

**TAKING FACEBOOK OFFLINE: HOW USING SOCIAL MEDIA-INSPIRED
PAPER TEMPLATES IMPACTS STUDENTS' WRITING AND ENGAGEMENT**

by

Patrick Shannon Fenelon

Bachelor of Arts, St. Francis Xavier University, 2008

Bachelor of Education, University of New Brunswick, 2009

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Education

In the Graduate Academic Unit of Education

Supervisor: Elizabeth Sloat, PhD, UNB Faculty of Education

Examining Board: Ken Brien, PhD, UNB Faculty of Education, Chair

Ellen Rose, PhD, UNB Faculty of Education

Marcea Ingersoll, PhD, STU Faculty of Education

This thesis is accepted by the Dean of Graduate Studies

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

September, 2016

© Patrick Shannon Fenelon, 2016

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines whether and how using Facebook-inspired paper-based templates changes students' writing characteristics and school engagement levels. Two grade seven classes participated in different literary character analysis activities, one of which involved writing descriptive sentences about a poem's narrator, while the other class filled out Facebook-inspired paper-based templates, to address the following two research questions: 1) how and in what ways do writing characteristics differ between each activity; and 2) how and in what ways does student engagement in learning using the paper-based Facebook template approach compare with those in the descriptive sentence writing approach? Student writing samples and observation notes were used in conjunction with a writing assessment framework and student engagement model to explore these questions. The findings suggest that those students who completed the Facebook-inspired activity were not only more engaged with the activity, but also produced longer writing pieces that contained stronger examples of voice, word choice, sentence fluency and conventions compared with writing produced by the descriptive sentence group.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beautiful niece Sophia, whom I love with all my heart. May this research help to create new learning opportunities for you and your future classmates!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my wonderful parents for their constant support, and encouragement throughout this process. Your love and advice has been greatly appreciated, and I can truly never thank you enough for what you have done for me over the years.

I would also like to give a big thank you to my supervisor Dr. Elizabeth Sloat for her expert guidance, valuable feedback and tireless support. It has been a tremendous privilege to work with you, and to draw on your vast knowledge about students' writing theories. I also promise never to use the phrase "the researcher" ever again in any future drafts!

To Dr. Lynn Randall and Dr. Paula Kristmanson, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to sit on my committee and to provide valuable input throughout the writing process.

Finally, to Dr. Jane McLean, Philip Sexsmith, Teena MacDougall, Kendra Haines and Sonia Lavertu-Bernier, thank you for being constant pillars of support and friendship throughout this process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Overview of Relevant Literature.....	4
Overview of Methodology.....	6
Key Findings.....	8
Conclusion.....	8
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	10
Introduction.....	10
Desired Skills for 21 st Century Learners.....	11
ICT & Social Media in Literacy Education.....	18
Barriers to ICT and Facebook Integration.....	25
Conclusion.....	30
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....	32
Introduction.....	32
Study Design and Approach.....	33
Research Design and Approach.....	34
Research Setting and Participants.....	35
Procedures.....	36
Data Collection Methods.....	39
Data Analysis.....	41
Conclusion.....	45
CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	47
Introduction.....	47
Writing Analysis Framework.....	47
Writing Analysis.....	48
Comparing Writing Activities.....	55
Student Engagement in the Writing Tasks.....	65
Conclusion.....	70
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION.....	72
Introduction.....	72

Study Limitations.....	74
Considerations for Future Research.....	75
Conclusion.....	77
APPENDIX A: POEM USED DURING BOTH WRITING ACTIVITIES...	79
APPENDIX B: WRITING ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK.....	80
APPENDIX C: FACEBOOK-BASED PAPER TEMPLATES.....	81
APPENDIX D: LESSON PLAN: DESCRIPTIVE SENTENCE ACTIVITY.	82
APPENDIX E: LESSON PLAN: FACEBOOK-BASED ACTIVITY.....	83
WORKS CITED.....	84
CURRICULUM VITAE	

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: The Student Engagement Core Model (Corso et al, 2013).....	43
FIGURE 2: Revised Corso et al (2013) Model of Student Engagement for Collaborative Exercises.....	44
FIGURE 3: Below Appropriate Achievement, Sonia’s Conventional Written Responses.....	51
FIGURE 4: Appropriate Achievement, Joey’s Conventional Written Responses.....	52
FIGURE 5: Superior Achievement, Lilly’s Conventional Written Responses	53
FIGURE 6: Below Appropriate Achievement, Darren’s Facebook Template Written Responses.....	55
FIGURE 7: Appropriate Achievement, Susan’s Facebook Template Written Responses.....	56
FIGURE 8: Superior Achievement, Debbie’s Facebook Template Written Responses.....	59
FIGURE 9: Debbie’s Second Status Update.....	63
FIGURE 10: Average Word Count by Task and Achievement Level.....	64

Chapter I: Introduction

Introduction

Students use Facebook and other social media for personal communication at such a consistently high level that it has changed how they read, write, and communicate, and in turn broadened how literacy is conceptualized (Kist, 2010; Kuznekoff & Titsworth, 2013; Luke & Woods, 2009). Teachers are beginning to integrate social media literacy into classroom practice in an effort both to build connections between class-based literacy learning and new technologies, and to ensure students know how to communicate effectively and safely through these media (Beach, 2012; Kinzer, 2010; Ravenscroft et al, 2012). Social media as used in this context refers to digital applications that are designed for and geared towards social interaction (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). Emerging research on the role and value of social media in achieving curricular outcomes suggests that Facebook and other media increases students' engagement in learning when personal knowledge and interests are drawn upon to complete activities (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Rovai, 2004). Despite this knowledge, there are still teachers who, for various reasons, are either unable or unwilling to incorporate social media platforms into instruction.

The above situation raises a number of questions. Why are some teachers hesitant to incorporate social media into instruction? Further, are there teachers who wish to use social media but are unable to do so due to various barriers to online access? Can we as educators develop social media-inspired learning tools that teachers facing barriers to access can use during instruction? Can these teachers then provide experiences similar to engaging with social media in their classrooms by using paper-

based templates for websites such as Facebook (Appendix C), which would include space in which students would write status updates and comments, as well as an area for students to draw a picture to accompany their writing? Could these templates serve as both an independent writing activity or as a graphic organizer to inspire further writing? Most importantly, can these paper templates enhance students' writing and increase their engagement with learning?

This study seeks to shed light on these questions. Two grade seven Language Arts classes, both taught by the same classroom teacher, participated in the study on the same day in March, 2015. Data was collected during each class's reading of the poem *Ordinary, Extraordinary* by Amelia Harmon (2011, Appendix A), including students' character analysis responses of the poem's narrator. However, each class engaged in the character study in different ways. One class followed the more traditional middle school character study approach using an initial class discussion followed by a formulating of descriptive statements in writing that drew upon supporting evidence from the text. The other class also engaged in an initial class discussion, but used paper templates inspired by Facebook as the means by which to examine the poem's narrator in writing while also drawing on the text to support their character analysis statements. Writings from each group were then analyzed and compared in an effort to determine whether, how, and to what extent writing quality and complexity differed. At the same time, classroom observations developed a record of students' engagement level with each activity.

A recent study by White & Hungerford-Kresser (2014) asked students to make posts on Facebook as the various characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but it did not assess the students' writing quality, nor did it compare their engagement levels with

another activity. Also, while students enjoyed this task, it is not clear whether this high level of engagement could easily be translated to a paper-based format. This study seeks to determine whether using Facebook-inspired paper templates can achieve the same learning outcomes given the challenges many teachers face with accessing and using computer-based technologies in their classrooms. As such, two research questions were developed for this study:

- 1) How and in what ways do writing characteristics differ between each activity?
- 2) How and in what ways does student engagement in learning using the paper-based Facebook template approach compare with the descriptive sentence writing approach?

For this study, writing characteristics are defined as the four qualities of voice, word choice, sentence structure/fluency, and conventional awareness, whereas student engagement refers to the degree to which students interact with the text, their teacher, and their peers. These questions helped structure this study's research methods, which are described in detail in chapter 3. The following provides a detailed overview of this study. The first section summarizes the research informing the study, including literature regarding 21st century learning, information and communication technology (ICT) in schools, and barriers to ICT access in schools. These issues are then examined in greater detail in chapter 2. The section below provides a brief overview of the research methods used during the study, and the third section offers a brief summary of the study's findings.

Overview of Relevant Literature

21st century learning has recently become a popular idea in educational literature, although writings vary on the necessary skills for students to learn in the new millennium. 21st century learning proponents agree that students should be technologically proficient and comfortable using technology resources such as the internet (Canadians for 21st Century Learning & Innovation [C21 Canada], 2012; Ferriter & Garry, 2010). Due to the emphasis placed on technology, digital resources can play an important role in helping students develop new skills. Students engaging in self-directed learning opportunities, in and beyond the classroom, can also strengthen their reading and writing skills as a result of using technology, which can lead to increased creative and critical thinking, as well as stronger problem solving skills (C21 Canada, 2012; Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Labbo, 2005; Pellegrino & Mahaffey, 2012; Ravenscroft et al, 2012; Williams, 2008). Students who use digital resources while problem solving can also develop critical literacy since teachers are able to design lessons that address real-world concerns and encourage students to develop meaningful solutions to these problems (C21 Canada, 2012).

