

APPLES TO BATTLESHIPS: GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' 2018-19 PAY-
FOR-PERFORMANCE SYSTEM

by

TRAVIS RYAN HENRY

(Under the Direction of Pedro Portes)

ABSTRACT

This project analyzes a pay-for-performance system implemented in Gwinnett County Public Schools as of late 2019. Foucault's writings of power analysis are reviewed, as is historical background on salary schedules in the United States dating back to 1921. Foucauldian theory works at the poststructural paradigm on the philosophical/conceptual level while self-determination theory works at the psychological/individual level. These theories do not intersect in this study. The study concludes that pay-for-performance system did very little to change attitudes of teachers or open up new possibilities for their teaching practice. At the same time, pay-for-performance continues a trend of neoliberal reforms in the public school system, which ultimately produce high-achieving and low-achieving teachers which could potentially be used as a justification for further neoliberal reforms.

INDEX WORDS: pay-for-performance, Foucault, self-determination theory, neoliberalism,
Gwinnett County Public Schools

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family: my wonderful wife Anna Mendoza, my mom Carol Henry, my brother Tyler Henry, and especially to the not yet born Baby Mendoza-Henry, a daily reminder of possibilities to come. Thank you for your support and patience during my time at graduate school. I love you all.

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Thanks to my interviewees. You know who you are. Thanks go more generally to all Gwinnett County Public School teachers. You do a mostly thankless job. As this study helps to explain, teachers put up with reform after reform, year after year, whether the reforms result in better teaching practice or not. I regret that this dissertation has no revolutionary silver bullets to free tired teachers from never-ending reforms, but at the very least, it serves as a document that describes why teachers are so tired all the time.

Lastly, thanks to the anonymous teacher who gave their bonus money back, spurning one of the first newspaper articles about this topic. The careful reader will see that the title is borrowed from their letter to colleagues.

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CHAPTER 1

“APPLES TO BATTLESHIPS”, AN INTRODUCTION TO GWINNETT PAY-FOR-PERFORMANCE

The purpose of this chapter is to describe stakeholder concern about Gwinnett County Public Schools’ pay-for-performance system that arose shortly after it was implemented in December 2019. This serves as the impetus for the present dissertation study. The following chapters concern the history of pay-for-performance, a description of Foucauldian power analysis and of relevant concepts in educational psychology. The methodology of qualitative interviews follows, then findings from Foucauldian and motivational perspectives, and limitations and directions for future research.

Many stakeholders in Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) voiced concerns that pay-for-performance may not have evaluated teachers in the ways it was meant to. They were concerned about the system’s fairness and possible effects on teachers’ motivation and future career decisions, especially given the fairly large monetary rewards that were at stake. This chapter outlines the present dissertation project which reviews Gwinnett County Public Schools’ pay-for-performance evaluation system implemented during the 2018-2019 school year. This study has been heavily influenced by Michel Foucault’s writings on power relations, which lead to ideas about the unforeseen effects of the pay-for-performance system, historical roots, and possibilities for resistance to the system.

Chapter 2 outlines the history of pay-for-performance which has come down from the federal and state levels to Gwinnett County from the early 1980s to the present.

Chapter 3 describes Foucault's description of power relations and why it is useful for analyzing the pay-for-performance system to take as the ethico-onto-epistemological arrangement (Barad, 2007) which informs this study. Related educational psychology theories about teacher motivation and attribution are reviewed in Chapter 4. GCPS teachers were interviewed in this study and the methodology of qualitative interviewing is described in Chapter 5. Findings from teachers are described from the theory of Foucauldian power relations in Chapter 6 and from an educational psychology perspective in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 concludes the study with limitations and directions for future research.

Christmas Comes Early (for some)

On Wednesday, December 18th 2019, Gwinnett County Public Schools distributed a total of \$12.37 million in one-time bonuses to 3,144 Gwinnett County teachers as part of their pay-for-performance awards program (Denman, 2019). The county had transitioned to a performance-based salary schedule in August 2017 (Harris, 2019). Those determined by this system to be top teachers throughout the county received awards as well as top teachers from every school. The point was made clear that the awards did not detract from the salaries of other teachers. J. Alvin Wilbanks, CEO/Superintendent Gwinnett County Public Schools, wrote in GCPS's online periodical *Torch* (named after the seal of the school system, which bears a torch) to explain that the awards

serve as a way to reward those who made the biggest difference in students' success. I've had some people question why our district has developed and is providing Performance-Based Awards for our teachers. The simple answer is that

they deserve it! We have worked hard to develop a fair system that rewards the efforts of as many teachers as possible.

(GCPS, 2019, n. p.)

One anonymous Collins Hill High School teacher redistributed their \$3,725 to their approximately 160 colleagues, each receiving \$20 cash (Downey, 2019). Their colleagues also received a letter denouncing the system for “making teaching feel competitive rather than collaborative”

We aren’t selling used cars here, we are teaching unique, individual students and their performance is not dependent solely on a teacher’s efforts...With vastly different classroom content, different levels of student abilities, and different student home lives, each teacher faces very different challenges. Trying to boil it all down to a number to pit teachers against one another is like comparing apples to battleships. (Anonymous teacher, as cited in Denman, 2019, n. p.)

The anonymous teacher presents a very different perspective on the system than the superintendent/CEO. Is it a rewards system for teachers that deserve it? Does it pit teachers against one another? Does it do both and/or something else? “[P]erformance is not dependent solely on a teacher’s efforts” (Denman, 2019) echoes the critique often heard in American education that too much in educational outcomes is attributed to the teacher, whether positive or negative. Another Collins Hill teacher remarked: “In the light of all the tension revolving around bonus pay, I thought it was pretty amazing that an employee wanted to pay it back” (Downey, 2019).

Janet Brown-Howard, the CEO of Gwinnett Professionals for Human and Civil Rights (a county-based nonprofit) and former president of the Gwinnett NAACP, said that she had received several complaints from teachers.

[T]hey have no recourse when they receive an evaluation that is underrated or unfair...performance awards have left many Gwinnett County teachers with a feeling of discouragement when they received a zero for their award amount. Many teachers in some Title I schools believe they are at a disadvantage from the beginning. They feel disrespected and unappreciated for factors beyond their control that influence student performance. (Brown-Howard, as cited in Broady, 2019, n. p.)

How could receiving an extra \$3,725 leave a teacher so willing to critique the system? Does giving a bonus to top teachers necessarily involve pitting teachers against one another? In what ways did teachers become “competitive rather than collaborative” (Anonymous teacher, cited in Denman, 2019)? Did some refuse to become competitive? In what ways did they refuse competition? And what can teachers or other stakeholders do to resist an evaluation system which seeks to reward competitive teaching? This dissertation examines Gwinnett County Public School’s pay-for-performance system in an attempt to answer these questions. It gives an overview of the history of merit pay centered in Georgia. It describes Foucault’s understanding of *power relations*. It details interviews with GCPS teachers to further elaborate changes they perceived. Thinking with the Foucauldian concept of power relations ultimately troubles the idea that a scaled evaluation system for teachers can determine the best teachers. Lastly, ways in which teachers were able to resist this or similar evaluation systems are described.

Personal Background

Gwinnett County, 2020

I am a fourth-generation teacher whose family has lived in Gwinnett since 1998. Every member of my immediate family has taught in GCPS at one point. I taught as a substitute briefly after college and plan to return to substitute teaching this fall. All of the teachers I interviewed are people I may work with in the future. This rewards system is interesting to me because it is a recent event which affects my local context where I live and several people I know. It is possible that I will take a teaching job in GCPS in the near future. My wife is now pregnant and our current plan is for the child to attend GCPS.

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, September 2008 – January 2009

I was a beneficiary in a performance bonus system several years ago. In August 2008, I accepted the position of English Language Instructor at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology's (RMIT) international branch campus in Vietnam. At that time, the student population at RMIT was approximately 6,000. Many students joined academic language preparation programs before beginning their undergraduate degree, and I began teaching those courses at their Ho Chi Minh City campus.

In December 2008, the university surprised most faculty and staff by announcing a performance bonus system in the last weeks of that year that would evaluate their performance for the entire year of 2008. In January 2009, staff were invited to apply to receive either a 0%, 5% or 10% bonus of their total pay for the year 2008. This bonus was based on their teaching supervisor's evaluation of their performance as well as their own self-evaluation across several categories. The categories had not been discussed with teachers beforehand. I did not think much of this at the time, having only worked

there for three months. I applied and received a 5% bonus, which amounted to approximately \$350 based on my four months of pay at RMIT Vietnam in 2008.

What happened next was peculiar: several people, including those who had received bonuses, began to display negative attitudes about the performance bonus system. One staff member received a 5% bonus but was disappointed and frustrated because they thought it should have been 10%. Another, a teacher many had described as passionate and devoted to their students, preferred not to discuss their bonus. I had asked them about it because I presumed that they received 10% and would be happy to discuss it, but I never found out what bonus they actually received. This teacher would go on to be awarded Teacher of the Year in 2010, so them not wishing to discuss their performance was probably not beneficial to the department. (This was a long time ago and these are the only two encounters that I remember personally.) I do not recall any teachers who were willing to speak positively about the system, perhaps out of fear of embarrassing others who did not receive a bonus.

My thought about myself receiving a bonus was that it was an unexpected windfall and that I should not look a gift horse in the mouth, so I chose not to explore the issue further at that time. In 2009 and 2010, RMIT management decided to give everyone the same bonus, and there was much less complaining, not that giving everyone the same was necessarily better, only that giving everyone the same bonus resulted in fewer complaints. Perhaps giving everyone the same bonus did not represent a negative value judgment on anyone's professional practice.

Statement of the Topic

In this study, five Gwinnett County teachers were interviewed to find their thoughts about Gwinnett County Public Schools' pay-for-performance system. They

were asked about their thoughts, feelings, and experiences surrounding the time from when performance bonuses were announced in 2018 to when the bonuses were issued in December 2019. Interview data was used to draw conclusions about power relations in the system, the motivation and attributions of teachers in the system, and to describe how some teachers responded to this system.

Research Questions

This study focuses on three research questions:

1. What are the historical underpinnings and theoretical framework of Gwinnett County's pay-for-performance system?
2. How did pay-for-performance shift power relations from a Foucauldian perspective?
3. How did individual teachers respond to the pay-for-performance system?

Significance of Questions

These questions are significant because, in the immediate context, many Gwinnett teachers were dissatisfied with the evaluation and bonus system, including one who received a pay-for-performance bonus. Teaching is often described as a high-status but low-paying job that expects employees to put passion above profit, so the idea that they would benefit from financial incentives may lead to a fundamental misunderstanding about teachers. It is possible that the \$12.37 million could have been spent in different ways to better improve teaching and learning outcomes. If a teacher thinks they are doing their best, then evaluating them as not doing as much as others could be quite disheartening.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study examines Gwinnett's pay-for-performance system from two different lines of thought, each with their own macro-concept. The first is Foucault's concept of *power relations*. In order to describe his ideas about Power, Foucault invented other concepts such as *power/knowledge*, the *grid of intelligibility*, *surveillance*, and *resistance*. These concepts work together to form an analytics of power to explain how power relations work in a particular context. In this study, power is theorized as something which creates possibilities for teachers' thoughts and actions. These will be elaborated in Chapter 2.

The other macro-concept is *self-determination theory*, formulated by Deci and Ryan. This theory works to explain how individuals understand and respond to different motivational effects such as a new pay-for-performance system deployed in their workplace. Self-determination theory explains how different factors affect teachers and guide their actions. Concepts related to the macro-concept of self-determination theory are *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness*. These concepts will be elaborated upon in Chapter 4.

Overview of Research Design

In this study, I conducted qualitative interviews with Gwinnett County teachers in order to describe the underlying power relations involved in the Gwinnett County Public Schools' new Pay for Performance system of teacher evaluation. Literature was reviewed, then methods of analysis specified in order to draw out the conditions of possibility for the emergence of a performance evaluation system involving financial rewards.

Site of Research

I interviewed teachers of GCPS, most likely located in or around Lawrenceville, GA, which is my hometown. I began at Sweetwater Middle School in Lawrenceville since this school is easy to access for me as both my wife and my mother currently teach there. The interviews were conducted over Zoom, or, if the interviewee prefers, over the phone or email.

Sample selection

I conducted semistructured interviews with five teachers which averaged 60 minutes in length. Teachers were selected out of convenience. I knew most of them before the study began. This is not meant to be a representative sample of all of Gwinnett County teachers. The interview data collected serve as sources of knowledge about power relations regarding performance pay. The snowballed out to other teachers and schools in Gwinnett County. There was no budget or expense for this project other than time spent, and interviewees were offered no incentive, making it most feasible to approach people I already knew and had previously established rapport.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an outline to the present study on Gwinnett County Public Schools' pay-for-performance system. Theoretical frameworks are reviewed in Chapters 2 and 4. Historical background on pay-for-performance and other salary models will be given in Chapter 3. The methodology of qualitative interviewing is stipulated in Chapter 5. Results of Foucauldian power analysis are elaborated in Chapter 6 and results based on Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory are elaborated on in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 concludes the project and summarizes what was learned. Lastly, an epilogue is included which was written after the study concluded.

CHAPTER 2

“THE SCHEMA OF POWER-KNOWLEDGE”, FOUCAULDIAN RELATIONS OF POWER

Where are we now?

Chapter 1 gave an introduction and outline to the dissertation project. In this chapter, Foucauldian concepts will be introduced which will play a part in the writing of the remaining chapters in this dissertation. After a brief biographical sketch, several important concepts are defined and explained, primarily using quotes from Foucault’s genealogical works *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1977) and *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (1976/1978), along with lectures and interviews also given in the mid-late 1970s. These concepts are *power relations*, *grid of intelligibility*, *neoliberalism*, *surveillance*, and *resistance*. Foucault introduced dozens of concepts, and no single study can address them all, but these are most relevant to understanding teacher pay in Gwinnett County. The arrangement of these concepts will constitute the *paradigm* of this research that is seen from two different levels, the philosophical (power relations) and the psychological (individual) level.

Chapter 1 described the impetus of this project by looking at the deployment of Gwinnett County’s current pay-for-performance system. Chapter 3 describes the *history of the present* which traces ideas about teacher pay over the last century. Chapter 4 outlines research in educational psychology that informs understanding of the teaching context, centering those which discuss performance pay for teachers. Chapter 5 explains the methods that are used in qualitative interviews with several Gwinnett County Public

School teachers. Chapters 6 and 7 summarize the results of those interviews from Foucauldian and educational psychology perspectives, returning to the idea of teachers positioned in a system of *power relations*. Chapter 8 concludes with limitations and directions for further research.

This chapter will also note concerns arising about conducting qualitative interviews with what Foucault might call “the teaching subject,” bodies construed as humans and then construed as teachers and then construed as interviewees. In Chapters 4 and 5, I ask individuals that are called *teachers* but who also have a variety of other roles (citizen, adult, wife/husband, mother/father, child, sibling, girlfriend/boyfriend, etc.) to eschew their other relations and answer questions only as teaching professionals. Particularly during COVID-19, a *teacher* might be an employee who wants to return to the classroom and also just as legitimately exist as a *parent* who does not wish their child to go back to school. This dissertation is not able to address that complication. It is only able to call out an onto-epistemological arrangement which acknowledges and accounts for there being multiple realities and possibilities resting in one human body.

Paradigms

Paradigms are collections of theoretical assumptions that fit together to form a coherent perspective about research. These assumptions include ideas about the nature of reality, or *ontology*, ideas about knowledge, or *epistemology*, and ideas about values and ethics, or *axiology* (Gray, 2004). The assumptions are always-already baked into philosophical theory, just as a cake is always-already a solidified arrangement of flour, sugar, and baking soda. Understanding the paradigm of beliefs in which one is operating is an essential step in a research project. Kuhn (1962/2012) explains:

The study of paradigms, including many that are far more specialized...is what mainly prepares the student for membership in the particular scientific community with which he will later practice. Because he there joins [wo]men who learned the bases of their field from the same concrete models, his subsequent practice will seldom evoke overt disagreement over fundamentals. (Kuhn, 1962/2012, p. 110)

Paradigms are also dangerous because of these very “fundamentals.” The danger of deploying Foucault in educational psychology is that I may appear incomprehensible to many in my field. “Some people can talk, hide nothing, not lie: they are secret by transparency, as impenetrable as water, in truth incomprehensible,” high praise from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1980/1987, p. 290), but not being comprehensible does not bode well for an academic career. However, as is shown in this paper, Foucault addresses the discipline of educational psychology more than once in *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1977), one of the smartest minds to ever do so. It is incomprehensible to me that the discipline would not grant him at least a moment of its attention.

Michel Foucault, 1926-1984

It’s not a little ironic that a self-proclaimed ‘historian of the present’ is now read and interpreted in complete abstraction from his own present. Those who like to claim him today want to make him into a figure that responds to their own expectations. (Zamora, 2019)

It is my hope that this dissertation does not fall prey to Zamora’s concern, but at the same time, I *do* have expectations for how his genealogical writings and theory of

power relations apply to teaching contexts today. Foucault's understanding of power relations is rooted in his study of the history of education, made clearest in *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1977). By the end of Chapter 3, I hope to have made my expectations clear and to have explained why they are reasonable.

Michel Foucault was born in Poitiers, France into an upper middle-class family. He was educated in a local public school and later in a Catholic school. He graduated from the Sorbonne in 1948 (Blades, 1997). He was a thin, able-bodied, attractive white male. Being a gay man was his only claim to minority status, perhaps explaining why he wrote four volumes on the *History of Sexuality* (1976/1978, 1984/1985, 1984/1986, 2018/in press) while saying so little about gender. While his writings dealt with themes related to sexuality, including homosexuality, there was no point where he came out of the closet in a conventional sense. It is perhaps easier for someone attracted to others of the same gender could say that sex "appears rather as an especially dense transfer point for relations of power" (Foucault, 1976/1978, p. 103).

Most of the intelligentsia of France immediately after World War II subscribed to either the paradigm of existentialism, epitomized by Sartre and Camus, or the paradigm of Marxist structuralism (Blades, 1997). "During the years 1945-1965 (I am referring to Europe), there was a certain way of thinking correctly, a certain style of political discourse, a certain ethics of the intellectual. One had to be on familiar terms with Marx, not let one's dreams stray too far from Freud." (Foucault, in Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1977, p. xl) This is the structuralist paradigm in philosophy departments in France in the generation after World War II.

