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# Prospective Elementary Teachers Gone Wild? An Analysis of Facebook Self- Portrayals and Expected Dispositions of Preservice Elementary Teachers

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## Abstract

This study was conducted in response to several recent incidents in which teachers and student teachers were reprimanded for content they placed on the Internet. This study examined the Facebook postings of preservice elementary teachers to determine the extent to which these postings are congruent with expected dispositions. Profiles were analyzed to determine the appropriateness of the content, and when inappropriate, the nature of the behavior depicted on the site. Findings indicated that 32% of elementary education majors in this study had an unrestricted profile on Facebook, and only 22% of those profiles were devoid of inappropriate content. These numbers are likely conservative due to other networking sites that may be in use. The nature of the inappropriate behavior is cause for concern for teacher educators who are expected to teach and assess dispositions and who must decide whether or not a prospective teacher is ready for the ethical responsibility of teaching children.

Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil.

C. S. Lewis, English essayist and novelist (1898-1963)

## Background

Honorable character and virtuous behavior have always been associated with the noble title *teacher*. This association is reflected in the high expectations society has for teachers that go well beyond effective teaching of subject matter content. Teachers work with students, often impressionable children, who are undeniably influenced by the behavior of adults—particularly, those in close proximity to them. Thus, teachers are also expected to teach and model high character and moral standards. At the very least, teachers' questionable conduct and particular behaviors that are reserved for adults are not to be made public. Any teacher who advertises such behaviors will likely suffer career-ending consequences.

However, today's prospective teachers have access to technologies that blur the distinction between public and private space (Bugeja, 2005). The ease of making and sharing videos, taking and distributing unlimited digital images instantly, talking on the telephone in places outside the home and phone booths, and posting information that can be viewed by anyone with an Internet connection have expanded the number of ways people communicate and the very nature of communication.

As communication technologies have shifted dramatically, a corresponding decrease in social skills have been noted. For example, Japanese theatre companies installed scrambling devices due to complaints about audience members receiving and answering cellular telephone calls during live performances (Poupee, 2002). Others have lamented individuals who loudly carry on phone conversations in places where such conversations had previously been limited to discreet private talk, such as restaurants and elevators (Bugeja, 2005). A common theme to these concerns is the conflict between traditional social norms and new technologies that attack norms of politeness. Bugeja writes of the negative consequences of this "connected" world in which we find ourselves. He argued that "the greater the convenience, the greater the interpersonal consequences and ethical concerns." The result is a *loss* of community, at the same time the technology is touted as creating connections.

The ethical concerns raised by an Internet-connected world are not always readily apparent, but they are real. For instance, people have always sought social connections and ways to express themselves, and today's college students, including preservice teachers, are no different. However, the Internet combined with the increased isolation of the American college student (Nathan, 2005) has resulted in growing use of social networking websites as a way to make friends and communicate with them.

Prospective teachers uploading content to the Web that is intended for friends and peers may find that same material being accessed by students, parents, administrators, and strangers. This content may portray behaviors and a personal character deemed unacceptable for teachers of children. This study investigates how elementary education majors at a Midwestern university portray themselves on social networking sites.

## **Social Networking on the Internet**

Facebook is one of a growing number of social networking websites that allow people to post information about themselves and others. Started by a Harvard student who wanted an easier way to network with classmates, Facebook has blossomed into a robust online community that included more than 12 million people in 2006 and grew to 300 million people in 2009 (Carvin, 2006; Facebook, 2009). Because these tools started as a way for college students to network, the majority of the users were originally of college age. However, Facebook is available to the general public, and anyone in the world with an e-mail address can have access to the network. As college students graduate and the general public learns of Facebook, its users now include millions of individuals of all ages.

The popularity of social networking has exploded, but problems have followed. Several published studies and reports address the dramatic increase in cyber-bullying occurring on social networking sites. When children have the capability to post messages instantly to the Internet, the fact that they create voting sites for the “Ugliest Girl on Campus” and send hate messages to fellow students is not surprising. Problems regarding postings on social networks are not limited to school affairs. Corporate secrets, opinions about bosses, and other workplace issues have been posted by employees’ children, with parents often unaware of what images or statements their children are posting (Finnigan, 2007).

Postsecondary faculty who use Facebook to communicate with their students can be surprised at what they find readily available online. Pablo Malavenda, an administrator at Purdue University, came across Facebook pages indicating that students were selling cocaine on campus. The students were expelled, and photos from Facebook were admissible in court as evidence. In retaliation, the students started a Facebook group called “We hate Pablo,” and posted his home address and instructions to hurt and eliminate him (Carvin, 2006).

These and many more examples illustrate some of the serious criminal and ethical issues raised by the use of Facebook. Administrators of Facebook do not edit the content and rely on users to report inappropriate conduct. Illegal and questionable behavior can be posted without review or reprimand. Students may perceive that what is placed on the Internet is simply personal expression and an exercise of free speech.

Teacher education students also take part in online networking and make regrettable decisions. In spring 2007, a preservice teacher at Millersville University was denied her degree in elementary education (and subsequent state licensure) because of a photo that she placed on her MySpace account. The photo depicted her in a pirate hat, drinking from a plastic cup, with a caption of “Drunken Pirate” (Carvin, 2007). She unsuccessfully sued the university, and her lawsuit made national headlines. The judge ruled that the Plaintiff learned at the practicum’s outset that she was required to “maintain the same professional standards expected of the [school] teaching employees” and that those professional standards were violated when she posted inappropriate material on the Internet that was subsequently viewed by her cooperating teacher and her students (Snyder v. Millersville University et al., 2008).

Her case is not the only one involving universities, online postings, ethics, and students involved in specific programs that have standards for appropriate behavior. Athletes at the University of Iowa were removed from the football team and eventually arrested when university officials noticed three players' Facebook photos showing the players holding large amounts of cash. Their Facebook photos appeared on the evening news on television stations across the state, and in *The Des Moines Register* (Peterson & Barton, 2007).

The personal information that individuals freely choose to place about themselves on the Web has attracted the interest of universities wanting to learn more about students, employers screening potential candidates, and others seeking to know more about those in their purview. An estimated 20% of companies are using the Internet to search online profiles before they interview candidates (Clark, 2006).

Parents and children also search these sites. A high school art teacher in Austin, Texas, was fired for photos posted on the website Flickr.com. These photos depicted the teacher in the shower, lifting weights, getting dressed, in bed, and doing other routine activities (Associated Press, 2006). Students who saw the pictures showed them to another teacher in the school, who notified school officials. The school district fired the teacher because the photos were considered inappropriate and violated the "higher moral standard" expected of public school teachers (Clark, 2006).

Bill Shaw, professor of law and ethics in business, commented on this case, stating, "School teachers are supposed to be mature enough not to titillate their students," and "A teacher is more or less expected to be a guide or ... demonstrably mature." Teachers' personal behavior as well as their judgment regarding what to make public online or through other avenues are clearly grounds for disciplinary action, and they illustrate the moral and ethical standards that teachers, prospective or practicing, are expected to convey.

### **Public and Institutional Expectations of Elementary Teachers**

Since the founding of public education, instructing children in character and ethics has been part of the school's charge (Lortie, 2002). As employees serving the public and entrusted with children, teachers have been expected not only to teach appropriate behavior and ethics to children, but to also be models of upstanding character. In the early years of public education, "teachers could be dismissed easily not only for incompetence but for a variety of infractions against morality stringently defined" (p. 8).

According to Murray (2007), historically a community granted an individual permission to become a teacher based on at least one of the following:

- (a) an assessment of the prospective teacher's character, values and beliefs, usually by a member of the clergy; (b) an assessment of the prospective teacher's knowledge in select domains, usually by a common or standardized test in a teaching subject; and/or
- (c) an assessment by a faculty with regard to the prospective

teacher's course of professional study, usually with a major emphasis on pedagogy and teaching skills. (p. 381)

Today's standards have changed somewhat, but the expectation that teachers be models of high character continues. A recent article in *NEAToday* described at least eight cases of teachers who were reprimanded or dismissed from their jobs after inappropriate behaviors were posted on personal webpages (Simpson, 2008). Simpson, a member of the NEA Office of General Counsel warned that

school employees can be disciplined for off-duty conduct if the school district can show that the conduct had an adverse impact on the school or the teacher's ability to teach. And it wouldn't be too difficult to make that showing if the teacher's blog includes sexually explicit or other inappropriate conduct and is widely viewed by students. (p. 17)

In addition to the expectation for teachers to practice appropriate behavior, formal programs to teach good character to children are becoming more commonly used in public schools. A popular program is "Character Counts"—a program endorsed by thousands of schools, the National Education Association, and public groups such as Little League, the YMCA, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, to name a few. The goal of the program is straightforward—teach and reinforce character:

The ethical values that define good character are pretty basic. We can all agree what they are. The trick is to express them using a consistent language so that messages about ethics and character resonate across the community, from the home to the classroom to the playground to the workplace. (Josephson Institute, 2009)

This program includes lessons that focus on the teaching of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. The program developers acknowledge that "it is always primarily a parent's job to teach a child how to behave and make wise choices, but other institutions and adults working with young people play critical support roles." Teachers play a pervasive role in children's lives from preschool through high school. Thus, the character, behavior and judgment of teachers are crucial to the wellbeing of children and society.