Recent studies have examined the effect that social media platforms such as Facebook have had on students' learning in the new millennium (Divall & Kirwin, 2012; Hung & Yuen, 2010; White & Hungerford-Kresser, 2014). Digital communication through instant messaging and social media sites contains complex linguistic systems of images and abbreviations that are often rejected by teachers in favour of standard grammatical forms (Beach, Appleman, Hynds, & Wilhelm, 2011; Janks, 2010). Nevertheless, researchers have become increasingly focused on

determining how social media and digital literacies can enhance classroom learning, especially when these applications are familiar and used regularly by students (Voss, 2013). Research by Plester and colleagues (2009) found positive correlations between students' text message communication and their reading and writing development, but not with improved spelling. Other studies have demonstrated that social media sites help students extend discussions about learning beyond the classroom, but the quality and frequency of these discussions depends heavily on whether teachers regularly encourage participation and how digital discussion spaces and activities are designed (DiVall & Kirwin, 2012; Junco et al, 2013; Safar & Alkhezzi, 2013). Social media communication between students makes it easier to incorporate collaborative learning activities (Hung & Yuen, 2010), while also helping students who struggle with writing to improve their written communication skills (Freeman & Brett, 2012).

While these studies demonstrate the value that social media can have as a supplement to classroom learning, not all students and teachers are afforded high-quality access to technology in their classrooms. The high cost of maintaining technology equipment, coupled with concerns surrounding unreliable connections or limited access to the internet, makes it difficult for some schools to utilize digital resources (Miller-Cochran & Gierdowski, 2013; Sundeen & Sundeen, 2013). Limited funds can also lead districts to provide fewer professional development sessions for teachers who wish to learn how to effectively implement digital resources into their lesson plans (Domine, 2009; Gordon, 2003). District and school policies can also limit access to sites such as Facebook since concerns over student privacy and cyber-bullying have resulted in some districts banning social media sites on school computers (Buckingham, 2007; Levinson,

2010). Teachers themselves may choose not to use digital resources because they are concerned that students may become too easily distracted during instructional time (Gordon, 2003; Levinson, 2010). Some teachers are also hesitant because the curriculum documents that they use do not require or encourage technologically-enhanced learning activities (Gura & Percy, 2005).

If barriers to access prevent some teachers and students from reaping the benefits of digital resources during classroom learning, is it possible to find an offline method for incorporating digital literacies into instruction? As the recent study by White and Hungerford-Kresser (2014) has demonstrated, Facebook can be a useful tool for helping students to learn about characterization when studying literature. Is it also possible to achieve the same results if students use the Facebook template but write out their ideas on paper rather than online? Can such Facebook-inspired paper templates adequately replace the experience of engaging with Facebook online? Further, does it change how students understand concepts such as characterization when used during literary study, and how and in what ways does it compare to students' understanding of these concepts when engaging with non-social media based character study activities? This study aims to shed light on these questions by examining whether Facebook-inspired paper templates enhance students' writing and engagement in relation to literary character study.

Overview of Methodology

The study took place in two grade seven classes on the same day in March, 2015, in one Anglophone school district in New Brunswick. Each class was taught by the

same teacher. Thirty-seven students received informed consent from their parents/guardians to participate. The school itself has approximately six hundred students from grades six through eight and forty full- and part-time teachers.

Students took part in one of two activities. The first class completed a descriptive sentence writing activity. The second class completed an activity using Facebook-inspired paper templates. During each activity, student behaviours, discussions and work habits were observed and documented as field notes.

All pieces of writing produced during these activities were gathered and analyzed to determine how and in what ways students' writing and engagement with learning differs between each activity, and ultimately to examine whether paper-based Facebook templates can be useful for teachers facing barriers to internet access in their classrooms. Students' writing was analyzed using a writing analysis framework (Appendix B) based primarily on New Brunswick's Writing Achievement Standards for End of Grade 7 (New Brunswick Department of Education, 2013), with additional elements derived from the work of Culham's Writing Traits (2005) and Peha's writing analysis descriptors (2010).

Student engagement was measured through classroom observations recorded as field notes. A student engagement model developed by Corso and colleagues (2013), described at length in chapter three, was reconceptualized to structure this study's focus on whether students are more engaged during one activity than during the others.

Key Findings

Students' writing was assessed in terms of voice, sentence fluency, word choice and use of conventions, which were selected due to their relevance to digital communication styles, and in all four categories, students completing the Facebook-based activity rated stronger than their peers from the descriptive writing group, to varying degrees, at all three classification levels: below appropriate, appropriate, and superior achievement. There was also a substantially higher level of engagement and collaboration in the Facebook-based assignment group, which resulted in a higher volume of writing produced. This study provides an example of how using social media-based templates can impact students' writing and engagement levels with in-class activities, and suggests that the presence of digital technology may not be necessary to achieve positive results. Chapter 4 explores these key findings in greater detail.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on whether Facebook-inspired paper templates can provide an effective simulation of online experiences for students in classrooms where barriers to technology exist. By virtue of its design, this study also examined students' writing in each activity to determine which method of character study produced stronger writing. Qualitative research produces findings that can be transferred to and resonate in other classrooms and contexts. Findings do, however, add to the discussion regarding how and in what ways teachers who face barriers to technology access can incorporate digitally-inspired resources into their instruction.

This study was also designed to determine whether students were more engaged in character study activities that are based on social media platforms such as Facebook. Observations conducted during each class were analyzed to determine which activity students found more or less engaging, and whether these differences are significant enough to suggest that one activity is more conducive to student engagement than the other. These analyses could drive further research to determine whether students learn better using familiar design environments such as Facebook-inspired paper templates, or whether such activities can become less effective if used too often with the same set of students.

The following chapters provide further detail regarding the study. Chapter two overviews research literature regarding 21st century learning skills, promising practices in literacy learning, information and communication technology (ICT) usage in schools, and barriers to ICT and Facebook integration in schools. Chapter three outlines the study's methodology in specific detail, in particular drawing attention to data analysis methods. Chapter four sets out the study's findings, and also contains a discussion of the findings while also considering results in relation to the relevant research and practice literatures. Chapter five provides a concluding study discussion.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

Introduction

Technology is becoming an integral part of students' lives at a staggering pace, and the education research literature suggests that our education system is struggling to adapt its practices adequately to accommodate these new realities (Herro, 2015; Marcus, 2006; Polly, 2014). Literacy instructors, in particular, have long been touted by researchers as key players for introducing technology and digital literacies into classroom instruction, as they can play an important role "in defining how students learn to write with... new technologies" (Brunner & Tally, 1999, p. 124). By learning through new technologies, students can become better prepared for the modern workplace, which seeks employees who are capable of working effectively through these mediums (Cuban, 2001). However, despite these claims, "[f]ew literacy-based technology programs... either captured the school curriculum or dominated instruction" (Cuban & Cuban, 2007, p. 50). With digital literacies absent in most classrooms, students may potentially become increasingly disengaged from their learning process as the gap widens between their personal contexts and what they experience in school (West, 2012). Various factors, including the lack of available resources and proper support in the form of professional development for teachers, have been cited for the slow development of technology-enhanced learning in literacy classrooms (Cuban & Cuban, 2007; Domine, 2009; Lee, 2006; Levinson, 2010). Despite these factors, few studies have been conducted to find solutions to these barriers. How can literacy teachers work around these barriers, in order to create meaningful learning activities that are inspired by modern technologies?

This chapter highlights relevant research literature, focusing on three areas of study. The first explores the literature setting out expectations of 21st century learners and the skills they need to succeed in contemporary classrooms and workplaces. The second section overviews current research regarding information and communication technologies (hereafter ICT), with a particular focus on social media platforms such as Facebook and their potential benefits for literacy instruction. The third section examines various barriers that prevent schools from utilizing new technologies, which this study aims to address.

Desired Skills for 21st Century Learners

As our society changes with the continued evolution of technology, it is imperative for curriculum to adapt to meet the changing needs of today's students. Learning activities must be relevant to students' lived experiences and carefully designed to help them develop skills that can be useful outside of the classroom (C21 Canada, 2012; Voss, 2013). The changing workforce that students face upon graduation seeks individuals who are creative, innovative and capable of conversing through written, verbal and digital forms of communication (C21 Canada, 2012). These attributes are considered to be quintessential for learners to achieve in the 21st century.

Technological advances in recent years have driven the need for curricular change, and as such, 21st century students are expected to be technologically proficient. Early examples of ICT-based education focused heavily on technical aspects such as typing and using basic word processing software, with little attention paid to preparing students for the different digital literacies they now face (Gura & Percy, 2005; Kajder,

2007). As time progressed, critics began to push for technology education to move beyond technical learning to instead focus on digital literacies and effective online communication practices (Labbo, 2005). However, not all school systems have been able to make this progress, and, as a result, new technology resources are often misused, completely ignored, or simply non-existent in some classrooms (Gura & Percy, 2005; Romeo, 2006; Sundeen & Sundeen, 2013). Recent literature continues to demonstrate the need to move beyond technology as a novelty in classrooms to ensure we use new technologies to enhance learning processes, rather than to merely replace existing procedures to make classroom activities more efficient (Kist, 2010; Lee, 2006). There are also calls for helping students develop the necessary skills to distinguish between valuable and less valuable information on the internet, which can impact how they learn outside of the classroom (Ferriter & Garry, 2010). By making space for these curricular changes, school officials can help students engage with and better understand new technologies.

Student Centered Learning: Increasing technology use in schools facilitates another commonly promoted 21st century learning principle, which involves creating student-centered, student-directed learning environments. Recent literature on accomplished teaching reinforces this idea, suggesting that high-quality teaching encourages students to take ownership over their own learning (King & Watson, 2010). As a result, students may feel responsible for what they have learned and a sense of accomplishment over completed tasks (Cullen, 2011). To facilitate this transition, teachers must be willing to give up direct control over teaching, and allow students to engage with self-directed study (C21 Canada, 2012; Cullen, 2011; Greenlaw &

Ebenezer, 2005; Shaltry et al, 2013; West, 2012). It is also imperative that teachers create authentic and relevant learning activities for students, drawing connections between learned concepts and their respective out-of-school realms (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Rovai, 2004; Warschauer, 2006). By connecting classroom learning to new technologies and digital literacies, students may be able to apply learned concepts beyond the classroom (LeNoue et al, 2011; Pellegrino & Mahaffey, 2012; Ravenscroft et al, 2012). As noted, one of the end goals of 21st century learning is to help students engage successfully with and communicate with others through new technologies (Tsitouridou & Vryzas, 2011; Williams, 2008). In order to ensure that students' technology-related needs are considered, teachers may wish to consult students during curricular planning to ensure that they are learning appropriate and valuable lessons in class (Cook-Sather et al, 2009; Prensky, 2005). This direct involvement can also give students a sense of ownership over their own learning, and result in increased student engagement in class.