For a time, Foucault was a card-carrying member of France's Communist Party. He decided on a career in psychology. He taught in Sweden, Poland, and Germany

before returning to France (Blades, 1997) and earned his PhD in 1961, submitting the thesis which would be rewritten into a book and published as *Madness and Civilization* (1965/1988). His greatest scholarly influence was Louis Althusser, a structural Marxist. When Foucault is writing about discipline (1975/1977) or neoliberalism (1979/2008), he is writing in response to Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). Foucault's *bio-power* (1979/2008) is descended from Althusser's *Labour-Power* (1970/1971), and that the various ISAs create something resembling Foucault's "grid of intelligibility" (1976/1978, p. 93) in which the Repressive State Apparatuses must exist in order to make sense. Althusser's "double 'currently'" or "two 'currentlys'" (1970/1971, p. 173) closely parallel Foucault's notion of resistance as a "counter-current" (Foucault, 1978/2007, p. 197). Students owe their teachers much.

1968 was a very important year in Foucault's life. As an academic, he accepted a prominent position as chair of philosophy at the Collège de France in Paris. Politically, the student revolts in Paris in May 1968, the assassinations of RFK and MLK in the US, and Russia's invasion of what was formerly Czechoslovakia led him to question the political role of the intellectual (Blades, 1997). He would go on to call all of his books published before 1968 "a very imperfect sketch" (Foucault, 1969/1972, p. 15) of his project, an investigation into power/knowledge, and the discourses surrounding the workings of power. Power/knowledge's role in discourse was explained in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* first published in 1969. In 1970, he began lecturing at the Collège de France, which he continued to do until three months before his death. His next books were *Discipline and Punish* in 1975 and *The History of Sexuality, Vol 1* in 1976 which serve as the basis for this study. He later moved on to a different project in

the later volumes of *History of Sexuality*, the ethics of *care of the self*, a very different project not addressed by this study.

Foucault's analysis of power relations note that power moves, defines, and subjugates knowledge and people, but it is not something that can be overthrown in a Marxist-style revolution, because, for one, it does not rest in a single entity which can be revolted against, and for another, power is not necessarily evil, nor is it necessarily good, but it is certainly productive. Power does not corrupt, but it opens up possibilities for corruption to occur. This analysis may be best-suited for the public schools because power *has* to move through the schools in order for students to be educated. Often, the best thing for a student to do is to listen quietly to their teacher. It can also be true that students are shushed far too often.

Power Relations

The first thing that must be understood about power is that it is not static but relational. Foucault's (1976/1978) objective in *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* was "...less toward a 'theory' of power than toward an 'analytics' of power: that is, toward a definition of the specific domain formed by relations of power, and toward a determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis." (p. 82) It is not easy to say what power is or how to get it, but it is much easier to identify how power moves to augment and produce knowledge systems. Sometimes power moves through wealth, and other times, power moves through legal precedent. It is not created; power is "is always-already present" (p. 82).

Power analysis is not a "method" which is laid out in advance, but it is a commitment to a type of inquiry. Foucault (1976/1978) explains this in a chapter of *History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, which is titled "Method" but is really his description of

power. Methods differ for several reasons he lays out in the chapter. Power manifests in many different ways, sometimes as knowledge, other times as law, elsewhere as tradition, often as police, and other ways, usually a combination of these multiplicities, a “tactical polyvalence of discourses” (1976/1978, p. 100). Power is always *immanent*, meaning that it is always present but cannot be detected before it moves. Power is “everywhere but indeterminate, not yet created, not yet individuated and organized into the definite.” (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 4) Deleuze & Guattari (1991/1994) might say that power is in the virtual which often realizes its potential in the actual as knowledge, law, police, etc. Relations of power-knowledge are not static, but continually vary in “matrices of transformations” (Foucault, 1976/1978, p. 99). Power is not subjective; it is intentional. Power is “imbued with calculation through and through” and uses “unspoken strategies” (ibid, p. 95). Lastly, power affects the order of knowledge, directing what knowledge is useful, how it is useful, and how people understand it to be useful. This dissertation argues that teacher performance pay is a particular modern manifestation of power-knowledge which explains why Gwinnett County would spend over \$12 million paying their “best teachers” based on quantitative performance indicators.

Foucault (1976/1978) believed that power was latent to rules, systems, and even the entire social body. Power works throughout a system but manifests differently depending on time and place. Foucault also believed that power is inextricably linked with knowledge, leading him to use the word “knowledge-power” at times (1976/1978, p. 58, for example).

Power/knowledge

There are several forms of power as it relates to knowledge. Two examples are “the power of knowledge of the truth and the power to disseminate this knowledge.” (Foucault, 1977/1980, p. 34) Power encompasses knowledge and helps to form the contexts in which knowledge can be disseminated. Power is a species whereas knowledge is a domain, but they never stop relating to each other. “The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power...Knowledge and power are integrated with one another” (Foucault, 1977/1980, p. 52) This is a double-movement.

This formation of knowledge may sound ominous, but can be viewed as good. Power is neither good nor bad, only productive. For example, “It was on the basis of power over the body that a physiological, organic knowledge of it became possible.” (Foucault, 1977/1980, p. 52) Humans asserting the ability to study other human bodies created “forms of knowledge: public hygiene, inspectors, social workers, psychologists.” (Foucault, 1977/1980, p. 62) However, in producing certain forms of knowledge, it oppresses other knowledge constructions. For example, knowledge is written in a scholarly journal article, but the editors’ process is that which decides which articles are published. Many articles of real knowledge are not published. Foucault’s description of movements of Power largely parallel Kuhn’s description of the paradigm of “normal science” (Kuhn, 1962/2012). “[K]nowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power. There is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge, relations of power which pass via knowledge” (Foucault, 1977/1980, p. 69)

This dissertation describes both levels of analysis: that of power, which is larger than humans, and that of knowledges, which are possessed by humans. This Chapter

and Chapter 6 focus on power relations whereas Chapters 4 and 7 focus on the knowledge that is possible for humans to have and to articulate.

Subjugated Knowledges

Power produces a privileged knowledge, that which is “normal science” to Kuhn, but there are many other knowledges that exist in less prominent positions. Foucault calls them *subjugated knowledges*. “By subjugated knowledges I mean two things: on the one hand, I am referring to the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemisation.” (Foucault, 1977/1980, p. 81) These knowledges sit outside of the official system and are seen as not legitimate. Foucault gives the example of a patient in an asylum, who is not listened to because their knowledge is very different than the norm, is not comprehensible, and/or is deemed to be dangerous.

The idea that knowledges can be subjugated is important for this paper because it is possible that the pay-for-performance system uses a certain kind of knowledge in its evaluation. Teachers who are well-versed in educational theory have been interviewed who were the subjects of this assessment. An argument in this study is that, in doing so, economic theory attempts to replace educational theory as the primary knowledge useful for teachers in being given a financial award. Many teachers end up refusing this system because, to them, educational theory should be paramount in their decisions about how to educate students. “[I]t is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work.” (Foucault, 1977/1980, p. 82) This study also attempts to re-center ideas of good teaching and learning as important knowledge(s), and in so doing, attempt to shift

relations of power in a way that opens up possibilities for teachers to consider their teaching practice apart from a possible performance bonus.

Neoliberalism

Harvey (Neo-Marxism)

The promotion of economic logic and/or practices is called neoliberalism. *Neoliberalism* has multiple good definitions. The most-often cited is David Harvey's definition. Harvey, a geographer and neo-Marxist, wrote that neoliberalism is "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills" (2005, p. 2) It follows that *human well-being* is best realized in a framework where individual merits are recognized and rewarded. Applied to the context of public schools, appropriately assessing teachers' performance allows the schools to recognize and reward the best teachers, leading to healthy entrepreneurial competition. Specifically, GCPS' pay-for-performance system introduces an element of market competition into teaching by seeking to reward teachers that best achieve certain outcomes.

Competition—between individuals, between firms, between territorial entities...is held to be a primary virtue. The ground-rules for market competition must be properly observed, of course...Privatization and deregulation combined with competition, it is claimed, eliminate bureaucratic red tape, increase efficiency and productivity, improve quality, and reduce costs, both directly to the consumer through cheaper commodities and services and indirectly through reduction of the tax burden. The neoliberal state should persistently

seek out internal reorganizations and new institutional arrangements that improve its competitive position...While personal and individual freedom in the marketplace is guaranteed, each individual is held responsible and accountable for his or her own actions and well-being.

(Harvey, 2005, p. 65)

Teachers were encouraged to think how they could improve their teaching based on evaluation of their observed lessons and the improvement of their students measured by district assessments. They were not given specific instruction on how to achieve on these parameters, and there were a finite number of monetary awards, so this broadly fits Harvey's (2005) ideas about neoliberal entrepreneurial competition.

Laitsch (2013) cites several examples of how competition is realized in education. This involves increasing the role of the private sector in education through privatizing providers and services within schools, commodifying the curriculum, textbooks and resources, and creating charter schools, vouchers, tuition tax credits, and school choice. Neoliberal entrepreneurial competition has the added effect of increasing the individual accountability of teachers. This happens primarily through an increased focus on standardized assessments, teacher certification reforms, and de-unionization. Once teachers can be observed and measured as individuals, merit pay becomes possible to implement and reasonable to some.

Foucault (poststructuralism)

Extending and complicating Harvey's definition, Foucault scholars argue that we are not merely placed into a system, but actually our goals and decisions have been *produced by* that system. Re-describing the teaching subject as a neoliberal being who

best works competitively and is most free when competing is very different from other descriptions of teaching subjects. Under this description, teachers are more like *homo aeconomicus*, Foucault's label for neoliberal human being from *The Birth of Biopolitics* (1979/2008), the being which applies economic logic "to domains that are not immediately and directly economic" (p. 268). Application of this and other related concepts has already worked to produce both teachers and the environment in which they work.

Laitsch (2013) writes in the area of school and curriculum policy and agrees with Foucault that, in the area of education, many critiques of neoliberal reforms are ignored because educators fail to recognize a change in logic. The neoliberal emphasis on liberating individual freedoms and skills often manifests as individualized accountability programs for students and teachers, specifically high-stakes testing. Thus, teachers may be ill-equipped to combat ideas of neoliberalism because they respond to policy reforms by citing educational theories. However, neoliberalism did not originate in an educational paradigm, nor did its underlying logic, nor did many of the neoliberal entrepreneurs who champion these reforms.

I believe that the danger of doing this comes if those in education assume that learning outcomes are too similar to an economic resource like money. This might be desirable because money is something that can be saved, stored, planned with and transferred. One issue, according to Schmeichel, Sharma and Pittard (2017), is that this description of teachers, deployed into educational contexts, foregrounds individual identification and achievement as tools for freedom and advancement while backgrounding other factors like support systems, context and luck as unimportant or minor. This will be seen in the next chapter when pay-for-performance awards are

examined for Title I schools. The results of a teacher performance assessment tell a story about teachers which imply an individual teacher's responsibility for educational outcomes. But after Foucault, this portrayal cannot be believed to be the only story.

Foucault explained what happens in neoliberal discourse:

American neo-liberals apply, at any rate try to apply economic analysis to a series of objects, to domains of behavior or conduct which were not market forms of behavior or conduct: they attempt to apply economic analysis to marriage, the education of children, and criminality, for example. This of course poses a problem of both theory and method, the problem of the legitimacy of applying such an economic model, the practical problem of the heuristic value of this model, etcetera. These problems all revolve around a theme or a notion: *homo œconomicus*, economic man. To what extent is it legitimate, and to what extent is it fruitful, to apply the grid, the schema, and the model of *homo œconomicus* to not only every economic actor, but to every social actor in general...So there is a problem of the validity of the applicability of this grid of *homo œconomicus*. Actually, this problem of the application of *homo œconomicus* has become one of the classics of neo-liberal discussion in the United States. (p. 267-8)

Few Americans self-identify as neoliberals, but Foucault believed that neoliberal economic logic was such a constant theme in American life that it is not often disagreed

with. As it will be shown in the next chapter, while Ronald Reagan and Barack Obama had very different politics, they both held the neoliberal view that the government should take a role in rewarding good teachers and developing others.

Application of neoliberal logic, given enough political support, has the possibility to produce both teachers and the environment in which they work. The risk of bringing neoliberal logic into education is if teachers begin thinking more about the possible rewards than about learning outcomes. One issue, according to Schmeichel, Sharma and Pittard (2017), is that this description of teachers, deployed into educational contexts, foregrounds individual identification and achievement as tools for freedom and advancement while backgrounding other factors like support systems, context and luck as unimportant or minor. This will be seen in the next chapter when Category I awards are seen to be more difficult to receive for Title I teachers. The results of a teacher performance assessment tell a story about teachers which imply an individual teacher's almost full responsibility for educational outcomes. But after Foucault (1976/1978), this portrayal cannot be fully believed.

Power, Performance and Pay

The deployment of performance pay is a top-down change in power relations which may change the teaching environment. One of the possible results in creating a finite number of rewards for top teachers is that teachers may become more competitive. How would one teach competitively? This does not prove that those who made the change are bad or corrupt. Rather, the change in the system has to do with the introduction of monetary rewards into a particular context, the schools' teacher evaluation system, which previously was not associated with competitive monetary rewards. It is not preferable or necessary to determine whether giving monetary rewards

is good or bad in all situations. Money is neither good nor evil, but it is one technology in which power moves.

Power is not an evil. Power is strategic games...To exercise power over another, in a sort of open strategic game, where things could be reversed, that is not evil. That is part of love, passion, of sexual pleasure. Let us also take something that has been the object of criticism, often justified: the pedagogical institution. I don't see where evil is in the practice of someone who, in a given game of truth, knowing more than another, tells him what he must do, teaches him, transmits knowledge to him, communicates skills to him. The problem is rather to know how you are to avoid in these practices – where power cannot not play and where it is not evil in itself – the effects of domination which will make a child subject to the arbitrary and useless authority of a teacher, or put a student under the power of an abusively authoritarian professor, and so forth. (Foucault, 1984/1987, p. 129-130)

Power moves through education. This study assumes that power must move and change into knowledge so that students can learn. Teachers use power daily when they write lesson outcomes, encourage learning, grade assignments. These are also strategic games. What must be avoided? Power that is arbitrary and useless. What if power were to set up a money game for teachers who were already trying their best? Would those who win monetarily triumph over power? “The irony of this deployment is in having us believe that our ‘liberation’ is in the balance.” (Foucault, 1976/1978, p. 159)

Resistance

If Power cannot be summarily opposed or overturned, then what can be done?

Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power... a multiplicity of points of resistance. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable (Foucault, 1976/1978, p. 93-94)

Power is often portrayed as one thing that produces one “normal” kind of knowledge. Resistance(s), on the other hand, could be many different kinds of knowledges, actions, or activities, and could take place on different levels. Resistance also involves changing power relations, but in a way that challenges dominant knowledge frameworks. For example, a pay-for-performance system presumes that teachers are motivated by money. Ramirez (2010) mocks merit pay systems for their “shaky theories and false assumptions” by writing that “Greed is good. Teachers will respond to financial rewards.” (p. 55) Ramirez concludes that “Merit pay misses the boat entirely because good teaching is not about money.” (2010, p. 57) In later chapters, I place these concepts in the context of pay-for-performance to see how they work. Sometimes resistance is simply a refusal of the validity of the system of pay-for-performance. Not all resistance is effective, and sometimes it can be seen as effective for an individual but not others.

Grid of Intelligibility

Power moves and changes through people and systems, so it cannot be understood by only one concept, but exists in an arrangement of concepts that work together, in a grid of intelligibility. These concepts must be put together in order to obtain a clear picture of Foucault's understanding of power:

Power's condition of possibility, or in any case the viewpoint which permits one to understand its exercise, even in its more 'peripheral' effects, and which also makes it possible to use its mechanisms as a grid of intelligibility of the social order, must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point, in a unique source of sovereignty from which secondary and descendent forms would emanate; it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable. (Foucault, 1976/1978, p. 93)

Thus, power can be static in a particular time and place, but this state always runs the risk of being upset. Resistance makes possible such an upset. Currently, in Gwinnett County, neoliberal reforms like pay-for-performance carry a set of assumptions about how teachers can be motivated toward best teaching practice. As stated earlier, these assumptions are based on economic logic, not motivational theory or pedagogy. Educators often try to respond to these reforms using ideas that make sense within the discipline of pedagogy.

Critiques of Pay-for-Performance from Educators

Many educators have realized this problem, and there have been several impassioned and well-reasoned calls for limiting the role of neoliberalism in general and merit pay in particular. For example, Ramirez (2010) critiques merit pay reforms by pointing out, among other arguments, that teachers' merits cannot be accurately compared because teaching contexts differ between grade level and subject matter, because measurements are imperfect, and because of factors beyond the teacher's control such as the different students assigned to each teacher.

Perry, Englers, and Jun (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of 57 studies which evaluated performance pay systems in the public sector between 1977-2008. In summing up their research they write, "at the aggregate level, our analysis finds that performance-related pay in the public sector consistently fails to deliver on its promise." (p. 43) They identify problems in the failure of these systems to change employee motivation, and this is particularly true for systems that originate at higher levels of organizations. If a performance pay system is initiated at a lower level, then the goals are usually less ambiguous and more contextualized, leading to a higher likelihood of motivating employees. They remark that "public service motivation theory and self-determination theory may be more applicable levers for imposing performance in public agencies than approaches applying expectancy and reinforcement theory." Perry, Englers, and Jun, 2009, p. 46)

Little (2009) agrees with others that measurement and motivational issues plague performance pay systems, but focuses more of his attention on administrators. "Policy makers, politicians and senior administrators, refuse to do what it really takes to recruit and retain good teachers because, at its core, it is a power struggle." (Little,

2009, p. 152) “Merit pay plans moves [sic] accountability away from politicians and administrators where it belongs, to the workers, where it does not belong.” (p. 153) Little ends his argument by saying that, contrary to performance pay being a retention effort, the de-professionalization, increased accountability, and decreased control implicit in the system actually drive away teachers.

Levin (2011) also presents several arguments as to why merit pay for teachers carries a number of disadvantages, echoing others’ arguments about ineffectiveness and unpopularity. He adds the idea that pay based on student achievement would likely decrease the prominence of other educational goals. He worries that extrinsic rewards may work to decrease intrinsic motivation, an idea examined more thoroughly in Chapters 4 and 7. He not only brings up measurement error but points out that there is no consensus on what the measures of merit should be, only the appearance of consensus for what are usually top-down reforms. He concludes that, if new teacher pay systems are meant to motivate teachers, then teachers should be involved in the process of development.

