DIGITAL IMMIGRANT TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS IT

INFLUENCES THE AFFECTIVE AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF

STUDENTS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by
Robert Warren Williams
Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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APPROVED BY:

DANIEL BAER, Ph.D., Committee Chair

JARED BIGHAM, Ed.D., Committee Member

MILTON SLAUSON, Ph.D., Committee Member

Scott Watson, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Advanced Programs

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe how digital immigrant teachers perceive the influence of social media on the affective and cognitive development of students at three high schools in Alabama. As the prevalence of social technologies is increasing, educators must understand how it is affecting students in order to instruct students and utilize technologies in an effective manner. Thus, a phenomenological study should inform teacher practitioners on how to address concerns and issues associated with social media in order to positively influence the learning environment. Ten teachers were selected from one private and two public high schools in Alabama. Data was collected through interviews, observations and focus groups. Data was analyzed through transcendental analysis consisting of horizontalization, describing, classifying, and interpreting in order to develop themes; textural and structural descriptions were developed in order to determine the essence of the phenomenon. While negative aspects such as the prevalence of "drama," poor interpersonal communication skills, and improper writing in formal settings were voiced, digital immigrant teachers acknowledged collaboration, the potential for enhanced teacher-student relationships, and an additional communication forum as positive implications for social media.

Keywords: digital immigrants, digital natives, socially interactive technology (SIT), social networking media (SNS), social media, socioculturalism/sociocultural psychology.

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List of Abbreviations

ADD …………………………………………………...Attention Deficit Disorder

CIPR ………………………………….…..Chartered Institute of Public Relations

IM ………………………………………………………....Instant Messaging

IRB …………………………………………....Institutional Review Board

MILE …….…………..………..Milestones for Improving Learning and Education

SIT ………………………………………..Socially Interactive Technologies

SNS …………………………………………………Social Networking Sites

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

The goal of this investigation is to describe the experiences of digital immigrant teachers and how the influence of social media has manifested in the affective and cognitive development of students. The Chartered Institute for Public Relations (CIPR) defines social media as follows:

> Social media is the term commonly given to Internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement. (CIPR, 2011, p. 4)

For the purposes of this study, therefore, social media will be defined as those Internet and mobile-based technologies that allow for interactive and interpersonal dialogue and communication amongst individuals. This definition encompasses texting, social networking sites (SNS), blogging, and email.

Affective and cognitive development are defined as emotional/social advancement and learning progression respectively. Digital immigrants can be defined as those who were socialized in pre-digital ways before digital technology became prevalent (Prensky, 2001). Thus, digital immigrant teachers will have a longitudinal perspective of the influence of social media. Acknowledging a marked difference in the ever-changing landscape of learning that is emerging, the effects of the various social technologies need to be examined. John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) asserted that sociocultural approaches are based on the concept that "human activities take place in cultural contexts, are mediated by language and other symbol systems, and can be best understood when investigated in

the historical development (p. 191). The research is directly related to Vygotsky's (1978)

sociocultural psychology theory in that society, culture, and its technological offerings

are impacting the learning and development of children.

According to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, cognitive development is

impacted by the surrounding environment and its influences; social interaction plays a

part in the development of cognition. Sharples, Taylor, and Vavoula (2005) note that

learning is not separated from everyday activities such as conversation, reading, or

watching television, but that "these activities can be resources and contexts for learning"

(p. 5). Cognition is thus affected in the context of "language learning" – learning a new

tongue or way of communication and functioning via social media (Kuhl, 2004; Kuhl,

Tsao, & Liu, 2003; Newport & Aslin, 2004; Saffran, 2003).

Social media is impacting the culture in which students live and learn. Based on

empirical research, medical doctors O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) concluded that

"a large part of this generation's social and emotional development is occurring while on

the Internet and on cell phones" (p. 1). Social media has extended the mediums by which

peer groups interact and socialize. Similarly, qualitative studies of youth and social

media usage suggest that (a) identity development is a major element of adolescent

progression, and (b) youth use social media to express themselves (Livingstone, 2008;

Schmitt et al., 2008). In her study on the influence of peer groups on motivation and

achievement, Allison Ryan (2001) noted "students share experiences and exchange

information . . . and out of these interactions among peer group members a context

emerges with regard to the norms, values, and standards that concern academic

motivation and achievement" (p. 1136). While not specifically discussing social media

as the catalyst for peer group interaction, the principle can be applied to the social media context. The implications are that social media has a multi-layered influence on the socialization and learning context of students. Therefore, educators must no longer view social media and other technologies simply as curriculum-delivery devices or teaching aids. Rather, social media must be leveraged towards "critical engagement with questions of learning, communication and culture" (Buckingham, 2007, p. 13).

Studies on the digital divide, defined in terms of conventional access, computer ownership, and youth participation (Lynch, 2001; Jenkins, 2006; Cheong, 2008) often take an ethnographic perspective of examination. These studies demonstrate disparities in social media and technology usage. Research on usage based on gender differences (Lenhart, Madden, Macgill, & Smith, 2007) as well as that on the digital divide (Lynch, 2001; Jenkins, 2006; Cheong, 2008) reveals little to inform educators on practices that affect the classroom.

Some studies of college students find correlations between social media, specifically social networks, and relationship development. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) conducted a regression analysis and found that college students' ($N = 286$) use of Facebook contributes to positive relationships with peers. Additional findings confirm correlations of friendship practices related to Social Networking Sites (SNS) (Ito, Baumer, Bittanti, Boyd, Cody, Herr-Stephenson, Horst, & Lange, 2009). Further, much research on the relationship of social media usage on social capital has been conducted (Boyd, 2008; Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008; Seiter, 2008; Hargittai, 2007). It has been found that higher Facebook use is positively correlated with bridging and bonding social capital among college students (Ellison, Steinfield, &

Lampe, 2007). These findings may be transferable to high school students and demonstrate a need for continued research so that educators can harness the positive implications to impact the learning environment.

Situation to Self

As a practicing principal, social media and interactive technologies have posed challenges and opportunities as well as fears and concerns. Students' use of smart phones, text messaging, and the internet necessitate rules and procedures for addressing potential issues that affect the school environment. Concerns such as new forms of cheating, cyber-bullying, and possible classroom disruption tend to be discussed among the faculty. However, the potential advantages of social media usage for educational purposes are intriguing. As a digital immigrant, I acknowledge that the implications of social media usage need to be researched in order to determine how social media will change the learning environment. Digital immigrant teachers' perceptions of this phenomenon should provide a basis for further studies.

The philosophical assumptions that led to the choice of research are ontological and epistemological. To determine how social media is affecting students, I desired to investigate the perceived reality of social media influence through the eyes of digital immigrant teachers. Epistemologically, the study was conducted in the context of high school settings in order to understand the perceptions of digital immigrant teachers. A combination of constructionist and participatory paradigms guided the study. Through the constructivist paradigm, meaning of what social media means to education was developed. An understanding of the digital immigrant teachers' perception and how that understanding shapes the educational process was gained. Through the participatory

paradigm, the "voice" of the digital immigrant teachers was presented in order to bring about understanding for those participants as well as those that interact with and support those participants.

My relationship to the participants, therefore, was that of an outlet to allow their voice to be heard. I have heard some negative perceptions from digital immigrant colleagues regarding social media and have too been reluctant to embrace social media in the classroom. However, as many articles have shown how some teachers (both natives and immigrants) have been innovative in the use of social media, I have come to realize that social media can be leveraged for educational purposes.

Problem Statement

Quantitative research suggests that aspects of social media are affecting the affective and cognitive development of students (Boyd, 2007; Liu, 2010; Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007; McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002; Ofcom, 2008). However, qualitative research which gives voice to teachers is significantly lacking. Thus, a transcendental phenomenological study explores how teachers perceive the influence of social media on students. By interviewing ten high school digital immigrant teachers, themes emerged that reveal how social media is impacting students on the affective and cognitive level within the classroom. Practitioners must understand and incorporate the technologies to provide learning opportunities that are relevant to today's students. The problem this study will address is that there is a lack of understanding on how the usage of social media is manifesting itself on the social and learning development of students within the high school setting. Specifically, there has not been an investigation to understand digital immigrant teachers' perspectives, regarding this phenomenon. As

digital immigrant teachers will continue to be educating students for years to come, the concerns and perceptions of those teachers need to be addressed.

The prevalence of social media usage has impacted how youth socialize and learn. Whether influencing youth positively, such as strengthening relationships (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007) and collaboration (Borja, 2005), or negatively such as cyber-bullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010) or possibly altering formal writing skills (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, & Macgill, 2008), the perceptions of digital immigrant teachers should provide a view of how social media may be changing students' affective and cognitive development, and thus, how educators need to address this phenomenon.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe how digital immigrant teachers perceive the influence of social media on the affective and cognitive development of students. Social media elicits a connection between social development or socialization and the learning development of students. Modified from the definition as provided by CIPR (2011), social media is defined as those Internet and mobile-based technologies that allow for interactive and interpersonal dialogue and communication amongst individuals. This definition encompasses texting, social networking sites (SNS), blogging, and email. Digital immigrants can be defined as those who were socialized in pre-digital ways before digital technology became prevalent (Prensky, 2001). Baird and Fisher (2005) noted that social networking media "provides the opportunity to take the social interaction to deeper levels as well as address learning styles rooted in digital technologies" (p. 8). Therefore, the use of social media has implications for learning, teaching, and the educational process.

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Significance of the Study

The research literature concerning youth and social media is just emerging. Many studies address college-age and young adult users of social networking sites (SNS) (Ahn, 2011; Hargittai, 2007; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Ito et al., 2009), but fail to encompass other aspects of the multi-faceted phenomenon – social media. Further, while not specifically addressing high school students, the studies provide theoretical frameworks and considerations that may translate to a younger demographic.

As the prevalence of social media is still in its infancy, this study provides another dimension to the current research. Digital immigrant teachers have a perspective prior to the advent of digital technologies transcending to the digitally defined world of today's learners. The experiences of digital immigrant teachers provide the necessary context for noting differences in students' socialization and learning development with and without the affordances of social media. Today's high school students are engulfed in social media. Therefore, this study informs educators as to how the influence of social media is being manifested in students, thus providing a knowledge base for those measures needed to address emerging concerns as well as leveraging social media for the benefit of the educational system. Further, the study uncovered themes derived from the lived experiences of digital immigrant high school teachers as they perceive the influence of social media. The study will add to the theoretical research as well as the studies that have been conducted with students. Although a few studies regarding student perceptions of various aspects of social media have been conducted (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Lewis, 2010; Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007), teacher perceptions have been noticeably neglected.

The real life experiences of digital immigrant teachers will fill the gap in the literature relating to the influence of social media on high school students. It is necessary to explore all aspects and views in order to adequately prepare teachers and students to repurpose social media and interactive technologies for engagement, teaching, and learning. As Prensky (2001) asserted, "our digital immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language" (p. 2). Prensky's (2001) assumptions that digital immigrant teachers are technologically illiterate cannot be generalized to the entire digital immigrant population as some have acclimated to the digital society. This study should provide an understanding of the perceived influence of social media on students with regards to affective and cognitive development. The description of how digital immigrant teachers perceive this phenomenon will inform educators on how social media is influencing students, what areas of social media influence need to be addressed, and what areas of social media should be capitalized on. Further, the study will inform educational leaders about the perceptions of digital immigrants, thereby allowing leaders to make informed decisions on how to address and assist digital immigrant teachers.

Research Questions

As the focus of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe how digital immigrant teachers perceive the influence of social media on the affective and cognitive development of students, the following questions guided this study:

Question 1: What are the experiences of "digital immigrant" teachers with the manifestation of social media in the lives and works of their students? Digital immigrant teachers should be able to recognize the changes over time that may be attributed to

social media usage. Additionally, the feelings associated with this phenomenon may provide insight which will allow leaders to better address digital immigrants' concerns when utilizing and integrating technology.

Question 2: How do digital immigrant teachers perceive social media to be impacting the affective and cognitive development of students? Examining this question should yield positive and negative implications. Answers to this question will provide a knowledge base by which administrators and researchers can provide support to teachers for effectively handling issues which arise from social media usage.

Question 3: How does the use of social media, formally or informally, contribute to the classroom environment as perceived by digital immigrant teachers? The implications will allow practitioners to shape the way in which technologies are used to enhance learning.

Question 4: How do digital immigrant teachers address potential negative influences of social media in the school environment? Other literature, as well as comments from colleagues, suggests issues such as poor grammar or inappropriate use of "text speech" in formal writing. Further, issues such as cyber-bullying have increased with the prevalence of social media. Depending on what influences the teachers recognize, responses could range from writing interventions to recommending counseling services.

Question 5: How can social media be utilized effectively to support learning in today's educational system? After determining how social media is influencing students, practitioners can formulate methods to utilize technologies more effectively.

Research Plan

A transcendental phenomenological approach to qualitative research was used for the study. Patton (1990) defined phenomenology as "inquiry [which] asks the question, 'What is the structure and essence of the experience of this phenomenon for these people?'" (p. 69). Therefore, a qualitative research design as phenomenological inquiry was chosen in order to understand the influence of the social media phenomenon, how it is constructed, how it can be applied to education, and the essence of what social media means to educators with regards to engaging students in their context of learning.

Delimitations

I have chosen specific criteria for the selection of participants. Participants must be at least 38 years of age, with at least ten years of teaching experience. The criteria for teachers were chosen to target digital immigrant teachers as those teachers have an established history by which to draw perceived implications. Some view 1981 as the definitive cutoff year as that was the year that computers were first used in schools (Kemp, 2010). For the purpose of this study, I submit that digital immigrants are those individuals born before 1974 in support of Fox (2009). The demarcation of 1974 is appropriate as the first video game, Pong, was introduced that year (Fox, 2009). Given the criteria, the teachers should be able to give a perspective as to the changes that they have perceived over time with regards to how the evolution of social media has been exhibited in the affective and cognitive development of their students. Younger teachers would have a limited perspective because of their exposure to social media and lack of perception as to the change that has occurred in students.

I have also limited the study to high school teachers as social media is prevalent in the lives of high school students (Boyd, 2007; Lenhart, 2009). Further, out of convenience, the focus of the study includes teachers in Alabama. While it is assumed that the research could be generalized to other parts of the United States, replication of the study would need to be conducted to confirm such.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The goal of this investigation was to describe how social media is influencing the affective and cognitive development of students from the perspective of digital immigrant high school teachers. Acknowledging a marked difference in the ever-changing landscape of learning that is emerging, the effects of the various social technologies need to be examined. The research is directly related to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural psychology theory in that society, culture, and their technological offerings are impacting the learning and development of children. Thus, the process of knowing is mediated by community and culture.

In order to frame the study, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory is combined with Barron's (2006) learning ecology perspective. Additionally, the concepts of "digital immigrants" versus "digital natives" (see Prensky, 2001) are discussed to explain the perspectives of the participants in relation to the students. A description of adolescent social media usage is provided to support the need for continued study of the phenomenon. Implications of the impact of social media are analyzed. A look at 21st century learning is taken to describe the skills needed to function in today's competitive society. Finally, a review of the literature related to current usage of social media and interactive technologies in the classroom is provided. The review positions the study in order to ground it with the literature.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework aims to situate the study among the theories of Vygotsky (1978) and Barron (2006). These theories seek to provide an understanding of the processes and developments, within sociocultural contexts, required to explain how people learn.

