, what was detrimental at one time was valuable at another time is not. A lot of things in courses and teaching approaches you will see are just rehashes of old models – it goes back and forth.

Leah believes that teachers like Susan do not speak out because they are "riding out the trends." Ella agrees that veteran teachers are silent because they know new policies will not be given the time that is needed to see their impact and will likely be replaced by the next cycle. As she says: "Things are changing constantly. So, why get on the bandwagon?" Even David infers that the school's administration must "balance what we are asked to do with respect from the state or whoever would send a dictate or mandate asking us to do something with what the long-term going to be."

When policy is implemented without opportunity for discussion or negotiation it is perceived by teachers as dictatorial, and thus distant from their own interests and local context. The non-involvement of teachers is a byproduct of public policy discourses that are intentionally developed at a distance from historic teaching practices. Teachers are not included because they are seen as obstacles to progress – as representing the old traditional practices and local backgrounds that policy aims to overcome and expunge. Rapid shifts in public policy are deemed necessary to support the growth of the economy, they represent progress, and this is the bottom line. This ahistorical framing of the goals of education creates a distance between public policy and teachers who are left out of the conversation and thus react with silence.

Language of Public Policy Discourses

Absolute language like "all," "universal," "common," "it's the law," and "unavoidable" characterizes public policy discourses. These code words denote certainty and rigidity about subjective beliefs that are asserted as categorical "truths." Typically, absolute language codes in texts are signposts of exaggeration, bias or extreme views that are polarizing and attempt to stifle dissent by manufacturing a reality in which people feel like they have no

other option but to agree. These sorts of "truths" are visible in talk of the high school teachers. For example, the following comment from Leah is riddled with the codes of absolute language and typifies this underlying belief system: "We are supposed to be preparing these kids for employment because that is the whole purpose for education is to boost the economy and to try to keep kids from being broke and hungry by the time they are eighteen."

Reinforced by the "absolute" knowledge of economic imperatives, public policy discourses attempt to drive education toward performative models derived from the private sector. These business-like practices attempt to systematically manage education using mechanistic models that objectify teachers with data. Halle, an administrator, justifies the need for the accountability systems that compare teachers based on their performance: "I think of accountability as consistency. Like, if you have got two teachers and they teach the same thing, and one teacher's kids are always outperforming the kids in the other class, then I think we need to address that issue." As is common in the rhetoric of public policy discourse, Halle justifies her performative principles by comparing education to the private sector:

> Honestly, education is one of the only fields where you are not judged on your performance – where you could be in the classroom, teach all day long and be a pretty crappy teacher. You may just teach your heart out, all day every day, but if the kids have not learned anything, then something is wrong. We are one of the only professions like this. I mean, if a doctor did twenty surgeries and one out of twenty were incorrect, someone would "red flag" that doctor.

Using absolute language, Halle is making the argument that education is lagging behind other social institutions like health care that have embraced business-like production models as the modern and thus the "correct" way to organize work. Echoing the rhetoric of public policy discourses, she proclaims that education is the last "hold out" and should give in to the inevitable change for its own good. Teachers recognize the absolute language in the public policy rhetoric that school administrator's pickup to uphold accountability reforms, which is different from the language they use locally. For example, Rachel thinks that education is being fooled into adopting capitalist ideas:

> Education institutions have been duped into focusing on business norms because of the idea of constantly wanting to learn and improve and get better. They can translate that into being able to serve more students or achieving better outcomes or whatever, but the idea that you can change what we have got going on in a classroom to fit a business model is wrong headed.

As mentioned before, many of the rationalizations underlying public policy discourses are codified in law. The official standards, regulation and rules of teaching included in the law make public policy discourses even more absolute and unquestionable. As Kourtney recognizes, teachers do not have a choice expect to comply: "We have to do it because it is the law. . .I have to follow the content standards. . .and all teachers in the state have to present it the same way." Susan also explains how public policy explicitly oversees her work:

> The State's Course of Study governs us. We are given a list of topics and objectives and whatever the state puts together, and we have to turn in for each course our curriculum map, what we are covering, the order in which we are covering it, and the objectives for that. . .and that pretty well guides what we do.

Kourtney's comments highlight how the technology of common standards and accountability "conduct their conduct." By spreading the practices of accountability across all teachers, certain customs are imposed and rigid boundaries of what is permissibly are cemented. Backed up by absolute rationales and law, public policy discourses regulate what teachers can do and attempt to define what is "normal."

Tools of Public Policy Discourses

For Foucault, the mechanisms, techniques and technology of power are the practical or objective means through which individuals are governed (Gordon, 1991, p. 3). Public policy requires teachers and administrators to comply with the procedures of counting what teachers do through submitting paperwork, entering data into computer systems and compiling reports. Much of the administrative tasks of teaching are automated by technology. Like most schools across the state, the teachers at the high school use an information system called iNow to enter grades, comments, attendance, discipline referrals, seating charts, list of assignments, syllabus and so on. Kim explains that parents and students also have access to iNow and "all of their academic stuff is on it, like transcripts, GPA, contact information, past year grades, disability issues, etc." Electronic systems like iNow cement the outputs of teachers' work and makes this information instantly available to administrators, students and parents, and according to Luke, this keeps teachers honest.

