

USES AND PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA  
AS A STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TOOL FOR  
ACADEMIC PURPOSES  
AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

By

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Title of Study: USES AND PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A STUDENT  
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Major Field: EDUCATION

Abstract: With the growth of social media over the last decade, students are looking at these platforms not only for personal purposes but also for academic purposes. Social networking sites (SNS) are online communities designed to connect individuals to wider networks of relationships. The purpose of this sequential explanatory mixed methods study was to examine the student and faculty uses and perceptions of social media for academic purposes at a community college. This research purpose is relevant and timely due to the increase in social networking in the academic environment.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

With the growth of online communities over the last few years, people are using social media networking sites for many different reasons which include personal, business, product information, and education. Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined social network sites as web-based services allowing individuals to construct profiles, display user connections, and search and traverse within that list of connections. Social media represents new skills and ways of participating in the world (Jenkins, 2006). In 2018, nearly 70% of adults in the U.S. reported using some form of social media (Pew Research Center, 2018). Adding that 88% of college students ages 18-29 years old admitted to using at least one social media platform. A report by Brenner and Smith (2013) found that roughly 90% of an adult sample, age 18-29, used social networking sites for some purpose. Facebook (2020) reported there were 2.7 billion monthly active users in the second quarter of 2020. Social networking sites such as Facebook allow users to engage with others on a global basis.

Students interact with social media sites such as Facebook which links them to thousands of news articles, product endorsements, links, and interactions between their contacts. “Facebook puts a massive amount of information and communication power at a student’s fingertips” (Heiberger & Harper, 2008, p. 20). Junco et al. (2011) found that “94% of first year college students use a social networking website, 85% of students at a large research university had accounts on Facebook, the most popular social networking site” (p. 120). This technology could

provide educators with multiple ways to deliver content and it could give students easier access to that content. With an increase in the usage of social media on college campuses, studying the use of social media as an educational tool is becoming more common and administrators could benefit by better understanding the possibilities and opportunities of incorporating this technology. Social media is a part of our technological society, therefore the need to examine the use of social media as an educational tool is critical.

Berg and Christoph (2007) described how one university used Facebook as a means to build better relationships with its students and personnel. They also discovered using Facebook positively and constructively allowed students ways to connect with core campus activities such as tutoring, study groups, class scheduling, counseling, and academic advising. The researchers concluded that social networking technologies are part of our technology world, so they are implementing various ideas for engaging and benefiting from the fast-moving technology. Wesch (2011) stated that new media we see in our environment are not just new means of communication, they are not just tools, they can change what can be said, how it can be said, who can say it, and who can hear it. Media counts as information and knowledge. Without adequate knowledge of how, when, and why social media can contribute to an academic environment, this technology may fail to reach its potential as an educational tool, and no useful and reliable guidelines can be developed for its effective design and implementation.

According to the American College Personnel Association (1996), the key to enhancing learning and personal development is not simply for faculty to teach more and better, but also to create conditions that motivate and inspire students to devote time and energy to educationally-purposeful activities, both in and outside the classroom. The Center for Community College Student Engagement [CCCSE] (2009) found that many community college students use social

media to communicate with faculty and staff and to connect with peers for both academic and non-academic reasons. These connections resulted in higher levels of measured engagement (CCCSE, 2009).

Using social media for academic purposes and contributing to online communities could help to develop the necessary skills and technical literacy that will be vital in the future.

According to Kuh et al. (2005a), two key components contribute to student success. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies. Students who dedicate more time toward their studies and co-curricular activities often gain more from their college experiences. The second component of student success is how an institution allocates resources and organizes learning opportunities (Kuh et al., 2005a). Student engagement focuses not on what students bring to college (such as motivation and academic preparation), but what students do in college and how student behaviors, opportunities, and environments mediate college retention and graduation (Kuh et al., 2005b). Student engagement can occur inside the classroom (curricular), and it can also occur outside of the classroom (co-curricular). Through involvement in both aspects of learning, students can become more engaged and connected to the college which can promote learning and personal development which in turn transfers to student success.

This study builds on the work of Bishop's (2015) "Student Use of Social Networking Sites: A Multimethod Study at an Access Institution." Bishop's study explored student uses and perceptions in three categories: connecting, interacting, and sharing. This study will not only expand on the student perspective but also add the perspective of faculty at an urban community college. Bishop recommended surveying and interviewing faculty to determine their behaviors and perceptions of social media use for academic purposes and expanding the research to other community college institutions. Bishop also indicated that a more focused explanatory design

would be beneficial to explore how social media could be used in academic settings. Many studies relate to social media use at four-year institutions, but studies that focus on community college use of social media as an engagement tool are limited (e.g., Alderson, 2017; Evans, 2017; Ramirez, 2017). Therefore, this study will focus specifically on similarities and differences of student and faculty use and perceived benefits of social media as an engagement tool in the community college environment.

### **Problem Statement**

Since students appear to be engaged with social media, one way that institutions could strengthen the learning environment is by incorporating the use of this technology into the classroom experience such as using Facebook to increase university student involvement (Heiberger & Harper, 2008). Similarly, Junco and Cole-Avent (2008) suggested that technologies such as social networking could not only increase college student engagement but improve educational outcomes. Social media could be used as an engagement tool for faculty members to draw the learner in. Sturgeon and Walker (2009) stated that some of the most effective faculty members are those who create informal relationships with their students via Facebook.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Because there have been limited studies on the effects of social media on student engagement at community colleges, the purpose of this study was to examine and describe both student and faculty uses and perceptions of social media as a student engagement tool for academic purposes in this setting. With the current growth in social media, using this technology could allow students to feel more connected and engaged with their instructors as well as other

students in the class. Conversely, instructors could also become more engaged with the students in the classroom by utilizing social media. Some researchers suggest a sense of connectedness achieved through the use of digital tools, which could include social networking sites, may increase student engagement in online courses (Imlawi & Gregg, 2014; Kear, 2011). Colleges and universities are joining the social media revolution to form connections with their target demographic (Reynolds, 2013).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will be explored in this study:

- Q1: How do community college students use social networking sites for academic purposes?
- Q2: How do community college faculty use social networking sites for academic purposes?
- Q3: What is the community college student perception of social media usage in community college courses?
- Q4: What is the community college faculty perception of social media usage in community college courses?
- Q5: Is there a significant difference between community college student and faculty perceptions toward the use of social media for academic engagement?

### **Significance of the Study**

Social media usage is increasing in popularity among Americans. According to Baer (2019), approximately 223 million Americans used social media in 2019. This technology has

given community college students unlimited access and resources at their fingertips. For many students, community college is the first step in their collegiate academic career. Students choose community colleges for a variety of reasons: tuition costs, workforce training, obtaining a specialized certificate, assistance in transferring into a four-year institution, family/work-life balance, and college readiness. Community college students have unique characteristics when compared to four-year university students (Kuh et al., 2008). These students are considered more diverse. They can be commuters, non-traditional or traditional age, first generation, minorities, and part-time students who have prior family and/or work obligations. This study assisted in describing the relationship of social networking sites in conjunction with student engagement.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was based on Astin's (1984) Input-Environment-Outcomes Model and Theory of Involvement, or I-E-O, as seen in Figure 1. This theory describes how students change or develop. Astin asserted that for students to grow, they need to actively engage in their environments. Astin established five criteria to consider in the student involvement theory. The five criteria are investment of psychological and physical energy, investment of energy in different objects, involvement (which exhibits both qualitative and quantitative characteristics), learning and development (which is directly related to the amount and level of involvement), and educational policy effectiveness (which is an indication of the ability to successfully encourage student involvement) (p. 306).

Involvement theory and engagement theory are used interchangeably even though there are differences between the two theories. Astin's I-E-O Model and Theory of Involvement has many key elements that are tied directly to student engagement. Astin's (1984, 1993) involvement theory primarily focused on extracurricular (out-of-classroom) involvement and

how that involvement contributes to the success of the student. Astin (1984) defined involvement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 297). College student engagement theory primarily focuses on the amount of time and effort that college students dedicate to activities that are linked to desired outcomes of a college education (Kuh, 2009). This research study will use the terms interchangeably. Astin’s I-E-O Model fits well with this study due to the following reasons:

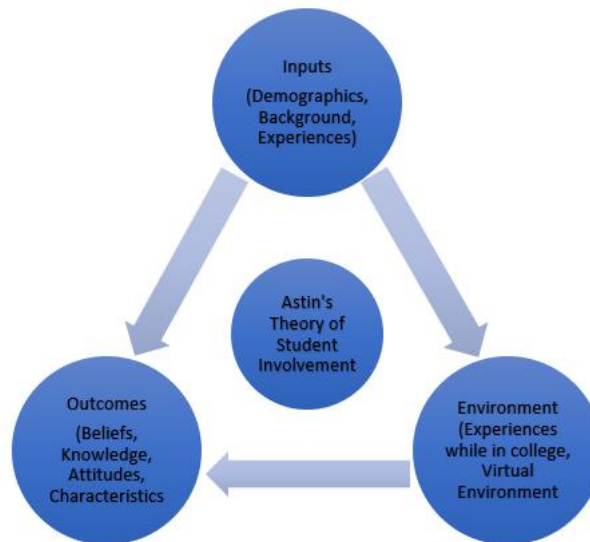
- a) I (Input) relates to the faculty and student demographics and/or what their background may be in relation to social media;
- b) E (Environment) will measure the frequency rates that faculty and students use social media within the classroom for academic purposes;
- c) O (Outcomes) will measure the uses and perceptions that faculty and students have regarding social media as a student engagement tool.

Astin’s Theory of Student Involvement includes activities that are designed to increase student retention rates based on their active involvement. This theory is a useful lens for this study because it enabled the researcher to examine and explain how this technology might be used to engage community college students. This study identified the uses of social media and the frequency of engagement of various types of social media activities for academic purposes. Student engagement focuses not on what students bring to college (such as motivation and academic preparation), but what students do in college and how student behaviors, opportunities, and environments mediate college retention and graduation.



## Figure 1

### *Astin's (1984) Theory of Student Involvement*



### Definitions of Key Terms

The following key terms are being described for this study.

#### **Definitions**

College success course: a college-level course that teaches students tools for student success. For example, time management skills, note-taking skills, test-taking skills, and critical-thinking skills.

Community college: a junior college or technical college that offers two-year degrees and accessibility to all (Grove, 2020).

Co-curricular: consists of structured learning activities that complement the formal curriculum (Rutter & Mintz, 2016).

Curricular: planned instructional content, materials, resources, and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives (Adams & Adams, 2003).

Nontraditional student: The National Center for Education Statistics (1996) defines nontraditional students as meeting one of seven characteristics: delayed enrollment into postsecondary education; attends college part-time; works full time; is financially independent for financial aid purposes; has dependents other than a spouse; is a single parent; or does not have a high school diploma.

Social media: Web 2.0 applications through which users create and share information to create opportunities for dialogue and collaboration with other users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Joosten, 2012). Examples of social media platforms:

- Facebook: a social network that allows users to create online profiles about themselves and can include their interests, degree of study, photos, and personal updates. Facebook was developed to create a space to share information and create a more open and connected world (Abell, 2009).
- GroupMe: a mobile group messaging app owned by Microsoft.
- Instagram: a social network that allows the user to share pictures and videos to tell their story.
- LinkedIn: a social network that is designed to connect professionals. Users can network with peers, search for jobs, and share professional updates.
- Microblogging: short text updates used on social media sites. For example, Twitter.
- Pinterest: a social networking website that allows you to organize and share ideas with others (TechTerms, n.d.).

- Twitter: a microblogging site that allows users to post up to 140 characters of information in a social way. Users can create private or public accounts where the profile information is limited, and users create small “tweets” that can link to users or articles (Abell, 2009).
- Snapchat: a mobile messaging application used to share photos, videos, text, and drawings (Aslam, 2018b).
- YouTube: a social media technology that gives everyone a voice and shows them the world. YouTube is based on four essential freedoms that define who we are: freedom of expression, freedom of information, freedom of opportunity, and freedom to belong (YouTube, 2017).

Social networking (SNS): web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Student engagement: the total effort made by students toward their studies, thus resulting in positive educational outcomes (Kuh, 2009). The three characteristics of student engagement are that students are concerned with their work, they persevere through difficulties and obstacles that they face, and they take pleasure from their accomplishments (Schlechty, 1994).

Student involvement: the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience (Astin, 1993).

Web 2.0: the term given to describe a second generation of the worldwide web focused on the ability for people to collaborate and share information online (Beal, n.d.).

## **Assumptions**

This study was based on several assumptions. The first set of assumptions is based on the employment of the researcher. The researcher is employed at a large urban multi-campus community college in the south-central region of the United States and surveyed the students of this institution. The researcher did not know the students that participate in the survey and assumed that there is no effect on the results.

The second set of assumptions is based upon the honesty and accuracy of the participants. The researcher assumed that students understood the questions fully and answered them to the best of their ability. The researcher also assumed that students gave honest and accurate opinions and/or perceptions of social media for academic purposes.

The third set of assumptions was based on social media networking sites and usability. It was assumed that community college students use social media networking sites. It was also assumed that many community college students use social networking sites for entertainment purposes instead of educational purposes. It was also assumed that not all community college students prefer to use social media networking sites. Lastly, it was assumed that not all students have equal technology proficiencies.

## **Limitations**

There were several limitations of this study that could impact the internal and external validity. For this study, surveys were distributed to students enrolled at a large multi-campus community college in the midwestern state; therefore, the results may not be generalized to all colleges and/or universities. The next limitation is that the survey data is self-reported. Another limitation is that the survey was strictly voluntary for student and faculty participation. This

could have prevented some participants from completing the survey because it was not mandatory. The fact that social media networking sites were not intended for use as an educational tool could also be a limitation of this study.

### **Delimitations**

There were a few factors that narrowed the scope of this study. For example, research was done with community college students and faculty versus a traditional four-year institution. The results of this survey may differ from those at a traditional four-year institution. Another delimitation of this study is that research was done on a convenience sample during the 2019 fall semester and will not represent participants in other semesters. The survey reflected current social media platforms chosen by the researcher. Another delimitation is that the researcher was not allowed to survey all faculty, therefore surveys were sent to faculty members that teach one course. This study did not address the success rates of the students that use social media as a student engagement tool, it only addressed their perceptions of engagement while using this tool.

### **Organization of the Study**

This chapter offered background on the issue of student engagement and the use of social media networking sites. It outlined the purpose of the study and provided the research questions and brief definitions of key terms related to the study. In Chapter 2, the literature review, I examined student engagement, social media networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Theories linked to student engagement were also explored. Chapter 3 provides details of the research methodology which includes the research design, data collection methods, and analysis used for the study. Chapter 4 presents summarized information

of the data that will be collected. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Utilizing social media in the college classroom could be considered a link to student engagement, which, in turn, could strengthen a student's relationships not only with their peers but also with faculty members. Prior studies suggest students who feel connected through shared experiences with peer groups or faculty are less likely to drop out (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1987). The research on the use of technology to improve learning seems to indicate that with appropriate use, it can have a significant, positive effect on student learning and attitude (Talley, 2004). One way of engaging students is through the use of technology. As educators, we need to look at new technologies and decide how to best utilize them for academic purposes to increase student engagement. One of the main concerns with implementing the use of social media for academic purposes is that there is a limited number of qualitative studies that show the connection between student engagement and social media. This literature review explored several theories of student engagement, student involvement, and relevant studies as they relate to social media networking sites, specifically regarding the community college. Search terms that were used for this literature review were *social media, student engagement, student development, community college, open-access institution, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, Instagram, and Astin's Theory of Involvement*.

## **Overview of the Community College**

Community colleges provide access to higher education for many students who might not be eligible or might not be ready to attend four-year institutions. The community college is often called an “open access” institution because it allows the opportunity for all people to obtain a higher education. Community colleges remain committed to keeping access open and providing comprehensive course and program offerings. Once a student is enrolled in community college, many resources are available to provide support such as financial aid, academic advising, career services, and tutoring, which helps ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed. These institutions are characterized by their primarily open-access missions, which “develop the potentials of underprepared students, so that they may become productive members of society, and to provide second chances and retraining for adults” (Biermann, 1996, para. 2).

Bailey et al. (2015) found that community colleges serve an underrepresented number of students that are low income, immigrants, first-generation, and ethnic minority students. The community college has historically been a venue through which working professionals or students for whom attending a four-year college was not an option have been able to take courses. In recent years, the community college has changed experiencing significant growth over the last decade due to increased accessibility. Vaughn (2000) summarized the mission of the community college as a series of commitments that include providing open access to all segments of society with equal and fair treatment to all students, offering a comprehensive education, serving the local community, teaching, and providing opportunities for lifelong learning. These colleges are considered open-access institutions that allow a wide variety of students the opportunity to complete their educational dreams. They are very diverse in population and offer students multiple options, such as transfer degrees, certificates, and



associate degrees. Another important factor for open access is low tuition rates. By maintaining low tuition rates, community colleges can remove barriers to those students that cannot afford four-year institutions. They can also be looked at as institutions that provide lifelong learning opportunities to the community at large.

Community colleges developed as an educational extension for students who had completed the K-12 system to obtain further training to build a better workforce (Wells, 2008). For many, community college is the first step in obtaining a college degree. As Santibanez et al. (2007) explained, “Community colleges have traditionally benefited low-income students, who use them as a stepping stone to better jobs and higher education” (p. 52). Further, according to Cohen and Brawer (2003), these institutions have served a vital role in the American higher education system.

The American Association of Community Colleges (2016) confirmed this vital role when it reported the headcount for community college enrollment for Fall 2014 was 7.3 million students which included full-time and part-time students. Community colleges provide educational access to many non-traditional students, minorities, low-income students, and first-generation students that otherwise might never be able to attend college. Community colleges have evolved from simple transfer institutions into institutions for vocational careers, workforce training, and baccalaureate delivery programs, among others (Bragg et al., 2006). Without meaningful interactions between students, faculty, and staff outside the classroom, community college students often feel isolated and disconnected, putting them at high risk of not persisting to graduation (Braxton et al., 2004).

Another challenge for the community college is student engagement. Many students that attend community colleges live off-campus, work full-time, take classes part-time, take care of

family, or have other obligations that limit the amount of engagement they can have either inside or outside of the classroom. The term *engagement* has been used to refer to a few types of engagement, including academic, social, cognitive, behavioral, and others (Taylor & Parsons, 2011). Social media is increasing student engagement outside of the classroom and it is creating new and innovative ways in which students learn (Ivala & Gachago, 2012). Gant and Hadley (2014) examined microblogging's potential to create heightened engagement, to encourage transactional learning, and to help with the retention of class content.