Vygotsky

The study is prompted by Vygotsky's (1978) ideas of socioculturalism/sociocultural psychology in that development of children is proportional to how children are involved in a culture's activities. Vygotsky (1978) recognized the disconnect between psychological and anthropological ideas of knowledge construction. The assertion that there is an interplay of cultural offerings (social media included) and knowledge construction lends itself to the theoretical framework for this study. Miller (2011) stated that "an active-child-in-cultural-context is the unit that develops. This unit constructs a variety of cognitive skills, most importantly a system of meaning and its psychological tools – a culturally constructed system of knowledge. Goals, values, and motivation are inseparable from cognitive activity, and thus follow a parallel developmental course" (p. 194). Wertsch (1985), following the thoughts of Vygotsky (1978), agreed that there is a "tight connection between the social organization of behavior and the individual organization of thinking" (p. 148). Therefore, social media acts as a medium between society's social constructs and the informal learning of the cognitive and affective domains within individuals.

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of socioculturalism applies to students as learning through cultural offerings such as social media. Sociocultural theory also applies to

teachers with emphases on "co-participation, cooperative learning, and joint discovery as the teachers bring existing knowledge to students by co-constructing it with them" (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996, p. 199). Therefore, it is worth examining these patterns of interaction and collaboration.

Barron

Brown (2008) argued that fostering adolescents' social learning – how and with whom they learn – and learning as contributors and shapers of a global society is paramount (para. 3). Understanding of these informal learning opportunities should inform educators of needed improvements in formal learning settings. A need exists for understanding this *learning ecology* (Barron, 2006) in which students live in order to progress in educational practices that are meaningful and relevant to today's students. Learning ecology in concert with sociocultural psychology is demonstrated as Sharples, Taylor, and Vavoula (2005) stated:

> As they [children] become familiar with technology they invent new ways of interacting – 'smilies', text message short forms, the language of instant messaging – that create new rules and exclusive communities. This appropriation of technology not only leads to new ways of learning and working, it also sets up a tension with existing technologies and practices (p. 8).

Learning ecology is defined as the "set of contexts found in physical or virtual spaces that provide opportunities for learning" (Barron, 2006, p. 195). This theoretical framework follows Vygotsky's (1978) theory of sociocultural psychology. The learning ecology perspective posits that there is a reciprocating catalyst for learning among formal and informal settings – how learning outside of school relates to learning inside school

and how learning in the school can lead to learning activities outside of school. Learning ecology suggests that (a) individuals are simultaneously involved in many settings, (b) individuals initiate learning contexts for themselves within and across settings, (c) the boundaries among settings can be cross-connected and cross-applied, and (d) interest-driven activities can span contextual boundaries and be self-sustaining given adequate time, freedom, and resources (Barron, 2006, pp. 199-201). Learning can be manifested across settings and the cross-pollination of formal and informal learning may enhance education and understanding.

Drawing on the works of Brofenbrenner (1979), McHale, Dotterer, and Kim (2009) subscribed to an ecological perspective of youth development which supports that of Barron. McHale et al. (2009) contended that "daily activities are important influences on development in a range of domains, including youth's skills and abilities, their social relationships and behavior, and their identity development" (p. 1187). Social media, therefore, has a contextual influence for affective and cognitive development. The theoretical frameworks of sociocultural psychology and learning ecology situate the study to delve into describing how these frameworks translate into the everyday classroom environment through the eyes and voice of digital immigrant teachers.

Review of the Literature

Social media is part of the culture in which today's students are engulfed. Other fields have recognized the need to embrace social media. Implications for social media are being researched and employed in fields such as marketing (Mangold & Faulds, 2009) and health care (Hawn, 2009).   Just as other fields are recognizing the opportunities and challenges that social media affords, the field of education can utilize

current trends to enhance the learning environment. As technology continues to change the landscape of learning, educators must understand and incorporate the technology in order to effectively teach students in their "language." A review of the literature indicates a need for reflecting on current practices, developing new methods, and envisioning an end result of teaching students in a format that will result in authentic learning.

Digital Natives Versus Digital Immigrants

Marc Prensky (2001) has coined the terms "digital natives" and "digital immigrants" to describe the variance between today's learners and those who were not born into the digital world. Digital natives begin their life engulfed in everything digital. Digital natives can be operationally defined as "people who have grown up in the digital world using technology as a way to communicate, record, educate, and understand society" (O'Donnell, n.d., para. 1). Thus, their learning has been shaped in a much different way than their predecessors. Today's students are not only influenced by social media (cell phones, social networks, gaming, instant messaging, texting, smart phones, programming, etc.), but such media is a part of the language of digital natives; they speak the "native language" with which many digital immigrants must adapt and adopt at some minimally appropriate level. Alexander (2004) stated "this generation entering our schools is immersed in cyberculture and is untethered, mobile, and wirelessly connected" (p. 32). This culture impacts the way students acquire skills and information. If educators can think of social media as a "language," then a better of understanding of its importance can be grasped. According to Miller (2011), "language directs thinking, controls the child's behavior, organizes categories of reality, represents the past, and

plans for the future" (p. 182). Therefore, in order to connect and interact with today's

students, the "immigrants" must adopt the "native's" vernacular.

The divide between natives and immigrants occurs for a variety of reasons.

Immigrants may lack a basic understanding of the new forms of socialization in which

the native's participate (Palfrey, Gasser, & Boyd, 2010). Additionally, constantly

changing technology hinders the technical abilities of or time for immigrants to keep pace

with the natives. In essence, there is both a knowledge and technical skill gap between

natives and immigrants which perpetuates the disconnect in how each participates in

online activities.

Baird and Fisher (2005) discussed digital natives as "neomillenial" users. As

such, the authors suggest that a time of refining our understanding of instructional design

is necessary. Educators must discover new content delivery options which will most

benefit today's learners. Prensky (2007) spurs educators to "take our cues from our

students' 21st century innovations and behaviors, abandoning, in many cases, our own

pre-digital instincts and comfort zones" (p. 2). Teachers, therefore, are required to be

early adopters of social media and integrate them into current practices.

Based on the proposed differences between digital immigrants and digital natives,

both cultural and linguistic divides exist. How immigrants perceive and address these

divides necessitates the research and study of means for bridging such chasms.

Adolescent Social Media Usage

Social media has been shown to be used for a variety of reasons. A report from

Ofcom (2008) indicated that social media is used for fun and engaging leisure activity,

experimenting with one's identity, exaggerating one's personality, building a social

network, managing existing relationships, making linkages with old friends, and as a tool for building confidence.

Over the past decade, adolescent internet usage has risen from just under 75% in 2000 to over 93% in 2009 (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). With the increase in technology availability, social media usage has increased at a proportional rate. Of the teen internet users, 73% use social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter (Lenhart et al, 2010). This is up from 55% in 2006 and 65% in 2008 (Lenhart et al., 2010). These statistics (see Figure 2.1) demonstrate the evolving and increasing trend of social media usage. Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts (2010) found that youth spend a staggering 10 hours a day using some form of technology, with social media encompassing a large part of their daily lives. According to one poll, 22% of teens log on to a social media site more than 10 times a day, with more than half of young adults logging on at least once a day (Common Sense Media, 2009). With over 75% of teens possessing cell phones (Lenhart et al., 2010), 54% report using phones for texting, and 24% for instant messaging (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). Lenhart (2009) found that cell phone usage is relatively equal across demographic groups as well as between genders. Further, 73% of all teens are connected via social networking sites (Lenhart et al., 2010). The percentage of high school students, age 14-18, increases to 82% (Lenhart et al., 2010).   Ito, Horst, and Bittani (2008) found that engaging in social media has not only become routine, but benefits adolescents by enhancing communication, social connection, and technical skills.
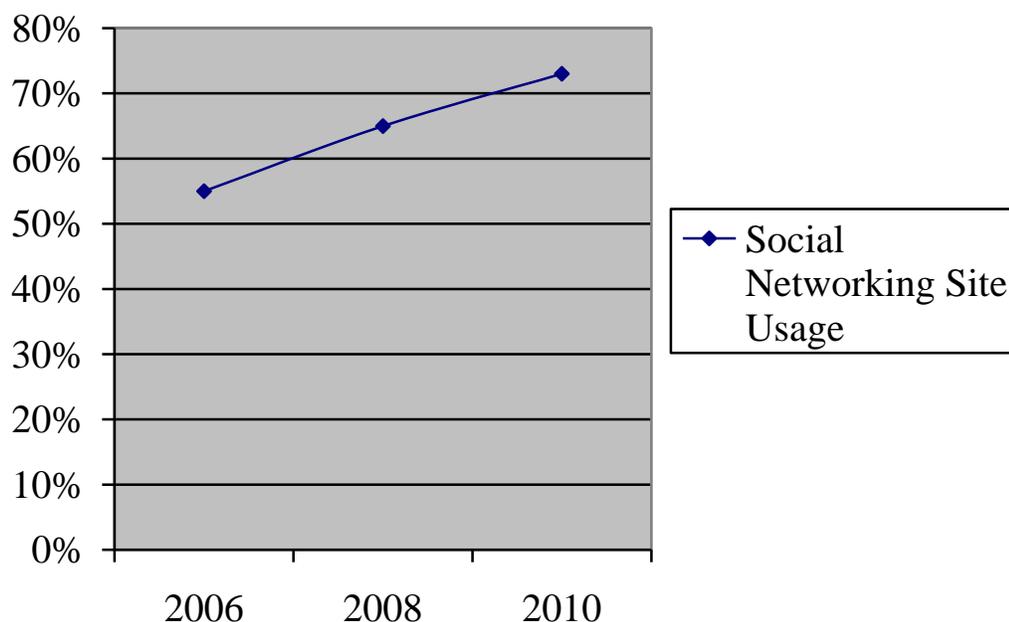
Figure 2.1. Social Networking Site Usage by Teens. This figure illustrates the increase in social networking site usage over the past six years.

Students are using social media for education purposes as well. Karlin (2007) noted that nearly 60% of students who use social networking talk about school online with more than 50% talking about specific school work. It stands to reason that teachers could benefit from using a platform in which students are already engaged. However, this harkens to the notion that today's students are communicating in their "language" – a language which may be foreign to some digital immigrants.

Psychological and Social Implications

Within the world of neurobiology, research by Caine and Caine (1994) has demonstrated that the brain constantly reorganizes itself through a process known as neuroplasticity. Therefore, various stimulations, including social media interactions, change the way people think. In conjuction, social psychology suggests that one's

thinking patterns change depending on experiences. Research from social psychologists

Luria (1963) and Nisbett (2003) demonstrates that people who grow up in different

cultures think differently. It can be said that today's students are maturing through a

different culture than that of digital immigrants. Thus, neurobiology and social

psychology support Vygotsky's (1978) ideas of sociopsychology and Barron's (1996)

learning ecology. Further, not only does this indicate that there are marked differences in

digital natives and immigrants thinking, but also in their construction of knowledge.

Active, participatory learning is vital, even at an early age. In an interview with

Dr. Patricia Kuhl, a social learning researcher, Scarpelli (2009) reported that "knowledge

retention is only possible when accompanied with personal interaction or activity, but this

becomes even more important as people get older" (para. 6). Thus, social stimulation

through various mediums spurns learning. Social media provides the forum by which

personal interaction is possible. Markedly different from the teacher-centered approach

with which many digital immigrants were raised, the interactive, co-constructing

knowledge approach may pose a challenge.

Much like the ideas of Vygotsky (1978) and Barron (2006), Jonny Bentwood

(2008) recognized the influence of people on society, and vice versa. Bentwood (2008)

stated that "calculating an individual's online influence is becoming more important each

year as people seek advice from their peers on the internet regarding what they should

think, buy, and say" (p. 3). As much as social networking media affects one's behavior,

it also contributes to one's cognitive development. The exposure to information and

ideas shapes how one thinks and views society, including education.

In "Towards a Theory of Mobile Learning," the authors' findings "broadly match a social-constructivist approach, which views learning as an active process of building knowledge and skills through practice within a supportive community" (Sharples, Taylor, & Vavoula, 2005, p. 3). Learning is interwoven with other activities as part of everyday life. Tirasiuk (2010) asserted "technology that students are involved with outside of school provides processes of learning that are deeper and richer than the forms of learning to which they are exposed in schools" (p. 544). Additionally, learning occurs as a socio-cultural system, as learners interact to create a collective activity framed by cultural constraints and historical practices.

Differing surveys find points of view that range from "exuberant, discussing how socially interactive technologies can save youth from social isolation and depression, to alarming, focusing on how constant use of these technologies fosters anti-social behavior" (Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, & Smallwood, 2006, p. 1). However, more research supports that social networking media has positive effects. Reid and Reid (2004) found that "regular use of electronic mail and participating in user groups had improved the lives of some users, particularly those who experienced difficulties with face-to-face communication (e.g. those who are socially anxious and/or lonely, or who have marginal identities)" (p. 2).

In today's world, the need for juggling multiple activities, both in the workplace and in personal life, has grown. Alexander (2004) found that because of the technological advances and prevalence, social networking media included, "multitasking has intensified" among students (p. 30). The available immediacy of communication encourages quick articulation as well. Among other contributions of social media,

students "significantly increased their personal writing and composition" (Alexander, 2004, p. 30).

Tirasiuk (2010) performed a study in which social media was incorporated in the form of blogs or wikis into class assignments. Students were to post work related to a class novel via a wiki rather than doing traditional homework packets. (A wiki is a web site that allows users to add and update content using their own web browser.) Tirasiuk (2010) noted that students were more inclined to extend their learning and that "students had created something new" (p. 548). Further, producing text digitally via a medium that is visible to others encourages students to "get information right and to tempt readers through visuals, music, sound effects, and the story" (Tirasiuk, 2010, p. 549).

In a similar study requiring students to incorporate social media and technology to produce documentary films, Dockter, Haug, and Lewis (2010) noted students' responses that while difficult, the assignment was the most intellectually challenging; they felt respected and believed in; they "valued the authentic audience and feeling of competence" (p. 419) when they met their goals; and they "felt agency to connect with their identities, communities, and interests outside of school" (p. 419).

Critics have asserted that social networking media is an avenue which perpetuates artificial bonds and surface relationships. However, Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, and Smallwood (2006) found that the participants in their research did not seem to be creating either more or weaker ties using Socially Interactive Technologies (SIT). Bryant, et al. (2006) asserted that "youth are using SITs to enhance communication among friends and family, to make plans with one another, and to maintain social contact outside of their day-to-day face-to-face conversations" (p. 2). Youth still tend to hold in-depth, important

conversations offline. Further, social media is a conglomeration of networked publics in which social norms emerge. Identity development is promulgated through the process of social media usage as students learn socially appropriate or acceptable cues (Boyd, 2007).

In contrast, the advent of Web 2.0 technologies provides tools that can be used to build a learning environment. Gunawardena, Hermans, Sanchez, Richmond, Bohley, and Tuttle (2009) offer the advantage of peer-to-peer mentoring. Based on Vygotsky's (1978) theory, peer-to-peer mentoring establishes a "collaborative zone of proximal development" (Gunawardena, et al, 2009, p. 15). The exchange of ideas enhances individual and collective creativity. Thus, social media is being used to accomplish homework and group projects (Boyd, 2008). Some schools are employing blogs as teaching tools which may reinforce English skills, written expression, and creativity (Borja, 2005).