This emphasis on character and values in the teaching profession is apparent in the inclusion of "dispositions" in the preparation and evaluation of prospective teachers. In 2001, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2001) included three focal points of standards for teacher preparation programs, including "knowledge, skills, and dispositions" (Damon, 2007). Although the first two terms refer to knowledge and skills related to content and pedagogy, dispositions are more difficult to define. NCATE (2001) provided the following definition:

Dispositions. The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors towards students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values

such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. For example, they might include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment. (p. 30)

NCATE further elaborated on the expectations teacher preparation programs should have of prospective teachers:

Candidates work with students, families, colleagues and communities in ways that reflect the professional dispositions expected of professional educators as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. Candidates demonstrate classroom behaviors that create caring and supportive learning environments and encourage self-directed learning by all students. Candidates recognize when their own professional dispositions may need to be adjusted and are able to develop plans to do so. (NCATE, 2008, p. 20)

Teacher preparation programs in the United States, whether NCATE accredited or not, have means by which teacher education candidates are evaluated and recommended to the state's teacher licensure agency. Teacher preparation programs can remove a teacher candidate from the program for violations of appropriate conduct. The institution involved in this study has written guidelines to assist teacher candidates in knowing dispositions expectations. The document lists expectations in the following areas:

- Caring (includes empathy, compassion, rapport, respect, passion, and cultural competence)
- Communication (includes presence, responsiveness, attentiveness, authenticity, collaborativeness, and voice)
- Creative (includes flexibility, inventiveness, resourcefulness)
- Critical (includes reflectiveness, initiative, open-mindedness, efficacy, and humility)
- Professional Requirements (includes professionalism, personal and professional ethics and integrity, work ethic/responsibility, and confidentiality)

Included under “professionalism” is the expectation that the candidate “endeavors to meet the standards expected of a teacher such as appropriateness of dress, grooming, demeanor, punctuality, tact, discretion, courtesy, etc.” A copy of the full document is found in [Appendix A \(pdf\)](#) .

Concerns have been raised about the assessment of dispositions. Burant, Chubbuck, and Whipp (2007) asserted that *dispositions* is not a single construct—that conceptualizing and identifying dispositions falls into three distinct domains. “These are listed as beliefs, personality traits and inference from behaviors. Each approach offers a perception on dispositions, but each one is also considerably flawed” (p. 400).

Personality traits are defined as a disposition that produces consistent patterns of behavior in individuals (Mullin, 2003). In 1963, Gage argued that the personality characteristics of teachers is one of three central

variables of teaching, and Getzels and Jackson (1963) viewed the personality of the teacher as the most important variable in the classroom. However, Washburne and Heil (1960) found that the personality of the student interacts with the personality of the teacher, making it relatively impossible to identify personality traits of the ideal teacher (in Burant et al., 2007).

Efforts are underway to develop assessments of dispositions (Bonnstetter & Pedersen, 2005; Wasicsko, Callahan, & Wirtz, 2004). This task is particularly challenging because, as Burant et al. (2007) noted,

There are currently flaws in the way we think about and assess teacher dispositions. Belief statements are best understood as acquired knowledge, not dispositions. Personality traits are too static, and teaching context is too fluid and complex to conceive of dispositions as a reduction of ideal personality traits for teachers. (p. 405)

Thus, Burant et al. (2007) argued that the term disposition should be avoided when assessing teachers and, instead, two separate variables should be used: moral sensibility and code of ethics. Moral sensibility addresses the way in which a teacher thinks and acts. Code of ethics refers to a specific foundation of ethics connected to teaching. This foundation would include those qualities directly related to the behaviors desired in the teaching profession and would give clear descriptions of each.

Despite the challenges in the development of an instrument to measure dispositions, institutions and accreditation agencies remain committed to using dispositions in the evaluation process of prospective teachers. Dispositions are difficult to measure, but the teaching profession has a general sense of when such expectations are violated or considered inappropriate.

Data from the institution that participated in this study suggest this is the case when problems arise with its student teachers—almost all students who were asked to leave their student teaching placement (either by the cooperating teacher, the university supervisor, or a school administrator) were removed for demonstrations of a less-than-professional disposition. For example, these behaviors include the perpetually late or unprepared student teacher, the student teacher who was included in the faculty photo and decided to put “bunny ears” with her fingers behind the principal’s head, violations of student confidentiality, use of inappropriate language with students, excessive absences, and lying. And the cases of teacher dismissal noted earlier for poor judgment regarding online postings illustrate that the assessment of dispositions goes beyond what occurs in school buildings. The dispositions exhibited online by preservice elementary teachers and their prevalence are the subject of the study reported here.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine how current college students majoring in elementary education at a large, public Midwestern university portrayed themselves in the publicly accessible domain of

Facebook and to compare these portrayals to the dispositions expected of K-12 prospective teachers by that institution. This study is useful beyond the institution examined here. Teacher preparation programs more broadly are impacted by the increased use of social networking sites by prospective teachers, and these students are likely facing similar access to and use of technology as their peers in other institutions.

Teacher educators cannot assume that their students have the same kind of college experience as previous generations. Today's college students are under tremendous pressure to communicate electronically (Nathan, 2005), and their use of such communication tools enables others to have access to that information, with potentially negative consequences. Students in a teacher preparation program may be unaware of such consequences, and when faculty in preparation programs understand the nature of their students' self-portrayals, they can better determine how to prepare these students for a profession that demands high moral and ethical standards.

### **Research Questions**

This study was designed to answer the following questions:

- What percentage of the elementary education majors at a large, public Midwestern university have a profile on Facebook?
- What percentage of the elementary education majors at a large, public Midwestern university have a fully accessible profile on Facebook?
- What percentage of the elementary education majors' profiles contains material that is considered inappropriate?
- What percentage of the elementary education majors' profiles contains material considered marginally inappropriate?
- What kinds of inappropriate images/messages/references are portrayed on elementary education majors' profiles?

### **Study Context and Methodology**

The study was conducted by examining publicly accessible profiles on Facebook posted by students enrolled in the elementary education major at a large, public Midwestern university. Participants included students who declared elementary education as a major, even if they were freshmen and had not yet been admitted into the teacher education program—a process that begins during the sophomore year. Data were collected in early summer, so all but a few students in the study had completed a full year of the major, including a freshman orientation course that addresses standards for teacher education (including dispositions and field placements) and a foundations of education course. The study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board and was declared exempt from human subjects consent due to the public nature of the data under federal guidelines, 45 CFR 46. To protect students, however, we have chosen not to disclose full names or other personal identifiers.

All students in the major were entered into the search feature of Facebook, and their profiles printed between May 22 and June 5, 2007.



Facebook profiles are updated regularly (sometimes hourly) by students. The purpose of printing the profile was to ensure that we examined a single point in time.

Students in the major were predominately white females, aged 18-24. A small number of nontraditional, male, and minority students were part of the sample. The major had an enrollment of 471 students at the time of data collection. Of these students, 85.7% were female ( $n = 404$ ), and 14.2% were male ( $n = 67$ ). The major attracts a large number of transfer students, and this fact was reflected in the lower number of students at the freshman/sophomore levels: 15.3% of this population were freshmen ( $n = 72$ ), 19.7% were sophomores ( $n = 93$ ), 25.3% were juniors ( $n = 119$ ), and 39.7% were seniors ( $n = 187$ ). The larger number of seniors was likely due to students who add an additional semester to their coursework to complete a reading endorsement, thus maintaining their senior status for an additional semester.

This study was a naturalistic inquiry conducted in a similar manner as the dorm room door analysis reported by Nathan (2005) who, as an anthropologist, enrolled as a freshman at her own university. She used grounded theory and a constant-comparative method to develop categories of photos and text content that captured students' self-portrayals in a descriptive manner.

Readers may disagree with some aspects of our coding process, or the conclusions we drew from these data. However, consistent with methodological perspectives in qualitative research, the objective was to make the methodology as transparent as possible so that

given the same theoretical perspective of the original researcher and following the same general rules for data gathering and analysis, plus a similar set of conditions, another investigator should be able to come up with the same theoretical explanation about the given phenomenon. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 251)

To reduce bias in coding, the first and third authors coded over one third of the same data independently. Intercoder agreement in each category met or exceeded 93%. In addition, the behaviors that were coded as *inappropriate* are consistent with those reported in the literature and at the university as causing teachers or student teachers to be removed from their positions. Second, we chose to include our position on the findings in the Implications section. The findings warrant the opening of important conversations in the field of teacher education, and the final section serves this role.

