What Nurse Educators Should Consider When Developing Social Media Policies

Nancy Spector, PhD, RN

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (p. 61). The key phrase is "user-generated" because social networking is defined by the community it generates. Social media is fundamentally collaborative, open communication between individuals where mechanisms and platforms change continuously (Spector & Kappel, in press).

The social networking statistics are staggering. There are more than 900 million active Facebook users, a 32.5% increase from 2011 (Hachman, 2012). Twitter now has 140 million users accounting for 340 million Tweets per day (Twitter, 2012).

The literature abounds with innovative suggestions for using social media to promote student engagement and interactivity. Some excellent examples include learning activities on Facebook (LaRue, 2012; Schwartz, 2009; Skiba, 2010), Twitter (Bristol, 2010; Skiba, 2008), YouTube (Clifton & Mann, 2011), and with mobile devices (Skiba, 2011b). Others have touted the use of social media for mentoring of students (Schwartz, 2009) and even new faculty, which could be valuable during this severe nursing faculty shortage (Bassell, 2010). Educators must stay abreast of the changes to social media, as well as the excellent educational opportunities made available by social media, because it is here to stay. However, it must be used appropriately or students will get into trouble with their employers, the law, or their boards of nursing (Cronquist & Spector, 2011), not to mention their universities (Huckabee, 2011).

Therefore, it is paramount for nursing programs to develop sound policies related to social media (Junco, 2011; Kenner & Pressler, 2012; Skiba, 2011a; Spector & Kappel, in press).

When developing social media policies, faculty should be aware of the national and international guidelines that are available. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) has developed guidelines and illustrative cases from a nursing regulation perspective that are publically available on their social media Web site page (NCSBN, 2012). The cases can be used to engage students in interactive teaching sessions.

While subtle and not egregious violations, the cases make students think that this is something they too might have done. One of the examples is about a nursing student who posted a photo of a patient on her Facebook page, not realizing that this is a violation of patient confidentiality. That particular case would spark a lively discussion. The students might ask, "Should the student have been expelled?" The NCSBN guidelines also have specifics about myths and misunderstandings that are important to highlight. Often students don't realize, for example, that deleted posts can be accessed again and are discoverable in a court of law. The section on how to avoid problems is the essence of social media guidelines and should be integrated into nursing program policies. These include:

- Nurses must recognize that they have an ethical and legal obligation to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times.
- Nurses must not transmit by way of any electronic media any patient-related information or image that is reasonably anticipated to violate patient rights to confidentiality or privacy or to otherwise degrade or embarrass the patient.
- Nurses must not share, post, or otherwise disseminate any information (including images) about a patient or information gained in the nurse-patient relationship with anyone, unless there is a care-related need to disclose the information or other legal obligation to do so.
- Nurses must not identify patients by name or post or publish information that may lead to the identification of a patient. Limiting access to postings through privacy settings is not sufficient to ensure privacy.
- Nurses must not refer to patients in a

Nancy Spector, PhD, RN, *is Director of Regulatory Innovations, National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), Chicago, IL. She can be contacted at nspector@ncsbn.org.*

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disparaging manner, even if they are not identified.

- Nurses must not take photos or videos of patients on personal devices, including mobile devices.
- Nurses must maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media.
- Nurses must consult employer policies or an appropriate leader within the organization for guidance regarding work-related postings.
- Nurses must promptly report any identified breach of confidentiality or privacy.
- Nurses must be aware of and comply with employer policies regarding the use of employer-owned computers, cameras, and other electronic devices and the use of personal devices in the workplace.
- Nurses must not make disparaging remarks about employers or co-workers.