Engagement in Learning: The latter point is an important one, as increasing student engagement is crucial for 21st century learning initiatives to be successful (Prensky, 2005). It is not uncommon for even the most capable students to disengage from the learning process (Schussler, 2009). To mitigate disengagement, teachers must ensure that students feel appropriately challenged (Schussler, 2009). It is also important to offer students a variety of learning activities, as repeated exposure to even the more interesting activities can become tiresome for learners (Clarke, 2009; Cook-Sather et al, 2009; King, 2002; Schussler, 2009). There is also increasing pressure to include ICT in classrooms, as the lack of connection between students' lived experiences with

technology and classroom learning contexts has been cited as a leading cause of student disengagement (LeNoue et al, 2011; Warschauer, 2006). Therefore, using technology to support students' learning can be an effective way to increase students' active engagement in class, which can result in stronger student performance and deeper learning taking place (Taffe & Gwinn, 2007). That being said, simply introducing ICT elements may not increase student engagement. *How* teachers use technology to enhance learning is crucial to motivating students in the classroom (Cullen, 2011; Romeo, 2006).

Collaboration: Students use new technologies on a regular basis; therefore, it is important for students to learn how to collaborate effectively with others, both online and in-person, in order to prepare students for future career opportunities (Burke, 2007; C21 Canada, 2012; Ferriter & Garry, 2010; Fredericks, 2010). The internet's structure is conducive to building community, but only if students possess the necessary tools to communicate effectively and responsibly through this medium (Buckingham, 2007; García-Valcárcel et al, 2014; Marzano & Heflebower, 2012). Therefore, teachers should find opportunities for students to work together on technology-based projects, as well as opportunities to collaborate with classmates through instant messaging communication (Warschauer, 2006). Planning ICT-based collaborative activities can be a time-consuming but worthwhile practice for teachers hoping to promote team-work (García-Valcárcel et al, 2014). Teachers can also help students connect with their surrounding community, by creating projects that involve digital communication which can extend beyond the classroom (Marzano & Heflebower, 2012). This may help prepare students for the *digital workforce*, which often requires them to be adept at collaborating both in-person and online, and to be able to address, resolve and ultimately

prevent conflicts amongst their colleagues (C21 Canada, 2012; Ferriter & Garry, 2010; Marzano & Heflebower, 2012).

Communication: To collaborate effectively with others requires strong communication skills, and helping students develop effective and safe communication practices is becoming increasingly important as our society becomes more digitized (C21 Canada, 2012). Students now use social media for personal communication at such a consistently high rate that it has changed how they read, write and communicate, and in turn social media has broadened how literacy is conceptualized (Kist, 2010; Kuznekoff & Titsworth, 2013; Luke & Woods, 2009). As a result, there is pressure on language arts curriculum developers in particular to adapt curricular goals and practices to prepare students for communicating with digital literacies (Beach, 2012; Kinzer, 2010; Kist, 2010). Teachers can help students by allowing them to regularly interact with new technologies, including social media, which in turn could help students develop a deeper appreciation for reading and writing when they realize that they are already proficient with both of these activities as a result of their social media participation (Labbo, 2005; Williams, 2008). Using social media can also help students develop complex literacy skills, as each new platform contains its own language and communication structure (Leu Jr. et al, 2005). It is also crucial for teachers to help students learn safe communicative practices through these mediums, to help them recognize threats online and to prevent them from unintentionally hurting others through social media (Holfeld & Grabe, 2012).

Creative Thinking: There is a significant push to infuse creative thinking into 21st century learning initiatives (C21 Canada, 2012). Teachers and students can now

access tools, applications and instructional websites that can help them foster and further develop their creative skills, but without careful instruction, students may not meet their full potential when using these resources (Csikszentmihalyi, 2012; Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). Students could simply copy and paste creative work they find online if lesson plans are not carefully constructed to discourage and prevent such actions (Sprague & Parsons, 2012). Students may also resist indulging in creative activities, because they have been conditioned in the age of standardized testing to fear failure, whereas creativity is a process that involves learning from prior failures to inspire future creations (Au, 2011; Gardner, 2012; Rubin & Kazanjian, 2011). To counteract this fear, teachers should encourage students to engage in original thought, and to accept multiple viewpoints during class discussions, as well as various approaches to completing assignments (Fredericks, 2010). Providing students with the opportunity to try new things and express new ideas, without immediate fear of failure and repercussion, can help them discover new skills and talents that they may not have realized they possessed, which can help them garner a better sense of which career path they may wish to take in life (Farson, 2007; Sprague & Parsons, 2012). It can also encourage creative thought regarding technology and its various uses, ensuring that students are able to evaluate and properly use new resources as they are made available (Buckingham, 2007; Marzano & Heflebower, 2012).

Creative thinking is a desirable skill for students to obtain in 21st century learning, and through using ICT, particularly social media, teachers now have the opportunity to infuse more creativity into instruction (Csikszentmihalyi, 2012; Greenlaw & Ebenezer, 2005; Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). As noted above, recent literature on

creativity suggests that a culture of standardized testing and regimented curricula discourages students from using their imaginations and creates artificial contexts for learning (Boyles, 2011; Rubin & Kazanjian, 2011; Sprague & Parsons, 2012). Bringing social media into instruction thus allows teachers to make connections between students' lived experiences and classroom discussions, making learning more authentic for students. However, teachers still need to be cautious, as technology can limit students' creative potential because it can reduce the need to use their imagination (Csikszentmihalyi, 2012; Sprague & Parsons, 2012). Therefore, it is crucial that teachers design learning activities that encourage students to develop creative responses, and to draw connections between their personal contexts and classroom learning. Teachers can also use technology to bring a wide variety of resources to the classroom, such as setting up interviews with people through Skype or using Google Maps to look at a region being discussed in class. These examples can help increase students' engagement with learning, and allow teachers to stretch the limits of what they can teach during instruction.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: Critical thinking is a crucial skill for students to develop, especially with technology's increasing influence on the lives of young people. In order to develop critical thinking, proponents push for more problem-solving activities to be included in lesson plans (Burke, 2007; Fredericks, 2010; Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; LeNoue et al, 2006; Marzano & Heflebower, 2012; Saavedra & Opfer, 2012). These activities encourage students to present and support claims, while developing conclusions based on their own and others' perspectives (Marzano & Heflebower, 2012). These activities can also be completed using electronic

resources, allowing students to gain experience solving problems collaboratively online while searching for evidence through digital databases (Labbo, 2005). As a result, problem-solving activities promote collaboration, strong communication skills and creative responses to problems, as well as encouraging students to use technology-based resources to support their positions. In this regard, problem-solving activities represent an ideal opportunity to promote 21st century learning.

It is imperative that curricular outcomes, particularly in language arts, are interpreted and acted on in ways that reflect 21st century skills. Our society is rapidly changing as technology evolves, and consequently we have to reconceptualize how we define and structure literacy education. Students need to become more self-aware, self-directed learners, who effectively communicate their creative solutions to societal problems with others both face-to-face and via digital platforms. The following examines current research on the use of ICT and social media in schools, and how teaching practices can change to incorporate ICT into instruction.

ICT & Social Media in Literacy Education

Promising Practices in Literacy Education: Literacy education has long been focused on developing students' ability to read, write and represent, and speak and listen; as such, literacy curricula are often structured around these key concepts (New Brunswick Department of Education Curriculum Development Branch, 1998; Shanahan, 2014). However, the recent and rapid emergence of digital technologies has necessitated looking beyond printed texts and verbal communication when considering literacy development (Hutchison & Colwell, 2014). Digital technologies and communication

methods require a wide variety of literacy skills to effectively engage with others, as each social media platform contains their own language and communication structures, which also allows students to be more experimental with literacy forms (Leu Jr. et al, 2005). As a result, social media platforms can serve as graphic organizers for student writers, as they can use these experimental postings to craft and further develop additional writing pieces (Ponce, Mayer & Lopez, 2013). The following section explores the various other ways that digital technologies can impact classrooms.

ICT & Social Media: As the literature demonstrates, ICT has recently become a significant topic in educational studies. Students now interact with ICT platforms, particularly social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instant Messaging, on an increasing basis (Lester & Perini, 2010). Despite this, not all schools use, or are able to provide, technology in the classroom, creating a 'digital divide' amongst students (Goode, 2010).

Even with numerous studies highlighting the potential for enhancing student learning, technology-based literacy activities are not common place (Beach et al, 2011). As students become more engaged with text messaging, curricula need to reflect these new communication forms. Plester's (2009) study with British middle school students sought to determine whether text messaging slang would be effective for achieving curricular outcomes when students create text messages in response to hypothetical scenarios. The study's findings suggest there is a correlation between texting and reading development, but not between texting and improved spelling.

Text Messaging: Text messaging also increases student engagement in writing since they are able to experiment with language while feeling less pressure to conform

to traditional language forms when communicating with peers (Plester et al, 2009). Students can also demonstrate writing concept knowledge such as audience based on the language they choose for communicating with peers versus the language used when speaking with parents online (Plester et al, 2009). For example, a teacher might ask students to compose a text message communicating a key message to a friend, such as an invitation to their party on the weekend, and ask students to share their various messages, remark on how the examples differ, and discuss which messages are the easiest to understand. Helping students recognize how others can misinterpret their technology-based messages can help them think critically about how they approach digital communication.