### **Student Engagement**

Student engagement is part of the learning process and can be looked at inside the classroom, as well as outside the classroom. It can have a positive relationship with the overall learning process and outcomes of student success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Students who are more engaged claim to have gained more from their college experience than students who are not actively involved or participating in school (Kuh et al., 2004). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) defined student engagement as the amount of time and energy put forth by a student, which can be directly related to desired student outcomes. According to Kuh et al. (2005a), student engagement focuses not on what students bring to college (such as motivation and academic preparation), but what students do in college and how student behaviors, opportunities, and environments mediate college retention and graduation. In a later study, Kuh et al. (2008) noted that student engagement includes two components: the first involves students' time and effort spent on educationally purposeful activities, while the second involves the institution support systems that lead to student success. Similarly, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) found that student engagement can also be influenced by the level and degree of contact that a student

may have with faculty, college personnel, and peers, as well as involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Chapman (2003) identified five indicators for student engagement in college. They include the level of academic challenge which means the extent to which expectations and assessments challenge students to learn. Second is active and collaborative learning which includes the students' efforts to actively construct their knowledge. Next is student-faculty interaction which is the level and nature of student contact with teaching staff. Students should build relationships with faculty to increase learning. When a student is engaged in conversations and/or projects with a faculty member, more learning can take place. Next is enriching educational experiences including participation in broadening educational activities. For example, faculty members might partner with campus life professionals that provide learning opportunities that take place out of the classroom. These could include educational workshops, speakers, lectures, musical performances, and service-learning projects that complement the content that is being taught in the classroom. The final indicator is a supportive learning environment, which includes feelings of legitimation within the university community. When students feel supported by faculty, other students, and the university community, they could feel more connected to the learning environment. It is the contention of theorists and published research in this field that student engagement is essential to the learning process (Kearsley & Schneiderman, 1998). Student development has been described as "the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education" (Rodgers, 1989, p. 27).

A key component of student engagement is how an institution delivers its resources, learning opportunities, and support services to induce students to participate in activities that lead

to desired outcomes such as persistence, satisfaction, learning, and graduation (Kuh, 2009).

There are five indicators of student engagement in college (Chapman, 2003). They include the level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching education experiences, and supportive learning environment. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) highlighted key findings regarding the relationship between student engagement, student development, and success:

1. College environments that emphasize close interactions between faculty and students are related to improved critical thinking, knowledge acquisition, analytic competencies, and intellectual development.
2. Close on-campus friendships and engagement in college-sponsored activities maximize persistence and educational attainment.
3. Environments that emphasize engagement in class discussions and involvement with faculty in the academic community maximize psychological adjustment and maturity; students' perception of faculty as accessible, caring, and helpful promotes persistence and degree completion.
4. Extracurricular involvement has a positive effect on persistence and educational attainment, women's choice of nontraditional careers, and development of a positive social self-concept.
5. The higher the level of student engagement in academic work and in the academic experience of college, the greater his/her level of knowledge acquisition and cognitive growth.

6. Interaction with peers is a powerful force in student persistence and degree completion.

Faculty and staff interactions have continually shown positive relationships to persistence and degree completion. Communication is a coordinated or synchronized process that allows people a means for coping with or dealing with the environment in which they live (Berlo, 1960). Today, we communicate in various methods and with the ever-changing world of technology, we must adapt to these changes in communication styles. It is important for faculty to communicate with students in the virtual world. One of the most important factors that can contribute to student success is how much effort students put into their assignments. These theories focus on behaviors that play a role in student engagement. As more and more faculty join social networking sites this could allow them to engage with their students. Social media integration for academic purposes can inspire faculty members to think outside the box and explore new digital ways to teach students.

### **Student Engagement and Instruction**

Chickering and Gamson (1987) offered seven principles for improving undergraduate education based on research on exemplary teaching and learning in college and universities. These principles are directly related to student engagement. First, encourage contact between students and faculty. One example of encouraging contact includes freshman seminars which were taught by senior faculty members. These seminars allowed faculty members the opportunity to engage early with students. When students and faculty engage outside of the classroom it can lead to student motivation and involvement. Second, develop reciprocity and cooperation among students. When there is cooperation among students, learning is enhanced because it is more of a team effort versus a single effort. Working with other students can

increase involvement in learning and create a more collaborative atmosphere. Third, encourage active learning. Active learning can be increased when students talk about what they learned versus just sitting and listening to the teachers. When the student can apply the lesson to their everyday life learning takes place. Fourth, provide prompt feedback. Students need appropriate and prompt feedback to benefit from the courses. This helps with assessing the students existing knowledge and provides them with feedback for improvement. It is important for students to be able to assess themselves and what they have learned throughout the course and what they still need to work on. Fifth, emphasize time on task. Time management can play a key role in learning. The amount of time that a student commits to learning can provide them with more understanding of a subject matter. Time management is critical to the success of a student. Next, communicate high expectations. The more faculty expect in the classroom, the more they will receive. Faculty members should hold high expectations which in turn should make students perform better. Last, respect diverse talents and ways of learning. There are various ways that students learn. Some may need hands-on experiences while others may need visual or auditory learning situations. There are many different paths a faculty member can take when teaching but it is important to know the students that you are working with.

These seven principles are intended as guidelines for faculty and students to improve teaching and learning. Chickering and Gamson (1987) suggested it is the responsibility of both the student and the teacher to improve undergraduate education by following these principles. Each of these principles can stand on its own but when used all together the effects can become powerful forces in students' education. When used together, they employ six powerful forces in education: activity, expectations, cooperation, interaction, diversity, and responsibility (Chickering & Gamson, 1987).

Astin (1984) defined engagement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 297). Students change and develop as a result to being involved in co-curricular activities. Both students and faculty need to commit to active involvement and both need to put forth effort to gain knowledge and experiences that foster growth and learning. For students to grow, Astin argued that students need to actively engage in their environment. He defined three core concepts to improve student engagement. The first core concept is *inputs* (I). Astin (1993) suggested that “inputs” refer to the student as they enter their chosen institution. Inputs can also be defined as any previous experience that a student has had. Inputs also includes the student demographics, student background and the experience of the student. Inputs are simply the personal qualities and experiences the student brings to the educational environment. The second core concept is *environment* (E), which refers to the student’s experiences while in college. Environment refers to the professors, classmates, various programs, and policies the student will experience or simply all the experiences a student would have during their academic career. Outcomes is the third core concept which refers to the characteristics of the student after they have experienced the collegiate environment for example, their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and values that exist post-academia. Students who are actively engaged in campus activities typically have a higher persistence level (Astin, 1984).

Astin’s (1984) Theory of Student Involvement had five tenets that can be used to gauge the level of involvement in a particular experience. The first tenet refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy of involvement. This involvement can be anything from the student experience or it can be a specific activity in which the student participates in. For example, participating in an intramural sport, joining a student organization or studying for an exam.

The second tenet of involvement is that it occurs along a continuum. Some students are more apt to spend energy in a specific activity than other students. Some students will become more involved in their campus culture than other students. Clearly, students have different degrees of involvement with different objects at different times.

The third tenet of involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features. When defining quantitative involvement this could be measured by the amount of time that a student devotes to a specific activity. A qualitative component would include the attention given to a specific activity. For example, does a student review and comprehend the content of the reading assignment they are given or does a student stare at the textbook.

Next, the amount of student learning and development associated with an educational program is directly related to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program. This simply means the more a student puts into an activity, the more they will get out of the activity. Finally, the effectiveness of any educational practice is directly related to the ability of that practice to increase student involvement (Astin, 1984). According to Astin (1984), a greater degree of student involvement in college life as measured by time spent on academic activities, social activities on campus, etc., is associated with persistence and a lesser degree of such involvement in college life is associated with departure. The more time students spend on activities related to their education, the more involved they will become in their campus culture. Astin (1993) noted that one of the primary factors of college retention is student involvement with peers and faculty.

Additionally, Kuh et al. (2005b) contend that students are more likely to be satisfied with their education and feel a sense of loyalty to their institution if the institution promotes active involvement on the part of students in campus life and learning. Students' past educational



experiences, intentions, educational goals, and their level of commitment to the institution were the factors that explained student persistence (Tinto, 1993). Tinto also found that the level of commitment was affected by a student's level of academic and social integration at the institution.

As defined by Kuh (2009), the student engagement premise is straightforward and easily understood: the more students study a subject, the more they know about it, and the more students practice and get feedback from faculty and staff members on their writing and collaborative problem solving, the deeper they understand what they are learning and the more adept they become at managing complexity, tolerating ambiguity, and working with people from different backgrounds or with different views. Engaging in a variety of educationally productive activities also builds the foundation of skills and dispositions people need to live a productive, satisfying life after college (Kuh, 2009, p. 5). Similarly, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) suggest that "since individual effort or engagement is the critical determinant of the impact of college, then it is important to focus on the ways in which the institution can shape its academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage student engagement" (p. 602).

Students can become more engaged by interacting with their peers. Schlossberg's transition theory (1989) states that it is imperative that higher education institutions make students feel significant since that feeling precedes student involvement in college activities and programs. She found that there are many steps to becoming engaged with the campus community. The first one is student-peer interaction such as joining student organizations or Greek life. Student-peer interactions can also occur through classroom discussions and study groups. Second is engaging in service learning which enables the student to apply in-class principles to real-life experiences. Next, students can become involved in campus life through

activities that promote diversity and inclusion and by participating in student organizations and Greek life. These could include focus group discussions, faculty panels, field trips, and diversity lectures. Finally, students can become more involved in campus culture by engaging in athletics or intramural sports.

When looking at social media for academic purposes, Moore's Transactional Distance Theory (1997) can also give a glimpse into the connection of social media and student engagement for academic purposes. The theory looks at the interplay between dialogue, structure, and learner autonomy and how these three variables interact to either increase transactional distance, the feeling of connectedness, and a measure of efficiency in diminishing miscommunication, or to decrease transactional distance (Shearer, 2010). Moore described the importance of the teacher to student communication specifically in a virtual world and this theory has been widely discussed in online distance education. The theory poses that high structure and low dialogue result in greater transactional distance and more responsibility on the part of the learner to be autonomous to succeed (Moore & Kearsley, 1996). Further, Moore (1991, 1993) identified three such dimensions as interaction, course structure, and learner autonomy, affecting the teaching procedures in distance learning.

The first dimension is interaction. Often, the first thought of interaction is as an interaction between faculty and student. For a student to have successful interactions they must possess a comfort level with the delivery method of information. Students' interaction with their classmates in a distance learning environment can contribute to learning (Moore & Kearsley, 1996). Technology lends itself to collaborative work between and among students (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1999). According to Kearsley and Shneiderman (1999), "The fundamental idea underlying engagement theory is that students must be meaningfully engaged in learning

activities through interaction with others and worthwhile tasks” (p. 20). There is a need for instructors to learn how to effectively incorporate technological media into the classroom for learning purposes and student engagement. As bell hooks (1994) argued, educators have the responsibility to present engagement strategies in every classroom. Course structure is the second dimension which "is determined by the educational philosophy of the teaching organization, the teachers themselves, the academic level of the learners, the nature of the content, and in particular, by the communications media that are employed" (Moore & Kearsley, 1996, p. 203). Kearsley and Shneiderman (1999) found that when instructors incorporate interactive technologies in their courses it helps to create these meaningful learning experiences. Students prefer technology and multimedia-based instruction, and they feel that it promotes self-learning abilities and growth in professional development (Wang, 2010). Wang also found that these technologies may increase a students’ level of creativity and interest in learning. The last dimension is learner autonomy. Moore (1984) described autonomy as “the extent to which, in the learning-teaching relationship, it is the learner rather than the teacher who determines the goals, the learning procedures and resources, and the evaluation decisions of the learning programme” (p. 85). Learner autonomy is the ability to effectively take part in learning opportunities that include a “range of ability and willingness to participate” in the selection and formulation of projects that involve individual or collaborative efforts (Confessore & Park, 2004). Granitz and Koerning (2011) found that each instructor has unique considerations for course design and would need to assess the compatibility and the relative advantage that social media tools offer. With the significant social, economic, and technological changes that we are facing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, higher education institutions must change the educational experience of the student by incorporating social media and other technologies for academic purposes.

## **Overview of the College Success Course**

The College Success course is designed to teach students ways in which they can transition from high school or work to college life. This course serves as a teaching tool on how to succeed in the college classroom and provides students with the proper resources that are available to them at the institution. These courses oftentimes serve as extended college orientations for first time entering students by providing more detailed information about campus policies and services, career planning, study habits and personal skills.

### **Social Media**

Social networking sites (SNS) are online, or virtual, communities designed to connect individuals to wider networks of relationships. Rheingold (1993) is credited with inventing the term “virtual community” through his research of online life. These virtual spaces allow participants to create virtual communities to share experiences, communicate personal information, connect with friends and family, and share information. Facebook (2020) reported that seven out of ten (69%) adults use Facebook. There are also a variety of activities being shared on this network. According to Facebook (2020) statistics, they are the leading social platform, reaching 60.6% of internet users. There are thousands of college students participating in some form of social media at any given time (Reimherr, 2014). A 2013 study by Shweiki Media and Study Breaks College Media found that of 260 college students 95% of them were using Facebook, 80% were using Twitter, 73% were using Instagram, 48% were using Pinterest and 40% were using LinkedIn. Pew Research Center (2018) reported that because of widespread availability of smartphones, about 24% of teens aged 13-17 go online “almost constantly.” They went on to say that because of the convenience of smartphones and constant access about 92% of teens are online daily.

Social media networking sites have emerged in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a way to connect people with companies, institutions, and causes, as well as with each other. Users can share a wide variety of information and media on SNS, such as pictures, news stories, personal stories, and more. SNS like Facebook are one of the latest examples of communications technologies that have been widely-adopted by students and, consequently, have the potential to become a valuable resource to support their educational communications and collaborations with faculty (Roblyer et al., 2010). EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research (ECAR) (2011) collected data from 71,641 undergraduate students from 183 institutions to learn about their technology experiences. From that data, they developed a snapshot using a representative sample of 10,000 students from 153 of those institutions. This snapshot showed that 46% of students say they get more actively involved in courses that use technology and 78% of students agree that the use of technology contributes to the successful completion of courses. Students are comfortable using social networking sites as communication sites to connect with other students as well as with faculty (EDUCAUSE, 2011). Additionally, the student perception is that they learn more when there is a technology/online component included in the course (EDUCAUSE, 2011). In short, social networking sites provide people with an online space that allows them to virtually build and establish their own personal social connection. These technologies have opened the doors to have more interactive communication among students and faculty. The following paragraphs describe and provide background for popular social media sites.

### **Facebook**

Facebook was launched in 2004 as a way for college students to connect to each other and eventually it was opened to the population at large. Ninety percent of students use Facebook, including 58% who report using it several times a day (Educause, 2011). Twelve percent of

students say Facebook is “extremely valuable” to their academic success, while 25% consider it valuable or “extremely valuable.” Additionally, Heiberger and Harper (2008) reported, “Facebook puts a massive amount of information and communication power at a student’s fingertips, making it possibly the ultimate synthesis of student-relevant data” (p. 20). Students interact with Facebook on their laptops, desktops, and mobile phone devices. They have an instant connection to the outside world. This instant connection makes it easy for students to connect with faculty and other students and to engage in ongoing discussions. Social networking sites have the potential to connect students in a more meaningful way than email (Kuh et al., 2005a). Social networking sites offer the student a way to post videos, pictures, profiles, preferences and interests. Students can learn more detailed information about their fellow classmates and faculty, which can in turn provide more meaningful interactions.

The use of Facebook contributes to the level of learning engagement in the real world or that Facebook assists students in merging their academic and social life together (Wang et al., 2013). Researchers surveyed 134 students in two advanced English courses. The instructor created a private Facebook group the entire class could access. Next, students were introduced to Facebook, received an hour of training on how to use Facebook, and were given various activities to complete. Results of this study revealed that students were highly engaged with their instructor and other students during the duration of the study and that using Facebook sustained learning engagement both inside and outside of the classroom (Wang et al., 2013).

## **Twitter**

As stated on the website, Twitter was launched in 2007 and is the second largest social media networking site. Their mission, according to Twitter (2015), is to give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers. As of November 2019, there

were approximately 330 million active users. 500 million tweets are sent out each day, which equates to 5,787 tweets per second (Twitter, 2015).

Twitter is considered a real-time information network that will connect the user to the latest news, information, and opinions about topics of interest. Twitter allows the user to “tweet” or microblog small amounts of information to the entire social networking community. The *tweet* is an electronic message sent from an individual’s Twitter account via text messaging or Internet connection. They are short messages containing a maximum of 280 characters, and they can also be used for photos and videos. Twitter’s design allows the user to quickly post information or share information in real-time. Twitter provides the instant connectivity that people seek today. A user “follows” other users to see what they share on Twitter. A user “retweets” comments that another user makes. This provides an opportunity for the user to redistribute a particularly meaningful or import message from someone they follow. Retweets are a common measure of Twitter activity because they signify action within the Twitter network (Junco et al., 2011). Twitter users frequently use a hashtag (#) to denote a topic of discussion or conversation. Once a user sees a hashtag, they can join the conversation. Users can also search Twitter for specific hashtags to join any number of conversations.

One of the benefits of using Twitter is that it could increase a faculty member’s level of commitment to the student for communication. An example of using Twitter for academic purposes can be for the Instructor to create a single Twitter account for their class and have students manage the Twitter account. Twitter can be used to engage students in conversations which could allow students to serve an active role in the learning environment. Using Twitter could allow faculty members to utilize technology and directly connect with students throughout the day, not just while they are in class. Conversations could take place or continue outside of the

classroom, which is an important factor for student engagement. List and Bryant (2009) surveyed the student body in an early college high school program and found that Twitter increase student accountability and is effective as long as other forms of peer-to-peer communication are also used. By utilizing Twitter, instructors could choose the level of engagement that they want with their students. For example, if they want to discuss a specific topic that was covered in class, they could use the hashtag feature and follow the students' comments. They could also follow or re-tweet related Twitter conversations or topics. Students who can connect with peers and faculty via technology resources may feel more connected to the campus than those who never step foot on the campus.

### **Instagram**

Instagram (2015) is a social network in which people post photos and videos. According to Instagram (2015), there are one billion monthly active users and 71% of those users are under the age of 35. An estimated 50 billion photos are shared with approximately 4.2 billion "likes" added daily. Instagram posts can be immediately shared with other social media networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. With the development of Instagram and other social networking sites like Pinterest, a visual shift in communicating has occurred. Educators can use interactive media in their courses by using photos with links that can take the user directly to a web source for more information.

