

# Eastern Education Journal

College of Education and Professional Studies  
Eastern Illinois University

Volume 41, Number 1, Winter 2012

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# ***Eastern Education Journal***

College of Education and Professional Studies  
Eastern Illinois University

## Dean's Note:

We are so excited to unveil the new online Eastern Education Journal while maintaining the same high standards as always. We are currently a yearly journal that publishes articles about contemporary education issues containing features focusing on concepts, research, or practice. We will continue to improve and evolve as each issue is published becoming a primary source on education issues. Let us know what you think about our new format by e-mailing [edjournal@eiu.edu](mailto:edjournal@eiu.edu) and keep checking back to watch us grow.

*Eastern Education Journal* seeks articles representing contemporary issues on education. Manuscripts should focus on concepts, research, or practice. Research summaries, program descriptions, book reviews, and original points of views are encouraged.

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*Eastern Education Journal* seeks articles representing contemporary issues on education. Manuscripts should focus on concepts, research, or practice. Research summaries, program descriptions, book reviews, and original points of views are encouraged.

## MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES

- Cover Page
  - Title of manuscript and date of submission
  - Author(s) name; institutional affiliation and mailing address; telephone number; and email address.
  - Provide the same information for each author if more than one is involved.
  - Category in which the article should be placed for review.
    - Research
    - Program Description
    - Book Review
  - A statement as to whether or not the manuscript has been previously published or is under consideration by another publication.
- Length
  - A definitive abstract of 50 to 75 words must accompany the manuscript
- Format
  - Double space all text, including references with 1 inch margins all around.
  - Place illustrations, tables, charts, and/or figures in appropriate places within the document.
- Style
  - Editorial style and references must follow guidelines set in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th Edition.
- Form
  - Send via e-mail to [edjournal@eiu.edu](mailto:edjournal@eiu.edu)
- Editorial Procedures
  - Articles submitted undergo a blind review by members of Editorial Board.

Are You Voting Today? Student Participation in Self-Government Elections

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Abstract

*Student government organizations play a variety of roles on college campuses, ranging from fostering students' sense of civic responsibility to assisting students to engage in the campus community. This study explored voter turnout at student government elections at 100 colleges and universities. Voter turnout averages were identified, along with differentiating voter participation by institutional type. Findings identified that most institutions engage less than a fifth of their student population in annual student government elections.*

## Introduction

Colleges and universities, through calls for greater accountability, have worked to better define the student learning experience on campus, often by level of study (freshman learning outcomes, sophomore learning outcomes, etc.). Through the identification of learning outcomes tied to the out-of-classroom experience of college, many institutions have developed processes and indices for measuring student learning (Bray, 2006) and foremost among the outcomes to be identified are inferences to life in a democratic society (Shapiro, 2005). The notion of the collegiate experience tied to the preparation of a society politic has been frequently discussed throughout the history of higher education (Donoghue, 2008; Shapiro, 2005) and is often directly linked to discussions about the developmental potential that the postsecondary experience provides for students (Bray, 2006).

Conversations about the preparation for life in a democratic society can be correlated to a variety of experiential components of campus life, but are most clearly defined in the realm of student governments (Laosebikan-Buggs, 2006). Whether referred to as a *student government association*, *student senate* or *associated student body*, the overarching electorate of student participation in institutional decision-making closely resembles democracy in the larger American society. In these roles, not only do students learn to represent others, balance public funds, and enforce rules, but they also learn interpersonal and critical thinking skills related to speaking, listening, ethical decision-making, representation, and bargaining (Kuh & Lund, 1994).

Although higher education institutions have developed sophisticated systems to track student involvement in governance, there is relatively little known, described, or researched in the area of student government elections. Although some anecdotal literature has described elements of the student government election, there has been no thorough description of voting trends in elections. Information related to how this process works is important to institutional leaders as they seek to document their attempts at developing an engaged citizenship and, as they seek to use students as critical stakeholders in institutional decision-making. The current study was subsequently developed to describe the level of voting behaviors among college students in self-governance elections. This baseline data may then open avenues and streams of additional research that can have a broad and meaningful impact on student development and institutional performance.

## Background of the Study

Student government associations provide important opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills while providing the institution critical input to operations and decision-making. From the emergence of student nations in Bologna, Italy, student associations have provided both protections of student interests and opportunities for engagement. This examination of student voter turnout provides a reflection of the type and level of engagement of contemporary college students. The study accepts the assumption that students at doctoral and comprehensive institutions may differ in their characteristics and desired collegiate experiences. To help inform the construction of research questions, literature on student governments and youth voting behavior has been presented here as the background of the study.

### *Student Government: An Overview*

Student government organizations, whether referred to as *senates*, *associations*, or *councils*, exist on many college campuses and conduct a variety of functions. The responsibilities of student governments can differ from institution to institution (Torok, 1999). These bodies typically have some responsibility for student fee money distribution, but also play an important role in creating a culture or establishing a climate for activities on campus. Student government bodies have largely become the formal face of the larger student body (Miller & Nadler, 2006), and are also used to gain input from students to assist institutional decision-making (Bambenek & Sifton, 2003).

Traditional arguments for the inclusion of students in decision-making include the importance of learning about activism and involvement; the proximity of students to the issues of teaching, learning, and campus life; and the need to teach students about democratic behavior (Hodgkinson, 1971; Hodgkinson & Meeth, 1971; Kuh & Lund, 1994; Miller & Nadler, 2006). Conversely, students have been argued to be too immature or young to make substantial, objective decisions; too naïve about institutional issues or politics; on campus for too short a period of time to be vested in long-term institutional issues; and too self-interested in immediate, short-term outcomes to think strategically about the long-term consequences of their actions (Miller & Nadler, 2006; Hodgkinson, 1971; Hodgkinson & Meeth, 1971).

The result of the conflicting need to involve or not involve students in institutional decision-making has been a growing apathy among students to engage in formal student governance activities (Miles, 1997). Miles argued that as student voices are given less attention or value in decision-making by institutional leaders, they tend to invest less of their time and energy, resulting in apathy toward large institutional issues. This apathy has been noted in many areas and activities that benefit the welfare of all students, and conversely, the trend has been an increase in involvement and activity in specialized, individual-interest based organizations.

Another dimension to the role higher education plays in developing an engaged citizenship is through the promotion of service learning. The popular Campus Compact, for instance, is an association of over 1,000 universities that promote civic engagement (Campus Compact, 2009). The group was formed in the mid-1980s by a group of college presidents who believed strongly in the purpose of higher education in developing engaged citizenry. Zlotkowski and Williams (2003) have argued that this type of engaged learning is socially responsible and socially responsive, and is a necessity for the future of higher education in fulfilling its role to the larger society.

### *Trends in Youth Voting*

As student governments are micro-level democratic organizations with elected officials representing the larger student population, it is helpful to understand how these college-aged students are involved in national elections. By exploring how they participate in national elections, some precedence can be established for an anticipated level of engagement.

There are a variety of national trends in the general behavior of the electorate. The presidential election between Barack Obama and John McCain, for instance, witnessed an increase in minority and female voting (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2008). Yet, in the last national presidential election, approximately 129 million voters cast ballots for a presidential nominee, of a possible 228 million potential voters (of appropriate age and ability, but not necessarily registered), representing a 56% participation rate for the US. Of the larger 301 million Americans (albeit, nearly 25% unable to vote due to age restrictions), that participation level was 42%, meaning less than half of all Americans vote.

Marcelo and Kirby (2008) noted that young adults, those considered between the ages of 18 and 29, comprised 49% of voters in the 2004 presidential election, and that 60% of college students voted in the 2004 and 48% in the 2000 presidential elections. The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University reported that following the 2008 presidential election, college educated citizens were more likely to vote than those with less than a college education, and that 52% of 18-29 year olds voted in the election. The rise to 52% continued a decade-long growth in youth voting, increasing from 37% in 1996 (CIRCLE, 2008).

These data would then suggest that college students are likely to participate in elections, although the exploration of voter-motivation is better suited for a different study. Based on these data, if voting behaviors for young, college-aged students is consistent, a university could anticipate voting participation in student government elections in the 40-60% participation range.

### Research Question

As a result of the purpose and actions of student government associations combined with the national trends of youth engaging in democratic activities like voting, several research questions emerge, including what is the voter turnout trend among college students for their student government elections (including the average number of voters, the percentage of students voting in elections, and differences based on institutional type) and is there a significant difference between the voter turnout at public and private institutions.

### Research Procedures

#### *Data Sources*

Data for the current study were drawn from either the student government unit's website and official vote reporting of elections or the student-run newspaper for election results, and institutional research websites (typically the institution's Common Data Set report for 2008-2009) for enrollment (full-time equivalent report). Data were collected during the summer and fall of 2009, allowing institutions to complete their election process during the spring 2009 semester, and providing additional time for several institutions that held contested elections that lasted into the early summer of 2009.

Institutions were selected using a table of random numbers for inclusion in the study, with the comprehensive listing of Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education as



the identification of the population. A total of 50 doctoral institutions were selected for inclusion as well as 50 comprehensive institutions. The doctoral institutions, specifically defined as *Doctorate-granting Universities* were those which offer and award at least 20 doctoral degrees, and are unique in that they typically engage in sponsored research activities (although Carnegie further differentiates these institutions, the study treated the category as one). Comprehensive institutions, termed *Master's Colleges and Universities* award at least 50 master's degrees per year and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees per year. Similarly, the Master's institutions have sub-categories that were not utilized in the current study; the subcategories for both Master's and Doctoral institutions were not used in order to create broader institutional band classifications, allowing for a simpler categorization of the type of student who may elect to attend this type of institution.

A total of 100 institutions constituted the sample, although it is important to note that the sample was drawn with replacement. A total of seven doctoral and 14 comprehensive institutions were replaced during the selection because they did not report the number of students participating in elections (or reported only partial/incomplete information).

### *Limitations*

There are many problematic dimensions to assessing student participation in elections. There were inconsistent definitions of eligible voters, for example, at multiple institutions. At some institutions, all enrolled students were eligible to vote, and at others, only full-time students were eligible to vote. Although student government is primarily an undergraduate activity, there were institutional reports that indicated graduate students were or were not eligible to vote, online students were eligible or not eligible to vote, and professional school students, such as law and medical students, were eligible and not eligible to vote. Additionally, student enrollment is continuous, and a full-time student one semester may be enrolled on a part-time basis during the next semester, resulting in differing numbers of eligible voters from year-to-year and semester-to-semester.

The study was also limited to student government elections that were open to the entire campus and not restricted to specific class years. Not all students choosing to participate in an election vote for all candidates, resulting in a variety of different voting totals (there may be a different number of students voting for a president, for example, than for a senator or even vice president). In an attempt to mediate these differences, the study accepted the highest vote total accepted and reported. For instance, at one institution over 2,000 students voted during the general election that included senators and presidential candidates, but the run-off election for presidential candidates reported only 1,200 students voting; therefore, the study reported the higher number of 2,000. Similarly, if a general election resulted in a contested run-off election, the higher of the two numbers of voters was included in the study.