The NCSBN (2012) *Social Media Guidelines* Web page (https://www.ncsbn.org/2930.htm) contains a number of other free resources, such as a video that illustrates how students can unknowingly get into trouble. Educators can order free brochures from this site, which can be handed out to students during classes. Other organizations have resources as well. The American Nurses Association (ANA) published the *Social Networking Principles Toolkit*, which is available to their membership online (http://www.nursingworld.org/socialnetworkingtoolkit). ANA has endorsed NCSBN's social media guidelines, and NCSBN has endorsed ANA's social media principles (NCSBN, 2011).

The National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA) recently published a white paper on social media, which also would be important to review before developing a social media policy (NSNA, 2011). Sigma Theta Tau has published a book on the effective use of social media, devoting a chapter to guidelines for avoiding pitfalls (Fraser, 2011). Educators would find the

examples of what to post, in contrast to what not to post, valuable to discuss with students. Internationally, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in the United Kingdom has published legal advice on using social media appropriately (RCN, 2009), and Canada has been exploring the issue from a regulatory perspective (Anderson & Puckrin, 2011).

Skiba (2011a) reviewed and analyzed several social media policies, citing Junco's (2011) suggestions for the policy development process. When developing policies related to the use of social media, faculty might begin by reviewing the sound sources cited above. If a committee is formed to develop the institution's policy, this is a good time to bring students into the process as they are often familiar with social media and would provide valuable input. The students should read the program's social media policy at the beginning of the program, and information about the appropriate use of social media should be presented throughout the program. Below are some key points to consider when developing social media policies:

- Be proactive. Even if your program has not experienced a problem with students inappropriately using social media, policies should be in place.
- Don't be negative and restrictive. Develop the policy as a guideline, respecting social media as a viable communication avenue.
- Emphasize that the appropriate use of social media is essential for maintaining professional and ethical nursing practice.
- Instruct on privacy, confidentiality, and HIPAA laws and how they limit disclosures on social media.
- Avoid citing specific social media platforms because they frequently change.
- Educate on the common myths of social media.
- Inform how disparaging remarks against colleagues on social media can adversely affect team-based care.

These are exciting times in nursing

education. Some of the examples of using social media to engage students are brilliant. For example, Skiba (2010) described how some talented educators created a Facebook page for their simulation manikin, making it very realistic, thus humanizing the manikin and the simulation experiences. It is important for educators not to dwell on the challenges of social media, but to think about the possibilities of the future. At the same time, sound social media policies should be implemented in every nursing program, and students should be aware of these policies from the very beginning. **DN**

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2012 NSNA MidYear Career Planning Conference
Faculty, School Advisors, State Consultants Schedule

Town & Country Resort & Conference Center • San Diego, California • November 8–11, 2012

Thursday, November 8, 2012

8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Breakfast and *Facebook: Using Social Media* (1.5 contact hours*)
Speaker: Nancy Spector, PhD, RN, Director of Regulatory Innovations, National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Chicago, IL

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Orientation to MidYear and NSNA Update
Speakers: ANA-appointed consultant Rebecca Patton, MS, RN, and NLN-appointed consultant Cheryl Taylor, PhD, RN

2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.
Mentoring and Coaching Nursing Students
Speaker: Lois Marshall PhD, RN, Nurse Education consultant, author, speaker, Miami, FL
Sponsor: The Johnson & Johnson Campaign for Nursing's Future, New Brunswick, NJ

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Opening Session and Keynote Address
Nursing: A Career for Your Lifetime
Speaker: Donna Cardillo, MA, RN, speaker, author, consultant, and coach; Cardillo and Associates, Sea Girt, NJ
Sponsor: Anthony J. Jannetti, Inc., Pitman, NJ

Friday, November 9, 2012

8:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
Leadership University Consultant Advisor Certificate Program Part I
Speakers: Dr. Diane Mancino, NSNA Executive Director; Rebecca Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR, FAAN, ANA-appointed consultant; Dr. Cheryl Taylor, NLN-appointed consultant. This is a great opportunity to obtain continuing education credit* and validate your role as a state consultant or school advisor.