Teachers understand that data can render digital images of both students and teachers that can be used to subject them to perpetual sorting, ranking and classification. Reports are regularly run not only to, as David says, "understand which students may be at risk. . .and intervene before a kid gets behind academically," but also to, as Luke says, identify any "red flags" that administrators need to address during a teacher's evaluations or instructional audit. Luke describes how administrators can "pull up the overall grades of a teacher and use that as part of an evaluation tool essentially." Noah says that administrators will use the data during instructional audits:

> Administrators will go through and check our grades all the time. It is not uncommon. Especially for our audits, we have to print out our grades and take them with us. They will see how many 'A,' 'B,' or 'C's' and we have to be able to tell them why a certain kid is failing.

iNow distributes teachers relative to their students in their class and widens their continuous observation; rendering digital profiles of a teachers that reveals patterns of their behavior in comparison to others and the institutions' norms. In response to feeling like they are being watched all the time, teachers manipulate the data they enter to produce a positive digital image of themselves. For example, Kourtney admits that she must be "careful" in how she writes comments about students in iNow. She avoids entering any needless data and keeps her

comments to a minimum. As she says: "We just know less is more." She also reveals that there is a certain professional jargon that teachers become accustomed that characterizes their textual data. Kourtney describes her technique: "There is a way that you want to word it and you have to be very specific, but very general at the same time. You have to be politically correct all the time. I think it is just common knowledge between us."

Furthermore, the end-of-course exams and ACT college readiness test are used to show how teachers at the high school compare to the national norm, the state average, other individual schools and to each other. Aggregate test scores abstractly represent and objectify teachers. They reduce everything they do down to a single number that ranks them in relative order to everyone else. Halle, an administrator, explains how technology makes it easy to apply this tactic: "We gave the test in December, and I pulled it up. I wanted to see which of our teachers have the highest scores. Because that is who you want teaching – you want those teachers explaining to the other teachers what they did." Halle wants to use the data to praise some teachers and compel them into normalizing other teachers into the "right" modes of teaching.

The comparisons based on aggregate test scores encourage competition between schools, between departments within schools and between individual teachers within departments. To effectively compete and produce data that resembles the norm, schools pressure teachers and teachers discipline themselves to produce "good" stats. In her comment above, Halle assumes that the teachers with the top test scores relative to everyone else are the "best" teachers. Testing technology furthers an environment where teachers are classified, rated and ranked based on their performance. From her administrative perspective, Halle "hopes teachers are a little bit self-critical" after seeing their scores, and she bluntly asserts that competition is a good for teachers: "...sometimes a little bit of competition is not always a bad thing. You know it has kind of lit a fire under some of their butts to make sure they are not the one who has the lowest score after test time." She relates competition to making teachers feel more responsible: "The teachers feel ownership because their class data was compared to the teacher next door." Halle is asking teachers to identify themselves in the classifications that the data inscribes – assigning responsibility to themselves for the results.

The high school teachers are aware of how they are measured and how competition is encouraged. For example, Rachel recalls that during a meeting with an administrator during which she was given her pass rate, aggregate ACT test scores and a goal was set for her based on the average of her students' exam scores. Kim mentions that her department gets "incentives for passing the exams." Kourtney says she is evaluated and by the aggregate of "students' ACT test score" and this stresses her out. She describes her response to an incident last year when she found out her "brilliant kids" did not perform well on their exams: "Oh my God, it is going to look bad on me. It is going to look like I did not teach them." Kourtney implies that she is responsible for her students' test scores and her self-imposed accountability is adding to her stress.

When the work of teachers is reduced to numbers and policy practices like common standards segment their time by the minute, the reality of their localize context is lost. Most often, administrators do not hear or choose to ignore teachers when they object to being individualized by data because they believe data is impartial and thus represents the only "fair" means through which to hold all teachers accountability to the same standards. David, downplays how the school uses data to distribute, observe and judge teachers: "I don't look at it as big brother is watching you but if something is going on, then we need to check on it." His earlier comment that "Everyone wants to be a part of a successful school" also implies that he thinks everyone else in the school sees reality the same way he does. He believes that is normal for teachers recognized the obligation for increased rigor and higher standards, and it's only natural that they should want to apply pressure on themselves do better.

Truths of Teacher Discourses

Teachers resist the way public policy discourses frame teaching in mechanistic terms by producing their own localized truths to justify their decisions to, as Kourtney says, "go off-road" with their instructional practices. Primarily, teachers emphasize that "others" perceptions of them are erroneous because they do not understand what it is really like to be a teacher. For example, Kourtney rationalizes that the politicians who make the laws will "never understand" and this is where the "disconnect" occurs. John agrees that teachers are left out of conversations about public policy because the people who wrote the rules have obviously "never been in a classroom." Their point creates a distance between themselves and public policy so that they can feel less obligated to comply with the "rules."

Teachers contend that public policy discourses unfairly treat teachers like "robots" because they are understood only in relation to their subject. For example, Jane claims that there is more to teaching than just the content of a course and there is more to her role than just representing her subject matter – her job is that of "a surrogate mother, cheerleader, an educator all rolled up into one." She goes on to say that "teachers are more than our subject matter" – their primary responsibility is to "...care, connect and show students that they are important and not just a warm body in the class." Ella reiterates this view: "I may be the only positive influence a student has in his or her life" and "you have to raise them too and I do not think people know that this is that part to it... you have to be a friend, parent, counselor, role model, or psychotherapist some days." In their language, teachers reveal certain understandings that support them in resisting the way public policy reduces their work to merely measures of academic outcomes.

