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ARTICLE

What Teachers Wear: Working the Wardrobe across 15 Years

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Abstract

Preservice teachers are in the process of constructing their own personal and professional teacher identities. In order to explore questions and assumptions implicit to such an undertaking, this study examined teacher images created by preservice teachers over the course of a 15-year case study, focusing (in this essay) on the results of the clothing and color choices attributed to teachers in the resulting images. Semiotic analyses of these images showed that preservice teachers drew images of teachers that were most often clothed in some interpretation of casual professional clothing. The dominant colors of the rendered clothing were most frequently shades of blue and black. Communicative, cultural, and functional dress codes indicate that these clothing and color choices signify that these preservice teachers saw the teaching profession as one that was conformist, service-oriented, chaste, and modestly prestigious. The examination of preservice teachers' "teacher" and/or "teaching profession" ideologies through communicative non-verbal cues in their constructed teacher images can be an important part of understanding their beliefs and values about the teaching profession, as well as their professional identity development and career choices.

Keywords: aesthetic codes; connotation; interpretative codes; material culture; multimodal semiotics

"Clothes are inevitable. They are nothing less than the furniture of the mind made visible."

~ James Laver, 1949

Introduction

Dress, "an assemblage of body modifications and/or supplements displayed by a person in communicating with other human beings" (Eicher and Roach-Higgins 1993, 15), allows us to communicate social cues nonverbally to others, display and conceal aspects of our personal identities, and indicate our familiarity with particular

contexts (Barnard 2002). Our choice of dress and accessories assembles a group of external signifiers which impart meaning to others: "It is impossible to wear clothes without transmitting social signals. Every costume tells a story, often a very subtle one, about its wearer" (Morris 1977, 9). Some dress and accessory stories may be subtle, but others may be quite unequivocal, perhaps inadvertently conveying more information to observers than the carefully curated posts of a social media profile, such as social position, social background, economic level, economic background, educational level, educational background, level of sophistication, trustworthiness, level of success, and even moral character (Thourlby 1978).

Dress plays an influential role in articulating and illustrating one's social and physical identity: "Because clothing (along with cosmetics and coiffure) comprises what is most closely attached to the corporeal self – it frames much of what we see when we see each other – it quite naturally acquires a special capacity to say things about the self. Dress, then, comes easily to serve as a kind of visual metaphor for identity and… for registering the culturally anchored ambivalences that resonate within and among identities" (Davis 1992, 25). Dressing up is an act where "people confront the reality of their bodies" and their clothing selections are potential indicators and expressions of their perceived roles and beliefs (Giorcelli and Rabinowitz 2011, 257). "Appropriate" dress may legitimatize a person's "place" in society, as clothing is often used to indicate social status as people commonly judge others' social worth by their appearances. In the workplace, dress is the means by which one conveys their intent.

The links between dress, communication, and culture can initially seem somewhat obvious and uncomplicated, but it is worthwhile to lay out a basic explanation of the connections amongst them. First, the connection between dress and communication is based on the semiotic model of communication, where the process of communication actually generates and exchanges meaning (Fiske 1990). Through this, an individual can socially interact with a group and/or thereby be identified as part of that group: "It is the social interacting, by means of the clothing, that produces the individual as a member of the group rather than vice-versa, that one is a member of the group and then interacts socially" (Barnard 2002, 32; Fiske 1990). Barnard (2002) uses a descriptive example of a youth group of the 1980s (Raggas, devotees of an electronic subgenre of reggae music that often uses sampling) to make clear this definition. I use his same premise, but illustrate instead with a more contemporary youth group of the 2000s, Emos (devotees of a rock music genre characterized by emotional, confessional lyrics): It is the wearing of skinny jeans, studded belts, tight T-shirts blazoned with Emo band names (such as My Chemical Romance), jet-black eyeliner, and straight, jet-black hair with very long bangs that communicates someone as Emo *rather than* that one is Emo and then goes out to get the clothes to communicate this message. Thus, clothing, by means of what it is paired with and how it is worn, ends up communicating a variety of messages based on individual producers and consumers.

Second, there is a connection between dress and culture. It is based on the concept of material culture, where the elements of culture do not exist independently as items that especially identify particular cultural positions, but rather that the social use of these items, as incorporated into our lives, construct our cultural realities: "Clothing and fashion, as communication, are cultural phenomena in that culture may itself be understood as a signifying system, as the ways in which a society's beliefs, values,

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ideas and experiences are communicated through practices, artefacts and institutions" (Barnard 2002, 39). The things we use, wear, and furnish our homes with connect us to others in society and give us a means to share lifestyles, values, experiences, beliefs, feelings, and ideas (Dant 1999; Barnard 2002). Roach and Eicher (1979) identify 10 cultural functions that dress may serve to signify within the realm of material culture, cultural reality, and cultural identification and expression: individualistic expression, social worth, social status, definition of social role, economic worth, economic status, political symbol, magico-religious condition, social rituals, and recreation.

Next, dress also has material functions that attempt to explain why people adorn their bodies with clothes. The material function is not separate from the connections to communication and culture, but rather it adds to our understanding and construction of those concepts within dress signifiers. Laver (1949) explains three basic motivations that guide the choice of dress: the utility principle, the hierarchical principle, and the seduction principle, wherein dress is selected to protect the body, indicate status to observers, or attract sexual attention. Barnard (2002) also details three basic material functions (protection, modesty/concealment, and immodesty/attraction), two of which somewhat align with Laver's principles (utility and protection; seduction and immodesty/attraction). Further, Rafaeli and Pratt (1993) postulate that material dress choices have additional dimensions which aid an observer in interpreting the function of what they see: attributes of dress, homogeneity, and conspicuousness. The attributes of dress include style, color, and material. The style of dress (i.e., contemporary, old-fashioned) can convey impressions of status or category to an observer. Colors can evoke subliminal feelings or moods, just as different fibers can indicate quality or power. Clothing constructed of synthetic fabrics (unless of extremely sophisticated make) tends to convey less status than clothing constructed of natural fibers such as wool, silk, or linen. Homogeneity refers to the variety (or lack thereof) of clothing worn by individuals in the same organization. This can range from no similarity (random heterogenous; i.e., artists) to partial similarity (stratified homogeneous, i.e., bankers) to full similarity (complete homogeneity, i.e., naval officers) (Rafaeli and Pratt 1993). Finally, conspicuousness relates to the extent that dress within profession is differentiated from dress external to that profession. For example, most uniforms (i.e., military, medical) are rather conspicuous in comparison to clothing sold in stores for casual, everyday wear. The same person dressed in casual clothing as compared to their police officer work uniform, will evoke different functional connotations to the observer.

Finally, dress provides a host of visually interpretive data that serves both denotative and connotative functions, whereby it constructs and carries messages that can be understood by others, approximating something like a dress code (Eco 1976; Davis 1992). Clothes can be loosely "read" and linked with broader themes and meanings: "The fashion code in western consumer cultures like ours correlates particular kinds or combinations of clothing with certain concepts…all those who share the same fashion code will interpret the signs in roughly the same ways" (Hall 2013, 22). For example, we do not only identify or denote clothing (i.e., Q. What are those? A. Trainers/sneakers), contextually interpret what we see (i.e., Those are casual, athletic shoes, unsuitable for formal occasions), but also connote meanings, by making links to larger social ideologies, beliefs, and cultural values (i.e., Wearing trainers with her bridal gown exploits the concept of difference and makes a statement of rebellion and individuation).

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This signification connects distinct articles of clothing to the themes which we attribute to them, and again to the vast breadth of our cultural history.

Teachers' dress is likewise (wittingly or unwittingly) constructed. Like any other constructed appearance, teacher's dress transmits social signals that shape the responses the teacher may receive from those who view or encounter them. In order to learn more about teacher image, appearance, and effect, I designed this study years ago to gather data to explore these concepts. As a teacher educator, I recognized that my students brought their own personally constructed and internalized perceptions of how a teacher should appear to my courses, perhaps little adjusted over time from their inceptions. As durable as these perceptions may have been, there was an inevitable struggle with these long-established perceptions as my students explored the development of their own professional teacher identities, social expectations of teachers, and institutional pressures to adapt to district norms.

Students' development of their professional identities can be understood by examining their positions with respect to the image markers or sociocultural values that they use to construct their images of teachers. Their positioning decides the kinds of teacher identity features, such as dress and other external appearance markers, that are more meaningful and useful among different sets of teacher identity features from different communities of practice. Thus, students construct their professional identities not only by looking inward, but also by looking outward and around themselves. Often, students respond by fashioning an appearance that is "closer to the imagined 'normal' behaviors. These patterns are sustained by a broad spectrum of social and school-based practices" (Fischman 1999, 7).

The elements of clothing and accessories selected by a teacher present a set of visual cues from which others make assumptions that do not lie within the confines of the profession (Eicher and Roach-Higgins 1993); clothing suggests conjectures about dedication, competence, personality, habits, tastes, social life, friends, even quirks. Long before I have an opportunity to actually speak with a particular teacher, I observe their approaching somatic impact: gait, posture, countenance, grooming, quality and quantity of clothing, and adornments. I make mis/informed judgments about all of these signals that this teacher is (intentionally or unintentionally) sending, which will codify the tone and frequency of my subsequent interactions with them. Recognizing, incorporating, and "speaking" this dress code is a language that we have tacitly assimilated, usually from our circumferential social contexts.