These educators are resisting, but the resistance is often ineffective. As explained by Laitsch (2013), these reforms were not created by educators to benefit educators or even students, but in a context where it behooves entities to be accountable, or rather, to show their methods of accountability. This may be why many educator concerns fall on deaf ears. Interviews with teachers will relate their experiences with this system and how they work with and/or against it.

Concepts which are not used

Caleb Booth (2014) wrote a Foucault-inspired dissertation about a performance pay restructure in Minnesota that had taken place over the 2013-2014 school year.

Booth saw that two other Foucauldian concepts, *hierarchy* and *normalization*, were at play in the Minnesota system, but these are not considered here as it is not seen that the hierarchy of GCPS was significantly altered. For example, Booth noted that a new position arose called “master teachers”, who became the observers of other teachers, most similar to instructional coaches in GCPS, a role that already exists. Booth saw that power shaped the hierarchy in the Minnesota system, but the GCPS system’s hierarchy remains almost entirely if not entirely the same.

The “master teachers” in Booth’s study conducted observations and then engaged practicing teachers in dialogue about how their teaching practice might improve. This has been done in GCPS, sometimes by instructional coaches but mainly by assistant principals, for many years, so normalization is not seen as a change in the GCPS system. It should be remembered that Foucault wrote mostly about France and other European countries in the late 20th-century, but he did not suggest that power or any other concept would work in the same way in another time or place. It is up to us to see whether and how power relations might manifest in early 21st-century America, and others to say how power works in their local context.

History of the Present

Why did Foucault write history? “Simply because I am interested in the past? No, if one means by that writing a history of the past in terms of the present. Yes, if one means writing the history of the present.” (Foucault, 1975/1977, p. 31) He wrote about what happened because he knew it played a part in what was happening. The pragmatist and educational theorist John Dewey also had a concept of the *history of the present*. See, for example:

The segregation which kills the vitality of history is divorce

from present modes and concerns of social life. The past just as past is no longer our affair. If it were wholly gone and done with, that would be only one reasonable attitude toward it. Let the dead bury their dead. But knowledge of the past is the key to understanding the present. History deals with the past, but this past is the history of the present.

(Dewey, 1916, p. 213-214)

Auxier (2002) compares and contrasts both of their concepts of *history of the present*, first by pointing out that Foucault had been made aware of Dewey by Gérard Deledalle, a colleague who taught with Foucault in Tunis. At the time they met, Deledalle had spent twenty years researching Dewey and writing a book published in French about Deweyan philosophy. Deledalle got to know Foucault in Tunis and lent him some of Dewey's books. Auxier (2002) examines the question of whether or not Dewey had an influence on Foucauldian thought and concludes that there is no definitive answer. "This question would be difficult to settle to anyone's satisfaction." (Auxier, 2002, p. 82)

One of the most important similarities is a thread that runs through the philosophical systems of pragmatism and what is more loosely called poststructuralism. Dewey was a pragmatist, and, many identify Foucault as a poststructuralist, although he was less interested in placing his thought in a system. Both pragmatism and poststructuralism are antifoundationalist, that is, they critique the notion that one whole, coherent history must be built up brick by brick (Auxier, 2002). Richard Rorty (1982) explains further: "Dewey and Foucault make exactly the same criticism of the tradition. They agree, right down the line, about the need to abandon traditional notions

of rationality, objectivity, method, and truth. They are both, so to speak, 'beyond method.'" (p. 204) The key difference in these systems of thought is that pragmatism needs identity to function within history. Pragmatism both requires and presumes the rational human while poststructuralism works to deconstruct the notion of the rational human. Foucauldian theory gives more prominence to the human within relations, including relations that arise from the socio-historical context. This and other onto-epistemological assumptions will result in a much different history of the present than one written by a pragmatist.

Conclusion

This chapter has explained five concepts which will be useful for this study. The next chapter will be a *history of the present* that gives an overview of the last century as it concerns federal, state and local trends in teacher pay. In summation, the high-level theory that informs this project is Foucault's concept of power relations. Next, a *history of the present* will be written which brings to bear a century of educational reforms. Afterwards, the mid-level theory will be developed, the measurement theory of teacher performance and its association with the notion of performance pay. At the middle level, educational psychology research speaks about the motivational and behavioral effects of monetary rewards' on teacher performance. An incomplete summary of this dissertation is that Chapters 2, 3, and 6 focus on poststructural thought and Chapters 4, 5, and 7 focus on pragmatic thought. Then the methodology of interviews will be laid out before the findings and lastly, the conclusion, limitations and directions for future research will be described.

CHAPTER 3

“A HISTORY OF THE PRESENT”, A CENTURY OF TEACHER SALARY REFORMS

This chapter uses the concept *history of the present* in order to review educational reforms related to teacher pay, including pay-for-performance, in order to better understand the historical context for Gwinnett County’s pay-for-performance system. It references policy documents at the federal, then the state, then the county level, which serve as historical underpinnings that help to contextualize the pay-for-performance system recently deployed in Gwinnett County Public Schools. While many educational reforms fall away, certain ideas about how teacher salaries should be calculated continue to be relevant over decades, culminating in the *present*, the explosion of energy and discourse from Gwinnett County stakeholders described in Chapter 1 following the full implementation of the system.

In Chapter 2, Foucauldian power relations and related concepts are identified, including the neoliberal idea that market competition liberates entrepreneurial freedoms and involves a shift toward economic logic. This chapter gives evidence for Harvey’s and Foucault’s claims by laying out ideas about teacher salaries before the rise of neoliberalism and how neoliberal ideas changed the thinking process behind how teachers should be remunerated for their service.

Before Performance Pay: The Single Salary Schedule, 1921-1983

This project began after Gwinnett County’s performance bonuses were awarded, resulting in an outpouring of community concern over the fairness of bonuses. This change followed a transition from a single salary schedule to a pay-for-performance

schedule in GCPS. A *single salary schedule* is a standardized method for determining annual salaries of teachers, usually based only on years of experience and qualifications rather than personal and discriminatory factors such as race, gender, marital status and grade level taught (Prostik, 1995). Under a single salary schedule, if a teacher accrues another year of teaching experience or a graduate degree, they are certain to get a raise. In 1921, this system was first introduced in the Des Moines and Denver city school systems. It was named *single salary* because one pay schedule determined salaries for all teachers in these respective cities.

It is argued that the main benefits of this system are that it discourages race and gender discrimination, increases equity between elementary and secondary teachers, and decreases teacher attrition rates (Prostik, 1995). In the late 1940s, the National Education Association made national headlines when it helped to pass a single salary schedule in the New York state legislature. This was a move oriented to benefit the mostly female elementary teachers who were, at that time, paid less than their predominantly male high school colleagues (Urban and Wagoner, 2014).

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) sought to combat differences in pay between black and white teachers. Since 1896, the Supreme Court's *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision held that segregated facilities in public life were justified as long as they were "separate but equal". In the American south, the notion of equality between black and white teachers was merely a legal fiction. After World War II, the NAACP began challenging unequal salary schedules in the south. Finding a plaintiff was sometimes difficult to find due to possible retaliation from the school systems, but when the cases saw court, the NAACP most often won their challenges (Urban and Wagoner, 2014). Systemic backlash was sometimes a reality. For

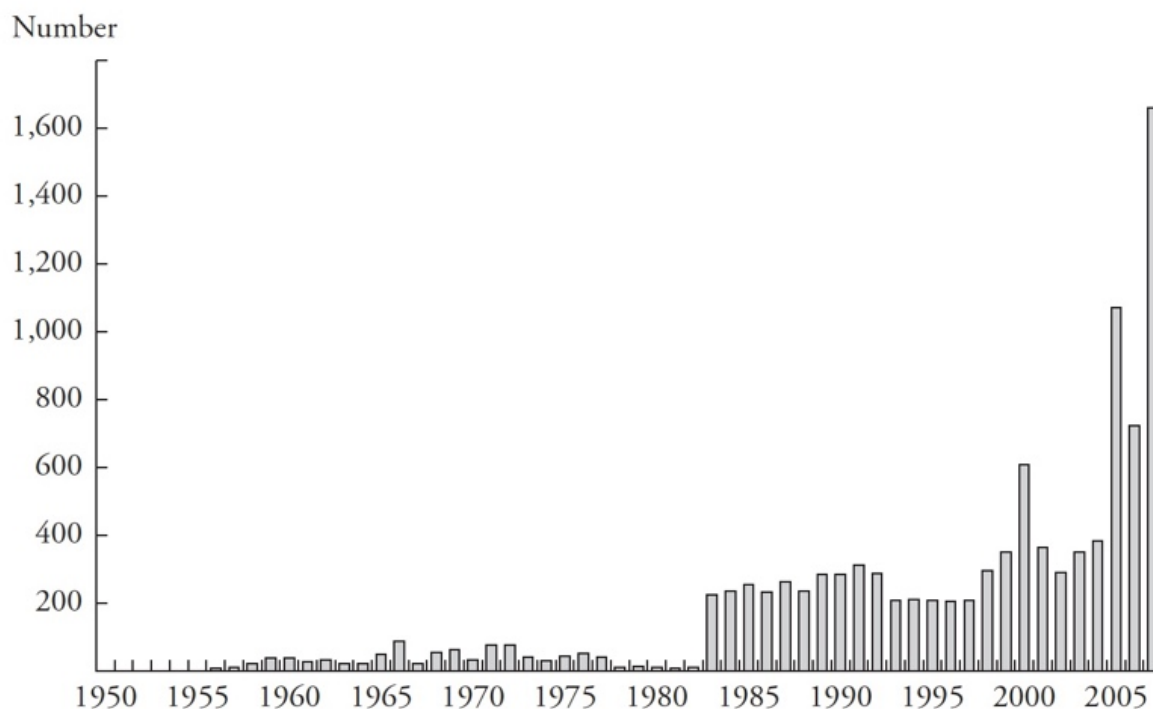
example, in Atlanta, the mostly-white teachers' union pushed through a total abolition of salary schedules altogether, normalizing the paying of teachers solely on perceptions of value and performance, which once again had the effect of black teachers being paid less due to lower evaluations based on the perception of deficiencies in their background and prior training (Urban and Wagoner, 2014). It was only after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 ruling segregation unconstitutional that the single salary schedule gained prominence in Georgia.

As will be described in Chapter 4 and evaluated in Chapter 7, if teachers know that they will receive a raise next year without needing to ask for it or meet required criteria, teachers may be motivated to stay an extra year. By 1950, 97% of all public school districts in the US used a single salary schedule (Sharpes, 1987). For many decades, single salary remained the dominant pay schedule (Springer, 2009). While the majority of districts still use this system, the current trend inspired by *Race to the Top* (RT3), Obama's educational initiative passed in 2009, is to move away from a single salary schedule to a system determined at least in part by performance (US Department of Education, 2020).

A Nation at Risk, 1983

The impetus for the current trend towards giving bonuses to top teachers seems to have taken off in the mid-1980s according to Springer (2009), who introduces the topic by documenting its frequency of mentions in popular media:

Figure 1. References to Teacher Compensation Reform in Popular Media (p. 2)



The initial spike seen in 1983 was most likely caused by the widely-read *A Nation at Risk* report which gave many recommendations to public schools, among which was this one: “Salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system that includes peer review so that superior teachers can be rewarded, average ones encouraged, and poor ones either improved or terminated.” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 30) This caused many districts to begin considering performance pay (Podgursky & Springer, 2007). One impetus in this consideration was a perceived weak link between student achievement and the single salary schedule (Springer, 2009). Gwinnett County Public Schools had used a single salary schedule to determine teacher pay for many years before 2017. Chapter 4 argues that it is largely unfair to assume that there should be a link between a teacher pay scale and student achievement.

The Rise of Neoliberal Thought, 1970s-present

As discussed in Chapter 2, the 1980s saw an emergence of the concept of *neoliberalism*. Both Harvey's (2005) and Foucault's (1979/2008) definitions of neoliberalism were discussed earlier. Do they both apply to the notion of teacher performance pay? The idea that effective evaluation systems should include rewarding high-performing teachers and improving or firing sub-par teachers could possibly fit Harvey's definition of neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills" (2005, p. 2) This could fit with the system of performance-based teacher pay if, in instituting the performance-pay system, teachers are somehow given more freedom to innovate than before, or if it is assumed that a competitive framework somehow unleashes a teacher's entrepreneurial spirit. Perhaps if teachers were given a significant voice in the selection of curriculum and methods, it could be argued that teaching practice differentiates teachers. The planning and selection of teaching methods is certainly evaluated in Georgia's current Teacher Assessment of Performance Standards (TAPS) (Georgia Department of Education, 2014b), but this is always in reference to expectations of the school. However, this is not inherent to the idea of teacher pay-for-performance. Later in this chapter, Gwinnett County Public Schools' system will be reviewed in detail. GCPS specified how teachers were to be rewarded for better performance, but did not specify that they were given any additional latitude in order to innovate or differentiate. Thus, Harvey's definition of neoliberalism could fit, but is not ensured to fit, a teacher performance pay context. Ultimately, GCPS's pay-for-performance system does not fully realize the characterization of neoliberalism described by Harvey (2005).

Foucault gave a different definition which involved applying economic logic “to domains that are not immediately and directly economic” (p. 268). This is a broader characterization which Foucault used to point to many aspects of societal change from family planning to criminality. This relates to a teacher performance pay system if the best teachers are rewarded and/or the worst punished, which parallels the workings of an economic system. A performance pay system constructs teachers as *competitors* by, *homo aeconomicus* or economic [wo]man. The idea that many people become teachers due to love of students and/or love of content areas is downplayed as unimportant. At their nature, teachers wish to be the best at their subjects, and economic logic argues that most will teach their best if they are in competition. Foucault’s definition of neoliberalism is sufficiently broad to cover the context of teacher pay and is also more useful in an educational psychology domain to investigate if teachers use economic logic or see themselves as competitors.

Race to the Top, 2009-2014

In response to the economic depression of 2007-2008, Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act into law in 2009. This provided for several initiatives with one of the most prominent being a \$4.3 billion Race to the Top (RT3) fund. This act allowed states to apply for grants during 2010 provided they make several comprehensive reforms to their education systems. One of the four core areas which required reform was “Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals” (US Department of Education, 2009, p. 2) Note the similarity between this recommendation and its parallel in *A Nation at Risk*: “...superior teachers can be rewarded, average ones encouraged, and poor ones either improved or terminated.” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 30) Ronald Reagan and

Barack Obama would have disagreed on many political issues, but their notions of how schools should reform and good teaching promoted are strikingly similar.

Later in *Race to the Top*, the core area focusing on rewarding effective teachers was translated into a specific criterion with specific directives laid out in detail: “(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance.” (Department of Education, 2009, p. 9) State education boards were advised to form “a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets” which, among many other stipulations,

Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement. (Department of Education, 2009, p. 9)

This criterion is the basis for creating an evaluation system. Further guidance in RT3 is for the evaluation systems to “Conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals” that involve giving “timely and constructive feedback”, to “provide teachers and principals with data on student growth.” (ibid) This guidance makes clear that data should be individualized by student and able to be sorted by teacher. A system such as this makes possible the evaluation of a teacher using student data, which is also required in the next criterion. RT3 recommends that school systems:

(iv) Use these evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding— (a) Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or

professional development; (b) Compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals, including by providing opportunities for highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) to obtain additional compensation and be given additional responsibilities. (ibid)

These are the specific criteria which lead many school systems in the country to consider shifting towards pay-for-performance salary systems. From 2010-2014, state boards of education would apply for RT3 grant funding if they could evidence that they were making these recommendations.

Georgia's RT3 Grant

Georgia's Department of Education applied for and received the Race to the Top grant for K-12 programs in 2010. This required the Georgia Department of Education to draw up district-level provisions for high-performing teachers to be compensated for results (Georgia Department of Education, 2014a; GCPS, 2016). This is an important point as Georgia, in accepting the grant money, became accountable to the federal government for evidencing that they had encouraged districts to change their teacher pay systems toward rewarding those seen as more effective. Economic logic may or may not move teachers, but it certainly moves state governments.

This is one reason Laitsch (2013) calls many critiques of neoliberalism “the wrong debate at the wrong time with the wrong people” (p. 155). This could be said again, since, in one perspective, the die was cast for Gwinnett County back in 2010 when Georgia's Department of Education committed to the federal government that the state would reform districts' pay scales, and the state won grant money. Having the debate about teacher evaluations in late 2019 at the county level is the wrong debate at the

wrong time with the wrong people. Foucault (1980) might say that ideas about good teaching practice had already become subjugated knowledges, as are many other knowledges that are out of their productive context.

Georgia's Education Reform Commission, 2015

One immediate impetus for Gwinnett County's pay-for-performance system was the 2015 report from Georgia's Education Reform Commission, chaired by former University of Georgia president Dr. Charles Knapp. The commission was appointed by former Georgia governor Nathan Deal in January 2015. Deal asked them to "comprehensively review the status of preschool, primary, and secondary education in Georgia and to provide bold recommendations that will better prepare our students for life and the workforce in the twenty-first century" (Office of the Governor, 2015).

The commission met throughout the year and issued their final report on December 15. The ERC recommended that Georgia "Develop guidance to assist districts in developing strategic compensation models for teachers," (ERC, 2015, p. 15) among many other recommendations. This included guidance to "Provide the opportunity for teacher involvement in the creation of strategic compensation models at the district levels" and to "Provide opportunities for teachers to earn higher salaries earlier in their career." (ERC, 2015, p. 15-16) The commission cited declining enrollment in Georgia teacher preparation programs, a relatively flat slope in current teacher pay systems for first five years of a teacher's career, and few career opportunities for career advancement that do not involve leaving the classroom as problems they wished to reform through this recommendation.

In 2016, it was announced by the governor that the pay scale based on training and education would be eliminated and replaced with a merit-based system. In the

beginning, this was thought to only be for new teachers. Then-governor Nathan Deal explained, “We’re not going to go to a fully merit-based pay system, but I do think there is a portion of the teachers’ pay should go to how good a teacher they are.” (Tagami, 2016)

J. Alvin Wilbanks, CEO/Superintendent of Gwinnett County Public Schools since 1996, had a hand in both a cause and an effect of the ERC report. He was a member of the 2015 Education Reform Commission that released the report (ERC, 2015, p. 4). He then used that same 2015 commission report to justify a change in GCPS teacher compensation in his November 2016 address to Gwinnett County teachers: “last December, Governor Nathan Deal’s Education Reform Commission released its recommendations, which included the call for school districts to develop new compensation models for teachers using guidance from the state Board of Education.” (GCPS, 2016) In effect, he cited himself without citing himself. He did acknowledge that teachers gave feedback on initial ideas of a pay-for-performance system, and they said that any such system should be fair to all, continue to incentivize further education for teachers, and to take into account the plethora of factors in the classroom that may affect student and teacher performance.