### **Pinterest**

Pinterest (2015) is a visual bookmarking tool that helps a person discover and save creative ideas. As noted on the website, Pinterest was developed in 2010 and currently has an estimated 322 million monthly active users. There are over 200 billion pins saved on Pinterest (2015). Pinterest is a popular site for social sharing among educators. The evolution of the visual



shift began with websites then blogs that provided collaboration and community-building that eventually pushed for shorter communication offered through microblogging such as Facebook updates and 140-word tweets (Moritz, 2012). With the development of Pinterest, users can look at an image visually and decide if they are interested in learning more about the topic by clicking on the photo, which directs them to an external link. Pins can be shared and can be searchable which makes it a great content-curation tool for instructors. Faculty can pin together images, links, lesson plans, podcasts and videos into creative and visually appealing boards for students to view. Faculty can also create resource boards for themselves or other instructors and use the boards for classroom assignments. These social media networking sites that primarily focus on photos are more likely to draw the user in.

### **LinkedIn**

LinkedIn (2015) was developed to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. When users create profiles, they have access to jobs, news, people, updates, and relevant information that is related to their specific interests. Aslam (2018a) stated that LinkedIn was launched in 2003 and is considered the largest professional network with more than 562 million members. These members are from countries all over the world. One benefit of using this site for academic purposes is that it allows students to connect with people all over the world that could be interested in collaborating with a project.

### **Snapchat**

Snapchat was developed as a video messaging application. Aslam (2018b) stated that Snapchat has an estimated 210 million daily users worldwide. He also stated that 38% of male students share content on Snapchat and 61% of females share content. Zhang (2017) noted that Snapchat can be used in a variety of ways when it comes to education. For example, it can be

used as reminders for upcoming assignments or activities, it can also be used for reviews, showing daily examples of vocabulary and relating real life situations to classroom learning and theories.

### **YouTube**

YouTube (2017) was developed to allow users to watch, create, and develop originally created videos. According to Smith (2020), YouTube has 1.9 billion logged in monthly users and users watch over 1 billion hours of YouTube videos a day. YouTube reaches more 18-49-year-olds than any cable network in the United States. YouTube is available in 76 different languages which covers 95% of the internet population. Users can create their own YouTube channels to deliver messages to wider audiences. YouTube is being used more and more for academic purposes. Educators can create playlists that complement their lesson plans. More than 80% of survey respondents tapped into online sites such as YouTube for video to use in their teaching (Tinti-Kane, 2013). Other ways YouTube is used in the classroom can include digital storytelling through images, sound and video; math and history tutorials; and concept illustrations that can complement the curriculum being taught. Not only is YouTube used in class sessions, but it can also be assigned for outside viewing.

### **GroupMe**

GroupMe (2010) was developed as a group messaging platform. It is a free service for users where they can create private chat rooms for groups. Group members can share information to the entire group or message privately. Some instructors have used this as a class communication tool or for reminders. Phone numbers of members can remain private or they can be visible to the group. GroupMe is a simple application that can extend the community and group communication for any given class or a student group.

## **Student Engagement and Social Media**

Technology changes rapidly in today's environment and many students interact daily with social media via their mobile phone devices. Research has shown that social media is growing in popularity and is being used more in the academic setting. Student engagement and/or student involvement can be a powerful force in both student psychosocial development and academic success. Madden and Zickuhr (2011) examined SNS as online communities designed to connect individuals to wider networks of relationships. Students interact through Facebook, Twitter, or other social media networks daily, which links them to thousands of various news related articles, links, and interactions with their contacts. These students are considered the "net generation" or students who have been immersed into technology during their entire life. The term *net generation* was first mentioned by Tapscott (1997). This term comes from the fact that members of this generation's birth coincided with the development of the internet and digital technology. Members of this generation have been surrounded by computers, technology and digital media throughout their lives. A study by Thompson (2013) indicated that out of eight categories of digital technology, those that were frequently used by students of the millennial generation were rapid communication technology and web resources categories. These include tasks such as using a cell phone for voice calling or text messaging, commenting on Facebook, instant messaging on a computer, watching videos, and using the Internet to search for information. According to Thompson (2013), the influence of technology on the digital natives' approaches to learning is varied and complex rather than deterministic.

Students today are growing up in extremely stimulating, interactive environments where they are accustomed to being active, instant consumers of knowledge (Gaston, 2006). Student engagement can also lead to appropriate uses of technology in an educational setting, which can

result in positive outcomes in “critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, and responsible citizenship” (Kuh et al., 2005a, p. 9).

Because of this engagement, Heiberger and Harper (2008) stated that it makes sense to examine the relationship between Facebook use and student engagement for two general reasons: 1) today’s college students use Facebook at high rates, and 2) Facebook intends to be an engaging platform going so far as to measure their success in terms of user engagement. They conclude that students may be using Facebook in ways that influence or are influenced by real-world engagement. Roughly eight in ten Americans (79%) use Facebook, one-third of online adults (32%) use Instagram, one-quarter of online adults (24%) use Twitter, 29% use LinkedIn, and 31% use Pinterest (Greenwood et al., 2016). The use of such technology can also help to establish new relationships, a sense of connectedness, and a commitment to a community (Horstmanshof, 2004). Twitter is an effective way to broaden participation. Greater participation translates into better academic performance, motivation, and a likelihood of adopting different points of view which is why it is so striking that Twitter can foster that type of communication (Ferenstein, 2010).

A study by Junco et al. (2011) lends support to the idea that online activities matter. They found that using Twitter in educationally relevant ways led to increases in student engagement. Their analyses of Twitter communications showed that students and faculty were both highly engaged in the learning process in ways that transcended traditional classroom activities. The sample consisted of seven sections of a one-credit first year seminar course for pre-health majors. Four sections were put into an experimental group and three were put into a control group. The experimental group used Twitter in the classroom and the control group did not use any social media. The study ran for 14 weeks. The experimental group were taught the basics of

using Twitter and participated in a wide variety of engagement activities, such as book discussions, class reminders, class discussions, organizing service-learning projects and more.

This study provided experimental evidence that Twitter can be used as an educational tool to help engage students and to mobilize faculty into a more active and participatory role. Junco et al. (2010) concluded that students were highly engaged with faculty and other when they used Twitter and it had an effect on their academic success. These researchers also found that using Twitter in educationally relevant ways can increase student engagement and improve grades, and thus, that social media can be used as an educational tool to help students reach desired college outcomes. Students who can connect with peers and faculty via technology resources may feel more connected to the campus than those who never step foot on the campus. Prior studies suggest students who feel connected through shared experiences with peer groups or faculty are less likely to drop out (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1987).

The most popular social media sites, Facebook (87%), Twitter (47%), Instagram (45%), Pinterest (37%), Snapchat (34%) and Tumblr (19%), are all more popular among college students than among young Americans who are not in, or never have attended college (Harvard IOP, 2017). Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin (2010) stated that social media has been implemented in academic settings to motivate students to participate, share, and learn with other collaborators. According to Windham (2005), engaging learners in learning, new educational curriculum and activity must include the following: interaction, exploration, relevancy, multimedia, and instruction. Interaction includes not only personal relationships but also virtual relationships.

Exploration is important because students today want to see how things work in real life which can be more engaging than reading about them. Brown (2002) noted, "Learning becomes situated in action; it becomes as much social as cognitive, it is concrete rather than abstract, and

it becomes intertwined with judgment and exploration” (p. 6). According to Claxton (2007), activities and curricula must have the following factors to engage learners: (1) relevancy: the topic connects with students’ interests and concerns; (2) responsibility: students have genuine control over what, why, how, and when they organize their learning; and (3) reality: solving problems or making progress genuinely matters to someone.

Engaged learners today seek relevancy in their learning. Working with authentic problems or community issues engages students and builds a sense of purpose to the learning experience (Claxton, 2007). Multimedia and technology have proven helpful in engaging students in learning about subjects, how to present their learning and in helping students to control their learning (Dunleavy & Milton, 2009). Multimedia and technology bring learners accessible and relevant subject matter therefore it is a tool for engaged learning.

To create an engaged learning environment, we should create engaging and challenging instruction. Creating this environment will ensure students feel able and safe to challenge instructors as part of the learning process. Students want more autonomy to engage in and design their own learning (Carlson, 2005). They want to learn and utilize their learning preferences and learning styles and seek the support to do so. The role of access institutions in United States higher education is invaluable (Dowd, 2007). We should be able to provide a wide variety of instructional design for our students to become engaged and successfully complete their college goals.

### **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe faculty and student uses and perception of social networking sites as a student engagement tool in community college classrooms. Lederer (2012) stated that the use of social media in learning environments increases student engagement, builds communication skills among students and faculty, and assists the students in building a professional profile. There have been very few studies on using social media networking sites for engagement at community colleges. With the growth of social media networking over the last ten years, this technology could allow students to feel more engaged with their classmates as well as their instructors if used for academic purposes. This study also examines how faculty use the sites as a resource to engage students inside the classroom. According to Kuh et al. (2008), student engagement is important because research has shown that it is linked to student achievement, defined as grades and retention.

This study builds on the work of Bishop's (2015) "Student Use of Social Networking Sites: A Multimethod Study at an Access Institution." Bishop's study explored student uses and perceptions in three categories: connecting, interacting, and sharing. This study will expand on the student perspective as well as add the perspective of faculty at an urban community college.

Upon completion of Bishop's research, the author's recommendations included surveying and interviewing faculty to determine their behaviors and perceptions of social media use for academic purposes and to expand research to other community college institutions. He

also indicated that a more focused explanatory design would be beneficial to explore how social media networking sites could be used in academic settings. All research questions in this study extend and build on the sequential exploratory design of Bishop's study. Research questions one and three will expand further on student perceptions at an urban community college. Research questions two and four will give more insight into faculty perceptions. Research question five will explore the differences in student and faculty perceptions.

The following research questions were explored in this study:

- Q1: How do community college students use social networking sites for academic purposes?
- Q2: How do community college faculty use social networking sites for academic purposes?
- Q3: What is the community college student perception of social media usage in community college courses?
- Q4: What is the community college faculty perception of social media usage in community college courses?
- Q5: Is there a significant difference between community college student and faculty perceptions toward the use of social media for academic engagement?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Astin's Theory of Student Involvement is the theoretical lens that framed this study because it enabled the researcher to examine and explain how this technology was used to engage community college students. Student Involvement Theory focuses on students and their level of involvement during their college career. This theory states that students must be engaged in their learning environment to advance their personal development and achieve a higher level



of learning. When looking at this theory in relation to social networking sites, there could be a link to a higher level of learning if students and faculty use the sites for academic purposes. If they use social networking sites to create environments for interactions with other students and faculty, students could become more engaged in the academic content.

This study identified the uses of social media and the frequency of engagement of various types of social media activities for academic purposes. Astin's (1984) theory indicates that student learning and personal development is directly related to the quality and quantity of student involvement. Astin's I-E-O Model fits with the study because of the three core concepts: input, environment, and outcomes. *Input* relates to faculty and student backgrounds and experiences. *Environment* relates to the faculty and student experiences using social networking sites for academic purposes. *Outcomes* are the beliefs, knowledge, attitudes and characteristics that students and faculty may have about social networking sites used for academic purposes. Student engagement focuses not on what students bring to college (such as motivation and academic preparation) but what students do in college and how student behaviors, opportunities, and environments mediate college retention and graduation.

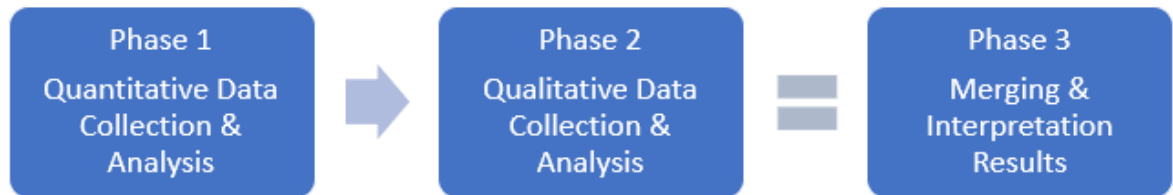
### **Research Design**

This study was a sequential explanatory mixed methods study. Creswell and Clark (2011) defined mixed method research as one in which the researcher collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data and then mixes or integrates the two while framing the procedures within a philosophical worldview. A sequential explanatory design is a study in which the researcher begins by conducting a quantitative phase and then follows up on specific results with a second phase (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The second phase is implemented to explain in further detail the initial results from phase one. Data was collected in a sequence

where quantitative data was collected first. This design used results from quantitative questionnaires as a guide for the semi-structured interviews. Mixed method research requires extensive data collection, analysis, interview skills, and additional time and resources to be conducted properly but has the advantage of allowing for interaction between the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study (Creswell & Clark, 2011). By implementing both quantitative and qualitative measurements, the researcher uncovered more detailed information of social media as a student engagement tool for academic purposes.

**Figure 2**

*Sequential Explanatory Design Process*



**Participants and Setting**

The participants for this study consisted of undergraduate students and faculty at a large multi-campus community college located in a midwestern state. There are four main campuses located across a metropolitan area, and it is considered the largest community college in the state. The faculty that were surveyed consisted of those teaching College Success. This course was selected because all incoming freshman are required to enroll in this course. Annual enrollment for credit students during the 2018-2019 academic year was 22,918. Twenty-nine

percent of those students were enrolled in 12 more hours which was considered a full-time student. Twenty-one percent were first-time entering students, while 37% were first generation college students meaning they were the first person in their family to go to college. The average age of student at this institution was 25, and 67% of students were age 24 and under. Sixty three percent of enrollment was made up of females. Forty-four percent (6,838) of students fell into a minority status. The concurrent enrollment (high school students enrolled in college courses) during the 2018-2019 academic year included 1,893. The retention rate for full-time students was 56%. With the demographics listed above, it is the hope of the researcher that there will be a wide variety of participants that complete the questionnaires.

This institution offers 86 associate degree programs and 39 credit-bearing certificate programs. During the 2018-2019 academic year, 2,449 degrees were awarded along with 332 certificates. There were 277 full-time faculty members (37%) and 474 (63%) part-time faculty members. The institution employed 609 full-time staff members (42%) and 834 part-time staff members (58%).

### **Participant Demographics**

The gathering of quantitative data was conducted at a large, multi-campus community college system in a midwestern state. The researcher used two questionnaires adapted from Bishop's (2015) "Student Use of Social Networking Sites: A multimethod Study at an Access Institution." The questionnaires were the "Faculty Use of Social Networking Sites" and "Student Use of Social Networking Sites" documents, which were distributed via the Qualtrics online platform. They were comprised of three sections: demographic questions, social networking site usage questions, and social networking site use and academic engagement questions.

During the fall semester of 2019, an email was sent from the Institutional Research Department to all enrolled students and all faculty members teaching *College Success*. The email requested voluntary participation in the questionnaire. Potential participants had two weeks to complete the online survey. A reminder email was sent to all potential participants after one week. At the end of the two-week time period, the researcher received the participating student and faculty raw data files from the Institutional Research Department. The raw data was analyzed using SPSS where descriptive statistics and Chi-square values were computed.

## **Population and Sample**

### *Student Demographics*

The student participants for this study were students over 18 years of age attending the community college in the Fall of 2019. The demographics portion of the questionnaire asked participants their age, race, gender, school and work information. The questionnaire was sent to 16,348 students, all enrolled in the course by September 1, 2019. There were 686 initial respondents. Forty-one of those were under 18 years of age, and the questionnaire ended for them leaving 645 respondents. Of those respondents, thirteen did not answer any questions past “age” and were excluded from the study. This left 632 qualified respondents whose data was included in this study. Table 1 shows the demographic make-up of the 645 qualified respondents, the obtained sample size for each variable, and the population size for each variable. Not every participant answered every question. Of all answered questions demographics were determined as follows: 67% were female, 24% were male, and 1% answered “other.” Eighty-six percent were not Hispanic or Latino, while 14% were Hispanic or Latino. Sixty-seven percent were white or Caucasian with the next largest group being American Indian or Alaska Native at 11%.

The demographic make-up of the sample closely matched the overall demographics of this community college.

**Table 1**

*Demographics for Student Sample*

	Survey Responses	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	<i>n</i> = 632	
Male	168	24
Female	458	67
Other	6	1
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<i>n</i> = 629	
Hispanic/Latino	88	14
Not Hispanic/Latino	541	86
No Answer	3	0
<b>Race</b>	<i>n</i> = 629	
American Indian or Alaska Native	72	11
Asian	16	2
Black or African American	56	9
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3	0
White or Caucasian	424	67
Other	56	9
No Answer	3	0

There were several additional demographic questions asked regarding their status as a student and employment status. As shown in Table 2, 36% (*n* = 228) of students worked full-time, which was defined as working over 34 hours a week, while 38% (*n* = 242) of students worked part-time which was defined as working anywhere from 1-33 hours a week. Twenty-five percent (*n* = 161) of the students were not employed while attending school and two students did not respond to the question.

**Table 2***Student Employment Status (n = 632)*

Employment Status	Survey Responses	Percentages
Part-time (1-34 hrs/wk)	241	38
Full-time (34+ hrs/wk)	228	36
Not employed	161	25
No Answer	2	

Three demographic questions pertained to the students' status at the college. Fifty percent ( $n = 316$ ) of those surveyed were classified as Freshman, while 41% ( $n = 261$ ) were classified as Sophomores, 8% selected "other" and 1% did not respond. Forty-two percent ( $n = 265$ ) were classified as part-time students (taking 11 hours or fewer) while 58% ( $n = 365$ ) were classified as full-time students (taking 12 hours or more). Of the 631 students who completed the survey, the top three academic schools chosen by students included: Business & IT with 20% of students ( $n = 125$ ), Nursing with 17% of the students ( $n = 106$ ) and Liberal Arts and Communication with 16% of the students ( $n = 103$ ).

**Table 3***Student Classification, Enrollment Status, and Academic School*

	Survey Responses	Percentages
Classification ( <i>n</i> = 633)		
Freshman (1-30 hrs)	316	50
Sophomore (30+ hrs)	261	41
Other	54	8
Blank	2	1
Enrollment Status ( <i>n</i> = 632)		
Part-time (11 hrs or fewer)	265	42
Full-time (12 hrs or more)	365	58
No answer	2	0
Academic School ( <i>n</i> = 631)		
Allied Health	68	11
Business & IT	125	20
Engr/Aviation/Public Svc	64	10
Liberal Arts & Comm	103	16
Nursing	106	17
Science & Math	84	13
Visual & Performing Arts	22	3
I do not know	23	4
Undecided	35	5
No answer	2	0

**Student Interview Participants' Demographics and Profiles**

The interviews included four students who identified as female and two who identified as male. One student identified as Hispanic/Latino and one identified as American Indian or Alaska Native. Table 4 reflects the students' self-reported demographics. Three of the students interviewed stated social media was a distraction, while three students said it was beneficial.