Even if a teacher does not intentionally select clothing to communicate particular connotations, observers will nonetheless interpret their appearance as a message to decode, in order to reveal the communicative relevance of those personal choices (Hickson and Stacks 1993). Although we may think we understand the general gist of the dress code we are reading, we are also aware that the code may have been contrived by the wearer in order to deceive or disguise: "While we look to read the other through appearance and hope we can do so accurately, at the very same time we are aware that 'appearances can be deceptive.' This awareness of the problematic nature of appearance does not stop us from attempting to control how we look and calculate our appearance in order to 'put our best face forward' or 'make a good impression,' and we employ a whole host of strategies to enhance our appearance" (Entwistle 2000, 113). Deprived of clothing, the nude body cannot similarly convey an individual's social

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identity, self-image, or express personality through visual appearance. The body, and dress by extension, is the envelope of the self (Giorcelli and Rabinowitz 2011); clothing and accessories are envelopes open to multiple interpretations As language is constantly re-inventing itself, so too does dress recycle itself to produce fresh new looks and consequently, new dress codes, signifiers, and interpretations of meaning.

Image data

Using images as a primary source of data is a way of effectively incorporating semiotics into the field of educational research. When visual images are included, there are a variety of motivators that influence interpretation such as perception, reception, and context of the image. Images in existing educational research (when they appear at all) tend to serve as token illustrations or auxiliary addendums to the text. It seems as if their authors unintentionally fail to recognize that readers will dynamically interact with the images as well as with the text. Fischman (2001, 28) feels that the lack of images in educational research constitutes a "blind spot" in academic culture. He posits that this is due to a general academic tradition of dismissing images, distrusting their value, and being skeptical of their analyses. Oddly (and persistently), academic culture does not encourage the examination of visual culture in publications as authors are asked to "translate the visual complexity of research problems or fieldwork experiences into words and numbers" and "more energy is spent seeking an adequate balance between words and numbers" (Fischman 2001, 28), which is in complete controversion of our "unmistakable social and cultural reality: that images have become an omnipresent and overpowering means of circulating signs, symbols, and information" (Fischman 2001, 29).

I intentionally selected a pictorially based mode of data collection when first thinking about this study design, but this is not to say that I believe that reading and composing text is an inferior method of inquiry and explanation. Traditional reading and writing skills should remain the seminal tools of educational research. However, as ubiquitous and necessary as text is, it can be manipulated, massaged, even magicked into existence with the aid of AI text generators; its meaning is thus affected by the intent and mode of its composition: "All words have the 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context in which it has lived its socially charged life: all words and forms are populated by intentions" (Bakthin 1986, 293). Images, too, "have a taste of a profession," but they give us a different way of looking at human meaning-making, for they express elements of the subtle and inexpressible that may perhaps elude textually or quantifiably based modes. Often, the nuance of an image presents us with a problem to be solved, rather than some obvious explanation: "They must be understood as a kind of language; instead of providing a transparent window on the world, images are now regarded as the sort of sign that presents a deceptive appearance of naturalness and transparence concealing an opaque, distorting, arbitrary mechanism of representation, a process of ideological mystification" (Mitchell 1984, 504). Concepts may surface in a finished visual product that perhaps did not seem to be present in the image-making process or context, revealing layers of contrapositions. Drawings may also synthesize phenomena that are too many or complex to

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verbally explain, but which are nonetheless part of expressing an important schema or reality.

Asking someone to "simply" draw a teacher is not such a simple task, although drawings have been used to explore perceptions and identity for more than a century (i.e., Rorschach ink-blots (1921), Goodenough-Harris Draw-a-Person tests (1926), Burns & Kaufman Kinetic Family Drawing tests (1970), etc.). The ways in which preservice teachers imagine teaching and the teaching profession evolve from each learner's lifelong experiences and trajectories. Each interpretation may stray from a professor's or course's intent because of how personal meaning is constructed for each preservice teacher, as meaning-making is necessarily individualized (Eco 1976; theory of unlimited semiotics). The importance of individualized interpretation was certainly evidenced by the study participants, not only by their unique graphic representations of teachers, but also in their textual responses, which together constituted the bulk of the data for this study: "Casual drawings are helpful to self-study, as they reveal, upon close examination, our hopes and aspirations as well as our fear, disappointments, or frustrations…They help us get in touch with our imagination, while at the same time revealing the extent to which our vision is confined by ingrained social images" (Weber and Mitchell 1999, 132). Drawing, as a method of self-examination, can result in a product that attempts to reflect outward that individual's emotions, needs, and expectations (Joseph, Eron, and Schumer 1965). Although this research was not intentionally designed as an experiment in self projection, the nature of asking someone to draw is necessarily permeated with results that may tap into their individual thoughts and feelings, needs and expectations. Both writing and drawing may articulate aspects of self-identity. Some preservice teachers completed the teacher drawing as a self-portrayal and drew themselves as teachers. As the focus of this study was not to measure the projected self, this data was not specifically analyzed for that indicator.

Although the educational field of inquiry has tended to encourage forms of research that focus on words and numbers, I believe images remain important to achieving a holistic understanding of data. While image data is a rich source for mining information, the reliability and validity of such data, even when analyzed using a variety of methodologies, can be difficult to pinpoint with quantifiable certainty. However, the singularity and luxuriance of image data needs increased employment and exploration in research, even if we grapple a bit in our efforts to best interpret what we have collected. Using detail-oriented and refined mixed methods approaches, I believe we can uncover meanings that lie along the lines of drawings, just as we do along the lines of text: "Visual sources of data…should be used to advance our knowledge about old and new topics in educational research. These sources have the potential of making our work not only more comprehensive and clear, but also politically more relevant" (Fischman 2001, 31).

Setting and data collection

The setting for this study was a required teacher education program course that focused on foundational principles and practices of education, designed specifically for all beginning preservice teachers, regardless of content area discipline, type of teacher

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certification, or intended student population (K-12). It took place at a small, liberal arts college in New Jersey, in the northeastern United States. The students in this course could be at any point in their four-year college plan, but most were within their second or third year of study. The course term was one semester, during which time a mandatory clinical experience component (20 hours of fieldwork in a classroom within an urban school setting) also needed to be simultaneously completed. The course was designed to introduce participants to the practice of teaching, instruct them in a broad range of competencies required for state and national certification, and help them become professionals with a repertoire of skills and strategies.

Data collection for this study included: 1) teacher images (graphic representations of teachers drawn by the participants); 2) individual preservice teacher textual responses (to reflective questions about their completed teacher images); 3) collaborative textual responses (completed as a group during in-class discussion of their teacher images); and 4) stimulated-recall interview data (as needed).

Teacher images

The teacher drawing task was distributed during the first class session. Preservice teachers were given a sheet of blank paper, a week to create their teacher images, and straightforward directions: "On the blank piece of paper provided, using colored markers, crayons, pencils, or paints, draw a teacher. Include as much detail as possible, especially when you draw your teacher's body, clothing, and appearance. Relax and enjoy the process. Do not allow yourself to be interrupted. Do not worry about artistic ability—this is not an art activity. While I am aware that not everyone prefers visually oriented tasks, I am also aware of the difference between a solid effort and a five-minute effort." No prior context was given, such as what details the preservice teachers should include or why they were drawing a teacher, in order to minimize the direction or influence of the context/s while drawing.

Individual preservice teacher textual responses

After completing their teacher drawings, the preservice teachers were asked to respond to a series of textual prompts that were designed to clarify their motivations, thoughts, and feelings during the creation of their images. These prompts were adapted and excerpted from Weber and Mitchell's (Weber and Mitchell 1999, 130) "Draw a Teacher: Accessing Cultural Images" activity: "Examine your completed drawing and write down your thoughts and reactions to what you have drawn. Answer the following questions: 1. What did you think, feel, or set out to do when beginning this task? 2. Who or what does the drawing remind you of? 3. Who might this drawing be based on? (for example, fictitious or real teachers, media images, a composite of past teacher, etc.) 4. How does the drawing relate to your personal life experience?"

Collaborative textual responses

At the next class session, images were shared and preservice teachers were divided into small, random groups where they were encouraged to describe their teacher drawings to their groupmates and explain their rationales for portraying their teachers in the

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ways that they chose. Each group collaboratively completed a set of questions that asked preservice teachers comment on different aspects of their collective drawings. These prompts were adapted and excerpted from Weber and Mitchell's (Weber and Mitchell 1999, 130) "Draw a Teacher: Accessing Cultural Images" activity: "1) Comment on each teacher's age, gender, clothing, props, physical features, expression, ethnicity, class, economic background, and social standing; 2) Comment on: the students (or their absence), the nature of the student-teacher relationship, the physical setting (ex: location, arrangement of desks, homework, etc.), teaching style, and subject matter; 3) What do your drawings say about your views, experiences, or aspirations with regards to teaching?"

After this collaborative work was completed, a teacher-led discussion of the teacher images and preservice teachers' textual responses (both individual and collaborative) began. In addition to discussing the participants' teacher images and textual responses, this discussion also focused on the ways that teacher identities can be constructed through dominant narratives, cultural ideologies, and existing stereotypes as well as assumptions, responsibilities, and factual statistics related to the teaching profession. While all of these topics were referred to during the remainder of the semester, they were not revisited with the same intensity as during this initial discussion. Teacher images, individual preservice teacher textual responses, and collaborative textual responses were collected after this discussion.