In the above comments, the high school teachers emphasize that their work is about relationships, not producing results. Teaching is important, but it is the least stressful part of what they do. For example, Ella says she dreams of having a day where she could "teach content all day," but she says that "is not the reality." As a result of the many demands placed on teachers, Ella says that teachers can be "drained" of their will to teach unless they have "coping skills to diffuse stressful situations" that occur nearly every day with their students. Mary adds that there is no way to "describe to someone the amount of work teachers" have to do

and Kourtney says she does not just teach, she has "50,000 other things" she does every day.

In addition to portraying teaching as an exhausting profession that is based on building one-on-one relationships with students, teacher discourses also characterize others as not having empathy because they lack experience as teachers themselves. For example, Kourtney reveals her feelings: "This is the most thankless job. You have to really want to be here and not because anyone is telling you that you are doing a good job. You rarely hear that." Her statements reveal how teachers cultivate a resentment or contempt for authoritative power that bolsters their resistant position.

Teacher discourses present a picture of reality based on their connection with each other. It is from a collective appreciation of the ethics of care, a shared sense of subjugation, and teacher comradery that teacher discourses create the conditions for opposing other discourses. This construction of reality romanticizes the struggles of teachers and creates different conditions through which teachers are assumed to be motivated. For example, Jane hypothesizes that the real reason why teachers want to teach: "As a teacher, seeing my students learn and overcome their obstacles gives me motivation – it is the reason I love my job. I get up every morning and I am here by 5:30 because I enjoy my relationship with my students." It follows that Jane maintains her commitment because "…we still have and hopefully will continue to be able to keep the independence that allows to teach our personality and our teaching style and deliver the material specifically in a way that our kids can understand it."

Foucault (1971) characterizes resistance not as a reaction, but as the assumption of power through the forming of contradictory discourses (p. 211). Teacher discourses are based on a shared sense of isolation and mutual experiences of coercion under other regimes of truth instituted by public policy discourses. In Jane's comment above, she relates her freedom to teach how she wants with her personal purpose or identity as a teacher. She is willing to compromise and teach what is required in exchange for being allowed to teach in her own way. Jane expounds on her philosophy:

> We are here for the kids. Do not get me wrong, I do my curriculum and I administer ACT prep, but what is the point of education if students cannot analyze something? If they want to take the initiative, then I will give them a little bit of free range and let them do that. You have teachable moments and sometimes you have to grab them. We are still driven by the common standard and the curriculum and I think it is good. So, we all must do it, but you also have to have some autonomy to let your kids bring their own ideas into the learning process.

Jane's tentative language demonstrates how teacher discourses are interwoven into other discourses to change the structure of the power relations and resist normalization. She demonstrates an awareness that meeting the expectations and required performances of administrators, and toeing the "party line" is necessary to retain her position. High school teachers are compelled to assimilate the directives of public policy discourses, but they have the freedom within certain boundaries to make secondary adjustments (Goffman, 1961, p. 54). Teacher

discourses produce the power to give teachers the space in which to, as Kourtney says, "bend" the rules sometimes as administrators turn a blind eye.

Goals of Teacher Discourses

Teachers recognize the goals of public policy discourses and from a professional standpoint they are obliged to blend performative values and principles with their own personal approaches to teaching. However, teacher discourses do not define the goals of education terms of accountability or quantitative measures; but rather the indicators of success are qualitative and subjective. The credos of what it means to be a teacher reflect the ethics of care to which teachers ascribe like making a difference, watching students grow and being a role model. As Jane says, the role of education is not just to transfer knowledge, it is "to make citizens who can read, comprehend, think for themselves and question what is right and wrong." Ella shares a story which demonstrates how she validates her work: "Some students have come back to tell me that I made such a huge difference in their life." Rachel also believes that teaching is about the "personal satisfaction" of knowing that sometimes teachers make a difference in the messy lives of students: "Once in a blue moon one teacher out of one-hundred has a chance to make a huge difference. You see it happen. Years later, you will see a former student write a thank you to that one teacher." It is through these shared stories about their life-changing relationships with students that we teachers measure achievements.

For administrators, the goal of education is, as Halle says, "to make sure those kids master those standards," but for teachers the focus on standards limits what students can learn. Leah believes the goal of education is to build "coaching" relationships with students in which teachers "role model the skills and let kids figure things out for themselves." Leah believes the trend of making standards "more difficult" and "raising the level of achievement" is having the opposite effect of what is intended. She says it transforms teaching into following a standard "routine" and set of "instructions" that has little to do with whether students have "actually learned math, history, etc." Leah wants students to follow their interests, so they have an intrinsic incentive to learn, but when teaching is construed as a set of "step-by-step" common procedures and standards that require students to do things "exactly to the letter" then "it punishes students for thinking divergently." Teacher discourses reason that students are unique, and they need be allowed to grow and learn in different ways, and public policy's cookie cutter approaches to learning encroach on teachers' freedom to differentiate instruction.