**Table 4***Student Self-reported Demographics for Interviews*

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Race
<b>Student</b> Sara	F	Not Hispanic/Latino	American Indian or Alaska Native
Paul	M	Not Hispanic/Latino	White or Caucasian
Kelly	F	Not Hispanic/Latino	White or Caucasian
Shawn	M	Hispanic/Latino	White or Caucasian
Tonya	F	Not Hispanic/Latino	White or Caucasian
Carrie	F	Not Hispanic/Latino	White or Caucasian

**Student Participants' Backgrounds*****Sara***

When Sara was interviewed at East Campus, she was classified as a freshman. She was not employed and was taking classes full-time. Sara considered herself a frequent gamer and does not use social media networking as much as she used to. She stated that she used social media networking sites to interact with others and for study breaks. She also used social media to let her friends know when she was online for gaming purposes. Academically speaking, she believed that YouTube videos could be used to supplement learning while utilizing social media networking sites for group work could be negative due to cheating.

***Paul***

When Paul was interviewed at the Northwest Campus, he was in his second year. He was employed part-time and was taking classes full-time. He stated that he considers himself a frequent user of social media networking sites and believed it is good for communication and



connecting with others. Paul used a variety of sites such as Facebook, GroupMe, Snapchat, and Instagram in addition to using Hulu and Netflix. He used SNS to keep in touch with others and schedule events because he was active in multiple student organizations that used social media to promote their student organization and share events. Paul believed that using social media kept him more engaged and involved with the college community. Academically speaking, he did not see it being used in the classroom but thought it could increase student engagement. He believed that his instructors were open to it because they need to use more technology. One of the drawbacks that Paul saw was that students might take advantage of the teacher. He believed that the potential of social media networking sites being used in the classroom is that there was a lot of new content that instructors could use which could increase student engagement.

### ***Kelly***

When Kelly was interviewed at the Central Campus, she was working full-time and taking classes part-time. She had already received a bachelor's degree and was working on a second career. Kelly used social media for sharing information and communicating with friends and family. She used Facebook and YouTube to gain new perspectives from others and learn about new content she was interested in for her personal life. She also used these sites as a news and entertainment source. Kelly admitted that she does not use social media for academics but had used it for student organization information regarding meetings and events. Academically, she only used SNS to message friends about upcoming assignments and due dates. She believed that instructors are very quiet about social media as an engagement tool because they used Blackboard and they encouraged the use of more educational tools. She also believed that some of the drawbacks included connection to personal information and discomfort among teachers with social media in the classroom. However, she believed that social media is convenient and

accessible and could be a good resource if users don't cross the boundaries by mixing personal and professional information.

### ***Shawn***

When Shawn was interviewed at the Northwest Campus, he classified himself as a freshman. He was not employed and was undecided on a major. Shawn used social media for networking and communication purposes for personal business not academic purposes. He used Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, GroupMe, and Tumblr. He also used GroupMe and Google Docs for academic purposes and believed those are good for reminders and working on projects with classmates. He viewed other social media networks as a waste of time and believed they are distracting for students. Shawn also believed that instructors view social media as having no impact on learning. He stated that social media is a significant distraction for students, specifically when using it while listening to lectures. Shawn thinks that social media usage needs to be separated between academics and personal use. He suggested that the institution create their own social media application for students and faculty and viewed it as a potential avenue for more student engagement.

### ***Tonya***

When Tonya was interviewed at the Northwest Campus, she was employed part-time and taking classes part-time. Tonya used social media for communicating with family and friends. She admitted that she used Facebook most frequently, but does not post content, instead viewing other Facebook profiles. She used the Remind application for academic purposes and thought it was beneficial. She stated the Remind application was great for homework assignment due dates and keeps students on track. Her instructor used this application frequently to connect with her

class. Tonya stated that she believed that this application is a great tool for academic purposes and is the only one that could be beneficial.

### ***Carrie***

When Carrie was interviewed at the Northwest Campus, she was classified as a sophomore and was taking class full-time. She worked two part-time jobs and was expected to graduate in May 2020. She used social media for communicating with friends and family. She used Facebook, Instagram, Skype, TikTok, and YouTube. She primarily used these sites for personal reasons, not academic purposes. She enjoyed getting updates for events and information from social media. She believed that you can get information from social media faster than other sources. She also enjoyed using YouTube for lectures and as a supplement for math directions. According to Carrie, there were not many instructors who used social media for academic purposes. She viewed addiction as a drawback for using social media because many students used it all the time before doing classwork. She believed social media could be used for academic purposes because instructors could use it for live lecture feeds and because it was more accessible to everyone. She stated the use of SNS could be a great supplemental instruction tool for the class.

### **Faculty Demographics**

The faculty surveyed for this study were those teaching *College Success* during the Fall 2019 semester. Table 5 reflects the demographics for faculty. The questionnaire was sent to 61 faculty members and 26 responded. The questionnaire sample was voluntary and no incentives were given to those that participated. Seventy-seven percent of faculty survey respondents were females, while 23% were males. Ninety-six percent of the participants were not Hispanic or Latino while 4% of faculty participants were Hispanic or Latino. Eighty-eight percent were white

or Caucasian, followed by 4% Black or African American, 4% American Indian or Alaska Native and 4% Asian. The majority of faculty fell into the 40-44 age range at 31% with 19% of participants falling into the 35-39 age range. *College Success* was chosen for three reasons: it had the largest number of full-time and part-time faculty; all incoming freshman were required to enroll in the course, and the course had the most sections offered.

**Table 5**

*Demographics for Faculty Sample*

	Survey Responses	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	<i>n</i> = 26	
Male	6	23
Female	20	7
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<i>n</i> = 26	
Hispanic/Latino	1	4
Not Hispanic/Latino	25	96
<b>Race</b>	<i>n</i> = 26	
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	4
Asian	1	4
Black or African American	1	4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0
White or Caucasian	23	88
Other	0	0
<b>Age</b>	<i>n</i> = 26	
18-24	1	4
25-29	3	12
30-34	2	8
35-39	5	19
40-44	8	31
45-49	3	11
50-55	1	4
55-59	3	11

The questionnaire included a section on faculty employment. Sixty-five percent of the faculty members were not employed outside of the college while thirty-five percent of the faculty were employed outside of the college. Of the 35% that indicated they were employed outside of the college, the other employment positions included teaching at other higher education institutions, public schools, online charter schools, and working with small businesses.

**Table 6**

*Faculty Employment Status*

	Survey Responses	Percentages
Employment Status at the college	<i>n</i> = 26	
Part-time	19	73
Full-time	6	23
No response	1	4
Employment Status outside the college	<i>n</i> = 26	
Yes	9	35
No	17	65

The questionnaire also included a section on faculty education and teaching experience. Table 7 displays the education level as well as the teaching experience for faculty participants. A Masters’ degree is one of the requirements to teach at the community college. Of the faculty surveyed, 73% had a masters’ degree, 11% had a PhD, 8% had an EdD, and 8% did not answer the question. Of the faculty members who participated in the questionnaire, 46% had less than ten years of teaching experience, while 50% had over ten years of teaching experience in a higher education setting. Four percent of faculty did not answer this question.

**Table 7***Faculty Education and Teaching Experience*

	Survey Responses	Percentages
Highest Degree	<i>n</i> = 26	
Masters	19	73
PhD	3	11
EdD	2	8
No answer	2	8
Years of Teaching Experience in Higher Education	<i>n</i> = 26	
0-4 years	7	27
5-9 years	5	19
10-14 years	7	27
15-19 years	3	11
20-24 years	1	4
25-29 years	2	8
No answer	1	4

**Faculty Interview Participants' Demographics and Profiles**

Research question four examined the faculty perceptions of social media usage for academic purposes. The faculty interviews consisted of six faculty interviews including four females and two males. One faculty member identified their ethnicity as Hispanic/Latino, while all faculty selected White/Caucasian as their race. Ages of the faculty participants ranged from 25-49 years. Table 8 reflects the self-reported demographics of the faculty that were interviewed.

**Table 8***Faculty Self-reported Demographics for Interviews*

<b>Participant Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Race</b>
<b>Faculty</b> Derrick	M	Not Hispanic/Latino	White or Caucasian
John	M	Not Hispanic/Latino	White or Caucasian
Lisa	F	Not Hispanic/Latino	White or Caucasian
Susan	F	Not Hispanic/Latino	White or Caucasian
Julie	F	Not Hispanic/Latino	White or Caucasian
Mary	F	Hispanic/Latino	White or Caucasian

**Faculty Participants' Backgrounds*****Derrick***

Forty-seven-year-old Derrick was interviewed at the Northwest Campus, he had been teaching as a part-time instructor for the last 15 years. He used social networking for connecting with family, friends and colleagues and considered himself a frequent user. Most of his usage was for personal reasons but had used social media while in graduate school researching projects or looking at other colleges. Academically speaking, he did not use it in his classroom but might use it for prepping or occasional assignments. Derrick believed that social media networking sites could be impactful when setting up groups to share ideas on programming, gathering information and just to be connected to others. He also believed that social media has an influence on student engagement because students today want information quick. They love to use messenger type applications to get quick information. The major potential that Derrick saw was the never-ending resource or pool of information that social media has to offer. You can

connect and track down someone that knows something anywhere in the world. The biggest drawback he saw was the loss of personal communication skills because students are behind a keyboard. Derrick's advice to other faculty was set parameters for usage in the classroom and don't cross the line between personal and professional usage. He believed there could be great possibilities with social media, but thought there could be more training for faculty on how it can be used for academic purposes.

***John***

John was interviewed at the administrative offices building. John, 40 years old with a master's degree has been teaching as a part-time instructor for 10 years. He identifies as an occasional user of social media. He mainly used Facebook for connecting with friend and family. Instagram is his second choice to check out businesses and their promotions or updates. John did not use social media for academic purposes but would like to see examples of how it could be used to connect with students. He thought it could be used for experiential learning opportunities and could also see a use for discussion boards on these platforms. He feels that if there are better policies for using social media, faculty members might be more inclined to utilize them. John knows social media is where students are getting information, therefore we need to engage with them on these platforms. He believed that if the proper training is done and best practices are used than social media for academic purposes could support learning.

***Lisa***

Lisa, 45, was interviewed at the Memorial Campus which is a branch of the community college. Lisa had been teaching as a part-time instructor for 5 years and has a PhD. She identified herself as a non-user but had logged into Facebook before many years ago. To her social networking means connections. She mainly used GroupMe for her children's activities. She did



not use social media for academic purposes because she believed it could become a distraction and a timewaster. However, she believes full-time faculty could use it because they have more time to connect with students. She believes it could be used for building long-term connections with students. Lisa does see the benefit in using YouTube in the classroom. She used it to supplement his instruction so that students can see concepts differently. She viewed social media as an incredibly effective supplemental resource.

### ***Susan***

Susan is 33 years old and was interviewed at the Southwest Campus. She had been teaching as a part-time instructor for 8 years and has a Masters' degree. She classified herself as an occasional user for Facebook to view marketplace and pictures and a frequent user of Instagram for stories. Academically speaking, Susan used YouTube and TED Talks because they are engaging her students and the videos helped to supplement her instruction. She shares videos with other faculty members. She believed that if the videos are meeting learning outcomes then they should be used. On the other hand, if they are distracting then faculty should not use them. She also stated that using a platform like GroupMe helps students connect with each other outside of the classroom. Susan believed if social media is used right, then it could have a lot of potential in the classroom. She was open to incorporating in the classroom because it keeps students engaged and involved. Susan expressed that faculty should listen to the students and get feedback on how it can be used for academic purposes. She also wondered how it will fit into the academic classroom ten years from now.

### ***Julie***

Julie, 43, was interviewed at the Southwest Campus and had been teaching as a part-time instructor for 8 ½ years. She also had a Masters' degree. She rarely used social media but when

she thinks about the definition, she indicated it is for keeping in touch with others and job searching via LinkedIn. She did use Facebook but has not logged on in quite some time. She did not use it for academic purposes but believed that younger instructors might use it more often than her because they can relate to it more. She considered herself very private and did not want to communicate outside college email. She believed the major drawback of social media in the classroom is faculty are not comfortable using it and they want to keep their academic and private lives separate. Her advice to faculty was educate themselves on the sites, be careful and always handle social media in a professional manner.

### ***Mary***

Mary, 29, was interviewed at Central Campus and had been teaching as a part-time instructor for 3 years and has a master's degree. She considered herself a frequent user of Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. She used these sites for networking, job searching, seeking out volunteer opportunities, and keeping up with professional organizations. She used YouTube for academic purposes to show visual learner's concepts. She liked to meet students "where they are" and stated that social media is where a lot of students are. She also incorporated Ted Talks into her learning environment because she believed students are more engaged. Mary believed that social media is especially helpful for visual learners and it helped students get out of their small world and see how others learn. She also viewed social media as helpful for students that are introverts because it helped them have a voice. Mary considered herself a "traditionalist," so she didn't plan on using social media in the classroom other than YouTube or Ted Talks. She viewed the major drawback as a distraction for students.

## **Instrumentation**

The research instruments for this mixed methods study included questionnaires and one-on-one interviews. The questionnaire gathered demographic information as well as perceptions regarding social media usage in an academic setting. The questionnaires consisted of mostly Likert-type questions and one open-ended question. The questionnaires were adapted and extended from Bishop's (2015) *Student Use of Social Networking Sites: A Multimethod Study at an Access Institution*. Written permission to use the instrument was obtained by the researcher. A copy is located in Appendix A. Modifications made to the student questionnaire included: changing answer options from agreement/disagreement to a five-point Likert scale and the addition of an open-ended question. A Likert type scale is often used because it is easy for the respondent to understand because they are selecting how much they agree or disagree with a statement. Likert scales allowed the researcher to create user-friendly charts and graphs from the responses. The Likert-style survey consisted of answer choices such as: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. A faculty questionnaire was created that mirrored the student questionnaire so that the researcher could compare the differences between student and faculty perceptions.

### **Student Questionnaire**

The electronic questionnaire was built using Qualtrics software. The student questionnaire (See Appendix B) was used to identify and describe variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, types of social media used, perceptions of social media and student engagement. This questionnaire consisted of thirty-three questions. The first nine questions related to demographics such as gender, age, ethnicity, employment status, student classification and enrollment status.

The next two questions were considered closed questions because the participant used “yes/no” answers. These questions were related to social networking site usage. If the participant did not utilize social networking sites, they did not complete the remainder of the questionnaire. The next four questions related to the usage of social networking sites such as interacting, connecting, sharing and how often they use these sites. The next section consisted of seventeen questions that related to social media use and academic engagement and the perception of social media for academic purposes. Finally, the last five questions related to continued participation in the second phase of the study which included a face-to-face interview (Appendix C).

### **Faculty Questionnaire**

The electronic questionnaire was built using Qualtrics software. The faculty questionnaire (See Appendix D) was used to identify and describe variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, full- or part-time, length of time teaching, academic school/division, types of social media used, perceptions of social media and student engagement. While the demographics for the faculty questionnaire did not include student classification, part-time/full-time student status and college credit hours completed, the *Social Networking Site Usage*, *Social Networking Site Use and Academic Engagement* and *Continued Participation* questions were the same as the student questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of thirty-three questions. The first nine questions related to demographics such as gender, age, ethnicity, employment status. The next two questions were considered closed questions because the participant used “yes/no” answers. These questions were related to social networking site usage. If the participant did not utilize social networking sites, they did not complete the remainder of the survey. The next four questions related to the usage of social networking sites such as interacting, connecting, sharing and how often they used these sites. The next section had seventeen questions that related to

social media use and academic engagement. Finally, the last two questions related to continued participation in the second phase of the study (Appendix E) which included an interview.

**Interviews**

Questions for the semi-structured interviews were adapted from Bishop’s (2015) study. The goal of the qualitative interviews was to gain a more detailed and in depth understanding of how students and faculty used social media sites as an engagement tool for academic purposes and their perceptions of that use. The semi-structured interview consisted of a series of questions relating to social networking sites (Appendix C and E). Table 9 reflects the research questions, who the participants are and what type of data analysis took place.

**Table 9**

*Research Questions, Participants, and Data Analysis: Uses and Perceptions of Social Media as a Student Engagement Tool in a Community College Classroom*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Data Analysis</b>
Q1: How do community college students use social networking sites for academic purposes?	Student Survey Student Interviews	Descriptive Statistics Student Interviews
Q2: How do community college faculty use social networking sites for academic purposes?	Faculty Survey Faculty Interviews	Descriptive Statistics Faculty Interviews
Q3: What is the community college student perception of social media usage in community college courses?	Student Survey Student Interviews	Qualitative Coding Descriptive Statistics
Q4: What is the community college faculty perception of social media usage in community college courses?	Faculty Survey Faculty Interviews	Qualitative Coding Descriptive Statistics
Q5: Is there a significant difference between community college student and faculty perceptions toward the use of social media for academic engagement?	Student Survey Student Interviews Faculty Survey Faculty Interviews	Chi-square Qualitative Coding

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

The sequential explanatory design involved two phases of data collection and data analysis. The data collection followed the mixed methods sequential explanatory design in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected independently and analyzed. The quantitative data was collected through questionnaires and was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings are reported in chapter four. Qualitative data was collected by face-to-face interview which were designed to enrich the quantitative data. The quantitative and qualitative data was reported separately.

### ***Phase One: Quantitative Data Collection***

The researcher obtained approval to complete this study from the community college's Institutional Review Board (Appendix F). Approval was also given from Oklahoma State University (Appendix G). Phase one of this study includes two questionnaires: Faculty Use of Social Networking Sites and Student Use of Social Networking Sites. The Qualtrics questionnaire link was sent out by the Institutional Research Department at the community college. The first email inviting students and faculty to participate in the survey was sent out on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The questionnaire link went to 16,348 students who were enrolled as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. The questionnaire link was sent to 61 faculty member who taught (part-time or full-time) *College Success*. The faculty and students were asked to participate in this study to determine the uses and perceptions of social media as a student engagement tool for academic purposes. Participation was encouraged but it was not mandatory. Student participants that completed the survey were entered into a drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card. A reminder email was sent on September 11, 2019. Survey data was collected during a two-week timeframe.