Stimulated-recall interview data

Sometimes responses to both individual and collaborative textual prompts were used to verify questions that arose during the coding process, in order to make sure codes were accurately assigned to different image signifiers based on the preservice teacher's intentions and motives when rendering their image. For example, if a preservice teacher rendered a stick figure teacher wearing geometrical "clothing" (i.e., a triangle "skirt" from the waist down), textual responses were first referred to in order to determine what the preservice teacher intended to portray. In the instances that such data was not present in the textual responses, the preservice teacher would be briefly interviewed in order to verify or correct the accuracy of the coding. The preservice teacher's drawing was used as a stimulus in an open-ended, stimulated-recall interview. During these interviews, participants were first asked to describe all of the different parts and elements of their teacher drawing, without prompting on the part of the researcher. After the participant had described their teacher image, I would circle back to probe or clarify some of the statements they had made which were either ambiguous or intriguing (rather than asking pre-determined questions). If questions still remained, I would ask the preservice teacher a direct question in order to clarify the coding (i.e., "What does the triangle on this stick figure represent?"). Each preservice teacher's interview responses were hand recorded and corrections to coding were made immediately afterwards, as necessary.

After the second class session, preservice teachers were invited to participate in this study. For each preservice teacher that agreed, basic demographic data was recorded (i.e., gender, age, race, content major, intended grade level certification, intended content area certification). Each preservice teacher's drawing was scanned and textual

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responses were transcribed verbatim to a digital format and linked to the corresponding teacher image. Drawings were re-classified by semester of collection and a number in order to keep each preservice teacher's identity anonymous.

Methodology

In order to learn more about teacher image, appearance, and effect, I designed this study 18 years ago in order to gather data to explore these concepts. This essay discusses some of the findings from my 15-year study on teacher appearance and clothing and builds upon data and discussion raised in previously published studies (Katić 2008, 2012). The first article was written in the study's infancy and discussed the results of 32 teacher images collected from four randomly selected semesters. The second article was written almost midway through the study and discussed the results of 339 teacher images collected from 8 randomly selected semesters. This final essay discusses the whole data corpus: 852 teacher images collected from 30 consecutive semesters from fall 2005 to spring 2020.

This large-scale case study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods to focus on the ways that preservice teachers attributed certain characteristics to the teaching profession based on visual signifiers in their drawings of teachers. In a study that concentrated on identifying student concerns, Swennen, Jörg, and Korthagen found that drawings appeared to be "a reasonably reliable and valid means of assessing concerns" (Swennen, Jörg, and Korthagen 2004, 265) when used in mixed methodology that combined image-based and more traditional research techniques. While this study used a mixed-methods approach, it was conducted using primarily qualitative research methods. In order to analyze the images in this research, I drew on the social semiotic approach to analyzing images, as described by Rose (2008) and Banks (2008). Signifiers in the images did not have a priori meaning, rather, meaning emerged from the ways in which the signs were constructed and used. I felt that these analytical approaches emphasized not only the importance of an image's elements, but also how these elements (and consequently the image as a whole) were situated and shaped by the preservice teacher's motivations and social contexts. In addition to an ethnographic approach to the research (Cresswell 1998) and methods for visual semiotic analysis of the teacher drawings (Banks 2008; Rose 2008), quantitative methodology was used for statistical inquiries in order to generate numerical data such as percentages (Jaeger 1993). All images and accompanying textual data ($n = 852$) were used for analysis.

All elements of the rendered teachers' appearance, dress, and accessories in each drawing were coded, as well as perceived genders, facial expressions, and items, tools, and props that were present in the drawn classrooms. Codes were not developed a priori, but rather became part of the working code list as each drawing was coded. For example, in the first drawing where a teacher was rendered with a blue jacket and a red tie, at that time the codes "Jacket," "Tie," "Blue," and "Red" were added to the working code list and would remain as possible codes for all following drawings. The final code list consisted of 111 specific appearance, dress, color, and item codes. This essay focuses on 57 of those 111 specific codes in the teacher images: 45 codes specific to external clothing, accessories, and personal adornment and 12 codes specific to color. The following figures and text excerpts were chosen to illustrate representative examples of

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the statistical results. Particular students or semesters were not privileged in any way, but selected from the sum group of drawings that satisfied the illustrative purpose, with care taken to fairly represent a diversity of semesters across the years of the study.

Finally, my role as the researcher was undertaken from as neutral and as objective a standpoint as possible, using methods to retain participant anonymity and remove as much researcher bias as possible. It was very important that the preservice teachers' images, textual data, verbal data—their voices and thoughts—were central to the study's findings and provided a statement of their perspectives. However, shared meaning is created when working and talking together with others; the prehensions of neither myself nor my preservice teachers would remain unchanged through this process. I tried to be mindful of this and consider what frames of reference might be prioritized or marginalized when analyzing and interpreting the collective data.

Results

Clothing. Preservice teachers' textual responses about the overall general appearance of their teacher images included many statements that were a variation on the theme of neat and proper. Teachers should be and were: "dressed neatly" (female PS, spring 2007), "dressed nicely" (female PS, spring 2015), "impeccably dressed" (female PS, fall 2010), "properly dressed" (female PS, fall 2008), "appropriately dressed" (male PS, fall 2017) or "professionally dressed" (male PS, fall 2011). (The genders in the parentheses following each textual response indicate the gender of the preservice teacher, not of the teacher in the rendered teacher image, followed by "PS," an abbreviation for "Preservice Teacher," and finally the semester and year this textual data was collected.) In addition, many expressed how the contents of a teacher's vita were not the only factors that could contribute to that teacher's success in the classroom: "I also thought about the type of clothing she should wear. Conservative was the main word that came to mind. I have never seen a teacher that dressed unprofessionally or inappropriately" (female PS, fall 2017); "I thought that a teacher should look well put together, but not too dressy and not too casual" (female PS, spring 2014).

Clothing in the teacher images was coded for every individual item of clothing rendered as well as categorized as belonging to one of three categories: formal professional dress, casual professional dress, and casual dress. Gorham, Cohen, and Morris' (Joan, Cohen, and Morris 1999) descriptions of these three categories was used as a baseline for categorization, with slight modifications. Coding for casual professional dress was based on the following description: "This is the attire you might see in the corporate world on a 'casual Friday.' For example, khaki slacks, a casual button front shirt and loafers or deck shoes for males; a skirt or slacks with a dressy blouse/sweater and low heeled shoes for females. If either males or females wear a jacket, it would be classified as casual professional if it does not match the slacks/skirt or is of a casual cut and/or fabric" (Joan, Cohen, and Morris 1999, 286).

In the teacher images, casual professional tops that matched this description totaled 72.25% (see Figures 1, 2, and 7) and casual professional bottoms (both trousers and skirts; see Figures 1, 2, 5, and 7) totaled 73.39%. These percentages outnumbered both formal professional tops and bottoms as in suit sets and dresses (21.66%; see Figures 4, 5, and 6) and all casual tops (24.59%) and bottoms (denim/jeans; 3.16%; see Figure 3).

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Figure 1. "I knew it had to be classy, but I had a few different options before I went with a simple collared shirt and knee-length skirt." Drawing of a teacher satisfying multiple codes. This image has been selected to particularly illustrate: "Clothing: Tops: Dressy shirt/sweater (female teacher images; collared and/or adorned; i.e., blouse; casual professional)" and "Clothing: Skirt (casual professional)." Rendered in spring 2015 by a female preservice teacher.

Flat, closed toe shoes and boots (casual professional) totaled 51.4%; see Figures 4, 5, and 7), while high heeled shoes (formal professional) totaled 32.79% (see Table 1; see Figures 1 and 5).

Some of the percentages remained comparable to the results found in previous studies (Katić 2008, 2012). In the previous midpoint study, casual professional tops totaled 72.9% as compared to 72.25% in this study; causal professional bottoms totaled 35.2% as compared to 37.71% in this study; flat, closed-toes shoes totaled 50.8% as compared to 51.4% in this study, and formal professional high heeled shoes totaled 34.9%

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Figure 2. "Many of the male teachers I have had dressed in black or khaki pants, a button up and a tie…therefore, to me, this drawing portrays an accurate picture of a teacher." Drawing of a teacher satisfying multiple codes. This image has been selected to particularly illustrate: "Clothing: Tops: Dressy button-down, collared shirt (male teacher images; casual professional)" and "Clothing: Trousers: (male teacher images; casual professional)." rendered in fall 2010 by a male preservice teacher.

as compared to 32.79% in this study. Other clothing elements indicated a decrease in frequency as with suits (from 12.5% to 8.9%) and skirts (from 42.9% to 36.18%).

