The promise, reality and dilemmas of secondary school teacher–student interactions in Facebook: The teacher perspective

# Details

## Year

2015

## DOI

10.1016/j.compedu.2015.02.003

## Issued

2015

## Language

English

## Volume

85

## Start Page

## End Page

## Authors

Asterhan C.;Rosenberg H.

## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Computers Education

## Publisher

Elsevier BV

## Topics

Social mediation

## Sample

The overall sample included 178 Israeli secondary school teachers (130 female, 48 male), with a mean age of 42.11. Eleven teachers (3 male, 8 female) who maintained ongoing FB communication with their students for at least one year participated in the interview study

# Abstract

We report on a multi-method study that seeks to explore if, how and why secondary teachers use
Facebook (FB) to interact with their students. Issues of privacy, authority and even abuse have fueled
socio-political debates on the desirability of teacher-student FB contact, leading some authorities to
curtail or even prohibit such contact. Proponents of harnessing Web 2.0 and Social media technology for
learning purposes, on the other hand, have emphasized the many potential advantages for formal and
informal learning. However, there is little empirical research on the scope, the nature and the purposes
for secondary school teacher-student contact through social network sites. The present study makes a
first step in this direction, by triangulating teacher survey data (N ¼ 187) with in-depth teacher interviews
(N ¼ 11). Findings from both data sets show that teacher-student FB contact comes in different
forms and serves a range of purposes, which fall into three main categories: Academic-instructional,
psycho-pedagogical and social-relational. Advantages, dilemmas and limitations of FB contact with
secondary school students are identified

# Outcome

Teachers have developed different routines and norms of behavior for communication with their students on this platform. They also choose to use different communication channels from the range of options that FB offers, to match these different routines, norms and purposes: closed FB groups, direct befriending with personal profiles, and communication through specifically created professional profiles. the dilemmas and conflicts that teachers identified mainly revolved around the potential blurring of different types of boundaries: Privacy (vs intimacy), authority (vs friendship), and availability/responsibility.
Even though teachers seemed to be aware and alert to these issues, they also seemed to have developed strategies to deal with these issues