Valkenburg, Peter, and Schouten (2006) conducted a study with a sample of over 800 Dutch youth which yielded positive results of social networking site (SNS) use related to self-esteem and psychological well-being. The "friending" aspect associated with SNS enhances the frequency of reactions to information on one's profile. In a follow-up study, Valkenburg and Peter (2009) found that the Internet is not isolating, but connecting people.

The potential, however, exists for social media to have negative uses, and thus, have negative psychological and social implications. Research has shown that social media can be used to bully, start rumors, or intentionally deceive others (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). The anonymity allows for more pervasive interaction that may not normally occur face-to-face. Additionally, online expressions of off-line behavior can

lead to sexual experimentation, privacy issues, and "sexting" (A Thin Line, 2009).

Therefore, it is crucial for users to avoid potential risks such as posting personal

information, photographs, and chatting with people that they do not know. Christakis and

Moreno (2009) suggested negative issues such as internet addiction and sleep deprivation

as additional risks.

Many educators and children's advocates support James Bullington, the Librarian

of Congress, as he suggested the potential for adolescent electronic communication to be

damaging "the basic unit of human thought – the sentence" (Dillon, 2008, para. 8). The

use of acronym shortcuts, emoticons, careless punctuation, and poor grammar and

spelling contribute to such perceptions. The Pew Internet and American Life Project

(2008) conducted national surveys and focus groups among students and parents which

revealed that both groups do not consider electronic communication as "real" writing

although teens are composing more writings (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, Macgill, 2008).

Teachers' perceptions were not included in this study.

21st Century Learning

Preparing students for a global economy requires 21st century skills which include

digital literacy, inventive thinking, effective communication, teamwork and the ability to

create high quality products (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006). Educators need

to rethink what and how we teach today's students. Therefore, a pedagogical shift is

beginning to occur. The teacher is no longer simply the transmitter of knowledge, but

facilitates a classroom engaged in authentic and situated problem-based activities, advises

students, creates structures to scaffold student activities, and monitors student progress

(Carroll, 2000; Sawyer, 2006).

Expenditures on technology education and integration were in excess of $6 billion in 2002-2003 according to Quality Education Data surveys (Anderson & Dexter, 2005). This significant investment has been prompted by the need for schools to provide 21st century skills. While now commonplace, it has only been over the last decade that 99% of schools in the United States have been connected to the internet (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2007).

Today's students are carrying personal tools and technologies which can be used not only for communication, but for learning. This means that "mobile technology acts as a catalyst for an inquiry into learner preferences, skills, and study behaviors" (Kukulska-Hulme, 2010, p. 5). Technology, therefore, is changing what we expect of learners. The digital immigrant teacher may struggle with the technological change which is perpetuating a disconnect between educators, education, and the student. Gerlich, Browning, and Westermann (2010) conducted a study (n = 141) utilizing the Social Media Affinity Scale which indicated that "students are so accustomed to using this technology that when they enter the classroom they are often 'cut off' from this vital connection, as they see it" (p. 35). Yet, teens are using social media, specifically, instant messaging not only for socializing and event planning, but for schoolwork collaboration, and multitasking (Grinter & Eldridge, 2003; Grinter & Palen, 2002).

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) utilized the MILE Guide Self-Assessment Tool which demonstrated that the outcomes of 21st century skill development include learners as active collaborators in the teaching and learning process and as co-creators of knowledge in project work and inquiry-based learning. Digital immigrant teachers may be at a disadvantage as they recognize a shift from lecture-style instruction

to participatory learning. As today's students are conditioned to learn through interactive

resources such as social media, Glimps and Ford (2008) asserted that in order to be

effective, "teachers must structure their instruction strategies in recognition of this

development to better assist students in acquiring interaction skills suited for a global

context" (p. 91). Part of the push for 21st century skills includes the need for today's

graduates to be able to compete professionally and academically on a global scale. It is

therefore paramount that students learn relevant skills and utilize technological

affordances in order to perform in a highly digital world.

Professional Development with Technology

With the push for 21st century learning, professional development on the

integration of technology has become paramount. However, the means by which teachers

effectively utilize technology is the ever-increasing focus of much professional

development. It should be noted that regardless of the availability of technological

affordances, "teacher quality is the factor that matters most for student learning"

(Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1998).

Along with resources, institutional and administrative support, and attitudinal

factors, training and experience are among noted barriers to technology integration

(Brinkerhoff, 2006). Barriers to training and experience entail insufficient professional

development focused on technology integration (Butler & Sellborn, 2002; Cuban,

Kirkpatrick, & Peck, 2001; Loveless, 2003; Mumtaz, 2000; Pelgrum, 2001). Further, a

lack of support following professional development efforts has proven to magnify the

barrier (Jensen & Lewis, 2001; Mouza, 2002).

Lack of professional development on the implementation of technology in the curriculum has been an obstacle for many years (Fatemi, 1999; Office of Technology Assessment, 1995; Panel on Educational Technology, 1997). Yet, it is the deficiency of technological knowledge or skills that plagues many digital immigrant professionals.

Regarding the emphasis of technology in education, a study conducted with 175 teachers revealed that teachers' perspectives of their profession were transformed through their concept of the educator's role as well as their worldview of education (King, 2002). Technology shifts the teachers' role to that of a facilitator of knowledge rather than a disseminator of knowledge. The study revealed teachers believe that technology expands the boundaries of the classroom (King, 2002).

The need for professional development to support potentially transformative learning experiences with technology was displayed in the study. Rather than simply focusing on technological skills, "incorporating group discussions, collaborative work groups, and curriculum development can help faculty to begin to challenge their concepts of teaching and learning as they learn educational technology" (King, 2002, p.294). Professional development may cause teachers to reflect on their work in a global community and transform their perspectives of technology integration.

As social media is an emerging concept in technology, the study did not specifically address social media. However, the conclusion of needed professional development on technology can translate to the need for continued education on social media, its usage by students, and its influence on the classroom environment. While social media was not created for educational purposes, its usage can potentially be leveraged for education much like previous technologies have been incorporated.

As teacher anxiety is a noted barrier to technology integration (Christensen, 2002; Russell & Bradley, 1997), professional development on technology integration and initiatives can improve the self-efficacy of teachers as they adapt to new technological literacies (Brinkerhoff, 2006; Watson, 2006). Further, transformational practice concerning educational innovations such as technology and social media usage occurs more effectively when supported and directed by school leaders (Hoekstra, 2011; Piper, 2003). Social media must be examined in the context of education. However, school leaders must direct and support this examination if social media is to be effectively addressed and incorporated.

Uses of Social Media and Other Technologies in Education

Truly collaborative technologies can be traced to interactive whiteboards. Incorporating cognitive and motivational principles, collaborative technologies are learner/student-centered (Bonk & Cunningham, 1998). This began the shift from the teacher-centered approach to a constructivist approach in which students create meaning and understanding (Armstrong, Barnes, Sutherland, Curran, Mills, & Thompson, 2005). This shift poses a challenge for digital immigrants who have taught under the teacher-centered format. Zhang (2009) noted that this "open, emergent, chaotic nature of online interaction often conflicts with the rigidly organized social structure of formal education" (p. 276). The mismatch between technological innovations and the culture of schooling worries some educators, "who traditionally expect students to behave predictably, follow rules, and concentrate on academic achievement that can be reflected through competitive tests" (Zhang, 2009, p. 276).

Lifelong learning, therefore, has a whole new meaning and motivation for teachers. New reform measures in education require the development of innovative teacher communities. These communities are characterized by continual learning, investigation and reflection, collaboration, and collegial dialogues (Fogleman, Fishman, & Krajcik, 2006; Hargreaves, 1999; Wilson & Berne, 1999). Teachers must continue to learn in order to teach today's students. With the new directives for teacher development, technology and social media usage are skills in which professional development and teacher learning initiatives are centered.

Ahn's (2011) research addresses various concerns and theoretical discussions on the effects of social networking sites (SNS) and youth. Based on her findings, Ahn (2011) suggested that teachers "utilize SNS to engage their students, develop closer relationships, and model positive learning behaviors over time" (p. 9). Liu's (2010) conclusions support Ahn's (2011) as he states "Future technology integration in education should focus on what students use instead of what the school wants them to use to guarantee maximum efficiency" (p.113). While grounded in research, this suggestion is difficult for the digital immigrant teacher who struggles either philosophically, pedagogically, or technically with today's innovations.

Engaging in various forms of social media is a routine activity. Social media support more engaging and playful approaches, provide new formats for creative expression, and encourage learners and teachers to experiment with different, innovative ways of articulating their thoughts and ideas. Redecker, Ala-Mutka, and Punie (2010) asserted that social media offer a "broad variety of versatile tools which address different channels and involve learners more actively in constructing their own learning process,

allowing more effective learning strategies to be implemented" (p. 9). One not-so-obvious advantage is that social networking media can actively support lifelong learning. This is accomplished by offering accessible, flexible, and dynamic learning environments that can both complement and supplement initial learning.

As adolescent usage of technology and social media is prevalent (Lenhart, Madden, Macgill, & Smith, 2007), it prompts investigating usage for schooling. Teenagers' engagement with technology is in contrast with their disengagement from school. Through national analyses, Cataldi, Laird, KewalRamani (2009) found that almost 30% of high school students do not obtain their diplomas on time. Independent studies confirm nearly the same percentage of students, 32%, ultimately drop out of school (Barton, 2005). Incorporating technology and social media is one way to combat absences and dropout rates as well as disciplinary infractions. Roy (2010) examined changes after initiating a 1 to 1 laptop program which utilizes social media. He found that discipline referrals were down 63.4%; tardies fell 31% as students arrived early to collaborate on assignments; and absences decreased 37.9%. The positive results provide hope and incentive for all teachers as they incorporate technology and social media into the fabric of the learning environment.

The emerging solution of technology versus education is to integrate the technology that students are already using to enhance the learning engagement and environment. Through a meta-analysis of 42 studies, Waxman, Lin, and Michko (2003) found that teaching and learning with technology has a "small, positive, significant ($p<.001$) effect on student outcomes when compared to traditional instruction" (p.1).

Teachers across the country, therefore, are finding ways to infuse social media as a supplement or resource to the curricula.

Transforming schools and classrooms into networked learning communities eliminates the boundaries of school buildings. Robert Godwin-Jones (2005) examined some ways in which various technologies are being adapted for use in formal and informal learning. This generation's enthusiasm for social media and technologies not only have "obvious by-products as computer literacy, communicative skills, and community building, but to less immediately evident benefits like identity creation (avatars in games/chat), collaborative learning (networking to develop game playing strategies), or even mentoring (helping others in game strategies or game-related fiction writing)" (Godwin-Jones, 2005, p. 17). Although not developed to support language learning, these technologies are being used for such, both directly and indirectly. Godwin-Jones (2005) suggested that educators use such to connect to their students.

More and more websites and social media outlets are being developed to assist educators in incorporating these new communication and socialization tools in the practice of teaching and learning. Virtual spaces allow teens to explore interests, solve problems, provide academic support, and strengthen communication skills. Sites such as Dweeber.com and KidZui are dedicated to providing homework assistance through the use of social networking. Social media is creating "an atmosphere in which teens can learn from their peers about communication norms and cultures" (Lusk, 2010, p. 4).

With the potential negative influences and implications of adolescent social media usage, educators need to teach digital citizenry – appropriate use and behavior of technologies including social media. Chai, Bagchi-Sen, Morrell, Rao, and Upadhaya

(2009) conducted a survey of 285 teens which indicated that youth who have been educated about responsible internet use by parents, teachers, or peers are more likely to practice safe online behaviors. Therefore, while there are legitimate potential concerns for social media usage, educating students on appropriate behavior and managing their online presence can help to curb undesired actions and outcomes.

Summary

Grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural psychology theory, Barron (2006) approaches adolescents' social learning from a learning ecology perspective. This view requires an understanding of the way students live and learn and how educators should approach meaningful instruction. The literature review demonstrates there is a technological divide between digital natives and digital immigrants which requires digital immigrant teachers to expand their knowledge of technologies including social media. Further, the literature shows that youth are utilizing social media in increasing numbers. Therefore, teachers must find ways to incorporate and leverage that usage for educational purposes. It is evident that there are 21st century skills which include the use of social media and technological skills that need to be infused to today's educational system.

Examination of the literature demonstrates that there are positive as well as negative by-products of social media usage. Further, much of the literature appears to portray researchers as proponents of integrating technologies, including social media, into the world of education. While students' perceptions have been examined, the teachers' perspectives and experiences of approaching and addressing the manifested influences of social media is noticeably lacking in the literature.

CHAPER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As the purpose of the study is to describe the experiences of digital immigrant teachers and the perception of the manifestation of social media in their students, a transcendental phenomenological approach is taken. Moustakas (1994) and van Manen (2011) drew on the principles as defined by Husserl (1931) to purport rationale for transcendental phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology therefore, encompasses intentionality, eidetic reduction, and constitution of meaning (van Manen, 2011). Intentionality means that one's awareness and consciousness of the world affects every thought and action (van Manen, 2011). Eidetic reduction is the vivid recall of details related to a phenomenon (van Manen, 2011). The constitution of meaning is the reflection on the details extracted through eidetic reduction (van Manen, 2011). This transcendental phenomenological approach asserts that researchers bracket out their own views and experiences so that "everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34). I, therefore, reported the experiences and uncovered common themes as voiced through the digital immigrants' responses while bracketing any personal experiences and opinions. This section discusses the chosen research design, as well as describes the participants, setting, and the researcher's role. Further, a description of the data collection and analysis is provided, followed by a discussion of methods for increasing trustworthiness and an identification of potential ethical issues.

Design

Given the prevalence of the social media phenomena, a phenomenological approach to qualitative research was used. Moustakas (1994) defined phenomenology as the interrelationship between the context (or environment) and individuals, thus constituting an experience. Social media is a phenomenon that is influencing the affective and cognitive development of students (Kuhl, 2004; O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Livingston, 2008; Lenhart et al, 2007; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). This approach seeks to find the meaning of social media and its impact on the social and learning development of students through the eyes of digital immigrant teachers. Further, the study seeks to provide information that will assist teachers in understanding and approaching the use of social media in the curricula.

To study the teachers, I used phenomenology and the procedures advanced by Colaizzi (1978) and modified by Moustakas (1994). According to Moustakas (1994), "scientific investigation is valid when the knowledge sought is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of experience" (p. 84). Because I have found no studies that address the perception of teachers and how social media is manifesting itself in the cognitive and affective development of students, a phenomenological study devoted to understanding teachers' experiences best lent itself to examining the phenomenon.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: *What are the experiences of "digital immigrant" teachers with the manifestation of social media in the lives and works of their students?*

Research Question 2: *How do digital immigrant teachers perceive social media*

to be impacting the affective and cognitive development of students?

Research Question 3: *How does the use of social media, formally or informally, contribute to the classroom environment as perceived by digital immigrant teachers?*

Research Question 4: *How do digital immigrant teachers address potential negative influences of social media in the school environment?*

Research Question 5: *How can social media be utilized effectively to support learning in today's educational system?*

Participants

Ten participants were selected through criterion sampling which is useful for quality assurance and saturation purposes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants had to meet certain criteria in order for the researcher to obtain valuable or specific information. A combination of male and female teachers who are at least 38 years of age (born before 1974) was part of the criteria for selection of participants. Additionally, at least ten years of teaching experience was required. These criteria were in place so that participants had longevity as teacher practitioners. The requisite years of experience for the participants allowed them to determine perceived differences in cognition, socialization, writing, and learning over time. Further, the participants were high school teachers who were invited to participate in the study. For convenience and to provide perception of teachers with varied experiences, the volunteers represented both public and private schools in Alabama.

After receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I sought permission from local education agencies, superintendents, and heads of schools to conduct research in the respective schools and with their teachers via a letter describing the study (See

Appendix D). After approval to conduct research on each campus, copies of permission letters were sent and suggestions for participants who meet the aforementioned criteria were sought from building principals through phone conversations. I followed up with emails, personal phone calls, and visits to the teachers' schools to answer any questions potential participants may have had. Informed consent was secured via the letter in Appendix C.

After securing the participants, I developed a table (Table 3.1) displaying the age, gender, ethnicity, highest achieved degree, number of years teaching experience, and subjects taught. Combined with the tables displaying the student makeup of each school (Tables 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4), this table demonstrates the variance of experiences

Table 3.1. Participants' Background and Makeup

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Highest Achieved Degree	Years of Experience	Subjects Taught
Ms. Benton	59	White	MS	35	Chemistry, Calculus
Mr. Nicks	39	White	BS	16	Government/Economics
Ms. Staples	55	Black	MS	31	Algebra 2
Ms. Smith	46	White	BS	22	Chemistry
Ms.Thomas	51	White	BS	28	English
Ms. Vincent	53	White	MS	21	Physics, Biology
Ms.Wallace	41	White	BS	15	English
Ms. Wills	51	White	MS	27	English
Ms. Evers	42	White	BS	14	History, English
Ms. Pitts	55	White	MS	29	Government, History

Note. Pseudonyms were used to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants.

Setting

Teachers from Social High School, Media Academy, and Tech High School were chosen for the study (pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of locales and participants). The two public high schools and one private high school are located in two

major cities within 15 miles of each other in central Alabama. They were chosen not

only for convenience in proximity, but because each represented constituents of varying

demographics (see Tables 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4). Such demographics include various

socioeconomic indicators, genders, and ethnicity. Demographic data was requested and

received from the superintendents. Additionally, the data from three varying sites

provided themes, implications, and an essence that could be applied to high school

educational settings throughout the United States. Social High School is a public school

with approximately 522 students. Media Academy is a K-12 private school comprised of

1003 students. The high school portion of the school (9th-12th grade) consists of 390

teens. Tech High School is a public school with 1,083 ninth through twelfth grade

students.

Table 3.2. Socioeconomic indicators of students

Indicators	Social High School	Media Academy	Tech High School
Free lunch	231	NA	494
Reduced lunch	61	NA	113
Paid lunch	230	NA	476
Financial Aid*	NA	32	NA

*Private schools do not delineate based on free and reduced lunch. However, some
students receive financial aid based on family income.

Table 3.3. Gender of students

Gender	Social High School	Media Academy	Tech High School
Male	273	187	562
Female	249	203	521

Table 3.4. Ethnicity of students

Ethnicity	Social High School	Media Academy	Tech High School
White	449	343	688
Black	66	39	345
Hispanic	1	0	21
Other	6	8	29

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Procedures

Several data collection methods including interviews, observations, and focus groups were used in this phenomenological study. The methods chosen provide a better understanding of the impact of social media on students, the learning process, and implications for today's educational system. I secured Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before proceeding with research (see Appendix A). Further, I gained informed consent from participants (see Appendix C) after being granted approval by the school districts. Interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed for review.

The Researcher's Role

I am serving in my seventh year as a middle school principal and will serve as the human instrument to interpret the research. I was previously employed as a math teacher for seven years at two southeastern private schools. Interest in the phenomenon of social media arose after realizing a need to incorporate technologies into the curricula of the school. Observations and experiences involved with social media and its impact on the socialization and writing habits of students prompted further research into methods of incorporating such technologies and what that incorporation means for teachers, students, and the educational system.

Along with many educators, I had been reluctant to embrace social media while focusing on its potential negative uses. Therefore, I began exploring research with the idea to determine the negative effects that it is having on students in relation to education. Additionally, comments and exhibits from fellow teachers connoted negative implications. However, literature review has indicated more positive outcomes and potential benefits of social media on education than was first conceived. Therefore, my presuppositions were bracketed in order to find more objective conclusions.

Data Collection

A combination of interviews, observations, and focus groups were conducted to achieve triangulation in the data collection process. A description of each procedure is provided.

Interviews

Kvale (1996) posited that interviewing for qualitative research "is to describe and understand the central themes the subjects experience" (p.29). For the study, ten high school teachers within the three selected schools were interviewed to ascertain their perceptions of the impact of social media on the affective and cognitive development of students. As prescribed by Colaizzi (1978), interviews were recorded so that I, as researcher, could review them for accuracy of transcription. An interview protocol of open ended questions (see Figure 3.1 or Appendix B) was used to ensure consistency (Patton, 1990). Further, the questions were piloted with digital immigrant teachers at a neighboring school in order to establish face and content validity. The teachers used to pilot the questions were asked for feedback to identify ambiguities and difficult questions (Peat, Mellis, Williams, and Xuan, 2002). A record of the time to complete the questions was kept (Peat et al, 2002). Unnecessary and ambiguous questions were discarded. I assessed whether each question gave an adequate range of responses and that the replies could be interpreted in terms of the required information (Peat et al, 2002). Piloting the interview questions illuminated unanticipated issues with current questions and prompted additional questions. Minor rewording and revisions occurred after piloting. However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) support maintaining flexibility so that "the interviewer can follow up promising leads or return to earlier points that seem to require fuller development" (p. 270). During interviews, therefore, I was able to ask for clarification with some answers and provide additional clarification for some questions as needed.

1. How would you define social media or social networking media?
2. What positive perceptions of the impact of social media on the socialization of students do you have?
3. What negative perceptions of the impact of social media on the socialization of students do you have?
4. What positive perceptions of the impact of social media on the learning and cognition of students do you have?
5. What negative perceptions of the impact of social media on the learning and cognition of students do you have?
6. What experiences have you had that contribute to your perceptions?
7. Why are you supportive or reluctant to incorporate social media as a tool in the education process?
8. If a school required you to incorporate social media as part of your curriculum, how would you feel?
9. What are your current uses of social media as a formal learning tool in the education process?
10. What is your perception of the use of social media as a formal learning tool on the impact on learning?
11. What rationale do you have for using or not using social media in education?
12. How would you view social media contributing to the learning process?
13. Reflecting from when you first began teaching until now, are there any changes in student learning or behavior that you attribute to social media?
14. What preparation or training have you received in incorporating social media (or digital technologies) into the classroom? Describe a specific preparation experience.
15. What challenges do you attribute to social media?
16. How do you as a digital immigrant address challenges associated with social media? This includes both how you use social media as well as the perceived influence of social media on your students and in your classroom.
17. How do you address social media usage and influence with your students? Describe any specific instances in which you addressed social media with your students.
18. Are there any concluding comments, insights, or opinions you would like to add that have not been addressed in the previous questions?

Figure 3.1. Interview questions. This figure lists the questions that will be used during the interview process.

The questions (see Figure 3.1) were developed and grounded in the research.

Question one seeks to develop a common understanding of social media in order to

establish consistency among the participants. Because responses varied, I clarified by

providing a working definition to the participants. The definition included social

networking sites, texting, email, blogging, and any digital forum by which students could communicate.

Questions two through six allowed for digital immigrant teachers to express their perceptions of social media, positive and negative, on the affective and cognitive development and behaviors of students. Caine's and Caine's (1994) research along with that of Luria's (1963) and Nisbett's (2003) demonstrated that environmental constructs such as social media influence the brain, its organization, and the way people think. Influence on one's social or affective development is also suggested by Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, and Smallwood (2006), Boyd (2008), and Hinduja and Patchin (2010). Responses to the interview questions assessed how this research translates to the real life experiences of digital immigrant teachers.

Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, and Smallwood (2006) found various opinions from parents about the advent of socially interactive technologies. Question seven sought to add the perception of digital immigrant teachers as to why they are supportive or reluctant to utilize social media in education.

Gunawardena, Hermans, Sanchez, Richmond, Bohley, and Tuttle (2009) suggested collaboration as a benefit of social media usage. Additionally, Boyd (2008), Borja (2005), and the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2009) promote the use of social media and technologies in the education process. Questions eight through twelve were developed to describe digital immigrant teachers' feelings concerning the ever-changing technologies' influence on their work.

Questions thirteen through seventeen address the challenges that digital immigrant teachers may face when instructing digital natives. Glimps and Ford's (2008)

asseriton that effective teachers must restructure their instruction in recognition of the digital shift prompts the need to address the challenges with which immigrant teachers must deal.

Question eighteen allowed the participants' to express further views or opinions that may not have been addressed in the interview protocol. Such responses may illuminate insights that can add to the study or elicit further studies.

Observations

I observed each teacher in his/her classroom at least once for a minimum of 50 minutes or one class period. In order to gain a better sense of classroom management and atmosphere, I observed three of the participants over two class periods. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that observation "provides here-and-now experience in depth" (p. 273). While all observations were scheduled, teachers were instructed to invite the researcher when issues of social media were specifically addressed in a class. Three teacher participants invited me during such times. Descriptive as well as reflective notes were taken via an observation protocol (see Appendix E) to provide an overall sense of the context.

Focus Groups

Three focus groups were conducted within two weeks after the completion of interviews. Focus groups were held at each school for the participating teachers of each school. Separate focus groups were held as it was anticipated that the teachers within each school would be more open and comfortable with colleagues. The participants were

assembled to openly discuss social media and its impact on students as experienced by the digital immigrants. Questions for the focus group were generated after interviews and observations in order to provide further clarity and active discussion, but also to avoid redundancy of interview questions (see Figure 3.2 or Appendix F). However, some questions used in the focus groups reiterated some of the same sentiments as some interview questions. This was intentional as I desired for the group setting to generate additional discussion. The questions were grounded in the literature and piloted to ensure validity. The focus groups were recorded and transcribed in the same manner as the individual interviews.

Focus Group Protocol

1. To what extent do each of you personally use social media?
    Text?
    Social Networking Site?
    Blog?
    Email?
2. Now that we have conducted interviews and you have had time to reflect on the questions and premise of this study, what positive and negative perceptions of social media do you have?

    In your opinion, how has it affected students positively?

    In your opinion, how has it affected students negatively?

3. Reflecting on the writing of students, how has social media affected student work?

4. Reflecting on behavior, how has social media affected students?

5. If social media usage were required, how would you envision using blogging, texting, and social networking sites in class?

6. In your opinion, how could the intentional use of social media in the classroom positively or negatively affect the learning process?

7. How are some of your colleagues using social media for educational purposes?

8. If you personally utilize social media (texting, SNS, blogging), why are you hesitant to use in a formal educational context? What apprehensions in incorporating social media do you have?

Figure 3.2. Focus group questions. These questions were used during the focus group sessions at each school.

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Data Analysis

Processes developed by Colaizzi (1978) and Moustakas (1994) were used for data analysis. Horizontalization provided opportunity to find significant statements. Classifying was used to develop meaning or themes from important statements. The process of describing produced textural and structural descriptions which led to interpreting. Trustworthiness is addressed through the use of member checks, an audit trail, peer review, and triangulation.

Horizontalization

Colaizzi's (1978) method of analysis included a verbatim transcription of each interview. I paid a professional to transcribe most of the interviews and focus group sessions. However, I chose to transcribe three of the interviews to gain further experience with the process. I listened to the recordings while reviewing the transcripts for accuracy. This transition from the transcriptions to analysis was accomplished by reading and rereading through texts and transcripts, making memos in the margins and/or highlighting. This process allowed me to highlight significant statements that are relevant to the phenomenon. Colaizzi (1978) described this as "extracting significant statements" (p. 54). While differences in participants' responses were evident, the similarities of their experiences provided a sense of commonality to be explored. Through this step, I sought to more fully describe the lived experiences of the participants and uncover common themes.

Classifying

Classifying helps the researcher to compile and organize data into themes. This is accomplished by developing or listing significant statements (horizonalization) and grouping statements into meaning units. Colaizzi (1978) observed that this is difficult because the formulated meanings must not distort the original transcription, yet need to reflect the underlying information. After highlighting, memoing, reading, and re-reading the transcripts, significant statements were written on note cards. After reading and rereading, interpreted meaning was ascribed and written on the back of the note cards (see Interpreting below).

Describing

This process allows the researcher to give personal experiences through epoche. Through epoche, where "no position is taken either for or against" (Lauer, 1958, p. 49), I attempted to not allow my presuppositions, meanings and interpretations to enter into the context of the informant/participant (Moustakas, 1994.) This process allowed for the development of textural and structural descriptions in order to facilitate description of the essence of the phenomenon.

Interpreting

A textural description was developed to describe what happened or is happening with regards to social media. A structural description was developed to describe how the phenomenon is experienced (Moustakas, 1994). The structural description includes the interpreted meaning as developed from the significant statements. The interpreted

meaning was written on the back of the note cards that include the significant statements as previously mentioned. From those descriptions, the "essence" of the experiences was developed.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness addresses the credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness has been established through the use of member checks, an audit trail, peer review, reflexivity, and triangulation.

Member Checks

Participants were given transcripts, interpretations, and conclusions and asked to review, correct, and respond to them. This process increased the reliability of the study because it allowed for clarification of potentially misconstrued ideas and its transparency increases the credibility of the findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated it as "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314).

Audit Trail

The audit trail chronicles the steps that the researcher takes throughout the process of the study. Also described as logging (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), this process is important to demonstrate that protocols and procedures were followed in order to formulate viable and accurate codes, categories, and conclusions. Additionally, dependability of the study is established as the audit trail demonstrates how the study can be replicated.

Peer Review

Peer review provides an external check of the research process. It allows for unbiased, uninvolved individuals to examine the processes used which increases the trustworthiness of the study and conclusions. Further, review from another individual ensures that the study resonates with individuals other than the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested finding "someone who knows a great deal about both the substantive area of the inquiry and the methodological issues" (p. 303). Therefore, the research was reviewed by an associate who has his doctorate in guidance and counseling and has been through the dissertation process. Additionally, as a digital immigrant, the peer reviewer holds doctoral minors in educational psychology, curriculum and supervision, special education, and statistics.

The peer reviewer was given a chronicle of the steps taken in order to examine and provide feedback on the research process. The reviewer was allowed to highlight and make notes on the log and return such to me. Further, any suggestions given by the reviewer were incorporated and implemented into the process.

Reflexivity

I am not only aware of, but have divulged personal biases and experiences that may influence the study. "Memoing" (opinion based on fact), as described by Miles and Huberman (1984), helped to delineate factual responses from the opinions of the researcher and helped to reduce bias. Moustakas (1994) refers to the separation of one's suppositions from the research as epoche. Employing epoche or bracketing personal feelings and experiences allows for reflection of the phenomenon in a new light or fresh

perspective. Partiality can compromise data collection and analysis. Therefore, I utilized the process of memoing during observations, interviews, and the focus groups.

Triangulation

Triangulation ensures that data is corroborated and collected from multiple sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The multiple sources as described in the data collection (interviews, observations, documents, and focus groups) as well as in the data analysis processes (horizontalization, classifying, describing, and interpreting) revealed consistent and complementary themes as well as provided a better understanding of the phenomenon.