Individual preservice teacher textual responses provided further insights as to the choice of primarily casual professional clothing in the teacher images. This category of clothing seemed to indicate the appropriate attire for teaching, as well as a familiarity with what they had seen before in their own educational experiences: "I knew it had to be classy, but I had a few different options before I went with a simple collared shirt and knee-length skirt" (female PS, spring 2015; see corresponding Figure 1); "Many

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Figure 3. "For whatever reason, my top 3 teachers were older men (50+)…all of these teachers had glasses, so I included those." Drawing of a teacher satisfying multiple codes. This image has been selected to particularly illustrate: "Accessory: Glasses." Rendered in fall 2007 by a female preservice teacher.

of the male teachers I have had dressed in black or khaki pants, a button up and a tie…Therefore, to me, this drawing portrays an accurate picture of a teacher" (male PS, fall 2010; see corresponding Figure 2).

Accessories. The accessories that were seen with the greatest frequency across all teacher images were skin-toned or sheer stockings (30.68%), belts (including trouser suspenders; 25.65%), eyeglasses (19.20%), and ties (15.81%). While all of these accessories cannot technically be classified as clothing, they are less arbitrarily worn as some accessories may be, such as a hat or gloves, but rather for more practical reasons. Material function and cultural expectation, rather than personal expression, categorized the most frequent accessories found in the teacher images.

Skin-toned, sheer stockings (30.68%) were almost always paired with high heeled shoes in many of the female teacher images (see Figures 1 and 5). High heeled shoes, which were drawn on one-third of all teachers across studies, are considered a formal professional shoe option (Joan, Cohen, and Morris 1999). In stimulated-recall interviews, preservice teachers explained that the choice to pair high heeled shoes with hosiery was two-pronged. First, hosiery was "more appropriate" to wear with high heels, as if by association, formal shoes should be paired with more formal leg coverings: "I tried to portray appropriate dress: professional jacket, long skirt, and pantyhose as well as close-toed [sic] shoes" (female PS, fall 2018; see corresponding Figure 5). Hosiery was also expected to be worn in a professional setting, whereas it was not always an expectation in a casual setting: "I don't really ever wear pantyhose, even when I wear heels to go out, but it seems wrong and weird to not wear it in when you're at work (school)" (female PS, spring 2014). Second, stockings usually made wearing high heeled shoes a little more comfortable as they protected the foot (albeit thinly) against shoe friction and outside dirt.

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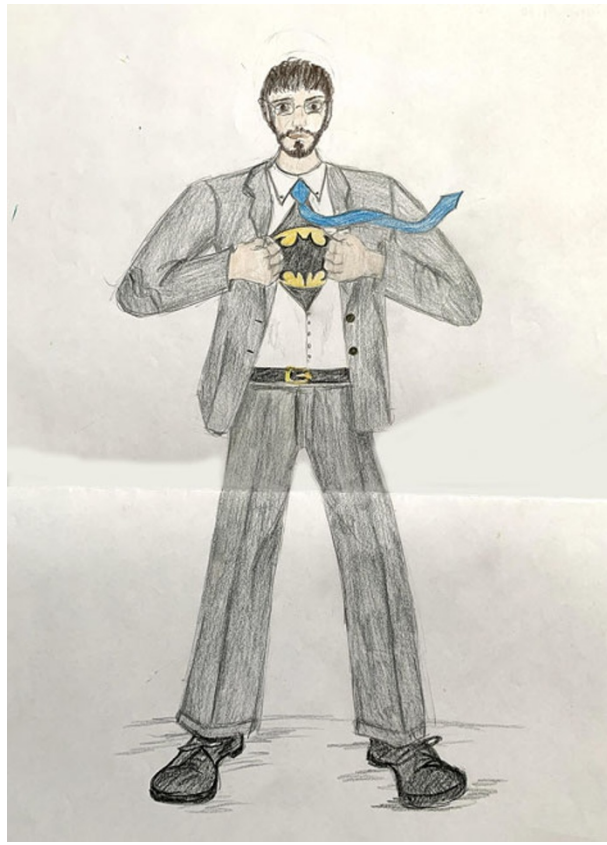

Figure 4. "I based this drawing on my favorite high school History teacher, who usually wore a dark jacket and a blue tie. You have to look professional if you want to succeed, which is why the teacher is wearing a suit and tie." Drawing of a teacher satisfying multiple codes. This image has been selected to particularly illustrate: "Accessory: tie." Rendered in spring 2013 by a male preservice teacher.

Belts (including trouser suspenders) appeared much more frequently on male teacher images (62.56% of all male teachers wore a belt) but were present in both male and female gendered teachers (14.84% of female teachers wore a belt). In many of the female teacher images, the belt appeared to be more of a fashionable accessory that accentuated the waist as it cinched in a blouse or a dress. On male teacher images, it was a practical accessory to keep trousers up above the hips, due to differences in male and female anatomy (see Figures 2 and 4).

Eyeglasses were the third most frequent practical accessory (see Figures 2 and 3). While I am aware that some people do wear non-prescriptive eyeglasses as an adornment, I believe more people wear them for practical reasons in order to correct their eyesight in some way. Based on individual textual responses and stimulated interview data, some preservice teachers explained that teachers they had had in the past had worn eyeglasses, which is why they included them in their teacher images: "For whatever reason, my top 3 teachers were older men (50+)…all of these teachers had glasses,

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Figure 5. "I tried to portray appropriate dress: professional jacket, long skirt, and pantyhose as well as close toed [sic] shoes…She has blush and lipstick on which make her prettier and more approachable to her students." Drawing of a teacher satisfying multiple codes. This image has been selected to particularly illustrate: "Clothing: Shoes: High heels, Closed top/toe (formal professional)," "Accessory: Skin-toned, sheer stockings," "adornment: facial cosmetics (i.e., mascara, lipstick, eye shadow, etc.)," and "Adornment: Jewelry: Necklace." Rendered in spring 2018 by a female preservice teacher.

so I included those" (female PS, fall 2007; see corresponding Figure 3). Others included eyeglasses as a signifier of teacherly appearance. From their textual and interview data, it became clear that these preservice teachers' inclusion of eyeglasses may not have been for practical reasons (i.e., a past teacher wore them to improve their eyesight), but rather an as an illustration of an "intelligent" or "traditional" teacher: "When my mom went back to teaching, she had to get a whole new wardrobe of 'teacher clothes.' I think the vest, turtleneck, and glasses is the typical attire" (female PS, spring 2006); "This picture has the teacher as a woman wearing glasses and her hair pulled back tightly with a dress suit like a traditional teacher" (female PS, fall 2009); "I chose to

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Figure 6. "She's already full of energy, but make-up makes her look even more alive and sparkly. I think it complements the bright blue of her dress." Drawing of a teacher satisfying multiple codes. This image has been selected to particularly illustrate: "Adornment: Facial cosmetics (i.e., mascara, lipstick, eye shadow, etc.)" and "Color: Blues (i.e., all shades of blue, such as cerulean, cornflower, teal, etc.)." Rendered in fall 2019 by a female preservice teacher.

draw reading glasses because objects like these are usually associated with teachers" (female PS, spring 2008).

Finally, ties (including bow-ties) were seen only on male teacher images and appeared in almost half (ties, 15.81%: formal or casual professional clothing, 33.84%) of all teachers dressed in either formal professional clothing (i.e., a suit; see Figure 4) or in casual professional clothing (i.e., collared shirts and jackets; see Figure 2). Ties were originally associated with the military, but have long been incorporated into civilian clothing as symbols of prestige and conformity. Preservice teachers that referenced the tie in their textual responses indicated that it was included as a symbol of success: "I based this drawing on my favorite high school History teacher, who usually wore a dark jacket and a blue tie. You have to look professional if you want to succeed, which

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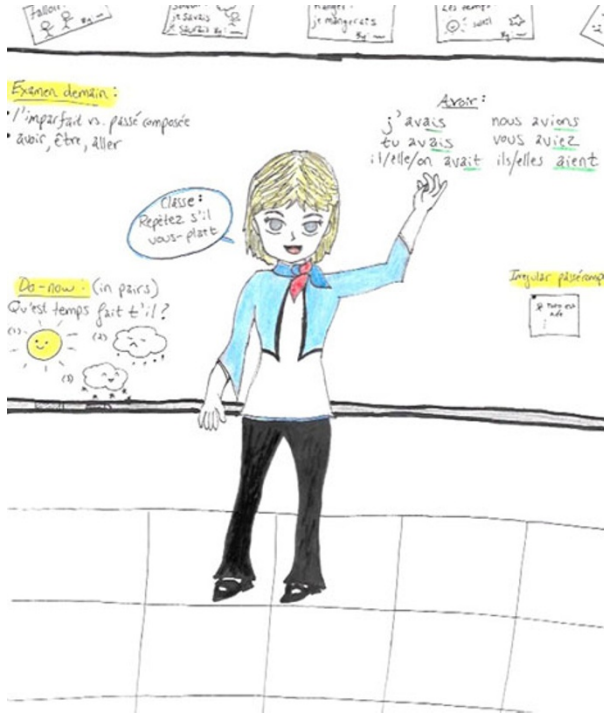

Figure 7. "She has pale make-up to show that she is not concerned with her appearance as she is with her profession." Drawing of a teacher satisfying multiple codes. This image has been selected to particularly illustrate: "Color: Blues (i.e., all shades of blue, such as cerulean, cornflower, teal, etc.)" and "Color: Blacks (i.e., all shades of black, such as cool and warm)." Rendered in fall 2016 by a male preservice teacher.

is why the teacher is wearing a suit and tie" (male PS, spring 2013; see corresponding Figure 4).