Taken together, the divergent goals of teacher discourses that are discussed above, lay the groundwork for denying the rationales of public policy discourses. For teachers, it unreasonable to hold them accountable to quantitative measures of performance when there are so many factors outside of their control. Based on the truth that all students are different, teachers question whether the statistics can be generalized. For example, Rachel contends that students change from year to year and thus cannot be compared: "It is a different set of kids every year, so you are not comparing apples to apples. You are not really comparing

how well I did to move this set of students." By questioning the validity of the statistics, Rachel is diffusing the pressure to honor their imbued meaning. Based on the "truth" that students are driven by their own decision to become active learners, Rachel also argues that when students preform badly on tests it can have nothing to do with a teacher's performance: "There is not much recognition that you are dealing with a great big messy bundle of a human being. If we are being honest, then are we are going to understand that the student is not capable of doing this right now and is getting an 'F,' but that's held against us instead of them." Jane expands on Rachel's view by reasoning that by the time students reach high school, their performance is pretty much predestined: "Students come to you already. You challenge them, but you are not necessarily able to remake what they are going to become."

Language of Teacher Discourses

Teachers often use tentative language to temper the zealousness of mainstream views and the often-overstated promises of public policy without directly challenging the regime of truth on which they are based. Tentative language is exemplified by a conditional "it depends on" viewpoint as represented by codes like "think," "guess," "probably," "kind of," "feel," and "maybe" that reflect conditional perspectives and respectful attitudes toward each other and administration. It is a nice way of disagreeing without getting into trouble.

For example, Jane talks tentatively about how her teaching philosophy diverges from the norm: "I guess I do not focus as much as maybe I should on the test because I still think with my units, it is more important to make them think." Rachel does not want to directly challenge one managerial practice, so she underrates her own opinion: "Well, this is kind of minor, but I think it has an almost kind of a sneaky type of impact." When talking about how her department's new standard curriculum has changed her work, Kim adds a qualifier at the end of her sentence that signals she is alone in her view, and thus is should not be taken too seriously: "This year, because we are following this new curriculum, I do not have time to breathe, I feel like." Kourtney attempts to downplay all her criticisms of public policy by saying: "I am probably super biased with the way I say things." Teachers will often speak favorably of public policy before stating their criticisms. For example, Kourtney proclaims that accountability is "good" before she goes into how it "ties" her hands sometimes. Similar, Jane shares: "the universal standards sounded great on paper – I do not think you would have anyone say all children do not deserve the same quality of education. But, when we forget that all kids are not the same I think that is a problem."

As evidenced above, the language of teachers at the high school reveals code-switching tactics. Code-switching is a way someone tailors what they say in different contexts (Gal, 1988). Teachers learn to develop a language facility for speaking with different stakeholders (students, parents, administrators, and other teachers). Teachers comply with normative rules of speaking about technology to fit in socially, and they talk enthusiastically about public policy because they do not want to appear out-of-line or because they simply want to get something by appealing to the logic of administrators. Emily seems very much aware of this practice: "You have to tell them what they want to hear along with what they need to here. It is a fine weave to get that through, but you do have to do a song-and-dance, or you do not get anything accomplished." Kourtney likened it to putting on a "show" for administrators when they conduct classroom observations. Rachel explains that it is sometimes hard to tell the difference between what an act is and what is real: "Once they become part of the norms that you were adjusted to, you would be hard pressed to be able to identify them." Finally, Noah drives the point home:

> It has to do with being intelligent about when you are communicating with a certain person. Principals want you to do one thing and parents think you ought to do this while students think you ought to do that. There are different sets of expectations for all three different stakeholders, and the teacher learns to transform himself/herself to meet those expectations while still managing to get the job done.

Generally, teachers will follow along with the "script," but their tentative language and code-switch deflect public policy's desired preeminence over of their own localize teaching practices. Bandeen (2009) clarifies: "Their tentative language refuses power held over them. By viewing everything as conditional, tentative, and temporary, teachers maintained their relationships and in turn their power as constant amid changing policy cycles" (p. 125). It is not just in their verbal language that this occurs. As was mentioned before, teachers will self-regulate what they enter into databases to produce a positive image of themselves in data.

Their "script" is also visible in the lesson plans they submit for approval to administrators. For example, Leah says it comes down to the "legal aspect of it." She writes her lesson plan so it "looks like I am doing what I am supposed to be doing on a paper, – like I am covering the standards and covering the things they want me to – but no one knows the difference between my plan and what I actually do." Rachel concurs with Leah: "My lesson plans that I submit once a week do not give anyone a clue as to what actually happens in here." Lesson plans are inspected by administrators based on the same criteria that is used to judge teachers during an observation. Kim notes: ". . .they are looking for certain things and I assume if they see something interesting, they will pop in that day." The collection of lesson plans represents a kind of 'shadow' of a teacher for administrators to examine for the "correct" language. Teachers have learned not to include anything in their lesson plans that would spark the attention to administrators.

Tools of Teacher Discourses

Foucault (1980b) theorizes that a "discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (p. 101). Teacher discourses employ their own tools, tactics and technology to disrupt, diffuse and transform power relations. Teachers respond to the dominant public policy discourses not only with compliance, but by expanding the boundaries of the "spaces" in which they operate. High school teachers frequently mention that they are granted autonomy based on their acceptance of responsibility for public policy. For

example, Kourtney says she has "complete freedom" as long as she meets "certain restrictions." Complying with the restrictions in exchange for freedom represent an unwritten social contract made between administrators and teachers. Rachel explains that if administrators "really wanted to see what happens in the classroom or how a teacher really works" this would require "some serious monitoring" that would "intrude on the trust relationship."