<center>**Ethical Considerations**</center>

Ethics is predicated on an ideal of how one should treat others and how society should be organized and function. The ethic of reciprocity or "Golden Rule" is applied. "Do unto others as you would have done unto you" (Luke 6:31). The researcher, therefore, adheres to a Christian worldview in order to establish principles and standards of conduct. The standards by which one frames his philosophy determines both the efficacy and legitimacy of the researcher.

Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality is of the utmost importance (Patton, 1990). Confidentiality issues were addressed by assigning pseudonyms to participants, providing informed consent procedures, and taking measures to protect anonymity. Participants were secured only after receiving informed consent for their involvement in the study.

Data storage and Usage

Privacy was maintained by ensuring that electronic files were password protected. Additionally, physical documents were held in a secure, locked file.

Influence and Divulgence

The researcher refrained from sharing personal experiences or divulging personal opinions with participants during interviews. Sharing during an interview can unduly affect participants' answers and views, and thus, obstruct the perceptions and consequent constructed meanings. Additionally, as an administrator, I did not include any participants in this study for whom I am a supervisor.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe how digital immigrant teachers perceive the influence of social media on the affective and cognitive development of students at three high schools in Alabama. Themes were developed through analysis of the data as outlined in Chapter Three. Numerous hours were spent listening to the interviews and focus group sessions while reviewing the transcriptions for accuracy. Reading and rereading the transcripts allowed me to become invested in the participants' perceptions and to recognize commonalities and themes.

Using excerpts from the transcripts, I described the experiences of the digital immigrant teachers. Explaining the themes in a narrative format allowed me to understand "what" the teachers experienced, thereby developing a textural description. As prescribed by Moustakas (1994), I used "acts of thinking, judging, imagining, and recollecting, in order to arrive at core structural meanings" (p. 79).   My perception of the experiences allowed me to understand how the digital immigrant teachers' opinions, attitudes, and responses came to be. Chapter Four has been organized into a composite textural and structural description. The finished narrative description synthesizes my understanding of "what" (texture) occurred and "how" (structure) the experience occurred for the participants. Through this process, I was able to develop the essence of the overall experiences of digital immigrant teachers.

Participants' responses are organized according to the research questions. Research question number one is the overarching question which directs and focuses the inquiries of the other four questions.

Research Question #1: What are the experiences of "digital immigrant" teachers with the manifestation of social media in the lives and works of their students?

The experiences of the ten digital immigrant teachers revealed many similarities. However, their perceptions on the effective implementation of social media for educational purposes varied. In order to gain insight into the participants' views, a discussion of personal usage was established.

I questioned participants about their personal usage of four of the major social media forums: texting, ownership and usage of a social networking site, blogging, and email. Nine out of the ten participants utilize text messaging as a form of communication. Although admitting to texting, Mrs. Staples indicated that she didn't like it. She would rather use the phone because it was quicker and more personal. Mrs. Pitts, the non-user of texting, also admitted that she has not used her cell phone in two months.

Seven of the participants admitted to using a social networking site for communication. All seven individuals use Facebook, while two of them also engage in Twitter. None of the participants own or participate in personal blogging. Only one stated that she occasionally reads someone else's blog. All ten of the participants reported using email on a regular basis.

This information provides insight as to the digital immigrant participants' proficiency or level of comfort with social media. Such usage may contribute to the participants' opinions of social media and of its influences upon students.

Research Question #2: How do digital immigrant teachers perceive social media to

be impacting the affective and cognitive development of students?

The participants indicated both positive and negative aspects as to the influence of social media on students. Through analysis of the data collection, many themes emerged regarding social media influence on students. The themes have been differentiated to denote whether social media has impacted the students' affective development or cognitive development.

Affective:

1. Students are in constant communication.

2. Social media allows kids to express themselves.

3. Social media supports the need for instant gratification.

4. Social media breeds drama that infiltrates the classroom.

5. Bullying and/or meanness are more prevalent.

Cognitive:

6. Communication skills have decreased.

7. Social media is a distraction to education and the classroom.

8. Writing and spelling skills have decreased.

Social Media's Impact on Affective Development

Students are in constant communication. All ten of the teacher participants indicated that the immediacy and accessibility that social media outlets provide have increased the efficiency and availability of information. The teachers feel that students are more informed or have the capability of being more informed. Mrs. Wallace went so far as to say "their ability to learn because of involvement with things like that [social

media] is probably higher." The increase in multi-tasking behaviors allows "more connections to be made in their brains" she added. Mrs. Benton agreed, "I think they learn things faster because of their multi-tasking with it [social media].… I think it has sped up some of the learning processes."

Additionally, the immediacy and availability is sometimes used to communicate what they are learning in their classes. For instance, Mrs. Evers follows some of her students on Facebook and Twitter. She was elated and encouraged as one of her students posed a question via Facebook. The student was on a school trip to New York, saw a statue of someone they had talked about in class, and wanted to know something more about them. She asserted that "it [social media] keeps that learning experience open."

Mrs. Staples noted the benefit of this constant communication. She said, "They [the students] are able to correspond with each other rapidly. If there is something going on or something they need or forget, they can text their fellow classmates and get materials or information faster." On the flip side, she mentioned that because the constant communication can happen during school, students get information "like what's on a test.… There are pros and cons on that."

Social media allows kids to express themselves. Mr. Nicks explained that social media allows some people to fill in the gaps or weaknesses that they may have in the communication process. He gave the following example, which he said could be applied to students:

I know a guy that would be very uncomfortable sitting down having a face-to-face conversation or a negotiation process over the price of a car. The last two

vehicles he's bought, he's bought basically via email and text messaging a guy – a car dealer.

Mrs. Evers also believes that social media can be a positive outlet for some students. She added her opinion:

What I like about social media is that it gives kids a voice. For example, a shy kid might not normally speak out in class. But if they're on a Twitter account, they will speak out and say what they think. So that helps them connect with other students, whereas on a personal basis they may be very shy. But when you put that technology in their hands, they can connect to more people, express themselves, hopefully through positive ways, which helps them grow.

Mrs. Wills agreed, "Some kids who aren't exceedingly verbal can express themselves better maybe on a blogging site or something like that." She averred that it could help kids who have trouble expressing themselves. Much like Mrs. Evers' comment, Mrs. Wills referred to a teacher who uses Twitter so that kids can ask questions "even if they are afraid to raise their hands and talk out loud in class, they can tweet a quick question to the teacher and the teacher can address it for the whole class."

Social media supports the need for instant gratification. Mrs. Thomas said, "Because it [social media] is instant, they think everything has to be instant." She went on to say: "I think students are losing their patience in finding answers…. Technological progress, social media included, has enabled our students to become lazy. They don't have to think." Instant gratification can be taken positively as well. As Mrs. Evers posited "it's immediate gratification when they don't know a word, they look up something or ask someone immediately."

Mrs. Wills went so far as to crediting social media with increasing ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) problems. "They can't focus on anything for long periods of time" said Mrs. Wills. She continued, "They have trouble learning in 50-minute blocks anymore or in long blocks of time or sitting down and focusing." Mrs. Benton articulated the same sentiment. Mrs. Vincent concurred that attention spans are shorter. She made the attribution "they are ADD because of focusing everywhere all at once." Mrs. Benton added her observation, "I can look at their eyes sometimes and tell that after 15 or 20 minutes they are ready to move on to something else." Mr. Nicks purported:

> We're competing for their attention more than ever…. They want immediate
> feedback when they text somebody. They get antsy. I call it the microwave
> popcorn society. We won't even wait more than three minutes for popcorn. And
> I don't think it has gotten better because of social media. I think it has gotten
> worse.

In a focus group session, Mrs. Smith asserted that "students feel a need or addiction to respond immediately to every post or text." The other three focus group participants agreed.

Social media breeds drama that infiltrates the classroom. All of the participants iterated some sentiment about "drama" that social media supports, transmits, and hastens. Mrs. Smith summed up her thoughts on social media:

> They know everything about one another. There are no secrets…. I think it
> changes our climate in the classroom. Anything goes on in these children's
> personal lives, it comes to the classroom and everybody knows about it. And that
> is because of social media. Sometimes it leads to classroom disruptions.

Mrs. Smith went on to describe how a disruptive conversation may sound: "Did ya'll see what so and so posted last night? Can you believe so and so broke up with…? I wouldn't take that crap that so and so said about…" With regards to the drama, Mrs. Vincent noted: "It's not in the lunchroom. It's not after school. It happened via Facebook and they know it 20 seconds later and it is a big to-do in the middle of a classroom."

With regards to how social media impacts the socialization of students, Mrs. Thomas said that it provides a way for students to "air their dirty laundry, to pick fights, or stir up trouble." Her contention, as well as that of two other participants, is that social media in the form of social networking sites such as Facebook, is for making connections and keeping up with long-lost friends. All of the participants assert that kids have turned social media into a drama-instigating medium. The challenge is described by Mrs. Thomas:

> Teachers and students are fighting rumor; students bring everything with them into the classroom. Whatever is said on Facebook the night before or a minute before comes to class with them. Years ago, boys would duke it out and everything was okay. Girls would get into a verbal argument, but it was settled. Now it is all done via social media until it comes to a boiling point and poof… you have the explosion…. When they say something on Facebook or they tweet something, in their minds I don't believe it registers that 'I just said that' and just how many people know I said that. They still think that it's in their nice little box.

Bullying and/or meanness are more prevalent. The drama promoted through social media can lead to cyber-bullying. As Mrs. Thomas stated, social media outlets are students' "mean ground." Mrs. Evers concurred and explained:

As students get comfortable with social media, sometimes unfortunately they use it to hurt others through bullying, through texting, venting, the drama, because they vent their feelings without realizing that it may impact someone else so they will put their opinions out there and not think about the repercussions of what they can do to someone else, if they're talking about someone, bad-mouthing someone, criticizing, and they don't realize the negative, that they can be hurting someone through that social media.

Mr. Nicks again mentioned the need to filter one's comments. This thought transcends to the area of cyber-bullying. He noted:

I think if they had heard themselves say the things they texted or emailed, they might have immediately said, 'I didn't mean that' or 'that came out wrong' or they would have said it in their head and filtered it before it came out of their mouths. Sticking your foot in your mouth has been around as long as humans have been speaking but I do think it has been hastened by the text response or email response because that person is not sitting there. I'm not reading them. I'm not gauging them. I'm not going to have to physically see and hear their response, so I might be bolder via digital transmission rather than sitting in front of someone.

Others affirmed the fact that students will say things via text or posting whereas they would not face-to-face. It allows them anonymity or a shield to hide behind. Mrs. Wills shared the following experience:

My daughter is a softball player. Several years ago, all the softball players were tweeting or texting. It was on Facebook actually I think, posting things about being in the State championship and blah, blah, blah, blah. This one little girl made a comment about being sick of hearing about softball. Somebody made an ugly comment back to her, and she ended up calling them all dykes, you know, all softball players are dykes. It just kind of broke down from there, and got really ugly. It was because of the speed that social media travels and because of the wide range that everybody sees it and hears it and anybody that is on Facebook that is your friend, which may be people you don't even know, can see things, and it just spreads rampantly. So it caused controversy in the school system. It caused controversy in the classroom.

Again, four of the participants asserted that kids may not fully understand what they are doing. Mrs. Thompson noted, "If they say something mean on Facebook, they don't make the connection that they really said it; they typed it."

Social Media's Impact on Cognitive Development

Communication skills have decreased. While social media has increased the amount of communication, some of the communication skills are being lost. Mrs. Thomas defined social media as "a way of just communicating via cyberland without having to actually converse." With regards to lost communication skills, Mrs. Wallace mentioned the lack of eye contact among many students was becoming prevalent. As

Mrs. Staples stated, "I'm disappointed that social media is their only means of communication." Mrs. Vincent asserted "they don't know the person next to them, but they'd rather talk on their phone or text with somebody else." Mrs. Pitts observed that a lot of students "don't know how to communicate face-to-face – the rhetoric." Several of the teachers commented that students are less able to express themselves verbally to one another in an appropriate way. Because there are no immediate repercussions such as "somebody smacking you in the face or yelling at you or screaming at you," some of the appropriate levels of how to interact have been lost. Mrs. Benton concluded with her belief:

> We are getting away from being a social society. I have the fear that we get in
> our own little world and forget that we are a society of people and we have to
> interact with people. You know, it is important to get in groups and talk with
> each other instead of just playing games, texting, and things like that.

Although asserting the positive implications of social media, Mr. Nicks also noted the negative:

> If you don't do it, you don't get better at it. If you do so little real, face-to-face
> communication, you don't get better at it. The words are only 20% of the
> communication, the language we use. So much is gestures, facial expression,
> inflection, voice tone. To some extent, while it can aid in communication,
> sometimes a lot of context can be lost in the digital transfer because you lose so
> much of what we really use to communicate which is really very little verbal –
> just a look. Face-to-face, you can immediately tell what I mean by a look or how
> I react that you've struck a nerve or gotten me excited. I might not use any

different words. On a telephone, you can tell voice inflection. Sometimes we speed up or slow down and a lot of that means stuff that we perceive from the other person. You don't get that in a digital transmission. As a result, people become weaker communicators interpersonally.

Six of the teachers said that filtering the content that is sent via texting is lacking. Although they "have time to think through what they say, students often do not take that time" said Mrs. Wallace. Because they are not face-to-face, they are not as careful about what they say. Mr. Nicks commented, "Sometimes you need reflection. Many times, our immediate knee-jerk reaction is not the one we need to go with, not the response we need to give. We need to weigh our words, our responses. We need to filter."

Social media is a distraction to education and the classroom. While Mrs. Evers noted some learning implications of social media usage, its continual usage has adversely affected learning opportunities. She stated:

Some students are spending way too much time staying up late texting, using social media. And they're losing sleep; they're not doing homework because they're choosing social media over instead of incorporating it into their homework. They're making a choice not to do their homework or not to sleep and that is affecting them in the classroom.

Mrs. Vincent recommended students be taught to moderate their time. She said, "We will have kids who are on it [social media] for hours, but they did not do their homework."

As most students own a cell phone by which they can send, receive, and post messages, four of the participants insist that social media infiltrates the classroom,

thereby becoming a distraction. They say students feel a need to respond at all times to messages. Mrs. Staples described her students:

> These kids keep it in their pockets and they are on vibrate and they don't know that they can't respond to it when someone calls them in the middle of school. Some of them have gotten to the point now where they will just get up and go to the bathroom or whatever; but some of them are just going to try to text in class. They will say, 'It's my mama.' It doesn't matter who is calling you; they can't call you in the middle of class. That's bad.

Mrs. Wallace added that social media is a distraction because students are "consumed with" the comments made throughout the day "rather than being focused on the reason that they are at school." She went on to say:

> On a daily basis, I see kids who are texting somebody rather than listening… they would rather be checking their Facebook status or updating about the PDA (public displays of affection) that is going on in the hallway at school instead of focusing on trying to learn what they are here to learn.

Mrs. Vincent mentioned that she has to take up cell phones from students because they are texting with others rather than listening.

Writing and spelling skills have decreased. According to the teacher participants, many students are unable to delineate the need for formal and informal writing. Papers, essays, and answers are written in textisms. Every teacher mentioned that students often turn in assignments with textisms and abbreviations. Mrs. Wills, an English teacher, was passionate as she displayed her disappointment and almost disgust with the poor writing and spelling skills of students. She attributes this decrease in skills to social media. She

stated, "They want to write it all in IM [instant messaging] or email lingo or text or Twitter lingo, and they don't want to write out anything anymore. Everything is an abbreviation." Mrs. Vincent expressed her concern:

> I have a problem with some of the abbreviations that some of the students aren't learning to spell or to write complete sentences. I mean 'IDK' is used more often than 'I don't know.' And I want them to be able to write completely as well as communicate quickly with their friends. It has to be a balance…. They have to know how to write essays. They can't write essays by using the abbreviations that they do when they text message or email.