### Findings

During data collection, the variety of voting participation rates varied dramatically from what newspapers reported institutional enrollment to be and what institutional data were reported in other sections of the institutions' websites. This disparity suggests intricate voter eligibility

regulations, and that these study findings should be used as an initial guide for the larger discussion of student participation, but should not be the basis for comparative statements among individual institutions. Data have been presented by doctoral, then comprehensive institution election results, with the data then segmented by public and private institutions.

As shown in Table 1, the doctoral institution sample included in this study had an average enrollment of 25,559 students, and these students were inferred to be the potential voters in student elections. These institutions had an average of 4,380 voters in student government elections, ranging from a low turnout of 502 students to a high of 15,105. These voter turnout levels ranged from 3% of the student population to 53.77% of the student population, with an average turnout of 17.17% of the student body.

Table 1

*Doctoral Institution Voter Turnout by Frequency and Percentage*

Institution	Voter Turnout	Enrollment	Percent
Alabama <sup>1</sup>	14380	26740	53.77%
Arkansas <sup>1</sup>	3445	19194	17.90
Arizona <sup>1</sup>	4752	35743	13.29
Arizona State <sup>1</sup>	3619	48922	7.39
Boston College <sup>2</sup>	3967	13903	28.53
California-Los Angeles <sup>1</sup>	9715	38476	25.24
California-Riverside <sup>1</sup>	3163	18079	17.49
Chicago <sup>1</sup>	2139	14847	14.40
Clemson <sup>1</sup>	6056	17585	34.43
Connecticut <sup>1</sup>	3892	29383	13.24
Duke <sup>2</sup>	2700	13457	20.06
Florida <sup>1</sup>	9847	51413	19.15
Florida State <sup>1</sup>	5947	35976	16.53
George Mason <sup>1</sup>	3390	30714	11.03
George Washington <sup>2</sup>	3964	20001	19.81
Georgia <sup>1</sup>	7306	34180	21.37
Georgia Tech <sup>1</sup>	3397	18006	18.86
Idaho State <sup>1</sup>	2538	14520	17.47
Illinois-Chicago <sup>1</sup>	1433	25243	5.67
Indiana <sup>1</sup>	7742	40354	19.18
Iowa State <sup>1</sup>	2188	26856	8.14
Kansas <sup>1</sup>	5650	29365	19.24
Kent State <sup>1</sup>	1387	23622	5.87
Kentucky <sup>1</sup>	4677	26913	17.37
Louisiana State <sup>1</sup>	7771	25896	30.00
Louisville <sup>1</sup>	3050	20834	14.67

Table 1, continued.

Institution	Voter Turnout	Enrollment	Percent
Massachusetts (Amherst) <sup>1</sup>	2425	23253	10.42
Miami <sup>2</sup>	593	15323	3.86
Mississippi State <sup>1</sup>	2000	17824	11.22
Nebraska <sup>1</sup>	3615	21662	16.68
Nevada-Reno <sup>1</sup>	1554	12168	12.77
New Hampshire <sup>1</sup>	1958	14204	13.78
New Mexico State <sup>1</sup>	2183	15345	14.22
North Carolina-Greensboro <sup>1</sup>	502	16703	3.00
North Carolina State <sup>1</sup>	6366	32782	19.41
Ohio State <sup>1</sup>	6216	53715	11.57
Oklahoma <sup>1</sup>	3447	23035	14.96
Oregon State <sup>1</sup>	2095	20320	10.31
Pittsburgh <sup>1</sup>	3876	30787	12.58
Rice <sup>2</sup>	1610	5339	30.15
Rhode Island <sup>1</sup>	1504	15904	9.45
Syracuse <sup>2</sup>	3302	17670	18.68
Tennessee <sup>1</sup>	6112	27739	22.03
Texas <sup>1</sup>	10000	49984	20.00
Texas A&M <sup>1</sup>	15105	48039	31.44
Utah <sup>1</sup>	3652	23430	15.58
Vanderbilt <sup>2</sup>	2425	12093	20.05
Washington <sup>1</sup>	3156	42098	7.49
West Virginia <sup>1</sup>	5400	29284	18.44
Wyoming <sup>1</sup>	1807	9048	19.97
Average	4380	25,559	17.16%
Range	502-15105		3%-53.77%

<sup>1</sup>=public institution; <sup>2</sup>=private institution

As shown in Table 2, the comprehensive university sample included in the study had an average enrollment of 11,940 students, and averaged 1,355 student voters in each election. The voting participation ranged from a low of 2.79% of the student body to a high of 51.79% of the student body, an average turnout of 13.1% and a range of 203 student voters to 5,220 student voters. A t-test between the doctoral and comprehensive institutions identified no significant difference between the percent of students voting in the elections ( $t=2.35$ ;  $\alpha .05=1.65$ ).

Table 2

*Comprehensive Institution Voter Turnout by Frequency and Percentage*

Institution	Voter Turnout	Enrollment	Percent
Abilene Christian <sup>2</sup>	813	4698	17.30%
Austin Peay State <sup>1</sup>	999	7499	13.32
Cal State-San Bernadino <sup>1</sup>	1671	17066	9.79
Central Michigan <sup>1</sup>	2081	20246	10.27
CUNY-Queens <sup>1</sup>	5220	19500	26.76
Drake <sup>2</sup>	1241	5668	21.89
Drew <sup>2</sup>	478	2605	18.34
East Tennessee State <sup>1</sup>	1713	11117	15.40
Eastern Illinois <sup>1</sup>	733	10645	6.88
Emporia State <sup>1</sup>	905	6404	14.13
Florida Gulf Coast <sup>1</sup>	2282	10221	22.32
Fordham <sup>2</sup>	1571	6685	23.50
Fort Hayes State <sup>1</sup>	475	10107	4.69
Georgia College & State <sup>1</sup>	1250	6500	19.23
Jacksonville State (AL) <sup>1</sup>	855	8753	9.76
Louisiana Tech <sup>1</sup>	1201	10950	10.96
Marquette <sup>2</sup>	2515	11623	21.63
Michigan-Flint <sup>1</sup>	203	7260	2.79
Minnesota State (Mankato) <sup>1</sup>	1790	13232	13.52
Missouri State <sup>1</sup>	2718	19489	13.94
Nebraska-Omaha <sup>1</sup>	751	15050	4.99
North Carolina-Wilmington <sup>1</sup>	1606	12195	13.16
Northeastern Illinois <sup>1</sup>	612	11913	5.13
Northeastern State (OK) <sup>1</sup>	482	6462	7.45
Pittsburg State <sup>1</sup>	637	7127	8.93
Point Park (PA) <sup>2</sup>	368	3843	9.57
Rowan (NJ) <sup>1</sup>	437	10271	4.25
San Jose State <sup>1</sup>	1800	32746	5.49
San Francisco State <sup>1</sup>	1614	24292	6.64
Santa Clara <sup>2</sup>	1248	8248	15.13
Sonoma State <sup>1</sup>	794	8770	9.05
Southeast Missouri <sup>1</sup>	1641	10126	16.20
Southern Utah <sup>1</sup>	1337	7516	17.78
Southern Maine <sup>1</sup>	403	10000	4.63
SUNY-Geneseo <sup>1</sup>	1379	5585	24.69
Tennessee-Chattanooga <sup>1</sup>	1232	9807	12.56

Table 2, continued

Institution	Voter Turnout	Enrollment	Percent
Texas-Dallas <sup>1</sup>	787	14944	5.26
Texas-San Antonio <sup>1</sup>	1505	28658	5.25
Trinity (CT) <sup>2</sup>	1139	2199	51.79
Towson <sup>1</sup>	2236	21111	10.59
Utah Valley <sup>1</sup>	2191	21420	10.22
Washburn <sup>1</sup>	1388	6545	21.20
Weber State <sup>1</sup>	961	21388	4.49
West Georgia <sup>1</sup>	1509	11252	13.41
West Texas A&M <sup>1</sup>	1026	7550	13.58
Western Kentucky <sup>1</sup>	1567	19761	7.92
Western Washington <sup>1</sup>	2184	13777	15.85
Wisconsin-Eau Claire <sup>1</sup>	1445	9820	14.71
Wisconsin-Whitewater <sup>1</sup>	392	10700	3.66
Wright State <sup>1</sup>	2381	13674	17.41
Average	1355	11,940	13.14%
Range	203-5220		2.79%-51.79%

<sup>1</sup>=public institution; <sup>2</sup>=private institution

Both samples had approximately the same number of public and private institutions represented, with 43 (86%) public institutions in the doctoral-research group and 42 (84%) in the comprehensive university group. The private research universities had an average voter turnout of 2,652 students and an average enrollment of 13,969, for an average student voting participation as 20.16%. Public doctoral institutions had an average of 4,661 students vote in their elections, an average enrollment of 27,445, and an average voting participation rate of 16.67%.

In comparison, the public institutions had 43% more voters, nearly 50% more enrollment (49%), yet, private institutions had an 18% higher percentage of their student body voting. Private comprehensive institutions averaged 1,171 students in each election (as compared to 16% more in public institutions that averaged 1,389 student voters), a student body of 5,696 (as compared to an enrollment of 13,129 in public comprehensives), and had a 22.39% voter turnout, which was 51% higher than the 11.37% in public institutions (see Table 3 for means, ranges, and medians on voting). As shown in Table 4, an analysis of variance revealed no significant difference between the four groups in their level (percentage) of student voter turnout.

Table 3

*Campus Voter Participation by Institutional Type*

Category of Institution	Mean	SD	Hi	Low	Median
Public Doctoral	16.70%	8.78	53.8%	3.00%	15.60%
Private Doctoral	20.20	8.54	30.1	3.86	20.10
Public Comprehensive	11.40	6.00	26.8	2.79	10.40
Private Comprehensive	22.40	12.70	51.8	9.57	20.00

Table 4

*ANOVA Results for Public-Private Comparison*

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Squares	F
Between	1290	3	430.10	6.573
Error	6282	96	65.44	
Total	7572	99		

$f=8.572$

Conclusion

Based on data identified in the current study, voter turnout for student government elections was considerably lower than the percentage of voting in national elections. The voter turnout rate was lowest among comprehensive public universities, although an ANOVA provided the identification of no significant differences between public and private and doctoral and comprehensive institutions.

Future research that explores voting trends over a time-series might help to identify trends among college student voting. Research that explores general student elections in addition to student government presidential elections may prove helpful in better understanding student voting. Advisors and student affairs officials may consider research of this nature as an excellent beginning point to collect and use data on voting and participation in decision-making.

Reporting student voter turnout can both strengthen and weaken how seriously college administrators listen to student voices and recommendations; student leaders may wish to give particular attention to how their constituents express their desires on campus.