Halle confirms that the focus in on the goals of education, not on changing teachers: "I do not care how teachers teach, but I want to make sure those kids know those standards and they are ready for the next thing." Jane concurs with Halle: "It does not matter how you reach the goal as long as you have accomplished what the goal is." John reveals that teachers "constantly adjusts the framework of what we are going to teach that is put out by the State – we have the opportunity to make it individualized for our particular classes." The friendly relationship between administrators and teachers allows teachers to "bend" the rules under the condition that they continue to produce the results that make them, and the school look good. John feels he has the permission of administrators to "bend the rules a little bit if I have to without straying too far away from the standards – I am covering the standards, but not covering them in the same way they suggest."

The mutual contract between administrators and teachers to share responsibility for achieving goals is an effective tactic for getting teachers to self-govern, but teacher discourses can take advantage of this relationship to push the boundaries of what is considered permissible. Left without much supervision, Rachel notes: "You get to a point where you realize that no one really has a clue what I am doing in here, so how anyone can tell me how to do better?" Referring to the "truth" that outsiders cannot understand teaching, Rachel discredits any guidance they may attempt to provide to her, and takes it on herself to, as she says: ". . .read, attend workshops and piece together things I think will be helpful to me." Rachel accesses an outside unauthorized body of knowledge to justify her teaching practices.

Showing excitement about the dominant goals and their friendliness with administrators is another part of the "song-and-dance" that teachers do. Hayward (2000) points out that this allows teachers more than just a space in which to act within the boundaries of certain restriction, but rather to develop their own power (p. 8) – a power that "comes from below" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 94). However, the cordial relationship between administrators and teachers has its limits. Administrators are seen by teachers as authority figures who are excluded from teacher discourses in order to maintain an effective distance from them. Kourtney likens schools to "prisons" where administrators are the "wardens." As Kourtney says, "We are friends, but when it comes to work, we are professionals." Bandeen (2009) explains that this distance is needed to "expand the boundaries of what they can say and do by deflecting possible interventions by policy" (p. 131).

When teachers do feel the pressure to change their pedagogical practices, they can enact counter-tactics to control primarily in the form of acts of hidden resistance that they do in spaces left free by management practices. Earlier, it was revealed how

some teachers create lesson plans that are indicative of the "correct" ways of teaching, but do not reflect their real activity. Jane acknowledges that performative models have "changed how teachers present stuff" and do not "drive" her curriculum. Teachers can work in unauthorized ways by presenting a semblance of official knowledge in their talk in front of administrators, written reports and the data they enter into official databases. Teachers essentially hide from supervision with "secondary adjustments" that give the superficial appearance of compliance. Kourtney gives a specific example of how teachers collude with each other to lookout for administrators who attempt to catch them in the act of teaching:

> When there is administrative walk through and if we are switching classes, teachers will talk or we all text each other "they are out walking around." We do get around stuff. It is like the warden is coming. That is how you feel sometimes.

In another example, Emily confesses that some teachers do not bother using the textbooks they are given, which are written to match the common standards: "I know the reason the book was picked was because it aligns with the standards, but we go in with the mindset that we are not going to teach out of the book." Earlier, it was mentioned that Kourtney feels that she must go "off road" just to maintain her sanity. Putting on a "show" for administrators by using the "right" language cannot be characterized as merely resistance – it is more complex than that. For teachers, putting on the semblance of compliance is something they are forced to do to cope with what irrational demands. They are finding ways to get their work done without being outwardly negative, which helps them to avoid situations where a spotlight is shined on them.

Truths of Technology Discourses

From a Foucauldian perspective, the social and economic imperatives are universal "truth" claims that are taken as reality. Technology discourses attempt to remake epistemological views in education by reducing education to a set of oversimplified economic and social imperatives. These repurposed "truths" include variations on familiar public policy rationalities. They promote the views that the digital revolution in society is a sign of progress that will inevitably impact education; a new "net-generation" of students needs and expects to interact with technology to learn effectively; and economic growth depends on schools adequately preparing students for a techno-centered world (Tapscott, 1998, p. 8). Following this logic, it is only natural for schools to embrace the cutting-edge technology solutions born from technology trends in greater society. These rationalities are apparent in the speech of high school teachers who believe profound changes in education are needed due to the pervasiveness of technology. For example, Emily observes: "Everyone has a cell phone with Internet. This opens up what the students can do. It is a whole new world because of the technology that has been introduced."

Technology discourses argue that the current 'net-generation' has grown up with and is immersed in digital technology, and thus, it must be the natural way in which they learn (Prensky, 2001). David reproduces this belief: "It is the culture

students a growing up in. Students are digital natives compare to 20 years ago when they were not. I think new interactive technologies are like hooks for learning now." Likewise, Jane supports the perspective that students are already immersed in digital technology, and this impacts how she teaches: "My students are so driven by technology and their brains are so overloaded with it. So, you have to find creative ways to present the things they are interested in." Ella also confirms the net generation theory: "They have so much entertainment at their fingertips, so when they come here and they watch you teach, you have to constantly be looking for fun and exciting lessons."

This theory challenges conventional ideas about education. It follows, old technology like textbooks and blackboards must give way to electronic textbooks and interactive multimedia presentations, and outdated teaching practices must succumb to new approaches to learning like the digital tools that facilitate self-directed learners who no longer need to depend on teachers for getting information. David's support of Learning Management Systems (LMS) applies to this rationale: "If students are 'natives' to this digital age and this is the way they communicate, then an LMS is another great platform to communicate with them." For David, technology is the bridge between teachers and students that overcomes the generational divide.