Not surprisingly, there has been a recent influx of studies testing how ICT applications can enhance and extend students' learning, and although a number of these studies have occurred in post-secondary institutions, their findings relate to secondary classrooms as well. One such study by Safar and Alkhezzi (2013) explored undergraduate students' use of ICT tools inside and outside the classroom to determine the effect on academic performance. They found that students who used ICT tools both inside and outside of the classroom had higher grades and stronger engagement in learning than those who relied solely on verbal and written communication. They concluded, "that the potential of a blended approach of teaching and learning is endless" (p. 624). While this statement is hyperbolic, it does illustrate the need for further research in this field to determine specifically how ICT tools can enhance individual aspects of instruction.

Student Engagement: Social media has also been demonstrated as useful for professors looking to increase student engagement, as long as these professors actively engage with students through these mediums. The study by Junco and colleagues (2013) of four first-year seminar courses found that both student engagement and performance improved with the class required to use social media compared to those where participation was optional. The researchers concluded that the way social media is used plays an important role in increasing engagement and performance, noting that faculty must regularly engage with students through social networking sites (SNS) discussions to improve student performance. Researchers concluded that “the design of teaching strategies and practices related to virtual engagement and collaboration is instrumental to achieving positive educational outcomes” (p. 285). When instructors simply encourage students to hold discussions through social media, without providing regular direction, feedback or structure, students do not receive the full benefit of these media and are thus less likely to become more engaged (Revere & Kovach, 2011).

Facebook, in particular, is commonly used by students and therefore appears more likely to increase learning engagement (West, 2012). DiVall and Kirwin’s (2012) study documented a post-secondary class in which the instructor encouraged students to use Facebook “to post and view study tips, links, or questions” (p.1). Students were not required to use Facebook, but were reminded to *like* the course’s page in order to expand discussions outside of the classroom. The researchers found that students were better able to access content on Facebook than on other mediums, such as Blackboard. However, most students identified themselves as “passive observers” (p. 4), which emphasizes the important role that instructors play in motivating student participation in

discussions. It also demonstrates how important it is for teachers to clearly identify why social media is being used to supplement in-class learning so students can take full advantage of this resource. Finally, teachers should not be discouraged if certain students are resistant to posting and choose simply to observe ongoing discussions, as long as students are actively reading and thinking about these discussions (Park, 2013; Woodley & Meredith, 2012).

Collaborative Learning: Social media can also be used to create positive and collaborative learning environments. Hung and Yuen's (2010) study of four face-to-face undergraduate courses that used social media sites to build students' "sense of community" (p.703), found that students positively responded to the social media aspect of their course. The researchers concluded that "such extended interaction can also lead to additional learning opportunities or enhance participation in the face-to-face classroom" (p. 712). This increased camaraderie amongst students may also make it easier to implement student-centered, group-based activities, as students in the digital age are more accustomed and open to building friendships online (Ferriter & Garry, 2010; Peck, 2012). There is also the potential bonus of increasing class attendance, as students may feel more connected to their classmates and course materials.

Motivating Writers: Social media can also be used to motivate struggling writers. Freeman and Brett (2012) conducted a study to determine whether using blogs could help students develop reflective writing skills. They found that there was "a relationship between increasing levels of reflective writing and frequency of posting" (p. 1037), suggesting that consistent engagement with digital platforms can help students think deeper about their writing and their personal contexts. As with previous studies,

teachers must actively engage with students through these writing activities, providing clear structure, appropriate challenge, and meaningful feedback through the writing process (Cakir, 2013). As with all forms of social media, teachers play a crucial role in structuring writing activities through these platforms, to ensure that students get the most out of each resource (Ferriter & Garry, 2010). Although this study was conducted using blogs, it can easily be applied to other social media platforms such as Facebook, which allow students to post long pieces of writing and to garner immediate and continuing feedback from peers.

Literary Study: Social media can also support learning during literary study. White and Hungerford-Kresser (2014) conducted a study involving 18 post-secondary students who used Facebook to create character profiles for *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Each student volunteered for, or was given a character to portray, and students were to create images and content for each character's Facebook profile while interacting regularly with other characters. Researchers found that "[u]sing social networking for character journaling allowed for extensive use of multiple literacies, for students to incorporate prior knowledge and present interpretations into their online discussions, and thus for cooperative learning" (p. 648). They also found that the activity helped students think about language usage, noting how students would tailor communication between characters based on how they perceive each character's personality and attributes; for example, if their character was speaking with well-educated Atticus Finch, they would use proper diction and forego any slang terms that they have used when communicating with other characters in the novel. Participating students indicated

that they found the activity engaging, citing the creative aspect of the project as being especially enjoyable.

As the above discussion demonstrates, social media can effectively extend learning outside of the classroom in post-secondary settings, although secondary teachers should be careful when implementing similar strategies. Several studies indicate that a growing number of post-secondary students receive study notes and important announcements through mediums such as Facebook and Twitter. These platforms also represent opportunities for students to continue discussions outside of the lecture hall (DiVall & Kirwin, 2012; Elavsky et al, 2011; Engelhard & Seo, 2012; Junco et al, 2011). However, transitioning these practices to secondary schools is challenging given that interacting via social media could be a potentially dangerous practice, especially given the age of students at this level and how personal posts are often made without the full digital audience in mind (Ferriter & Garry, 2010; Kuznekoff & Titsworth, 2013; Levinson, 2010). There are also privacy concerns since as using personal Facebook sites to communicate can lead to teachers and students learning personal information about one another that could jeopardize trust and respect (Davis & James, 2012). Teachers may opt for less personal social media platforms such as blogs and Wiki-spaces, as well as learning platforms such as Moodle, to communicate information to students and parents, which ensures two-way communication while removing personal contexts from the equation. These factors, as well as other barriers preventing social media usage in secondary classrooms, are discussed in the next section.

Barriers to ICT and Facebook Integration

ICT, particularly applications such as Facebook, have strong potential as teaching aids in language arts, though not all classrooms are properly equipped to incorporate these mediums into daily instruction, which creates a *digital divide* between students and their learning environment (Domine, 2009). There are high costs related to integrating technology into schools, including purchasing, upgrading and maintaining computers for classroom use (Balajthy, 2000; Grabe & Grabe, 2001; Valmont, 2000). Not surprisingly, the socio-economic status of the school and its surrounding community also plays a large role in its ability to provide students with adequate access to technology (Balajthy, 2000; Grabe & Grabe, 2001). Schools in more affluent areas and with parental contributions and support can access new technologies as they are able to afford newer models and licensing fees for high quality programs, while poorer schools often have fewer computers equipped with lower quality programs (Blanchard, 1999; Ferneding, 2003; Grabe & Grabe, 2001; Gura & Percy, 2005). There is also the issue of available infrastructure, as rural schools may not have access to wireless or high-speed internet, which creates significant difficulties for using handheld devices and the internet (Songer, 2006; Sundeen & Sundeen, 2013). As a result, students across North America do not have equal access to classroom technology. Given the emphasis on developing digital literacies for the modern workplace, this inequity places students in rural and low socio-economic areas at serious disadvantage when entering the workforce (Grabe & Grabe, 2001; Warschauer, 2006).

Professional Development: Further inequities exist even amongst schools that can afford new technology, as some schools are unable to provide sufficient professional

development to help teachers understand and implement these new technologies into their lesson plans (Domine, 2009; Gordon, 2003; Gura & Percy, 2005). In other instances, districts may offer training when the equipment is initially purchased, but may not maintain training to ensure continued success (Roy, 1999). Additionally, other schools offer professional development, but they are unable to provide teachers with sufficient time following training to meet and brainstorm strategies for implementing these new resources (Domine, 2009; Irvin et al, 2007; Levinson, 2010). *How* professional development is structured can also be a factor if it focuses too heavily on technical training of each application, while providing few, if any practical strategies to use these new technologies to meet curricular objectives (Domine, 2009; Ferriter & Garry, 2010; Johnson, 2005). Professional development practices that ensure teachers realize the full potential of each application (Coiro, 2005; King, 2002; Romeo, 2006) can help those uncomfortable integrating these technologies because they feel they lack sufficient knowledge (Grabe & Grabe, 2001; Hew & Brush, 2007; Romeo, 2006). It is also important for administrators to recognize that all teachers, regardless of age or experience, may require further training regarding digital technologies. While some teacher education programs include ICT-focused courses in their programs, not all new teachers have the opportunity to gain adequate knowledge to authentically integrate ICT materials into instruction (Blanchard, 1999). Therefore, it is necessary to provide thorough and practical ICT training to all teachers, as without this, inequities in students' learning experiences may persist.

School and District Policies: School district policies can also play a significant role in defining and limiting what technologies can be used in classrooms (Kist, 2010).

District officials sometimes lose sight of educational objectives when purchasing new technologies and resources such that practical applications may be overlooked for those which are more affordable or better promoted (Wiske, 2006). Districts may also have limited technology experts available to assist teachers with implementing new resources into instruction (Gura & Percy, 2005; King, 2002). This can be the direct result of one-time investments in technology, which rarely reserve funds for school districts to maintain or enhance the resources being implemented (Hartschuh, 1999; Roy, 1999). Technology can quickly become outdated, making it increasingly difficult for teachers to effectively use these resources.