A key theme in Caleb Booth’s (2014) Foucauldian analysis of a teacher performance pay system in Minnesota was that, while subjects were visible, power was invisible. The ERC/Wilbanks relationship parallels this *invisible power/visible subjects* binary. Wilbanks is only a person, and a person can be disagreed with easily, but the ERC is a state-level commission whose report seems to hold much more authority.

Description of GCPS's Pay-for-Performance System

For many years, GCPS determined teacher pay based on a matrix of number of years spent teaching and highest qualification. In 2015, GCPS began building a system that was deployed last December called Pay for Performance.

Phase I: August 2017-2018

Phase I of pay-for-performance formally began in August 2017. Phase I is notable more for what remained the same than for what changed. A new salary schedule was released, but it still had 29 different steps, the same number as before, still rewarded the completion of graduate degrees, and was still a single schedule that determined pay for all teachers and support staff (GCPS, 2016). GCPS teachers interviewed verified that the changes made by Phase I still do not affect returning teachers, so while the system began to be referred to as a pay-for-performance system, many teachers were not actually paid differently based on any measurement of performance.

The performance-based salary schedule continues to look very similar to previous single salary schedules in the current academic year (GCPS, 2020b). This indicates a change in that the salary steps are no longer based on time accrued but on a performance assessment. The major change is that teachers would only move to the next (higher) pay step if they received a *Proficient* or higher rating on their TAPS evaluation (GCPS, 2018). This features all teaching staff receiving at least the same base pay as in the previous academic year, and was pitched as a raise for most teachers. It kept the same number of salary steps, but changed them into performance steps, not determined by years of teaching but by a performance assessment of teaching practice (GCPS, 2016). Superintendent Wilbanks admitted that the system was “not perfect” but was still a “remarkable” change that can help teachers (GCPS, 2018).

Figure 2. Summation of GCPS's Performance-Based Awards (GCPS, 2017)

Gwinnett County Public Schools			
Performance-Based Teacher Compensation System			
February 16, 2017			
PHASE 1: SY2017-2018			
Performance-Based Teacher Salary Schedule			
Salary Schedule	Performance Steps	Preparation Levels	
Salary schedule that reflects base salary and step and level increases	Step increases that are based on Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) evaluation rating of Proficient or higher	Level 1 – Bachelor’s Degree Level 2 – Master’s Degree Level 3 – Specialist’s Degree Level 4 – Doctoral Degree <i>Provisional certificate lanes eliminated (B-4 - B-7)</i> NOTE: All levels require specific Georgia Professional Standards Commission certification.	
PHASE 2: SY2018-2019			
Performance-Based Awards: Metrics, Scores, and Weights			
Metric	Raw Score	Scale Score	Weight
Professional Growth	0 - 100	0 - 100	15%
TAPS Evaluation	0 - 30	0 - 100	40%
Student Growth	1 of 4 Performance Levels	0 - 100	35%
Weighted School Assessment	0 - 100	0 - 100	10%
Raw and Scale Scores subject to change as metric details are finalized.			
Performance-Based Awards: Categories and Compensation (Based on Total Weighted Score of 4 Metrics)			
Performance Category*	Category Award Ranges	Compensation Award	Payment Method
Category 1	Highest 10% of scores for eligible teachers SYSTEM wide	10% of average GCPS Teacher salary (FY17 - \$58,519)	Lump sum payment based on prior school year’s performance
Category 2	Highest 10% of scores for eligible teachers at each SCHOOL	6% of average GCPS Teacher salary	Lump sum payment based on prior school year’s performance
Category 3	Second highest 10% of scores for eligible teachers at each SCHOOL	3% of average GCPS Teacher salary	Lump sum payment based on prior school year’s performance

* **Category 1** includes teachers whose total performance scores fall within the highest 10% of all eligible teachers system-wide. **Categories 2 and 3** include teachers whose total performance scores fall within the highest 10% (Category 2) or second-highest 10% (Category 3) of all eligible teachers at each school. Teachers awarded in Category 1 will not be eligible for awards in categories 2 and 3. **Eligible teachers** are classroom teachers who provide direct instruction to students, for whom scores are available on all four performance metrics, and who were employed for at least 120 days during the school year.

Phase II: 2018-2019

Figure 2 shows the summation of the GCPS pay-for-performance system (GCPS, 2017). As can be seen from the figure, the performance of most teachers is evaluated on four categories. The most-weighted category is Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (40%), next is Student Growth (35%), then Professional Growth (15%), and lastly, Weighted School Assessment (10%). Due to the complexity of this evaluation system, GCPS made a video in which slides are presented to explain each metric, and teachers were required to watch it as part of their professional development in 2018 (GCPS, 2020a).

Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (or TAPS) is an administrator's evaluation of a teacher's performance as demonstrated by observations of teachers and conferencing afterwards, based on Georgia Department of Education's performance standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2014b). The TAPS raw score is converted to a scaled score of 0-100. Gwinnett's TAPS reference document is publicly available and plays a large part in how teachers are evaluated during observed lessons and many other aspects of their professional life (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2020a).

Student Growth is based on the pre- and post-test results on District Assessments for each of the students served by each teacher. According to GCPS, this was the most highly deliberated and tested metric, and this has resulted in the most complex measurement tool in the new system. The year is divided up into tenths and each tenth needs a pre-test and a post-test. Differences in pre- and post-test are compared to the median for those students in that grade across the county. A teacher is awarded more points if their scores are higher than the median. According to participants interviewed, this category is also a place where many teachers gave feedback that was critical to the

new system. Many teachers were skeptical that teacher effectiveness could be properly assessed by only looking at high-stakes tests. Teachers were not sure that this would capture an accurate picture of teacher effectiveness. Some teachers were also concerned that this may result in teaching only to the test rather than the full bevy of curricular goals.

Professional Growth involves completion of 20 or more hours spent on staff development. It is the only categorically-determined variable with point values of “0 or 100” as seen in Figure 2. If a teacher completes their 20 hours, they receive a score of 100 for Professional Growth; if they do not, they receive 0 (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2020a).

The Weighted School Assessment is a scaled score given to *schools* based on their performance, and each teacher at the school receives the same score. This score takes into account academic scores and is weighted to award schools points based on “special entity” standing, such as Title I schools with high poverty levels. Note that this measure is only 10% of teachers’ overall measure to determine performance-based awards (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2020a). Participants’ comments in Chapter 7 reflect their opinions as to the extent to which this score fairly represented the challenges of teaching in Title I and other underprivileged schools.

Description of Awards

Once these four metrics are summed and weighted, the teacher’s overall score is compared to others at the county and school. The highest-scoring teachers are eligible for awards in one of three categories. Category 1 awards are given to the teachers who score in the top 10% in the county for each level, meaning that the top 10% of elementary school teachers, the top 10% of middle school teachers and the top 10% of

high school teachers in Gwinnett County receive Category 1 awards. In 2019, the Category 1 award was \$6,208 based on 10% of the average teacher's salary.

Category 2 awards go to the top 10% of teachers in each school. Since a teacher may only receive one monetary award, those who have already received Category 1 awards are excluded. In 2019, Category 2 awards was 6% of the average teacher's salary, or \$3,725. Category 3 awards went to the next 10% of teachers in each school who had not previously received an award. Category 3 awards were 3% of the average teacher's salary, or \$1,862 in 2019. In total, 3,144 Gwinnett County teachers received over \$12.37 million in awards.

Category 1 Rewards and Title I status

This category covers the top 10% of teachers in the county based on their scaled scores. The day bonuses were issued, there was criticism about the idea that Title I schools, schools legally defined as having a high percentage of students on free or reduced lunches, may have been effectively discriminated against, since almost four times as many Category 1 awards went to teachers in non-Title I schools than did to teachers in Title I schools (Denman, 2019).

While the focus of this project is qualitative rather than quantitative, the association between a school's Title I status and the likelihood of teachers there receiving a Category 1 award can be statistically tested. Thus, a statistical analysis was conducted to find if there was a significant relationship between teachers receiving Category 1 awards and their placement in Title 1 schools (H_0 = independence of variables and H_1 = dependence between variables). Frequencies are given in Table 1. A between-groups chi-square test was conducted, and results indicated a significant relationship between the two categories of Title I status and Category 1 award-winners, $\chi^2(1, N = 9327) = 415.559, p <$

.001. Unfortunately, this means that if a teacher works at a Title 1 school, they are much less likely to receive a Category 1 award than if they do not. This could be due to a variety of factors, including the resources that the student, the student's family and/or the school have to help the child learn. Another factor could be that Title I schools are often not attractive by reputation and thus might not attract top teacher candidates. However, if this effect is true, then disseminating the results of this and Denman's (2019) report may exacerbate that effect. If teachers perceive that it is easier to get a \$6,208 award if they teach in a non-Title I school, then they will probably prefer to teach in those schools rather than Title I schools.

Table 1. Actual and expected counts of Category 1 award-winners in Title I and non-Title I schools.

	Title I teachers	Non-title I teachers	Marginal row totals
Category 1 award recipients [Expected count]	196 [491.56]	741 [445.44]	937
Non-Category 1 award recipients [Expected count]	4697 [4401.44]	3693 [3988.56]	8390
Marginal column totals	4893	4434	9327 (Grand total)

Category 2 and 3 awards and teacher competition

These two awards involve judging which teachers are best in the school, so they involve the perception of being *competitive* among teachers who previously saw each other as colleagues. Chapter 5 will lay out the methods used when interviewing teachers, and Chapters 6-7 will describe the results of teacher interviews.

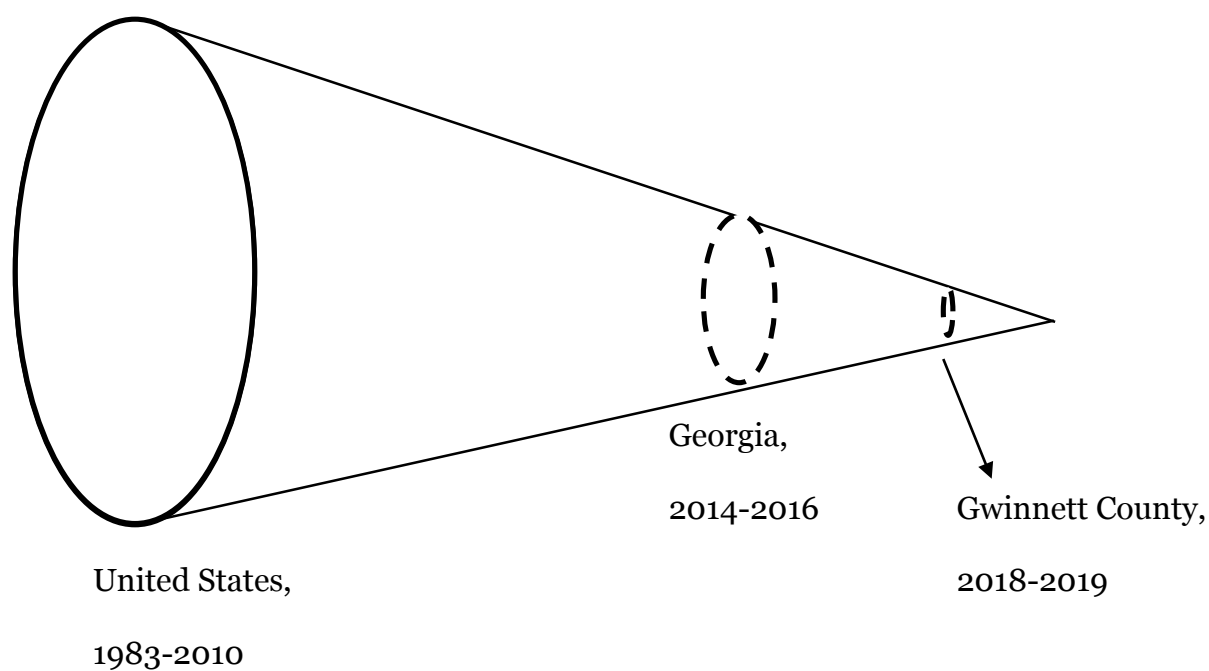
In both these awards, certain populations of students have been perceived historically to be easier to teach (for example, honors, gifted, and Advanced Placement students) or more difficult to teach (for example, ESOL students or students with special needs). It is possible that measuring student growth based on change in test scores may not account for the difficulty of learning outside one's native language or learning with special needs. It is also possible that gifted or Advanced Placement students would show growth not necessarily due to the teacher's efforts, but because these students have the resources to learn on their own.

Recall Superintendent/CEO Wilbanks's statement justifying teacher performance pay, that they "reward those who made the biggest difference in students' success...they deserve it! We have worked hard to develop a fair system that rewards the efforts of as many teachers as possible." (GCPS, 2019) In order to understand some of the effects of this statement, it is necessary to interview teachers about their experiences from when they heard the school superintendent announce the change to when bonuses were given in December 2019. For example, it would help us understand a teacher's experiences if we learned that many teachers were not consulted about the change.

In this chapter, current and historical policy documents were used as an attempt to write a *history of the present*, a contextualized account of policies over the last century which have affected teacher pay today. This is an important part of investigating

how power works along with discourse and individuals to influence the conversation that continues today. Figure 3 shows the outline, the cone that covers the United States over the last century and narrows to the present and the local context of Gwinnett County. In the next chapter, concepts and research from educational psychology will be outlined to understand the effects from the perspective of the individual teachers. Methodology for qualitative interviews is described in Chapter 5 and findings are given in Chapter 6 from a Foucauldian perspective and Chapter 7 from an educational psychology perspective before concluding in Chapter 8.

Figure 3. The Cone of Chapter 2, a “history of the present”.

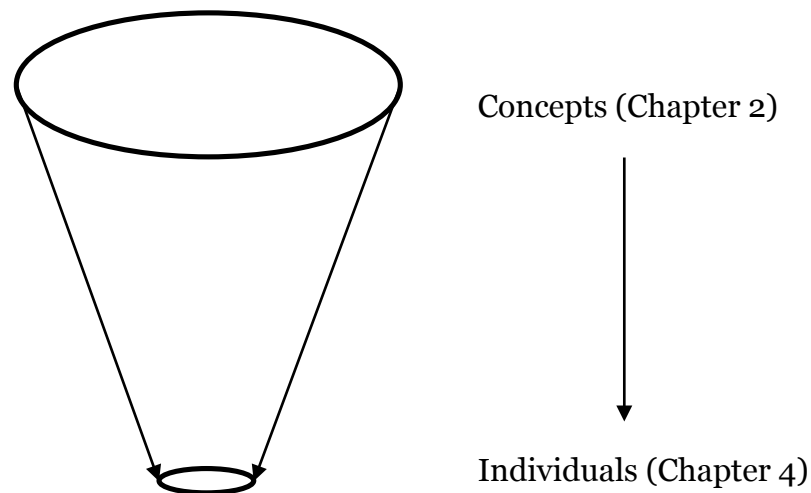


CHAPTER 4

MOTIVATION AND ATTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS

Chapter 2 outlines the Foucauldian concepts which work to explain the position of individual teachers working in schools. These concepts (power, neoliberalism, and others) work on the philosophical level to *individualize* human beings and schools. Buildings and living things are groups of material, but history, language, culture,

Figure 4. Relationship between philosophical concepts and individual actions



This chapter is centered on the experiences of individual teachers and describes theories which may play a part in understanding teachers' thoughts, feelings and behaviors about a pay-for-performance system such as the one Gwinnett County began in 2018. This is not to say that individuals' motivations and behaviors are less important than philosophical concepts, only more defined. What is the theoretical framework behind linking teacher pay to educational outcomes? The primary theories reviewed regard the

motivation and attribution of teachers, two ideas which would be key in such a system. Does changing the teacher pay system *motivate* teachers toward producing better outcomes, and if so, how would that happen?

One Pessimistic Perspective: Test Fairness?

The American Educational Research Association (AERA), in conjunction with the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), are three scholarly organizations that have worked together to create their *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (2014). In this work, *fairness in testing* is highlighted as an important topic and goal. In the chapter, Fairness is advanced as a fundamental issue, yet does not have a singular meaning within literature, as fairness is not only related to the goals of the test, but also the way the tests are reported and used, and factors which affect validity. They limit their focus to aspects of fairness “which are the responsibility of those who develop, use and interpret the results of tests, and upon which there is general professional and technical agreement” (2014, 49). The *Standards* define fairness thusly:

A test that is fair within the meaning of the *Standards* reflects the same construct(s) for all test takers, and scores from it have the same meaning for all individuals in the intended population: a fair test does not advantage or disadvantage some individuals because of characteristics inherent to the intended construct. (2014, p. 50)

Unfortunately, this strict definition of a fair test probably excludes most or all operational definitions of pay-for-performance. The district assessments in Gwinnett County and many other districts are given to students, yet the data are used again to

assess teachers through student growth. The *Test Standards* would point out that this is not their intended purpose, does not assess the same construct (student achievement vs. teacher performance), and advantages some teachers while disadvantaging others.

If students have a better support system or ample free time to study longer, they may do better on their assessments while the teacher reaps the benefit. In 10th grade, I was failing chemistry, and my parents paid extra for a tutor to help me twice a week. My Fs became Cs, but the teacher would not seem to deserve any credit for this improvement. Or perhaps the student does not listen in class, does not have a lot of free time outside school, or experiences significant stressors such as poverty. This type of student would be much less likely to do well on a district assessment, and in a pay-for-performance system, their teacher would receive the blame. This disadvantage has been observed empirically in the last chapter when looking at awards given to Title I teachers, who were statistically much less likely to get them than teachers at non-Title I schools. However, since pay-for-performance was determined to take place in Georgia ever since 2010's RT3 grant, Foucault (1980) may call this another piece of subjugated knowledge.

The Logic of Pay-for-Performance

The educational policy documents reviewed in the last chapter almost never comment on the ideas of how the idea of pay-for-performance arose in present-day educational contexts. It is up to scholarly works to draw up this history. Where does the idea of paying for increased performance come from? "The concept arises directly from Taylorist scientific management, where there is a most efficient way to do each job, and the employee has to be motivated by external forces to do the job more efficiently." (Bohnet & Eaton, 2003, p. 239) *Taylorism* references Frederick Taylor, whose *Principles of Scientific Management* was published in 1911. This is also known as a piece

rate system often used for workers in clothing factories or other home products as well as farm workers (Bohnet & Eaton, 2003). This, as with the Gwinnett County pay-for-performance system, is combined with a standard base pay. This assures the employee a minimum wage while ensuring the employer a minimum rate of production.