This imperative reinforces the public policy notion that education has the responsibility to prepare students with the knowledge and skills to be successful in the workforce. In the digital age, it is assumed that technology is driving the economy and the new challenge of education is to prepare students for a digital world. In keeping with this economic rationale, David believes schools should provide students experiences using the same technology in the classroom that they will encounter in the workplace after they graduate: "Sometimes I feel like there is disconnect between what technologies educators should have and need to use and what kids need and will use in the real world."

Goals of Technology Discourses

The "truths" of Technology discourses frame technology advancements as a "revolution" in education that automatically enhances teaching practices, empowers student-centered learning, and "liberates" education from the physical boundaries of public schools by enabling students to learn from each other anywhere in the world. The language of self-directed and technology-mediated learning is a recurring theme among the high school teachers who have internalized some of these views. For example, Emily describes how technology can transform teaching: "Before, all thirty different students in one class had to get one delivery mode from one teacher, but now when we have technology and devices in the kids' hands, those thirty kids can have thirty different teachers." She continues by recognizing that not all teachers are ready to hand over or empower students to learn on their own through technology:

Self-pacing is hard for teachers because they have to relinquish control of that delivery and it's hard because you want to be responsible for everything that kid gets an understand. Sometimes it easier to feed it to them on silver platter then to have them find it on their own. That is why you are starting to see a shift in education of it going that way, but there are still a lot that are reluctant to try some of the new technologies out there to help in covering their course work.

Noah has embraced the rationales of technology discourses and believes in self-directed learning. He uses Edmodo to allow students to "move as they need to move" or "work through" lessons at their own pace. He sees his role as that of a "facilitator" instead of a "coordinator" of learning and he uses a metaphor to describe the change: "It is almost like a metaphorical shepherd so to speak. You take people where they need to be and point them to the right places." Noah's view echoes the way wider technology discourses characterize the innovative technology-enabled role of the teacher as the "guide on the side" who allows students self-direct their own learning and by using connected mobile devices to search for the information they want investigate.

Ultimately, the goal of technology discourses is to compel teachers to willingly relinquish their power to technology-driven learning environments – to get out of the way and let technology take over. Technology discourses endeavor to replace the usual teacher-centered classroom model of education with a technology-centered online model in which students self-direct their learning, learn collaboratively with their peers all over the world, and are connected to all the information they need through the Internet. However, some of the high school teachers push back against computerized teaching, by arguing that models like Noah's flipped classroom approach are only for "advanced" students who are capable of learning on their own. Emily contends that self-directed methods are "only for a select few" who are "smart and above average" students. After supporting the approach earlier, Emily questions: "When they teach themselves something, do they really understand the depth of what it is their teaching or are they mimicking some process they see?" And, she emphasizes why the relationship between teachers and students is essential: "You still have to have the teacher to be able to go even deeper or wider than they ever could by watching a video or reading a textbook."

Technology discourses characterizations of technology as powerful tools that can transform education drives attention away from the social or contextual aspects of learning to technology considerations such as access to digital devices, teaching the knowledge of technology, and addressing apparent technology inequities. This new epistemology of education creates a 'distance' or separation between the usual old ways of teaching and bold new technology-driven ways of learning – between conventional teacher practices and technology as an end in itself. This view frames technology in terms of how it may be used in education, not how educational theory may be applied to technology (Castell et al., 2002). In other words, technology developers and education experts who offer up technology to be used in education have separate interests that are disconnected or distant from teaching practices. The agenda of these interests is to position technology tools at the forefront of change in education. They promote widespread and unconstrained access to information through technology as a way of connecting students with the world outside the school.

Language of Technology Discourses

The Technology discourses privilege certain language that frames the application of technology in education as a response to the social and economic imperatives of the information age. Technology discourses assert that education must respond to the demands of learners by providing them with dynamic, flexible technology that engages them with the high-tech world beyond the school. The humanist or modernist views of technology discourses are signified by futurist or visionary language like "digital generation," "information revolution," "connected world," "access to learning," "anywhere, anytime education," "collaborative networks" and so on. This ideal language of technology discourses is visible in the rich texts provided by interviews with the high school teachers; however, it is largely translated into more practical terms.

In the language of the high school teachers, the transformative and progressive aspects of technology is primarily framed as futuristic learning environments where technology enables students to take responsibility for self-directing their own learning. Noah echoes this vision of the future: "Things are becoming more individualized and more personalized. With online learning platforms and web-based stuff, you can individualize pacing so that everybody no longer has to be at the same point at the same time." And, as a test of the possibilities of technology, John reveals that his class "is nearly all computer-driven." In his class, each student has his or her own individual computer instructor. The courseware John uses provides his students with content for each lesson, tasks them with assignments, tracks their progress and tests them at the end. When his students are using the system, it entirely changes John's role from lecturer to facilitator of the technology.

Kim references the flipped-classroom approach as the "ideal" model that blends technology with instruction as the goal she is working toward: "I think that for my class I would like to implement more of a flipped classroom type plan, and I have kind of started doing some of that this quarter." In this model teachers prepare the materials, but learning is no longer centered on the teacher/student relationship. As a technology trailblazer, Noah already implements the flipped classroom model, and he describes how it works:

I have not lectured in 6 months because what I have done is either create videos of myself or found some other ones when I did not have time that cover what I needed to teach. I give the kids the links to the videos, and we have laptops in the room. If they reach a point where they need to learn something new, they pull the computers out, watch a video and move onto the next assignments.