### Discussion

Data examined in the study show clear and consistent patterns of student participation in self-governance voting based on institutional type. As noted in the limitations, the enrollment figures for a given semester may not truly represent eligible voters. The range among institutions did vary substantially, with very few instances of institutions garnering anything near half of the student population. If institutions are intending to teach students about the value of participating in a collective democracy, there seems to be a certain level of ineffectiveness in getting students to engage by voting (as evidenced by some institutions reporting participation levels as low as 3, 5, or 7% and an average of under 1 in 5 students voting). If institutions cannot, in a safe educational environment, encourage students to vote, then this may be a reflection of the larger challenge of getting a citizenry to participate in public elections.

There has been a growing acceptance of the value of student engagement in creating student satisfaction with the college experience. As early as 1973, Astin's conception of involvement impacting satisfaction and learning has provided a framework for the standard rationale for the measurement of student engagement on campus (see Astin, 1985 for a discussion of engagement and learning). As institutions work to engage students in all facets of institutional life, from social support networking to prompting intellectual curiosity, institutional leaders must find ways to engage students in a meaningful way in activities that have relevant carry-over into life outside of college. Participation in democratic activities, such as voting in student governmental elections, is one clear area that institutions can do more to teach the future citizenry.

Findings indicate that a small percentage of students at any given institution, regardless of institutional size or governmental organization, participate in voting. At some institutions, voter turnout might be highly situational and the presence of a highly contested student government election might have a tremendous impact on how many and which students choose to vote. Voter turnout might also reflect the general perception of student government activities, or, it might be related to the role and activism of the student government advisor. These findings pave the way for additional research into the trends in voter turnout, the relationship with different types of institutions in different parts of the country, and even the larger growth and recession of political activity among the American electorate.

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Identifying Cyberbullying, Connecting with Students:  
The Promising Possibilities of Teacher-Student Social Networking

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Abstract

*Cyberbullying, an emergent problem that most students face but few report, negatively affects students' academic and personal development, disrupts the school environment, and usually peaks around middle school. The Association of Middle Level Education (AMLE) suggests that successful middle schools should, among other things, ensure every student has an adult advocate to guide academic and personal development in an inviting, safe, inclusive, and supportive school environment. The Olweus Anti-Bullying Program denotes educators' proactive intervention must first follow recognition of students' misbehaviors and both identification and supervision of problematic school contexts. Without such recognition, identification, and supervision, educators' proactive interventions are likely impossible. This article offers social networking to educators as a method to identify and, to the best extent possible, supervise cyberbullying. This identification and supervision method merges with youth culture and coheres with AMLE's and Olweus' philosophies to positively influence the school's environment and facilitate students' intellectual and personal development. However, it contrasts sharply with various school districts' approaches to confronting cyberbullying. The authors intend for this premise to spark interest in potential pilot studies whereby educators conscientiously and deliberately construct a path to proactive intervention.*

“It is appallingly obvious our technology has exceeded our humanity”  
– Albert Einstein

Considering the ever-changing nature of technology, how it is employed, and its impact on society, Einstein’s quote may be applied to new situations ad infinitum. Many teachers and administrators might concur with Einstein as they confront the various impacts of cyberbullying on their classrooms and schools (Darden, 2009; de Vise, 2008; Feinberg & Robey, 2009; Johnson, 2009; Mustacchi, 2009; Winton, 2009). Similarly, many administrators and parents might agree with Einstein as they learn of teacher misconduct on social networking sites, like Facebook (Helms, 2008; Horvath, 2008; Vanhooose, 2009). Administrators and school boards, worried about potential litigation based on issues that originated on or were documented within social networking sites, have also taken stances in concert to Einstein’s claim (Cannon, 2009; CPS, 2009). Articles within *American School Board Journal* and *Principal Leadership* verbalize these worries and suggest districts understand legal obligations, include cyberbullying within all pertinent policies, examine and investigate cyberbullying, support victims, educate staff, parents, and students, and safeguard staff (Darden, 2009; Feinberg & Robey, 2009).

These suggestions do not incorporate two key features of a proven, research-based anti-bullying program: identification and supervision. Teachers can utilize social networking technology to more effectively identify cyberbullying and, to an extent, insert adult supervision. In doing so, teachers and districts might more ably regain a sense of classroom humanity and resist an emergent dilemma that most students face (Li, 2006, 2007; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2008; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004) but few report (Feinberg & Robey, 2009; Fredrick, 2009; Price & Dalgleish, 2010).

While acknowledging the gravity of cyberbullying and teacher misconduct, teachers can employ social networking technologies to identify and, to an extent, monitor cyberbullying. Researchers have noted that teacher-student social relationships fostered on these networking sites has positive impacts on students’ learning and socio-emotional development (Carter, Foulger, & Ewbank, 2008; Kist, 2008a; Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007, 2009). Other professionals disagree with these data-based conclusions.

The Ohio Education Association, the Association of Texas Professional Educators, and other organizations strongly encourage educators to avoid social networking sites (eSchoolNews, 2007a). The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and Frederick County (Maryland) Public Schools (FCPS) policies are illustrative examples of school districts’ responses. CPS banned all teachers from social networking on the district’s computers and limited faculty members’ e-communication with students and parents to only district e-mail accounts (CPS, 2009). FCPS warned educators about potentially negative outcomes of social networking with students, provided past examples of teacher misconduct for illustrative purposes, and stated there would be no support for teachers enmeshed in conflict (Cannon, 2009). These represent two ends of a continuum centered on school districts’ reactions to teacher-student social networking.

District policies such as those noted above and others cited within *American School Board Journal* and *Principal Leadership* (Darden, 2009; Feinberg & Robey, 2009), however, do

not provide opportunities for effective identification of cyberbullying nor do they recognize the potentially positive aspects of teacher-student interactions on social networking sites. These policies are litigation-prevention and liability-avoidance responses; they are comparable to moral panics surrounding Internet imagery (Grassley, 1995), comic books (Hajdu, 2008), and film and television (Kist, 2008b). With the intent of protecting districts from litigation, such policies are long on restrictions and broad in scope. However, empirical evidence indicates both that cyberbullying is ubiquitous (Li, 2006, 2007; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2008; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004) and that victims are reluctant to report it (Feinberg & Robey, 2009; Fredrick, 2009; Price & Dalgleish, 2010). Such policies do not construct regulatory measures to identify or monitor cyberbullying, which are two key components to all anti-bullying strategies (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, 2010; Olweus, 1991, 1993, 2004).

This article utilizes suggestions from consequential organizations and research-based programs to demonstrate how teachers can creatively utilize social networking to identify (and, to an extent, supervise) cyberbullying and to connect with students socially. The article details and applies its arguments, which many may see as potentially effective at best or seemingly nonsensical at worst, to the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) (formally the National Middle School Association, NMSA, 2003, 2010) suggestions for successful middle schools in *This We Believe*. It then contextualizes students' interests in, and cyberbullying on, social networking sites along with school districts' responses. Next, the article applies the premise to the guiding principle of Olweus, a proven and research-based anti-bullying program. It then examines a range of school districts' policies on social networking sites, which most specifically address students' abuses and teachers' misuses. The article ends with reflections about the implications of the aforementioned suggestions. (Due to a dearth of research on this topic and various administrators' reservations with a pilot study, the authors make this case in this format in hopes of rousing interest for further research.)

### **Teacher-Student Social Networking and the AMLE**

In refutation to Einstein's quote and those in education who subscribe to it, teachers can construct a sense of humanity in the schools through social networking technology in ways that they cannot do otherwise. The authors base their premise on teachers' ethical and purposeful use of social networking sites. (Ethical means the moral and principled dispositions that administrators and the public expect of teachers; purposeful denotes the deliberate employment of social networking technologies to positively impact students and the school environment.) This premise is two-fold.

First, social networking websites are technological tools that can enable teachers to identify seemingly hidden conflicts that may manifest in cyberspace but begin in school. As mentioned, cyberbullying peaks around middle school, most students are targets at some point, and few report it. By adding students as Facebook "friends", teachers can inconspicuously observe the content students add to their online profiles as well as comments made by others. By this means, teachers can *better* identify potential cases of cyberbullying than if they simply observed students' school behaviors and classroom comments or waited for students to report it. This approach is akin to a fisherman casting a wide net. As the fisherman's net cannot catch every fish, neither can this approach identify every case of cyberbullying. However, as

fishermen need to put nets in the water to garner some success, educators must similarly act to identify some instances of cyberbullying. Without identification, proactive intervention is impossible. While this technology does not enable comprehensive supervision, such regulation is near impossible in school hallways, bathrooms, lunch rooms, locker rooms, and other “hidden” spaces within a school (Finders, 1997). While certainly less-than-ideal, this is a positive step towards identification and supervision.

The AMLE (2003, 2010), in the School Environment clause of This We Believe, suggested that students in middle schools should feel safe and supported. In a sense, teachers can become metaphorical flies on the wall as students share issues that are usually reserved for the aforementioned hidden spaces within a school. Teachers can then employ this discreetly gained knowledge to identify and, to an extent, supervise (and proactively intervene in) the interpersonal conflicts that manifest in all schools. As previously stated, the authors do not pretend that this approach will identify every case, nor do they imply this supervision to be infallible. Without such an attempt, though, educators are akin to the motivated fisherman without a net in the water.

Second, teachers can employ Facebook, and other means of social networking, to construct meaningful teacher-to-student relationships. Teachers can share more about themselves to students who view the teacher’s pages, observe the teachers’ comments, and look over the teachers’ pictures on the respective social networking website. This enables shy students to learn more about the adult in front of the classroom without getting up the courage needed to ask that (sometimes scary) first question. Furthermore, research indicates that students see teachers who willingly and freely disclose personal information through social networking sites as more competent, trustworthy, and caring than teachers who do not (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2009). Research also demonstrates that students demonstrated higher levels of motivation for learning, displayed greater affective learning, and perceived the classroom climate to be more positive for teachers with whom they socially networked than for teachers with whom they did not (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007). This all supports the positive results of online relationships developed through teacher-student social networking.

In the Adult Advocate section of *This We Believe*, the AMLE (2003, 2010) suggested that all children should have an adult advocate that guides the students’ intellectual *and* personal growth. Concerning intellectual growth, social networking sites can be tools for teachers to offer students reminders on upcoming events and assignments. They can provide students an opportunity to ask homework questions outside of school. In addition, as previously mentioned, students rated teachers with whom they socially networked as more competent, exhibited more motivation, and viewed the classroom context to be more constructive than teachers with whom they did not socially network (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007, 2009). Concerning personal growth, social networking sites enable students to communicate with teachers through public wall comments and/or email in privacy and without worry of potentially judgmental stares. The technologically-constructed privacy that regulates potentially judgmental stares is not always possible during school time. Unlike in a discussion, there is a better chance for a written and stored record for communication (save instant messaging), which can protect teachers from erroneous claims. Finally, unlike in school when educators’ time can be scarce, teachers can respond to academic questions and personal queries at their own speed, possibly after having

consulted with a guidance counselor or other teachers about a consequential topic. Such technology, for those teachers who employed it, facilitated students' perceptions of them as more trustworthy and caring than teachers who did not employ the technology (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2009). This research suggests the positive impact social networking can have for students' intellectual and personal development.