Media and Outside Influences: Public perceptions of social media can also play a role in restricting new technologies in classrooms (White & Hungerford-Kresser, 2014). As a result of the media's fixation on the negative potential related to social media, namely the risk of predators and cyber-bullying, there is increasing concern in some districts that online activity during school hours could have a negative impact on students (Gura & Percy, 2009; White & Hungerford-Kresser, 2014). There are concerns that students may plagiarize work using online sources, resulting in some districts limiting students' online access (Sadowski, 2003). Although this is not the norm, other schools and districts have chosen to restrict access to social media applications such as Facebook on school computers and wireless networks (Buckingham, 2007; Domine, 2009; Levinson, 2010). Districts that restrict social media access cite various factors for their decision, including protecting students from peer pressure, bullying and constant distractions, while also respecting students' right to privacy (Buckingham, 2007; Franz, 2003; Grabe & Grabe, 2001; Levinson, 2010). Those who oppose banning social media

highlight how important it is for students to learn about digital communication in classrooms, arguing that online communication has different cues and structures than verbal speech and requires “specific skills in language and interpersonal communication” (Buckingham, 2007, p. 100). For example, students who struggle to communicate with standard English in class may demonstrate high levels of fluency and criticality through instant messaging communication with their peers (Irvin et al, 2007). There are also websites with formats that mirror popular sites such as Facebook and Twitter that are designed for use in classrooms. These sites can allow teachers to use digital resources while minimizing potential distractions and dangers for students (White & Hungerford-Kresser, 2014). Also, if discussions regarding proper conduct on social media do not occur during instruction, students may not realize the “consequences of posting intimate information about themselves, as well as posting information that harms others” (Domine, 2009, p. 49), which could have negative consequences for students’ emotional health, as well as their future educational and career endeavours (Holfeld & Grabe, 2012). As previously noted, there is also the threat of cyber-bullying, which may not be adequately addressed without direct access to social media for educational purposes (Holfeld & Grabe, 2012). By allowing students to think critically about these applications, and how they approach communication through these mediums, we can help them prepare for challenges that they may face outside of the classroom (Freishtat & Sandlin, 2010).

Classroom Management and Distractions: Individual teachers may also reject ICT and social media platforms in their instruction because they feel that classroom management could be more difficult to maintain. Laptops in classrooms can allow

students to access any number of websites during instruction time, which may be distracting for students and may have a detrimental impact on how much they learn in class (Gordon, 2003; Levinson, 2010). Even direct use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter can cause students to become distracted, especially if they use personal accounts and have access to private messages (Gordon, 2003; Junco & Cotton, 2012). Cell phone use to access the internet can also be distracting, as students could have access to text messaging and games (Charles, 2012). These distractions may result in a lower quality of learning for students when paying less attention to classroom learning. Recent studies at the post-secondary level have verified this conclusion, suggesting that students who use ICT devices in class took less thorough notes, which had a negative impact on their final performance (Kuznekoff & Titsworth, 2013). While there are steps that teachers can take to minimize distractions, it is not possible for teachers to monitor every student's online activity during instruction without some form of surveillance technology, which may be deemed by students, teachers and parents as an invasion of student privacy (Levinson, 2010). With all of these factors considered, it is understandable why some teachers choose to omit ICT resources from their lesson plans.

Curricula-based Limitations: Curricula are designed to guide classroom instruction; therefore, it is safe to assume that teachers may be less likely to use technology in instruction if documents do not encourage such activities (Gura & Percy, 2005). Even though both new and experienced teachers acknowledge that curriculum documents need to contain more technology-supported learning outcomes and digital-based classroom learning opportunities, there is insufficient evidence that these changes

are taking place (Levinson, 2010). As the first section of this chapter demonstrates, 21st century learning principles are often included as a separate category in curriculum documents across North America, rather than overhauling existing outcomes and procedures to include technology-based learning outcomes. To truly move into the 21st century, curriculum needs to be reinvented and reformulated to ensure that these learning objectives are paramount through each curricular outcome.

With these barriers in mind, researchers like Valmont (2000) have concluded that “[t]he presence of ample computers and internet connections in your classroom ultimately will determine how effectively you will be able to influence learning” (p. 171). While there is some truth to this statement, that ample access to technology could make it easier for well-trained teachers to incorporate technology into their teaching practices, the overall sentiment that the significant presence of technology is crucial for enhancing instruction is limited and completely rejects teachers’ abilities to work around these barriers to incorporate digital literacies into instruction. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, simply having sufficient technology resources available in schools does not guarantee that students can work effectively with these mediums, highlighting the important role that teachers play in making technology-enhanced learning meaningful (Ferneding, 2003; Grabe & Grabe, 2001).

Conclusion

This literature review demonstrates that further research is required to find effective strategies for incorporating technology-enhanced 21st century learning activities into classrooms with barriers to access. There is also insufficient evidence in

the literature to determine whether using social media platforms such as Facebook in the classroom can enhance student learning, especially in literacy development. This study, outlined in detail in the following chapter, was developed in response to both of these gaps in the current literature, to focus on Facebook's ability to enhance students' understanding of characterization in literature. This research study relies on using paper-based templates of Facebook pages, such as status updates and the 'about me' section, which can allow classrooms with insufficient equipment or internet access to incorporate digital literacies into learning activities. Overall, the activity strives to enhance students' understanding of characterization in literature through the addition of ICT-inspired resources.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate whether, how, and in what ways using Facebook-inspired paper templates changes students' learning in classrooms where limited access to technology is available. Using the above literature review as a guide, the following research questions were developed to investigate during this study:

- 1) How and in what ways do writing characteristics differ between each activity?
- 2) How and in what ways does student engagement in learning using the paper-based Facebook template approach compare with the descriptive sentence writing approach?

Research findings discerned through these questions are intended to help educators find practical methods for incorporating social media-inspired teaching tools into their lesson plans to help students understand literary concepts such as characterization, and also to discern whether these paper-based Facebook templates can help students improve their writing while increasing their engagement with classroom learning activities. These questions also address debate regarding whether social media should be used in classrooms by offering an alternative to directly using social media sites that may still allow students to learn through these familiar mediums.

The following provides an overview of the study's research design and data collection methodologies. The first section, study design and approach, sets out the study's objective and purpose. The next section, research setting and participants, outlines where the study took place, why this location was selected, who participated and what roles they held. This is followed by study implementation procedures, which

outlines the activity that each class completed during this study. A data collection and analysis section then outlines how data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted for determining study findings. The final section both outlines the ethical parameters of the study and concludes the chapter.

Study Design and Approach

As evidenced in chapter two, a number of factors confront schools in using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Many schools cannot afford to purchase new technology due to budget constraints, resulting in limited access and often outdated equipment available for teachers to use during instruction (Sundeen & Sundeen, 2013). Also, a lack of targeted professional development prevents both new and experienced teachers from learning new technologies and developing methodologies to incorporate them into classroom learning (Shaltry et al, 2013). Further, even when teachers are provided adequate professional development, there is often insufficient technology hardware available for all students to use in class (Sundeen & Sundeen, 2013). Finally, the issue of whether to use social media in classrooms continues to be divisive in educational thought. While some argue that reconceptualized technology-based understandings of literacy are necessitating changes to Language Arts curriculum delivery (Kist, 2010; Kinzer, 2010), others insist that social media can be distracting for students, especially if they are permitted to use personal mobile devices in class to access websites and other online tools (Kuznekoff & Titsworth, 2013). Socio-economic factors also affect bringing social media into instruction, since some students cannot afford personal mobile devices (Greenhow & Gleason, 2014).

With these factors under consideration, this study was developed to discern whether Facebook-based paper templates offer a tangible solution for teachers wishing to bring digital literacies into classroom instruction but who do not have access to these technologies in their classroom. Of particular interest in the ICT field is the growing popularity of social media sites with adolescents, especially with increased ownership of mobile phones by teenagers (Kuznekoff & Titsworth, 2013). Ironically, despite their popularity amongst students, the previous chapter demonstrates limited research aimed at testing effective methodologies for using social media sites as learning tools. It is therefore necessary to develop innovative methods for implementing technologies as learning tools in classrooms in such ways that learning outcome achievement is not compromised. One of the most commonly used networking sites, Facebook, serves as the inspiration for the templates developed for, and tested in this study (Prescott, 2014). As the literature has shown, there are concerns that using social media sites can be detrimental to learning when students are distracted by website features other than those they are to attend to during class (Charles, 2012; Kuznekoff & Titsworth, 2013). Therefore, it is important to develop strategies for bringing Facebook-inspired learning activities into the classroom in such a way that eliminates potential distractions.

Research Design and Approach

A qualitative design was a good fit for this study given the need to observe and document activities and the reactions of students and teachers as learning occurred in a familiar setting (Gay & Airasian, 2003; McMillan, 2004). The concept of enhancing a learning experience is inherently subjective, and thus subjective research methods such

as observing classroom activities and comparing student assignments were likely to generate a more accurate depiction of whether using Facebook-inspired paper templates enhanced student learning within this context. Qualitative methods are also “exceptionally suited for exploration, for beginning to understand a group or phenomenon” (Gay & Airasian, 2003, p. 163). As chapter two demonstrated, limited research exists regarding offline approaches for bringing social media into classroom instruction, it was appropriate to use an exploratory method to examine its potential as a teaching aid. Carefully constructed qualitative studies are also less prone to observer effect. Conducting research in a familiar context such as students’ regular classroom can generate a more accurate depiction of how using Facebook affects learning (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Research Setting and Participants

In-school research was conducted with two grade seven classes in one urban middle school in New Brunswick’s Anglophone West School District during one 45-minute class for each participating group while students studied the poem, *Ordinary, Extraordinary*, by Amelia Harmon (2011). The participating teacher was selected for three reasons. First, she teaches both of the two participating grade seven English Language Arts classes, and from time-to-time uses digital resources in her teaching. As well, having the same teacher for both activities and following the same curriculum plan helped to strengthen the study’s internal validity (McMillan, 2004). Finally, this teacher was made known to the researcher by a colleague and thus recruited for study participation because she is accustomed to working in both paper-based and IT-based teaching contexts, and thus was open to using digitally-inspired learning methods. This

was beneficial because, as the literature demonstrates, teachers' willingness to move beyond lecture-based learning, and perhaps step outside of their areas of expertise, allows students to share knowledge with the teacher, which in turn helps students develop a deeper engagement with classroom learning activities (Exeter et al, 2010). In this instance, students in the group using Facebook-inspired paper templates could use their knowledge of social media and its purpose to inform their learning in class, potentially increasing their engagement with the material as a result.

