

Daniel McNeeley

Critical Thinking Exercise 5

I am a major advocate for separating a professional life from my personal life and respecting that I am an individual with my own beliefs and life outside of my work. Teaching has grown to be more and more about growing students as individuals and people rather than just subject or content area education, much of that perpetuated by our own professionals. While this is important and necessary, I feel that this narrative has created an unrealistic and insincere expectation of teachers. We are held to standards that demand us to be perfect and act in ways that no person truly acts - all things that would not be expected in other jobs.

I work with children and adolescents, so I also understand that there is a somewhat different level of trust that must be built with the community. That being said, because of the narrative that teachers are supposed to be perfect and impartial in all things, it creates this unhealthy and toxic relationship that teachers think - or must think - exactly as "I do" or they are unfit to teach my children. While my personality outside of the classroom could mirror my personality inside of it (for example, being rude to service workers could also show that I am rude to students) much of our actions should be respected as part of our private lives. There is an admittedly subjective line of what is considered acceptable and what is not, but I also strongly believe that people should respect my privacy outside of the classroom.

Accessibility to teachers and the need to criticize as well as the inability to take criticism is a huge part of our society in recent years, becoming a large detriment to trust. Parents can now access social media, email, or even text teachers at any time, blurring the lines between professional and personal. Furthermore, the increasing use of social media for political and social justice purposes has created this strong desire to take action through advocacy (or false advocacy and ad hominem - but that is another topic) allowing people to feel comfortable criticizing or

attacking teachers or vice versa. Lastly, because using social media for these purposes is relatively new, people feel the need to defend and justify themselves against any and all perceived attacks on their person and livelihood. This all has the potential to create a chaotic cycle of toxic relationships between those in education and the community. Peace, justice, and education reform through social media and the internet is a pioneering venture that must sort through the messiness before it can be used efficiently and effectively. Headaches are to be expected, as with Rosenlee wearing his HSTA shirt at a protest.

Rosenlee could absolutely participate in the protest as a private citizen and as such should be respected for that decision. But by wearing his HSTA shirt, he is representing a much larger group of people without their consent. That does not sit well with me. On the one hand, HSTA formally supported Hillary Clinton in the election and therefore he can definitely voice the organization's professional opinion on the matter, but the protest against Trump's election was not a formal organizational decision (as far as I can tell) and as such he should have not participated with his HSTA shirt. If the organization formally decided that Trump's election would cause catastrophic ruin to education, then participating in the protest could have been fine. This is not the case, though, and Rosenlee should not have worn his HSTA shirt to the protest.