The "Perfect" Teacher: Discursive Formations of #teachersofinstagram

Lauren Angelone, Xavier University

Abstract

As social media use has risen, teachers have also taken up the medium in specific ways. This study investigates the ways in which teachers are using Instagram, particularly at a moment in time during a global pandemic, when teachers are both more isolated and dealing with multiple modes of instruction, many that involve some new use of instructional technology. Top posts made by teachers using the hashtag #teachersofinstagram are categorized and analyzed using a feminist critical discourse analysis through a visual methodology. Findings indicate that the top posts on #teachersofinstragram portray teachers as heteronormative White females with a focus on sharing the positive aesthetics of the teacher, her classroom, and her life, but that teachers are also experiencing stress and resilience as they connect with other teachers on this platform.

Keywords: *social media, teacher education, critical discourse analysis*

As we move into the third decade of social media, there is much known about how teachers have come to use these platforms over time. Teachers have utilized various social media to teach, to learn, and to create community to serve these purposes. Twitter became the landing place for most teachers and the research followed. But as new platforms emerge, teachers are shifting to new spaces. Instagram, a social image sharing site launched in 2010, has 7-8 million posts using the hashtag #teachersofinstagram at any given time. Teachers are on Instagram and active, but the research on this use is nascent.

As teachers use these tools, they also contribute to a larger discourse around what it means be a teacher. The context around which teachers are engaging in social media also matters. At this point in time, teachers are engaging in social media in the midst of a global pandemic. The pandemic has affected education in a variety of ways, most notably that many schools were not able to meet in person for several months and then continued with various remote and hybrid options throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Additionally, in the United States in particular, the year was fraught with political turmoil around the pandemic, anti-Black racism, and the 2020 presidential election. These political moments further impacted education through an increased awareness around the ways the pandemic disproportionately affected Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), which was a signal of existing inequities (Strauss 2020), as well as through the resulting battles among local school boards around the teaching of Critical Race Theory, provoked by Donald Trump during his 2020 campaign (Bailey et al., 2021; Shocker & DeSenso, 2021/2022). This study is an investigation into how teachers were using the hashtag #teachersofinstagram in this

context. As such the research question is, *what do the top Instagram posts by teachers in the fall of 2020 tell us about how teachers are using Instagram and how teachers are being constructed through this use?*

Literature Review

Teachers and Social Media

The research on social media and teachers is mostly focused on the ways in which teachers use social media for teaching and learning. Teachers are defined in this study as K-12 teachers, but post-secondary and pre-K teachers also use these teacher hashtags as well. The benefits of social media in the classroom have been found to enhance student engagement, community connections, and teacher-student interactions (Greenhow et al., 2020). Teacher professional learning in both formal and informal spheres is also supported on social media platforms, though there is a disconnect between formal uses that are open-ended and voluntary and informal uses that are closed-ended and structured (Sharma et al., 2019). The community developed within Twitter, the most studied platform, has been reported to be a benefit for teachers (Carpenter & Krutka, 2015; Carpenter et al., 2017; Nagle, 2018) for developing teacher identities, mentoring (Carpenter et al., 2017), and resource sharing (Hsieh, 2017; Carpenter & Krutka, 2015).

As the COVID-19 pandemic told hold across the globe, teachers' uses of social media shifted. Teachers began to experience stresses related to the pandemic itself and to the massive changes to their work due to the shift to emergency remote teaching. Teachers' workloads increased (Kaden, 2020) and they had to figure out how to adapt their instruction quickly and find opportunities for innovation (Khirwadkar et al., 2020). This was easier for some schools and teachers than others as a persistent digital divide still exists in terms of hardware, high speed internet, and varying skill levels with the technology itself (Miller, 2021), particularly in rural (Kaden, 2020), urban (Ligon, 2021), and some international contexts (Padilla Rodríguez, Armellini, &Traxler, 2021; Tajik & Vahedi, 2021). These changes in teachers' work and lives precipitated uses of social media in which they were more likely to "connect and share" as well as "learn and follow" (Aguilar et al., 2022).

Most studies of social media and its uses by teachers are focused on professional learning (Greenhow et al., 2020) or are exploratory in nature (Sharma et al., 2019). 'The field needs more research on how and why teachers acquire knowledge and learn through participation in informal learning opportunities via social media, including those "invisible" or indirect processes of reading, curating (e.g. favoriting), sharing, passing along others' information (retweeting), and more' (Greenhow et al., 2020, 34). Similarly, I believe this research should seek to understand and make visible the sorts of gendered and raced discourses that are constructed and reproduced by teachers, particularly as the pandemic shifted these uses.

Instagram and Teachers

There is emerging research around the use of Instagram by teachers, mostly focusing on the benefits to teaching and learning, but a few took a cultural approach to understanding its use. Like on Twitter, teachers are using Instagram to share resources and for connection with fellow teachers (Carpenter et al., 2020). Unlike Twitter though, Instagram was noticeably more polished and sometimes teachers' posts were created in an effort to sell products by connecting their account

to another site, Teachers Pay Teachers (Shelton et al., 2020), a marketplace for teachers to buy and sell lesson plans and other classroom materials ostensibly by teachers, but increasingly by publishing companies. It was also found that Instagram encouraged communication and local and global teacher education, despite student hesitancy to connect with instructors via their personal accounts (Al-Bahrani and Patel, 2015). Another study, however, showed that students preferred an Instagram assignment to a PowerPoint assignment, finding it beneficial to learning about a language and culture while practicing digital literacy, and did not find that students had privacy concerns with using their personal accounts (Leier, 2018).

Several studies of Instagram in education looked at the use by teachers through a cultural lens. The Instagram usage habits of future primary school teachers were analyzed and found "intensive" use (which these authors link to smartphone addiction) and the selfie as the most common type of post (Romero-Rodriguez et al., 2020). In another study, the discourse of social media (not just Instagram) was studied in a composition class and found that it could be a tool for activism, identity formation, and inclusion (Wake and Laughter, 2019). Edwards and Esposito (2018) studied a viral post of a Black female teacher to understand the ways in which an Instagram post can be a site of both liberation and domination.

Instagram in Culture

Instagram, outside of its use in education, is more often studied from a cultural perspective to understand the ways in which it is taken up by professional fields and groups of people for varying purposes. Instagram has been studied within the fields of art, medicine, and politics. Instagram was studied as a way for visitors to an art gallery to extend their aesthetic experience before and after their visits (Seuss, 2018). Instagram has also been used by medical centers to share information and free resources as the visual nature of the platform is helpful in fields such as radiology (Thomas, Johnson, & Fishman 2018). Politically, the use of Instagram by Donald Trump's 2016 campaign to spread a positive populist message (Dobkeiwicz, 2019) while the hashtag #ShePersisted was used on Instagram and other social media as a form of feminist activism (Boling, 2020).

Instagram has also been studied within groups outside of a particular field. Marginalized groups, thus far, seem to be the focus of this type of research. One parent's Instagram account was studied to understand the ways in which children are presented through the lens of a parent and the future implications for that child (Dobson & Jay, 2020). Women have been studied through the ways in which both pregnancy (Mayoh, 2019) and motherhood (Zappavigna, 2016) are constructed on Instagram. "…Instagram images generally portray an enviable elite lifestyle and hegemonic (White, heterosexual) ideal of beauty" (Mayoh, 2019, p. 207). And finally, a larger study of Hispanic urban artists found that they used Instagram to resist racialization and stigmatization (Magro 2018).

Theoretical Framing and Situating Myself

This study is framed by poststructural notions of the ways in which knowledge and power are inextricably linked and how humans are awash in discourses that shape us and are shaped by us. I see knowledge through a Foucauldian (Foucault, 1980) lens, such that there is no real, true, or neutral knowledge. Rather, knowledge is constructed by discourses that compose groups and individuals with room for agency to push against discourses. Feminist theory and critical whiteness

studies dovetail with poststructural theory in this study in multiple ways. For example, Butler's (1990) explanation of gender as a performance constructed by discourses rather than as a static biological category divorced from culture is one way in which postructuralism helps me to identify how discourses surrounding gender can be both oppressive and transgressive. In addition, whiteness (Amico, 2016), understood as yet another discursive formation with power to construct the dominant discourse with oppressive effects. These two formations, gender and whiteness, are particularly important to this study of teachers on Instagram, as the teaching profession in the western world that dominates #teachersofinstagram, is currently a White woman's profession (Lagemann, 2000; Galman, 2012).

With a subjectivist theoretical framing in which knowledge is constructed by those in power, it is important to situate myself as the author. I am a heterosexual cisgender White woman and a former public school teacher, that thus felt quite at home in the profession. Though I grew up poor, I am now a university professor with advanced degrees. I have been educated in several lenses for understanding the ways in which education impacts society, from poststructuralism to social justice to best practices. In this type of work, I seek to understand the ways in which teachers, as a category with which I identify, are both reproducing oppressive discourses and transgressing discourses. I feel well situated to do this work in order to be able to call on other White women in education to reflect on these discourses, in order to push against the discourses that damage our BIPOC colleagues and students and to do better.

Method

A visual methodology (Rose, 2007) was used to conduct a feminist critical discourse analysis (Lazar, 2007) of public posts on the hashtag #teachersofinstagram throughout the fall semester of 2020. For fifteen weeks, the top nine posts were collected via a screenshot and link. The "top posts" on Instagram are the posts for any given hashtag that are ostensibly the most liked and commented upon, given an extra boost through the category of top posts. Instagram does not give more detail on the algorithm used to generate top posts, which is problematic given the concerns that algorithms are designed by engineers that are themselves awash in normative discourses and the algorithms may encourage the reproduction the status quo (Cotter, 2019). "Top posts" were selected for their discursive power. They are ones that elevated by this community through interactions, which gives them more visibility. This study is only a study of the top public posts of this particular hashtag. The intention is to understand the discursive formations that that have power within this community. The hashtag #teachersofinstagram at this time period had over 7 million posts per day (10.3 million on the day of this writing) and is the top hashtag listed if you begin to search for the term "teachers" (Carpenter et al., 2020). The use of "of Instagram" to name a community specific to this social media site is a common practice.

After the collection of these posts, exclusion criteria were used to narrow down the posts to those that were practicing teachers (PreK-grad). Posts that were excluded were meme accounts about teaching, business accounts selling items to teachers, or individuals who were not teachers and who appeared to be gaming the hashtag by having several related accounts comment on it multiple times. Of the 135 posts collected, 82 were determined to be relevant posts from classroom teachers. There were 74 unique accounts.

Once the data were collected, other data connected to each post including presenting gender and race, location, a summary of the text from the post, and the number of likes and comments, were also collected. The author searched through the profile in order to gather more detail about

the demographic information if it was not readily available in the post. This demographic information was collected specifically to provide context to potential issues of power in the discourses present in the posts. If a White teacher or a Black teacher posts the same image, it will be read differently by an audience. Presenting gender and race, though problematic and based on my assumptions as a researcher, are collected with the understanding that gender and race are socially constructed (Butler, 1990; Zack, 2017) and in this feminist discourse analysis, the assumed gender and race of the subjects in the posts is deeply connected to issues of power.

A feminist critical discourse analysis was conducted in multiple steps (Howarth, 2000) using a visual methodology. First, I became familiar with the posts describing each in detail focusing on the object of the photo and what was in the foreground and background. From this visual analysis, I generated initial themes based on recurring visual imagery. Then I coded the material more closely, describing the content of the posts in more detail, confirming or complexifying the initial themes, and exploring the possible connections between the initial themes. For example, White women and themes of motherhood were commonly found together. Once these codes were generated, I analyzed the codes and images through the critical questioning of positioning and practices of power as well as the potential for challenge and change, in accordance with Foucauldian and poststructural feminist theory. This process led me to the narrowing of three themes listed below. Finally, I asked a colleague to provide a check of my codes and analysis to offer additional perspective before finalizing themes. This colleague challenged several codes around femininity and race, which allowed me to both broaden and focus my themes.

Findings and Discussion

The 82 unique Instagram posts that were selected for analysis were grouped into three themes. These themes are *Teachers are White and traditionally feminine, Teachers present themselves as "perfect,"* and *Teachers present themselves as stressed but resilient.* See table 1 for demographic/contextual information.

Table 1: *Demographic and Contextual Data*

Baseline characteristic		
	n	*%*
Presenting Gender		
Female	73	89
Male	8	10
Unknown	1	1
Presenting Race		
White	62	76
Black	6	7
Middle Eastern	4	5

Latino/a	4	5
Asian	3	4
Unknown	3	4
Location		
North America	53	65
Australia	9	11
Europe	9	11
Asia	3	4
South America	1	1
Unknown	7	9
Average Likes Per Post	1080	
Average Comments Per Post	30	

Teachers are White and Traditionally Feminine

Posts falling into this theme were coded as White (41), feminine (45), heteronormative (12), and mother (8). There were some posts in opposition to this construction of teachers that included nondominant groups (12).

In the many posts coded as White, the post includes an image of a White presenting body. Most of the time, this is an image of a White body or bodies as the dominant feature in the photograph, but other times just a hand is shown that indicates the whiteness of the author. For example, several teachers post pictures of themselves standing in a classroom setting. Other teachers share resources, such as a book or handout, that shows just their hand holding the resource.

Most posts coded as White were also coded as feminine with explicit images that represented heteronormativity and motherhood. These posts included images presenting gender in traditionally feminine ways, including long hair, dresses, traditionally feminine colors, and photos of women with male partners, pregnant, or with children. This definition of heternormativity is drawn in part from Adrienne Rich's (1980) definition of "compulsory heterosexuality," in which women includes the assumption that all romantic relationships are between a man and a woman and that a woman must be desired by the man in, for example, feminine dress (including colors like pink (Koller 2008)) and control of body hair (Fahs 2011). In one post, a White woman is in a bikini holding a pink water tumbler standing in the water at the beach. Her hair is tied up in pigtails and she is playfully turned and touching her sunglasses. In another image, a teacher is in a form-fitted black dress showcasing her pregnant belly. She is wearing a hat over her long blonde hair that is partially pinned up, a large blue ring, and heels. In another representative image, a White teacher with long brown hair is wearing a pink dress holding infant twins who are each wearing a pink bow and outfits with pink flowers.

In the sea of whiteness and traditional feminine discourses, there were some nondominant groups represented. These posts included some male presenting teachers as well as teachers from different races. Though heteronormative in nature, several posts include Black, Latina, and Asian

women and one mixed race couple is represented. Two teachers identify as queer, but these representations were not included in the top posts, rather they were discerned from viewing the individual profiles.

In considering the Foucauldian productive power of discourses, these top posts of the hashtag #teachersofinstagram construct teachers as predominantly White and traditionally feminine. Because whiteness (Amico 2016) and gender (Butler 1990) are cultural constructs, this analysis coded White presenting as White and female presenting as feminine. The representation of race and gender in these spaces are less objective and more productive. In this case, the top teachers of Instagram are producing a discourse of teaching that is mostly a White, traditionally feminine space and that productive value has more impact than the intention of the teacher posting it, whatever that may be. Rather, these posts serve to construct both race and gender in particular ways within the teaching profession. Though there are some spaces for thinking otherwise, this includes teachers that fit and those that do not fit.

Teachers Present Themselves as "Perfect" Teachers

The second theme identified was the presentation of teachers as "perfect" in multiple ways. Posts falling into this theme were coded as sharing resources (10), "pretty" scenery (18), "pretty" clothes/smiles (36), "pretty" classrooms (20), commercialism (18), as well as some inspiration/religious posts (11). There were some posts in opposition to this perfected image of the teacher that were coded as political challenges (8).

What binds the codes of this theme together is the carefully curated nature of the posts. Those coded as "pretty" appear to be staged to include a rosy view of the person, the backdrop, or the content shared. The resources shared are mostly resources that are aesthetically pleasing with carefully constructed fonts and images. Inspiration is shared in a way that supports a generally "nice" and agreeable view of teachers and the work that teachers do.

Many of the posts coded as "pretty" clothes/smiles are posts that were also coded as White and feminine with teachers in dresses smiling nicely. In one post coded as "pretty" scenery, there is a mountain and lake backdrop with two White hands, one with an engagement ring on. In a post coded as "pretty" classroom, an image of a classroom with neat black tables adorned with a pink basket in the middle of each one is shared. The teacher desk is to the side with a pink chair and decorations are neatly displayed on walls with colorful puffballs hanging from the ceiling. A similar "pretty" classroom post shows desks in neat rows, spaced appropriately for teaching in a pandemic. Each desk has a star on it with a student name. There's a red carpet on the ground and a matching red bulletin board and red drapes on the window of the classroom.

In a carefully composed post, coded as sharing resources, a book is shared with carefully placed objects around it, stickers, plants, and eye mask. This post was also coded as commercialism as it included a tag to the author of the book and a link for where to buy it. Posts coded as commercialism, typically included the teacher highlighting things that could be purchased, such as clothing or teacher resources. Each post coded as commercialism was also coded as "pretty" clothes/smiles, "pretty" classrooms, or resource sharing.

Posts coded as inspiration included either text as the main feature of the image of the post or supporting text in the image that referenced some uplifting words. One post coded as inspiration includes the image of a smiling Black male sitting at his desk. On his desk is a mug that reads, "I (heart) my teacher" and the supporting text in the post reads, "First Day of School. Year 7! Imagine

how great this school year is going to be!!! (scared emojis in a reference to teaching in a pandemic) 'For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of sound mind.'"

Within this attractive, agreeable, and mostly nice discourse on #teachersofinstagram that paints a perfected image of teachers, there were some posts that were more challenging to the status quo as they were political in nature. One post of this sort was text on a purple background that read "White and non-Black educators… How will we shift our thinking from 'I will use my privilege', to 'I will give up my privilege'?" Another post provided a particularly anti-"pretty" message and included a dimly lit bedroom with a folded up treadmill and a folding table with a laptop on it and explicitly suggested in the associated text that teachers should work with what they have in a pandemic, rather than allowing the posts on Instagram or Pinterest to make them feel inadequate. This post was unique in the explicit rejection of this discourse.

The identification of the theme of the perfect teacher is borrowed from Joanne Mayoh (2019) and her analysis of "perfect pregnancy" on Instagram. As in Mayoh's work, teachers on #teachersofinstagam reinforce dominant discourses through practices surrounding how to do teaching "well." Often these include professional looking shots of women in well-manicured homes or classrooms, wearing fashionable clothing, and the sharing of carefully curated resources. These images taken together create a discursive formation that supports a sort of self-surveillance (Foucault, 1977), in which teachers control themselves and present only the best parts to avoid not fitting in or being rejected within the social media space.

Shelton et al. (2020) used the term "edu-influencer" to describe the microcelebrity nature that some teachers obtain with more followers and more influence. In her study, edu-influencers provided discussion of teaching strategies and a general positive stance toward the teaching profession, but most were also selling something. Edu-influencers sold teaching resources on Teachers Pay Teachers or promoted clothing, much in the same way that many of the top posts on #teachersofinstagram did. They warn of this neoliberal ethic creeping into the profession.

> If teaching and teachers come to be visualized as highly stylized, strategically posed microcelebrities with picture-perfect bulletin boards, how will an actual teacher ever measure up? More broadly speaking, edu-influencers may perpetuate a K-12 culture that values superficiality, "carefully constructed…self-presentation" (Markwick & boyd, 2011, p. 140), and individualistic self-branding (Khamis et al., 2016), over collective success of teachers and students. (Stokel-Walker, 2019, p. 547)

Teachers Present Themselves as Stressed but Resilient

In contrast to the previous theme in some ways, the final theme is that teachers are stressed but resilient. There's an admission in this posts that there are difficulties teaching, certainly to teaching in a pandemic, but there is a hopefulness that remains. Posts falling in this theme were coded as overworked (6), teaching in a pandemic (26), humor (8) and technology (8), mainly due to teaching in a pandemic. There was one category seemingly in opposition in which teachers were enjoying their breaks from school (11), but needing breaks also implies that teachers may be stressed and finding ways to survive.

Each of the codes categorized under this theme showcase the ways in which teachers portray the stresses of teaching, particularly at this point in history when schools all over the world were changing modes of instruction in response to the pandemic. Most of these posts identified

the stresses, but also showcased the ways in which they were hopeful and adapting to their changing classrooms. For example, it is seen as acceptable to work on the weekends, to have three screens going at once to support remote instruction, or to have had to completely rethink instruction due to spacing requirements and masking. Humor is sometimes used to make soften the posts or to make jokes about needing a break. However, there are also several posts that encourage the sharing and taking of breaks as a way to refresh from the difficult job of teaching.

In one post coded as teaching in a pandemic, a teacher shares a selfie in which she is wearing a mask and a plastic shield over her face. In the text, she describes how she spends all day adjusting the mask and the shield and is quite uncomfortable. She uses a laughing emoji at the absurdity of her picture with both a mask and a shield. In a similar post also coded as teaching in a pandemic, a masked teacher stands in front of desks that are spaced apart. In the text, she describes how she has had to rethink teaching kindergarten in person during a pandemic and has challenges like not being able to work in groups or come to the carpet, but that she is also hopeful that her students will be able to learn and have fun even if they have to keep distance, hand sanitize, and wear masks.

Technology often played a large role in many of the posts of the stresses of teaching in a pandemic. In the post with three screens mentioned above, the teacher uses the text to disclose that she finds teaching remotely "indescribably hard" and begs parents for patience. In another post coded as technology, a teacher looks happy sitting at her kitchen table in front of four different screens and a ring light, arms spread wide theatrically. In the text she says that teaching virtually "feels like you're hosting a live TV show for 6 hours straight." She also uses a laughing emoji at the absurdity of her current teaching situation.

Posts coded as humor were often memes, in which text is the main feature, sometimes combined with a corresponding image. One post coded as humor and teaching in a pandemic and humor includes a meme with the image of an actor on the phone and reads, "Teachers giving tech support 90% of the time during digital learning. Hello, IT, have you tried turning it off and on again?" Another post coded as humor just has text that reads, "I'm not opposed to every weekend being a three-day weekend."

A final code that both opposed and supported this theme showcased teachers on their breaks from school. Teachers shared vacation pictures or just pictures of themselves relaxing at the beach or on a walk in the park on the weekend, at times encouraging other teachers to step away from their work and relax.

In the feminized teaching profession (Lagemann, 2000), with a loss of status, came a loss of power. Though many are unionized, teachers often spend time outside of contracted hours in order to meet the demands of the profession. Just like in a traditionally feminine heteronormative relationship where women take on the bulk of the household work, women often take on work beyond the school day. The pandemic required even more of teachers, asking that they teach in an unfamiliar format or teach in classrooms with new rules of masking, social distancing, and sanitizing shared surfaces, all while unvaccinated (this study took place in the fall of 2020 before vaccines were widely available). Through these challenges, the top posts of #teachersofinstagram showcase the ways in which teachers adjust, adapt, and connect with one another in order to complete the task that had become more difficult. Perhaps this analysis is a further oppressive feminized conception of the perfect teacher, another iteration of women having to "do it all." Perhaps the resilience shown is a great privilege granted to those with access to the right technology and possessing the right technology skills (Tyson, 2015) or to those White women without a pre-existing condition, who could enter classrooms with optimism about the unknowns of teaching in a

pandemic. Perhaps resilience is a privilege, but most of the top posts included teachers who rose to the occasion in an unprecedented time in history.

Limitations

This study is a snapshot of the top posts of #teachersofinstagram in the Fall of 2020. Though #teachersofinstagram is a large and active hashtag, there are other hashtags used by teachers on Instagram that could be explored. Additionally, more work could be done on the recent posts to see how teachers are using Instagram more generally, rather than understanding the most popular or "top posts" at any given time. Lastly, only the posts themselves and the captions posted by teachers were studied. The comments were not studied, nor were the stories posted by these same teachers. Stories could be an interesting avenue to study the less "perfect" version of what teachers share via social media. Finally, age of the teacher was not studied and may be an interesting factor in the ways in which posts were constructed.

Conclusion

Through this small study of a particular period of time on a popular hashtag on Instagram, teachers appear to be using Instagram to document their lives, personally and professionally, connect with other teachers to share classroom aesthetics, teaching ideas, to make extra money, and to empathize with one another. These uses construct teachers as a particular group dominated by White and feminine discourses that are using Instagram in a certain, perhaps more polished way, that presents the highlights of their teaching and their lives as teachers and women. The sharing of the personal within what would appear to be a professional hashtag alongside the presentation of the more polished pieces of teaching could be connected to the feminization of the teaching profession as the camaraderie among a mostly White and female teaching force begins with women who enter teaching because it is understood as a field where niceness and compliance are rewarded, particularly at the primary level (Galman, 2012). Or perhaps this is unfair and, instead, teachers are taking control of their image in a low status profession (Lagemann, 2000), presenting the best of what they do for public viewing, though I think this analysis breaks down in that this hashtag is used to connect teachers to each other.

Regardless of the motives, in a world where the teaching force is in need of diversification at a time when, in the United States the students are growing more diverse in a context heavy with anti-Black racism, what is important to interrogate as teachers and teacher educators is what these discourses do. Foucault (1980) views the construction of knowledge as powerfully productive. Though the teachers of #teachersofinstagram share content that they feel is worthy to share on this platform, they do so awash in discourses that frame teachers in the broader society as well as discourses currently being constructed by top posts on Instagram (though as of the time of this writing the top posts algorithm has changed again, including more than 9 posts at any given time). These discourses and perhaps the hidden algorithm then further frame teachers who come to use Instagram in a way that might get the most likes or comments, in a way that reinscribes dominant discourses rather than pushing against them to consider the ways that those discourses may do harm or exclude.

This has implications for teacher education as social media has come to be used both formally and informally by teachers and teacher educators. If teachers come to #teachersofinstagram and do not seem themselves, how does this discourage them from participating in a larger network of

teachers, or from entering the profession at all? Or, how does this encourage them to reproduce the status quo instead of transgressing in ways that might open up avenues to new discourses that are more inclusive and more just? As such, I echo Nagle's (2018) call for a critical social media literacy, one in which teachers and preservice teachers critically examine what is posted to social media as well as critiquing what they themselves post. Though there are pockets of transgressive discourses, these are not the dominant discourses. And because the visual nature of Instagram is somewhat of a departure from more studied platforms like Twitter, there exists a need to study how, once again, the medium is the message (McLuhan, 1962).

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Lauren Angelone is an Associate Professor of Science Education and Instructional Technology at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. She is a former middle school science teacher and has her PhD in Cultural Foundations, Technology, and Qualitative Inquiry from Ohio State University.