Two issues arise almost immediately if one is considering applying this model to an educational context. Firstly, this seems to be a deficit model which assumes that the worker (or teacher in the present case) is not functioning at peak efficiency. This may be easily demonstrable when producing t-shirts or any other nonliving commodity, but less so if one is measuring learning outcomes for individual students. In education, many variables can affect the student's ability to learn independent of the teacher's ability. The student's prior learning, time on task, and resources outside the classroom are three important examples of why low student growth may not necessarily indicate a lack of teacher efficiency. This system may need significant adaption if it is to remain comprehensible for educational contexts.

Secondly, it is unclear that a piece rate system for consumer goods like t-shirts applies to an educational context where the commodity is student learning outcomes, a much less tangible item than a t-shirt. What is the learning unit to be measured? Many school systems have stipulated that learning units are to be operationalized through collecting standardized test data. While these units are easy enough to understand and collect, test scores do not totally encapsulate learning outcomes. For example, in a Life Science class, a teacher may spend a week or more teaching various examples of how human body systems work together before giving a one-hour standardized assessment. It is impossible to test everything that is learned over multiple class periods in one

period. How should students be expected to respond? Kellaghan, Madaus, and Raczek (1996) answer:

In both industry and education, the use of incentives to control performance leads individuals to focus their behavior on what is evaluated, to the neglect of other important tasks. It also leads to a variety of undesirable behaviors, of which cheating is the most obvious...Furthermore, it promotes competition at the expense of cooperation, although the latter is likely to yield better results. If a test is highly competitive, students [and teachers] quickly internalize this value. (p. 34)

Because learning is so much more than a test score, educators may be hesitant to agree that a measurement that operationalizes student learning only using standardized tests to be a valid measurement of the outcome which GCPS terms *student growth*.

Teacher Motivation and Pay-for-Performance

One reason why pay-for-performance might be thought of as a reasonable improvement is if monetary rewards are conceptualized as a *goal* which teachers are likely to be motivated toward (Dweck, 1992). “In justifying the centrality of goals in motivation, psychologists argue that people who commit themselves to a goal will direct their attention toward actions that help them realize that goal and away from other possible actions.” (Kellaghan, Madaus, & Raczek, 1996, p. 11) Goals are more likely to cause motivation when they are comprehensible and when they can be reasonably expected to lead to benefits (Deci, 1992). It may be questioned as to the extent to which a norm-referenced goal such as being in the top 10% of teachers evaluated.

A further question emerges when theorizing how teachers might respond to performance pay incentives. Could the notion of monetary rewards serve as a distraction to an already hardworking teacher? After all, performance rewards are not only achieved by teachers doing better, but also by demonstrating that they have done better to administration. Would money be viewed as a reward for achieving a performance goal, or would money be seen as a different goal entirely?

Self-determination Theory (SDT)

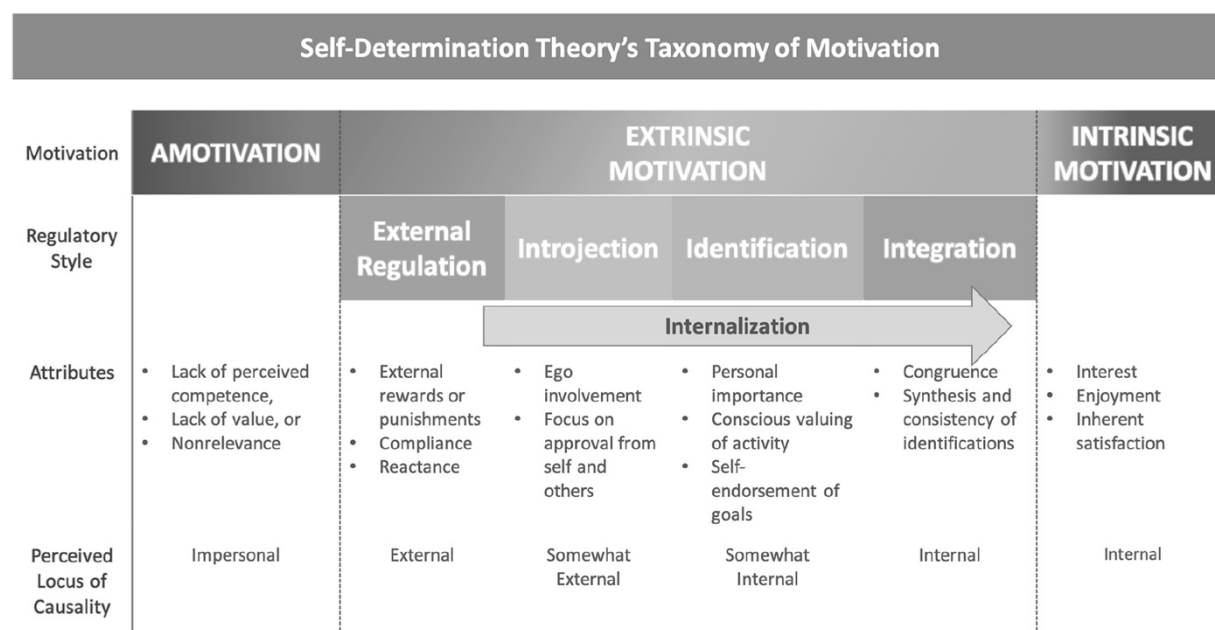
The theory which best helps to explain motivation, attribution, and their effects on behavior is Ryan & Deci's (2020) *self-determination theory*. This theory places *amotivation*, an absence of motivation, on the left side of a continuum with *extrinsic motivation* in the middle and *intrinsic motivation* on the right side, implying that this is the "best" motivation which leads to experiences like interest, enjoyment and internal satisfaction (p. 2). It is more advanced than theories that draw a categorical difference between internal vs. external motivation, and it acknowledges the possibility of *multiple motives*, "...that most intentional behaviors are multiply motivated..." (p. 3) This would account for multiple and interacting teacher motivations expected about a pay-for-performance system. For example, a teacher might say, "I want my students to do their best [internal motivation], but also getting a financial award would be nice [external motivation]." Many adults feel both, especially in their chosen career.

The basis of a pay-for-performance system is to use money to incentivize good teaching, which would most likely put outcomes on the left (lower) motivation side. However, it is not certain to be so. For example, Booth's (2014) study researched a pay-for-performance system which reported increased motivation through several structural changes, such as teachers who were given a new role as "master teacher", instructional

coaches who observed and helped to improve other teachers' lessons. Their improvement resulted in most of the teachers interviewed in the Booth study reporting greater motivation. GCPS did not significantly adjust their support or administrative structures. The feelings of five teachers interviewed in this study will be described in Chapter 7 which will ultimately inform an evaluation of how the extent to which GCPS teachers' motivation was affected by GCPS' new pay-for-performance system.

The next several paragraphs describe concepts related to SDT that can work to pinpoint individuals' levels of motivation. The full picture of the various effects on motivation is given below:

Figure 5. Ryan and Deci's (2020, p. 2) Motivation(s) Model



Ryan and Deci (2020) state that self-determination theory works at the level of the individual and is a factor in healthy development. Elsewhere, they argue that self-determination is a part of an individual's *basic psychological needs* (Ryan, Ryan, Di Domenico, & Deci, 2019). Foucault (1966/1970) might point out that the reverse would

also be true, that an organism which can be seen to determine its own *self* is part of what is involved in the modern classification of an organism as a human individual, a construction which arose during the Enlightenment and will probably change again, but this chapter is not for him. That which we presently call human individuals are those which have the psychological need of self-determination, which is an assertion of an individual's identity, a self that recognizes its own self and, when certain basic psychological needs are met, tends to take some initiative in its own development. Ryan and Deci (2020) specify the basic needs for self-determination to be *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness*.

Autonomy is an individual's sense of initiative or ownership over their own actions. SDT research indicates that individuals who experience a sense of choice feel greater ownership over their activities, experience increased autonomy and thus an increase in intrinsic motivation as this facilitates curiosity and increased performance. However, those who feel they are making choices which are uninteresting, do not matter, or are pressured to make choices do not experience a sense of autonomy (Moller, Deci, & Ryan, 2006). The autonomy of individuals can be supported by providing autonomy support such as an environment where engagement and structures which specify clear expectations and consistent rules. Respecting and responding to individuals' difference of perspectives can also foster autonomy.

Competence is a feeling of mastery, the sense that an individual is able to succeed in a task. *Amotivation* may result from a lack of competence in the task to be performed as well as from a lack of interest, and is associated with a lack of learning and engagement (Ryan and Deci, 2020). One very clear connection between motivation and goal-setting is if the goals are *performance* goals, which assess a skill level in one

particular context and/or over the short term, or *mastery* goals, which emphasizes abilities in a variety of circumstances and/or over a longer term (Woolfolk, 2015). Ryan and Deci (2020) point out that goals should be outcomes-focused, which can be either performance- or mastery-oriented, although failure on a performance goal can bring a greater sense of lack of competence. An individual who sees themselves as competent is much more likely to be motivated to achieve.

Relatedness is a person's sense of belonging in a community which supports their learning and achievement. Noticing respect and caring can help an individual develop a sense of relatedness. This can be supported by the other two concepts. For example, a teacher who gives a student autonomy support may also be showing the student relatedness.

At the other end of the spectrum (left), various phenomena describe a lesser amount or total absence of motivation and various factors which are counter to motivated individuals. Consulting the left side bullet points and moving right, several of the phenomena represent an absence of the concepts laid out above, such as a lack of competence, a lack of perceived value, or a lack of relevance (Ryan and Deci, 2020, p. 2). *External regulation* involves a person controlling themselves because of factors enumerated below the term like external rewards such as money. Compliance is a social psychological phenomenon where individuals acquiesce to others' requests to take particular action. (Aronson, Wilson and Akert, 2002) Or reactance, action to stave off a perceived potential loss or threat to freedom (Steindl, Jonas, Sittenthaler, Traut-Mattausch, and Greenberg, 2015).

Moving right in Figure 1, positive thoughts and feelings can be observed. Internalization is the extent to which one has formed an internal justification for why a

particular knowledge or skill is preferable to acquire. Grading, one of the most frequent teaching practices the world over, has a role to play here as it more often than not increases opportunities for internalization and thus intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985), barring the complete focus on standardized tests mentioned earlier. On the other hand, if feedback only increases pressure, it can have the opposite effect if a person only interprets it as an attempt to control others' behavior. Feedback should be centered on important concepts emphasized during teaching and learning (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic motivation fully realized ultimately leads to interest, enjoyment and satisfaction, self-sustaining behaviors that keep people desiring to learn and achieve irrespective of grades or other rewards.

Conclusion and Justification for Data Collection

This chapter has reviewed self-determination theory and defined related concepts in order to lay out the possibilities for individuals' motivation and action. This project reviews GCPS' recently implemented pay-for-performance system, and the need arises to ask GCPS teachers about their thoughts, feelings and behaviors related to the pay-for-performance system in order to gauge their motivation. Several questions will need to be answered about the roll-out and justification given to them about pay-for-performance. SDT in general and the specific concepts and phenomena defined in this chapter will be used in Chapter 7 to evaluate the extent to which teachers' motivation and behaviors were affected by GCPS' pay-for-performance system.

CHAPTER 5

(POST) QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the approach to data collection used in this project in order to ascertain GCPS teachers' thoughts and feelings about pay-for-performance.

Foucault's ideas about power relations work on the level of philosophical concepts and the history of systems of thought. The conceptual and historical background laid out in Chapters 2 and 3 were most useful for conducting Foucauldian power analysis, and the work done here can be loosely described as *post-qualitative inquiry*, the examination of philosophical concepts. On a different plane, the motivational framework laid out in Chapter 4 requires data from individual teachers, so Interview protocols were drawn up and elaborated here.

Post-Qualitative Inquiry

Troubling "Methods" and "Data"

In a Foucault-influenced study, texts and speech are presented and analyzed as with other, more conventional analyses, but the ideas of methods and data are troubled as the idea of *power relations* can be many things which produce or lead to individual speech and behavior. We can observe speech, but what happened to construct that speech? For example, an assistant principal may ask a teacher if there are any disciplinary problems in the teacher's classes, and the teacher may respond that there are none. However, if it is later understood that the assistant principal is the teacher's supervisor, *especially* if that supervisor's evaluation of the teacher could result in a monetary award, it is possible that power relations work to constrain the teacher's

response, or limit their possibilities for discourse and action. This may help to answer the question of why few if any teachers critiqued the idea of pay-for-performance before the system was implemented. It is less true of newspaper quotes, policy documents, and certainly of the anonymous letter in the introduction. That teacher's anonymity gave them much more freedom than they have during most meetings! (The letter also came with money, which certainly enhanced its power and popularity.) The money emphasizes the notion that power is never totally separate from material.

What is Post-qual not?

Without conventional ideas about data, the set containing all possible "data" is exponentially larger. For Foucault, "data" can be another philosophical text such as Machiavelli's *Prince* (Foucault, 1978/2000), the changing governmental structure of eighteenth-century Britain (Foucault, 1979/2008), Victorian social mores about sex (Foucault, 1976/1978), or the architectural principle of panopticism (Foucault, 1977/1995). The "data" is whatever leads to a greater understanding of the system of power/knowledge, the many different causes of what people do and discuss. For Deleuze & Guattari (1980/1987), "data" may be as many things as can be thought of, the multiplicities and potential that one person may do and be. In fact, "data" might be things that are not strictly speaking "real" in the conventional sense, but even dreams, emotions, sensations, and responses which are felt by the writer (St. Pierre, 1997).

Post-qualitative inquiry can be concisely described as doing philosophy, involving much reading, thinking and writing. More specific descriptions continually fail as post-qual attempts to embrace all possibilities. In attempting to define post-qualitative inquiry, it is more important to say what it is *not* than to say what it is. Post-qualitative researchers refuse assumptions of conventional ontology in an attempt to make room

for what could become possible (St. Pierre, 2019). As neoliberal thought continues to define and specify individuals and things, post qualitative inquiry challenges the presumption of certainty. At the same time, much psychological theory works by assuming the individual, which is not *wrong*, but only one possibility among many. Post qualitative inquiry allows us to hold suspect prevailing assumptions and methodologies in order to speculate on alternate ontologies and epistemologies of how to be, do and live. Ultimately, it gives writers permission to create new concepts, or to think about new concepts and take them more seriously than anything else in our onto-epistemological arrangement. This project does not go so far as to create new concepts, but does take on an alternate onto-epistemology in order to consider *power relations* and similar concepts as real as psychological theories about individuals.

Discussions of ontology are rarely seen in educational psychological research. One notable exception is in Williams, Billington, Goodley & Corcoran (2017). This textbook problematizes language construction of people and social practices in an educational psychological context and provides steps for questioning our already-presumed ontology. “Ontological constructionism presents you with options for proactive participation, not only to ‘tell it as it may become’, but also to work in support of preferred ways of being and forms of life.” (p. 33) This presents the possibility of an ontological turn in educational psychology, however improbable. Educational psychology is currently deeply rooted in the notions of the Ethico-onto-epistemological human (Barad, 2007). To explain, the conventional ontological assumption of educational psychology is that humans are distinct creatures. Thus, humans are also knowledge-makers...according to ourselves. Post-qualitative inquiry, particularly Deleuze & Guattari (1980/1987) helps to decenter the human and acknowledge the

multiplicities of the “human” “subject’s” “identity”, simultaneously making humans both more and less of what they were. Unlike conventional qualitative data analysis, Foucauldian power analysis does not set out to find emerging themes or patterns as multiple truths can be embraced. It does not set out to make an ultimate determination that something is good or bad, only to point out that the interjection of something (like performance pay) into an arrangement changes that arrangement. How this power arrangement was changed by the injection of performance pay is the focus of this study.

Why Both Qual and Post qual?

This study employs Lather’s (2007) double move of within/against qualitative methodology, “both ‘doing it’ and ‘troubling it’ simultaneously” (p. 38). Ryan and Deci (2020) allow for qualitative data collection, which Foucault would trouble, but not in a way that the knowledge gained by Ryan and Deci is wrong, irrelevant or unnecessary. Deci and Ryan provide one source of truth; Foucault provides another. In future projects, they may be allowed to “speak” to one another, when Foucault’s concept of *power-relations* will be able to affect Deci and Ryan’s *self-determination theory* and vice versa, but for this study, they will stay on their particular tracks.

Qualitative Interviews

Brinkman (2015) coined the phrase “Good Old-Fashioned Qualitative Inquiry” (p. 620) to mean a conventional humanist interpretive study that uses standard methods like interviews, questioning, dialogue, recording, transcription, coding, and thematic analysis. Brinkman argues that, in spite of post qualitative inquiry and many other fairly new ideas about qualitative research, all of these older methods are still completely legitimate. Brinkman does not argue that this research is bad but implies that it might leave some assumptions unquestioned, such as the view of the human

individual as having agency and his/her voice as brought out in dialogue with the interviewer. In this context, one can be more certain about the data collected. As in Chapter 4, the qualitative interviews conducted assume that human individuals are capable of speaking for themselves, and this presents another source of data against the more conceptual Foucauldian power analysis.

For the remainder of this chapter, and in Chapter 7, it will be assumed that human individuals have agency, have ways to determine themselves and can say what they think, feel and do during qualitative interviews. The data from qualitative interviews can say things about individuals given these assumptions.

Semistructured interviews

Semistructured interviews are formal interviews involving a questionnaire with the same interview guide used with participant in the study. This allows the researcher to compare participants' answers later, although this is not required. Open questions are used to elicit in-depth responses beyond simple yes-no, but questions are written in order to elicit responses on a particular topic (Frankel et al., 2015). However, unlike structured interviews, semistructured interviews allow for follow-up questions in order to collect more specific information about the topics asked. For example, a researcher may ask "Why do you think so?" or "Can you tell me more about [a certain topic]?" as a follow-up to a written question (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1991). Lastly, Frankel et al. (2015) noted that semistructured interviews should be used near the end of a study because they tend to shape the perceptions of the researchers about the area of interest. In my study, this will be the case as interviews will be conducted after documents have been analyzed.

Interpretation of Data

This chapter has given a broad overview of the first chapters in the study. Chapter 2 will outline Foucault's concept of *power relations*. Chapter 3 will examine research in educational psychology concerning the motivation and behavioral change of rewards to teachers, particularly performance pay. Chapter 4 will outline the procedure of conducting qualitative interviews with GCPS teachers. Chapter 5 will describe the results of those interviews. Chapter 6 will make recommendations for how the pay-for-performance system might change and how teachers might resist exercises in power in the future. Chapter 7 will conclude the study by summarizing key findings, describing the study's limitations, and providing suggestions for further research.