### **Coding Procedures: Profile Sections**

From students' printed Facebook profiles, we examined six main sections that corresponded to spaces on a Facebook profile (see [Appendix B](#)). Each section of the profile was read by two researchers and a three-category scale (*appropriate*, *marginal*, or *inappropriate*) was used to assess each section. The content of each section was independently reviewed to determine if it was (a) offensive to the researchers and potentially to parents and administrators (*inappropriate*), (b) possibly offensive to those stakeholders but probably acceptable to others

(*marginal*), or (c) not likely to offend parents and administrators (*appropriate*). These decisions were guided by the following documents:

- The university's dispositions document ([Appendix A, pdf](#)).
- The NCATE dispositions definition.
- Student behaviors that have resulted in school requests to remove a prospective teacher from a school placement. A report of these behaviors is developed annually by the university's field placement office and is made available to program faculty.

Sections of the profile were coded after reviewing the entire contents of that section. If a single inappropriate item was found in that section, the section was coded as *inappropriate*. This was also the case with a *marginal* rating. A section was coded *marginal* if the most questionable content on it was considered *marginal*. To be coded *appropriate*, the content of the entire section needed to be *appropriate*. Efforts were made to code in the prospective teacher's favor when difficult judgments had to be made about a particular section.

For example, in one profile section coded as *marginal*, a student wrote, "lol damn sunday night is going to be awesome!!!! i can't wait! did you want to come up to the rugby house or do you want me to come to dm?? i am up for anything!!!" This statement may refer to a party on Sunday night, and being up for "anything" might suggest inappropriate behavior. Because the posting did not explicitly state the inappropriate behavior, it was given a coding of *marginal*, as it was suggestive but less explicit than an *inappropriate* posting. Each section of the page was coded independently by two researchers, and every effort was made to evaluate the section based only on its exact content.

Examples from profiles follow for each category to illustrate the nature of the content that was coded at each level. All content has been left unedited for grammar or spelling, with the exception of the use of substitute symbols (e.g., \$%#^ ) in place of vulgarity.

### ***Inappropriate***

- Photos: A photo of three college men holding another upside down over a keg of beer with a tube emerging from the keg and being held in the upside down student's mouth. The caption of the photo read, "Beerfest 07 Event #5."
- Information: After multiple statements about enjoying "exploding" and "imploding," a student listed some of his favorite quotes as "Doggy style is a pain in the a\$#" and "God says he can get me out of this, but you're f\*#ked" –Irish guy on Braveheart" and "Is it dead?" -Rocko on Boondock Saints after splattering a cat when his pistol misfired." He listed his current job as a care giver at a community preschool center. Under "job description," he stated, "I get payed to watch your kids, be afraid, be very afraid."
- Groups: A student who claimed membership in groups that included "Dixie Chicks' suck my left nut" and "In Heaven There Is No Beer, Thats Why We Drink It Here."

- Main Photo: A main photo depicting the 19-year-old student drinking from a bottle of whiskey. (Age 21 is the legal drinking age where the study took place.)
- The Wall: Postings from friends that included “Hahah!! i was looking at pictures today and i completely forgot about how last year when we came to veisha and how i kept making you drink all of those beers, and then i made you go into the porta potty to do it, haha oh man what was i thinking, you should definitely come up this weekend or i will see you at home on saturday!!”

### ***Marginal***

- Photo: An image of a student in a very revealing bikini lying on a dock next to a lake.
- Groups: A student whose groups included “Jews for Hillary,” “Hillary Clinton: One Million Strong!” “Hillary Clinton,” “A love for wine,” “Students for Hillary Clinton,” “Jewish girls are HOT!!!!” “I FREAKING LOVE Hillary Clinton (a.k.a. Vote Hillary 2008),” “Hillary Clinton Supporters,” “Hillary Clinton for President and Equality,” “Hillary Clinton 4 Prez! It always takes a Clinton to clean up after a Bush!” “Hillary ‘08” and “Hillary Clinton Rocks!!!”
- Information: An otherwise appropriate description of herself, but her interests included “golfing, soccer, swimming, ... painting, drawing, *no clothes*, running, watching TV....” [italics added]
- The Wall: A friend wrote, “actually i was thinking that you could tickle me...and make it awkward, and then call me archiepoo!!! i would love that...NOT!!! lol damn sunday night is going to be awesome!!!! i can’t wait! did you want to come up to the rugby house or do you want me to come to dm?? i am up for anything!!!”
- Main Photo: An image of a student kissing another student.

### ***Appropriate***

- Photos: A group of images of the student riding a horse, watching a football game with friends, and camping—fishing, roasting marshmallows, and struggling to put up a tent.
- Groups: A student whose groups included “I live in Iowa and I am NOT a farmer,” “Teach Bailey Lewis to make the waterdrop sound,” and “When I was your age, Pluto was a planet.”
- Information: A student with a list of favorite quotes that included “Jealousy does not show how much you love someone, jealousy shows how insecure you are.” Favorite things: “basketball, friends, hangin out, decorating my apartment, flavored water, working with children, smiling, watchin TV”
- Main Photo: An image of the student smiling in front of a restaurant, standing between two friends.
- The Wall: “Hi Sarah! Nice to see you on facebook [smily face icon] How are you doing? No job offers, but I haven’t been looking. Ryan is trying to start a business so we’re staying in Iowa for one more year (it’s cheaper!) before moving back to Illinois. Once we move back I’ll start looking.”

### **Coding Procedures: Development of *Marginal* and *Inappropriate* Categories**

Once each area was given an overall rating of *appropriate*, *marginal*, or *inappropriate*, those areas given a *marginal* or *inappropriate* rating were examined to determine the nature of the content deemed questionable. These decisions were also guided by the institution's dispositions document and the NCATE definition of dispositions. The categories were data derived and included the following:

**Partying.** Depictions of groups of people engaged in the college party scene. These included images of reckless behavior at bars or dorms, wild, sexually oriented dancing, etc. This category did not include more serene get-togethers, such as scrapbooking parties or students smiling at a football game. What defined an image as partying included a sense of reckless behavior with a somewhat large group of people. What defined written descriptions of partying was the clear reference to "partying" or "clubbing" in the text.

**Sex/sexual content.** Depictions of individuals engaged in sexual contact with same sex or opposite sex and references to sexual encounters.

**Inappropriate clothing/too much skin.** Images of nudity, revealing shirts, skirts that are too short for a student to sit down without revealing private areas, underwear, and other appearances that would not be acceptable in most classrooms.

**Political views.** Bold statements about political references. "Students for Hillary" comments were not coded as *marginal* or *inappropriate*, but statements such as "Monica Lewinsky had more president in her than George Bush ever will" had more obvious potential to offend K-12 education stakeholders.

**Vulgarity.** Profanity, anything children would get in trouble for saying in a public school. Also includes text message abbreviations that involve profanity, such as WTF (What the F#@^ ) or MILF (Mother I'd like to F#\$%).

**Alcohol.** Given the "Drunken Pirate" court case, we determined how many students portrayed themselves drinking alcohol. Underage Drinking was subset of this category. We coded instances where students were under 21 and showed themselves drinking alcohol.

**Criminal references/behavior.** A broad category that included any serious reference to violence (such as personal intent to commit a violent act against another), gang references, racist comments, hate messages, or criminal activity.

**Religious views.** This category included strong comments about religious views that made a deliberate statement of proselytizing in the context of teaching. Based on the establishment clause in the U.S. Constitution, the government is not allowed to favor one religion over another. Teachers who claim to be converting others or promoting their

religion in the context of teaching may be seen as being in violation of the establishment clause. Each instance of a religious statement was coded *marginal*, and none were considered *inappropriate*. One religious statement coded *marginal* was, "I consider myself a missional teacher. My purpose in life is to be the hands of God and help expand his Kingdom." The statement was coded as *marginal*, because some parents could view this as ill-advised behavior for a public school teacher and in direct violation of the establishment clause. However, the quotation is vague enough that we felt a *marginal* rating was more descriptive than an *inappropriate* rating. This category does not include general information about personal church affiliations or quotations from scriptures.

**Other.** This category includes behaviors such as sitting on a toilet, passed out drunk in a bathroom, smoking at a Hookah bar, describing specific incidents from a student teaching placement, and other information that might raise concern among K-12 stakeholders.