Research Question 3: How does the use of social media, formally or informally, contribute to the classroom environment as perceived by digital immigrant teachers?

The participants identified some positive aspects of social media and its usage that may afford benefits to the classroom environment. Four themes emerged with regards to how the use of social media contributes to the classroom environment:

1. Immediate feedback can be provided through social media outlets.

2. Collaboration is enhanced with the use of social media.

3. Social media can aid students' organizational skills.

4. Social media can strengthen student-teacher rapport.

Immediate feedback can be provided through the social media outlets. Six of the participants agreed that social media outlets may provide a forum by which students can receive feedback immediately. Mr. Nicks has used texting for educational purposes. He stated:

I have used in class a survey app where students can text in class answers to instant survey questions to stuff that I may put up. It can give immediate feedback or immediate input. I see that as positive and beneficial. It's a tool like anything else. If used properly, it's good. The ability to give immediate feedback and input is positive.

Mrs. Staples added that the immediate feedback can be used as a "reinforcement mechanism" – reinforcing what one is teaching. The six participants supported social media as a tool by which feedback can be given and thereby, enhancing learning.

Collaboration is enhanced with the use of social media. "I let them use their phones to look up information on the internet and communicate with each other over what they're learning with their media devices" said Mrs. Evers. Previously, she had mentioned that social media could be an outlet for communication for those who don't have natural verbal skills or don't like to speak out loud. However, she turns that around for a positive learning experience. "It might help them speak out loud…. Once they type it on Twitter, I may have them repeat it out loud so it can help them with their verbal skills" she stated.

Mrs. Vincent broadened her ideas on collaboration. She said:

It has helped them network across the country and across the globe. I have students who are working on projects with somebody who is not in their backyard. Years ago, they could not work on it or they would be on the telephone or back and forth with mail. It would take a long time to get a project done. Now you can work on a project jointly with somebody who is nowhere near here and it

just makes for cooperative learning across cultures or across the nation much easier.

Mrs. Thomas' response paralleled that of Mrs. Vincent. Mrs. Thomas noted that the collaboration across borders provides students a global connection. She said:

For some students, I think that it broadens their horizons because through friends of friends, they are being exposed to foreign exchange students or friends of foreign exchange students in their homeland, if that makes any sense. I think in some cases, their horizons go beyond the little box that they live in. I think that is a good thing. They realize that everybody doesn't think like they do, that there are differing opinions, that there are different viewpoints.

One of Mr. Nicks' main concerns about social media was the lack of visual and auditory cues. However, as noted by Mr. Nicks, social media collaboration can include other important communication cues along with words. He said:

They can collaborate from different places. You can get student collaboration without them having to be in the same room at the same time. If it's going to include video cams or video conferencing, then they can actually see and hear the voice inflection, they can have the visual and auditory to go along with the verbiage. But I like the collaboration, the comfort. A lot of kids, digital natives, are more comfortable with social media. That can make it better for some.

Social media can aid students' organizational skills. All of the teachers agreed that today's digital native students live attached to their cell phones and technological devices. Some are resigned to accepting that fact and utilizing it. Mrs. Staples said:

If I am giving an assignment or something that is due, I make sure that they list

the dates and keep up with it just like a calendar for them to keep up with what

they need to do and when it is due. I make them take out their cell phones and put

it in their calendar because this is what they live by, their cell. If it is in the cell

phone, then they do it. Some will take a picture of a calendar or assignments. So

if it is an assignment and it is on the board, they say, 'well can I take a picture?'

If that's what it takes for them to remember the assignment, then I let them.

Mrs. Pitts concluded that because students can communicate so easily with one

another, they are able to remind each other of assignments. "Aside from reminding each

other about an event or a party, students utilize social media to communicate about

assignments" she said.

As she does, Mrs. Smith mentioned some teachers use texting and social

networking sites to remind students of assignments as well. She admits:

I keep my AP class as a group on my phone so I can text them almost daily –

'don't forget to do so and so. Tomorrow so and so is due. Make sure to study

chapter 22 notes. Don't forget we have a test tomorrow in organic chemistry.

While students often use social media outlets as social calendars, teachers can

harness that forum for educational purposes.

Social media can strengthen student-teacher rapport. In a focus group, the

teachers of Tech High School agreed that using social media outlets between teachers and

students can help establish rapport. Mrs. Wallace posited that it "humanizes the teachers

to the students and the students to the teachers." She, along with Mrs. Smith, Mrs.

Thomas, and Mrs. Vincent concluded that social media created a common ground by

which communication could be enhanced. At the focus group session at Media

Academy, Mrs. Evers averred, "When the students know we are willing to meet them

where they are, they will sometimes meet us half-way and become more responsive."

Research Question 4: How do digital immigrant teachers address potential negative

influences of social media in the school environment?

The interviews and focus group discussions meted out some challenges that social

media pose which must be addressed. Five themes emerged with regards to the potential

negative influences of social media and how digital immigrant teachers address those

issues.

1. Authority and relationship between teachers and students must be balanced.

2. The potential for cheating concerns digital immigrant teachers.

3. Classroom management practices must be addressed.

4. The need to teach digital etiquette is heightened.

5. The need for revised policies is evident.

Authority and relationship between teachers and students must be balanced. Mrs.

Staples had concerns about authority between teacher and student. She voiced, "I want

them to know that I am their teacher and their friend, but I am not their best friend. I am

the adult and you are the child. When we get Facebook, sometimes we lose track of

which is which." Mrs. Benton, Mrs. Pitts, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Wallace expressed

similar concerns.

When addressing issues such as cyber-bullying, however, Mrs. Evers noted the

importance of teacher-student relationships. She stated:

Kids are smart enough not to put stuff out there in the open where teachers can

see it. So it's important to maintain a good relationship with your students so they

feel comfortable coming to you if there's a problem and just trying to keep that

mode of communication open because kids are very smart today.

Mrs. Smith said that "students become more in your business" when you
communicate over social networking sites such as Facebook. Although she has heard
people say not to "friend" your students on Facebook, she noted that it was a way to "get
to know your kids" which strengthens the relationships and could help "make you an
effective classroom teacher." However, she cautioned the importance of not crossing
over the appropriate lines when communicating online.

The potential for cheating concerns digital immigrant teachers. The possibility of
cheating via social media outlets was mentioned by all ten of the participants. While
noting that receiving materials faster via social media as a potentially positive aspect,
Mrs. Staples also voiced that they may receive information about what is on a test from
another student. She said:

By the time a class comes to me, they pretty much know exactly what we are

doing that day, which is good--they come prepared; or it could be negative in that

they have already been told about things that are on the test. A lot of times, you

have to give different tests just to keep on them because they text throughout the

day, during breaks, in the halls, or even during class.

Mrs. Pitts asserted that cheating is "rampant." She said students take pictures of
their work; post it; and someone else copies it in their own hand writing and tries to pass
it off as their own. Mrs. Vincent shared the same sentiment and considers it plagiarism.

Although she is for the use of social media in the classroom, she noted "the problem is when they make somebody else's stuff their own."

As an English teacher, Mrs. Thomas was concerned with using social networking sites for cheating on writing essays or papers. She said, "it is not hard to tap into somebody who is off at college somewhere and say, 'I am looking for an essay about such and such and such and such.'" Therefore, she admits that she must be aware of the student's abilities and be more diligent in assessing the capabilities of the student.

Classroom management practices must be addressed. When discussing the possibility of using social media in the classroom, Mr. Nicks posed the concern that "there is potential for students to be on something inappropriate or not on task or emailing mom when they are directed to be using digital mediums for educational purposes." Mrs. Evers, Mrs. Wallace, and Mrs. Pitts concurred that a negative aspect to social media usage in the classroom will be keeping the students on task. Mrs. Evers asked:

> Now that they have social media, how do I keep them focused on my English or history classes and not texting their friends about the prom dates or about lunch or whatever? How do I keep them totally connected to what they're supposed to be doing that whole 50 minutes they are in my class?

Earlier, Mrs. Evers mentioned the fact that students were choosing to spend their time on social media rather than studying or doing homework. She further asserted that students' nightly on-line behaviors and social media activities affected the class. She commented:

I've written detentions for students sleeping in class and to find out that their

spending a lot of their time on the computer… based on their friends' responses or

their responses they spend too much time texting at night or on their laptops at

night communicating with friends rather than sleeping.

Mr. Nicks agreed that "the use of social media [by students] is difficult to

monitor. But, we had the same conversations years ago when we put internet in the

computer labs. How are we going to monitor? Over time, we've worked through these

issues."

The apprehension that social media usage through cell phones would increase

cheating is a classroom management issue according to Mr. Nicks. Further, Mrs. Wills

said:

It has made us as teachers have to be more aware, just watchful every minute,

about new ways that we have to be watchful. We all had learned, you know, you

write it on your shoe, you write it on your leg, up under your skirt, in your sleeve,

but now it is, if their hand is in their purse or if their purse is open on their lap or

if their hand is in their pocket or they are looking down to the side of them and

their arm is hanging down. You know there are just a lot more clues that you

have to be aware of and watch.

She went on to admit that social media usage can be channeled positively;

however, it takes some effort.

As a teacher who does use social media in the classroom, Mrs. Evers articulated

expectations and consequences for social media usage. She explained:

When I let them use their phones, they can use their media, but I instructed them
as to the proper usage and put the warning out there that if they were caught using
it inappropriately, they would receive a detention; their phone would be taken up
and wouldn't be allowed to use it again. If I can't trust them to use it wisely, then
they will lose the opportunity to use it.

The need to teach digital etiquette and citizenship is heightened. Mr. Nicks
described how he addressed social media usage with his students and how he turned the
"drama" brought in by social media into a learning opportunity:

Last week, students came in saying 'can you believe so-in-so broke up with so-in-
so on a text message?' So, yeah, we had a conversation about that. I said 'why
do you think he did that?' Well, it was easier. 'What do you wish or rather that
he have done?' Well, he needs to do that in person or at least on the phone. Well,
then it got into, 'well you're braver on line or text messaging.' So the question
was 'if you were that person how would you feel?' I'd be angry. I'd be hurt. I'd
feel like if you're going to break up with me via text message, if that's how this
relationship is going to end, what was my value level at any time in that
relationship? If I don't mean enough to you, if I'm so insignificant in your life
that you're gonna break up with me in a text message, what leads me to believe
that any time in our relationship, I had any significant value. Everyone was like
'yeah.' 'Well, have you ever done anything like that?' So, I think there were a
lot of them thinking, 'well maybe I have made someone feel insignificant.
Maybe I have cyber-bullied and not realized it.' And so we've had conversations
like that.

Mrs. Pitts speaks to her students about etiquette and what is appropriate to text or post. She approaches it in regards to privacy or the lack of privacy from many angles. She warned:

> You need to be careful about what you put on Facebook. Employers will check that. Universities will sometimes check that [Facebook] for seniors who may be tied for a scholarship. What you think is private becomes very, very public. I don't personally like the fact that you can't control what other people put on their Facebook. Obviously you can't. But someone may have a photograph that may be very innocent, but it may not appear innocent and then boom it's there. And now you gotta defend yourself.

She reiterated her main point: "What you think is private becomes public."

Mrs. Thomas made the same point, "I try to make them understand that what is out there in cyberland doesn't go away and it can come back down the road to haunt them." She mentioned an illustration that she shared with her students:

> There is a show, the Making of the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders on CMT….They were making their final cuts – pretty girl, cute, talented, all that kind of stuff. They called her in and they put some pictures in front of her, and they said, 'Explain.' And it was pictures taken at a party. She was dressed inappropriately and behaving inappropriately and they said, 'This is it. You're gone. This is not the image we want.' Some of them [the students] said, 'That's not fair. They can't…' You know, the organization hires you and you have to live up to some standards. This is life people….They don't think that the pictures that they post matter, but it does.

During an observation, Mrs. Thomas addressed an aspect of digital etiquette with her students – when and where social media usage was acceptable. She said, "I am talking. If you are on the phone, if you are tweeting, if you are on Facebook, and I'm talking, you are being rude. Do you want me to ignore you?" In a later interview, she said that students "get caught up in social media and feel the need to check it or respond to it immediately without concern for what's going on around them."

The need for rules and expectations about social media usage continued to emerge. Mrs. Benton stated her expectations for digital etiquette to her students:

We talk about rules in the classroom and you build people up – not the junk they see on T.V. or what they read – that it is more important to build people up. We talk about putting a filter, where if it is not necessary, if it is not kind, if it is not truthful, you don't say it – which is opposite of what they hear with their peers. You know, old school."

The need for revised policies is evident. Mrs. Evers stated "We need proactive rules in the school – strong rules that challenge the kids not to be bullies, but as a teacher, be available to kids so they know they can come to you." A comment by Mrs. Wills indicated some frustration, but made a poignant thought. She said, "I think it [social media] can be used if slowly to begin with and some common sense boundaries and guidelines are set up (something I feel has been left out of education over the last several years)."

Miscommunication of information via social media outlets requires revised policies according to Mrs. Wallace. She mentioned:

Facebook and Twitter are issues in public school because you have kids who are

posting and tweeting during the school day about things that are going on in

school and the information may be inaccurate. So it just leads to parents possibly

being concerned over things, you know, fights or just misinformation. So I view

that as a problem.

She along with five of the other teachers voiced concern over misinformation or

postings about themselves by the students. The potential for students to record or post

information about the teachers causes some consternation for the teachers. So far, none

have had that as a personal issue, but have had colleagues that have been faced with it.

Mrs. Pitts is also calling for not only a revision of policies, but a need for a

change in education. She asserted:

I don't think education has really moved into that transition of… I don't think it's

about giving information anymore. I think it's about teaching them how to

analyze and think about it. And I'm not sure we, as teachers, have made that

transition. We're still doing the old way and I don't think that will work with

technology. It's not about disseminating information anymore. The role of

teaching is changing.

Research Question 5: How can social media be utilized effectively to support learning in today's educational system?

Teacher responses revealed multiple methods for utilizing social media

effectively to support learning. Some ways are already being used by some of the digital

immigrant teachers; some methods are being used by colleagues of the digital immigrant

teachers; still some are methods that the digital immigrant teachers envision as potential usages.

Before moving on to exploring the ways in which the participants believe social media can be used effectively, it is important to note some of the personal barriers that were expressed. Time was expressed by seven participants as a personal barrier. Mrs. Wills said, "We are going to have to take time to learn it, time to figure out how to use it, and then how to control their [the students'] use of it." Expressing frustration about the job of a teacher, Mrs. Wallace said:

My reluctance comes from I guess two major places, the first being just inexperience myself with how to implement things like that into my classroom-- you know, what can I do with it; what are the things that I can do and how can I utilize it, and how can it benefit everybody? Along those same lines, not just how to do it, but the time that it takes to learn how to do it and implement it. For example, there is a web site, *My Big Campus*… [it] is a way that we are being encouraged to deal with kids and deal with assignments and the time constraint of sitting down and setting up a class and figuring out how all of that works certainly concerns me in a day and age where I am teaching seven (7) straight classes, four (4) of which are AP and they write all the time, and I have a 50-minute "planning period" that happens at the end of day, and, I don't mean to be a complainer, but the job is almost impossible to do as it is, so my tendency when people come to me with this fabulous wonderful technological thing I am supposed to implement in my classroom is to say, 'Oh my gosh, when am I going to have time to do that too?'