Adornment. While there were a wide variety of personal adornments that appeared amongst the teacher images, the most frequently drawn were facial cosmetics (41.57%; see Figures 1, 5, 6, and 8) and necklaces (24.12%), almost all on female teachers (there was one male teacher image drawn with a gold necklace and none were rendered wearing cosmetics). In stimulated recall interview data, many preservice teachers explained that facial cosmetics were a finishing touch that improved attractiveness, while others stated that cosmetics complemented carefully thought-out clothing and looked more polished: "She has blush and lipstick on which make her prettier and more approachable to her students" (female PS, spring 2018; see corresponding Figure 5); "She's already full of energy, but make-up makes her look even more alive and sparkly. I think it complements the bright blue of her dress" (female PS, fall 2019; see corresponding Figure 6). Other preservice teachers explained that cosmetics were intentionally not rendered in the image (or applied with a light hand) because cosmetics did not align with the modest and plain appearance they believed teachers should present: "I thought about what length her hair should be and that make-up should not be worn" (female PS,

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spring 2009); "She has pale make-up to show that she is not concerned with her appearance as she is with her profession" (male PS, fall 2016; see corresponding Figure 7).

Many of the female teacher images were decorated with different adornments to their hair or body (i.e., hair bands or earrings), but necklaces appeared with the greatest frequency across the years (see Figures 1 and 5). The necklaces rendered included a variety of styles such as gold chains, chains with pendants, and artistic costume jewelry, but almost half (10.96%) of the necklaces were strands of pearls. Natural pearls are rare and thus have been an object of beauty to adorn jewelry and clothing for centuries. Today, pearl necklaces are still seen as valuable, sophisticated, and elegant: "I added pearls because I think they are beautiful and classy" (female PS, spring 2012), "She would come to class dressed in simple things, such as a long dress with a strand of pearls. I admired that she always looked nice" (female PS, fall 2011).

Color. Color in the images was coded based on which colors dominated the overall image of the teacher. In order to determine which colors were dominant and which were subordinate, color was observed for the following three factors: 1. the approximate surface area of a particular color as compared to the approximate surface area of the teacher figure; 2. the frequency with which a color was used in the overall figure for elements of dress and accessories; and 3. the ascendancy of some colors above others, namely those that were chiefly visible when observing the image from a distance of five (5) feet. Colors were not separated into variant hues (i.e., light blue, medium blue, dark blue) for this study. Rather, all hues of a base color were grouped under the base color (i.e., light blue, medium blue, and dark blue were all coded for "blue"). For example, a teacher drawn wearing a light blue shirt, a red and blue striped tie, black trousers, black shoes, and a brown wristwatch was coded once for blue and once for black. These colors were the dominant colors in the image. The teacher image was not coded for red or brown.

While many colors were found in the teacher images, the most prevailing colors used were black (45.78%) and blue (40.98%). To a significantly lesser degree (50% or less), violet (19.79%), red (16.98%), and pink (16.28%) were featured, trailed by brown (14.40%) and green (14.29%). All other colors had a frequency rate that fell below 15% (see Table 2).

Teachers were often dressed in black clothing, usually on the bottom half of the figure as in the hue of the trousers, belt, skirt, dress, or shoes. (see Figures 1, 2, 4, and 7). Black has long been regarded as an authoritative color associated with darkness, sinfulness, magic, and mystery (Lurie 1981; The Economist 2009). The color blue was most often featured on the top half of the teacher image, as the hue of the shirt, blouse, sweater, or jacket (see Figures 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8). Blue is often associated with cleanliness, efficiency, and cooperation: "Blue is a global colour – a perception in part from its association with the sea. It is also a colour of co-operation: The United Nations, Facebook, and Twitter all use blue" (Markillie 2012, 134). Some preservice teachers specifically commented on the importance of selecting colors that best fit their imagined teacher: "I thought about a teacher wearing a blue shirt to work. I thought about how the color of clothing a teacher wears is important" (male PS, fall 2012).

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Table 1. Clothing, accessories, and adornments in teacher images (n = 852)

Criteria: (for all teacher images)	Percentage: (of total)
Clothing: Suit: Suit jacket and trousers (male teacher images; formal professional)	3.51%
Clothing: Suit: Suit jacket and trousers (female teacher images; formal professional)	5.39%
Clothing: Jacket or blazer (casual professional)	4.22%
Clothing: Waistcoat/vest (formal professional)	1.87%
Clothing: Tops (Total; all male and female teacher images)	96.84%
Clothing: Tops: Dressy shirt/sweater (female teacher images; collared and/or adorned; i.e., blouse; casual professional)	41.92%
Clothing: Tops: Dressy button-down, collared shirt (male teacher images; casual professional)	30.33%
Clothing: Tops: Shirts (no collar or adornment; long or short sleeved; i.e., T-shirt; casual)	17.68%
Clothing: Tops: Teacher signifying shirt (either school-related logos/mottos or seasonal décor; i.e., a sweater featuring pumpkins during the month of October; casual)	6.79%
Clothing: Tops: Sport uniform shirt or team jersey (casual)	0.12%
Clothing: Trousers (Total; all male and female teacher images)	49.77%
Clothing: Trousers: (male teacher images; casual professional)	18.62%
Clothing: Trousers: (female teacher images; casual professional)	19.09%
Clothing: Trousers: As part of a suit (male teacher images; formal professional)	3.51%
Clothing: Trousers: As part of a suit (female teacher images; formal professional)	5.39%
Clothing: Trousers: Denim/Jeans (casual)	3.16%
Clothing: Skirt (casual professional)	36.18%
Clothing: Dress (formal professional)	12.76%
Clothing: Shoes (Total; all male and female teacher images)	85.47%
Clothing: Shoes: Flat soled, full foot coverage, closed top/toe (casual professional)	42.27%
Clothing: Shoes: Boots (Total; from ankle to calf heights), closed top/toe (casual professional)	9.13%
Clothing: Shoes: High heels, closed top/toe (formal professional)	32.79%
Clothing: Shoes: Sneakers, closed top/toe (casual)	1.05%
Clothing: Shoes: Sandals, open top/toe (casual)	0.23%
Accessory: Tie	15.34%
Accessory: Bow tie	0.47%
Accessory: Belt	25.53%
Accessory: Trouser suspenders	0.12%
Accessory: Glasses	19.20%
Accessory: Skin-toned, sheer stockings	30.68%
Accessory: Opaque stockings or tights (in a solid color, such as black)	2.11%
Accessory: Lanyard (with ID card)	2.22%

(*Continued*)

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Table 1. (*Continued.*)

Criteria: (for all teacher images)	Percentage: (of total)
Accessory: Pocket protector (with pens)	2.22%
Accessory: Wristwatch	6.79%
Accessory: Hat or cap	0.23%
Accessory: Gloves	0.23%
Accessory: Protective clothing covering (i.e., apron, laboratory coat)	0.82%
Accessory: Personal bag (i.e., handbag, briefcase)	1.64%
Accessory: Cape	0.47%
Adornment: Hair (hair band, hair clip, other hair ornament)	4.10%
Adornment: Jewelry: Necklace	24.12%
Adornment: Jewelry: Earrings	12.06%
Adornment: Jewelry: Bracelet	5.87%
Adornment: Jewelry: Ring (Total; wedding and other)	2.92%
Adornment: Jewelry: Wedding ring	2.22%
Adornment: Jewelry: Other ring/s	0.70%
Adornment: Facial cosmetics (i.e., mascara, lipstick, eye shadow, etc.)	41.57%
Adornment: Tattoo	0.35%
Adornment: Manicured or polished nails (on hands)	5.15%

Unless otherwise noted in parenthesis, percentages refer to all teacher images, both in male and female gendered drawings. Percentages may total to more or less than 100% for various elements because not all teacher images were rendered for the observable characteristics selected in this study. For example, a preservice teacher may have drawn a set of words and symbols to represent his/her teacher, instead of a human figure of a person. Some teacher images were drawn with multiple signifiers or no signifiers related to particular codes. For example, a teacher image may have been rendered half dressed in a basketball uniform on the left side of the body and half dressed in a suit, tie, and formal shoes on the right side of the body. The image was then coded for all types of clothing that were rendered. Conversely, some teachers were less detailed images (i.e., stick figures, figures drawn only from the waist up from the edge of the paper) rendered without observable clothing elements and thus could not be coded for those signifiers.

Discussion

The development of teachers' professional identities is part of a complex process that incorporates not only educational preparation and training but also personal memories, conflicts, desires, and fears. Professional identities are not formed in a single instant and neither do these snap-shots of teacher images tell us a complete story. Rather, they are exactly that: snap-shots that capture a thoughtful moment, multiplied by hundreds of students. As a body of data, they give us some general insights into what these preservice teachers thought about teachers and the teaching profession, which we can extrapolate from how the teacher images were portrayed, what they were wearing, and how these elements of dress and color suggested certain material functions, cultural expectations, and connotations. While it is possible that the preservice teachers in this study may have drawn what they thought would suit course, professor or cultural expectations, it is hoped that in addition to (or undeterred by) these, these teacher images also reflect personal environments, experiences, and intentions: "Drawings are useful not only as iconic images, but also as layered paintings that hide or combine

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Figure 8. "Super teachers" make a conscious effort to combat moderate, traditional images of teaching with symbolic, powerful ones. drawing of a teacher satisfying multiple codes. This image has been selected to particularly illustrate: "Blues (i.e., all shades of blue, such as cerulean, cornflower, teal, etc.)" and "Adornment: Facial cosmetics (i.e., mascara, lipstick, eye shadow, etc.)." Rendered in fall 2020 by a female preservice teacher.

other social, cultural, and personal images. An analysis of drawing can thus reveal aspects of our personal and social knowledge – how we see the world, how we feel, and what we can imagine" (Weber and Mitchell 1995, 19).