## Findings

### **Research Question 1: What percentage of the elementary education majors at a large, public Midwestern university have a profile on Facebook?**

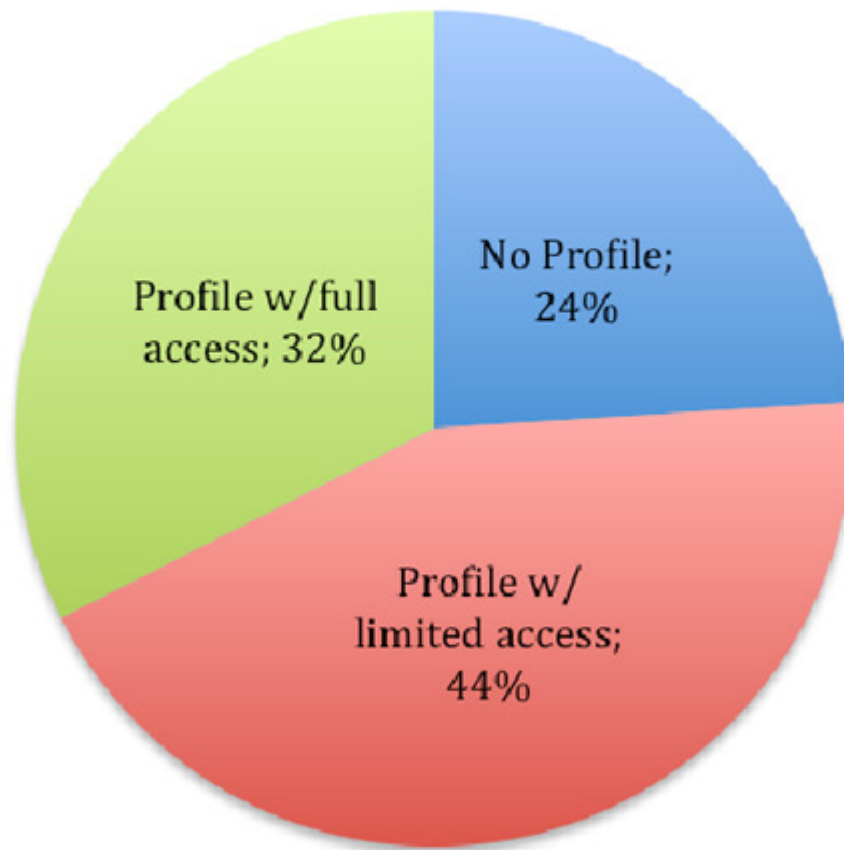
Of the 471 students in the elementary education major, 76% ( $n = 358$ ) had a profile on Facebook at the time of data collection. This does not mean that the remaining 113 students were not posting material on the Internet, because they may have had a profile on another networking site. Freshmen, in particular, are more likely to have retained their involvement with MySpace, a networking site that initially targeted high school students.

### **Research Question 2: What percentage of the elementary education majors at a large, public Midwestern university have a fully accessible profile on Facebook?**

Of the 471 elementary education majors, 32% ( $n = 153$ ) had an active, fully accessible profile on Facebook. Another 44% ( $n = 205$ ) had a Facebook webpage, but had restricted access to that page (i.e., only Facebook "friends" are allowed to view the contents of the page).

### **Research Question 3: What percentage of the elementary education majors' profiles contains material that is considered inappropriate ?**

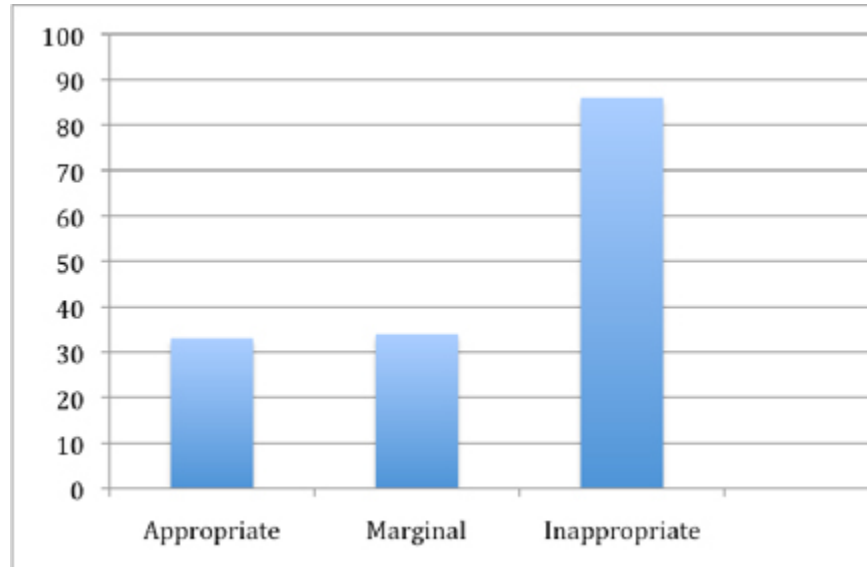
Of the 153 fully accessible profiles that were examined, 56% ( $n = 86$ ) contained *inappropriate* material. The location of inappropriate material varied, and is described under Research Question 5.



**Figure 1.** Participation in Facebook by elementary education majors.

**Research Question 4: What percentage of the elementary education majors' profiles contains material that is considered marginally inappropriate ?**

Of the 153 fully accessible Facebook profiles included in this study, 22% ( $n = 34$ ) contained at least one category that was coded *marginal*, with no *inappropriate* material on the site. However, both *marginal* and *inappropriate* material may be offensive to a potential employer or parent. For example, using our coding scheme, the Millersville University student who was denied her education degree and licensure for the Drunken Pirate photo on her Facebook profile would have been coded *marginal*. When the *marginal* and *inappropriate* categories were considered together, 78% ( $n = 120$ ) of the examined profiles contained material that could prevent an elementary education major from being allowed to work with children.



**Figure 2.** Number of elementary education majors' fully accessible Facebook profiles categorized by appropriateness.

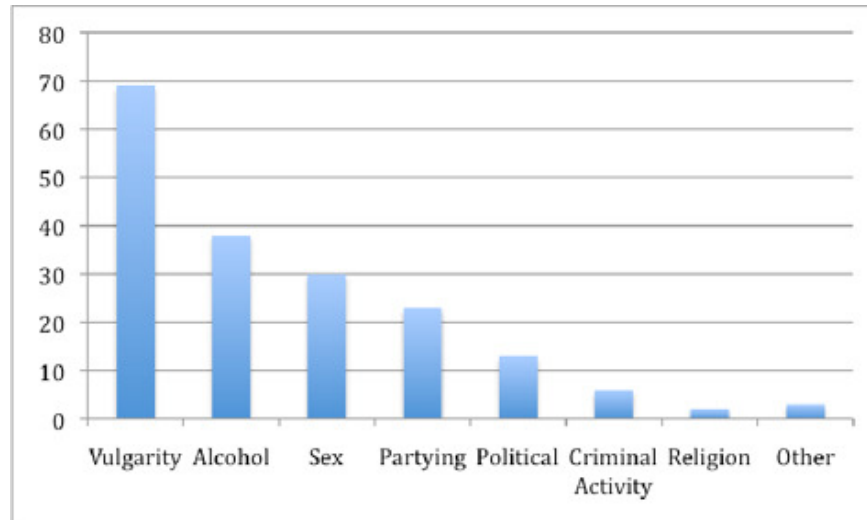
**Research Question 5: What kinds of inappropriate images/messages/references are portrayed on elementary education majors' profiles?**

The nature of the *inappropriate* material displayed by elementary education students varied by section on the profile (e.g., Groups or Photos). Frequencies of each type of *inappropriate* posting is provided, along with the percentages of profiles coded *appropriate*, *marginal*, or *inappropriate* for that section. Only one *inappropriate* posting anywhere on the profile is sufficient for a student to be in jeopardy of facing disciplinary action by a school where he or she is working with children. In some areas of Facebook profiles students posted a higher percentage of inappropriate material than in others. Therefore, a high percentage of *appropriate* material in one section does not mean that students' profiles are necessarily *appropriate*. Again, 78% of the profiles examined contained at least one *inappropriate* or *marginal* item.

**Section: Groups.** The most common location of inappropriate material was in the Groups section. Of the profiles examined, 58% contained material that was coded *marginal* or *inappropriate* in the Groups section. Specifically, 41% ( $n = 60$ ) were coded as *inappropriate*, 17% ( $n = 24$ ) were coded as *marginal*, 30% ( $n = 43$ ) were *appropriate*, and 12% ( $n = 18$ ) students did not list groups.

In the Groups section, 69 students listed groups that contained vulgarity, 38 students had groups with references to alcohol (2 of them underage), 23 students had references to partying, 30 students had references to sex, 13 students had negative political references, 6 students had references to criminal activity (such as shoplifting and breaking parole), 2 students were categorized as belonging to groups that may be offensive with

regard to religion, and 3 students belonging to groups in the “other” category (e.g., containing references to urinating).