The authors recognize that to suggest utilizing social networking sites in this way will likely elicit either curiosity or anxiety from educators, administrators, and the public. However, when considering the contemporary context of emerging Internet technologies, students' interests in and misuses of it, the ubiquity of cyberbullying, and students' reluctance to report it, to do otherwise might seem to be a controversy-avoidance (or a litigation-prevention) stance in the hopes that such misconduct will disappear. In other words, cyberbullying will manifest whether teachers identify it or not. The authors argue that a controversy-avoidance (or a litigation-prevention) stance is akin to the proverbial ostrich putting his head in the sand. To justify this argument, the article will document students' uses and misuses of internet technology, apply the premise to a successful and research-based programmatic approach to bullying, and contextualize it using representative examples of school districts' current policies.

### **Students' (Mis)Uses of Technology and Adults' Responses**

Miller, Thompson, and Franz (2009) offered a plethora of substantive examples to describe American teenage culture as "wired". Through technologies such as computers, cell phones, tweeting, blogs, social networking sites, YouTube, Google Buzz, and internet gaming, teens actively construct media and connect with friends more frequently than previous generations in ever-expanding ways (Miller, Thompson, & Franz, 2009; Lenhart & Maddeen, 2007; Lenhart, Maddeen, & Hitlin, 2005). Researchers suggest many positive aspects of this "connectedness" such as, but not limited to, novel literacies, cross-cultural and interracial interactions, access to alternative media, unique ways to explore new identities, and novel experiences that would not occur otherwise (Alvermann, 2008; Hartnell-Young & Vetere, 2008). Similarly, many researchers have noted the progressively increasing ways adolescents integrate the abovementioned technologies into their offline worlds (Miller, Thompson, & Franz, 2009; Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008; Tynes, 2007). As technologies expand, troubles and dangers emerge. While sexting elicits sensationally pungent headlines (Boucek, 2009; Lenhart, 2009; Manzo, 2009; O'Donovan, 2010; Zirkel, 2009), cyberbullying has a stronger (and more lasting) negative impact on children and classrooms (Darden, 2009; Feinberg & Robey, 2009; Fredrick, 2009; Gross, 2009; Mustacchi, 2009; Vandenbosch & Van Cleemput, 2008).

Cyberbullying thus has the attention of lawmakers, reporters, first amendment scholars, the courts, school administrators, and various parent groups. Koloff (2008) and eSchool News (2007b) reported numerous states' attempts to construct laws to confront cyberbullying. In response, many reporters and first amendment scholars question the first amendment or "free speech" rights of students depicted as the aggressor or cyberbully (Hudson, 2009; New York Times Editorial, 2009). In court cases, such as Beidler v. North Thurston School District (2000), these dynamics have been confronted with differing conclusions, which places school administrators in a quandary. There is simply no proven or universally supported path.

Even though some have questioned school administrators' authority to involve themselves in issues that manifest outside the schools' doors (Anderson, 2007), schools must respond (Darden, 2009; Feinberg & Robey, 2009; Mustacchi, 2009). It is due to this context's fluidity and the volatility of cyberbullying, which peaks in middle school (Williams & Guerra, 2007), that this article suggests teachers' active involvement with students on social networking websites. With the hopes of discovering effective strategies, educators must carefully and purposefully test new possibilities. This method addresses the first steps towards proactive intervention: identification and, to the best extent possible, supervision.

Clearly an attempt to think outside the proverbial box, this article's premise coheres with AMLE's stated philosophies. As mentioned, AMLE (2003, 2010) urged middle schools to facilitate students' feelings of safety and support. Through such social networking behaviors, teachers can effectively gain access to hidden conflicts to quickly and positively respond. As AMLE encouraged an adult advocate for every student, teachers can utilize social networking technologies to better construct meaningful relationships to aid students' intellectual and personal growth (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2009). Furthermore, this use of social networking follows the proactive suggestions of research-based anti-bullying strategies.

### **To Proactively Confront Cyberbullying**

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program grounds this article's proposal. Multitudes of researchers have studied various school districts' applications of the Olweus program. Black and Jackson (2007) noted dramatic decreases in bullying incidents over a four-year period in six urban schools. Research in rural school districts has yielded similar results (Melton, et al 1998). Focusing on ten middle schools, Bauer, Lozano, and Rivara (2007) reported comparable success.

Olweus' (1991, 1993, 2004) proactive philosophy, in short, suggests districts identify contexts where problems emerge, insert supervising adults whenever possible, educate adults to recognize students' (mis)behaviors, and empower the adults to proactively respond to new conflicts. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2004) supports such actions.

For any approach to be proactive and responsive, it must first identify problematic contexts and then, to the best extent possible, insert adult supervision. Utilizing premises from the AMLE (2003, 2010) and suggestions from Olweus (1991, 1993, 2004), this approach provides an (untested but promising) identification strategy and, to the best extent possible, incorporates adult supervision. As mentioned, identification and supervision are especially necessary in this emergent context of cyberbullying. As this next section details, however, current education policy complicates matters.

### **Current Policy in Education**

Social networking websites such as Facebook are immensely popular among adolescents and adults (Cassell & Cramer, 2008; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Since cyberbullying and teacher misconduct emerge on social networking websites, schools have legal and moral responsibilities to respond. Senate bill S. 1492: Broadband Data Improvement Act (2008) requires that all federally funded schools with internet access teach students about proper and improper

online behaviors, including cyberbullying and online threats. Thus, schools' must construct policies to protect students from such threats.

School districts' policies appear influenced by two guiding principles: to keep students safe and to avoid controversy and litigation. When considering the litigious implications for school districts, creating a policy that encompasses both principles is seemingly impossible. While not theoretically incongruous, these two guiding principles *in practice* negatively influence each other. Although both principles deserve consideration, this is not the case because school districts' fears of controversy and litigation limit how far they allow teachers to go to keep students safe. In doing so, such policies purposefully avoid employing unproven (if promising) techniques – like social networking technology – to ameliorate cyberbullying. This article contextualizes and evaluates their actions, as judged by their policies, on a continuum.

Chicago Public Schools (CPS, 2009) policy denotes the negligently reactionary end of the spectrum. CPS recently banned all faculty members' social networking activities on the district's network and limited faculty members' e-communication with students and parents to only district e-mail accounts. This policy, and others like it, fails to accept the previously mentioned positive attributes of teacher-student interactions on social networking sites, and in its current context, appears unenforceable.

Frederick County (Maryland) Public Schools (FCPS) policy represents the opposite end of the spectrum and is characterized as a weak warning. FCPS cautioned faculty about potentially negative consequences of teacher-student social networking, provided past cases of teacher misconduct, and asserted there would be no support for teachers entangled in controversy (Cannon, 2009). Thus, FCPS allowed teachers to network socially with students but offered no formal support, even if the teachers' social networking with students were attempts to confront cyberbullying. This lack of support likely has the resultant effect of timidity among teachers who employ technology to bring a sense of humanity back into the classroom.

Both school districts seemingly constructed policies out of fear of litigation and appear devoid of realistic tools to confront cyberbullying. Most importantly, both fail to distinguish between problematic behavior and problematic technologies. For instance, cyberbullying and teacher misconduct are certainly crises that manifest on social networking sites. While social networking sites enable their emergence, the misdeeds likely happen in other contexts, probably frequently, but go unnoticed or unreported. Thus, it is the students' and teachers' misbehaviors that are the problem, not the technology. To prohibit the technology (and this identification method) will not prevent the previously cited misbehaviors, it will however allow them to remain unidentified.

Since neither policy addresses cyberbullying through proactive identification or the insertion of adult supervision, neither coheres with the Olweus (1991, 1993, 2004) anti-bullying program. These policies thus do not advantageously employ the latest technologies to address cyberbullying and, it stands to reason, do *not* ensure a safe school environment or an adult advocate for all students, as AMLE (2003, 2010) suggested.



### Summations and Discussions

For purposes of clarity, it is necessary to revisit the previous suggestions about teachers and students interacting on social networking sites. First, as a technological tool, teachers can effectively identify consequential information from students about both cyberbullying *as they emerge*. Teachers can only garner evidence about cyberbullying, a ubiquitous and rarely reported problem, if they actively socially network with students. This enables teachers to proactively identify ostensibly concealed conflicts that emerge outside the school's walls but directly (and negatively) influence the classroom environment and students' learning. Through such identification, and in coherence with AMLE's suggestions about middle schools' environments and Olweus' suggestions for anti-bullying strategies, educators can better respond to cyberbullying.

Second, and in reference to students' personal growth, teachers can better construct meaningful relationships with students using social networking sites. By enabling picture-sharing and informal conversations, teachers can more easily connect with all students, especially the quieter ones. Furthermore, students who socially network with teachers see those teachers as more trustworthy, caring, and competent than teachers with whom they do not network. In regards to students' intellectual growth, teachers can use such sites to remind students about upcoming events and assignments and answer students' questions about homework after school hours. Additionally, students who socially network with teachers are more motivated, more able for affective learning, and view those teachers' classrooms as more constructive than teachers with whom they do not. Therefore, in coherence with AMLE's suggestions about adult advocates for all student network, educators can better form consequential relationships with students that positively influence students' personal and intellectual growth.

This approach enables teachers to connect with students, providing a novel avenue for student-teacher dialogue. Connectedness is a multi-facet proposition for contemporary middle school students. Since it is not only through face-to-face interactions that facilitate personal relationships, it makes sense that teachers' developed online presence can also facilitate young adolescents' socialization. In order to better bond with students, teachers need to become adept at and actively involved in how students socially interact.

Unlike in a discussion, there is a written and stored record for all communication, which can protect teachers from invalid assertions. In addition, unlike in school when teachers' time is scarce, teachers can respond to academic questions and personal queries at their own speed, possibly after having consulted with a guidance counselor or other teachers. Teachers may also feel the need to present themselves to students and parents differently than they do to friends and family. Towards these ends, a teacher can create two profiles, one for professional and one for personal use. Such privacy controls are both manageable and readily available (Kang, 2010).

Many teachers, administrators, and parents likely have experience with documented instances of cyberbullying on social networking sites after it emerged and continued for long periods of time. When this occurred, the victim likely felt disempowered at both the cyberbullying and at his or her "telling on" the aggressor (Gross, 2009; Vandenbosch & Van

Cleemput, 2008). If a teacher had been Facebook “friends” with either the victim or the aggressor and thus had access to their pages, the teacher could have quickly identified the situation and provided a more timely response. Sadly, in most instances, this does not occur because students rarely report cyberbullying.