### ***Phase One: Quantitative Data Analysis***

The survey data collected from participants was analyzed to understand the perceptions of social media as a student engagement tool. Descriptive statistics were used to help describe the general makeup of the participant sample such as their age, gender, student status as well as their social media usage. Data was entered into SPSS and a chi-square test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the faculty and students' perceptions of social media.

### ***Phase Two: Qualitative Data Collection***

Creswell (2007) advocated the use of open-ended questions to explore the perceptions and meanings constructed by the participants to better understand their lived experiences. Question #31 in the student questionnaire and question #28 in the faculty questionnaire were open-ended questions in which the results will be presented in the qualitative data portion of the study. Open-ended questions were also used in the semi-structured interviews. Students and faculty who expressed interest in Phase 2 were contacted by the researcher to schedule an interview. The researcher selected six students for interviews. Of the six students that were selected, three stated their perception of social media usage for academic purposes was beneficial. The other three students stated their perception of social media usage for academic purposes was a distraction. Of the six faculty members that were selected, three stated their perception of social media usage for academic purposes was beneficial, while the other three stated it was a distraction.

This phase consisted of a set of semi-structured interview questions as well as the open-ended questions in the student and faculty questionnaires of the quantitative phase. These interviews enabled the researcher to further understand student and faculty uses and perceptions of utilizing social media networking sites as a student engagement tool. The face-to-face interviews were scheduled during a one-month time frame. Participants completed an Informed Consent Agreement allowing the researcher permission to use their responses in the study. The individual interviews were conducted at the community college campus where the faculty teaches and student attends. Each participant was asked the same questions in the same order and the interviews were recorded with an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder (WS-852). Recordings were labeled and stored to the researchers' computer until transcribed. Each transcribed interview was saved on the researchers' password protected computer. This data was organized by participants in electronic files. Each participant was identified by the following: participant status (student or faculty), number, and their initials (Ex: F1JD, S1SV). Once the questionnaire data and the interview data was collected and transcribed the researcher used the remainder of the semester to analyze the data.

### ***Phase Two: Qualitative Data Analysis***

After all data was gathered and interviews were transcribed, the researcher proceeded with data analysis using qualitative methodologies. Data from the transcriptions was closely examined for concepts and categories. Coding is the process of grouping evidence and labeling ideas so that they reflect increasingly broader perspectives (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

The researcher used purposeful sampling to interview students ( $n = 6$ ) and faculty ( $n = 6$ ). The faculty and students who volunteered for the semi-structured interviews were selected by how they answered the open-ended question "What is your perception of social media usage for



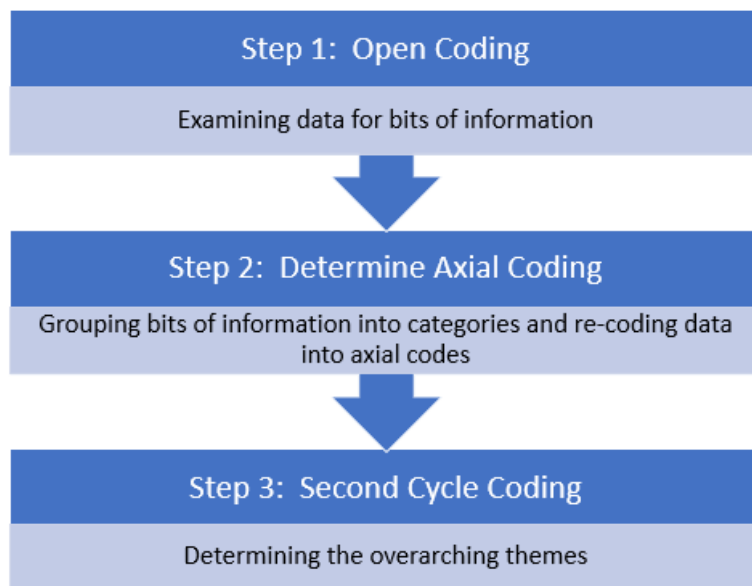
academic purposes?": "It is beneficial"; "It is a distraction"; "It keeps me engaged with other students or faculty"; "Other." For each population, there were three participants whose perception was "it is beneficial" and three participants whose perception was "it is a distraction." Once the participants were contacted for an interview, the researcher set up the meeting time and location. Since the community college is a multi-campus system, the participants were interviewed individually on the campus of their choice. The researcher met at four main campuses, one branch campus and the conference center which is where the administration offices are housed for these interviews. Interviews were recorded with an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder. The original data collection consisted of 12 interviews (six faculty and six student) that were downloaded on the researcher's password protected computer. The researcher met with a transcriptionist and delivered the data on an external flash drive. Interviews were transcribed and the files were stored on an external flash drive. Once the interview transcriptions were completed, the flash drive was retrieved from the transcriptionist and locked in a filing cabinet in the office of the researcher.

Figure 3 shows a visual representation of the methods that were used to analyze the qualitative data in three steps. Coding is the process of reducing a text or image to descriptions and themes of people, places, or events (Creswell, 2012). During the first round, the researcher used open coding. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), open coding involves "breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data" (p.82). Open coding was used to break down the data and identify first level concepts and categories. Next, axial coding took place and the concepts that were identified in the open coding round were re-examined and grouped together so that the researcher could take a closer look at relationships. The concepts and categories were further condensed so that second cycle coding could take place. According

to Saldana (2009), second cycle coding are advanced ways of reorganizing and reanalyzing data coded through first cycle methods. A second round of coding was more focused to ensure that the codes identified in the first round captured a range of information from students and faculty. The researcher also identified more emergent themes and concepts during the second round. Finally, the researcher identified overarching themes from existing categories which allowed the researcher to explain in more detail and add depth to the quantitative results. This same process was used for the interview data, as well. The interview process allowed the researcher to learn more about this smaller group of participants and their perceptions of social media networking sites. In total, 12 interviews were conducted for the qualitative portion of this study. There were six student interviews and six faculty interviews. To protect anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms were used in place of their names.

### Figure 3

#### *Qualitative Methodologies Used to Analyze the Data*



### ***Phase Three: Integration of the Data***

Mixed method refers to all the procedures involved in collecting, analyzing and presenting quantitative and qualitative data in the context of a single study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This final phase reflected the discoveries found in phase one and phase two. These results included findings from the student and faculty questionnaires as well as the themes found through the coded qualitative data from the interviews. In explanatory design, data analysis occurs in three phases: 1) the analysis of the initial quantitative data, 2) an analysis of the follow-up qualitative data to help explain the quantitative data, 3) after a thorough analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, a final presentation of data is available in text and graphic formats (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

### **Summary**

In summary, this sequential explanatory mixed methods design blended both quantitative and qualitative research methods to give the researcher a clearer understanding of student and faculty perceptions of using social media for academic purposes. This chapter detailed methods that were used to gather and analyze data which addressed the research questions. The following chapter presents the findings related to the methodology described in this chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### Overview of the Study

As described in Chapter I, the purpose of this Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods study examined and described student and faculty uses and perceptions of social media as a student engagement tool for academic purposes at a community college. This study extended the research of Bishop's (2015) "Student Use of Social Networking Sites: A Multimethod Study at an Access Institution." While his study focused on student uses and perceptions, this study included both student and faculty use and perceptions. It focused specifically on similarities and differences of student and faculty use and perceived benefits of social media as an engagement tool in the community college environment. The questionnaire was adapted to use for students and faculty. The questions used in this study asked participants about their use and perceptions of social networking sites. Upon completion of the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted with interested participants to offer understanding and depth to the data that was collected. The student questionnaire was distributed to all currently enrolled students via institutional email during the fall 2019 term. The faculty questionnaire was distributed to those teaching *College Success* during the same term. This included both full-time and part-time faculty. All survey responses were anonymous unless the participant wanted to be entered into the drawing or they wanted to be interviewed for Phase 2 of the study. The researcher contacted

both students and faculty who volunteered to participate in Phase 2 via email to schedule an interview.

Data and findings presented in this chapter address the study's two phases and five research questions. The research questions that were used to guide the study were:

Q1: How do community college students use social networking sites for academic purposes?

Q2: How do community college faculty use social networking sites for academic purposes?

Q3: What is the community college student perception of social media usage in community college courses?

Q4: What is the community college faculty perception of social media usage in community college courses?

Q5: Is there a significant difference between community college student and faculty perceptions toward the use of social media for academic engagement?

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques including descriptive statistics, chi-square, and qualitative coding methods were used to answer the research questions. The findings are presented in this chapter.

## **Social Media Usage**

### ***Student Social Media Usage***

To gain an understanding about social media usage from students at this community college, the questionnaire first asked participants about their frequency of usage. Table 10 reflects the frequency of social media usage by platform. The listed social media platforms

included: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, GroupMe and other. The top three platforms that student participants used more than ten times a day included Snapchat (26%), Instagram (23%), and YouTube (21%). The top three platforms that were used five to ten times a day included Instagram (16%), Facebook (14%), and YouTube (13%). The three platforms that were never used included; LinkedIn (73%), GroupMe (68%), and Twitter (59%).

**Table 10**

*Student Frequency of Social Media Usage by Platform*

Social Media Sites	Never	Less than once a day	1-5 times a day	5-10 times a day	More than 10 times a day
Facebook	21.0	17.0	28.0	14.0	19.0
Twitter	59.0	20.0	11.0	.05	.05
Pinterest	43.0	35.0	16.0	.04	.02
LinkedIn	73.0	21.0	.04	.003	.008
Snapchat	39.0	16.0	14.0	10.0	26.0
Instagram	25.0	14.0	21.0	16.0	23.0
YouTube	0.1	26.0	33.0	13.0	21.0
GroupMe	68.0	18.0	.07	.03	.03
Other					

Next, students were asked about frequency of social media usage for academic purposes which is reflected in Table 11. According to the responses, the listed platforms are rarely used, if ever, for academic purposes. YouTube was the most used platform for academic purposes at 46% (5-10 times a day) followed by Twitter at 19% (1-5 times a day). Students listed Snapchat (92%), Twitter (91%) and Instagram (88%) as never being used for academic purposes.

**Table 11***Student Frequency of Social Media Usage for Academic Purposes by Platform*

Social Media Sites	Never	Less than once a day	1-5 times a day	5-10 times a day	More than 10 times a day
Facebook	79.0	11.0	7.0	8.0	2.0
Twitter	91.0	6.0	19.0	3.0	3.0
Pinterest	81.0	13.0	4.0	7.0	1.0
LinkedIn	90.0	7.0	2.0	5.0	0.0
Snapchat	92.0	4.0	2.0	6.0	8.0
Instagram	88.0	7.0	3.0	1.0	6.0
<b>YouTUBE</b>	34.0	35.0	23.0	46.0	3.0
GroupMe	85.0	78.0	5.0	8.0	8.0
Other					

***Faculty Social Media Usage***

To gain an understanding about social media usage from faculty, participants were asked about their frequency of social media site usage for academic purposes. According to the responses, the listed platforms were rarely used if ever for academic purposes. The listed social media platforms included: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, GroupMe and other. YouTube (27%) was used 1-5 times a day. As shown in Table 12, the top three platforms that faculty participants used less than once a day included; Pinterest (23%), Facebook (19%), and LinkedIn (11%). The three platforms that were never used included; Twitter (92%), Instagram (92%), and GroupMe (92%).

**Table 12***Faculty Frequency of Social Media Usage for Academic Purposes by Platform*

Social Media Sites	Never	Less than once a day	1-5 times a day	5-10 times a day	More than 10 times a day
Facebook	77.0	19.0	3.0	0.0	0.0
Twitter	92.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0
Pinterest	77.0	23.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
LinkedIn	88.0	11.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Snapchat	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Instagram	92.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
YouTube	19.0	5.0	27.0	3.0	0.0
GroupMe	92.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	9.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.0

**Research Question 1**

*How do community college students use social media sites for academic purposes?*

The first research question explored the ways in which students used social media sites for academic purposes. The questionnaire data was explored first and interview data analysis followed. When taken together, one overarching finding emerged: students use social media to connect and communicate with each other. A sub-finding emerged from the qualitative data that indicates that students use social media to connect with and organize student group. Table 13 summarizes the ways in which students use social media sites for academic purposes.



**Table 13***Percentage of Community College Students Using Social Media for Academic Purposes*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Establish relationships with classmates	27	17	26	23	6
Message classmates about our course	28	19	20	23	9
Post content from my course for classmates who use that social networking site	44	28	14	11	4
Join groups related to my courses	35	20	2	20	5
Comment on my classmates' posts about our courses	44	24	17	11	3
Ask questions of faculty at my college	49	26	12	8	3
Repost content posted or distributed by the faculty and/or staff at my college	48	25	12	11	3
Establish relationships with my instructors at this college	55	25	13	5	1
Ask questions of my instructors at this college	53	24	12	7	2
Work on projects with my instructors at this college	54	23	13	7	2
Work on projects with my classmates at this college	38	19	18	18	6
Repost content distributed by one of my instructors at this college	49	24	15	8	3
Get advising guidance from one of my instructors at this college	52	26	12	7	2
Use social networking sites for academic purposes to increase my engagement	34	22	18	19	6

## **Finding 1: Communicating and Connecting with Other Students**

Both the questionnaire data and the interview data suggest that community college students use social media platforms to communicate with each other. When combining “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” responses from the questionnaire, almost one-third of the students indicated they use social media for messaging classmates about their courses (Table 13).

Twenty-nine percent of students indicated that they used social media for establishing relationships with classmates. Twenty-five percent of students used social media sites to join groups related to their courses and also agreed that they used social media sites to increase their engagement. Twenty-four percent used social media to work on projects with classmates.

During the interviews, when asked about the potential of social networking sites to academically engage students, Paul stated, “There are many possibilities to use social media as a way to connect to other students.” He believed that utilizing social media could get more students engaged in the classroom. For example, he said, “When you hear the same lecture over and over, it gets kind of boring but if the instructor incorporated a flyer or live video in a Facebook group, students might feel more connected which could increase participation.” Shawn used social media for connecting with college staff members and other friends who are attending college.

### ***Sub-finding: Communicating and Connecting with Campus Life***

Communicating and connecting with campus life and various student organizations is a sub-finding for student usage that emerged from the qualitative data. Several students who participated in the one-on-one interviews indicated they used social media for connecting with fellow student organization members or organize events. Paul indicated that he used social media for learning about student organization meetings and activities that were taking place on campus.

He believed that he was more engaged with the campus culture because of the activities he saw on campus. He felt that he participated more because of the things he saw on social media which kept him more engaged with others. He also used social media to schedule events for the student organization he was in and used it as a reminder for events in which he wanted to participate. Carrie also used social media for updates on events that were occurring on campus. She stated, “Students can get information more quickly on social media than via email or the student newsletter.” Although Kelly stated that social media is a distraction, she did use it to connect with other students in a student organization. She said social media is used for connecting students in the group to each other and for advertising events and meetings. Other students indicated they used social media for finding out about student life and other department activities that were taking place on campus.

## **Research Question 2**

*How do faculty use social media sites for academic purposes?*

The second research question explored faculty use of social media sites for academic purposes. This question was examined through descriptive statistics and a Likert-like scale was used to determine participant agreement with use of social media platforms. There were two overarching themes: supplement to instruction and communicating and collaborating with other faculty. Table 14 reflects the ways in which faculty use social media sites for academic purposes.

**Table 14***Faculty Use of Social Media Usage for Academic Purposes*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Establish relationships with students	68	16	8	4	4
Message students about our course	68	2	8	4	0
Post content from my course for students who use that social networking site	76	16	8	0	0
Join groups related to my courses	64	12	16	8	0
Comment on my students' posts about our course	72	8	2	0	0
Ask questions of other faculty at my college	44	24	4	28	0
Repost content posted or distributed by the faculty and/or staff at my college	4	2	16	24	0
Establish relationships with other instructors at this college	35	16	16	32	0
Ask questions of my students at this college	76	8	16	0	0
Work on projects with other instructors at this college	58	16	21	4	0
Repost content distributed by other instructors at this college	6	12	16	12	0
Get advising guidance from other instructors at this college	52	24	8	16	0

Use social networking sites for academic purposes to increase student engagement	67	8	12	8	4
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**Finding 1: Connecting and Collaborating with other faculty**

Although most faculty disagreed with using social media for academic purposes to increase student engagement, like students the faculty who do use it, use it the same way that students do: to connect and collaborate with each other. Thirty-two percent of faculty members in this study used social media to connect with other faculty members. Twenty-eight percent of faculty use social media to ask questions of other faculty at the college. Social networking also provided a place for faculty to collaborate and 21% of faculty said they used social networking sites to work on projects with other faculty.

All interview participants believed that both communication and connecting with others was the main goal of social media whether it is in the classroom or with family and friends. Derrick stated, “Social media is a gigantic network of people connecting across the nation, not really knowing each other but connecting over politics, entertainment or any other topic imaginable and commenting and sparking relationships.” During his interview, the first thing John thought of when social networking was mentioned was connecting with others. He stated that it is a place where students connect through an online platform and also believed that social media networks allowed him to connect and network with colleagues all around the country. Julie stated that she mostly used social media for connecting with family, friends and other colleagues. Mary used social media for networking purposes, also. She believed these were valuable resources for connecting and networking with potential employers and also finding

volunteer opportunities for herself and her students. The main sites she used for networking with other faculty were Facebook and LinkedIn.

### **Finding 2: Supplement to Instruction**

Both the quantitative and qualitative data found that faculty used social media for supplemental instruction. According to the questionnaire, 28% asked questions of other faculty and 24% reposted content that other faculty at this college. The interview data provided more specific examples, such as Mary who used YouTube and TED Talks in her classroom for those students that are visual learners. She stated those were used because it gave students more connection to topics and a broader range of learning. Mary also found “One of the benefits I see with social media in the classroom is that it connects students with each other and with things outside of their normal routine.” Derrick used Pinterest as a storyboard and other students engaged in discussion boards regarding the topics he chose. He also used YouTube as a resource for videos to use in the classroom while he was teaching. He viewed social media as a never-ending resource for supplemental instruction.

Lisa believed social media in the classroom is a distraction, but she used YouTube on occasion to supplement her lectures. When her students had a hard time understanding concepts she described, she turned to YouTube. Lisa stated, “There are amazing faculty lectures and presentations that are very creative and can explain concepts in a different way than I can.” Susan, who viewed social media as beneficial, used YouTube and TED Talks as part of her curriculum, also. She believed that these sources kept students engaged and they captured the attention of students in a succinct and quick way. She stated that if using social media in the classroom meets the student learning outcomes then she was in full support of using them as

supplemental instruction. Derrick stated, “Social media is a place where you can research various topics and connect with other faculty members who also use it for supplemental instruction.”