This chapter describes the method by which Gwinnett County Public School teachers were interviewed, including key decisions made about the interview questions and process. Previous chapters have introduced the GCPS pay-for-performance system, the concepts that guide the study, and ideas about how teachers may be motivated by pay-for-performance. For the last chapter and this one, teachers are assumed to be *individuals* acting in their professional lives.

The research questions for this study are the following:

1. What are the historical underpinnings and theoretical framework of Gwinnett County's pay-for-performance system?
2. How did pay-for-performance shift power relations from a Foucauldian perspective?
3. How did individual teachers respond to the pay-for-performance system?

Purpose of Interviewing

The purpose of these interviews is to answer the second and third questions from the teachers' perspective, as pay-for-performance is a system that involves evaluating teachers. Was it productive from teachers' perspectives? Interviewing can also elicit opportunities and challenges for teachers in a recently-deployed pay-for-performance system. How did teachers react to the announcement, training, and outcome of this system? Did this system change the way that they teach, reflect on their teaching, or perform other aspects of their professional lives? Did it change the teaching environment or how teachers relate to one another? And, as they perceive it, did it improve their teaching practice, and/or were other challenges created?

Interviewing is a particularly useful way to explore complicated processes and systems that the target population has already done a lot of thinking about (Patton, 2015). It is assumed that teachers would have knowledge of this system and opinions about this system because it has affected them in their professional lives, as a similar system had affected me in 2008. Thus, Gwinnett County Public School teachers are an important source of knowledge for understanding the effects of this system. As far as I could determine, other than a small number of news articles which anecdotally quoted teachers in Chapter 1, no interviews of Gwinnett teachers have been conducted.

Sampling Technique

For this study, I used a convenience sample and solicited participants by word of mouth. I know most of the participants. The five teachers interviewed all have specialized knowledges. All five are certified teachers in Gwinnett County. One is pursuing a graduate degree in educational theory and has read Foucault in graduate courses at a public university in Georgia. Another is studying educational psychology at

a public university in Georgia. One is a special education teacher with more than three decades of experience, a fourth is a science teacher with almost two decades of experience, and the last is a former high school special education department head. These teachers bring a variety of experience and expertise to bear on teaching.

These are important considerations, since important elements of the interview process were bolstered by our prior relationships, such as rapport already being present, the participants being clearly situated in the context of the desired data, and the expertise of the participants understood from previous experience (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007).

However, the researcher already knowing the participants may be problematic in other ways. For example, the possibility of the researcher being too close to the participants was present (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007). Being too close risks things like the pressure to acquiesce, a perceived pressure the interviewees might feel to agree with the interviewer not simply because they agree with the research trajectory, but also because they are my acquaintances. However, since the teachers were asked their thoughts about a subject that does not relate to me personally, it was judged that they would be able to recount their experiences honestly without damaging our relationship.

Interview Process

After Institutional Review Board approval was secured (Appendix A), several teachers were sent a single invitation email (Appendix B). If they did not respond, no follow-up communication was sent. Those who proactively contacted me were invited to participate in a one-hour semi-structured interview. The interview schedule can be found in Appendix C. During the interview, I made sure to ask all the participants all the scheduled questions, but also I asked probing and follow-up questions as necessary.

Interview “Site”

The interviews were conducted in August 2020 when COVID-19 cases in Georgia were still quite numerous. The risks of meeting the participants face-to-face was greater than the perceived benefit, so the participants were invited to interview via Zoom. This is new territory for the researcher and for many other scholars. I know of no active researcher whose plans have not been significantly altered by COVID-19, from cancelled conferences to budget adjustments to data collection. This may say something good about the resiliency of qualitative interviews, that a semistructured question schedule may be easily brought with the researcher from a planned encounter in-person to the Zoom platform, a 21st-century experience of “Good Old-Fashioned Qualitative” methods (Brinkman, 2015, p. 620).

Data Quality

One strength of the data was that each of the five interviewees spoke with expertise, knowing more than the average citizen about teaching practice, teacher evaluations, and the pay-for-performance system. However, as can be seen from the introduction, before I started the interviews, I already had ideas about what was important regarding pay-for-performance. While these ideas were helpful to me in writing the research questions and focusing my interview questions, it is possible that I might have missed something due to me being too close to both the topic and to the interviewees. It is not necessarily true that the data quality can be proven to be better or worse given my perspective and experience, but that noting my perspective is an important process of understanding the researched phenomena as well as the researchers themselves (Roulston, 2010).

CHAPTER 6

FOUCAULDIAN POWER ANALYTICS IN GCPS

This chapter reviews what can be learned about the GCPS pay-for-performance system by examining it using the Foucauldian concepts presented in Chapter 2. Again, this takes place on a different level from educational psychological theories about individual teachers' thoughts and behaviors, which will be examined in Chapter 7.

One analogy that can be drawn is that of a restaurant experience. Foucault's writings on power analysis explain how the menu is created, and Deci and Ryan's (2020) self-determination theory explains how people choose from the menu. Making a menu and choosing from the menu are different processes that different entities make at different times. The menu is an offering of standard possibilities that guides most patrons' restaurant choices most of the time, but this does not mean that the patrons' actions are totally determined. The menu guides possibilities but does not exclude other possibilities like ordering off-menu or requesting that the restaurant make changes to the menu items offered.

One of the most important findings of this project is that, for GCPS teachers, the teachers' menu of choices did not change in the shift toward pay-for-performance. The teachers had the same responsibilities. The ways they were evaluated after pay-for-performance were the same ways they were evaluated before (observations from assistant principals, students' standardized test scores, professional development). The only change was that these measurements were put into a matrix that gave certain teachers bonuses. Teachers could see their evaluations but not the evaluations of other

teachers'. As a result, many refused to engage with the system. As can be seen in Chapter 7, most teachers interviewed made no changes to their teaching practice, and only one teacher made a few small changes. Teachers also seemed to have no voice in the outcome of evaluation. The teachers interviewed certainly did not act like *Homo aeconomicus* (Foucault, 1979/2008) assumed by neoliberal thought. From the teachers' perspective, the grid of intelligibility may have changed very little, if at all.

If that is true, how did power relations change, if not for teachers? Power relations changed, but it was not the individuals who became more powerful. The measurements became more powerful, or more able to create possibilities, mainly through the way in which the measurement quantitatively described teachers. The teacher evaluation gained power as an arbiter of teaching quality, and the biggest shifts in relations of power were made by the standardized tests themselves, which were always used to sort students into high- and low-achievers, but are now increasingly used to do the same for teachers. Who is in charge? After pay-for-performance, the matrix and evaluation system is in charge, and individual teachers are less able to describe their own teaching practices. A measurement system describes it for them. This is a change in power relations: the set of possibilities has increased for the system and decreased for teachers themselves.

Neoliberalism, Educational Testing and Teacher Evaluation

Producing the “Best” Teachers (and Students)

In deploying pay-for-performance, GCPS used a matrix of professional development time, school-wide assessment by county, student growth measured by high-stakes testing, and teacher evaluation by assistant principals (GCPS, 2018b).

Pay-for-performance further empowers (opens up possibilities for) the teachers' evaluation and the students' standardized test as an instrument which defines individuals as high-achieving or low, passing or failing, and later, accepted or rejected. Many high-stakes assessment practices subject the student to a process of political economy which both produces and consumes the student as an individual entity. Since teachers' evaluations are given by an assistant principal at one time and result in a determination that could affect a teachers' salary, they have also become high-stakes assessments. Participant 3 explained:

I start to hear different perspectives, and some teachers felt like now, the environment is going to be even more competitive where people may not want to share ideas and share resources like they were doing before, because then they feel like they have to compete if our evaluations are going to be more difficult, I guess you could say more competitive. Not difficult, but critical, I guess you could say.

The idea in both observing a teacher at one time and testing a student at one time assumes an ontology of learning which preferences the representational over the relational. Foucault's concept of the neoliberal *homo economicus* (1979/2008) helps to explain how governance is implemented in American educational testing. The end result is that students conceptualize academic success within an ontology that discourages analysis of the governance which is subjugating them. Early 21st-century education assumes an ontology of learning which produces the student as a set of assessment scores. This takes place within a neoliberal framework. Harvey (2005) defined neoliberalism as "...a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human

well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework...” (p. 2) Later, when teachers are directly evaluated by student test scores, they are placed into this same neoliberal framework. Neoliberalism emphasizes the need for structures to produce the competitive economic individual who competes to be a winner or loser, foregrounding individual identification and achievement as tools for freedom and advancement while backgrounding such factors as support systems, context and luck as unimportant or minor (Schmeichel, Sharma & Pittard, 2017). This echoes Foucault’s notion of man as *homo æconomicus* (1979/2008), the being which applies economic logic “to domains that are not immediately and directly economic” (p. 268). *Homo æconomicus* tends to systematically allocate scarce resources for optimal efficiency. Often, s/he prefers to individuate her/himself and asserts her/his own individuality and merit. Under neoliberal governmentality, many students *choose* neoliberal philosophy even before reaching adulthood, joining the economic workforce having already “bought into” the notion that their accomplishments need to be measured, quantified, and that accomplishments need to be rewarded. Challenging students to think outside this system of governance will be a much more complicated and long-term task. The neoliberal tendency to foreground individual accomplishment and background support systems, luck and context is an inaccurate representation of my life...but it may be *tempting* to believe the neoliberal explanation if that description can be used to evidence an individual’s accomplishment, particularly on another high-stakes assessment like a college application.

Both the standardized test and the evaluation can be said to be an ontological instrument of learning, an object that makes a statement about reality, by asserting that

learning and development has or has not occurred, or to what extent. Standardized tests perpetuate a particular truth of the learner as a successful individual, backgrounding factors outside the control of the individual student such as support systems, luck and educational context (Schmeichel, Sharma, & Pittard, 2017). This reifies individual rather than collective achievement and the static score over the emerging learning process.

Thus, learning is reduced to a currency which is consumed by educational stakeholders. It is important for educational stakeholders that this currency be quantifiable, measurable, and situated within the individual student. This ontology of learning does not argue that support or context are not factors which influence the student's score; no counterargument is necessary. The most important thing about the standardized score is that it is produced efficiently, which was certainly the case in GCPS' pay-for-performance system as realized in late 2019. The process of assessment, of test-taking and of evaluation is much older than neoliberalism, but the process of assessment has been utilized in recent decades to create the *standardized* test, which is cheap and efficient for wide distribution to many students and can be used to discriminate between individuals through scoring. "From the point of view of a theory of government, *homo æconomicus* is the person who must be let alone...the person who accepts reality or who responds systematically to modifications in the variables of the environment..." (Foucault 1979/2008, p. 270) Indeed, for learning to be seen as real, the student must demonstrate it by themselves within timed and secure conditions, and the teacher must teach on their own. The fact that this development and learning could not logically exist without the hard work of other stakeholders such as other teachers, parents or guardians, other students, textbook writers and other support networks is sublimated in order to emphasize, or more accurately to *produce* the notion of the

individual having achieved. Teachers are judged by their students' scores, but students and teachers must also be judged *only* as individuals. It would be more reasonable to say that teachers should be judged, but then students should receive allowances based on the quality of teaching.

In order for scores to be considered valid, the “complex composed of men and things” (Foucault, 1978/2000, p. 208) must be employed to create the individual's score, a thing which is less than a person but more than just a number, a singular representation of “men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those things that are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities...” (Foucault 1978/2000, p. 208-209) All the interesting things about a person are paired down to one or two numbers. Those with higher numbers have learned more efficiently than those with lower numbers.

Fully-governed teachers and students may or may not accept that their merit is driven by their score, but their acceptance is not required since most key institutions such as potential employers or universities consume their scores in an attempt to evaluate them for employment or further study, for example. The end result is that students are subjected to an educational system which treats them as autonomous test-takers, then evaluates them based on their performance on tests assuming they have learned autonomously, thus solidifying many students' belief in an economic ontology of learning. The more successful teachers and students may resist an analysis of governance presented in this paper or even wish to champion the ontology which validates them as successful on their individual merit alone.

The tragic irony is that this economic ontology is so prevalent that it may become difficult for teachers and students to analyze the system of governance which acts on

them. Assessments put forth an ontology which preferences individual merit, thus the analysis of assessments as mechanisms of production within a grid of intelligibility may seem alien to students who have been shown that they must act and learn on their own. The final victory of governance is that it perpetuates its own ideology. In contrast, in order to understand governmentality, relations within political economy must be considered: relations between possibility and the policies made, relations between security and economy, and the way policies require economic operation (Foucault, 1978/2000). Students may find this mode of inquiry unfamiliar, but in fact many would find cause to resist this analysis, as they may wish to ‘own’ their accomplishments instead of admitting that scores are the result of a subjugation of learning to economics.

As individuals, students are taught to take responsibility for themselves and only themselves and that others are only interested in a student’s ability to prove individual merit. Provided the student does not drop out, they are exposed many times during their educational career to a process which demands that they act only as a neoliberal whose time and energy are measured and individuated for economic purposes, with the outcome that many students emerge from high school having ‘bought into’ this system of governance.

Is there hope for the future beyond neoliberal thought? Unfortunately, there seems to be no possibility for fully defeating the neoliberal order of things, nor does it seem reasonable to hope that standardized tests which individuate students will disappear in the near future. However, this does not preclude the promotion of more relational ontologies in the minds of students. Neoliberalism essentializes knowledge for the purpose of writing the test question, the curricular objective, and the timed lesson, but promoters of alternate ontologies can work within these systems to show the errors

in these systems. Are photosynthesis and respiration two completely different processes conducted by plants and animals respectively, or are both inseparable parts of a continual process which must necessarily entangles both plants *and* animals? While the story of early 21st-century education is of one ontology, we have reason to hope and motive to change the story so that education in the mid-21st century may include multiple ontologies, many different ways of seeing student achievement.

All domains have subjugated knowledges, but it is probably not advantageous that educational theory, the domain teachers need to study in order to be certified, is displaced by economic theory. Teachers were not interviewed about why some leave the profession, but it is possible that the knowledge area that is their expertise being displaced by neoliberal economic theory causes dissatisfaction.

Teacher Resistance

One of the three main research questions asked what teachers could do to resist. Little more can be said than that almost every teacher interviewed did not change a thing in their teaching practice, and only one teacher made minor changes. Perhaps they succeeded in resisting since they refused to be transformed by the reform put in place years ago by a former president and facilitated by state and county officials. Their resistance was not oppositional, but it was nearly total. They did not let pay-for-performance affect their lives. Perhaps this was always going to happen, since many teachers, by entering the field of education, have already decided to put passion over profit.

In an earlier version of this dissertation, a research question had to do with exploring how teachers might act ethically in a pay-for-performance system. However, upon reflection, the ethics of good teaching practice did not change at all. Teachers

evaluated for a possible pay-for-performance reward should not change their teaching practice for a possible bonus. There was a question about ethical action, and an answer was formed, but it turned out to not be a *research* question because answering the ethical piece did not need to involve any actual investigation. Teachers should continue to implement good teaching practice, not because of a possible reward, but because this is how the idea of a good teacher is created. “From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art.” (Foucault, 1984, p. 351) To resist neoliberalism, teachers continued to practice the art of teaching.

Their practice makes room for a counterargument that would make sense in a neoliberal paradigm, namely, that the \$12.37 million used to fund pay-for-performance was not properly allocated, and thus was used inefficiently. In doing so, teachers may also say how they think that money should be allocated. Certainly, education in the times of COVID-19 requires as much internet-capable and portable technology as possible. Hindsight being 20/20 (in 2020!), GCPS would not have missed several thousand more laptops and wifi hotspots, nor would it have missed an extra local school technology coordinator, a person well-versed in educational technologies that supports teachers at their school or online. Of course, GCPS cannot be blamed for not seeing technological needs that arose so quickly, as few knew how COVID-19 would affect public schools.

Reform to Reform

Foucault describes the logic of the operation of the Hôpital Général, a place to house the beggars and the insane, which opened in Paris in 1656. “What is the source of the disorders at Bicetre?’ the men of the Revolution were again to ask. And they would

supply the answer that had already been given in the seventeenth century: ‘It is idleness. What is the means of remedying it? Work.’” (1965/1988, p. 54) Those understood to be vagrant or insane were taken there by force, and once there, the building operated much like a workhouse where people were to make clothes and other goods. The problem noticed at the time was that the insane were not working hard enough, and the single remedy was that people should be forced to work harder. This was the case even though the clothes and other products made were of such low quality that most products coming out of the Hôpital Général were deemed to be useless.

Measured by their functional value alone, the creation of the houses of confinement can be regarded as a failure. Their disappearance throughout Europe, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as receiving centers for the indigent and prisons of poverty, was to sanction their ultimate failure: a transitory and ineffectual remedy, a social precaution clumsily formulated by a nascent industrialization. And yet, in this very failure, the classical period conducted an irreducible experiment. What appears to us today as a clumsy dialectic of production and prices then possessed its real meaning as a certain ethical consciousness of labor, in which the difficulties of the economic mechanisms lost their urgency in favor of an affirmation of value. (Foucault, 1965/1988 p. 54-55)

To the modern neoliberal mind, this would seem a tremendous waste. And yet, a very similar thing seems to have happened to the teachers, since there is *no evidence*

that teaching or test scores improved between 2017 and 2019. To give one public example, the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) for GCPS remained almost exactly the same: 82.4 in 2017, 83.0 in 2018, and 82.5 in 2019 (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2020). In today's neoliberal times, people are forced to compete. For the purposes of pay-for-performance, it does not really matter whether or not it makes sense that teachers who competed really improved their teaching, but the output of the system is that it allows for the discourse that teachers were evaluated in a competitive framework. The "best" teachers were constructed.

This allows the reform movement to continually recreate itself. Various standardized evaluations continually allow for the discourse that some students, teachers, counties and schools are "falling behind" or "below average", a normative judgement that lacks a coherent standard. In any normative evaluation, there will be a below average group, which does not mean they have not achieved. For example, Participant 1 explained that, in their elementary school, scores in 5th grade are the worst of the grades, followed by 4th graders, and so on. The curriculum gets more difficult with grade level, but the below average continue to fall behind. This does not imply that 5th grade teachers are doing a worse job teaching or that students are learning less, only that more 5th-graders are trying to negotiate learning with content that is above them.