Casual professional dress code. The findings of this study reinforce the findings of past research on teacher appearance. This consistency indicates a definite identification of teachers with casual professional clothing and the messages that such clothing imparts to an observer: Teachers are practical and approachable. They serve others. They have a moderate, but not high degree of prestige. Their appearance has an unremarkable uniformity that may indicate conservative conformity and an alignment to middle-class respectability. In short, many of the teacher images faithfully reproduced a stereotypical representation of teachers. Although stereotypes are often promptly maligned, they are not completely negative apparatuses. They often characterize and frequently encapsulate the opinions of a community: "The teacher's familiar blandness is appreciated by children and parents alike, because it seems to fit an undefined notion of how a teacher should be…Teachers are keenly aware of these expectations, to such extent that they may think it wisest to meet them by dressing or

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Table 2. Color in teacher images (n = 852)

Criteria: (for all teacher images)	Percentage: (of total)
Color: Reds (i.e., all shades of red such as cadmium, brick, carmine, etc.)	16.98%
Color: Oranges (i.e., all shades of orange, such as carrot, peach, burnt, etc.)	5.39%
Color: Yellows (i.e., all shades of yellow, such as banana, canary, goldenrod, etc.)	5.97%
Color: Greens (i.e., all shades of green, such as apple, army, bottle, etc.)	14.29%
Color: Blues (i.e., all shades of blue, such as cerulean, cornflower, teal, etc.)	40.98%
Color: Violets (i.e., all shades of violet, such as plum, lavender, royal, etc.)	19.79%
Color: Pinks (i.e., all shades of pink, such as fuchsia, carnation, cerise, etc.)	16.28%
Color: Browns (i.e., all shades of brown, such as tan, cocoa, saddle, etc.)	14.40%
Color: Blacks (i.e., all shades of black, such as cool and warm)	45.78%
Color: Greys (i.e., all shades of grey, such as ash, charcoal, cadet, etc.)	12.88%
Color: Whites (i.e., all shades of white, such as off, antique, pearl, etc.)	8.90%
Color: No color; preservice teacher rendered image without use of color	4.45%

Percentages may total to more or less than 100% for various elements because not all teacher images were rendered for the observable characteristics selected in this study. Some teacher images were drawn with multiple signifiers or no signifiers related to particular codes. For example, some teachers were rendered without using colors (despite detailed drawing directions) and thus could not be coded for those signifiers. Each criteria color includes a full range of that color in hue, value, and intensity. Thus, the criteria color "Reds" includes a range of red colors such as cadmium red, brick red, or carmine red, etc.

'disguising' themselves according to prevailing images" (Weber and Mitchell 1995, 56). They may be codified representations of historical realities. For example, Judge (1995) states that the enduring perceptions of teachers in the United States (i.e., friendly, flexible, non-prescriptive) "fit well with a deep distrust of governmental…power. The teacher cannot ever be the agent of government…no authority has the right to determine what a teacher should be" (262). And indeed, teachers' hiring, firing, codes of conduct, and codes for appearance in the United States are determined on a local, not national, scale. Stereotypes can reflect the tacit understandings of long experience within a profession's culture and traditions: "The conservatism we discovered in the majority of the preservice teachers' drawings seemed to be a reflection of strong influences past and present: not only do teachers remember the staid, white female teachers pointing at the blackboards…they also discover…that such stereotypes continue to be the accepted norm" (Weber and Mitchell 1996, 307). Conservative dress may also mirror preservice teachers' anxieties about joining the teaching workforce or having (and handling) their own classrooms. Subdued, casual professional clothing attempts to elicit the cuts and colors of "classic" clothing and may signify a desire to return to traditional and trustworthy values or methods (Lurie 1981). These professional novices may be expressing subconscious desires for the dependable rather than the daring as they begin their careers.

It is possible that this stereotype accurately reflects the dress code for teacher appearance. To be hired as a teacher, one must understand the dress code, dress the part, and show up for work wearing clothes that reflect the "company's" values, ethics, and style: "They [teachers] all dressed so similar…My shop teacher used to wear the sweater and

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tie combo all the time" (male PS, fall 2005). If the stereotypical dress seen in the teacher images serves as a signifier of affiliation to the group known as teachers, then the use of casual professional dress in the drawings signifies that these figures claim that association and recognition. If one conforms to the group's acceptable clothing parameters, then that person is considered to be a part of the group, eligible to move to more select inner circles within that group: "To wear the costume considered 'proper' for a situation acts as a sign of involvement in it, and the person whose clothes do not conform to these standards is likely to be more of less subtly excluded from participation" (Lurie 1981, 12). Those that inadvertently or deliberately do not conform, send messages of disapproval and disdain to the group and set the tone and themselves up for failure: "I wanted to depict the traditional clothing and body type of an older teacher…The image looks boring, just like my public schooling experience. It is also what my future might look like because I might turn into this guy" (male PS, spring 2020). To continue to succeed in a secured position, a teacher's wardrobe should consist of clothing that will serve them in every position that the job presents. Careers are not made at the conclusion of an interview, nor in the first few weeks on the job. A beginning teacher in New Jersey is not eligible for tenure until the first day of their fifth consecutive year at the same school, but only if they meet or exceed expectations with regards to their performance in the previous four years. In the first few years of teaching, careers are made through day to day accomplishments and impressions. Each day is an interview for the next step towards tenure. It is not inconceivable to imagine that the appearance, as well as the performance of a prospective tenure candidate, is marked by and supervisors and administration. It communicates what type of employee they may be guaranteeing a job for the next 30 years.

Stereotypes can also however, discourage detailed discussions about the multivaried contradictions that are necessarily inherent in such flattened images: "Stereotypes engender a static and hence repressed notion of identity as something already out there, a stability that can be assumed…trapped within these images, teachers come to resemble things or conditions; their identity assumes an essentialist quality and, as such, socially constructed meanings become known as innate and natural" (Britzman 1991, 5). The white, middle-class, composed, female teacher that Mead (1962) described more than six decades ago largely filled the boxes of teacher images collected for this study. It is difficult for me to ignore the impact and significance that this stereotype has had in the lives of my preservice teachers as seen through their rendered teacher images, nor was this realization lost on the preservice teachers themselves. They expressed in textual verbal statements that they (the schoolchildren of yesterday and the teachers of tomorrow) had not intended to draw a stereotype, but when they finished drawing, that was precisely what they had done: "My drawing does not remind me of any teacher I have had. It is more of an 'ideal' teacher in our society…It is funny that I used the stereotypes of a teacher to create my drawing instead of my experiences of what teachers look like in reality" (female PS, spring 2013).

Sometimes occupation helps to dictate dress; most labor occupations have strict guidelines about what clothing, adornments, even colors are acceptable in the workplace, while professional occupations tend to allow for more freedom and interpretation in dress: "Many occupations within the working or lower middle classes prescribe

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a uniform or lay down clear rules of dress, restricting the types of garments and colours suitable for work. The professions, on the other hand, generally operate with looser codes of dress that are left up to the individual to interpret…Within these constraints, individual professional women interpret what is and what is not appropriate to wear to work" (Entwistle 2000, 51). It is intriguing that the "profession" of teaching, which (to be fair) did produce variety and difference in the smaller details of dress in the teacher images, also produced an overall, overwhelming "uniform"-ity of dress that aligned more so with working class punctilio. The relatively small number of teacher images wearing suits points to the modest social and economic status of teaching in the United States. Suits convey reliability, capitalism, upscale expense, and of course, power (The Economist 2010), whilst casual professional clothing conveys approachability, communication, and compassion. Perhaps the latter traits really are more in keeping with the core principles of teaching, but the lack of formal professional clothing in teaching is definitely reflected in and correlated with earning power.

Conversely, although a relative "uniform-ity" of casual professional dress was apparent across teacher images, the freedom to select the styles, shapes, patterns and colors of the individual pieces of casual professional dress created a group that was difficult to distinguish from other professions if removed from the background of the classroom. If taking into consideration only the clothing and colors of the teachers in the images (not the black- and white-boards, books, or desks that might also be pictured), the social and economic roles of the rendered teacher were unclear. Clothing can often indicate that a "certain person occupies a certain role and may therefore be expected to behave in a certain way…The fashions and clothes worn by doctors, nurses, visitors and patients in a hospital for example, indicate the role of the people wearing them. Knowledge of the person's role is necessary in order that one behaves appropriately towards them" (Barnard 2002, 63). Removing the teachers from their classroom backdrops resulted in figures whose appearance was difficult to identify by occupation, role, or economic impact, other than some casual professional, working class employee. The clothing of female teacher images was particularly telling in that respect, partially because women's clothing since the 19th century has been largely ambiguous with regards to communicating economics or occupation and rather more concerned with decoration, with the exception of the power dressing ensembles that emerged from the 1970s and 1980s and attempted to signify working women as both women and professionals. That the teaching profession is made up of predominantly female teachers (especially at the elementary levels) may indicate to observers that it is not a distinguishable (or distinguished) occupation or at least not one that impacts the economy in any powerful or significant way.