Through her discourse, not only was time mentioned, but also her inexperience with social media incorporation into the classroom.

Therefore, another expressed barrier was teachers not knowing how to incorporate social media. Mrs. Staples admitted, "being old, a lot of this stuff, I have to learn." Agreeing, Mrs. Wills stated, "The teacher is going to have to just get in there and dig and play with it and see what works for their classroom." Mrs. Pitts, expressing the sentiment of five participants, simply asked for guidance and patience if she is going to implement social media into the classroom. Mrs. Wallace added, "there is a disconnect between what I can personally do for myself and what I could use those things for in my classroom."

While time to learn new technologies or methods was voiced as a concern, all of the participants were complementary to their school systems with the training that they have received regarding new technological offerings. Social High School and Tech High School participants commented on the extensive training for new technologies such as SmartBoards. Media Academy also appreciated that their school system had provided many in-services and on-going training opportunities for technologies such as iPad implementations, SmartBoards, and others.

Additionally, while expressing reservations and many negative implications of social media usage by students, all of the digital immigrant participants have resigned to the fact that social media usage is not waning and that technological implementations are inevitable. As Mr. Nicks asserted, "I think it's our job to get our kids ready for the world which is going to include texting, blogs, emailing, websites, and everything else. I don't see how we can run away from it." Mrs. Staples made a similar assertion, "anything that

is going to help me to help the students, I am all for it…. I would say that I am willing to learn something new and try it." Mrs. Benton agreed:

> We need to do whatever it takes to help them learn the most. If incorporating some of this will help them learn more, that's what we should do. I change every year. I find something new that I can use. So when they come up with something good with it, we will do it."

The way Mrs. Benton expressed this however, may describe a potential concern. She said, "When *they* come with something good with it, we will do it." Some teachers, young or old, immigrants or natives, rely on others and the educational institution to research and develop methods for utilizing and implementing programs or technologies.

Further, the participants admit that social media usage in the classroom can be beneficial. Mr. Nicks voiced the opinion of seven of the other participants:

> If it's a tool that applies to the need, use it. It's no different than pulling out a seven iron during golf if the shot calls for it. Should we do it just to be reactionary? No. If it's a legitimate tool, then we should use it. We shouldn't do it to pat ourselves on the back, to say we're being modern.

Similar comments continued to be iterated. With regards to the positive implications, Mrs. Vincent added:

> If we can show them how they can use them for doing research, for finding things out that they don't know, for communicating with their peers in a positive way, how they can actually stretch their minds rather than just limiting them, it can be a really positive effect.

The following ideas emerged as potential positive uses of social media to support learning:

1. The immediate feedback that social media can provide may assist in determining academic deficiencies more quickly.

2. Social media adds another component to communication between student and teacher.

3. Social media will aid in the engagement of the student.

4. Social media can promote the involvement of more students in the classroom.

5. Social media may aid or increase collaboration methods.

6. Social media can be a more relevant medium to teaching traditional concepts.

The immediate feedback that social media can provide may assist in determining academic deficiencies quicker. Immediate feedback was mentioned by six teachers. Three of those teachers articulated how they could utilize the information received from that feedback. Mr. Nicks has been using texting in conjunction with an instant survey app to assess student performance and understanding quicker. "I pose the questions; the students text in an answer; and we all get instant feedback," he said. Along with determining students' abilities to grasp concepts, he also indicated that he could use the immediate feedback to determine deficiencies in his teaching. Based on that, he could tailor his teaching methods differently – teach in a different order or in a different way.

Social media adds another component to communication between student and teacher. As mentioned earlier by Mrs. Evers, Mrs. Wallace reiterated, "As a teacher, I believe I have to have a rapport with them [the students] that extends outside the classroom; for me, that very often is on Facebook and sometimes through texting." Mrs.

Evers, an avid Twitter and Facebook user, commented that students frequently use those mediums to ask, "Mrs. Evers, what was this? What was that?" concerning information or assignments from class. Mrs. Wills also stated that students text her "all of the time." All of the teachers communicate with students and parents digitally. Up to this point, however, it has been through email. While technically a form of social media, emailing is not the "current" mode of social media communication. Mrs. Evers suggested that social networking sites such as Facebook be utilized in order to be more relevant.

Each of the participants posited that social media outlets provide methods for disseminating information. They mentioned posting assignments on Facebook, texting reminders of assignments, and discussing assignments. Describing how one of her colleagues use texting, Mrs. Thomas said that the "AP Chemistry teacher puts all her kids in a group on her cell phone and she sends text messages to them… whether it's reminders, assignments, changes in quiz dates, she will send them a text." Along with those uses, Mrs. Thomas noted how the communication among students can be hastened for educational purposes. While collaboration has been mentioned, Mrs. Thomas noted that when class officers put something on Facebook concerning upcoming events, "it spreads like wildfire."

The idea of extending learning outside of the classroom is supported by one of the ways that Mrs. Vincent utilizes her Facebook pages. She said, "You can be doing a review session after hours with your students, posing questions, and having them respond… like an open chat session." Extending the classroom was an idea also proposed and supported by Mrs. Evers, Mrs. Thomas, Mr. Nicks, and Mrs. Wills.

Social media will aid in the engagement of the student. Mrs. Wallace referred to a student that is "plugged in" is one that is "turned on." As she and others discussed this in a focus group at Tech High School, it was deduced that "students need it [social media] or other technology in order to be engaged."

Each of the teachers asserted that most of their students were actively participating in texting and social networking sites. They observe students in their classrooms using these platforms. The students talk about these mediums frequently in the classroom. Mrs. Vincent chose to create a learning opportunity from what the students were involved with. She described:

> Today they were looking up 'logos.' This is the new popular game. There were 10 of them in my physics class today that were searching for logos and they were like, this is a really new game. I was like, 'okay, let's talk about it and explain it.' They were all playing it… and we got to talking about why branding and logo things are important to different items and why having a unique one is important. We were able to discuss what the whole premise behind the game was and why… why that is important and those symbols and why they are important. We were able to use something that is distracting and use it as a teaching tool.

Mrs. Thomas noted that at this point, the use of social media in the classroom for educational purposes is new. As a result, "anytime something new is used, especially something that kids enjoy, that something different sparks their interests."

Social media can promote the involvement of more students in the classroom. As mentioned earlier, Mrs. Evers, Mrs. Wills, and Mrs. Pitts agreed the usage of writing, through texting, Facebook, or a blog, may provide a means for shyer students to become

actively involved in the classroom. Mrs. Evers said, "A shy child may not raise their hand to answer a question orally, but they might Tweet that answer…. It's going to help them learn and make them part of the classroom instead of feeling outside of it." Mrs. Vincent has subject-specific Facebook sites for her classes. The use of the subject-specific sites allows for discourse outside of the classroom. Additionally, she noted that some of the students who are quiet in her classroom are often some of the most outspoken students on the Facebook pages.

Social media may aid or increase collaboration methods. Collaboration was the most mentioned positive quality for social media usage in the classroom. Mrs. Pitts mentioned that some of her students have Skyped each other in order to study for exams. Mr. Nicks, Mrs. Evers, Mrs. Benton, Mrs. Staples, Mrs. Thomas, and Mrs. Vincent described occurrences of students texting one another on group projects. Mrs. Evers, Mrs. Pitts, Mrs. Wills, Mrs. Vincent, Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Smith and Mr. Nicks also explained how students were able to collaborate over Facebook or outlets such as Googledocs.

Social media can be a more relevant medium to teaching traditional concepts. Making schooling "relevant" was articulated by Mr. Nicks, but emerged as a theme through the comments of others. Mrs. Evers asserted:

For these kids, as we've heard, it's almost a second language to them. They've learned media before they really learn to talk or speak or write. You've seen it with the very small children. They're on their iPads. They can't even write essays, but they communicate on iPads. So, to me, it's very important in their learning that we've got to be in there with them. And if they learn better with an

iPad, with their Twitter, with these mediums, we need to incorporate that with

them and not keep them in an archaic, Stone Age classroom that they can't learn

in. They'll learn better in a media environment that allows them to use social

media.

As an English teacher, Mrs. Wills expressed the desire to incorporate blogging

either as a replacement or supplement for journaling. Additionally, she would like to

have a Facebook page dedicated to her English class in which conversations can occur

revolving around something the students were to have read. Through that medium and

by posting prompting questions, she could require all students to respond. She, along

with Mrs. Pitts, Mrs. Evers, Mrs. Thomas and Mr. Nicks, mentioned that blogging as a

journaling mechanism would be a way to get students to reflect and express themselves.

The three teachers from Media Academy noted that one of their colleagues has students

participate in a blog as part of their summer reading. Each of the three teachers

concurred that blogging for that purpose was a good usage of social media.

Summary

Through interviews, focus groups, and observations, data was collected which

revealed themes concerning digital immigrant teachers' perceptions of social media on

the affective and cognitive development of students. The digital immigrant teachers'

experiences were described. Through analysis of the descriptions and perceptions, ways

in which social media contributes formally and informally to the classroom environment

were discussed. As with any new variable introduced into the education process,

challenges may emerge. Therefore, ways in which teachers address potential challenges

and negative influences of social media were explored. As the participants reflected on

the influence of social media, ways in which social media can be utilized effectively to support learning were explained.

As I read and reread through the transcriptions, themes applicable to each research question jumped off the page and grabbed my attention. After reviewing and analyzing the information gathered as described in my methodology, however, the following perceived positive and negative themes emerged:

Positive

1. Collaboration is enhanced with the use of social media.

2. Social media can aid students' organizational skills.

3. Social media can strengthen student-teacher rapport.

4. The immediate feedback provided by social media can assist in determining academic deficiencies quicker.

5. Social media can aid in student engagement and involvement.

Negative

1. Communication skills have decreased due to social media usage.

2. Social media is a distraction to education in the classroom.

3. Bullying and/or meanness are more prevalent due to social media.

4. Writing and spelling skills have decreased due to social media usage.

5. The potential for cheating via social media concerns teachers.

According to Moustakas (1994), the result of deriving meaning to a phenomenon is to be aware of the essence or the condition which must be present in order for the phenomenon to occur. The textural and structural narrative explains the experiences of

ten digital immigrant teachers according to how I understood them, from my vantage point, and described the essence of the experience.

The experiences and perceptions of the digital immigrant teachers should provide a basis by which teachers can begin to dialogue about the implications that social media may have within the classroom environment. Additionally, the study should provide educational leaders a knowledge and foundation for addressing potential hesitancies and concerns among faculty, specifically with digital immigrant teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Aspects of social media are affecting the affective and cognitive development of students according to quantitative studies (Boyd, 2007; Liu, 2010; Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007; McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002; Ofcom, 2008). However, qualitative research which gives voice to teachers is significantly lacking. Specifically, there has not been an investigation to understand the perceptions of digital immigrant teachers regarding the phenomenon of social media. The problem this study addresses is that there is a lack of understanding on how the usage of social media is manifesting itself on the social and learning development of students within the high school setting. Therefore, the purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe how digital immigrant teachers perceive the influence of social media on the affective and cognitive development of students.

This study captures the lived experiences of ten digital immigrant teachers regarding the influence of social media on the affective and cognitive development of students. The experiences described "what" attitudes and perceptions the teachers had towards social media as well as "how" these attitudes were developed.

Some themes were generated as the product of responses from all of the participants. The teacher participants unanimously indicated that the immediacy and accessibility that social media outlets provide have increased the efficiency and availability of information by which students could benefit. Further, all participants acknowledged that social media and other technological usages are not decreasing. Confirming studies by Lenhart, Madden, Macgill, and Smith (2007) and reports from

Ofcom (2008), they posit that most of their students are actively engaged in texting and social networking site usage.

The teacher participants noted some opportunities that social media provides. Of the positive implications, collaboration was mentioned by all participants as a potential benefit. The implication of collaboration supports the findings of Godwin-Jones (2005) which mention "collaborative learning" as a by-product of social media and other technologies. Further, all teacher participants agreed that social media could be utilized to disseminate information for educational purposes.

However, many negative aspects pervaded the discussions of social media. All of the teachers made comments as to how "drama" is transported into the classroom because of social media – texting and social networking sites – and students' access and usage of such at all times. Additionally, every teacher noted that students use textisms and abbreviations in all forms of writing which the teachers attribute to social media. The potential for cheating with social media was also a concern for all teachers. As social media usage emerges in educational contexts, studies on cheating will need to be conducted to determine the extent to which cheating occurs and its effects. Therefore, teachers must address the negative and embrace the positive implications.

This study illuminates the perceptions of digital immigrant teachers with regarding the influence of social media on the affective and cognitive development of students. After reviewing the findings, conclusions are drawn and the implications are discussed. Additionally, suggestions for further research to expand the knowledge base of this topic are presented.

Conclusions and Implications

The digital immigrant teacher participants confirmed the fact that students are in constant communication which is hastened by the presence of social media. Most students today have cell phones which put many of the social media formats at the students' fingertips. Students can text, access social media networking sites such as Facebook, surf the web, and email from the palms of their hands. Increasing cell phone access coupled with home computer ownership provides communication possibilities to most of the students throughout the day. Despite the digital divide in terms of access that exists in our nation, the percentages of adolescent and adult users continue to rise. Therefore, social media influence is worth exploring.

Many of the teachers mentioned that social media is a distraction to education and the classroom. However, I noted through observations students' abilities to multi-task via devices or forums that some would view as distracting. Alexander (2004) found that technological advances such as social media had promoted multi-tasking. Supporting that assertion, Mrs. Wallace noted that the increase in multitasking behaviors allows "more connections to be made in their brains." Mrs. Benton, concurred, "I think they learn things faster because of the multi-tasking with it [social media]." Some teachers, digital immigrants or digital natives, may say that social media is a distraction while others purport that it enhances students' multi-tasking behaviors. It is worth noting, however, that current studies reveal multi-tasking may decrease productivity (Rekart, 2011; Wang, 2012). However, Paridon and Kaufmann (2010) found that the ability to multitask effectively depended on the type of tasks to be performed. Therefore, how a teacher views and approaches social media will determine the possibility for effective

usage and management within the classroom. Are students distracted or are they multi-tasking?

During a few observations, I noted students' texting, surfing the web, or updating Facebook statuses while the teacher was instructing. But when it came time for students to answer questions or indicate levels of understanding concepts, those students were able to provide appropriate and correct responses. Would utilization of social media by the teacher be more engaging for those students who were using social media during class? Were those students able to multitask effectively in order for them to comprehend the instruction and text at the same time?

During another observation, Mrs. Evers played music at the request of her students during an assignment. For this Advanced Placement United States History class, students were instructed to work in groups and use their cell phones to complete an assignment. The students were given a multi-page handout with many dates. They were to identify the president elected in given years, determine who took the president's place if he didn't serve out his term, and state one important fact associated with the president. While this was a time intensive assignment in which students were on-task the entire period, the students requested that the music be turned up. The on-task work combined with the listening of loud 1960's music demonstrated that students are able to multi-task. While some teachers may see loud music and cell phone usage as a distraction and would never attempt such an exercise, Mrs. Evers showed that she is aware of the students' abilities and their affinity for social media and interactive technologies. Therefore, the dichotomy lies with balancing social media as a distraction versus a multi-tasking

medium. I propose that teachers learn to harness the distracting behavior or leverage the medium by which students are being distracted.