**Figure 3.** Categories and frequencies of inappropriate material in the Groups section.

**Section: Photos.** The second most frequent location of *inappropriate* and *marginal* material was the Photos section, with 52% of the examined profiles containing *inappropriate* or *marginal* material. Thirty-nine students did not post Photos. Of the 114 students who posted photos, 43% ( $n = 49$ ) were *inappropriate*, 9% ( $n = 10$ ) were *marginal*, and 48% ( $n = 55$ ) were *appropriate*.

This category was particularly insightful, because images can portray what words cannot fully capture. The viewer can quickly see the appearance of students’ living quarters, the view from the inside of local bars, the kinds of clothing students wear when they attend parties, games of beer pong (i.e., a drinking game involving a ping pong ball), students doing a beer bong (i.e., using a funnel to rapidly consume a large amount of beer), and a kegstand. Students’ spring break vacations were also commonly posted and included local adventures as well as South Padre Island, Daytona Beach, South Africa, Panama, and New Orleans.

Alcohol use was the most frequent inappropriate event depicted in photos (48 students). Although 32 of these 48 students were of legal drinking age, most of these pictures were far more than a glass of wine with dinner at a restaurant. Rows of students drinking out of whiskey or vodka bottles, students doing beer bongs or singlehandedly drinking a pitcher of beer while others cheer them on, students drinking shots while the caption reads “Shot Number Four!” and other such uses of alcohol were far more common than a legal adult sitting with a drink. The latter type of alcohol use was coded as *marginal*, and this applied to only 3 students. Sixteen students posted photos of themselves drinking while

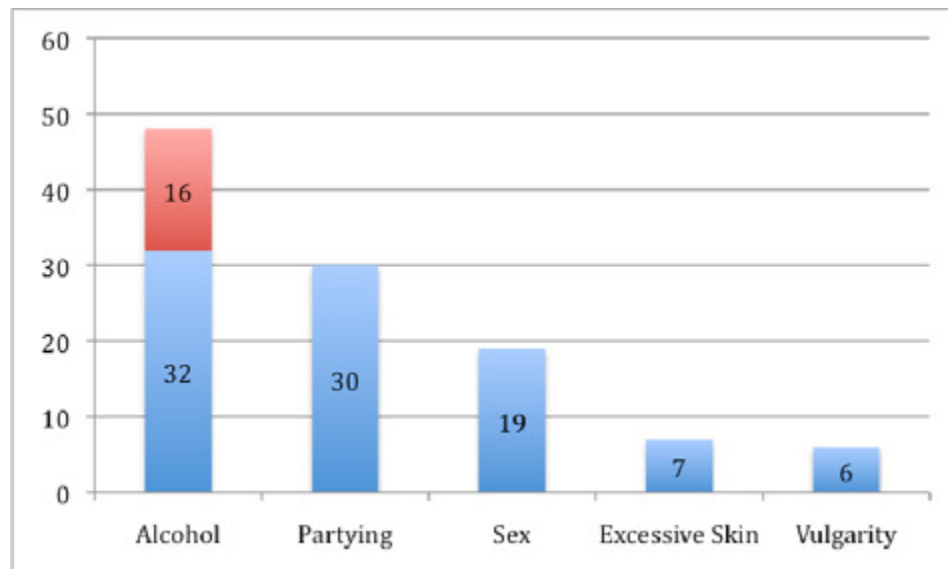


underage. More than one of these students also posted a “countdown clock” to his or her 21st birthday, while including albums documenting their underage drinking.

Thirty students posted pictures of themselves partying. Many of these students had hundreds of photos from such parties. Photos from these parties showed entire walls covered with beer case packaging, students in very compromising poses, images of women puckering at the camera while others touched their breasts, students licking one another while sitting around a beer keg, students dancing on bar tables, and students engaging in multiple drinking “events” at a “Beerfest” in a fraternity house. One image showed an unconscious male student lying on a sofa, with his male friend squatting over him, exposing his naked buttocks and positioning them directly over the unconscious student’s face. In most photos, the names of the students in the picture were labeled.

Nineteen students had photos that contained images depicting sexual content. More than holding hands or simply kissing one another (the latter coded as *marginal*), these images included women touching their tongues together, people on top of one another with captions that made joking references to rape, people in bed with one another, and excessively provocative poses.

Seven students included photos that showed excessive skin. In most instances, this included very revealing shirts that were accompanied by the student standing in such a position that the viewer could see down the student’s shirt. In one instance, a student had her hands raised in a gangster-sign while leaning toward the camera wearing a gaping tank top, all while sitting on a toilet with her jeans down.



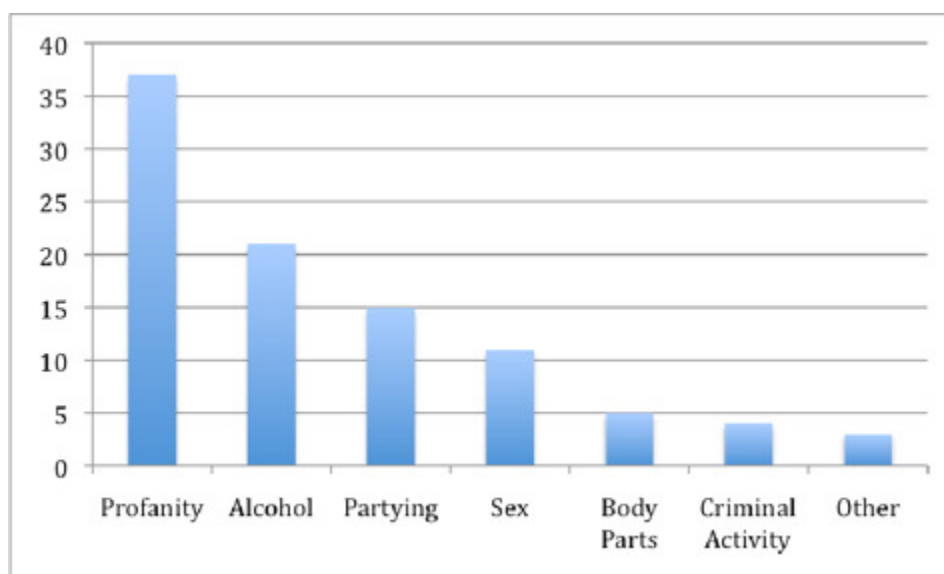
**Figure 4.** Categories and frequencies of *inappropriate* material in the Photos section. “Alcohol” is divided into those of legal drinking age ( $n = 32$ ) and underage drinking ( $n = 16$ ).

Six students showed some form of vulgarity in their photos, including direct use of middle finger hand gestures, t-shirts with profanity on them, and even a group of freshman girls standing in a line spelling a profane word with their bodies (the caption: “What’s that spell?”).

**Section: Information.** The Information section is a rich description of students and their interests. Students wrote a variety of descriptions of themselves, quotations that inspire them, favorite music, and favorite movies. The largest area within the Information section tended to be the quotations space. Interestingly, most quotations were not from famous inspirational authors, poets, politicians, or sports heroes. Quotations overwhelmingly were funny or bizarre statements made by self or friends. For example,

- “You’re the whitest Native American I’ve ever seen.” ~Jennifer P-  
---
- “Me: ‘I can’t sleep with socks on.’  
Jenny: ‘Me neither. My feet get too hot.’  
Me: ‘No, not because they’re too hot. I just can’t stand it!’  
Jenny: ‘So you’re saying your feet are claustrophobic?’”
- “You are seriously the fastest water drinker EVER!” – Me to Alissa  
“I’m not sure what truck stop...Oh wow. I really want to spoon with you right now.” -Alissa

Interestingly, four students mentioned in a section called “Favorite Books” that they do not like to read or do not read books. One student said, “Ha ha. What are books?” One student claimed “Don’t really have the time to read!”, yet he updated his Facebook profile several times per day and listed multiple television shows and movies as his regular pastimes.