### Research Question 3

*What is the student perception of social media usage in community college courses?*

Research question three examined the student perceptions of social media usage for academic purposes. Findings were derived from the open-ended question and student interviews. The open-ended question was “What is your perception of social media usage for academic purposes?” Students could select from the three choices or they could choose “other” and add their own text. The overall students’ perception of social media for academic purposes are reflected in Table 15. Thirty-eight percent of student perceptions of social media usage for academic purposes was a distraction, which has a negative connotation. When looking at the categories of beneficial and keeps me engaged as a positive connotation, 44% of students. Thirty-one percent felt like it was beneficial. Thirteen percent of students feel like social media keeps them engaged and seventeen percent responded with “other.”

**Table 15**

*Student Perception of Social Media Usage for Academic Purposes*

	Survey Responses <i>n</i> = 605	Percentage
It is beneficial	189	31
It is a distraction	232	38
It keeps me engaged	79	13
Other	105	17

The findings for the “other category” from the questionnaire are reflected in Table 16. Since the participants were able to select “other”, this question received varying responses, as

expected. There were four themes that emerged from the “other” category: distraction and benefit, educational resource, communicating and connecting, and not for academic purposes.

**Table 16**

*“Other” Findings for Students*

	Survey Responses <i>n</i> = 95	Percentage
Distraction & benefit	15	16
Beneficial under conditions	14	15
Educational Resource	9	9
Communication & Connecting	14	15
Not for academic purposes	28	29

***Finding 1: Social media is both a distraction and a benefit.***

Sixteen percent of students who answered this question felt like social media networking could be both a distraction and a benefit. For one student, they felt “It depends on the person, for some it can be a distraction but for others, it may be beneficial.” Depending on how social media is used, they felt it could be good or bad. One student believed, “It can be a distraction or beneficial, it all depends on how you choose to use it.” Others felt that it is easy to get distracted using social media, but it could be beneficial if it is used in short timeframes. Some students felt like it lessens the chances of face-to-face conversations and people are talking to screens instead of having interactive conversations. The students who participated in the interviews provided thoughtful and insightful responses concerning their experiences with social media as a student engagement tool. Based on the qualitative data of the participants, the themes were consistent with those students that believed social media was beneficial and those that believed it was a distraction. In Shawn’s interview, he stated the biggest drawback for utilizing social media for



academic purposes is distraction. He believed that students get too distracted using social media for other purposes such as entertainment.

**Sub-finding: Beneficial under conditions.** Of the students who responded with “other,” fifteen percent felt like social media could be used for academic purposes but only under certain conditions. The students felt that faculty do not utilize social media to its full potential or they do not understand how to use it in the classroom. Students feel as though if used in moderation, it could be beneficial to students. One student stated, “It is beneficial when properly controlled.” Another student stated, “It has benefits, but I believe instructors do not use them to their full potential.” The two conditions echoed the major findings for students in this study: communication and connecting and educational resource.

**Condition 1: Educational Resource.** Students who responded “other” for ways that social media could be beneficial felt that social media could be used as a supplement for classroom instruction. This condition echoed the major finding of using social media for an educational resource. YouTube was specifically mentioned on numerous occasions because students view videos that help them re-learn academic content. For example, math concepts are very popular on YouTube, so students will look there for ways to work mathematic problems. One student stated, “I only use YouTube for information/learning purposes.” Another student stated, “Social media is beneficial when used for studying and working; for example, viewing YouTube videos on topics of importance.” GroupMe seemed to be the next popular resource because faculty can send students reminders, homework assignments and the students use it for study groups. Students consistently used YouTube for supplemental instruction in their classes. They believed that using social media made them more engaged with not only their classmates

but also their instructors. They also thought that social media had more accessible content and they can learn from live feeds via Facebook or YouTube.

***Condition 2: Communication and Connecting.*** Fifteen percent of students used social media for communication and connecting with friends, family and classmates. This condition also connects to a major finding. They said it is a great tool to use for communication with classmates but not necessarily faculty. A few students felt that using social media could increase class discussion. “It could be useful in groups for class interactions,” stated one student. Another found it “more useful for in-person courses than online courses, which engage through blackboard/email.” Some students felt it is a great way to be connected to student organizations and student life on campus. One student said there were not any social media groups relevant to their college classes, so they communicate through the learning management system, Blackboard. Three of the students interviewed agreed that faculty should use more educational tools such as: GroupMe, Remind and Google documents instead of the traditional social media networks. However, they believed these technology tools were good for communication purposes.

### **Finding 2: Separation of Personal and Professional Social Media Accounts**

Twenty nine percent of students felt that social media should not be used for academic purposes (Table 16). One student stated, “I think social media is good for personal life but not college or work relationships.” Many felt that interacting with faculty via social media is not professional. Some were against using it for school purposes because they feel it is distracting and unnecessary. They prefer to use the college learning management system in lieu of social media. Others did not want to open their personal life up for faculty members to see. Some felt

that using social media in the academic setting is a waste of time and should not be allowed in a school setting. One student noted, “I do not use social media for academia.”

While the students who were interviewed used social media to connect with others, three of the six students believed that lines should not be crossed between personal and professional usage with faculty. Kelly believed that mixing professional and personal social media accounts could be dangerous and non-productive. Shawn also believed that personal and professional accounts should be separated. For example, he stated he used Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat for personal use and preferred to use GroupMe for professional use.

#### **Research Question 4**

*What is the faculty perception of social media usage in community college courses?*

Research question four examined the faculty perceptions of social media usage for academic purposes, “*What is the faculty perception of social media usage in community college courses?*” Findings were derived from the open-ended survey question and faculty interviews. The open-ended survey question was, “*What is your perception of social media usage for academic purposes?*” therefore faculty could select from the three choices or they could choose “other” and add their own text. Table 17 reflects the faculty perception of social media usage for academic purposes. Faculty found social media to be either a distraction or a benefit. According to the questionnaire, thirty-six percent of faculty felt that social media usage for academic purposes was a distraction, while twenty-eight percent felt like it was beneficial. Twelve percent of faculty feel like social media keeps them engaged and twenty four percent responded with “other”.

**Table 17***Faculty Perceptions of Social Media Usage for Academic Purposes*

	Survey Responses <i>n</i> = 25	Percentage
It is beneficial	7	28
It is a distraction	9	36
It keeps me engaged	3	12
Other	6	24

Since this question was open-ended, faculty could select from the three choices or they could choose “other” and add their own text. The findings for the “other category” are reflected in Table 18. Since the participants were able to select “other,” this question received varying responses, as expected. There were three themes that emerged from the open-ended question in the quantitative survey. Below the table are examples of responses that were given for each category.

**Table 18***“Other” Findings for Faculty*

	Survey Responses <i>n</i> = 11	Percentage
Supplement to Classroom Instruction	2	18
Like to see Benefit	3	27
Separation of Personal and Professional Social Media Accounts	5	45

### ***Finding 1: Social Media as a Distraction***

Thirty-six percent of faculty who completed the questionnaire believed that social media could be a distraction. Even though some faculty believed that social media was a distraction, they do see the potential use for academic purposes. It is hard for some faculty to imagine social media usage for academic purposes. Lisa considered social media a distraction because her students were constantly looking at their phones during breaks instead of engaging with each other. Mary also believed social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter were a distraction. She did not believe those should be used in the classroom because they are considered to be for personal use, not academic use.

### ***Finding 2: Supplement to Classroom Instruction***

Eighteen percent of faculty who completed the questionnaire believed that social media could supplement the learning material that they cover in the classroom. YouTube was the most specific source mentioned. Faculty felt that YouTube was a great platform and should be the only platform used because it is great for instructional videos and visual aids for students. Another supplement social media platform mentioned was GroupMe. Faculty stated that it is a great way to remind students of upcoming assignments, announcements and updates for the class. One faculty member quoted, “Social networking sites are helpful to supplement messages posted on and sent through the learning management system. I rely on Remind to send updates to students in ways that they seem more likely to notice than email. Students can also “text” me through the apps, ensuring a more immediate response and often a more open dialogue.”

All six of the faculty that were interviewed stated that social media could be used for supplemental instruction even though they do not all use it in that capacity. John viewed social media as a distraction, but he also believed that faculty could use it to make the curriculum more

exciting. He clearly stated that he wanted to see specific examples on how to use social media in the classroom before utilizing it himself. He was also concerned about the privacy of students using social media instead of the college learning platforms.

***Finding 3: Need to See the Benefit***

Twenty-seven percent of faculty stated they would like to see the benefit of using social media in the classroom. Because there has been a lack of research for using social media for academic purposes in a community college, the faculty who participated in this study need to be educated on the usage. They feel they have had little guidance on how it can be used to engage students, but they also feel it could be beneficial. One faculty member stated, “I’m not closed minded to using social media in the classroom. I’d like to see examples of actual usage to see it as beneficial.” They feel it could be beneficial for community building but would need to see actual examples of how it can be used. Some faculty felt that social media (especially in the Jr./Sr. level courses) could be helpful in networking and building relationships with those students.

***Finding 4: Separation of Personal and Professional Social Media Accounts***

Forty-five percent of faculty do not want to mix personal and professional social media sites. One faculty member said, “Students don’t seem to want to use social media sites for academic purposes. I also don’t want to bring students into my social media life.” Some feel that many professors have concerns about mixing these two and would like them to remain private. Some of the faculty believe that students don’t want to use social media sites for academic purposes. They simply don’t like to use them with students. Another faculty member stated, “When it comes to sites such as Facebook and Instagram, I don’t want to share my personal pictures and beliefs with my students. I use these social media platforms for personal use only.

Other than those, I will get on Pinterest but not for connecting with others. The only way I really connect with students and other faculty members is via email communication.” Julie believed that faculty should connect with students where they are, however, she wanted to keep her personal and professional accounts separate. Even though her choice was to keep everything separate, she did see value in adding social media into the classroom.

### **Research Question 5**

*Is there a significant difference between student and faculty perceptions toward the use of social media for academic engagement?*

A chi-square test is used in data analysis to determine if a relationship exists between the means of two categorical variables (Field, 2009). For research question 5, a chi-square test of independence was used to examine if there was a relationship between college student perceptions of social media used for academic purposes and college faculty perceptions of social media used for academic purposes. Data from the student and faculty surveys were inputted into SPSS software to determine if a relationship exists between perceptions of the two participant groups. The results of the chi-square test yielded no significant difference between the perceptions of the two groups,  $X^2 (2, n = 712) = 1.066, p \Rightarrow .785$ . The low level of significance indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the college student perception of social media for academic purposes and college faculty perception of social media for academic purposes.

**Table 19***Chi-Square Findings*

	<b>Value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</b>
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	1.066	3	0.785
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	1.047	3	0.790
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	0.105	1	0.746
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	605		

**Summary**

This chapter described the demographics of the study's participants, the results of the quantitative phase, and the findings of the qualitative phase for both students and faculty. Data revealed that social media for personal use not academic use is a common theme for both students and faculty not only in the survey responses but also in the interviews. The interview participants described more in depth uses of social media which were identified as the overarching themes. As demonstrated through the chi-square results, there is no statistical difference between student and faculty perceptions of social media as a student engagement tool for academic purposes at this community college. Chapter 5 will discuss the results and findings.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **Overview of Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine student and faculty uses and perceptions of social media as a student engagement tool for academic purposes at a community college. It extends Bishop's study by incorporating the uses and perceptions of social media as an academic tool for faculty as well as seeing if there is a difference between faculty and student perceptions. The theoretical framework for this study was Astin's (1984) Theory of Student Involvement. According to Astin (1984), the more students learn, the more they are involved in both the academic and social aspects of the collegiate experience. Utilizing social media for academic purposes could increase the participation of the student. This study used a Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods design to explore five research questions.

1. How do students use social networking sites for academic purposes?
2. How do faculty use social networking sites for academic purposes?
3. What is the student perception of social media usage in community college courses?
4. What is the faculty perception of social media usage in community college courses?
5. Is there a significant difference between community college student and faculty perceptions toward the use of social media for academic engagement?

The first phase of the study included a quantitative questionnaire for both faculty and students. The data from phase one was analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square.

Participants in the study voluntarily completed the surveys (see Appendix B and D) and answered questions about their usage of social media sites as well as demographic questions related to their age, gender, race, ethnicity, employment, and student/faculty status. Participants were asked to indicate their willingness to be interviewed for Phase 2. The second phase of the study consisted of face-to-face semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C and E) where the researcher was able to ask more in-depth questions about social media site usage and perceptions. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded and interpreted. Finally, the data from the questionnaires and the interviews was merged together to determine community college students' and faculty's uses and perceptions of social media. Chi Square was used to see if there was a significant difference in student versus faculty uses and perceptions. The first section of this chapter provides a summary of the findings. Conclusions for each research question are detailed in the second section of this chapter. Implications and recommendations regarding future research on using social media sites as an academic tool in the classroom will end this chapter.

### **Summary of Findings**

According to this study, both participant groups used social media as a tool for communication and connecting. Students used social media as an educational resource while faculty used it as an educational resource to supplement instruction. Both groups believed that social media could be both a distraction and a benefit, however, they were open to using it for academic purposes. The results of this study found only 1/3 of participants use it for academic purposes. Those who do use it, use it for connecting and collaborating. All participants were in agreement that social media accounts should be separated professionally and personally.

Findings from this study help faculty, students, and administration understand the possibilities of using social networking sites for engagement purposes. Findings revealed that while social media is being used primarily for personal use, it is used less for academic purposes by both students and faculty. The findings from both the student and faculty perspective who are using social media for academics can see potential benefit provide insight to its use, perception, and possibilities for use as an engagement tool for academic purposes. As indicated by the chi-square analysis, there was not a significant difference in student and faculty perceptions of social media as an academic tool for engagement. The qualitative data also supported this. The discussion of the findings are organized by the overlapping findings for both students' and faculty's academic use of social media in terms of: Communication and Connection, Educational and Supplement Resource, Both Beneficial and Distraction, and Professional and Personal Boundaries.

## **Discussion**

### **Communication and Connection**

One of the most prevalent themes from this study was the student use of social media for communication purposes, but, as the findings indicate, students are mainly connecting with students and faculty are connecting with faculty. Social media was predominantly used for communication and connecting with students, classmates, family, friends and others. Connecting and communicating were used interchangeably in the results of this study, which is consistent with other research. Brown (2019) found that students can connect with other students and faculty through social media which creates a highly effective communication tool. Brown also indicated that some faculty are using Facebook Live, which is another innovative way for students to connect. Additionally, when students joined social media groups that revolved around

certain academic topics, it created more opportunities for communication to take place. Students also used social media for connecting with others. Social media for connection was brought up multiple times in this study from both students and faculty.

Many students that participated in this study agreed that social media could be beneficial and increase their engagement if used in the classroom. Students believed the main ways in which it would be beneficial is for communication. Students today communicate via technology, therefore the instant connection with social media would be beneficial for them. Al-Bahrani and Moryl (2020) stated that developing social connections are important for student retention, academic development, diversity, and inclusion. They believe that the purposeful use of social media presents a great opportunity for educators to connect with their students and recreate social connections that are lost when students are enrolled in online courses.

Greenhow (as cited in Ward, 2020) believes that connections that students make with faculty and other students are important for a student's sense of belonging to an educational community. Jain (2019) found social media is an integral part of a student's life. He stated that social media networks give students an easier and convenient way to exchange information, communicate and stay connected with others. He also believed that social media is a medium where students can establish beneficial connections for their careers. Crowley (2015), stated that connected classrooms can reach beyond physical barriers to create conversations with people from other classrooms, cultures, and communities. She believed that social media provides the venue for students to connect and share their voice. Social media has opened new ways of communicating with others and it allows for discussions outside of the classroom. Astin's theory of student involvement states that a students' success can be measured by how much physical

and psychological energy they devote inside and outside of the classroom. By connecting with faculty on social media platforms, students can gain that sense of connection.

The results of this study found that faculty use social media primarily for communication and connecting with other faculty, however they were open to using social media for communicating with students. One of the most important factors in undergraduate education has been identified as faculty-student relationships (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Faculty in this study believed that utilizing social media for academic purposes could help to build those connections. Crowley (2015) stated students liked expanding learning through social media platforms because they were able to seek out different perspectives, ideas and feedback from a greater community. According to Greenhow (as cited in Ward, 2020), teachers can enhance interactions between students, between students and teachers, and with people and resources outside the classroom. Astin (1999) stated that students who interact frequently with faculty members are more likely than other students to express satisfaction with all aspects of their institutional experience. By using social media as an academic tool, this could create greater student involvement with faculty.

### **Educational and Supplemental Resource**

Both students and faculty used social media as an educational resource. Brown (2019) stated social media platforms are incorporating important information about different topics that are helpful for students. There are many forums that are helpful to students. The results of this study found that many students and faculty relied on YouTube as an educational resource. YouTube emerged as the most used platform by both students and faculty for the same purpose: supplemental instruction. This finding supported a study by Brown (2019) in which YouTube videos and tutorials were utilized by millions of students worldwide to clarify doubts about a

huge range of topics, starting from literature to mathematics to physics to chemistry and what not. She found that social media has become an integral part of our modern education system.

Many students in this study had no experience using social media for academic purposes. However, they did use YouTube for academic purposes because faculty used that platform as an educational resource. The students not only used YouTube when faculty offered it but also when they were researching topics on their own. Students were open to using social media if it was an option. Brown (2019) stated that because of this digital era, students can connect to social media easily and can assimilate information related to different subjects very quickly.

Even though very few faculty members from this study had used social media in the classroom, they did see the benefit of using social media as a supplemental instruction tool. They believed utilizing platforms where groups were formed could be beneficial in the students engaging with each other outside of the classroom. Faculty in this study often used YouTube videos to supplement their lecture material. Some of these included videos that explain how to navigate specific homework assignments and videos that explain an important concept or theory. Faculty could also ask students to create and post videos for in-class presentations.

As with the faculty in Brown's study who appreciated opportunities to connect and network with other higher education faculty, Richardson (2018) stated that teachers find social networking as a great way to expand their own learning and they can discover new resources. Brown (2019) stated that faculty are turning to social media because it is an uninterrupted flow of knowledge and it is easy to connect with others. Al-Bahrani and Moryl (2020) encouraged faculty to build a discipline co-educational space. This allows faculty to engage across courses at the same institution or another institution to find new resources and approaches to complex content. Additionally, faculty can follow educational Twitter accounts that focus on content that

is relevant to their subject matter and it will help them gain inspiration for their own classes. Haselwood (2018) found when students and faculty used Twitter, they felt a strong sense of community. Creating this space gives faculty a way to connect with their peers and colleagues that are not only in their discipline but also other areas. In these spaces, faculty can post materials and assignments to highlight how content can interact with other disciplines.