The suggested steps closely mirror Olweus’ (1991, 1993, 2004) suggestions to recognize problem areas, insert adult supervision, identify students’ misbehaviors, and proactively respond. These procedures closely mirror recommendations from AMLE (2003, 2010) and the APA (2004). Further, these procedures certainly seem to be more proactive with greater potential for success than previously mentioned school districts’ policies. Most importantly, students deserve educators’ conscientious and purposeful examinations of this new possibility.

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**Together as Better: Strategies that Invite Convergent Culture into the Classroom via  
Mobile Devices**

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**Abstract**

*University students feel comfortable using mobile devices, although not necessarily within educational contexts. Educators need to make every effort to join their students and embrace new multimedia practices in the classroom. The purpose of this article is to draw attention to a series of mobile device practices and strategies that promote and encourage collective, collaborative, creative, and thoughtful communication in university classrooms.*

## Introduction

We as a society are moving further into the Conceptual Era, an age in which individuals are equipped not simply with technical know-how, but with the ability to create, analyze, and transform information and to interact effectively with others (Pink, 2005). We witness this shift most vividly in the behaviors of today's university students, identified as the millennials (Howe and Strauss, 2002) or digital natives (Prensky, 2005), who stay constantly connected in order to be a part of a collective intelligence. While this may seem counter-intuitive to traditional education, it is something that we must recognize as one of the more common ways our students choose to gain information: they see "together" as better. More and more often we witness students in our classes seemingly not paying attention because they are texting in the middle of a lecture. The perception is that there is a decline in students' abilities to concentrate on the task at hand. While cognitive neuroscience points to research that shows that today's students have very different ways of processing information that enable them to have a deeper understanding of situations (Jenkins, 2006; Johnson, 2006), those of us who teach these students often don't have this same view; in fact, we often see these actions as disrespectful and counterproductive to the real learning that we think should be happening in our classrooms.

There is no getting around the fact that most of our students are connected to the web and their friends via mobile devices. Today's students will spend more than 10,000 hours playing videogames, send and receive over 200,000 emails and instant messages; spend over 10,000 hours talking on cell phones; watch over 20,000 hours of TV, and see over 500,000 commercials (Kaiser Foundation, 2010). That is exponentially higher than the amount of time that they will spend with traditional forms of literacy and learning. We would be remiss in our duties as educators if we did not recognize that learning and literacy are converging with new media in ways unfathomable ten or twenty years ago. In fact, schooling is just as it was ten, twenty, or even hundred years ago and not much has changed to match the pace of today's learner (Gee, 2003; Lankshear and Knobel, 2007; Steinkeuhler, 2008).

Today's students who are technically and digitally adept outside of school can navigate the Internet and technology peripherals (computers, game consoles, mobile devices) in a rapid and fast changing nature, with the ability to adapt to new changes in these environments at a quick pace which is not always recognized in class curricula (Abrams, 2009; Gee, 2007; Gerber, 2009; Gerber, 2010). The ability to navigate between online environments and popular culture is a convergence of cultures (Jenkins, 2006). It is collaboration and collective decision making that allows people and today's students to be successful in these environments (Jenkins, 2006; O'Reilly, 2005). This collision of thought, this so called "Convergence Culture" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 10), is at the heart of what good education should be. This same convergence in ways of thinking and collaborating can be invited into the classroom, if we allow it. The purpose of this article is to highlight a series of strategies that promote and encourage collective, collaborative, creative, and critical thought and communication within each and every student. When conducted through the engaging new media of text and web-enabled phones, a symphony of learning can be enjoyed by all who dare to participate. In order to better understand how to listen to and understand the symphony of language produced by today's students, we will first explore the digital native student and look at how these students' thoughts and styles of communicating

often collide with traditional academia and schooling before looking into mobile devices and how they can be incorporated in the classroom.

### *Who are the Digital Native Students?*

Today's college students think very differently from students of ten or even twenty years ago (Gee, 2003). These students, recognized by some as digital natives (Prensky, 2005), have very different ways of processing information and conceptualizing ideas. In fact, neuroscience shows that today's students' brains are likely wired in such a unique manner as compared to their parents and teachers that often it seems as if a language barrier exists between the "digital natives" and the "digital immigrants" (their parents, teachers, professors, and those not from the millennial generation--1978-2000). These are the students who have come of age in a world with technological advancements, and who do not remember a time without the Internet and computers; they are the students for whom the phrase "I'll just Google it" holds more validity than turning to reference books for information. Digital native students are adept in using multi-modal means to communicate and acquire knowledge through platforms such as video games, social network services (Facebook, Myspace, Friendster, and Bebo), YouTube, Instant Messaging, and other forms of Computer Mediated Communication or CMC. These are their tools and they use them as extensions of their bodies and minds, fluidly incorporating them into their daily routines (Prensky, 2005). They are changing the world when given the tools and the ability to do so. For example, Mark Zuckerberg, digital native student and founder of the world's largest social network service, Facebook (which has over 200 million users), was a Harvard student when he developed this social network service; Facebook is now the website of choice for many people young and old, for up-to-date information on life, politics, and civic engagement. He used what he knew about the communication needs and desires of students and improved upon the already existing idea of social networks and computer-mediated communication to create this site. Reportedly, Mark Zuckerberg turned down one billion dollars for his beloved Facebook from Yahoo because he felt that he was more knowledgeable about the wants and needs of the millennials and digital generation, being a member himself (McGirt, 2007). Digital native students know how to use media and create digital environments where communication and collaboration are nearly synonymous (Lomas, Burke & Page, 2008). This does not always occur within the four walls of school.

### *Collision of Cultures*

A collision of cultures may occur when digitally literate students clash with digitally challenged older adults in the traditional classroom. As stated above, research in cognitive neuroscience shows that there is indirect evidence that digital native students think and process information much differently from their parents and other digital immigrants. In fact, much of the current pop culture and the technology that emerges as a result of collective intelligence born out of pop culture can be credited with these changing brain patterns (Johnson, 2006). But what does that mean for schooling and for digital native students in a classroom that is not a familiar digital land? Often, it means a lack of understanding between what is to be learned and what is actually learned. The digital native student tends to become disinterested in the traditional classroom due to the segmented nature of the learning. Learning in a digital environment becomes an experience where learning is integrated and collaborative in nature

(Gerber, 2009). In order to increase an interest in learning, educators must encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative by allowing students to tap into these very diverse learning styles and digital aptitudes that emerge from today's students' repertoire of digital tools. Digital natives are used to being producers of knowledge and are aware of how to take a dynamic role in learning; being a pure consumer of knowledge is not something that sits well with them. Most traditional schooling forces students to only be consumers of knowledge and does not allow for them to become active producers of the very knowledge that they are helping to define. This is a collision of cultures, an area that should be more deeply explored to see how to integrate this digital native learning style into current curricula. One such way is to use the current medium of communication that most students carry around with them: the mobile phone or smart phone.

### New Literacies, Learning, and The Smart Phone

Addressing the changing nature of technology and student interaction with technology must include a conversation about the socio-cultural nature of new literacy practices on students. Engagement can particularly be attributed to the idea that new literacy, by its very nature, includes practices that can lead to higher student engagement (Osborne, 2005). In these new literacy environments, students often rely on skills of collaboration, collective intelligence, and appropriation, or remixing to be successful in these environments (Gerber, 2010). These same traits and skills can be harnessed within classroom instruction when using mobile devices. These practices and literacies are more collaborative, more distributed, and more participatory (Lankshear and Knobel, 2007).

According to the Pew Research Center's study of teens and mobile phones, the mobile phone has become the favored communication hub for roughly 75% of American young adults (Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010). Most students today own smart phones which are web-enabled that often run with multiple operating systems (OS), from PC based platforms, to Linux and Apple systems, which in turn can enable the owner to work on documents and browse the Internet. Smart phones, such as the iPhone and Blackberry, combine the elements of interactivity, identity and mobility. The mobility of the device demonstrates that media is no longer bound by time and space can be used in any context. Owning a smart phone gives students the opportunities to not only browse the web, but to stay constantly connected and plugged into a social network of learning, communicating, and collaborating. It enhances the participatory culture through increased levels of interactivity. Instead of merely watching, users are actively involved in making decisions, navigating pages, contributing their own content and choosing what links to follow. The smart phone offers endless choices and ways to get personally involved with multiple media at the same time, in a nonlinear way.

### *Mobile Devices and Collaboration through Micro-Blogging*

In recent years, Twitter's popularity has steadily gained traction. What started as a simple way to update friends about daily life has grown into a powerful tool for business, communication, and education. Twitter is an online micro-blogging service that allows users to broadcast and receive messages from the computer or cell phone of 140 characters in length. For instance, all those who "subscribe" to a broadcast can see a message, called a "tweet," and in return, can receive messages from all those to whom they subscribe. Because tweets can be sent

and received from a mobile phone, users can efficiently utilize this highly mobile form of communication. Twitter may be a few rungs below Facebook in terms of popularity among college students, but a growing number of educators are embracing it as a way to introduce students to a different kind of communication. The creative ways Twitter users have incorporated micro blogging into their daily lives have inspired universities to incorporate Twitter in the college classroom.

Why use Twitter in university classrooms? Twitter can help keep students engaged in course content beyond the classroom walls. The time when students could sit in a residence hall lobby after class to discuss ideas and share philosophies is almost a nostalgic practice of bygone days. Today, many students work several jobs and more often than not, do not live in a residence hall. However, using Twitter in the classroom is a way to make up for this lost venue.

The following are a few ideas for incorporating Twitter with course content in academic classroom.

#### *Direct tweet*

Professors and students can contact each other through direct Tweets without having to share cell phone numbers. The benefit of using a direct Tweet is that these messages are only viewable by the person who receives the message. Direct messages are also a nice way to personally greet new followers without cluttering your twitter stream with redundant introductions.

#### *Class twitter group*

A class Twitter group will help facilitate professors and students getting to know each other, especially if the class is part of a more intimate setting such as a seminar. This is a good way for professors to post class news, announcements, and project updates on the network during the course of the class period. Goals can range from helping students to develop personal learning networks outside of class, giving a voice to students who do not speak up often, creating a backchannel for two-way dialogue, and learning how to manage a fast-paced online conversation. In addition to following the professors, class members can follow each other and this can help to create a classroom community. In addition to the previous suggestions, a class Twitter account allows students to brainstorm, share interesting websites that are relevant to their class and posit questions to the professor or the class as a whole.

Before having a class participate within a group Twitter account, it may be advisable to set up a few guidelines. First, students need to understand that although they will be able to be in constant contact with their fellow classmates and their professor, tweets should be kept on a public, academic level, not a personal level. This is particularly important for professors to retain professional relations with their students. Further, the professor needs to establish the times when it is appropriate to tweet. May students tweet during a lecture? Should tweeting happen only when class has concluded? This guideline needs to be determined at the onset of the Twitter experience. Further, is it probably worth showing students how to turn off Twitter's

pushing (updates) to their phone during specified hours so the phone does not go off at 3 a.m. Finally, if students do not have unlimited texting, their number of text messages can really skyrocket. To address this concern, have them follow all of their classmates, but have only 5-10 of them pushed to their phone. Just because students are following someone does not mean they will get their updates on their phone.