In effect, the teachers experienced competition without deregulation, which, theoretically, should have come from neoliberal reforms since they are meant to be "liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills." (Harvey, 2005, p. 2) No freedoms or skills were liberated based on the interviews, nor were there necessarily extra responsibilities given. There may have been changes that were missed by the interviewer. The main changes from a Foucauldian perspective are the increased

domain of the standardized test and the teacher evaluation. The continuation is that another reform created a normative distribution of high- and low-achieving teachers and students, allowing the argument for the *next* reform to take shape, which remains to be seen.

CHAPTER 7

PAY-FOR-PERFORMANCE ACCORDING TO TEACHERS

In Chapter 4, Ryan and Deci's (2020) *self-determination theory* was reviewed, including three basic needs which the authors identify as necessary for motivation and development: *autonomy*, *competence* and *relatedness*. This chapter will try to gauge teachers' motivational changes based on pay-for-performance, focusing on how pay-for-performance satisfied these three needs, or does not. This chapter will end with an attempt to describe how qualitative interviews are different over Zoom using Don Ihde's and Peter-Paul Verbeek's concept of *postphenomenology*, concluding with an understanding of the *posts* in general.

Autonomy

Ryan and Deci (2020) describe autonomy as the extent to which people perceive that they are capable of making their own decisions. Generally, if people see they are able to realize their own initiative and ownership over their choices, then they are motivated to put increased thought and effort into those choices. On the other hand, if they see that most of their choices are subject to external control (perhaps implicit control through a system of rewards and punishments), then they are likely to show less interest. More than one teacher expressed decreasing motivation due to a lack of control:

Teachers attributing results to external locus of control

Participant 1: "First-year teachers, or novice teachers in general, can work their asses off, and they are working their asses off! First-year teachers, or second-, third-year

teachers are some of the hardest-working teachers I know, pulling the longest hours, but you don't know what you don't know, like, you can't know all the content Day 1, that's just not gonna happen. You have to get some time...like, I would not have gotten this award in my first several years, I may not have even gotten it the year before. As a teacher, I think you get better every single year, and not even just by a little bit. Every year, I'm like, 'Wow! I cannot believe what I was doing last year compared to now!'"

Participant 3: "The system is trying to build us up to all be better teachers, but it's not working in that manner, I believe, especially not in this digital world."

Seeing that the pay-for-performance system does not take into account the initiative and hard work that teachers often bring to their practice, these teachers experienced decreased motivation.

Competence

Ryan and Deci (2020) define competence as a feeling of mastery or an experience of success upon exerting effort. This is most likely to manifest in an environment where people feel challenges are reasonable, people receive positive feedback when they do well, and they can see opportunities to grow in their craft. Professional development is a habit that many schools promote, but it is possible that a normative pay-for-performance system hampers these in a teaching environment since it challenges teachers not to achieve on reasonable goals but on arbitrary goals defined by their colleagues' skill, does not result in positive feedback for most, and most likely does not result in identifying opportunities for growth. Teachers did not see the respect and caring about their teaching practice show through the pay-for-performance system, and thus were likely to exhibit decreased motivation.

Teachers at Title I Schools did not expect to receive Category 1 Awards

Participant 1: “Like, I knew there’s no chance that I’m going to get the Tier 1 or Level 1 or whatever they call it, where it’s all the teachers in the county, because I can’t compete with other teachers in the county. We’re 93% free and reduced, or something like that. So, I knew I wasn’t going to get that award.”

Participant 2: “This isn’t going to happen...How could they ever make a fair process, particularly with special education teachers? We were all going to be under the scrutiny of everybody...it didn’t sit well with me at all.”

Participant 3: “I remember how agitated I was about it...Colleagues were fighting with each other.”

Participant 5: “Gwinnett County is known for coming up for big initiatives, and then they never actually come to fruition, and they just say, ‘You know, we’re just going to keep doing what we’re doing.’ A few years ago, they put out some statement saying they weren’t going to pay for advanced degrees anymore (except for those that were grandfathered in), and then obviously there was some backlash, and they changed their minds. Gwinnett County is known for not following through with what they say, so at the time, I didn’t think anything was going to become of it, so the people that I talked to, I was like, ‘Yeah, don’t worry about it. I don’t think it’s ever going to happen.’

In this situation, it seems that teacher competence was not fully appreciated by pay-for-performance. Goals were arbitrarily norm-referenced and thus not always reasonable. The system, according to Participant 3, resulted in unhealthy competition when colleagues were fighting, perhaps demonstrating that the goals they were asked to achieve were not completely clear. Pay-for-performance resulted in an environment

where competence could not be fully realized, and the deprivation of this basic psychological need resulted in teachers that did not try to achieve on this system.

Relatedness

Ryan and Deci (2020) explain that relatedness involves a person realizing that the effort they put forward matters to others. To teachers, this is most often felt when their teaching practice results in greater student achievement. Some teachers reported that the pay-for-performance assessment was disconnected from doing what was best for the students.

Teachers thought assessments were unfair based on subject/students

Participant 1: “I know first grade and second grade for sure, they only have two DAs. They have reading and math, and those are the only standardized tests that those kids take for the first parts, other than ITBS. Obviously, they’re not doing Milestones. So they only have two DAs, which their scores are based off, Reading and Math, which, Math in my school population is always our highest score, and especially in lower grades, they normally do really, really well on the math tests just because of what the standards are at that level. And then, we switch to upper grades, 3, 4 and 5, which is what I was at at the time. We have four DAs: Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, and then on top of that, we have Milestones, so we do test prep all year long, the kids are literally always testing, and they therefore hate testing, and some of them choose not to do it, some of them say it’s BS and just don’t try, don’t do whatever, so my general perception of it before is that “this is bullshit”, because the K-2 teachers are gonna get the award. Their kids have two tests they take the entire year, I mean, they always score better than upper grades anyway because, you know, the knowledge builds and the standards build as you

go up, so 5th grade has the worst test scores, 4th grade has the second-worst test scores, literally it just falls like that.”

Participant 2: “Where did our equality come into this play?...Too many independent variables that weren’t gonna be considered...Certain administrators evaluate so incredibly different from another administrator.”

Participant 3: “How would it work with art teachers? How would it work with PE teachers?”

Teachers noted that subject and age were key differences that were not taken into account by the pay-for-performance assessment.

Teachers saw unfairness after awards came out

Participant 1: “Yes, so after the awards came out, it was greatly noticed that everybody at Title I, schoolteachers did not get as many awards...I believe it’s something like 16% of non-Title I teachers got the highest award at the county level, and it was 4.04% of Title I got that, so there’s a really big discrepancy there, and that’s for several reasons. Number one, I think it is related to the student growth, just in general. I also think it’s related to evaluations. It’s hard to look as good as you might look when you’re being observed with different kinds of kids. And a big factor was WSA, that school score, cause I don’t know how many poverty points you get, I don’t know if you know, Travis, is it like 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 out of a hundred, like, that just contributes to poverty, and that does not make up for the other stuff that we have going on. And that’s my *big* problem with this whole thing is that it’s, yeah, it’s inequitable, it’s not fair, it’s rigged.”

Participant 2: “How come we got no recognition at all?”

Participant 3: “The gentlemen down the hall from us, social studies teacher, his score was astronomical, whereas mine was a lot lower. He teaches accelerated kids, we teach SpEd kids, same administrators basically.”

Teachers noticing a more competitive environment

Participant 1: “More collaborative environment to a more competitive environment”

Participant 4: “Once co-workers start to talk about it, they were saying that ‘No, I think it’s gonna get more competitive now...they’re going to be more critical.’”

Participant 4: “And then there was another teacher, this person basically had the same attitude, but he was like, ‘They’re competitive. It’s definitely competitive.’ When we were in our curriculum meetings, you have people that share ideas, but at the end of the day, it’s competitive, so they do want to make sure that, when they’re evaluated, that they stand out. Because if they feel that, if there’s a particular budget, and that not everybody can get these bonuses, they do want to stand out. It’s not that they know this for sure, but that’s how some people think.”

These teachers did not see the results of their time spent with the students and administration valued by pay-for-performance. The communal aspect of teaching is totally ignored by an individualizing system. Ultimately, these teachers are determined to have *amotivation* towards pay-for-performance. Almost all of them refused to engage with the system:

Teachers refusing the system

Interviewer: “After you learned about pay-for-performance, did you make any changes to your teaching practice?”

Participant 3: “Absolutely not...[My co-teacher] and I were more concerned about the children’s growth. I didn’t want to get into that competition...”

Participant 4: “No.”

Participant 5: “No.”

Participant 3: “The system is trying to build us up to all be better teachers, but it’s not working in that manner, I believe, especially not in this digital world.”

Participant 3: “I think more teachers are going to leave the county because of it....I’ve thought about this quite a bit. If I were ever to talk to a new kid, or someone that’s coming into education, I wouldn’t come into Gwinnett County because of this. I don’t think it’s fair.”

Only one piece of counterevidence was found by examining the transcripts:

One teacher experiencing positive feelings about the system

Participant 5: “At the time, in 2017, I was a Teacher of the Year Runner Up, so I was somewhat excited because, at the time, based on the initial speaking of it, that I would be more than likely one of the ones that received the bonus.”

Summary

Pay-for-performance, a normative system that gives teachers bonuses based on student test score increases and administrator perception of teacher development, was seen by teachers as discouraging of their autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In short, the GCPS pay-for-performance system was seen as *amotivating* (Ryan and Deci, 2020) for teachers.

“Being” Online: Noticing Humans, Acknowledging Humanity

This section considers the human experience of interviewing over Zoom. It attempts to theorize what it is like to recognize others online and how this experience might be mediated by interviewing online. Many online interactions are person-to-person(s) through email, discussion forums, comments or Zoom, but oftentimes, the

experience is both literally and figuratively distant and different from a face-to-face conversation. Typically, in face-to-face teaching and learning situations (as teacher, learner, and/or interviewer), it is of no difficulty to recognize that other people are observing, thinking, feeling human beings, and also that those people in turn see the other human as a thinking person too. It is different online. This section attempts to unpack how it is different. The phenomenon of *recognizing a human being* seems to be mediated by the online nature of the interview. The postphenomenologists Don Ihde and Peter-Paul Verbeek argue that technology necessarily mediates experiential phenomena. Postphenomenological research parallels certain educational psychological research on the science of online teaching.

The unfamiliarity of clicking to interact over Zoom is partly but not entirely due to the habit and repetition of attending many more face-to-face classes and interviews and being more used to the experience than online classes or interviews. There are awkward aspects unique to the experience of a Zoom interview, such as the email exchange beforehand when Zoom links are shared and clicked on. Zoom necessitates email or some other online connection and thus excludes many without reliable internet.

The main idea is that conversations over Zoom often seem a degree removed from the regular experience interacting with humans face-to-face. This does not mean that they are always worse for interviewing. Zoom makes people accessible online and is a necessity for interviewing during a pandemic. Thus, COVID-19 asserts itself as an obstacle in the interview process.

Mediated Recognition

It is almost certain that the phenomenon is related to the medium of experience, The perspective of Don Ihde's post-phenomenology will play a part, as this perspective presumes that *most* media affect *most* experiences people have. While Ihde leaves room for completely unmediated experiences, like a person looking at a tree, he argues that most experiences of people in developed nations today are mediated in some way (Verbeek, 2001). The technology used to learn over distance most likely fits into two different categories. One type are *background relations*, which are ways that technology mediates our experiences without us necessarily being conscious of it, like the electricity, hardware, software, and internet used to experience the online content through our computers. The other type are *embodiment relations* where humans use technology to help produce the experience that is often produced using less technology, like when Zoom's sound and video sometimes feels like the other person is in the room. In many ways, online content is useful for replicating face-to-face content, although it is certainly not the same. Compare the differences of a simple exercise like reading a short text on a computer screen with reading the same text on a piece of paper. Many things, including the objective of understanding the text and the 'text' itself are identical, but the experience is not. This is a part of the post-phenomenological perspective known as *mediation theory* (Verbeek, 2018).

The main idea of *postphenomenology*, a branch of the philosophy of technology, is that the *phenomenon* of analysis in the traditional phenomenological study should not be understood as an entirely human-produced experience, but instead the phenomenon can better be understood as a *relation* between the human and the medium of technology (Ihde, 2008). After the Empirical Turn, post-phenomenology

looks at cases in order to explicate the material's agentic relationship between the human and the phenomenon, but according to Ihde (2008), "...postphenomenology remains recognizably 'Husserlian,' in the sense that it is 'to the things themselves' that the researcher turns..." (p. 8) However, "the things themselves" are not humans and not entirely human experiences, but experiences-in-context. This is not entirely different from other descriptions of phenomenology, but under post-phenomenology, the "thing itself" is a relational element, which might be present in an online class but absent in a face-to-face class or vice versa. The present-day lifeworld is mediated by technology, and so phenomenology must necessarily be different. This is of course not to say that either phenomenology or the lifeworld is *better* than it was, although it is almost certainly more complicated!

"Can I meet your dog?"

The most endearing moment of interviewing was when Participant 1's partner began to change a lightbulb in another room and their dog started barking. Participant 1 was very apologetic and got up from their seat to tell the dog to be quiet, which the dog did after several more seconds of protest. Once the dog quieted down, Participant 1 returned and continued to apologize. I expressed that it was adorable and that this probably does not happen often during interviews since people's dogs are rarely in the next room, but when under quarantine, the whole family lives, sleeps, eats and works together under the same roof. At the end of the interview, I asked to meet the dog. Participant 1 brought the dog over and held him up to the screen. I said several nice things to the dog while it proceeded to ignore the screen. For some reason, the dog did not treat the computer with the same recognition as a human in the room. The dog refused the interview, the Zoom program, and the entire project, but in all fairness, I did

not explain my research questions to the dog or the fact that I had already secured IRB approval.

It probably bears repeating that the goal of this phenomenological project is *not* to promote this or that technology for qualitative interviews, nor is it to argue that online interviewing should emulate face-to-face interviewing, although online researchers would most likely benefit from trialing different technologies and reflecting on the difference between their online and traditional interviews. The goal of this line of reflection on the project is to understand and analyze how people experience the phenomenon of *recognizing the humanity of others online*. It seems to occur more frequently and intensely over video than discussion text, and in my experience, it has a surprising and delightful quality when humanity is experienced online (especially with dogs!). This is not present in face-to-face experiences of humanity, probably because it is more habitual and expected when meeting humans in a room. I am rarely aware that I am experiencing humanity when looking at humans, perhaps because it is “natural” to experience other humans as humans when we are looking at each other.

Human Faces Online

As mentioned before, the phenomenon of *recognizing human being online* seems to be highly correlated to seeing the human face move, and it seems that there may be evolutionary tendencies which apply to the educational psychology domain. Is it natural to see a list of human names and not have the same experience as humans? Perhaps it is that, and also much simpler. The list does not elicit recognition akin to seeing real humans, because it is not actually any of these humans. It is a *list*, and I should not expect to get the sense of *human-ness* as the face of a human.

This and Many Other “Posts”

This line of thinking has advanced my current understanding of how “posts” arise. I think of “post” like one of Deleuze & Guattari’s “little machines” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Ihde wrote several books describing his thoughts on technology. “A book itself is a little machine; what is the relation (also measurable) of this literary machine to a war machine, love machine, revolutionary machine, etc.—and an abstract machine that sweeps them along?” (p. 4) A book is not the text inside; a book is how it is used, in the assemblage in which it is deployed. “Post” works the same way. “You have constructed your own little machine, ready when needed to be plugged into other collective machines.” (p. 161) The task of researchers in the “posts” is to plug “post” into old ideas and concepts and see what happens.

There is no guarantee that every post will be equally productive. One of the “posts” that is most clearly necessary and productive is *post-colonialism*. The Americans occupied the Philippines and the British occupied India. During their time as occupying empires, they did things that were in their own best interests as occupiers, like taking over or extracting resources, but also they did things that seemed to be in the interests of the people, like paving roads, building schools and ultimately facilitating transfer of governmental authorities before the former occupied powers left. Now what? India and the Philippines were “new” countries suddenly in control of themselves and in charge of the roads, schools, and new government, which they did not have total control in creating, and so on. It is clear that it is necessary to think in postcolonial terms.

However, we can imagine “posts” which are not accurate or useful in our lives. Are we “post-table”? No, I typed most of this dissertation project on various tables. I am typing on a table right now. I ate breakfast on a table...no, we are not “post-table”. And

postphenomenology rests between the two, probably nearer to post-colonial, in terms of the prefix “post” creating a whole new, vibrant area of inquiry which worked to critique and reimagine what phenomenology is meant to be. Postphenomenology is not more special than any other kind of “post”, including posts that have not been invented yet, but the “little machine” of *post-* needs to be plugged into lots of older ideas, some of which will not work, but so that others can reinvent their respective fields in new and interesting ways.

Conclusion

This chapter describes the results of the interview process. It has reviewed the central concepts within Deci and Ryan’s *self-determination theory*, that of *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness*. It has given examples of quotes from transcripts in which teachers described pay-for-performance as detracting from their motivation to improve their teaching practice. One surprising aspect of the interviews concerned the medium of Zoom, which was theorized from details during the interviews and through Don Ihde’s concept of *postphenomenology*.

Ryan and Deci (2020) should be allowed to have the final words here:

Ironically, despite substantial evidence for the importance of psychological need satisfactions in learning contexts, many current educational policies and practices around the globe remain anchored in traditional motivational models that fail to support students’ and teachers’ needs. (p. 1)

CHAPTER 8

ONE POSSIBLE CONCLUSION TO TEACHER PERFORMANCE PAY IN GEORGIA

The idea that all teachers were involuntarily assessed for normative rewards which many of them ended up refusing seems to indicate that the \$12.37 million could have been spent better in other ways. It seems the teachers, including the one who did receive a Category 2 award, would be better served by devoting that money to resources. One such possibility could have been putting the resources into technology, and hindsight being 20/20, this probably should have been done to give schools resources to bring about the emergency virtual education that was needed in March 2020. Gwinnett County wanted to lend each student that did not have a computer at home a Google Chromebook, but a needs analysis at a July school board meeting indicated that they were approximately 40,000 laptops short of that goal.

If a pay-for-performance system is to be required, as per the RT3 grant, then perhaps one could be used or adapted from the past. A possible solution toward a more amicable system presented itself in the University of Georgia archive.