Noah uses technology to create virtual copies of himself so that he can be accessible to his students all the time. Similar, in a previous section, Emily was quoted saying that mobile technology can give every student his or her own instructor. Her language demonstrates the influence of technology discourses Emily is echoing the "truths" of technology discourses that promote the effectiveness of technology over tradition teaching practices. And, she continues by revealing that technology asks teachers to relinquish their power students: "Self-pacing is hard for teachers because they have to relinquish control of that delivery and it's

hard because you want to be responsible for everything that kid gets an understand."

Emily affirms the goal of technology discourses to take center stage as justified by the assumed necessity to make education student-centered. Ella also reiterates this viewpoint when she talks about how technology is "good because ultimately the more students can teach themselves, the more they can take initiative with their own learning." The localized language of high school teachers reflects how they are merging modernist values and principals of technology discourses into their own historic ethical understandings of teacher practices like differentiating learning and student motivation.

Tools of Public Technology Discourses

Technology discourses in education are principally characterized by humanist 'truths' that technology inevitably leads to progress and technology "discoveries" can be universally applied to improve education. Yet, as noted above, the language of teachers in the localized context of the high school mollifies the zealousness of technology discourses with a more pragmatic "applied" image of technology, which is how teachers mainly think about it (Bouras and Albe, 2007, p. 288) The high school teachers principally see technology as useful tools that save them time and make their lives easier. Kim stresses how the Remind101 app allows her to contact all her students at once through text messaging, which makes her more efficient. Rachel's shares a story about the Quizlet app in which she emphasizes how easy it is for each of her students to have their own personalized vocabulary list:

Instead of giving students a set of vocabulary words to study, I ask them to collect words as they read and that they do not already know. They capture the context and then they build their list online in the Quizlet mobile app. In the past, it would be almost impossible to have individual quizzes, but creating the deck in Quizlet allows them another way of studying. It is electronic and a lot of them love to do anything electronic.

Another example the app that Jane uses, which makes grading tests a snap: "I use an app where I can take a picture with it, and it will grade my multiple-choice tests for me. It will do it just like that." Noah also favors this app: "I love it. It makes all the difference in the world and if nothing else it makes my life easier because otherwise, I would be forced to grade all those assignments by hand at the same time and I am trying to check other assignments and monitor my classroom." These comments demonstrate how teachers commonly frame technology as a practical shortcut to greater efficient and enhanced teaching practices.

Based on an "applied" epistemology, teachers speak about technology passively or conditionally. Where wider technology discourses frame technology as initiating or activating learning, teachers see it as sources of information or ways of presenting content that can enhance learning methods but are not the methods themselves. This view is represented in how the high school teachers talk about using YouTube videos and PowerPoint presentations as the extent of their technology adoption. For

example, Luke believes YouTube videos make instruction more engaging and real:

> It is a lot easier to connect students to the world when you can show them video clips or something. I can get online and show them real world stuff like YouTube videos and things that are happening all over the world that they are able to connect with. Seeing is believing kind of deal.

Like Luke, many teachers value technology because it offers them easy access to online libraries of multimedia materials that makes their instruction more interactive and engaging. John explains why this important: "I am going to put a YouTube video up and the kids are going to watch it. These are 14-year-old kids. They come in here and you have to get them interested somehow." Kim's emphasizes that the Socrative app she uses is beneficial because it encourages her students to interact:

> I will ask a question and they will enter their response on the app, and it will pop up as a graph and we will talk about that. Just by letting them insert something on their phone, they are engaged and now they want to talk about it. If I had them just raise their hand, they do not care.

She continues by giving a concise characterization of her applied view of technology: "I am really just more worried and interested in that they are engaged and here with me. If I can do that through technology, that is helpful." Kim is suggesting that if technology tools are not discernibly useful to her, then she is not interested in them. Teachers are looking for ways to relieve the burdens of their workloads and enhance their existing pedagogy, not make their lives more complicated or diminish their central role in education.

High school teachers typically see the tools of technology largely in relation to empowering teaching practices – they perceive technology through the lens of their professional experience. They are focused on how technology can be applied specifically to their situation to make their work easier and the possibilities it has for building relationships, offering more opportunities for interaction, and enabling deep and enhanced learning – how it relates to their distinctive pedagogical practices. They accept the rhetorical evidence that technology is generally effective at improving instruction, but they adapt technology to their own professional values and principles. By extending teacher's applied image of technology, technology discourses gain inroads into education because the tools are presented as neutral, practical, and non-threatening. However, teachers leverage this epistemological viewpoint of technology to maintain an effective distance between the field of teaching and touted urgent necessity for techno-driven change advocated by technology discourses.

DISCUSSION

Through the retold stories of high school administrators and teachers, the present study maps four discursive formations: truths, goals, language, and tools. **Table 1** summarizes how these dimensions define public policy, teacher, and technology discourses. The knowledge that emerges from this analysis resembles a "strategic power games" in which "individuals try to conduct and determine the behavior of others" in a tug-of-war over boundaries of the space in which they are free to work (Foucault, 1984, p. 18). The socially constructed building blocks of these boundaries are the dominant and contested norms that are continuously pulled and pushed in different directions in an agonistic struggle as dominant discourses collide, intersect and rearrange each other.