#### *Collaborate on projects*

Students can set up a group using an app like Tweetworks, which is a Twitter application that makes it simple to find and participate in relevant conversations. Users of the app can enjoy fully threaded conversations, join and create groups on any topic and share media with single-click tagging.

#### *Take a poll*

Students can express their opinions or get feedback on future projects or topics by using an app like PollDaddy, an app that allows the creation of surveys, polls, and quizzes in a short time. Responses can be collected via their website, e-mail, iPad, Facebook, and Twitter. The app can also generate and share easy-to-read reports.

#### *Follow These*

Twitter allows the class to follow politicians, mentors, the news, citizen journalism or professionals in the class' area of interest.

#### *Experiment with Twitter Tools*

*Glunote* is a note taking application. Notes can be taken and retrieved by using either a favorite Twitter client, Twitter itself, or on the Glunote website.

*TwitPic* lets users share media on Twitter in real-time from their phone, from the site, or through email.

*Tweetree* puts a Twitter stream in a tree so users can see the posts people are replying to in context. It pulls in numerous external content so the class can see them right in the stream without having to click through every link participants post.

Bringing a service like Twitter into academia as a teaching approach has garnered a fair amount of criticism. Some feel that restricting users to a mere 140-character blurb wreaks havoc with students' writing skills and does nothing to help lengthen their attention spans. Others feel a tool like Twitter should be used solely with other professionals in the field. Finally, some feel Twitter's usefulness depends on the individual. As William Kist, professor at Kent State University shares, "If you want to share information in small bites with a group of people who share your interest, that's what it's for." (Miners, 2010).

### *Mobile Devices and Collective Intelligence*

Collective intelligence is based on a model of deliberation in which diverse groups of people deliberately compare notes and work through problems together. It is the kind of intelligence that is constantly enhanced and coordinated in real time. "No one knows everything, everyone knows something, all knowledge resides in humanity" (Levy, 1999). Scarlat & Maries (2009) concur when they suggest that collective intelligence is the ability of a group to solve problems more effectively than any of its individual members.

User-generated content (UGC) refers to various kinds of media content that are produced by the users themselves, as opposed to traditional media producers such as professional writers and publishers (San Diego Media, 2010). Perhaps one of the most well-known examples of UGC is *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, an online encyclopedia that anyone can add to or edit. Equal parts online encyclopedia, almanac and tabloid, *Wikipedia* is exhaustively comprehensive but also corruptible because its content can be submitted and edited by users who are not always qualified or objective. Although not uniformly endorsed by instructors, *Wikipedia* tends to be more up to date than *Encyclopedia Britannica*, which has the brand, but *Wikipedia* employs a "super brain". With very minimal software, *Wikipedia* directs millions of minds to create a new kind of encyclopedia (O'Reilly, 2006).

Mobile devices can bring in more contextual information to user created data and enable creation of on-site and real-time information (Nishimoto, 2007). Today's smart phones contain microphones, cameras, motion sensors, proximity sensors, and location sensors. These sensor-based applications can be designed to get better the more people use them, collecting data that creates a virtual feedback loop that creates more usage (O'Reilly & Battelle, 2009). Utilization of mobile devices in the classroom to promote collective intelligence makes sense because these delivery platforms can be accessed anytime, anywhere, are cost effective, have a global reach, promote just-in time learning, are highly personal and encourage collaboration and interactivity.

Dr. David Kaufer, professor of English at Carnegie Mellon University states, "Studies show that people working in teams are able to arrive at better and more creative solutions than people working alone, and this is particularly true in reading and writing tasks. However, that collective effort is difficult to achieve in formal education settings" (Carnegie Melon University, 2011). Mobile devices can be used to engage students in online learning communities that effectively tap the collective intelligence of groups. For example, students can share their ideas about texts, news articles and other reading materials or their critiques of each others' writings. Additionally, students can read assigned texts and then annotate them with online editing tools. Their observations can then be shared with others that may then spark discussion within a document, cluster similar comments and identify which comments are most influential. Using mobile devices in the classroom can enhance students' experience as readers and writers.

The following are some applications for mobile devices that encourage the practice of collective intelligence.

### *Mashups*

Mashups combine music, text, video or images into one composition. They are useful in the classroom to get students to think creatively.

### *Wikis*

A Wiki is a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser. Wiki supports hyperlinks and has a simple text syntax for creating new pages and crosslinks between internal pages on the fly.

### *Document Sharing*

These are phone applications that allow users to "catch" documents from other sources and save them to personal phones.

### *Social Networks*

A social networking service is a platform, that focuses on building social relations among people who share interests and/or activities.

### *Blogs*

A "blog" is a blend of the terms "web" and "log". A blog is usually maintained by an individual on a regular basis and can be interactive. Visitors to a blog are often invited to contribute to the existing conversation.

### *Podcasting*

Podcasting allows users to create audio files and post them to the Internet for others to download and listen to at any time. Podcasts can serve as an alternative to student produced newspapers or oral presentations of reports and assignments.

The interfacing of collective intelligence with mobile applications in a classroom setting allows information to be compared, contrasted, and collated. At this moment in time, the idea of sharing information is being valued as much as the idea of proprietary information. Although these mobile applications hold many promising prospects, hand held devices are unable on their own to determine whether information is true or not. An application will assimilate information as 'truthful' and will render a result based on the original input, regardless of the quality of the original information. These apps do not know right from wrong, good from bad, so it is up to the collective intelligence to evaluate, rate, and update misinformation where it exists. Further, there are some legitimate concerns about privacy and ownership rights to data that is freely posted on multiple websites. That being said, use of mobile devices in the university setting to compile information from the collective is a promising way to truly harness our "web brain" in "real time".



*Mobile Devices and Appropriation/Remixing*

Tom Pettit, Associate Professor of English at the University of Southern Denmark, suggests that in the centuries prior to the invention of the printing press, humans commonly utilized devices such as sampling, remixing, borrowing and appropriating as a means to communicate and learn (Pettit, 2007). Interestingly, Walter Ong (1982) suggests that we have recently entered into an era of 'secondary orality', or prevalent form of communication, which is similar in scope to the time before Gutenberg when it was common practice to 'appropriate' thoughts and ideas, incorporating them into their own works of self expression. According to some scholars who are following and documenting the learning practices of today's participatory culture, media-centric youths are again demonstrating the same 'pre-Gutenberg' inclinations for "appropriation", "collective intelligence", and "networking" as staples of the methods they often utilize, especially in informal learning situations (Jenkins, 2005; 2006).

*Scala*, a girl's chorus from Belgium, performed a song for the 2010 movie *The Social Network*. What made the performance noteworthy was that the all-girls' choir sang an acoustic reworking of Radiohead's song *Creep*. Brothers Steven and Stijn Kolancy took the rock song and reinvented it as a melancholic hymn. In other words, they remixed Radiohead's original song.

The term remix is a metaphor for "changing it up," "looking at things in a new way" (Prins, 2010). Remix culture is all around. Popularized through the music culture and the online networking scene, it can now be found in literature, photography, video, and art. A remix in literature may be an alternative version of a text. Photographic mosaics are often a reorganizing or remixing of photographs. A movie parody of various mainstream movies may be a remixing or mashup of video. A similar term, "appropriation", refers to art and means to take possession of another's imagery by properly adopting, borrowing, recycling or sampling aspects of man-made visual culture (Delahunt, 2010) such as Andy Warhol's painting of the lowly Campbell soup can.

Images, sounds, video clips and text abound online. Copying those and reworking them with software is one way for students to accomplish a remix. Appropriation and remix are most often used to make some kind of commentary, but can also just be a fun way to work with a song or image that a student likes. In recent years, remix practices have gained increased recognition as powerful tools for teaching and learning in the youth media field. Re-using media is a means to strengthen critical analysis and heighten awareness of media's many creative forms and the cultural, political, economic, and social functions of mass media, popular culture and digital media in contemporary society (Hobbs, 2008). Remix practices offer students the opportunity to participate in culture, practice self-expression, communicate, advocate and become participatory citizens.

Popular examples of current remix practices used by today's youth include:

Photoshopping remixes - diverse practices of image editing, many of which constitute forms of remix.

Music and music video remixes - taking bits and pieces of existing songs and splicing them together.

Machinima (machine + cinema) remixes - the process by which fans use video game animation "engines" to create movies.

Original manga and anime fan art - a distinct branch of fan music clips using anime as their visual resources (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007).

Gee (2007) observes that humans feel "expanded and empowered when they can manipulate powerful tools in intricate ways that extend their area of effectiveness." He further notes that many of the tools young people increasingly have access to today are "smart tools" that have knowledge built in to them in ways that enable them to "collaborate" with the tool users to do complex things that the tool user either could not do alone or could not do as effectively. Classroom pedagogy stands to learn much from remix affinities and how they enable learning and achievement (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007). But, there is a caveat. Despite the popular and long-standing use of appropriation/remixing, these artistic practices have resulted in contentious copyright issues. Since remixers often borrow heavily from an existing piece of art, the issue of intellectual property becomes a concern. Producers and educators working with appropriation/remixing need to have a sound understanding of copyright and fair use and how it applies to teaching and learning (Hobbs, 2008).

### Conclusion

Today's digital natives and millennials are growing up in a world dominated by communication with others and have constant access to vast amounts of information through the use of mobile devices. Even though our undergraduate student population is extremely diverse, e.g. culturally, geographically, socioeconomically, traditional or non-traditional, one aspect remains the same; all of them will need to be prepared to work and communicate in 21st century classrooms. As our students connect and communicate with each other, so should we as educators make every effort to join them and embrace new literacy practices in which they are proficient. Current university students feel comfortable using mobile devices although not necessarily within educational contexts. This will require educators to use up-to-date multi-literacy practices to make learning more relevant and meaningful for digital and non-digital natives to be successful in the classrooms of the future.

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Teaching Diversity Issues to Pre-service Teachers in Rural Settings

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Abstract

*Pre-service teachers need preparation for the increasing diversity that will accompany their entry into the teaching profession. As there are few individuals of diversity near many rural campuses, it is necessary to develop alternative methods to prepare pre-service teachers for diversity issues. A study of pre-service teachers' attitudes toward diversity as well as how their college classes prepare them to deal with diverse students was conducted. Results show that students who come from rural settings have little apprehension when it comes to dealing with diverse students, and approve of the techniques that are being taught to them with regard to dealing with diverse students.*

It has become increasingly commonplace in our country to find rural schools challenged by diverse populations entering their classrooms (Reiter & Davis, 2011; Assaf, Battle, & Garza, 2010). These rural schools are now faced with some of the challenges that urban schools have been dealing with for many years (Beeson & Strange, 2003, Jones, 2004; Wenger & Dinsmore, 2005). According to Buchanan and Rudisill (2007), shifting demographics in schools toward greater ethnic and linguistic diversity require teacher education programs to teach future teachers even in rural areas how to be effective with all learners. In general education classrooms there are more races and ethnicities found, as well as individuals with disabilities and special needs. Educators must now teach large numbers of students who are unlike them culturally or linguistically (Harlin, Murray, & Shea, 2007; Thorp & Sanchez, 2008). Rural teacher education programs are now being asked to prepare their teachers for this influx of diversity.