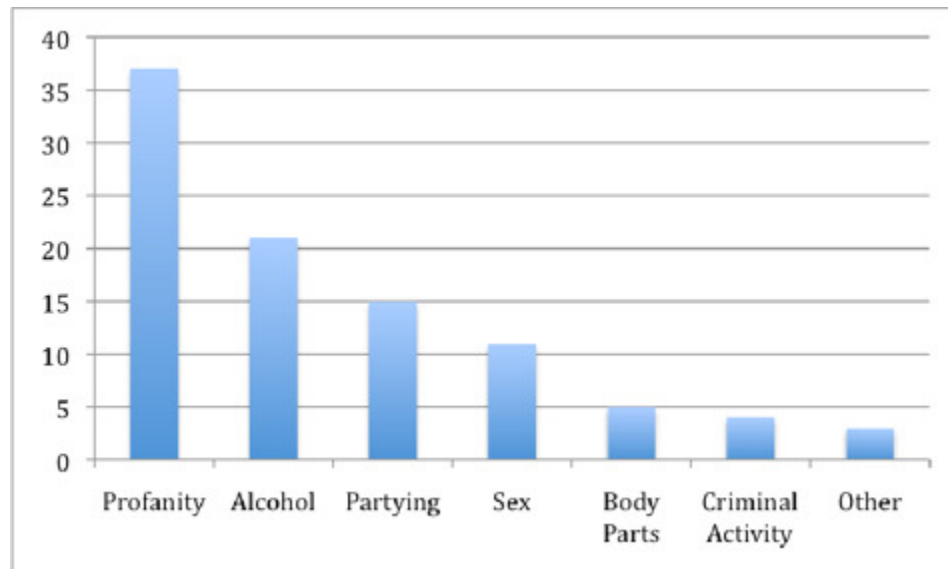


**Figure 5.** Categories and frequencies of *inappropriate* material in the Information section.

In the Information section, 27% ( $n = 37$ ) of the examined profiles were *inappropriate*, 22% ( $n = 30$ ) were *marginal*, and 55% ( $n = 82$ ) were *appropriate*.

Across all areas of the Information section of the profile, the most common *inappropriate* category included references to sex (41 of the 149 students who posted information). Profanity (33 students), alcohol (28, with 4 underage), proselytizing religious views (12 students), and partying (11 students) were also common. Five students made reference to some criminal activity or hate message, and two referred to other behaviors (such as urinating or defecating).

**Section: The Wall.** Postings on the Wall are not posted directly by the student, but can be removed by him or her. One danger is that a student may try to keep an appropriate profile and a friend could post an inappropriate message that could be read by others before he or she has the opportunity to remove it. This situation was rarely the case, however. Students with *inappropriate* wall postings almost always had *inappropriate* material that they posted elsewhere on their site, and *inappropriate* wall messages had been on the sites for a substantial period of time. Of the 136 students who had an active Wall section, 18% ( $n = 25$ ) were *inappropriate*, 31% ( $n = 41$ ) were *marginal*, and 51% ( $n = 70$ ) were *appropriate*. Only 17 students had no wall available on which others could post.



**Figure 6.** Categories and frequencies of *inappropriate* postings on the Wall section.

Profanity was posted on the wall by friends of 37 students in this study. This was the most common *inappropriate* posting. References to alcohol ( $n = 21$ ), partying ( $n = 15$ ), sex ( $n = 11$ ), body parts ( $n = 5$ ), criminal activity/hate messages ( $n = 4$ ), and other references ( $n = 3$ ) appeared on students' walls. Interestingly, students made no references to politics or

religion on the wall. Even students who identified themselves as very politically active did not have wall conversations related to politics, despite the fact that several high-profile presidential candidates had been campaigning on campus during the time of data collection.

**Section: Main photo.** The main photo was *appropriate* for 85% ( $n = 127$ ) of students. Only 6% ( $n = 9$ ) of the students had an *inappropriate* main photo, and 9% ( $n = 14$ ) had a main photo considered *marginal*. *Inappropriate* or *marginal* ratings were given to photos that showed partying (6), alcohol (6), sex (5), excessive skin/inappropriate clothing (4), and underage drinking (3).

**Section: Friends.** Friends were more difficult to code since they were only displayed by their main photo on a student's profile in a small corner. Often these main photos were displayed in a very small format, so determining if the drink they were holding was a soda or beer was difficult, if not impossible. Given the limitations of these data, only 6 students had friends with identifiably *inappropriate* main photos, and 14 had friends with marginal main photos. The remaining 120 were considered *appropriate*. Consistent with the students' own main photos, their friends' *inappropriate* or *marginal* photos conveyed alcohol (7), partying (4), sex (5), and excessive skin/inappropriate clothing (4). A viewer could, however, go to these students' pages to determine if their use of alcohol was underage, but this was beyond the scope of the study.

## Discussion

The findings of this study are sobering and an affront to the noble title *teacher*. Seventy-eight percent of the elementary education majors' publicly accessible profiles expressed content that was contradictory or potentially contradictory to the dispositions required of teachers by the institution where our study took place—dispositions developed as a reflection of what society expects of teachers (Simpson, 2008) and what schools reinforce to students in their field placements. Most of the 33 fully appropriate profiles (22%) were rather neutral—students making arrangements to meet for lunch and displaying photos from a football game. Although we did find ourselves smiling at the occasional picture of a student working with poverty-stricken children in Panama, rebuilding a house in New Orleans, or cradling a new baby niece, such positive personal messages were scarce and overwhelmed by activities unbecoming of those entrusted to teach children.

Behavior at odds with expected dispositions is the primary reason prospective teachers are removed from student teaching at the institution where this study took place. During the spring 2009 semester, 16 preservice teachers received disciplinary action during student teaching (an all-time high) for behavior conflicting with expected dispositions. Failure to exhibit required dispositions, not teaching practices, accounted for most all the students who had to be removed from student teaching during the 2008-09 academic year.

In this study, the dispositions most frequently violated by students include expectations of “appropriateness of dress, tact, discretion, courtesy,” and “adheres strongly to high moral principles and ethical standards...evidences integrity.” A photo showing a prospective teacher

being cheered as he drinks a pitcher of beer, and another photo titled “Kisses to redheaded sluts” that displays a prospective teacher downing shots with two other students, are not the behaviors parents and society want impressionable children to see from their teachers. Exhibiting and purposely posting such behaviors are the antithesis of tact, discretion, and integrity. Other photos titled, “Closet alcoholic,” “Gotta love cheap wine,” “Jenny wanted a 3-way,” “Jenny doing her first kegstand right before the cops busted the party and Jenny went running,” “Shake that ass,” “OMG this is just wrong...hehehe Good old new years” and “90 beers will do it” are clear indications that these prospective teachers either do not understand or do not take seriously their position as role models for children.

Perhaps most surprising is that prospective teachers would *purposely choose to display themselves* in the public domain of the Internet placing peer pressure on others, succumbing to peer pressure, exhibiting intolerance of others, and engaging in unadvisable and illegal activities. Many schools where these preservice teachers are guests have put into place programs to promote character and decision-making that these prospective teachers’ own chosen behaviors mock. Teachers are role models for children, whether or not they accept that responsibility. The issue is only what kind of role model teachers will be for children. Six months after the study, we examined the Facebook sites of students who had graduated and transitioned into full-time teaching positions. Many more photos were posted, but few individuals had removed inappropriate material or restricted access to that content.

Some readers may argue that the concerns raised in this study are little more than a new version of generation-bashing and that the behaviors exhibited by prospective teachers in our study have always existed to some extent among college students. While the students’ behavior noted in our study may be little different from past generations, this misses what *has* changed! What makes the current situation alarming is how new technology has altered the moral landscape, influences thinking and behavior, and demands conscious awareness and heightened discretion.

The way technology impacts individuals and society is never simply a matter of how we use it, but how the very nature of the technology alters the way people think and act and ultimately shapes culture (Postman, 1985, 1992). Facebook and other electronic social networks, like all technologies, have a bias. Electronic social networks favor and encourage personal expression through the immediate sharing of information, often pictorial, without review, but for everyone to see.

Fighting against this bias demands purposeful attention to what electronic social networks favor, how they alter thinking, the consequences of sharing information, and prudent decision-making. Although today’s student behavior may have similarities with inappropriate behaviors of previous generations, electronic social networking promotes the rapid, unexamined, and indiscriminate dissemination of those behaviors.

Conscious effort is required to resist this bias of electronic social networking. For example, not so long ago, pictures were captured by cameras that required film. The very cost of film and its development was

a consideration that limited the number of pictures taken and influenced to some degree the kind of pictures taken. Significant time would pass before the film was sent in for development. Profoundly inappropriate photos might have been flagged by the company performing the development, and this placed some limits on the kinds of photos that were originally taken or sent in for development.

Time would also pass before a photo would be available for viewing. This delay increased the likelihood that the viewing of an inappropriate photo would take place in a different context that might provide a heightened perspective regarding the photo's appropriateness. Once available, the photo was likely first viewed alone, and a decision was made whether to share it with others and, importantly, who those others might be. Particular pictures, because of their content, would be shared with some individuals, but not others.

In that moment where such pictures were shared, the reaction of viewers would send immediate feedback regarding the appropriateness of the content conveyed in the photo. With each reaction, information regarding the appropriateness of the photo's content would be provided, often subtly. Even though some viewers might chuckle at inappropriate content in a picture, their nonverbal reaction, voice-intonation, or advice to be careful about with whom to share the picture would send unmistakable messages about cultural expectations for behavior. The time that passed and the reaction that photos received along the way would all act as filters that shaped understanding of appropriate and inappropriate behavior and with whom else to share a photo or whether to share it at all.