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
***Student Evaluation in Nursing Education: Formative and Summative Effectiveness* (1.5 contact hours*)**
Speaker: Lois Marshall, PhD, RN, nurse education consultant, author, national speaker, Miami, FL

11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Career Counseling Center Open in Exhibit Hall

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
***Challenges in Clinical Decision-Making* (1.5 contact hours*)**
Speaker: Loretta Manning, MSN, RN, GNP Executive Officer, ICAN Publishing, Inc., Suwanee, GA

Saturday, November 10, 2012

9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
***Leadership University Consultant Advisor Certificate Program Part II* (continuation)**

10:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Career Counseling Center Open in Exhibit Hall

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
***Adaptive Quizzing and Learning* (1.5 contact hours*)**
Speaker: Rebecca Cox-Davenport, PhD, RN, Assistant Professor, Lander University, Greenwood, SC
Sponsor: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia, PA

3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.
Consultants and Advisors: Sharing Successful Organizational Strategies
Moderators: NSNA's national consultants, Dr. Cheryl Taylor, NLN-appointed consultant, and Rebecca Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR, FAAN, ANA-appointed consultant

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* This activity has been submitted to the North Carolina Nurses Association for approval to award contact hours. The North Carolina Nurses Association is accredited as an approver of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

For details and registration information, go to www.nsna.org and click on *Meetings, MidYear Conference.*

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NSNA Upcoming Events

30th Annual MidYear Conference
November 8-11, 2012
San Diego, CA

61st Annual Convention
April 3-7, 2013
Charlotte, NC

31st Annual MidYear Conference
November 7-10, 2013
Louisville, KY

62nd Annual Convention
April 9-13, 2014
Nashville, TN

63rd Annual Convention
April 8-12, 2015
Phoenix, AZ

64th Annual Convention
March 30-April 3, 2016
Orlando, FL

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Nurses Educational Funds Celebrates Centennial

Nurses Educational Funds (NEF) is celebrating its centennial this year. The organization has numbered among its distinguished leaders such greats as Isabel Hampton Robb, Isabel McIsaac, Estelle Osborne, Eleanor Lambertsen, Margaret Tyson, Ada Mutch, and Elizabeth Carnegie. Countless graduate nursing students have received financial support from NEF. The organization continues to fund nurses – today for graduate education only – and it represents an important source of support in an era when education is so extraordinarily expensive.

About NEF

Nurses Educational Funds, Inc. (NEF) is a not-for-profit organization that seeks and distributes funds to baccalaureate prepared registered nurses who are in need of scholarship assistance for graduate study. A Board of Directors comprised of prominent leaders in nursing, business, and other professions administers NEF.

In 1910, a fund for graduate nursing was originally established following the death of Isabel Hampton Robb, a visionary leader of modern American nursing. By 1914, a second educational loan fund was established through the estate of Isabel McIsaac, who was twice president of the American Journal of Nursing Company and who also served as president of the Society of Superintendents, which was later to become the National League for Nursing. The Robb and McIsaac Memorial Funds, along with the Nurses' Scholarship and Fellowship Fund (est. 1952) were merged to form Nurses Educational Funds, Inc. Over the years, these funds have gradually increased as a result of wise investment, contributions from nursing leaders, friends of nursing, schools of nursing, and other organizations such as nursing alumni associations and nursing honor societies. Corporations, including pharmaceutical companies and publishers such as the former American Journal of Nursing Company, have also made contributions.

NEF is preparing for an exciting 100th year anniversary. It was in 1912 that the first two Isabel Hampton Robb scholarships were awarded to two nurses, Cecelia Evans and Lisle French. Since then, NEF has continued to support nursing professionals motivated to seek graduate degrees. With the support of those who value the critical need for nursing educators, advanced clinicians, and nurse researchers, NEF has become the largest single, private, professionally endorsed source of funds for advanced study in nursing and will continue with this work for the next 100 years!

For more information, please visit www.n-e-f.org. **DN**

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