There were also preservice teachers that took a more individualized approach to their teacher images and rendered teachers in bright, clashing colors, lab coats or aprons, or sporting tattoos. They explained that they intentionally drew their teacher images differently from what they thought would be expected: "I have piercings and tats which is why you can see that flower tattoo on my teacher's arm. It is who I am and part of the teacher I will be" (female PS, spring 2015). The desire for independence is indicated by a departure from the norm, resistance to conforming to a stereotype, and the search for an external representation that is more palatable or aligned to personal

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viewpoints: "How we perform our identity has something to do with our location in the social world as members of particular groups, classes, cultural communities. The clothes we choose to wear represent a compromise between the demands of the social world, the milieu in which we belong, and our own individual desires" (Entwistle 2000, 114). For example, teacher images that depicted "super teachers" (see Figures 4 and 8) make a conscious effort to combat moderate, traditional images of teaching with symbolic, powerful ones: "Well the strange clothes relate to me because I do not want to be a teacher that simply dresses or acts like a normal one, because…I have noticed…that the great teachers always do something different" (male, spring 2013; see corresponding Figure 4); "Teaching is more difficult and amazing than people think. We need to shake up what people think it's all about!" (female PS, fall 2020; see corresponding Figure 8). There is conflict, however, in these departures from the norm, because the development of teacher identity is a complicated process. Even for self-actualized, professional, master teachers, creating a new identity by modifying stereotypical images that have permeated their experiences and lives can prove problematic. Imagine then the tension produced for preservice teachers who are likewise trying to remain individuals, but at the same time modifying both mythological and realistic images of teaching and conforming to societal and institutional expectations.

Self-effacing and non-sexual dress choices. Although most of the teacher images were drawn as female (77.28%, and drawn by female students: 72.37%), both teacher image genders were overwhelmingly rendered in clothing that was oriented towards deference and function as opposed to furbelow or vogue. Female preservice teachers' drawings were often very detailed with regards to clothing and their textual comments left no doubt as to the importance of presenting a teacher whose appearance was not attention-seeking or sexualized, but rather conveyed subservient professionalism: "I did not want my teacher's skirt to be too short or for her sweater to be too tight" (female PS, spring 2014); "The teacher is simple, but neat and covered, which I believe is a big part of a teacher's attire. Ex. She has jewlery [sic] but they are simple peices [sic] that don't draw attention or are too loud" (female PS, fall 2016); "This brings back memories… of the dress code problems they've been having with the teachers! It seems even they are losing touch with the meaning of being 'properly dressed' at work" (female PS, fall 2019); "To be honest, my first idea was to be creative with my drawing, adding a sexy shirt…or some other accessory of that sort. Then I realized that I didn't want the class to think that this drawing is a future reflection of myself as an educator!" (female PS, spring 2020); "Miss X, as we'll call her, is dressed professionally in a black knee length skirt and conservative blouse. Her make-up is minimal. Nothing is too revealing or too 'loud'" (female PS, spring 2006).

In stark contrast to men's bodies, women's bodies have long been exhorted to exercise control and exude morality, seemingly because women have been historically characterized as unpredictable, unrestrained, and uncontrollable. Lurie (1981) uses a variety of examples to illustrate how past conventionalisms with regards to women's dress reflect (mostly men's) society's desire to contain and control, from upper class Chinese foot binding, to discouraging women to wear trousers, to higher and higher heeled shoes. As women balanced home-making and child-rearing with entry into a male-dominated teaching workforce, appropriate dress choices necessarily deflected attention away from women's physical bodies because those that hinted at sexuality

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were considered threatening, non-conformist, and dangerous: "The sexuality of female teachers is often portrayed, not as healthy or enriching, but as perversion, as dangerous. Teaching and learning, after all, are not supposed to have anything to do with sex" (Weber and Mitchell 1995, 124). Female workers were expected to be sexless and selfless; in fact, early female teachers in the United States were required to be unmarried. The presence of these two traits would help a woman retain her employment and if the language of her dress also tacitly conveyed those traits, that could only help to reinforce what was already expected and appropriate of a woman in her position. Selflessness reinforced a preferred slave-like dedication, which was apparently necessary as women weren't considered serious workers: "So-called favorable images that characterize the teacher as selfless, also mirror the stereotypes associated with women. Like the 'good' woman, the 'good' teacher is positioned as self-sacrificing, kind, overworked, underpaid and holding an unlimited reservoir or patience" (Britzman 1991, 5). Sexless-ness ensured that a sterile, cerebral, and safe environment prevailed where parents left their children for the day: "Female teachers' bodies are subjected to gazes that are filtered through ingrained prevailing stereotypes that suggest that one cannot be a woman (sexual) and a professional (intellectual) at the same time" (Weber and Mitchell 1999, 152).

The association between women and children is both normal and natural as well as societally and culturally influenced because of women's reproductive capacities. Many women become mothers and mothers are generally the primary caretakers of children. The majority of teachers in the United States are women and the majority of these are employed at the elementary school level (U.S. Department of Education 2021). This may be due in part to historical legacy, as women have made up the majority of the teaching population ever since the mid-19th century (Rury 2020). At that time, teaching became a pursuit appropriate for women (should they choose a pursuit other than marrying and child-rearing), as it was considered somewhat akin to child-minding and therefore suitable to innate maternal instincts (Rury 2020). In addition, although women completed the same teacher education programs and internships as men, they could be paid significantly less than their male counterparts and schools took advantage of this fiscal serendipity.

This association between women and children goes one warped step further when aligning women to children by suggesting that women are not fully developed or mature the way that men are, especially with regards to their sexuality and presentation in professional spaces: "It seems that women were not to be trusted to keep their sexuality in check or to know how to behave without being told…Like young children who are assumed not to have the judgment and experience to know how to dress, teachers were and perhaps still are dictated to in such a way as to make it clear that they are not fully trustworthy, that it is not they who are in control" (Weber and Mitchell 1995, 63). While 48.94% of female teacher images were rendered wearing skirts or dresses, which could arguably be understood as more sexually accessible than trousers, these garments were consistently of a modest length (to the knees or longer). Almost all of the teacher images portrayed a modest, unassuming, and nonsexual figure indicating that this self-policing has been internalized, and perhaps intentionally propagated, within the teaching profession. Teacher images that were explicitly rebellious, sexual, or commanding were nearly non-existent in this data corpus.

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The appearance of the majority of female teacher images was one that mimicked power dressing rules that were borne out of the late 1970s with the increase of women in the workforce (Rury 2020) and remain in effect (to various degrees/professions) to the modern day: a straight skirt, a stylish blouse and/or jacket, and something feminine close to the face (i.e., cosmetics, jewelry). For example, trousers appeared on female teacher images half as much as skirts and dresses with 24.28% (casual professional trousers, 19.09%; trousers as part of a suit, 5.39%) of trousers in comparison to 48.94% of skirts and dresses (skirts, 36.18%; dresses, 12.76%). Power dressing hoped to manage women's culturally inherent sexuality (which was a deterrent to advancement in professional circles) by laying out rules for dress that would give a woman authority through "control over her body and self-presentation in the face of male-defined notions of female sexuality and the potential objectifying male gaze in the workplace" (Entwistle 2000, 188-189). However, this did not mean that a women's femininity should be completely quashed underneath boxy garments (such as the male sack suit), but somehow impossibly balanced between feminine, yet not-too-feminine (i.e., skirts as opposed to trousers, but not in feminine colors like pink and lavender) and masculine, yet not-too-masculine (i.e., tailored jackets and tops, but not so much so that they revealed the shape of the breasts or waist). This quixotic balance preserved some femininity so that males in the workplace would not feel threatened, but not so much that the female employee was aping men or pretending to aspire to or appropriate male status by assimilating their dress in toto. The dress of the female teacher images and accompanying textual data certainly indicated that my female preservice teachers were versed and adept in assuming responsibility for striking the "correct" balance between being a woman and being a professional (teacher): "Professional and business women continue to express concerns about how to present their bodies at work so as not to be read as 'sexual.' This concern with the body gives further evidence of the way in which women have had to become conscious of their bodies and responsible not just for their own sexuality, but for the sexuality of men who might be 'misled' into reading sexuality into their dress" (Entwistle 2000, 190).

The choice of a skirt or dress instead of trousers in the teacher images may also indicate an acknowledged imbalance of power between men and women on the basis of sex in the educational profession. Historically, women have been positioned as secondary to men and characterized as the weaker, yet paradoxically, unrestrained sex. The effect of this can perhaps be seen in the self-policing choice of a skirt or dress (and this metaphor may be stretched to include high heels which appeared in 32.79% of female teacher images) which could represent the acceptance of female sexual weakness and inferiority, as the skirt physically and symbolically hampers the wearer to a degree that trousers do not (Lurie 1981). Eicher and Roach-Higgins (1993) posit that (Western) male professional dress, in comparison to their physical bodies, has greater volume and shape as opposed to women's. Consider the volume of a boxy suit in a substantial fabric such as wool, which fully covers the torso and all limbs in multiple layers (i.e., collared shirt, tie, suit jacket, long trousers, socks, closed shoes, even perhaps an undershirt, waistcoat, and overcoat). Compare this to a filmy blouse, a silk cardigan sweater, a straight skirt that just covers the thighs, and open shoes that reveal the top of the foot. Despite the largely sexless, selfless, and controlled female teachers depicted

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in the teacher images, their bodies were more exposed and less consequential, while men's bodies were better hidden and better paid.