The participating classes are similarly constructed in that they are of overall equivalent academic achievement since each were comprised of students at various learning stages; some were on individualized learning plans, while others had skills that extended beyond those expected of students at their grade level. All participating students were also within the same age range and therefore similar developmentally in terms of social skills and behaviours. All of these factors were important to consider for ensuring that groups were not dissimilar in any significant way that might skew study results. In total, 19 students participated in the sentence-writing activity, while 18 completed the Facebook-based paper template exercise. Grade seven classes were selected because students in this age range have demonstrated high levels of social media participation (Holfeld & Grabe, 2012). Each class met daily for 45-minute periods, with students sitting at tables in clusters of 3 or 4 students.

Procedures

Each class completed a different character analysis activity after reading *Ordinary, Extraordinary* (Harmon, 2011; see Appendix A). This poem was selected

because it is keenly focused on the narrator's character and personality; the narrator is in the same age-range as students participating in the study, and because it was short enough to be dealt with during the one class data collection period. The literary concept of characterization was chosen because character study has been credited with improving students' reading comprehension and writing skills, as students dig deeper into texts to better understand characters' individual contexts, then use this information to write responses to the text (Manning, 2001). As well, student participants had already conducted various character analysis activities during the school year, thus they were familiar with this task.

After a brief introduction to students as an invited guest conducting research on character study activities, the teacher and researcher collaboratively led students through the various activities over each 45 minute data collection period, answering questions as asked. Feedback was also encouraged and sought from students throughout the process. The researcher's presence did not appear to constrain students in any way in either class while undertaking the work set out for their respective class periods, which may have been due to their familiarity with student interns and other guests in the classroom. The first class worked individually to complete three descriptive sentences to describe the poem's protagonist (see lesson plan in Appendix D). A limit of three sentences was established so that the amount of writing to be generated by this class was equivalent to the amount of writing required from the second class completing the Facebook template. Both class activities were to be completed within the 45-minute class timeframe. The second class completed an activity using Facebook-inspired paper templates to write in the voice of the poem's protagonist (see lesson plan in Appendix E). Both activities are

described in detail below. Student behaviours were also documented as field notes throughout each activity (McMillan, 2004).

The first class read the poem *Ordinary, Extraordinary* (Harmon, 2011) three times orally together, which was followed by a class discussion on character traits. Students were asked to orally share words and phrases that they felt described the poem's protagonist during a whole-class discussion, using support from the text to justify their response. A list of character traits was compiled on the whiteboard.

Following this activity, students were instructed to write three descriptive sentences on their own to describe the poem's protagonist using supporting evidence from the text. Students were given an example of a possible structure for these sentences on the Whiteboard: "Bob is a kind person because he helps his friend shovel his driveway". Students were also told they could use the traits listed on the board, or generate their own, if they had not been mentioned already. Student participants completed this activity individually, although discussions between peers were not discouraged, and students submitted their writing following the activity.

The second class also began with three shared readings of the poem followed by a class discussion about character traits. As with the first class, students shared words and phrases to describe the poem's protagonist, which were listed on the white board. Students were then given copies of the paper templates, which depict the following core Facebook features:

- A *Job Title* field, with space to describe the protagonist's dream career(s).
- A *Hobbies* field, with space to describe the protagonist's favourite hobbies.
- A *Favourite Movies* section, with space to list the protagonist's favourite films.

- A *Favourite Music* section, with space to list the protagonist's favourite singers, bands, songs and/or music genres.
- A *Status Update* page, with space to write two distinct Facebook-style status updates in the voice of the protagonist.

These five features were selected as they would require insight into the character's personality traits, as well as their likes and dislikes. The latter in particular, *Status Updates*, represented an opportunity for students to explore characters' inner thoughts and emotions since status updates are personal messages that Facebook users share with their friends. The purpose for each of the five core features was briefly discussed to ensure all students were comfortable with the Facebook-based nature of the writing task they were to complete.

For this activity, students worked individually to complete their own assignments, but were encouraged to discuss their ideas with their peers and to share their thoughts on the protagonist's character traits. As with the previous class, students sat in groups of two-to-four, and were not discouraged from sharing with peers sitting at different tables.

Data Collection Methods

Two data collection methods were employed that included widely applied qualitative techniques: 1) observing student behavior and making notes about their engagement levels during each activity to collect detailed field notes and recording reflections, and 2) collecting two sets of students' written assignments for criterion-referenced analysis for comparative purposes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The first

method involved direct observation during all classroom-based activities (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Field notes were composed during all observations and used to document student engagement levels during both activities (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Field notes consisted of low-inference observations, which involved recording behaviours such as students asking questions, and high-inference observations, which involved noting student behaviours and “to make inferences about their meaning” (McMillan, 2004, p. 164).

Classroom observations focused on two key areas: student interactions with peers and their teacher, and indicators of student engagement during each activity. The first, student interactions with peers and their teacher, is important because it helps to discern whether using Facebook-inspired paper templates enhances students’ collaborative efforts in different ways than writing descriptive sentences. This was decided through documenting student behaviours in field notes during each activity and later comparing the complexities of collaborative activities taking place; namely, are students working individually, collectively, or actively sharing their writing with their peers to a greater degree during one activity than the other? Is one activity more conducive to sharing than the other? The second concept, student engagement, was measured through classroom observations, described in detail below. Instances where students appear to lose focus or talk about other topics were documented and compared to determine the frequency of students being off-task during each assignment, and whether one assignment increased student engagement when compared to the other. Although it was difficult to examine all groups at the same time, these observations, when compared, helped to determine whether using Facebook-inspired paper templates

changed students' engagement when compared to the other activities. Written products from both classes were also collected for comparative purposes.

Data Analysis

Writing Analysis: The information gathered through the two data collection methods were analyzed and compared to discern whether paper-based Facebook templates are useful tools for helping students to improve their writing and to become more engaged with learning. The two assignments were analyzed in tandem to determine whether using social media-inspired instructional materials can enhance students' ability to grasp literary concepts such as characterization; in particular, whether there are more complex character descriptors in one assignment type compared with the others. Trends between each class's data can also help formulate naturalistic generalizations (McMillan, 2004) of Facebook-inspired paper templates and their effect on students' learning, which can then be studied through future research.

To facilitate comparative analysis, a writing analysis framework (see Appendix B) was developed which drew on New Brunswick's *Writing Achievement Standards for End of Grade 7*, as well as Culham's (2005) widely used writing assessment traits, and educator Steve Peha's (2010) detailed writing assessment criteria. The first step in developing this framework involved narrowing the provincial writing achievement standards from six to four based on selecting those most relevant to analyzing writing inspired by social media. These indicators were also selected because they represent two elements of the writing spectrum; "correctness", in the sense of sentence structure, sentence fluency, and conventions; and creative elements, such as word choice and

voice. The Culham and Peha writings criteria were then reviewed and relevant characteristics identified to supplement the descriptors within each of the four selected provincial achievement standards. The final framework derived focused on four indicators of writing quality: word choice, voice, sentence structure/fluency, and conventions. The two broad elements of writing correctness and creativity provided interesting points for comparison between the sentence-writing activity, which is grounded in conventional expectations, and the paper-based Facebook activity, which allows students to reject some conventional aspects to focus on creative elements, such as the inclusion of *hashtags*, a popular element of social media that allows writers to emphasize a key theme or message in their post by placing a pound sign in front of a word or phrase; for example, #BestDayOfMyLife, as one student wrote in her work.

Students' writing samples for each activity were divided into three groups: below appropriate, appropriate and superior achievement, categories that correspond with the New Brunswick Writing Achievement Standards document. These groups were used to demonstrate the range of writing produced during each activity, to facilitate comparisons between students in the same class, and also used to create comparisons between students' writing for both activities, such as whether the superior achievement students for one activity produced stronger writing than students from the other, and in what ways their writing is stronger or weaker than the samples produced within the other activity. One writing exemplar was selected from each of the three categories in each group for a total of six exemplars presented here. These exemplars are used to organize and demonstrate comparative findings, although all pieces of writing were considered during the data analysis process.

Student Engagement Model: Student engagement has been defined in vastly different ways over the years because “[m]any aspects of student engagement are specific to a particular context” (Corso et al, 2013, 52-53). For the context of this study, student engagement was viewed in two ways: first, students’ readiness-to-engage with the material, which could depend on whether students are willing and able to complete the activities as assigned (Handley et al, 2011). Second, students’ ability to remain task-focused while working collaboratively and independently was examined to determine whether one or more activities are more conducive to student engagement (Larwin, 2012). This information was gathered through observations during each activity.

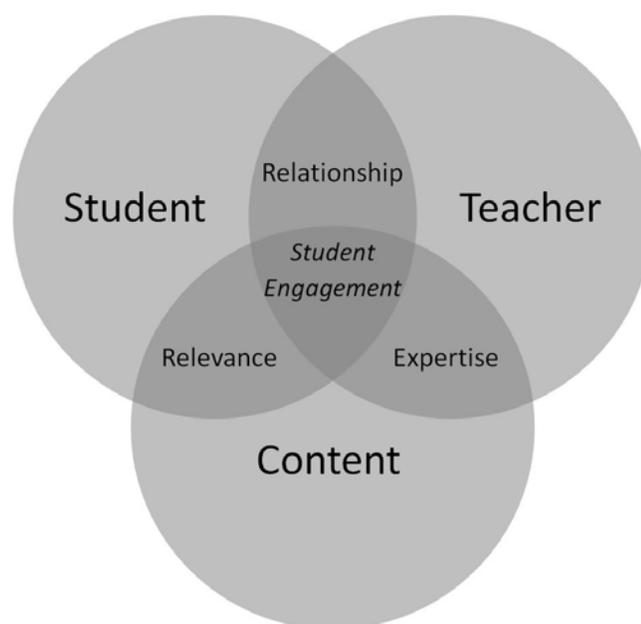


Figure 1. The Student Engagement Core Model (Corso et al, 2013).