But Facebook is faceless. Individuals who post pictures often have received no feedback (e.g., outright concern, nonverbal reaction, or voice intonation) that might convey messages regarding the appropriateness of a photo or written message. Photos can be immediately uploaded for all to see. The very nature of this technology is biased against the important filters — time and interpersonal cues — that help shape notions of appropriate and inappropriate behavior, or at least appropriate and inappropriate audiences for particular behaviors.

For example, among the thousands of photos posted on Facebook by the elementary education majors, few, if any, contained feedback or comments posted by others. This trend was also noticed by Cameron Marlow, a researcher employed by Facebook. Marlow found that what influenced the number of photos that people uploaded "wasn't based on how many of their friends showed approval for the photos by clicking that they liked them, or how many comments were left on each. Rather, it was based on how many photos your friends uploaded" (Marlow, in Ortutay, 2009). In a very real sense, the elementary education majors are using the technology in precisely the ways that the technology is designed to be used. So they are partially, but not fully, to blame.

As Postman (1995) noted, technological change is not simply additive, it is ecological. New technology does not merely add a new option; it alters the landscape of our thinking associated with the media, and thinking more generally. Electronic social networks promote the rapid sharing of information, and in doing so those technologies alter thinking about

what information to share, with whom to share it, and even what information was originally captured.

Of course, Facebook users may choose a limited-access profile that permits content to be viewed only by “friends.” Ignoring that little content on the Web is truly secure, social networks confuse and trivialize the meaning of the special relationship, friend. The true meaning of friend is profoundly different from *acquaintance*, but social networks are an assault on that important difference. The word friend may be used loosely, but in sharing personal information about ourselves we all tacitly understand the difference between a friend and someone we simply know and see at school or work. People, therefore, have always first shared personal information with family, friends, or others who can be counted on.

Even within these categories, we begin with certain individuals we particularly value. To varying levels, we trust such people with personal information, and look to them for feedback and a measure of protection. That is, these people are far more likely to provide feedback that we trust and value in making decisions. In referring to all who wish to be electronically connected as *friends*, social networks like Facebook blur these important distinctions, and the important role they play in making appropriate personal and public decisions that help in shaping the wider culture.

Some readers may reflect on their past behaviors and be thankful that technology did not capture their youthful dalliances. But technology *did* exist to capture and distribute inappropriate behavior. What is different is how new technology promotes the rapid and uncritical advertisement of what is being *purposely* captured.

Without the social cues that have previously existed to moderate such behavior (and, with time, create a sense of acceptable behavior), the ethical landscape changes. This moves the framework regarding decency from a shameful behavior that one might later regret to a behavior that is not recognized as shameful and is advertised for all to see, potentially including vulnerable and impressionable children. The former social framework acknowledges the moral/ethical issue and, at the very least, attempts to keep it private or limited to a smaller group of adults. The latter does not acknowledge the moral/ethical implications of the behavior, so readers who focus on how the technology captures youthful dalliances would be quite mistaken regarding what is going on here.

For instance, after observing inappropriate images of her own elementary science methods students placed on Facebook, the first author raised concerns to the students. Rather than removing the profiles or changing the content, or even being apologetic about their behavior, the students became angry that a professor had been viewing their profiles. They met at the café after class to complain about the professor. Some restricted access to their sites as a result, but no evidence exists that students questioned the content on their profiles.

## Implications

The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason but no morals.... We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character — that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate... (King, 1947)

The bias of electronic social networks toward the almost immediate sharing of information bypasses previous social filters that would help shape more acceptable decision-making, attitudes, and behavior. Without that feedback, students' choices to purposely and widely advertise inappropriate behavior and their sometimes puzzled response to disapproval is perhaps not so surprising. Bauerlein (2008) has noted how this younger generation uses technology to remain trapped in youth concerns, building a "camp in the desert" where they isolate themselves to exchange their photos, music, videos, status updates, and other entertainment—largely unaware of the greater adult world around them.

Clearly, students must be taught that the very public and potentially permanent display of inappropriate behavior may come back to haunt them in unanticipated ways. For instance, anything posted on the Internet regarding a weekend of partying is potentially visible and downloadable by children, parents, and employers. New technology encourages immediate and thoughtless sharing of personal information in ways that have not previously existed. Moreover, inappropriate behavior may also be caught electronically by someone else who may, without permission, just as easily and quickly distribute it. At the very least, students should be aware of the potentially damaging consequences of electronic social networks.

For teacher educators, the implications run deeper. We must explicitly and forcefully teach our students that their behavior in and out of the classroom *does* matter. We shirk our own responsibility if we ignore that parents, schools, and society hold prospective and experienced teachers to high expectations of conduct. The study reported here makes clear that students are not merely making poor judgments regarding what to post online. Their bragging about inappropriate, offensive, and sometimes illegal behavior is an indication that they do not see such actions as problematic. In the study reported here, the profiles of those in their student teaching semester were equally likely to contain inappropriate content as the profiles of their freshmen and sophomore peers.

The view that prospective teachers are simply being college students and will likely outgrow their juvenile actions is an abdication of teacher educators' responsibility to prepare highly effective teachers. The prospective teachers in this study who posted inappropriate items on Facebook clearly did not consider that their conduct outside of their school-based experiences had anything to do with their role as a teacher. Simply making students aware that they must more carefully decide what



to post online ignores the upright character that NCATE, many teacher education programs, parents, and the public expect of teachers. Teaching has never been solely or perhaps even primarily about effectively conveying a discipline's content knowledge. Socialization, values, and creating a public with an admirable character are undeniably part of the education establishment's responsibility. As Sizer and Sizer (1999) noted, the students *are* watching!

Teacher education programs should explicitly *teach* dispositions and their importance, not simply assess dispositions and punish students who do not exhibit them. This effort must be ubiquitous in teacher education programs, not simply an esoteric course that students can easily dismiss as an anomaly in an otherwise unprincipled program.

Students need consistent messages regarding how to be tactful, courteous, professional, and ethical and to be reminded of the high standards of behavior that society places on teachers. For instance, teacher educators need to professionally confront situations where prospective teachers are bragging about inappropriate or illegal behavior that may result in their being removed from the program or a teaching position. This has always been important, but takes on added significance now that technology isolates students from mature others, including adults, who are in a position to guide students toward a more appropriate and noble character.

Perhaps the least obvious implication of this study is that all students, including preservice teachers, need and deserve a far more robust technology education (Kruse, 2009; Olson & Clough, 2001). Meaningful technology education is far more than learning how to use technology. It includes an understanding of what technology is, how and why technology is developed, and how society directs, reacts to, and is sometimes unwittingly changed by technology. Technological literacy includes an understanding of the nature of technology and addresses questions like those raised by Postman (1995):

- For every advantage of technology, what is the corresponding disadvantage?
- How are the advantages and disadvantages of particular new technologies distributed unevenly?
- What is the underlying philosophy of particular technologies? For example, how do particular technologies change the way we think and act?
- What are the intellectual, emotional, sensory, social, and content biases of particular technologies?
- What goals are promoted and ignored by particular technologies?
- How does technology change the ways we view learning, teaching and schooling?
- How does the technology promote and inhibit thinking and learning?
- How does technology use us without our awareness?

The *National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers* (ISTE, 2008) recommended understanding the social, ethical, and human issues inherent in technology, but many educators appear not to understand or

take seriously that technology is not neutral or simply a matter of how people choose to use it. Any serious understanding of technology recognizes that it has inherent biases and promotes certain types of behaviors while suppressing others.

Facebook certainly promotes a kind of interaction among individuals, but it also promotes a personal bulletin board where students are pressured to fit in—to appear “fun,” “likable,” “adventurous” — just as the dorm room doors did in Nathan’s (2003) study. For today’s students, however, the prevalence of digital photos and the instantaneous manner of making them publicly accessible has led to a type of “race to the bottom”—the more outrageous the better. The result is prospective elementary teachers gone wild—not cognizant of their role as teachers and models for impressionable children—and unaware that society is watching and is not amused.

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## Appendix A

### Assessment of Dispositional Professional Qualities in Teacher Education Program Candidate—Draft

This form will be used to evaluate dispositions that education students display during class and field experiences, to document professional progress, and to identify areas where improvement is needed.

Not Applicable or Not Observed	Serious Concerns	Needs Improvement	Emerging	Acceptable
NA	0	1	2	3
	Behavior displayed is contrary to expectations for this disposition	Behavior is displayed occasionally	Behavior is displayed frequently	Behavior is displayed frequently and consistently

<b>Caring:</b> Candidates with this set of dispositions value and appreciate all aspects of other persons' well being—cognitive, emotional, and spiritual—thereby enhancing opportunities for learning needs of other education students and in working with professionals. The following list comprises many, but not all, of the qualities, tendencies, and/or behaviors which characterize a set of caring dispositions:					
1.1 <b>Empathy:</b> Inclination to identify with, and see things from the perspective of others	NA	0	1	2	3
1.2 <b>Compassion:</b> Sympathy, often with a desire to help relieve the suffering of others	NA	0	1	2	3
1.3 <b>Rapport:</b> Ability to develop appropriate relationships with peers and other stakeholders	NA	0	1	2	3
1.4 <b>Respect:</b> Shows appropriate regard for the needs, ideas, and experiences of others	NA	0	1	2	3
1.5 <b>Passion:</b> Demonstrates interest, enthusiasm and optimism for the people, content, and context of the teaching/learning process	NA	0	1	2	3
1.6 <b>Cultural Competence:</b> appreciates and capitalizes upon diversity; is aware of and acts to reduce one's own biases; employs culturally sensitive pedagogy	NA	0	1	2	3
Comments:					
<b>Communication:</b> Candidates with this set of dispositions are sensitive to and skillful in the various aspects of human activity. They have effective interpersonal relationship skills and attitudes that foster collaborative enterprises useful in enhancing the teaching/learning process. The following list comprises many, but not all, of the qualities, tendencies, and/or behaviors which characterize a set of communicative dispositions:					
2.1 <b>Presence:</b> Keen with-it-ness and engagement in human interactions and others' needs	NA	0	1	2	3
2.2 <b>Responsiveness:</b> Attentive to others' needs; the ability and inclination to act as best meets the needs, subtle as well as obvious, of others and their circumstances	NA	0	1	2	3
2.3 <b>Attentiveness:</b> Concentrates on others' communication; takes others' communication into account	NA	0	1	2	3
2.4 <b>Authenticity:</b> Genuineness that fosters and enhances the teaching and learning process while exercising judgment about personal and professional boundaries	NA	0	1	2	3
2.5 <b>Collaborativeness:</b> Seeks means to involve & work with others in planning, problem solving, and learning	NA	0	1	2	3
2.6 <b>Voice:</b> Speaks out when the need arises	NA	0	1	2	3
Comments:					

<b>Creative:</b> Candidates with this set of dispositions display the capacity to envision and craft things in novel and meaningful ways to meet the needs of students. The following list comprises many, but not all, of the qualities, tendencies, and/or behaviors which characterize a set of creative dispositions:					
3.1 <b>Flexibility:</b> Adapts, adjusts, and modifies practices to meet the needs of students and peers; thinks on one's feet; is comfortable with change	NA	0	1	2	3
3.2 <b>Inventiveness:</b> Uses the needs and interests of students to approach curricular and strategic decisions; visualizes and implements novel ideas and practices	NA	0	1	2	3
3.3 <b>Resourcefulness:</b> Utilizes resources in effective ways; adapts practices to unforeseen challenges	NA	0	1	2	3
Comments:					
<b>Critical:</b> Candidates with this set of dispositions have the ability to examine closely, to critique, and to ask questions. They do not accept the status quo at face value but employ higher level thinking skills to evaluate, analyze, and synthesize. Self-evaluation and reflection characterize candidates with this set of dispositions. The following list comprises many, but not all, of the qualities, tendencies, and/or behaviors which characterize a set of critical dispositions:					
4.1 <b>Reflectiveness:</b> Takes time consistently to evaluate effectiveness of instruction & behavior in terms of the larger goals of education; nurtures reflectivity in students and peers; reflects on own growth and accountability	NA	0	1	2	3
4.2 <b>Initiative:</b> Exhibits a willingness to pursue solutions to problems or questions; gathers relevant data and persistently seeks to improve situations or areas of need	NA	0	1	2	3
4.3 <b>Open-mindedness:</b> Exhibits an ability to look at different sides of an issue; recognizes the possibility of error in one's own beliefs and practices; does not display or act upon prejudices against people or ideas	NA	0	1	2	3
4.4 <b>Efficacy:</b> Nurtures high expectations, demonstrates self-direction and confidence, and empowers students and peers	NA	0	1	2	3
4.5 <b>Humility:</b> Places the needs of the learner and/or learning task above one's own ego; reflects on own growth and accountability	NA	0	1	2	3
Comments:					
<b>Contextual:</b> Additional qualities defined by and consistent with your institutional mission/conceptual framework:					
5.1 Not applicable	NA	0	1	2	3
5.2 Not applicable	NA	0	1	2	3
<b>Professional Requirements:</b> These are qualities and practices that teacher candidates must exhibit in order to be recommended for licensure, some of which are explicit in the State Code of Ethics and Code of Responsibilities. The candidates will display all of the following qualities and/or behaviors that characterize this set of professional requirements. Also, because each of these is considered absolutely necessary, each one will be separately assessed:					
6.1 <b>Professionalism:</b> Endeavors to meet the standards expected of a teacher such as appropriateness of dress, grooming, demeanor, punctuality, tact, discretion, courtesy, etc.	NA	0	1	2	3
6.2 <b>Personal and Professional Ethics and Integrity:</b> Adheres strongly to high moral principles and ethical standards as expressed in the [State] Code; evidences integrity	NA	0	1	2	3
6.3 <b>Work Ethic/Responsibility:</b> Attends to school policy for teacher attendance; completes teaching-related tasks in a thorough and efficient manner	NA	0	1	2	3
6.4 <b>Confidentiality:</b> Complies with federal, state, and school policies relating to confidentiality	NA	0	1	2	3
Comments:					

## Appendix B Main Areas of a Facebook Profile

**Main Photo:** The *main photo* is an uploaded photograph that is visible to anyone who searches the site and finds the student. Even if the student restricts who may access the profile, the main photo, name of the student, and network is displayed. A network is the group to which the person's e-mail address is registered (e.g., the university).

**Information:** The *information* section is an area students create by filling in preexisting categories. The student can select which categories are used, but cannot add new categories unless they are created by the site designers. Typical categories include name, hometown, network, sex, interested in (e.g., men, women, friendship, etc.), relationship status, religious views, political views, major, college, high school, year of graduation, home address, campus address, instant messenger address, phone number, website address (if the student has another website elsewhere), interests, favorite music, favorite books, favorite movies, favorite quotes, current courses, employer, dates of employment, and job description.

**Friends:** Students can become "friends" with one another by submitting a "friend request." A friend request sends an e-mail to the profile holder, who can choose to accept, reject, or ignore the request. Once accepted, the name and main photo of the friend will appear in the Friends section on the profile. Friends are arranged by network, with the student's network friends displayed prominently. A link is visible to friends in other networks. Each network is listed with the number of friends the student has in that network. For example, a student in the Iowa State University network may have 257 friends in this network, another 25 friends in the Drake University network, 30 friends at a former high school, and one or two friends at other universities or corporations.

**Groups:** Students may create their own interest groups for others to join. Groups may be global or limited to the network. These groups may or may not meet in person, and often they are ways to post information relevant to the group or just to meet people with similar interests. Some groups are political ("Students for Obama in 08"), where information on upcoming speeches is made available, along with links to the main campaign site. Other groups are less formal ("Mmm...Beer") and appear to have no value other than to gather members. Some seem to be designed for humor ("Are you a model? Oh, wait, you're an idiot who got dressed up to go to class.") or to make a statement ("I hate walking behind smokers to class."). The number of groups students join varies widely; some students have no groups, and other students may have 50 or more groups listed on their profile.

**The Wall:** The wall is a section on the profile where other students can post messages to the profile holder. The messages are visible to all persons who visit the site, and seem to have no expiration date. When more wall messages are posted than can fit onto the screen, a link appears that reads "View all # wall posts," indicating the number of wall posts that can be viewed, and sending the reader to the entire listing if he or she selects that link. At the time of data collection, the responses



created by the profile holder to the wall messages were not visible on that page. To view how a student responded to another student, the reader simply selects the name of the person who posted the wall message (listed next to the message, along with his or her main photo) and reads their wall.

Photos: Students may upload photos for others to view and may arrange them in albums. Students may place captions on photos, name albums, and even name the individuals in the pictures. Scrolling over the photo often reveals the names of people in the photo. In addition, students may link photos to another student's profile. Viewing photos on a Facebook profile occurs in one of two sections: photos uploaded by the profile holder, and photos added by others. Either photo type is equally easy to view—simply by clicking on the small view of the photo, the larger version is displayed. The name of the person who uploaded the photo is shown, along with the name of the album in his/her profile where the photo is stored. Also interesting to note is that copying photos is remarkably easy. Opening the photo, and then selecting “copy photo” will save a .jpg file of the photo on the viewer's computer.

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