### **Both Beneficial and Distraction**

In this study, both faculty and students believed social media could be a benefit and a distraction. As stated in the findings of this study, students believed they could get easily distracted when using social media for academic purposes. They also indicated that using social media could limit the amount of in person conversations they have with other students and faculty. Some faculty in this study believed social media was a distraction because they couldn't image how to embed it in their curriculum for academic purposes. They also believed it would distract students from listening to lectures and engaging in class activities. Purvis et al. (2016) also found that social media is often seen as a distraction because the user can link to so many different connections that it quickly distracts them away from their original intent of using it. Their participants also believed that social media takes away valuable time that could be spent focusing on other work. Purvis et al. (2016) stated that social media websites are seen by some as positive educational tools that provide students with opportunities to develop their digital capability but can also be a distraction.

Unlike participants in the Purvis et al. (2016) study, participants in this study also saw the benefits of social media. Several faculty who were interviewed in this study indicated that social media usage could be beneficial because they are engaging students in the virtual environment, they are familiar with. Faculty member, Julie considered using social media for academic

purposes as meeting them halfway, teaching and communicating virtually. Derrick looked at social media as a benefit because it gives students access to never ending educational resources. Froment et al. (2017), found there was improvement of teacher-student interaction through social networks which generated a deeper knowledge of the other person on a personal level. They also found that using social media was beneficial because it broke down barriers between the two groups which correlated to an increased academic motivation, academic performance, student engagement, student satisfaction and overall student success.

### **Professional and Personal Boundaries**

Students and faculty do not want to mix their personal and professional social media profiles. Both groups believed that the two should remain separate. For many, it is hard to imagine using something that is so familiar in personal usage for professional usage. Faculty are very aware that students are using social media daily for personal use and some students are using it for professional use; however, they believed that there should be a separation between these for themselves as well as students. Several faculty members who were interviewed used social media for personal use but hesitated to use it for professional use. Faculty believed that social media sites can be used for updating students on homework or class projects, sending reminders and general communication. However, they believed that it could cause issues if it is not used in a professional manner. Several faculty members stated they would create professional social media accounts to use for classroom purposes. Many students did not want to use social media for academic purposes. As revealed in the study, students believed that personal and professional accounts should not be mixed. Instead of opting out, students could create a professional social media account on the platform of their choice. For example, LinkedIn is



primarily used for professional purposes and provides students with opportunities to engage with professionals from all over the world.

### **Connection to Astin's Theory of Student Involvement**

One of the core concepts in Astin's Theory of Student Involvement includes the students' environment. Astin (1993) stated that involvement measures include those that describe student environment interaction. These included interactions with peers and faculty both in and out of class, involvement in work and academic effort. Connections that students and faculty gain by using social media demonstrates this core concept because the environment is defined by all the experiences that students have in college and social media uses is now part of that environment for at least a quarter to one-third of students in this study. The environment surrounding a student can play a major impact on their success according to his theory. Astin's (1984) theory also states that students do better in college when they are more involved both inside and outside of the classroom. The involvement in the classroom, with faculty and in co-curricular activities is an essential experience for student success.

According to this study, students are connecting with each other in a virtual environment and faculty are connecting with other faculty, however, students do see the potential of connecting with faculty, they just do not believe that faculty use social media to its fullest potential. Junco et al. (2011) found that engagement in the virtual environment via social networks allow students who may normally struggle to engage socially, connect with peers and staff by engaging them in this virtual space. They also found that sites such as Twitter can improve the level of contact between students and others in the community by taking advantage of the student's digital lifestyles. This goes hand-in-hand with Astin's Theory of Student

Involvement because there is an expansion of learning space with the increase usage of virtual environments.

Although faculty in the current study were not always using social media as a student engagement tool for academic purposes, they did see the benefits of using it to engage students. Interview participant, Susan believed that using social media for academic purposes showed the students that she was relatable to them and she was trying to engage them in a technology they were used to using. Other researchers, such as Brown (2019), found some of the major benefits of social media in education are how it can improve the process of learning. This includes communication and connecting with faculty, never-ending source of updated information, higher levels of engagement, and distance learning opportunities. She found that students who often felt hopeless in class and struggled with content. By joining social media groups, these students were able to discuss topics more in depth and they felt more connected while participating in discussions. The findings of this study indicated that faculty are open to learning how to use social media to increase student engagement, they just need to be shown how because they realize the value of using this technology for academic purposes.

### **Implications**

This study focused on using social media sites as a student engagement tool for academic purposes therefore these implications and recommendations focus on social media. A great deal of useful information could be obtained from this study.

#### **Implication 1: Faculty Training on the Usage of Social Media for Connecting With Students and Innovative Teaching Methods**

Students believed that faculty did not utilize social media for academic purposes because they were not trained on proper usage. They believed faculty did not know how to incorporate it

into the classroom, therefore, there is a need for innovative training for faculty. As stated in the Chapter 4 findings, the students who participated in the questionnaire felt that faculty do not utilize social media to its full potential or they do not understand how to use it in the classroom. Students felt as though if used in moderation, it could be beneficial to students. One student stated, “It is beneficial when properly controlled.” Another student stated, “It has benefits, but I believe instructors do not use them to their full potential.”

But faculty indicate they need to be shown. This finding aligns with one of the five attributes of Roger’s (2003) theory of the diffusion of innovation: observability. According to Rogers (2003), observability is the degree to which the results of innovation are visible to others. In this study, many of the faculty needed to observe how social media could be used for academic purposes before they could fully incorporate it into their curriculum. Paul, a student who was interviewed, indicated that he would mention how to use social media to his instructors and believed they were open to his ideas. Carrie, who was also interviewed, stated that her instructor uploaded all her lecture videos to YouTube so students could use those in study groups. Both of these examples are reflections of Roger’s attribute of observability.

The most used social media platform for academic purposes in this study was YouTube. It was a valuable educational resource for both faculty and students. YouTube hosts many education channels that assist in teaching faculty in presenting content and provide additional resources for students. Some faculty members in this study mentioned they would be more open to utilizing social media in the classroom if they were educated on how to use it or if they saw examples of usage. Since faculty already use it as an educational resource for content, it can also be used to support faculty through observable uses of social media to engage students. Using this resource to see how other higher education faculty incorporate social media usage in the

classroom could give faculty the confidence to try it to expand the learning environment. Faculty in this study believed that seeing how others have successfully used social media in academia could create opportunities for future discussions on how they can best utilize social media for engagement.

In her student interview, Carrie said if faculty are introduced to ways that social media can be implemented for academic purposes, they are more likely to use this technology for student engagement. She also indicated that one of her instructors showed her a link on YouTube to assist with science concepts she was learning. Carrie mentioned there are many teaching tools available and hoped that faculty would use them. There are also many organizations and companies that assist faculty with trainings, technology guides and user-friendly tutorials. A simple internet source can yield thousands of free tutorials that will help with the implication of social media for academic purposes.

With the ever-changing technology advancements, there is always room for faculty training to include innovative ways to connect with students in an online environment through social media. There are many recommendations for faculty and students based on the results of this study. Faculty can also use these technology advances to increase and improve upon their teaching methods. For example, they can use Twitter for discussion boards which continues the conversation outside of the classroom. Students learn in different ways, therefore using social media is another way to reach the learner. Social media can be used inside and outside of the classroom for engagement. For example, Facebook now offers live feeds which captures students' interest.

Social media could also be incorporated within Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Blackboard, D2L, and Canvas. Some LMSs include components of social media that are

embedded in these systems. For example, the Collaboration Tab in Canvas is used to interface with Google and faculty can incorporate YouTube in Blackboard. Faculty could use these for social media for engagement in a more private, protected environment. LMSs could also be used for announcements, alerts, and calendar features.

### **Implication 2: Missed Opportunities for Student and Faculty Connections**

While both faculty and students use social media to connect with others, the results of this study indicated that they limit that connection to their own peers. For example, faculty are connecting either with faculty at their institution or with faculty at other institutions and students are connecting with other students but not faculty. However, both participant groups believed they could increase engagement by connecting with each other. Interview participant, Carrie stated she would like to see more Facebook groups for classes where the “live” option was used because the content is more accessible once the class is completed.

According to Brown (2019), communication is key because students and teachers can communicate freely on various social media platforms which allows them the opportunity to bond. They can connect on various apps and share their thoughts and feelings on topics. She also stated that social media is a more engaging form of content because it can use animations and attractive visuals that grab the attention of students. Students indicated that they used social media for academic purposes but only for limited reasons such as; assignment reminders from classmates, information on student life events, general college information or for communication purposes with classmates. Recommendations for expanding these possibilities follow.

### **Recommendations**

Because there is overlap in student and faculty use and perceptions, there are four recommendations that could be used by both. There are several recommendations that can be

explored to assist educators in making informed decisions regarding the use of social media as a student engagement tool for academic purposes. These recommendations include the following:

**Recommendation 1: Find a Social Media Space Where Students and Faculty Can Engage Together.**

Faculty and students could social media sites that have more of an educational focus than those that are used for personal use. Communication between faculty and students could take place on educational social media platforms. Results of this study indicated that both students and faculty primarily utilize YouTube for educational purposes. YouTube provides the student with many opportunities to learn concepts and hear from a diverse population. The platform also has a comment section for students to ask questions or provide thoughts on the video content. Student interview participant, Tonya was more familiar with the Remind Me application because her instructor used that for communication. Other students also utilized GroupMe and Remind for connecting with faculty and peers. Another social media platform that has more of an educational focus is Edmodo. This platform could be used for educational posts, calendars, communication to students, discussion boards and it is not linked to the faculty members' personal social media accounts. Mentimeter is another example of an application where faculty can create live polls, interactive presentations, quizzes, word clouds and discussion boards. Many of these social media platforms can be embedded into the learning management system. As social media continues to grow in popularity, it is important for faculty and students to embrace the many uses.

Learning Management Systems are also a great resource for engagement; however, these are lead and controlled entirely by faculty. At some point, these systems are no longer accessible for students because they lose access after the course is completed. Social media sites could offer

a freer flowing space for information exchange between faculty and students. Using Facebook Live offers ways to stream guest speakers or faculty lectures into courses. They are recorded and can be accessed again and again during a course and also beyond the course semester (Campus Suite, 2019). Twitter hashtags can be used for class message boards (Haselwood, 2018). Instagram can be used for photo-sharing or photo essays (Golding, 2019). Pinterest is one of the most popular tools for educational purposes and can be used for blogs, lesson plans, digital portfolios, virtual field trips and photo journals (Ghundiya, 2017).

### **Recommendation 2: Separation of Personal and Professional Social Media Accounts**

Both students and faculty believed that there should be separate personal and professional social media accounts. One account can be used for personal use and the other for professional use. While students should have the option to opt out of using social media networks for academic purposes, a better solution for the 21<sup>st</sup> century professional is to create professional social media accounts that are only used for academics. While Facebook and Twitter are good options for professional use, LinkedIn is the most widely used professionally. Creating a professional account would allow the student to participate fully in the engagement activities provided by faculty.

### **Recommendation 3: Create Social Media Policies for Student and Faculty Use**

Social media policies and procedures on the use of social media sites in the classroom is recommended so that the users understand potential risks. These should include online safety, the use of personal accounts versus professional accounts, online etiquette, privacy and the proper uses and limitations of using social media in the classroom. Policies and procedures should be implemented as a safeguard to provide safety for faculty and students. Best practices for social media usage should also be included. Some of these are listed below.

## **Social Media Privacy Settings**

Faculty should review settings for social media at the start of the course, so they can assist students with any problems that might arise. Students might not be familiar with social media networks therefore a tutorial or lesson on privacy should be recommended. According to Tinti-Kane (2013), one-way faculty can incorporate Twitter into teaching without jeopardizing their privacy and their students is by creating a single Twitter account for their class and have the students manage the account. Faculty should always protect their students' privacy by not sharing any of their personal data. They must request permission or have students sign a release before they can post images or videos of students.

## **Transparency on Social Media Usage in the Classroom**

Faculty should set clear expectations on the use of social media in the classroom. They need to educate the students on how they will be utilizing it within the coursework. Faculty can explain both the benefits of social media use in the classroom and the risks (Higgin, 2019). Faculty also need to have alternative opportunities for those students that do not engage in social media. According to Higgin (2019), faculty should review their institutions social media guidelines and follow their acceptable-use policies of social media.

## **Recommendation 4: Be Prepared to Use Social Media Use During Emergencies**

Investigate using social media as an academic tool in emergency situations. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, thousands of college students across the nation experienced a sudden change from face-to-face classroom instruction to online instruction. Heitz et al. (2020) found that COVID-19 forced an abrupt move to remote learning and it has not been easy because faculty were forced to find new ways to engage with students online. The pandemic did provide institutions opportunities to experiment and become innovative in using social media networks.



However, many faculty used their own learning management systems, but some also included social networking groups as part of the learning process. According to Al-Bahrain and Moryl (2020), COVID-19 upended normal social connections that develop between students and professors. They found that faculty are missing those casual interactions in office hours, pre-class discussions, post-class questions, and other in-person interactions. They also believed that faculty must shift their teaching methods to develop these social interactions. Since many faculty had to pivot to online learning during the pandemic, we may see a switch to utilizing these platforms during other emergency situations such as snow days, hurricanes, or other natural disasters. The pandemic has exposed a new learning environment not only for students but also the faculty.

### **Future Research**

Because there is little research on social media for academic purposes in a community college setting, there are many opportunities to research this topic further. More research needs to be done on how faculty in each academic department are using social media in the classroom. For example, studies could focus on specific academic schools such as allied health, liberal arts, business and visual and performing arts to investigate if one discipline uses it more than another. A study could be also be done to see what types of content is posted on social media. Are faculty using videos, discussion boards, photos or polls when using social media in the classroom? That content could be used to compare the usage across a variety of disciplines. Another study could be conducted on the impact of professional development that faculty engage in to see if the training is beneficial.

This study focused on students and faculty in an academic classroom setting. More areas for future research could include surveying student service areas to see how they utilize social

media for student engagement outside of the classroom. Areas such as Career Services, Student Life, Diversity and Inclusion, Libraries and other service areas utilize social media for many different reasons.

This research was limited to one urban multi-campus community college. Future research could compare multiple community colleges to see if there are any significant differences between campuses. There could also be a comparison study between community colleges and four-year universities to see if there is a significant difference in perceptions among the two groups of students as well as faculty.

Another area for future research is to explore various age groups of faculties and their social media usage. For example, one faculty member stated, they could see younger faculty using social media more often than older faculty therefore a comparison could be between the different age groups to see if there is a significant difference in usage. According to Moran et al. (2012), 41% of faculty under age 35 used social media in the classroom compared to 30% of faculty over the age of 55. The authors found that younger faculty are leaders in social media adoption.

### **Final Thoughts**

This study provides new insight on expanding the community college learning environment to include virtual spaces and on the perceptions of social media as a student engagement tool from both faculty and students. Social media holds the possibility of extending the community college learning environment to include virtual spaces that could be beneficial to both faculty and students for engagement purposes. Social media is a way to expand and enrich the collegiate experience through connections, collaborations, and educational resources that have the potential to draw the student in creating a more expanded and enriched learning

experience. These findings expand Astin's Input-Environment-Outcomes Model because, for students to grow, they need to actively engage in their environment. Social networking provides an opportunity for expanded learning in a virtual environment.

According to Dr. Ai Addyson-Zhang (Schoology, 2018), there is a paradigm shift in education and social media and technology is part of the shift. Addyson-Zhang also stated that students are moving away from learning in the traditional space of the classroom to become digital learners. Social media has the potential to facilitate communications between faculty and students creating a more engaging atmosphere in the virtual classroom and in-person classroom. Social media can extend the classroom experience and environment when leveraged by faculty for academic purposes. Addyson-Zhang stated that because social media is open 24/7, it is collaborative and interactive creating that paradigm shift in education. The future of social media for academic purposes and student engagement is still unfolding, and this study contributes to that potentiality.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A Permission for Use of Survey Questions

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 Wed 7/15/2015 10:03 AM  
Jesse Bishop <jebishop@highlands.edu>  
Re: Permission to use survey for dissertation  
To:  Jennifer Duncan;  jbutler@westga.edu

Jennifer,  
Please feel free to use the survey. I'm glad to know that there's practical value in the work!  
Best of luck to you and please let me know if I can be of help.  
--JB

**Jesse R. Bishop, Ed.D.**  
Associate Professor of English  
Humanities Digital Liaison  
Advisor, Old Red Kimono  
<http://www.highlands.edu/site/faculty-jesse-bishop>  
706-368-7776

---

**From:** Jennifer Duncan <[jennifer.duncan@tulsacc.edu](mailto:jennifer.duncan@tulsacc.edu)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 15, 2015 10:35 AM  
**To:** Jesse Bishop; [jbutler@westga.edu](mailto:jbutler@westga.edu)  
**Subject:** Permission to use survey for dissertation

Hi there,  
I am working on my dissertation proposal on "Uses and Perceptions of Social Media as a Student Engagement Tool in a Community College Classroom". I ran across your study in the Oklahoma State University Library and found your survey very helpful. I am writing to ask permission to use your survey for my research. Your survey seems to touch on my research questions for my survey using the community college students at my institution as my participants. I had hoped to use the Community College Survey on Student Engagement but my institution would not add any social media questions to the survey this year.

Please let me know if you would grant me permission to utilize your survey. Of course, I would cite your information in my references.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jennifer Duncan



## Appendix B

### Student Use of Social Networking Sites: Phase 1 Survey

The purpose of this survey is to find out about social media usage and perceptions relating to the use of social media for academic purposes. This study is being conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation. The responses collected will be anonymous. Participation in this research is voluntary. If you do not want to fill out the survey, it will not affect you in any way. This survey should take you less than 10 minutes to complete. Participants who complete this survey will be put into a drawing for a \$50 Amazon Gift Card.

When answering these questions, think about **all** the courses that you have taken while in college.