Finally, one outlier code was the presence of high heeled shoes that were rendered in more than one-third of the female teacher images. High heels are considered more sexually charged shoes than for example, flat boat shoes. They complete haute couture runway ensembles, lingerie advertisements, and have been fetishized since they came into existence. However, high heeled shoes are also considered a more formal professional shoe option than flat shoes, perhaps because they imply settings of composure, gravity, and elegance and gliding along effortlessly in them requires determination, discipline, and an impeccable sense of balance. Thus, the sexy high heels and the sexless female body create tension in some teacher images. The inclusion of high heels could be simply be an involuntary compliance to prevailing societal guidelines which indicate that high heels are the formal professional shoe option for women in the workplace. But it could also be a form of rebellion, a way of inserting the unsexed female body (and by default, female sexuality) back into the image without making the female form overtly sexual and an object of predatory and critical gaze.

The colors black and blue. Colors have generally accepted social meanings that are most likely learned, however research on color meaning is not particularly conclusive because of different research methodologies and data collection (Pett and Wilson 1996) as well as intent and audience (i.e., aesthetics, science, psychology, etc.; Miller 2014; Fox 2021). Across the varied studies of affective (psychological significance) color meaning, most participants agreed that longer wavelength colors (560–700 nanometres) are usually described as warm (i.e., red, orange, yellow) while shorter wavelength colors (400–560 nanometres) are described as cool (i.e., green, blue, violet). Warm colors tend to be associated with happy, active, or exciting events, while cool colors indicate calm, peaceful, or controlled settings (Pett and Wilson 1996). In a variety of color and mood-tone studies, the color blue was associated with the following relatable moods: security, comfort, tenderness, soothing, calm, peacefulness, and serenity (Wexner 1954; Schaie 1961; Wright and Rainwater 1962). The moods or meanings for the color black were either unhappy (such as distressed, disturbed, upset, despondent, dejected, and melancholy) or powerful (such as dignified, stately, defiant, contrary, hostile, strong, and masterful) (Wexner 1954; Schaie 1961; Wright and Rainwater 1962). Associative color meaning is created by social contexts, which is why the same color can mean different things in different parts of the world. For example, in the United States one would be green with envy, but in France, one would be green with fear. While there are a few color associations that are considered global (i.e., black is associated with night, darkness, and dirt and blue is associated with sky and water; Fox 2021), the color associations discussed in the following paragraphs align primarily with Western color contexts and connotations.

Black, although a seemingly uncomplicated hue, has been imbued with a variety of symbolic meanings throughout history and its significance can vary greatly depending on cultural, social, and historical contexts. Black has been a fashionable color to wear in different circumstances and circles since the fourteenth century (Hollander 1978), but it is also often straightforwardly linked to immorality and pollution as its counterpole white is linked to virtuosity and purity. It can connote a variety of messages, which alter subtly with who, what, where, when, how, and why black is worn.

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Black may signify sobriety, denial, and mystery, but it can also symbolize knowledge, sophistication, and drama (Lurie 1981), even rebellion and counterculture. In many Western cultures, black clothing was historically worn during periods of mourning as a symbol of respect and sorrow and still is to this day. Perhaps historical legacy plays a part in black as a color choice for working professionals. As Lurie (1981) explains, the northeastern region of the United States was home to the largest population of Puritan settlers and their particularly severe garb (i.e., dark or drab dress with white accents at the neck and hands) can be seen in the dark suits and light collars/cuffs of modern working professionals. Over time, black has become a standard and highly versatile color in the realm of professional attire, associated with a range of positive qualities and emotions, including sophistication, power, authority, formality, and timelessness. It is regarded as a neutral color that can be paired with a range of other colors and patterns, which makes it a popular choice for those who want to look professional and fashionable at the same time. Black as a dress choice may convey preservice teachers' anxieties about entering the teaching profession or depressing expectations that the work will be difficult or trying. It may also connote their sense of sophistication or proficiency as they enter a profession where they will have the chance to exhibit the specialized content knowledge they have worked hard to master. It is also possible that it is an intuitive default choice for novice teachers who are unsure of what to wear, but subconsciously understand that the cultural dress code characterizes black as a neutral, appropriate color for professional dress.

In the verbal data collected along with the teacher images, preservice teachers indicated that black was a suitable neutral color; a color that was a predictable but somewhat dull staple in a teacher's wardrobe: "It's good for basic teacher clothing [the color black], but not too much of it. You don't want to be morbid" (female PS, fall 2019); "Black is good for pants because you can sit on the floor and doesn't get dirty" (female PS, spring 2020); "Black adds a little class to your outfit and it looks more professional, but you have to dress it up a little" (female PS, spring 2017).

Blue is a color associated with placidity and security and has often been linked to the sky and the sea, as well as to concepts of divinity and spiritual purity (Fox 2021). It also signifies trustworthiness, service, and hard work and is, coincidentally, the most common color for all clothing in the United States (Lurie 1981), as well as the most popular color in 17 countries across five continents by at least one-third of the total vote in each country (Fox 2021). The color blue predominates the official (and unofficial) uniforms of professions where loyalty and production are the main directives that the said profession wishes to convey to the public (i.e., insurers, police officers, bankers). Blue-collar workers/professions wish to communicate that its members are modest, service-oriented, and reliable. As teaching is also a service profession, the choice of blue in the teachers' is rather suitable, given the color's past and present associations: "I feel like my teachers always wore a lot of blue which is why my teacher has a blue shirt on" (male PS, fall 2017); "I put my tacher [sic] in a blue dress, but I would have drawn a suit if I knew how. Blue is a safe color, I mean who doesn't like blue?" (female PS, spring 2014); "It's important not to wear glaring crazy colors to be taken seriously. That's why my teacher is wearing a blue shirt and black pants" (male PS, spring 2011).

Public school teachers are often codified as representatives for the masses and perhaps the choice of blue (as a very popular and common color) in their garb is a way

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of identifying with the majority and authenticating their civic positions. Blue in the teacher image clothing may suggest that preservice teachers believe the teaching profession to be fundamentally service-oriented and honest. They may also believe that hard work is a foundational component to success in this field and that their work will be legitimately observed and judged by the public. Perhaps, there is even a devotional or inspiring aspect to becoming a teacher: in very few professions are you given almost free rein to work with a very special and sacred population (children) and be an influence in their future thoughts, words, and deeds.

Conclusion

A teacher's dress and appearance can play a role in student engagement and learning, but it is not the most significant factor in impacting student engagement and learning. Teachers' subject matter knowledge, teaching methodologies, and classroom management skills are all more important and much time is spent in teacher education programs studying these content areas and practicing these skills. However, an individual's physical appearance nonetheless has a nonverbal immediacy that is observed, processed, and judged in an instant. It often has, rightly or wrongly, a significant impact on a student's perception of a teacher, which in turn can impact levels of trust and respect. Students often size up their teachers during the first week of school based solely on their appearance, as other aspects of the teacher (such as actions, ethics, and values) are not immediately available and instead are ascertained more slowly over the course of the school year. A professional and expected appearance can help establish a positive and respectful learning environment, where students are more likely to be engaged and focused, while an inappropriate or distracting appearance may detract from the learning environment and reduce student engagement.

Fifteen years of teacher images represents a satisfactory, though not conclusive, amount of data. Although this is a small sample, located in a particular region of the United States and localized to a single preservice teacher program, I found interesting, but perhaps not wholly unexpected, elements present in the final coding array. I looked at the clothing and colors rendered in this set of teacher images spanning a decade and a half in order to further understand what my preservice teachers believed about teachers: who they were based on what they wore. I believe the clothing and colors that were rendered with the most frequency in the teacher images indicates a careful balance between preserving a sense of self-identity and conforming to societal expectations.

This data furnishes an additional lens with which to create customized curricula, navigate individualized advisement, and perhaps better understand recruitment and retention rates for different groups of students: "As teacher educators, one of our foremost tasks should be that of exploring the evolving practical knowledge of our student teachers to that we can build programs which assist them to develop, understand, articulate, and utilize that practical knowledge. The starting point for this task must be the student teachers themselves…Only from this starting point can we avoid superimposing potentially inappropriate theoretical frameworks derived either from the knowledge of researchers or from experienced teachers" (Johnston 1992, 125).

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This essay explored teacher images as a way of understanding preservice teachers' perceptions and how they conceptualized who teachers were and the teaching profession as a whole: "Inviting teachers to draw…provides an excellent forum for critical reflection, bringing to light the nuances and ambivalences in people's views of teachers" (Weber and Mitchell 1996, 312). Images are more than passive visual recordings of a moment; they are the collation of past personal experiences, current ruminations, and future expectations. They give expression to subconscious assumptions and beliefs that might not be otherwise articulated, but are nevertheless important as we continue to refine our practice of teaching teachers.

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