The interplay between public policy, teacher and technology discourses is characterized by the usual players in the game by their relative positions and interests: (1) school administrators who are concerned about efficiently running their systems and meeting public policy dictates; (2) teachers who look to the situated contexts of their current teaching practice and focus on ways to retain their autonomy and build personal relationships with their students; and (3) technology experts who promote technology adoption and aim to empower student-directed learning through the latest digital inventions. It is

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TABLE 1 | Contrasting public policy, teacher and technology discourses.

	Public policy discourses	Teacher discourses	Technology discourses
Truths	Imperative of economic growth, ideology of accountability, rational schemes, rules, mandates, goal oriented, **distant from history**	Personal experience, localized context, ethics of care, relationships, contradictory views, **distant from administrators**	Technology is the driving force behind progress, imperative of the digital age, digital natives learn differently, change is inevitable, **distant from education**
Goals	Projecting a positive image, delivering results, efficient systems, meeting AYP mandates, **quantitative measures**	Building relationships with students, deep and differentiated learning, maintaining autonomy, **qualitative measures**	Linking students to the world, allowing students to self-direct their learning, making a profit off education, technology as its own subject of learning, **technology adoption levels**
Language	Mechanistic, unquestionable, rigid, legitimated by law, business speak, authoritative, **absolute**	Conditional, pragmatic, subjective, ethical, traditional, relational, resistant, silent, professional jargon practical, **tentative**	Humanist, futuristic, capitalist, progress, disruptive, dynamic, techno-driven, new ways to work/learn, **innovative**
Tools	Common standards, curricula and assessment, business-like performative models, data collection, supervision, **teacher viewed as their subject**	Ethics, professional practice, comradery, personal style, secondary-adjustments, counter-strategies to control, **teacher viewed as caring mentor**	Technology as a means to deliver learning, connected digital devices, communication software, learning management systems, **teacher viewed as technology facilitator**

Bold highlights the key comparative concepts that characterize the four discursive formations.

around these differing trajectories that different discourses are reproduced and produced.

In the games, players attempt to reshape knowledge and redirect power to their own use. Public policy discourses reinforce truths that reduce education to a set of common standards that are intended to produce skilled workers that will drive the economy. Teacher discourses spread the truths that only teachers can understand education and that through their personal connections with students they can develop individuals who are critical thinkers and problem solvers who will contribute to society and be successful in life. Finally, the truths that underpin technology discourses portray the discoveries of technology as immediately empowering student-centered learning experiences and preparing students for success in the digital age. As was shown in the findings, the romantic narratives continuously spun by players about the rightfulness of their subjective views are visible in the speech of teachers.

For the most part, players in the strategic power games do not have an adversarial relationship with one another. The relationships between the players are more ordinarily characterized as a mutual give-and-take, rather than a push-and-shove in which power is a productive force rather than repressive (Foucault, 1980a, p. 194). It is through complex social relations that "the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 52). Discourses impose the norms that are subsequently one of the primary resources for "conducting the conduct" of teachers toward achieving certain productive goals.

The power games over teachers' work are mainly *ad hoc*. Technology discourses orient teachers to the "right" mode of work through computer-mediated learning. Public policy discourses leverage technology to align teacher's work with accountability standards and performative measures that produce data, which is used to judge, rate and sort teachers against established benchmarks and each other. School administrators incentivize, train, coach and praise teachers to produce "good" results. However, teachers have also discovered ways to leverage technology for their purposes to oppose, resist and disrupt the rationalities of the other discourses and exert their autonomy.

School administrators will make unwritten agreements with teachers to stay hands off and allow them freedom within certain boundaries in exchange for them sharing responsibility for achieving education goals – teachers agree to live up to official expectations encoded in the official discourses. This responsibilization of teachers compels them to self-regulate their behavior and self-correct their problems when they are pointed out by school administrators, parents, their colleagues and even students. Teachers become their own worst critics. However, through secondary adjustments teachers find other ways to appear productive to outsiders. Teachers hide from observation

of school administrators by putting on a show of compliance in their congenial language, official documents they produce, and in their performances during classroom observations.

By producing an outward semblance of compliance, teachers can retain their autonomy to teach as they want in their classrooms. The minor adjustments they make to public policy and technology also widens the boundaries in which they work and transforms official knowledge, thus reconfiguring power relations and expanding teachers' influence over education at the level of classroom practice. In other words, high school teachers demonstrate the capacity to alter power relations by pushing back in a different directions and deflecting responsibility for meeting certain expectations imposed on them by public policy and technology discourses.

The significance of the present study surely rests not in its practical application, but in examining how discourses "act upon the actions" of others as described therein (Foucault, 1983, p. 789). This study offers a degree of separation that allows policy makers, school leaders, and teachers to stand back and consider their own conditions in relation to "a certain way of thinking, speaking and acting, a certain relationship of what exists, to what we know, to what we do, a relationship to society, to culture and also a relationship to others that we could call, let's say, the critical attitude" (Foucault et al., 1997, p. 42). The present study challenges the players in the game to reflect on the root of the reality that they take for granted and consider how their ideas produce and are the product of different competing discourses in education.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review of Auburn University (Approval Number: 14071-991403). The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study. Written informed consent was obtained from the individual(s) for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data included in this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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