Corso et al (2013) offer a Student Engagement Core Model, as depicted in Figure 1 above, to demonstrate how students, teachers and content interplay to produce student engagement. However, this model falls short in two ways. First, which Corso and colleagues readily acknowledge, it negates the relationship between students and their classmates which can impact students’ engagement levels, especially during

collaborative exercises. Second, it relies on teacher-led instruction for success, suggesting that teachers' expertise in the content area is imperative to ensure successful student engagement; while it can play a sometimes significant role in student engagement, it is also important to create student-centered and student-led learning exercises.

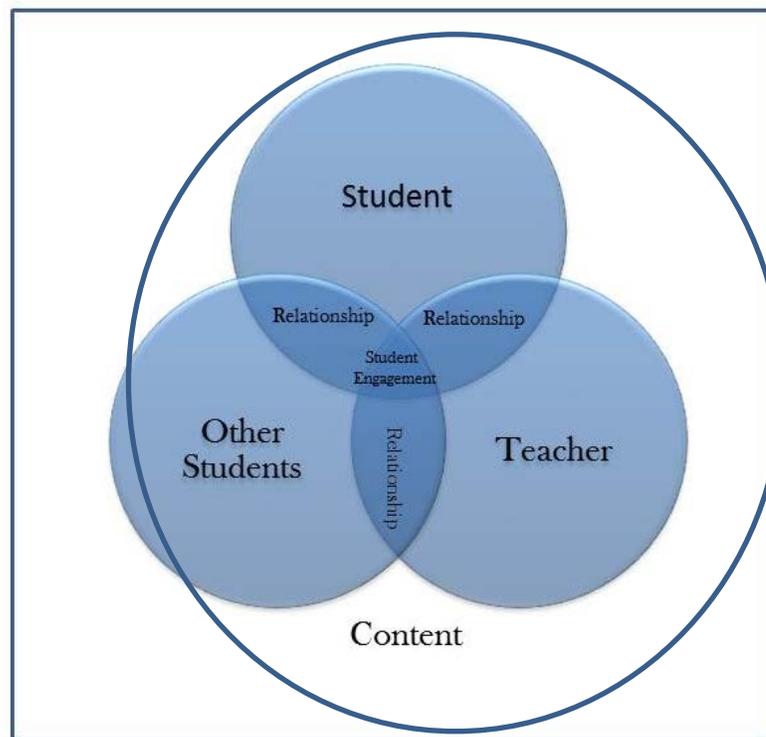


Figure 2. Revised Corso et al (2013) Model of Student Engagement for Collaborative Exercises.

It is therefore necessary to reconceptualize this student engagement model so that it includes collaborative learning exercises and student-directed learning activities. This study proposes a new model that builds upon Corso et al's (2013) concept (see Figure 2). The revised model places Content in a bubble surrounding the Venn diagram, and adds a new heading called Other Students. Placing Content in the bubble that

encompasses the full Venn diagram emphasizes how content impacts all participants throughout the learning process, and thus is a necessary factor to consider when determining whether students are engaged; namely, if teachers and students do not perceive learning activities to be relevant and meaningful, they may be less likely to be engaged (Corso et al, 2013). However, this new model focuses more on the relationships between teachers and students, and between students and their classmates, and how the relationship between each party impacts student engagement during collaborative learning activities.

This new model influenced how student engagement was observed and documented during this study. Students were observed during each activity to determine whether they were willing and able to complete each activity, and whether they were on-task and collaborating with their peers to complete the assignment. The teacher's interactions with individual students were also observed to determine whether this impacted their level of engagement with each activity. The teacher's interactions with each cluster of students was also observed to determine whether this affected students working at other tables, and whether students were willing to work together and share ideas to support one another's learning. These observations were then compared to students' completed assignments to determine whether students were more engaged with one activity over the other.

Conclusion

As this chapter indicates, this study is designed to verify social media's applicability as an instructional supplement in classrooms with limited technology

access. The grade seven students that participated in the study completed two activities, a descriptive sentence writing activity and a Facebook-inspired paper template-based activity to inform the research on whether using social media-inspired paper templates can enhance student learning. Student behaviours, discussions and interactions were also documented as field notes throughout each activity. These activities were designed to address the following questions:

- 1) How and in what ways do writing characteristics differ between each activity?
- 2) How and in what ways does student engagement in learning using the paper-based Facebook template approach compare with the descriptive sentence writing approach?

The primary goal of this study is to discern whether using Facebook-inspired paper templates can enhance students' writing, as well as their understanding of characterization in literary study. This study also informs the literature on whether social media-inspired teaching tools can effectively simulate online learning experiences in classrooms with barriers to technology access.

To ensure that the study met ethical guidelines for conducting research with human subjects under the age of 18, approval was obtained from the UNB ethics board prior to implementation. Parents and guardians received information about the study and were asked to provide informed consent for their children to participate in the research project. Pseudonyms are used in the reporting of results to ensure the confidentiality of participants.

Chapter IV: Results and Discussion

Introduction

The following chapter focuses on the results of this study, by examining student writing samples and classroom observation notes, and providing a detailed analysis of each along with the subsequent findings obtained. These findings are then discussed in connection with existing research, which highlights themes that emerged through data analysis and determines the study's key findings. This chapter first explores students' writing characteristics, then student engagement, followed by a summative conclusion.

Writing Analysis Framework

Student writing examples from each class were divided into three categories to permit deeper analysis and comparisons: below appropriate achievement; appropriate achievement; and superior achievement. The detailed assessment framework (See Appendix B) facilitated the assessment of the text for each writer. For example, students in the below appropriate achievement group wrote short, choppy sentences that had unclear textual support, numerous grammatical errors, and little evidence of a clearly defined voice or deep conventional understanding. Conversely, students who demonstrated superior achievement wrote complex, fluid sentences with strong textual support, limited errors, and a clearer sense of voice and conventional understanding. Those classified as appropriate achievement demonstrated an acceptable variety of sentence types, few but largely inconsequential grammatical errors, and evidence of textual support and unique voice appearing at times in the writing. When this framework was applied to writing exemplars from both activities, it became clear that

the Facebook-based paper templates writing activity produced stronger writing overall in terms of developing a distinct voice and employing more complex word choices, and sentences, and adhered more strongly to grammatical conventions.

The next two sections set out findings concerning both the writing analysis, and the classroom observations. Writing analyses for the group that followed the conventional sentence-writing lesson approach is presented first, followed by the Facebook template lesson group. The two groups are described separately to show the type and range of writings produced in each of these two classes. An exemplar paper chosen from each class's below appropriate, appropriate, and superior achievement categories is included to demonstrate writing variation within and between groups. The discussion then turns to comparing the writing qualities between the two groups. The second section in this part of the discussion is an analysis of the observational field notes gathered while observing both writing activities for differentiating whether using paper-based Facebook templates increased student engagement in learning.

Writing Analysis

Descriptive Sentence Activity

Analysis of the writing for this group showed a distinct difference in text between the below appropriate, appropriate, and superior achievement categories. Writings allocated to the lowest group were distinct in the number of grammatical, structural and spelling errors they contained. The appropriate and superior achievement groups initially proved more difficult to categorize since each writing piece contained at least one or more significant errors across the range of analytical criteria. Texts

ultimately allocated to the superior category displayed clear, original thought well beyond the example provided by teachers during initial lesson instruction. Conversely, texts allocated to the appropriate development category more closely mirrored the ideas and writing style provided at the start of the lesson. In all, six texts were allocated to the below appropriate achievement group, 9 were identified as appropriate achievement, and 4 were classified as superior achievement.

Below Appropriate Achievement: writing allocated to this category contained a number of consistent issues across all four analytical domains. These texts were underdeveloped to the extent that they lacked a sense of the writer's distinct voice, energy, personality, thoughts, or feelings. There was thus little there for readers to connect with beyond simply reading the basic message on the page. These writings also contained numerous grammatical errors that affected reading fluency, and tended to draw from a limited vocabulary. For instance, when analyzing the writing generated by one student, Cory, which reflects the kind of texts within this category, it becomes evident that while he stays true to the example provided on the board and uses the same format as his teachers, he struggles to convey his meaning clearly since he has not yet acquired the skill of effectively referencing and connecting his comments with the text being discussed in his writing. In one instance, while attempting to make a textual connection, he states that the protagonist is "worried because it say's no worries." Later, he again states that the main character in the poem is "insecure because it say's not worried what others think of me". In both cases, there are not only a range of concerns with limited word choice, sentence structure, and grammatical and

conventional errors, but it is evident that Cory has misinterpreted and misreported the meaning of each textual reference.

The exemplar selected to demonstrate writing generated by those in the below appropriate achievement group was written by Sonia, as shown in Figure 3 below. This writing displays the most inconsistent sentence structure of any piece developed during the sentence writing activity. Two of her three statements about the main character in the poem are largely sentence fragments with the one full sentence she includes containing an unclear textual reference. In this instance, Sonia states, “I think the lonely because it said she is for once peace”. The word choice and grammatical composition makes it difficult to determine how Sonia connected the textual reference to her characterization of ‘lonely’ when the poem’s character is actually speaking about finding a sense of peace when alone and engaged in the poetry writing craft. Sonia also demonstrates an inconsistent use of conventions, using quotation marks when directly citing the text in one case, but not in others. She does seem to have a strong capacity to paraphrase lines and ideas from the poem like, for example, when she characterizes the writer as “creative *because it was talking about words coming from her fingertips*”, but the sentence fragment and a few questionable word choices weaken what might otherwise be a strong and meaningful sentence.