An Archival Search: Pay-for-Performance (1995)

KSTP Channel 5 News segment was found as a VHS tape in the Zell Miller Papers of the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research. Collection IX is audiovisual material containing over 3,000 selections in a variety of formats, including “one and two inch video, betacam, VHS, CDs, DVDs, cassette tapes, mini-cassette tapes, reel-to-reel, and Umatic tape.” This collection includes “inaugurations, public appearances, speeches, debates, interviews, press conferences, campaign commercials” and Miller’s

appearances and mentions on television shows (University of Georgia Libraries, 2018). This audiovisual collection is organized by format. This particular news segment is found inside one of 269 boxes of VHS tapes, not all of which have been viewed and catalogued at present (University of Georgia Libraries, 2018). This VHS tape was digitized by an archivist and the two minute fifty second video clip was made available for research purposes online.

Unfulfilled Expectations (What was not there?)

I would have liked to see much more on teacher performance pay. I know that archives are not prepared to the researchers' order, but I certainly would have expected more on teacher evaluation. For example, former governor Zell Miller gave a great deal of public school education for much of his governorship, with the HOPE scholarship being his flagship educational program. As can be seen from the below transcript, the Pay-for-Performance system began in 1994 and was reported on in this segment in 1995. Former governor Zell Miller had plans to continue the system, but no records in the Zell Miller Papers about news reports after 1995, or notice of its cancellation, could be found, nor could an announcement (news, speeches, drafts or final bills, etc.) of another system put in its place could be found.

This VHS tape exists in the Zell Miller Papers which document the political life of Zell Miller as congressman and governor. There are many other political lives documented in the Russell Special Collection which have been procured in the same way, being that a politician leaving office chose to send their papers to the archive.

Themes and Concerns

This collection might have been sent from former governor Zell Miller's office, similar to the Darden Papers, also in the Richard B. Russell collections. It includes

papers and media which focus on Miller's political career, of which this Pay-for-Performance system was one policy he put into place. Zell Miller can be seen very briefly in the segment in a short cut of him shaking hands at a political event, but he is not directly quoted or interviewed in this news segment. This selection was most likely included because it relates to a program the former governor championed and worked to fund. The collection includes materials produced by the governor's office, such as campaign literature, brochures and press releases, but also other sources which discuss the governor's stances and policies. This video clip is transcribed in the Appendix.

Digital Recording

The archivist, Christopher Lopez, was very helpful in digitizing the news segment from the VHS tape. My understanding is that transcribing the news segment and documenting it in a dissertation it falls under Fair Use, but I would need to seek permission if I wanted to rebroadcast the news segment.

Secondary Sources

I went to search for all of the secondary sources I could find about Miller's pay-for-performance system. The sources I have found related to the 1994-1995 are all political reports. The one website I have reviewed thus far is *On the Issues* which documents various politicians as they campaign, collecting their statements of which policies they support and oppose. Zell Miller has an ample Education page as he was active in policy-crafting in that area (On the Issues, 2000). It mentions his support for teacher pay-for-performance dating back to at least 1991 when he issued a press release supporting the policy.

There have also been at least three books written which review Georgia's pay-for-performance policy. Miller wrote several autobiographical works, but I only found one

focusing on his gubernatorial record and time in office, emphasizing his myriad of accomplishments (Miller, 1999). Reily (2014) wrote a book about how performance-based compensation in the public sector has been decreasing in practice and popularity, citing Miller's system as an example of a statewide policy which would be much less common or popular today. The last source I found was a work on how the agenda of governors work to divide state governments in their relationship with state legislatures (Assendelft, 1997).

Research Topics and Questions

Before checking the archives, I did not know there was a statewide pay-for-performance system prior to 2014. (While my family has been involved in education in Georgia for decades, we moved here in the summer of 1998, a few months before Miller's governorship would end. Georgia's pay-for-performance system had ended by this time.)

Gwinnett County's current pay-for-performance system, their system in place today involves evaluating *all* teachers in public schools as individuals in the county based on teacher observations, student growth as measured by pre- and post-test scores, professional development, and an assessment weighting based on school (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2020). Differences in these systems are summarized in Table 1.

While Miller's 1995 pay-for-performance system involved teams of teachers signing up together and making their own goals, the current GCPs system involves individualized assessment of teachers whether they would prefer this assessment or not. It would seem that Miller's 1995 pay-for-performance plan would allow teachers to better realize the basic psychological needs of *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness* stipulated in Ryan and Deci's (2020) *self-determination theory*. Autonomy would be

better realized by a voluntary system where teachers set their own goals. Competence would be better realized by focusing only on student achievement and by giving a single reward based on success or failure. Relatedness would be better realized by the team-based and cooperative nature of performance. Possible benefits are summarized in Table 2:

Table 2. Key differences between two performance pay systems.

Georgia, 1995	Gwinnett, 2019
Team-based	Individual teacher-based
Voluntary	Involuntary
Cooperative	Competitive
One level of reward	Tiered levels of rewards
Goals set by teachers	Goals norm-referenced
One category: student achievement	Four categories: PD, observation, school weight

Conclusion to this dissertation

This study has focused on three research questions:

1. What are the historical underpinnings and theoretical framework of Gwinnett County's pay-for-performance system?
2. How did pay-for-performance shift power relations from a Foucauldian perspective?
3. How did individual teachers respond to the pay-for-performance system?

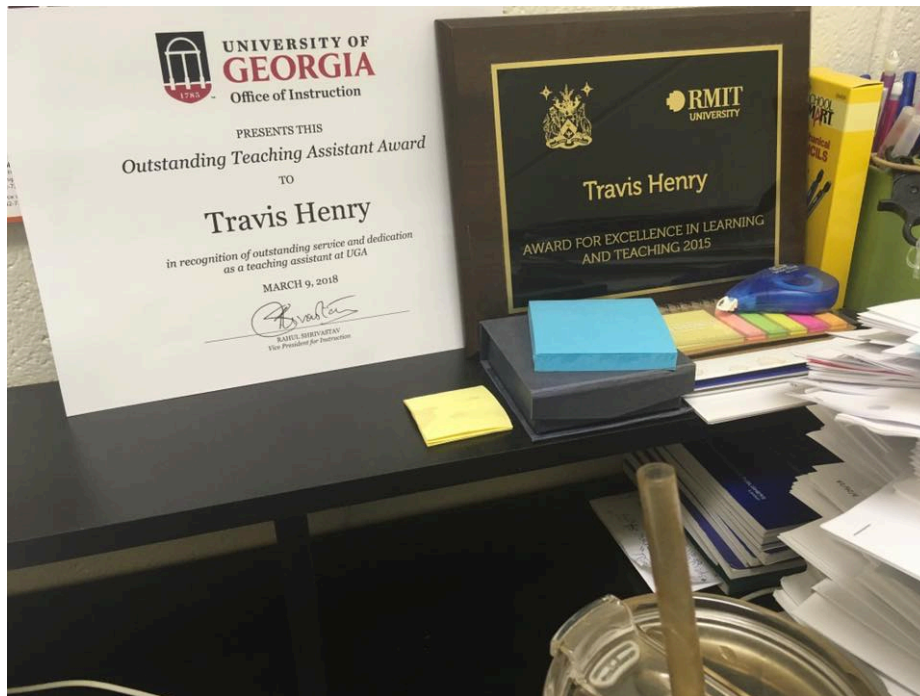
The first question was answered in Chapters 2-4, which explored several Foucauldian concepts before Chapter 3 summarized the role of neoliberalism in the construction of modern salary schedules and ideas on pay-for-performance. The second question was answered in Chapter 6 when it was seen that, while many teachers resisted by refusing to engage with the pay-for-performance system, performance pay had still

affected the discourse of the teaching environment, and thus had affected the power relations. More possibilities were realized for both standardized tests and administrator assessments' ability to describe teachers as better or worse. Most teachers ended up ignoring the pay-for-performance system. The third research question has a similar answer for different reasons, elaborated in Chapter 7. Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory was used to interpret transcripts of qualitative interviews and revealed that teachers responded to pay-for-performance with *amotivation*, a lack of motivation, and more than of them justified this by saying that it had nothing to do with teaching practice. Perhaps pay-for-performance was simply a distraction from learning about good teaching practice, and if this is so, this dissertation study is fully guilty of being distracted.

Directions for future research: Other possibilities

I believe that there are many ways to reward and recognize good teachers, but it seems rather arbitrary to recognize the "best" 10% to 20% of teachers based solely on a mathematical evaluation. I get the sense that some of the negativity the teachers expressed was due to the arbitrary nature of who was rewarded. Perhaps other systems might be invented which can show a more personal touch. Two of my most treasured artifacts from my fourteen years of teaching are both awards that did not come with a cash prize, but were given to me in short ceremonies by the respective schools. Perhaps more personalized, yet less expensive, avenues for recognition could be possible.

Figure 6. My two teaching awards in my office.



EPILOGUE

GOING BACK TO SCHOOL, THE START OF AN ETHNOGRAPHY

The largest part of this dissertation was completed by the end of September, 2020. On October 1st, 2020, I started a job as a 7th-grade science teacher at a GCPS middle school. My experiences serve as an entirely different source of data that describe what GCPS teachers are going through currently. Postqualitative inquirers would not be surprised to find that a different method of collecting “data” resulted in a totally different experience and interpretation from the others.

While this dissertation focused on hearing the voices of current teachers on pay-for-performance, the day-to-day concerns of teachers at middle school during the COVID-19 pandemic are very different. In the last month, I have not heard one word about pay-for-performance, and the county does not expect to be able to implement pay-for-performance during the 2020-21 academic year due to the pandemic’s myriad effects on the ability to administer standardized tests and to observe teachers in the way that the system was designed. This chapter may be useful for scholars interested in a description of what is best called Emergency COVID Schooling rather than home schooling, distance learning, or online schooling (Jones and Hughes, n. p.)

During the summer, GCPS gave parents a choice about how they would like their child(ren) educated during the first semester of the 2020-21 academic year. They were given the choice of either at-home digital learning or face-to-face learning. As of this writing at the beginning of November, about 20% of the students are going back in-person and the rest are learning online. Teachers are required to report to school each

day. The best explanation of the motivational aspects of teachers is from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, although this was not mentioned in the study proper. Teachers suffer from a lack of motivation for higher-order needs due to a lack of *security* because of COVID-19. On Wednesday, October 28th, there were 80,000 new COVID cases in the United States. On Thursday, October 29th, there were 90,000 new cases. On Friday, October 30th, there were almost 100,000 new cases (New York Times, 2020)

Why do we fear for our safety? In short, social distancing is not possible in many cases at a middle school. Buses cannot accommodate students sitting six feet apart, and the small hallways leading to classrooms cannot accommodate students standing or walking six feet apart from other students. In the classroom and hallways, middle schoolers are often quite energetic, and although there may be only eight students in a room, they often desire to talk and show each other videos on their phones, and they need almost constant reminders to stay distanced. Certain bottlenecks in and around the classroom, such as the one and only entrance to the classroom, cannot accommodate proper social distancing, as can be seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7. The Social Distancing Provision Above My Classroom Door



GCPS' current plan on the books is for all students to return to face-to-face learning in January. This plan makes very optimistic assumptions about the pandemic ending in the next two months, and many speculate that this plan will be changed soon. Several administrators at the school are guessing and preparing for a Semester 2 that begins very similarly to Semester 1 through parents being given a choice as to how they would like their child educated. All of this is to say that teachers probably care less about pay-for-performance than they did last year. I certainly do. Each morning I do not wake up with symptoms is a good morning. One member of my immediate family and at least two extended family relatives have already contracted COVID-19. Our family is very lucky that no one has died from it. This is not how I would have liked or ever expected to close my dissertation study, but researchers commit to telling the truth(s). The interviewees and writers quoted in this study have told their truths. This is one other.

Stay safe, Readers.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Exempt Letter



UNIVERSITY OF
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Human Research Protection Program

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

July 17, 2020

Dear [Pedro Portes](#):

On 7/17/2020, the Human Subjects Office reviewed the following submission:

Title of Study:	Henry Dissertation
Investigator:	Pedro Portes
Co-Investigator:	Travis Henry
IRB ID:	PROJECT00001741
Review Category:	Exempt 2ii

We have determined that the proposed research is Exempt. The research activities may begin 7/17/2020.

Since this study was determined to be exempt, please be aware that not all future modifications will require review by the IRB. For more information please see Appendix C of the Exempt Research Policy (<https://research.uga.edu/docs/policies/compliance/hso/IRB-Exempt-Review.pdf>). As noted in Section C.2., you can simply notify us of modifications that will not require review via the "Add Public Comment" activity.

A progress report will be requested prior to 7/17/2025. Before or within 30 days of the progress report due date, please submit a progress report or study closure request. Submit a progress report by navigating to the active study and selecting Progress Report. The study may be closed by selecting Create Version and choosing Close Study as the submission purpose.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

Jennifer Freeman, IRB Analyst
Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia

Appendix B: Recruitment Email

Henry Dissertation Study REVISED

ID: PROJECT00001741

Recruitment Email and Consent form (No Signature Needed)

[Email Begins Below]

Dear Participant,

My name is Travis Henry. I am a graduate student in the Educational Psychology Department at the University of Georgia under the supervision of Professor Pedro Portes. I am inviting you to take part in a research study.

This study aims to find out the effects that Gwinnett County Public Schools' 2018-2019 performance pay initiative had on the teaching environment and teaching practice. As part of this dissertation study, I am seeking to interview Gwinnett County Public School teachers to understand their thoughts and feelings about Gwinnett County's performance pay system. I am doing research on performance pay and its effects on teacher motivation and teaching practice. This research is not affiliated with Gwinnett County Public Schools and will not directly report information to GCPS.

You are receiving this invitation because you are a Gwinnett County Public School teacher. I am looking for five to seven teachers to share their feelings in an individual recorded interview. If you are willing, I would like to interview you for about 60 minutes, recorded over Zoom, or if you prefer, over the phone or email.

Participation is voluntary. You can refuse to take part or stop at any time without penalty. You may delete this email without penalty or further communication from me.

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study besides the time commitment. There are questions about the feelings of teachers regarding performance pay that may make you uncomfortable. You can skip these questions if you do not wish to answer them by saying "Pass".

This research involves the transmission of data over the Internet. Every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure the effective use of available technology; however, confidentiality during online communication cannot be guaranteed.

This study may benefit scholarly work regarding how good teaching is evaluated and how teachers are rewarded. Your responses may help us understand the relationship between performance pay and teacher motivation and performance. Member checking will be conducted, meaning that in the event that the researcher would like to quote from or write about your interview, the researcher will be contacted in order to approve, change or delete from the pages which involve your interview.

Research records will be labeled with study IDs, not your name. These will be kept on a password-protected computer, accessible only to the researchers. This list will be destroyed once we have finished collecting information from all participants.

The results of this study will be published in a dissertation at UGA. It will possibly be published in a scholarly educational journal. Recordings and transcripts will not be used in any future research. Gwinnett County Public Schools will not be directly made aware of any identifiable information.

If you are interested in participating or have questions about this research, please feel free to contact me at 770-841-3523 or email travis.henry25@uga.edu. If you have any complaints or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board at 706-542-3199 or by email at IRB@uga.edu.

Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Travis Henry, PhD Candidate

Department of Educational Psychology

University of Georgia

Aderhold Hall

110 Carlton Street

Athens, GA 30043

[Email Ends]

Appendix C: Question schedule

Semi-structured interview, approximately 60 minutes over Zoom

Tell me about the time that you first heard about Pay for Performance.

[if necessary, “Do you remember what you thought? felt?”]

Did you talk to anyone about Pay for Performance between then and December? [If so, what did you say? To whom? Where?]

Did you attend a meeting or workshop about Pay-for-Performance? [If so, what meeting/workshop? Who facilitated that meeting? What did you say during the meeting?]

Did you make any changes in your teaching practice after the announcement? Rewards were distributed on Wednesday, December 18th. What do you remember about that day? [Did you hear anyone talking about it? Did you read or hear any news?]

Is there anything else you would like to say about Pay-for-Performance?

Is there something you wished you could have said to another person? [If so, who? What?]

Appendix D: Transcript of news segment

Channel 5 Eyewitness News segment aired between January 13th-16th, 1995

Transcript of video, 2 minutes 50 seconds

Bold text is displayed in Chyron [bracketed text by author]

Jim Axel [news anchor]: Governor Zell Miller plans to spend close to \$4 million this year to pay incentive bonuses to Georgia teachers. It's a major expansion of a program that got off the ground last year, and it appears to be succeeding. Channel 5's Paul Yates went to a Metro-Atlanta school where teachers have their bonuses in hand.

Paul Yates: These 5th graders are ready to solve science problems at Cobb County's Tripp Elementary School. Their accomplishments grew in both science and math after their school was involved in the state's new pay-for-performance program.

Unidentified male 5th grader [no chyron]: We all worked together in different science projects, and that was really fun, I liked that.

Paul Yates: Students worked in special programs that cut across grade lines.

A second unidentified male student [no chyron]: It just totally brought out a new way of looking on at science and math.

Paul Yates: Tripp was one of ten Georgia schools where teachers won cash awards by setting goals for students, then showing that the goals had been achieved through test scores.

Jean Keller, 5th-grade teacher: It helped the children to realize that they could be scientists. Our first club had about 100 children in it. The club that we have now has 250.

Paul Yates: Each teacher got a bonus of \$2,000, before taxes.

Laverne Evans, lead teacher: Some of us used it for college, and some of us paid bills, and some of us I'm sure bought more materials to put right back into the classroom, but, uh...that was a real nice, nice bonus.

Lana Kleimon, 4th-grade teacher: But I think beyond the monetary award, and that was nice, I'm not negating that, was the fact that it was recognition, that we had worked so hard to accomplish something that we had set out as a goal.

Paul Yates: Now the program has expanded to include 45 Georgia schools, and the Governor's proposing new spending to reward them next summer if they meet their goals. After spending \$1 million on the program last year, the governor is requesting \$3.7 million this year. Parents are among the supporters of the pay-for-performance idea.

Audrey Sanazaro, parent: learned a lot. I think they came really excited about science and math, there's a math and science club now, my children are very involved in it and look forward to it, yes, I think there's a real presence of math and science here now, and scores, as you know, increased.

Paul Yates: And so has students' enthusiasm.

A third unidentified male student [no chyron]: It was just a lot of fun and I liked everything. I really love science.

Paul Yates: It's not easy for schools to participate in the program. Applications have to be approved, a lot of teamwork is required by teachers, and Jim, the state requires documentation that goals have been met.

Jim Axel: Paul, what kind of a success rate are we seeing in the schools that are doing this?

Paul Yates: Well, Jim, this past year, uh, eighteen schools were approved, uh, to go ahead and participate, and they went through the process, and of that number, ten actually met their objectives, and uh, the bonuses came in, so the requirements are pretty strenuous.

Jim Axel: Better than 50%, though. Alright, Paul Yates, thanks.

[2:50 – End of transcript]