It is a classroom management issue. Mr. Nicks came to the realization that social media usage and the concerns that he and the other teachers voiced boiled down to the need for teachers to be more aware and address their classroom management practices. Each school had a policy forbidding the use of cell phones in the classroom. Through observations, I noted that teachers' enforcement of the policy varied. The teachers who maintained the policy did not have issues in which social media was a distraction during class. However, I noted that some teachers chose to ignore the policy. As a result, many students in multiple classes were on their cell phones. As I was close in proximity to some of the student offenders, I witnessed them updating their statuses on Facebook; others were texting. The presence and availability of social media appeared to be a distraction from instruction. However, teacher expectations and lack of monitoring or enforcement could contribute to the non-academic engagement of students.

Social media as a form of socialization is foreign, or at least new, to digital immigrant teachers. While most of the participants have adopted forms of social media (texting and/or Facebook) in their personal lives, the teachers use them in different ways than students. They contend that students use them to communicate every aspect of their lives while the teachers use social media as supplements to their "normal" forms of communication. The teachers use Facebook to make contact or stay in contact with old friends, while students use it to promote "meanness" and "drama" according to the participants. Further, the teachers preferred face-to-face or phone communication over texting, while students would rather text. Although Hinduja and Patchin (2010) have

provided extensive studies on cyber-bullying, I have found no studies on any form of social media-instigated "drama" as purported by the participants.

While there may be some merit to the teachers' assertions that students' communication skills have decreased, it could be said that the digital immigrant teachers are not willing to accept social media as a credible form of communication. Often, people who have been in a profession for some time are not early adopters of technological innovations or changes that affect their customary ways. This hesitancy impacts the way people view the mediums of change. That is not to say that social media has not had an effect on the communication skills of students. The standards by which digital immigrants measure communication skills, however, are relative. There are still those who believe that email is not a valid alternative to a hand-written letter. Over time, as people become more exposed to and comfortable with changes, most tend to adopt such changes eventually. The same could eventually be said for social media usage.

Differing from the participants' views, previous studies found that social media usage increases communication skills. Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, and Macgill (2008) posit that teens are composing more writings. Further, Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, and Smallwood (2006) found that students use social media to enhance communication, but continue to hold in-depth, important conversations offline.

No doubt, social media poses new challenges for teachers. As the participants alluded, textisms and abbreviations to which students are so accustomed infiltrate the writings of students. While this is a relatively new concern, teachers have always had to guide and instruct students in proper writing. Textisms are simply the latest issue which teachers must address with regards to writing.

Bullying via Facebook or texting – cyber-bullying – is a voiced concern of not only the participants of this study, but of teachers across the country. The teachers of this study believe that bullying and meanness are more prevalent and attribute that increase to social media outlets. This belief supports the cyber-bullying research of Hinduja and Patchin (2007). Bullying has occurred for many years, but social media has provided a new forum with benefits to the instigators. As mentioned by the participants, bullies can hide behind social media either through anonymity or the non-confrontational position of not being face-to-face with the victim. Continued education for teachers regarding this issue is paramount. In turn, teachers and educational leaders must educate students about character issues, bullying circumstances, and ways to deal with such arenas.

The issues of poor writing and spelling skills, cyber-bullying, and the overall "drama" that teachers attribute to social media can be addressed through the topic of digital etiquette. In a survey of 285 teens, Chai, Bagchi-Sen, Morrell, Rao, and Upadhaya (2009) found that youth who have been educated about responsible internet use are more likely to practice appropriate on-line behaviors. Although educators and the educational system are catching up and improving methods for addressing digital etiquette, intentional efforts must be focused on this issue. Many students do not understand the term "digital footprint." As Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Pitts mentioned, what one writes, texts, or posts digitally leaves a digital footprint. They explained that universities and future employers may search Facebook sites and digital histories to determine the character of a person. As this reality is realized, leaders and teacher practitioners must make concerted efforts to educate students on digital responsibility.

The teachers admitted social media provides an additional forum by which students can communicate with each other. Further, social media extends the student-teacher relationship outside of the classroom. "While teachers must be cognizant of the potential pitfalls and inappropriate communication that can occur with students, proper usage of social media can enhance rapport with students and "humanize" the students to teachers and vice versa.

With regards to teaching methods, Mrs. Evers purported that the "old ways won't work," and that students will learn better in a media rich environment. She encouraged that "we need to incorporate that [digital mediums including social media] and not keep them [students] in an archaic, Stone Age classroom." Mrs. Staples agreed, "Old methods don't work." A difference exists between the two teachers, however. Mrs. Evers has searched for ways to incorporate social media and other technologies whereas Mrs. Staples continues to teach the same way she has taught for years. The participants agreed that social media can be harnessed for educational purposes. Admitting that social media could extend learning outside of the classroom, participants described ways in which colleagues used forums such as texting, blogs, or social networking media sites. Extending learning outside of the classroom has and is becoming the focus of numerous studies. Through a study investigating the use of blogs as learning tools, Tiriasiuk (2010) similarly concluded that students were more inclined to extend their learning. Redecker, Ala-Mutka, and Punie (2010) indicate that social media involves learners more actively in the learning process, thereby "allowing more effective learning strategies to be implemented" (p. 9).

However, Mrs. Benton's comment "when *they* come up with something good with it [social media]…" implies that she is waiting for someone else to figure it out before attempting to use social media. Such comments point to a need for educational leaders to encourage experimentation, research, and forward thinking with all teachers. Acknowledging that today's students are conditioned to learn through interactive resources such as social media, Glimps and Ford (2008) asserted, "Teachers must structure their instruction strategies in recognition of this development to better assist students in acquiring interaction skills suited for a global context" (p. 91). Granted, some digital immigrant teachers may not have a level of comfort with certain technologies to attempt usages. However, as much as educators want to promote creative thinking amongst students, leaders should encourage the same amongst teachers.

As Mr. Nicks asserted, I, too, am not an advocate for teachers using social media in the classroom unless it serves a purpose. Some of the participants, as well as teachers around the country, have discovered when and how to harness social media to the benefit of students and their education. As the participants agreed, social media is not going to disappear. Today's students live in a world of technology which includes, and often revolves around, social media. Educational leaders need to make concessions and plans to assist digital immigrant teachers and all teachers in developing strategies and competencies with social media. This development includes not only the assisting of teachers with methods to address the affective influence of social media on students, but also the adding of social media to the arsenal of methodologies and strategies for instructing students cognitively.

Future Research

This study described digital immigrant teachers' perceptions of social media influence. Given the limited number of participants, the contribution of this study highlights topics for future research. It is recommended that further investigations include larger and more diverse samples of teachers. Further, similar studies should be conducted to include other populations such as urban communities.

While the research is designed to assess teachers' perceptions of the impact of social media on students, a notable omission is the perception of students as to the impact of social media. Further research would need to consider student perceptions to form an overall sense of this phenomenon that incorporates all parties involved.

Much theoretical discussion is occurring about the influence of social media. However, as social media is still in its infancy, longitudinal and experimental designs are needed to adequately determine the effects of social media. If social media is to be adopted as a classroom resource, studies should include the impact of effective social media implementation on achievement levels of students.

Future studies should include quantitative data as well. A survey utilizing Likert scale items based on the findings of this study could be distributed to digital native and digital immigrant teachers involved in social media adoptions for educational purposes. Multiple statistical analyses might illuminate additions to qualitative studies about teacher perceptions across multiple variables.

A similar study utilizing digital native teachers would provide a comparison and contrast as to how social media is perceived. Since digital forums are not foreign to digital natives, they may have a level of comfort that allows them to formulate more

positive perceptions of its influence. Additionally, the potential level of comfort that digital natives have may permit them to visualize and conceptualize methodologies for leveraging social media in ways that digital immigrants cannot.

Summary

Various types of technology can be used to support and enhance learning. Some teachers' repertoires consist of video content and digital moviemaking to laptop computing and handheld devices. New uses of technology such as podcasting are emerging and will continue to be realized. The various technologies deliver different kinds of content and serve a myriad of purposes in the classroom. Therefore, each technological offering will likely play a different role in students' learning. Rather than trying to describe the influence of each medium as if they were the same, researchers should focus on the purposes that each could potentially serve. Such is the case with social media.

Teachers have acclimated and even embraced digital technologies such as PowerPoint, videos, and YouTube. At one time, these innovations caused concern and hesitancy among teachers due to levels of comfort or fear of change. The usages of such have increased and become more comfortable over time. Digital immigrant teachers such as Mrs. Wallace and Mrs. Thomas found value in internet sites such as the Florida Virtual Schools, while others such as Mrs. Evers and Mrs. Vincent have employed social networking sites to deploy information and promote dialogue. If digital immigrant teachers are willing to use resources such as Florida Virtual School reviews via the internet, why should they not use other technological resources such as social media to achieve educational goals? As with other forms of technology, it is likely that social

media usage will increase over time in education as practitioners find ways to leverage various social media platforms.

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of psychology as well as Barron's (2006) learning ecology theory are supported through the findings of this study. Vygotsky (1978) determined that children's development and knowledge construction was influenced by societal offerings. Additionally, Barron's (2006) learning ecology theory purports that the contextual boundaries can be expanded to support healthy development and learning. The participants' perceptions support these theories as social media is impacting the way in which students communicate and learn. As with any innovation, the potential for positive and negative impacts is present. Digital immigrant teachers have concerns about social media influence, yet acknowledge that social media usage will not soon fade. The potential of distraction, improper usage, cyber-bullying, and cheating are not new concerns. Social media, however, is the new medium by which these can occur. Positively speaking, social media poses opportunities for easier collaboration, communicating information, and engaging students including those who may not speak out in class. The latter supports Reid's and Reid's (2004) findings that "regular use of electronic mail and participating in user groups had improved the lives of some users, particularly those who experienced difficulties with face-to-face communication" (p. 2).

Additionally, if teachers recognize student adeptness and attraction to technological offerings such as social media, it stands to reason that teachers would be willing to utilize those offerings. However, digital immigrant teachers may need direction and training on how to effectively use such resources. Just because teachers

utilize social media personally does not mean that they are anxious or enthusiastic about incorporating it into formal schooling practices.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FORM

APPENDIX E: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

APPEDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

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The Graduate School at Liberty University

April 23, 2012

Robert Williams
IRB Approval 1321.042312: Digital Immigrant Teacher Perceptions of Social Media
as it Influences the Affective and Cognitive Development of Students

Dear Robert,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the
Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection
proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to
human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms
for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your
research project.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
IRB Chair, Associate Professor
Center for Counseling & Family Studies

(434) 592-5054

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40 Years of Training Champions for Christ: 1971-2011

APPEDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Personal Information:

Name _____ Year born _____

Gender _____ Degree and level _____ Number of years teaching ____

School _____ Ethnicity _____

Subjects taught _____

1. How would you define social media or social networking media?
2. What positive perceptions of the impact of social media on the socialization of students do you have?
3. What negative perceptions of the impact of social media on the socialization of students do you have?
4. What positive perceptions of the impact of social media on the learning and cognition of students do you have?
5. What negative perceptions of the impact of social media on the learning and cognition of students do you have?
6. What experiences have you had that contribute to your perceptions?
7. Why are you supportive or reluctant to incorporate social media as a tool in the education process?
8. If a school required you to incorporate social media as part of your curriculum, how would you feel?
9. What are your current uses of social media as a formal learning tool in the education process?
10. What is your perception of the use of social media as a formal learning tool on the impact on learning?
11. What rationale do you have for using or not using social media in education?
12. How would you view social media contributing to the learning process?
13. Reflecting from when you first began teaching until now, are there any changes or differences in student learning or behavior that you attribute to social media?
14. What preparation or training have you received in incorporating social media (or digital technologies) into the classroom? Describe a specific preparation experience.
15. What challenges do you attribute to social media?
16. How do you as a digital immigrant address challenges associated with social media? This includes both how you use social media as well as the perceived influence of social media on your students and in your classroom.
17. How do you address social media usage and influence with your students? Describe any specific instances in which you addressed social media with your students.
18. Are there any concluding comments, insights, or opinions you would like to add that have not been addressed in the previous questions?

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Consent Form
Digital Immigrant Teacher Perceptions of Social Media as it Influences the Affective and
Cognitive Development of Students
Doctoral Dissertation
Robert Williams
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of the phenomenon of social media and its influence on today's students. You were selected as a possible participant because of your experience with and observation of students for at least the past ten years. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Robert Williams, Liberty University, School of Education.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences of digital immigrant teachers with regards to social media and its influence on today's students.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:
1. Participate in an interview, which will last approximately one hour. The interview will be conducted on your school's campus and recorded for transcription purposes.
2. Participate in a focus group. The group will consist of teacher participants from your school to further discuss and provide clarity concerning the topic of social media. This focus group will occur on your school's campus and should last no more than one hour.
3. Allow the researcher to observe your classroom. I would like to observe your classroom at least once for no more than two hours. If possible, I request that you invite me to your classroom for any occasion in which you may specifically be addressing issues of social media.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

There are no known risks to you. Any minimal risk would be no more than that which you would encounter in everyday life.

The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study should provide more general benefits to the field of education

Compensation:

Participants will not be compensated for involvement with the study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Privacy will be maintained by ensuring that electronic files are password protected. Additionally, physical documents, video, and audio tapes will be held in a secure, locked file in the office of the researcher. Documents containing data will be shredded after the three year federally mandated time period for maintaining data. Video and audio files will be erased or destroyed at that time as well. Because of the focus groups, confidentiality is limited to the scope of the researcher. The researcher cannot assure that other participants will maintain confidentiality and privacy.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time with out affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is: Robert Williams. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 871 Winding Wood Drive, Wetumpka, Alabama, 36093, 334-201-2092, rwilliams31@liberty.edu. Questions or concerns may also be directed to Dr. Daniel Baer, 919-539-9094, dnbaer@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1582, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

□   I consent to being video and audio recorded for the study.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Signature of parent or guardian:_____ Date: _____
(If minors are involved)

Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FORM

My name is Robert Williams. I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. My research *Digital Immigrant Teacher Perceptions of Social Media as it Influences the Affective and Cognitive Development of Students: A Phenomenological Study* is focused on the phenomenon of social media through the eyes and voice of digital immigrant teachers. The aim of my project is to describe how teachers born before 1974 perceive social media and its influence on today's students. My research will attempt to inform educators on how social media is influencing students, what areas of social media influence need to be addressed, and what areas of social media should be capitalized on. Further, the study will inform educational leaders on the perceptions of digital immigrants, thereby allowing leaders to make informed decisions on how to address and assist digital immigrant teachers.

I will be taking field notes while observing a maximum of two hours and interacting with the teachers. Also, I will arrange to meet with them at a mutually convenient time and place for about an hour in order to conduct an interview. Further, I will conduct a focus group whereby the teachers will be able to share additional information, clarify previous thoughts, and answer follow up questions that may arise. After data has been collected, teachers will be able to examine the transcripts and notes of the taped interviews, and make any changes that they would like.

Their participation is voluntary. All the data collected will be confidential and it will only be accessible to the researcher. I would be pleased to discuss any questions you may have regarding my research. You can contact me any time at (334) 201-2092 or rwilliams31@liberty.edu.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request.

Rob Williams

Doctoral candidate student

APPENDIX E: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Participant Name _____ Date _____
Time of Observation _____

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes