

personnel, felt that the school had not responded adequately to his or her complaints. He could easily imagine how this incident could even become fodder for the media. Jack and Fran knew they would have to weigh their options carefully, considering not only their actions, but also what the political, social, and moral implications would be.

Questions

The Case

What viable options do Jack and Fran have for managing this dilemma?

History

Given that anti-bullying laws are now in place, have we gone too far or not far enough in making schools safe places for all students? Justify your answer.

Philosophy

How should schools balance the rights of behaviourally disordered students with the rights of their classmates to be safe? Explain why you think so.

Sociology

What forms of power and powerlessness can you identify in this case?

Implications for Practice

How will you create a classroom culture in which parents and students feel that they can talk to you about their safety concerns?

Brave New World?

It was Monday morning in the staff room at Jeanne Sauvé School. Over a steaming cup of coffee in the middle of a discussion of a controversial blog posting, Tom Di Giuseppe turned to a few of his colleagues and asked, "By the way, what do Tom Brady, Prince Charles, Barack Obama, Christina Aguilera, Paul McCartney, and I all have in common?"

His colleagues looked puzzled.

"The answer," he said, "is that all of us have had our privacy invaded. We are all victims of hacking. You name it—Facebook, cell phones, email—even Twitter. Early this morning, I found out that all my personal email contacts had been deleted and a message had been sent to everyone on my contact list. The message says that I'm in Swansea, Wales, and that my bag was stolen with my passport and credit cards in it. Let me read the rest of the message to you:

"The Canadian Embassy is willing to help by letting me fly without my passport, I just have to pay for a ticket and settle the hotel bills later. Unfortunately, I can't have access to funds without my credit card. I've made contact with my bank but they need more time to come up with a new card number, so I am pleading with you to lend me some money that I will give back as soon as I return. I really need to be on the next available flight. Western Union transfer is the best option to send the money to me. You can reach me via email or the hotel's desk phone. The numbers are +447031804805 or +447031804806. I await your response."

"Sounds pretty realistic, doesn't it?"

"Except for the part that says 'I await your response,'" joked Celia LaFrance. "Since when did you ever say something like that?"

Laughter rippled around the room and heads nodded in agreement.

"But, seriously, it's easy to see how someone getting that email could be taken in," Celia admitted. "You know, social media has a lot to answer for. Look at how often we hear about cyberbullying on social media sites! That's why the board is so concerned about on-line security when students and staff use computers. But I guess we'll have to accept the fact that social media is here to stay and, if you listen to our students, it is often the only way that they communicate with their friends."

"You're right," agreed Mike O'Leary. "But that means we need to be very careful. We should never forget that instantaneous and global contact with others can be used by terrorists to commit violent acts. Think about the many disturbing examples we have had when social media was used to create havoc on the global stage. Remember the London bombings of July 2005, the 'BlackBerry riots' of 2011, and the revolts in Egypt and Libya in 2011? Add to that, social media is a perfect vehicle for spreading false information. Did you hear what happened in Mexico, where two people were charged with 'Twitter terrorism' for wrongly reporting an attack on an elementary school?"

"No. What happened?" asked Celia.

"People were frantic! Parents rushed to the school, causing a number of car accidents and emergency phone lines were jammed as parents tried to get information about their kids," explained Mike.

"Hold on, social media isn't all bad," said Tina Verbeck. "It helped spread the news about the devastation in Haiti. As a matter of fact, last year, I responded to a tweet asking for a donation of \$10. I texted the word 'Haiti' to a number used by the Red Cross and their Twitter account ended up raising over \$32 million for the victims."

With Tina's comment, the staff room fell silent for a few moments.

"Celia, I want to go back to what you said earlier about our students and how they communicate with their friends via social media," said Diana Portofino. "Some of you seem to think that social media is the best thing since sliced bread, but others seem to believe we should ban it altogether." Looking around the room for a response, she asked, "So where do we go from here?"

"Well," said Renate Wexler, "I've said this before, but I want our students to learn about the impact of social media on their lives and how to use it responsibly. They should be able to create web content that they can post, use photo sharing sites like Instagram, be adept at on-line publishing, and contribute to discussions. Even more importantly, they need to become aware of how social networking can affect relationships, both positively and negatively."

"I agree," said Jim Rogers eagerly. "Social media has so much potential for all of us. I have a Facebook account, I update it regularly for my family and friends, I text regularly, and I have a blog on schooner building in Newfoundland. I started it several years ago, and now some of my students who are interested in boats follow it regularly, and believe it or not, we have discussions about schooners outside of class."

"Well, after my account got hacked, I support our district's policy on social media more than ever! I think it's good that students are prohibited from accessing social networking sites at school except for educational or instructional purposes and then only with prior approval from the school administration," said Tom ruefully. "I know some of you think that students should be banned from accessing all social networks, but I think the policy goes just far enough—allowing it but keeping some controls."

"Apparently, other school districts are grappling with the same issues," added Ibrahim Dali. "The superintendent of Lakeshore School District told the trustees there that the 'horse is out of the barn' as far as cell phones and social media go. His trustees have been asked to figure out how teachers can integrate social media into their classes most effectively and safely."

"Well, I hope it isn't catching!" said Sharam. "I actually cheered when the board banned the use of cell phones at school and posting photos on-line that were taken on school property. I would go even further and ask our board to adopt an extra strong filtering program, similar to Net Nanny, to block objectionable sites. But what would make me happier still would be a decision to prohibit *all* social media contact between teachers and students. In this way, no student, or teacher, for that matter, would ever be victimized in any way."

As the bell rang, Jim seized the opportunity to have the last word. "Thanks Tom for sharing your experience. It looks to me like there is some difference of opinion about social media here, but there is just one more point I want to make before you go. This is not just a school issue. We need to keep in mind that employers are asking us to prepare our students to function in the modern work-

place. They want employees who can collaborate, think creatively and critically, and use technology responsibly and ethically. Social media can really play a role there. In fact, we need to remove constraints and not add them if our students are going to be able to navigate this brave new world of ours."

As the staff filed out, most remained unconvinced that there was any place for social media in their teaching. Tom's experience just reminded some of them that technology was the source of more problems than it solved. Jim and Renate stayed behind for a moment and agreed that they were obviously still alone in wanting greater freedom to integrate social media in their teaching. They reminded each other that it was early days, but they couldn't help wondering what it would take for their colleagues to see the potential of social media, and not just the drawbacks.

Questions

The Case

In this case, convincing arguments are made for both sides of the debate on whether or not social media should be used in the classroom. What are the arguments? Which did you find most persuasive, and why?

History

How do you think social media will affect students' understanding of historical events? Explain.

Philosophy

How can teachers act responsibly and still be open-minded about the use of social media in the classroom?

Sociology

How might social media both enhance and disrupt relationships inside and outside the classroom?

Implications for Practice

Given the increasing prevalence of social media in our lives and in our schools, how will you manage it in your classroom?

On-Line or Off-Base?

It was an early fall day and a few of the teachers in the staff room at Georges Vanier Secondary were hotly debating the value of allowing cell phones in class. Although the conversation had just started, Kostas Leo, a new teacher in the