If you have questions about the research process being followed or wish to find out the results of this study, please contact Jennifer Dunaway: [Jennifer.dunaway@tulsacc.edu](mailto:Jennifer.dunaway@tulsacc.edu) or 918-595-8221. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

#### Demographic Information

1. **What is your age? If you are not 18 years of age, please DO NOT complete this survey.**

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **What is your gender?**

Female

Male

Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. **What is your ethnicity?**

Hispanic or Latino

Not Hispanic or Latino

4. **What is your race?**

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

White or Caucasian

Other

**5. What is your employment status (mark only one)?**

- Part-time (1-34 hours a week)
- Full-time (34 + hours a week)
- Not employed

**6. What is your classification?**

- Freshman (1-30 hours completed)
- Sophomore (greater than 30 hours)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**7. What Academic School is your degree in?**

- Business/Information Technology
- Engineering, Aviation & Public Service
- Allied Health
- Liberal Arts & Communication
- Science & Mathematics
- Visual & Performing Arts
- Nursing
- Undecided
- I do not know

**8. Are you a full-time or part-time student? (mark only one)**

- Full-time (12 hours or more)
- Part-time (11 hours or less)

**9. How many college credit hours have you completed?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Social Networking Site Usage:**

Social networking sites refer to web-based applications that allow users to connect, interact and share content using Web 2.0 platforms. Examples include; Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube and many more.

**10. Have you used a social networking site?**

- Yes
- No

**11. Have you ever used any of the following social networking sites: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram or YouTube**

- Yes, I have used at least one of these.
- No, I have not used any of these sites.
- I have no idea what this means.

**For Questions 12-15, please indicate your agreement with the following statements.**

<b>12.</b>	<b>As a student, I use social networking sites to interact with</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Constantly</b>
	Family	1	2	3	4	5
	Friends	1	2	3	4	5
	Classmates	1	2	3	4	5
	Instructors	1	2	3	4	5
	College	1	2	3	4	5
	Professional Networks	1	2	3	4	5
	Workplace	1	2	3	4	5
<b>13.</b>	<b>As a student, I use social networking sites to connect with</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Constantly</b>
	Family	1	2	3	4	5
	Friends	1	2	3	4	5
	Classmates	1	2	3	4	5
	Instructors	1	2	3	4	5
	College	1	2	3	4	5
	Professional Networks	1	2	3	4	5
	Workplace	1	2	3	4	5
<b>14.</b>	<b>As a student, I use social networking sites to share information with</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Constantly</b>
	Family	1	2	3	4	5
	Friends	1	2	3	4	5
	Classmates	1	2	3	4	5
	Instructors	1	2	3	4	5
	College	1	2	3	4	5
	Professional Networks	1	2	3	4	5
	Workplace	1	2	3	4	5
<b>15.</b>	<b>As a student, how often do you use each of the following social networking sites (Mark only one per row)</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Less than once a day</b>	<b>1-5 times a day</b>	<b>6-10 times a day</b>	<b>More than 10 times a day</b>
	Facebook	1	2	3	4	5

	Twitter	1	2	3	4	5
	Pinterest	1	2	3	4	5
	LinkedIn	1	2	3	4	5
	Snapchat	1	2	3	4	5
	Instagram	1	2	3	4	5
	YouTube	1	2	3	4	5
	GroupMe	1	2	3	4	5
	Other sites *	1	2	3	4	5

\*If you identified another social networking site that you use, please list it \_\_\_\_\_

### Social Networking Site Use and Academic Engagement

Social networking sites refer to web-based applications that allow users to connect, interact and share content using Web 2.0 platforms. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram and many more.

**16. Which social networking site(s) do you use in your college courses? (check all that apply)**

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn
- Snapchat
- Instagram
- YouTube
- GroupMe
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

17.	As a student, how often do you use each of the following social networking sites for academic purposes (Mark only one per row)	Never	Less than once a day	1-5 times a day	6-10 times a day	More than 10 times a day
	Facebook	1	2	3	4	5
	Twitter	1	2	3	4	5
	Pinterest	1	2	3	4	5
	LinkedIn	1	2	3	4	5
	Snapchat	1	2	3	4	5
	Instagram	1	2	3	4	5
	YouTube	1	2	3	4	5

GroupMe	1	2	3	4	5
Other sites *	1	2	3	4	5

\*If you identified another social networking site that you use, please list it \_\_\_\_\_

**For Questions 18-30, please indicate your agreement with the following statements. Mark only one answer.**

	As a student, I...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
18.	Use social networking sites to establish relationships with classmates	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Use social networking sites to message classmates about our course	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Use social networking sites to post content from my course(s) for classmates who use that social networking site	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Use social networking sites to join groups related to my courses	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Use social networking sites to comment on my classmates' posts about our courses	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Use social networking sites to ask questions of the faculty at my college	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Use social networking sites to repost content posted or distributed by the faculty and/or staff at my college	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Use social networking sites to establish relationships with my instructors at this college	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Use social networking sites to ask questions of my instructors at this college	1	2	3	4	5

27.	Use social networking sites to work on projects with my instructors at this college	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Use social networking sites to work on projects with my classmates at this college	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Use social networking sites to repost content distributed by one of my instructors at this college	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Use social networking sites to get advising guidance from one of my instructors at this college	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Use social networking sites for academic purposes to increase my engagement	1	2	3	4	5

**32. What is your perception of social media usage for academic purposes?**

- It is beneficial
- It is a distraction
- It keeps me engaged with other students or faculty
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**33. What else would you add about Social Media Networking sites that you think could be beneficial to this study? \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**34. Would you be interested in participating in Phase 2 of this study? Phase 2 involves an in-person interview to better understand your perceptions and experiences.**

- Yes, I would like to participate.
- No, I would not like to participate.

**Enter your name and contact information. By entering your name, you understand that you will no longer be anonymous; however, the researcher will be the only person to know your identity. There is no harm or risk associated with either phase of the study. Please refer to the informed consent statement included at the beginning and end of this survey.**

- Name:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**35. Thank you for completing this survey. If you would like to enter a drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card, please click on the link below that takes you to the drawing site. Your name will not be associated with your response.**

Appendix C  
Semi-structured Interview Guide for Students

- 1) Researcher will introduce herself.
- 2) Researcher will review the informed consent documentation and ask the participant to confirm his/her participation by signing a copy of the consent.
- 3) Researcher will notify participant that they may opt out of the interview at any time.
- 4) Researcher will notify the participant that recording will begin.
- 5) Researcher will turn on recording device.
- 6) Researcher will explain the context and purpose of the interview.
- 7) Researcher will review definitions and conceptualizations of social media and student engagement.
- 8) Researcher will provide a relaxed atmosphere by asking participant about their day, major, overall experience at TCC.
- 9) Researcher will ask questions related to the following topics and subtopics.
  - a) What is social networking to you? What do you think of when you hear that phrase?
  - b) Are you a frequent, occasional, or non-user of social networking sites? Tell me more about that. What do you use? How? Why? Please give me specific examples?
  - c) For SNSs users only: You indicated that you have used SNS at TCC. Can you tell me more about how you've used those sites? Can you give me specific examples?
  - d) How do you think SNSs have influenced your engagement? Please give me examples?
  - e) What impact has SNS use had on you, academically speaking? What about your classmates? How do you think SNSs have impacted their academic lives?
  - f) How do your instructors respond to SNSs in terms of personal or educational use? Please give me examples.
  - g) What do you think is the potential of SNSs to academically engage students? What are the possibilities? What are the drawbacks? What advice would you give instructors for using SNSs to academically engage students?
  - h) Is there anything else you want to mention about this topic or study?
  - i) Do you have any questions for me?
- 10) Researcher will thank the participant.



## Appendix D

### Faculty Use of Social Media Networking Sites: Phase 1 Survey

The purpose of this survey is to find out about social media usage and perceptions relating to the use of social media for academic purposes. This study is being conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation. The responses collected will be anonymous. Participation in this research is voluntary. If you do not want to fill out the survey, it will not affect you in any way. This survey should take you less than 10 minutes to complete.

If you have questions about the research process being followed or wish to find out the results of this study, please contact Jennifer Dunaway: [Jennifer.dunaway@tulsacc.edu](mailto:Jennifer.dunaway@tulsacc.edu) or 918-595-8221. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

#### Demographic Information

**1. What is your age?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. What is your gender?**

Female

Male

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**12. What is your ethnicity?**

Hispanic or Latino

Not Hispanic or Latino

**13. What is your race?**

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

White or Caucasian

Other

**3. What is your employment status at TCC (mark only one)?**

Part-time faculty

Full-time faculty

**4. Do you have employment outside of TCC? If yes, please explain.**

- Yes: \_\_\_\_\_
- No

**5. What Academic School/Division do you teach in?**

- Business/Information Technology
- Engineering, Aviation & Public Service
- Allied Health
- Liberal Arts & Communication
- Science & Mathematics
- Visual & Performing Arts
- Nursing
- Engaged Learning
- Global Learning
- Undecided
- I do not know

**6. What is the highest degree you have earned?**

- Associates
- Bachelors
- Masters
- PhD
- EdD
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**7. How long have you been teaching in higher education?**

- \_\_\_\_\_

**Social Networking Site Usage:**

Social networking sites refer to web-based applications that allow users to connect, interact and share content using Web 2.0 platforms. Examples include; Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube and many more.

**8. Have you used a social networking site?**

- Yes
- No

**9. Have you ever used any of the following social networking sites: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram or YouTube?**

- Yes, I have used at least one of these.
- No, I have not used any of these sites.
- I have no idea what this means.

For Questions 12-15, please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

12.	<b>As a faculty member, I use social networking sites to interact with</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Constantly</b>
	Family	1	2	3	4	5
	Friends	1	2	3	4	5
	Students	1	2	3	4	5
	Instructors	1	2	3	4	5
	College	1	2	3	4	5
	Professional Networks	1	2	3	4	5
	Workplace	1	2	3	4	5
13.	<b>As a faculty member, I use social networking sites to connect with</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Constantly</b>
	Family	1	2	3	4	5
	Friends	1	2	3	4	5
	Students	1	2	3	4	5
	Instructors	1	2	3	4	5
	College	1	2	3	4	5
	Professional Networks	1	2	3	4	5
	Workplace	1	2	3	4	5
14.	<b>As a faculty member, I use social networking sites to share information with</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Constantly</b>
	Family	1	2	3	4	5
	Friends	1	2	3	4	5
	Students	1	2	3	4	5
	Instructors	1	2	3	4	5
	College	1	2	3	4	5
	Professional Networks	1	2	3	4	5
	Workplace	1	2	3	4	5
15.	<b>As a faculty member, how often do you use each of the following social networking sites (Mark only one per row)</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Less than once a day</b>	<b>1-5 times a day</b>	<b>6-10 times a day</b>	<b>More than 10 times a day</b>
	Facebook	1	2	3	4	5
	Twitter	1	2	3	4	5
	Pinterest	1	2	3	4	5
	LinkedIn	1	2	3	4	5

	Snapchat	1	2	3	4	5
	Instagram	1	2	3	4	5
	YouTube	1	2	3	4	5
	GroupMe	1	2	3	4	5
	Other sites *	1	2	3	4	5

\*If you identified another social networking site that you use, please list it \_\_\_\_\_

### Social Networking Site Use and Academic Engagement

Social networking sites refer to web-based applications that allow users to connect, interact and share content using Web 2.0 platforms. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram and many more.

**16. Which social networking site(s) do you use in your college courses? (check all that apply)**

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn
- Snapchat
- Instagram
- YouTube
- GroupMe
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

17.	As a faculty member, how often do you use each of the following social networking sites for academic purposes (Mark only one per row)	Never	Less than once a day	1-5 times a day	6-10 times a day	More than 10 times a day
	Facebook	1	2	3	4	5
	Twitter	1	2	3	4	5
	Pinterest	1	2	3	4	5
	LinkedIn	1	2	3	4	5
	Snapchat	1	2	3	4	5
	Instagram	1	2	3	4	5
	YouTube	1	2	3	4	5
	GroupMe	1	2	3	4	5
	Other sites *	1	2	3	4	5

\*If you identified another social networking site that you use, please list it \_\_\_\_\_

**For Questions 18-30, please indicate your agreement with the following statements. Mark only one answer.**

	<b>As a faculty member, I...</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
18.	Use social networking sites to establish relationships with students	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Use social networking sites to message students about our course	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Use social networking sites to post content from my course(s) for students who use that social networking site	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Use social networking sites to join groups related to my courses	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Use social networking sites to comment on my students posts about our course	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Use social networking sites to ask questions of other faculty at my college	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Use social networking sites to repost content posted or distributed by the faculty and/or staff at my college	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Use social networking sites to establish relationships with other instructors at this college	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Use social networking sites to ask questions of my students at this college	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Use social networking sites to work on projects with other instructors at this college	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Use social networking sites to repost content distributed by other instructors at this college	1	2	3	4	5

29.	Use social networking sites to get advising guidance from other instructors at this college	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Use social networking sites for academic purposes increases student engagement	1	2	3	4	5

**31. What is your perception of social media usage for academic purposes?**

- It is beneficial
- It is a distraction
- It keeps me engaged with other students or faculty
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**32. What else would you add about Social Media Networking sites that you think could be beneficial to this study? \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**33. Would you be interested in participating in Phase 2 of this study? Phase 2 involves an in-person interview to better understand your perceptions and experiences.**

- Yes, I would like to participate.
- No, I would not like to participate.

**Please enter your name and contact information. By entering your name, you understand that you will no longer be anonymous; however, the researcher will be the only person to know your identity. There is no harm or risk associated with either phase of the study. Please refer to the informed consent statement included at the beginning and end of this survey.**

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
- Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**34. Thank you for completing this survey. If you would like to enter a drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card, please click on the link below that takes you to the drawing site. Your name will not be associated with your response.**

Appendix E  
Semi-structured Interview Guide for Faculty

- 1) Researcher will introduce herself.
- 2) Researcher will review the informed consent documentation and ask the participant to confirm his/her participation by signing a copy of the consent.
- 3) Researcher will notify participant that they may opt out of the interview at any time.
- 4) Researcher will notify the participant that recording will begin.
- 5) Researcher will turn on recording device.
- 6) Researcher will explain the context and purpose of the interview.
- 7) Researcher will review definitions and conceptualizations of social media and student engagement.
- 8) Researcher will provide a relaxed atmosphere by asking participant about their day, major, overall experience at TCC.
- 9) Researcher will ask questions related to the following topics and subtopics.
  - a. What is social networking to you? What do you think of when you hear that phrase?
  - b. Are you a frequent, occasional, or non-user of social networking sites? Tell me more about that. What do you use? How? Why? Give me specific examples.
  - c. What impact has SNS use had on you, academically speaking? What about your colleagues? How do you think SNSs have impacted their academic lives?
  - d. How do you think SNSs have influenced you or your students' engagement? Please give me examples.
  - e. How do instructors respond to SNSs in terms of personal or educational use? Please give examples?
  - f. What do you think about SNSs potential to academically engage students? What are the possibilities? What are the drawbacks? What advice would you give instructors for using SNSs to academically engage students?
  - g. Is there anything else you want to mention about this topic or study?
  - h. Do you have any questions for me?
- 10) Researcher will thank the participant.

## Appendix F

### Community College IRB Approval

#### Human Subjects Review

Proposal Title: Uses and Perceptions of Social Media as a Student Engagement Tool for Academic Purposes at a Community College  
IRB #: 19-010

Dear Researcher:

Your research proposal has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at [REDACTED]. You are authorized to begin your research and implement this study as of the date of this email. This authorization is valid for one year from today. After this authorization runs out, you are required to submit a continuation or renewal request for IRB approval.

This approval is granted with the understanding that the research will be conducted within the published guidelines of the [REDACTED] Institutional Review Board and as described in your application. Any changes or modifications to the approved protocols should be submitted to the IRB for approval. Please use the IRB number provided above in all your communications regarding this study.

Thank you for sending us your application for research involving human subjects. By doing so, you safeguard the welfare of our students and federal funding of our college.

Best,

Allison



# Appendix G

## Oklahoma State University IRB Approval



- Actions**
- Send EMail
- Start xForm
- xForms (0)
- Recent Items**
- ED-19-35-OFF
- Messages**
- Welcome to eCowboy Compliance at Oklahoma State University
- Due to the high volume of applications received, current review times for the IRB are estimated to be 2 weeks at this time.
- IRB has Zoom office hours on Wednesdays from 9-11 and Thursdays 1-3 see notices section on your dashboard for meeting id and passcode.**
- My Docs & xForms**
- 0 Attachments
- 1 xForms

Home

Study ED-19-35-OFF (IRB)

**Study**

<b>Study:</b>	ED-19-35	<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	*No Sponsor* (Primary)
<b>Committee:</b>	IRB	<b>Sponsor Id:</b>	
<b>Category:</b>	College of Education, Health, & Aviation	<b>Grants:</b>	
<b>Department:</b>	School of Teaching, Learning, & Educational Sciences		
<b>Agent Types:</b>	Interview Procedures (In Person) • Surveys/Questionnaires (Internet)	<b>CRO:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	Uses and Perceptions of Social Media as a Student Engagement Tool for Academic Purposes at a Community College	<b>Year:</b>	2019
<b>Exempt Categories:</b>	New Category 2: Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior if at least one of the following is met - anonymous, disclosure would not cause harm, or identifiable with limited IRB review completed.	<b>Number of Approved Subjects:</b>	300
<b>Review Level:</b>	Exempt		
<b>Comments:</b>	The purpose of this mixed methods study is to examine and describe both student and faculty uses and perceptions of social media as a student engagement tool <a href="#">(hover for more...)</a>		

**Study-Site**

<b>Site(s):</b>	OFF - Off Campus Location	<b>PI:</b>	Dunaway, Jennifer
<b>Status:</b>	Open to Enrollment	<b>Additional:</b>	N
<b>Approval:</b>	March 21, 2019	<b>Expiration:</b>	Exempt
<b>Initial Approval:</b>	March 21, 2019	<b>Other Expirations:</b>	Exempt check in date - 03/20/2022
<b>Location(s):</b>	Other		
<b>Comments:</b>			

**Study-Site Contacts (1)**

Name	Role
Vasinda, Sheri	Faculty Advisor

**Events (1)**

Event	Att	FE	Instance/UDF
IRB - Initial Submission	12		

VITA

Jennifer Leigh Dunaway

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Dissertation: USES AND PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A STUDENT  
ENGAGEMENT TOOL FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES AT A  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Major Field: Education

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Workforce and Adult  
Education at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in  
December 2020

Completed the requirements for the Master of Education at Northeastern  
State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma in 1996

Completed the requirements for Bachelor of Science in Health and Human  
Performance at Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma in  
1994

Experience:

Tulsa Community College  
Student Activities Specialist, 1998-2001  
Director of Student Life, 2001-Present  
Adjunct Professor, 1998-Present

Professional Memberships: National Association of Student Personnel  
Administrators, Oklahoma College Student Personnel Association