The steady increase in the diversity of general educational classrooms in terms of race, ethnicity, and individuals with disabilities has not been accompanied by a concurrent increase in teachers from diverse backgrounds (Allen & Porter, 2002). This problem is exacerbated by the finding that prospective teachers generally do not consider themselves ready to teach children from culturally diverse backgrounds (Marbley, Bonner, Malik, Henfield, & Watts, 2007). “Preservice and in-service teachers are being asked to teach in ways they were not taught in their teacher education programs, to learners who are often unfamiliar to them, in classroom contexts that are outside their experiential realm” (Sobel & Taylor, 2005, p.83). Research shows that “If instruction reflects the cultural and linguistic practices and values of only one group of students, then the other students are denied an equal opportunity to learn” (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007, p.66). Furthermore, teachers exposed to diversity issues tend to develop a more humanistic attitude toward all children (Allen & Porter, 2002).

### Role of Teacher Education Programs

The increase in diversity in rural schools is a major challenge to rural teacher education programs responsible for preparing individuals to teach diverse elements of society. A major requirement under Standard IV, Diversity and Equity, of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2001) is that teacher education programs provide preservice teachers with the knowledge, skills and related learning experiences required to succeed in facilitating learning that will take place in diverse classroom settings” (Valentin, 2006, p.196). Fortunately, there is a body of research that assists teacher education programs in meeting this challenge. However, the literature shows that reform with regard to educating for diversity cannot be limited to one course or field experience (Barnes, 2006).

Research shows that the shaping of attitudes and behaviors toward diversity is more important than stand alone multicultural courses (Valentin, 2006; Richards, et al., 2007). Preservice teachers have past schooling experiences which may inhibit their ability to be effective with diverse learners (Donovan, Rovegno, & Dolly, 2000). Many experts in multicultural education stress the need for diversity-sensitivity training for teachers (Marbley, et al., 2007).

Teacher education programs can affect how pre-service teachers perceive dialect diversity (Godley, Sweetland, Wheeler, Minnici, & Carpenter, 2006; Duarte & Reed, 2004). “If

one can recognize that oneself and one's colleagues and friends are diverse, one becomes more open to acknowledge the oppression humans suffer because of their differences. When authentic acknowledgement occurs, empathy and behaviors change" (O'Hara, 2006, p.39). Teacher education programs need to prepare teachers to become aware of and confront resistance to diversity and emphasize practical and relevant pedagogical applications of research related to diversity (Godley, et al., 2006). Teacher education programs need to offer pre-service teachers the environment that allows them to fully express their views regarding diversity issues. They need to be made comfortable for these discussions and allowed time to reflect about how diversity impacts teaching and learning. According to research, this happens through preparation and practice, not by chance (Gutierrez-Gomez, 2002). Field experiences that expose students to diverse learners are also very important (Gomez, Strage, Knutson-Miller, & Garcia-Nevarez, 2009; Valentin, 2006). Students have asked for more in-depth diversity training, desire opportunities to observe skilled teachers demonstrating appropriate instructional techniques, and want more opportunities to reflect on these experiences (Sobel & Taylor, 2005). Teachers need to know more about the world of the children with whom they work in order to better offer opportunities for learning success (Barnes, 2006), and they must be prepared to work with the families of their diverse learners (Chavkin, 2005). Universities are developing partnerships with school districts to address this issue and create more diverse learning experiences (Sobel & Taylor, 2005). One thing is sure: "Specialty area expertise, alone, is not enough. Educators must be guided by policies, practices and experiences in multicultural education" (Jones, 2004, p.12).

#### Ideas For Exposing Pre-service Teachers To Diversity Issues

##### Collaboration.

Research has shown the value of collaboration among faculty members in higher education (Austin & Baldwin, 1991; Boyer, 1990; Brownell, Yeager, Rennells, & Riley, 1997; Davis, 1997; Dickson, 1996; Richards, Hinley, Weaver, & Landers, 2003; Ripley, 1997; and Slevin, 1993). However, traditional models of teacher education programs rarely include collaborative teaching opportunities. It is important to note that the first author is a professor of special education and that the second author is a professor of general education and that both are on the same faculty at a rural, midwestern university. In order to demonstrate the collaboration necessary between general education and special education both authors often collaborate as instructors, presenting often in each other's classes. Additionally, it is quite common in the Teacher Education department at this university to have courses team-taught by general and special education faculty. A clear example of this is the collaborative teaching that involves faculty from general as well as foundations areas and special education in a human development course. Instructors plan, prepare, and teach both the typical (general education) and atypical (special education) content within the course. Curricular meetings are held each week and instructors have specific roles to coordinate the content, assessments, technology activities, and field-based experiences as they work together as a team.

Another unique feature of the renewed Teacher Education Program is the implementation of an interdisciplinary block of classes. In the first level of the teacher preparation program, education majors complete an introductory education foundations course along with a political



science class. The two courses are scheduled back to back for faculty collaboration and to create a block of time so that students can participate in field visits to P-12 schools. Social justice and educational diversity issues are explored and emphasized in both courses. The teacher education field-based program encourages faculty members to share their ideas and knowledge, and to build closer professional relationships.

#### Case-Study Pedagogy.

Due to the fact that the students in this rural, midwestern university come largely from rural, small towns where there are few ethnic, racial, and disability diverse residents, it is imperative that the department provide them with “meaningful” examples of racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse cases in which they can problem solve educational solutions. Fortunately, there are commercially available books that have case-studies of students who come from these diverse backgrounds. The first author has added texts with case-studies by Weishaar and Scott (2005, 2006) and Weishaar (2007) to courses in Medical Aspects of Individuals with Disabilities, Assessment in Special Education, and Legal Issues in Special Education.

In the Medical Aspects of Individuals with Disabilities course, students are exposed to case-studies of students with a wide range of disabilities. They experience problem-solving activities for individuals with disabilities including mental impairments, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, communication disorders, hearing impairments, physical disabilities, health impairments, autism disorders, traumatic brain injuries, and attention disorders. This is done to prepare them for various disabilities that usually are only found in larger urban settings, but appear from time to time in less populated areas. These problem-solving activities take place in student-led discussions in a face-to-face classroom setting, and in Blackboard group discussions in an online class. Students in the face-to-face class take turns presenting these cases, and students in the online class take turns summarizing their groups’ discussion board threads.

In the Assessment of Special Education class, students are exposed to case-studies of assessment of students in areas including general achievement, aptitude, emotional and behavior, reading, mathematics, written language, oral language, bilingual proficiency, transitional skills, and early childhood skill development. Face-to-face students and online students participate in the same types of structures mentioned in the previous paragraph.

In the Legal Issues of Special Education class, students are exposed to issues that include school accountability, high-stakes assessment, the referral process, discipline, nondiscriminatory assessment, free and appropriate education, development of Individualized Education Programs, least restrictive environment, due process, and parent participation, with involvement in similar class activities. This case-study approach has brought to life much of the content covered in these courses and made the topics more relevant to the everyday situations encountered by teachers in diverse educational systems.

### Service-Learning.

Several studies cite the benefits of using service-learning in the classroom. One of the most prevalent findings is that service-learning improves academic achievement and social awareness (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Eyler & Braxton, 1997). Another benefit is that students gain a deeper understanding of classroom content by participating in a thoughtfully organized service-learning experience (Mullany, 2005). Service-learning has the potential for developing pre-service teachers' abilities to question their perspectives regarding social inequities and worldview issues.

Service-learning is a major force in American higher education and is particularly powerful in undergraduate education (Ehrlich, 2006). When done effectively, service-learning has the potential to strengthen pre-service teachers' ability to work with others and to help them more fully understand social issues and diversity (Corporation for National Community Service Learning, 2000; Mullany, 2005). Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) suggest intense and robust approaches to help undergraduate students learn about diverse students. Some of the techniques suggested by these researchers include social immersion in a cultural community, and service-learning projects in diverse neighborhoods and schools. Personal interviews that provide pre-service teachers the opportunity to meet and dialogue with members of a diverse community were also suggested.

According to Ladsen-Billings (1994) pre-service teachers who actively engage in service-learning experiences that are different from their own tend to grasp the concept of culturally responsive teaching on a deeper, more significant level. In addition, when pre-service teachers are placed in culturally diverse and/or low-income settings, in addition to taking multicultural courses, they gain opportunities to better understand the social dynamics of culture, race and class (Sleeter, 2000). Service-learning often allows pre-service teachers to learn directly about children's social, emotional and cultural lives (Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 1998).

Implementing a service-learning component within the teacher education program occurred several years ago at this rural, mid-western university. Teacher candidates are now required to complete a fifteen hour service-learning project in an introductory education foundations course before they can be officially accepted into the Teacher Education Program.

Course instructors frame service-learning discussions around the principles of the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) (Goodlad, 1994). NNER was created by John Goodlad, to encourage teacher education programs to prepare future teachers to embrace democratic aspects of teaching. A strong commitment to civic engagement is embedded within this interdisciplinary approach to service-learning. The incorporation of service-learning as a cornerstone for curriculum collaboration among teacher education faculty and service-learning personnel was designed to meet the College of Education's mission of preparing students to actively participate in a democratic society. Service-learning promotes the active participation of pre-service teachers in the community, addressing a broad range of issues (Furco, 2008).

### Technology.

There is increasing research about the use of technology in helping pre-service teachers understand and appreciate diversity (Clark & Gorski, 2001; Phallion, 2003; McShay & Leigh, 2005). According to Phallion (2003), several teacher education programs from rural areas face obstacles in placing pre-service teacher in settings that have highly diverse students. The use of technology is one way to increase interaction and understanding between predominantly white, rural university students and school-aged students from diverse backgrounds. There is also emerging research about how technology aids in the development of mentoring opportunities between pre-service teachers and K-12 educators to benefit elementary and secondary students (Phallion, 2003).

### Multicultural Literature.

Another more traditional technique for addressing diversity issues is through literature. Investigating research articles, case studies, films, and literature related to diversity has been shown to increase multicultural understanding and empathy levels in pre-service teachers (Zygmunt-Fillwalk & Clark, 2007). The use of original texts allows students to analyze diverse perspectives and experiences and compare them to their own. Learning becomes meaningful when students use real situations and authentic viewpoints.

Numerous suggestions have been made to help current and prospective teachers reflect upon their own beliefs and experiences, develop cultural awareness and sensitivity, and potentially modify deep-seated biased attitudes. Several researchers, e.g. Baker and McDermott (2000), Nathenson-Mejia and Escamilla (2003), and Singer and Smith (2001), have used multicultural literature with graduate or pre-service teachers to initiate discussion, reflection, growth, and attitude change, and have reported positive results.

This study attempts to find out the extent to which our students have been exposed to diversity, are open to teaching students from diverse backgrounds and feel that the methods being used to prepare them to teach students of diversity are effective.

### Methods

Students from first year teacher preparation classes were surveyed on their exposure to diversity, attitudes toward diverse peoples and the preparation that they receive to be effective with diverse students.

### Research Questions

1. Do you know people who are...(African American, Asian, Hispanic, Muslim, Native American, Gay, Disabled)?
2. Do you have close friends with who are...(African American, Asian, Hispanic, Muslim, Native American, Gay, Disabled)?
3. Do you have apprehension teaching people who are...(African American, Asian, Hispanic, Muslim, Native American, Gay, Disabled)?

4. (Service Learning, Case Studies, Technology, Literature, Case Studies, School Visits)...would help with diversity issues.

### Results

There were many commonalities found among the students in the survey. Despite the fact that 91% of the students were Caucasian, and only 7% came from cities, an overwhelming majority of the students knew people who were African-American, Asian, Hispanic, Gay or Disabled. Far less of the students knew people who were Muslim or Native American. Fewer numbers in the study claimed to have close friends who were minorities (See Table 1).

Table 1.  
*Percent of Students who state that "I know people who are ..."*

Demographic	% "Yes"	% "No"	Significant Predictors
African American	95.3%	4.7%	None
Asian	89.6%	10.4%	Age (B=.034, Sig. = .035) Year In School (B=-.127, Sig. = .017)
Muslim	30.2%	69.8%	District Locale (B=-.033, Sig. = .048)
Hispanic	99.1%	.9%	District Locale (B=.009, Sig. = .007)
Native American	55.7%	44.3%	None
Gay	90.6%	9.4%	Age (B=.040, Sig. = .010)
Disabled	93.4%	6.6%	None

Note. n = 106 p<.05

Still, more than a third of the students surveyed had close friends who were African-American, Asian, Hispanic, Gay or Disabled. It was true again that very few in the study had close friends who were Muslim or Native American (See Table 2).

Table 2.  
*Percent of Students who state that "I have close friends who are... "*

Demographic	% "Yes"	% "No"	Significant Predictors
African American	38.7%	61.3%	State (B=-.347, Sig. = .026)
Asian	36.8%	61.2%	State (B=-.377, Sig. = .014) Ethnicity (B=-.204, Sig. = .004)
Muslim	8.5%	91.5%	State (B=-.241, Sig. = .006)
Hispanic	64.2%	35.8%	State (B=-.453, Sig. = .004) Ethnicity (B=-.151, Sig. = .034)
Native American	22.6%	77.4%	Percent Poverty (B=-.008, Sig. = .022)
Gay	39.65	60.35%	Gender (B=-.235, Sig. = .027) Ethnicity (B=-.141, Sig. = .050)
Disabled	35.8%	64.2%	None

Note. n = 106 p<.05

Despite the fact that the students in the study came from backgrounds of limited diversity, less than 9% of the students expressed apprehension toward working with people of diverse backgrounds. It was, unfortunately, Muslim people who encountered the most apprehension (See Table 3).

Table 3.  
*Percent of Students who state that “I have apprehensions about working with people who are .....* “

Demographic	% “Yes”	% “No”	Significant Predictors
African American	3.8%	96.2%	None
Asian	5.7%	94.3%	None
Muslim	8.5%	91.5%	None
Hispanic	3.8%	96.2%	None
Native American	3.8%	96.2%	None
Gay	3.8%	96.2%	Gender (B=.094, Sig. = .028)
Disabled	3.8%	96.2%	District Locale (B=-.027, Sig. = .000)

Note. n = 106 p<.05

The data analysis provided some statistically significant differences between groups. Comparing students from the State of Nebraska with students from other states, it was found that only 35% of students from Nebraska had close friends who were African-American, as compared to 75% of students from other states. Only 33% of students from Nebraska had close friends who were Asian, compared to 67% from other states. Only 5% of students from Nebraska had close friends who were Muslim, compared to 33% from other states. Only 60% of students from Nebraska had close friends who were Hispanic, compared to 100% from other states. And, as far as the use of case studies to help teach diversity issues, 82 % of students from Nebraska saw this technique as helpful, compared to only 50% from other states (See Table 4).

Table 4.  
*Percent of Students who state that “..... would help with diversity issues. “*

Activity	% “Yes”	% “No”	Significant Predictors
School visits	86.8%	13.2%	None
Case studies	78.3%	21.7%	Percent Poverty (B=.007, Sig. = .037) State (B=.442, Sig. = .001) Endorsement (B=.075, Sig. = .034)
Service learning	87.7%	12.3%	District Locale (B=-.018, Sig. = .011)
Good literature	70.8%	29.2%	None
Technology	82.1%	17.9%	None
Collaborative exercises	86.8%	13.2%	None

Note. n = 106

As far as gender is concerned, one significant difference emerged. Twenty-eight percent of all Males had close friends who were gay, compared to 46% of females.

### Conclusions

Pre-service teachers in rural settings need exposure to diversity issues in order to prepare them for a future that will see inevitable increases in the diversity of their student populations. There are pedagogical techniques that will allow professors in teacher training institutions to expose their pre-service teachers to effective ways in which to teach diverse students. It is encouraging that the research shows that, although pre-service teachers from rural settings coming to college have had limited exposure to diversity, they are, in general, open minded and accepting of diverse students.

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Breault, R. and Breault, D. (2012) *Professional Development Schools: Researching Lessons from the Field*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

This book is a review of 300 Professional Development School (PDS) - related writings that cover a 20-year period. The authors state that the purpose of their investigation “was to examine the nature of what PDS partners and advocates were writing about PDS work and the extent to which *actual, high-quality research* is being reported out of partnerships” (p. 24, emphasis added). What they began to discover prompted them to consider their work as a “panoramic look at the landscape” (p. 36) of PDS-related writings, rather than using the more traditional research term of meta-analysis. The importance of this distinction became evident in the first few sections of the book.

The introduction provides the first insight into why the landscape imagery is used rather than the more common meta-analysis term: much of the early writings about PDS consisted of descriptions of in-school activities, explanations of ideology and anecdotal accounts of collaborative work between universities and local preK-12 school districts. According to the Breault’s the documentation of actual effectiveness or impact on learning through the use of quality research methodologies was mostly absent. They also concluded that successful PDS partnerships were largely based on the charismatic personalities of those committed to the work rather than on the strength of the PDS concept, and that once grant monies ran out or a change in personnel occurred, the PDS model could not sustain itself.

Chapter 1 can best be described as a discussion of the PDS identity crisis. The movement heralds back to 1990 when the Holmes Group first coined the term *Professional Development School*. Envisioned as “true reciprocity” between school and university educators, PDSs were designed to improve teaching and learning for all students, whether they were children in preK-12 or undergraduate teacher education students. This open-ended operational definition of PDSs resulted in considerable variations in how the partnerships were designed and implemented. Then in 2001, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) came out with a list of *Standards for Professional Development Schools* which consisted of 32 pages of elements, developmental levels and rubrics (p. 19). This was followed by the establishment of the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) in 2008 which outlined nine required “essentials” of a PDS. These competing ideas created an identity crisis for those studying and implementing the model, which is an important contextual point to consider when reading the book.

Chapter 2 is actually the heart of the book. Here, four conclusions “paint a PDS landscape” as the authors address the questions that guided their initial query into PDS-related writings and publications. Strongly worded and definitively critical, each of these four conclusions is discussed in detail in subsequent chapters. Then in chapter 7 the authors present their opinion of why much of the PDS published work has not been rigorous or meaningfully conclusive, while chapter 8 provides summaries of studies that the authors have judged to be exemplary as a means to provide direction for future research endeavors.

The first general conclusion discussed in chapter 2 is: “The research base for the PDS model in action does not justify the current widespread approach for the movement” (p. 36). The Breault’s found little empirical evidence of actual “research” conducted in PDS environments. Of the 300 reviewed papers, the authors classified only about half (52%) as “research,” using current traditional definitions. The second general conclusion is: “Of the research that does exist, a significant amount offers conclusions that are invalid or unsupported. The same can be said of the non-research-based PDS writing” (p. 37). The authors indicated that almost every writing analyzed had gone through some peer-review process, but the “quality” of the research varied drastically. The authors judged that positive conclusions were drawn from weak studies and superficial stories, while short-sightedness was evident in implications and future directions. General conclusion number three is: “A lack of evidence of improved student learning is especially noticeable” (p. 40). They found that the literature was “fixated” on teacher candidate learning and in-service professional development, and spent precious little time considering preK-12 students and their learning. Out of 300 papers reviewed, only 10 had the latter as *one* of their focal points and out of these, only 4 had the sole focus placed on the preK-12 student. Lastly, the authors’ fourth general conclusion in chapter 2 was: “The voices of students, administrators, families, and university faculty are seriously underrepresented in PDS writing” (p. 40). The preK-12 students typically are seen as the *recipients* of what is done in the school/university partnership, and other stakeholders, such as parent groups, local businesses and community agencies are relegated to an even further back seat. The problem with this arrangement is that by definition, PDSs are supposed to be distinctive by their *inclusiveness* and *collaboration* with all stakeholders, with shared governance, equal participation, mutual learning and communication. The Breaults argue that the teachers in PDSs have actually taken on a larger role over the years, with university faculty deferring to the expertise of “teachers in the trenches.” It was noted that the voice of the elementary teacher was especially pronounced.

In chapter 7 the Breaults noted specific problems they found with the PDS studies that were reviewed: poor methodological design, unsupportable claims of positive learning development for children, and unequal representation among the stakeholders. Explanations included the pressure faced by professors to publish quickly and often, obvious tension between the varying agendas of teacher education programs and pre-K-12 public schools, and basic philosophical differences in definition and implementation. Though both authors have professional background and experience with PDSs, they felt unable to justify the amount of time and resources that have been put into the movement for the last 20 years. Their final chapter provides summaries of studies that they have been judged to be exemplary as a way to provide positive examples for future researchers to follow.

All in all, the book *Professional Development Schools: Researching Lessons from the Field* demonstrates how a new paradigm that was intended to further reciprocal learning and partnership across the educational preK-16 educational spectrum was unable to break free of a long-standing tradition of rules that define “research,” “roles” and “accountability.” This book shows how innovation can be slowly suffocated by traditional ways of thinking about what constitutes “effectiveness” and “quality,” and the Breaults are quick to point out these perceived inadequacies. Judging new paradigms with traditional standards is oxymoronic. New paradigms become the “norm” only with the test of time and often only after much angst. To this end, this book serves an important purpose: it represents a scrutiny which any enduring educational idea

must undergo; that is, a scrutiny that evaluates the new using the old. This clears the air for a different perspective to take root – one that will evaluate the new using the new. In the meantime, PDSs must continue to seek out their identity, document their journey and wait for “tradition” to catch up to them.

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