In grade 6-8 because it said "in my crazy middle school days!"

creative because it was talking about words coming from her fingertips.

I think her lonely because it said she is for one peace.

Figure 3: Below Appropriate Achievement, Sonia's Conventional Written Responses

Appropriate Achievement: Students in this category demonstrated stronger writing, but still displayed hesitance with straying from the example responses provided on the board by teachers. The exemplar for this group, written by Joey (Figure 4), contained an additional sentence compared with the other exemplars, and yet each of his sentences follows rigidly the same structure as those provided on the board. That being said, there are limited spelling errors, and grammatical errors are limited to two run-on sentences and a few instances of sentence-level word repetition, such as in the fourth point of his text when he states, "The main character likes writing because the whole poem talks about how much that person loves writing and how they are at peace and happiest when writing". These conventional errors aside, Joey demonstrates a reasonably strong connection between the text and the character trait he has identified for writing about since the sentence contains multiple references to the text to support his claim. Despite utilizing the text well to support his ideas, Joey's writing lacks evidence of a unique voice and sense of engaging personality emerging through his writing.

- #1 The main character is lonely because that person is only at peace when they are writing and always feel the best when they are writing.
- #2 The main character is shy because that person is happiest when alone, writing.
- #3 The main character is in grade 6-8 because it says my crazy middle school days.
- #4 The main character likes writing because the whole poem talks about how much that person loves writing and how they are at peace and happiest when writing.

Figure 4: Appropriate Achievement, Joey's Conventional Written Responses

Superior Achievement: Writings in this group were in many ways comparable to those allocated to the appropriate achievement category since these texts also contained a range of errors across all four writing analysis domains, particularly with spelling and grammar. However, writing pieces by the superior group contained more original ideas, and clearly demonstrated a strong sense of writing style and author voice. And although it did not factor into the sorting process, it is also interesting to note that students in this high group were also the most likely to choose character trait descriptors of their own, rather than use those listed on the board during the initial class discussion about the poem.

- The main character is sympathetic because in the poem it mentions that he/she wants to reach out to other people and cares about other people.
- The main character is creative because in the poem he/she mentions that he/she likes writing and "the words flow from my fingertips" is a very creative statement.
- The main character is an introvert because of the way he/she mentions "not worried of what others think of me", therefore he/she is a shy person. As well he/she mentions "I am alone with my words" so this person wants to be alone and wants time to his/herself!

Figure 5: Superior Achievement, Lilly's Conventional Written Responses

The exemplar for this category was written by Lilly (Figure 5), who astutely determines that the protagonist is an introvert, and acknowledges that the writer's gender is never identified, which is reflected in her writing through her use of both male and female pronouns, as evidenced below:

"The main character is an introvert because of the way he/she mentions 'not worried of what others think of me', therefore he/she is a shy person. As well he/she mentions 'I am alone with my words' so this person wants to be alone and wants time to his/herself!"

While Lilly presents interesting ideas, with strong supporting evidence from the text, her sentences are structured in such a way that the meaning is not always clear. The second sentence in particular has weaker writing characteristics, with the repetition of 'alone',

and the link between stating “I am alone with my words” and wanting time alone is not made clear or evident, despite connecting to her conception of the narrator as an introvert. Therefore, even though the ideas and textual support are strong in this piece, there is still room for improvement in terms of sentence structure and word choice.

Facebook-based Paper Template Writing Activity

The Facebook-based writing examples were decidedly more difficult to classify into appropriate and superior achievement categories. While the below appropriate papers were quickly determined since they contained short writing pieces with limited connection to the text, the distinction between appropriate and superior achievement was difficult to define given that there were a lot of original and strong pieces of writing that reflected digital communication styles. Ultimately, four pieces of writing that reflected strong textually-related characterization and a high level of creativity were identified as the superior texts. In all, five texts were allocated to the below appropriate achievement group, nine were identified as appropriate achievement, and four were classified as superior achievement; these numbers, other than the one additional below appropriate achievement text, are identical to those found with the descriptive sentence activity.

Below Appropriate: Writings allocated to this category were easily identified due to the limited scope of the writing in terms of idea development, although it is interesting to note that there is evidence in these texts of writers’ thorough conventional understanding of Social Media even within these short pieces of writing. Mary, for instance, writes only sixteen words in total throughout the assignment, but provides a hashtag that connects to the key theme of the poem in her status update, stating, “Can’t

wait for tonight writing poems by myself again #Bored". What is perhaps most compelling about this example is the evidence of clear voice being developed, but never fully realized, as the statement preceding the hashtag could easily be read as sarcastic, or as a complaint. In spite of this, her unwillingness to expand other ideas beyond single word statements and the incomplete second status update, as asked for in the assignment, prevent this writing piece from being ranked higher.

<p>Job Title</p> <p>The person nglie would like to be a righter. Or a teacher.</p>	<p>Hobbies</p> <p>Right</p>
<p>Favourite Movies</p> <p>A indepent person movie.</p>	<p>Favourite Music</p> <p>To listen to the trike of wheater from a stream.</p>
<p>Status What's on your mind?</p> <p>I just got finisht a story/poem. Tell me if you would like to. # Problems =C</p>	<p>Status What's on your mind?</p> <p>My # No friends !! I die a little bit evrey day</p>

Figure 6: Below Appropriate Achievement, Darren's Facebook Template Written Responses

The exemplar for the below appropriate group, written by Darren, also demonstrates conventional understanding of digital communication styles, but his writing had several limitations including numerous spelling and grammatical errors that weaken his overall product. His first status update presents a hashtag that complicates

the meaning behind their status update, stating “I Just got finsht a story/poem. Tell me if you woud like to. #Problems =(”, but never expanded beyond this initial idea or built a strong connection between the hashtag “#Problems” and the body of his text. There is further evidence of incomplete ideas throughout the writing, such as when he lists the word “Right” under hobbies, and “A indepent person movie” under Favourite Movies. In both of these instances, Darren presents the basis for interesting ideas, but they lack adequate development, and are further inhibited by limited word choice, spelling and grammatical errors, and unclear connections to the poetic text he is discussing.

Job Title
A Writer or a person who writes poetry. Because when I write the words just flow from my finger tips and its one of my favrite things to do!

Hobbies
My hobbies are...
-> Wriahnting
-> Wriahnting poetry

Favourite Movies
Dramatic, Sad movies!

Favourite Music
Calm peaceful Music!

Status - What's on your mind?
Today I had a very hard day I was made fun of and when I got home I think I wrote about it all night long.:c
~~#Oneofmy worst days~~

Status - What's on your mind?
Today I went out to see my favirate Poetry wriahnter Preform live!!:)
#Best day of my life!

Figure 7: Appropriate Achievement, Susan's Facebook Template Written Response

Appropriate Achievement: As noted, the remaining writing samples were difficult to classify as either appropriate or superior achievement since they often contained writing features pertaining to both grading categories of the Writing Framework. After lengthy deliberation, writing samples selected for the appropriate

achievement group were those that contained a larger number of spelling, grammatical, and conventional errors, or displayed limited evidence of unique voice or characterization in their status updates.

The exemplar chosen for the appropriate achievement group, written by Susan, shows two different moods from the narrator. The first status update details a negative experience, when she states that, “Today I had a very hard day I was made fun of and when I got home I think I wrote about it all night long! ☹️ #One of my worst days ever!” In conjunction with the sad, and no doubt hurt, feelings expressed in this sentiment, we also see writing characteristics of a run-on sentence, although no spelling errors are present. We also see a subtle misunderstanding of Facebook conventions, as spaces are left between the words in the hashtag, but this use of convention still highlights the update’s central theme of using writing as a coping mechanism for bullying and captures the mood of the poem’s narrator. The second status update is more positive in nature, stating, “Today I went out to see my favirote poetry wrighter preform live!! 😊 #Best day of my life!” Unlike the writing features in the first example, we see a number of spelling errors, although the sentence is less fragmented. Again, the conventional use of a hashtag ties in with the update’s theme, and presents a distinct alternative to the negative emotions experienced by the narrator in the first status update. It also builds a connection between poetry, writing, and happiness for the narrator, all of which were themes and ideas shared in the initial whole-class discussion as key characteristics of the speaker in the poem.

Superior Achievement: Writers in this group demonstrated stronger uses of conventions and sentence structure than the appropriate achievement group, but there were still discernible errors in each writing sample. The exemplar chosen for this group, written by Debbie, presents an interesting range of status updates. The first is written in poetic form, with a hashtag at the end to provide deeper context into the narrator's lonely mind:

“Roaming these halls leaves a dent in my soul. And I am incomplete. I am a lesser person for having known this lifestyle. Or so they think. I am alone. Just me and my paper and pen, that's how I live out my days.
#Loner4Life”

In contrast, her second status update is more casually written, and builds upon the hashtag at the end of the first update by suggesting that the narrator spends a lot of time alone: “What should I do tonight? Go to the party or go to a movie with my friends? JK I'll be at home watching Netflix. #NoFriends #DateWithNetflix - Feeling unwanted ☹”. In both of these updates, we see a clear voice being presented, as the character's thoughts and ideas come vividly to life through the writing. In addition to minimal spelling and grammatical errors, there is also a strong sense of conventional knowledge in terms of digital communication techniques, particularly given the hashtags in both status updates to summarize key themes and ideas, while also drawing on the recent feature of the shared feelings at the end of the second status update. This use of social media conventions strengthens the idea that the narrator is lonely, and gives us a deeper insight into how this impacts the social interactions that Debbie depicts in her writing. The varying styles of poetic and more casual writing also suggest that Debbie

may have positioned the young narrator in the poem as experimenting with form, and perhaps using social media to garner feedback.

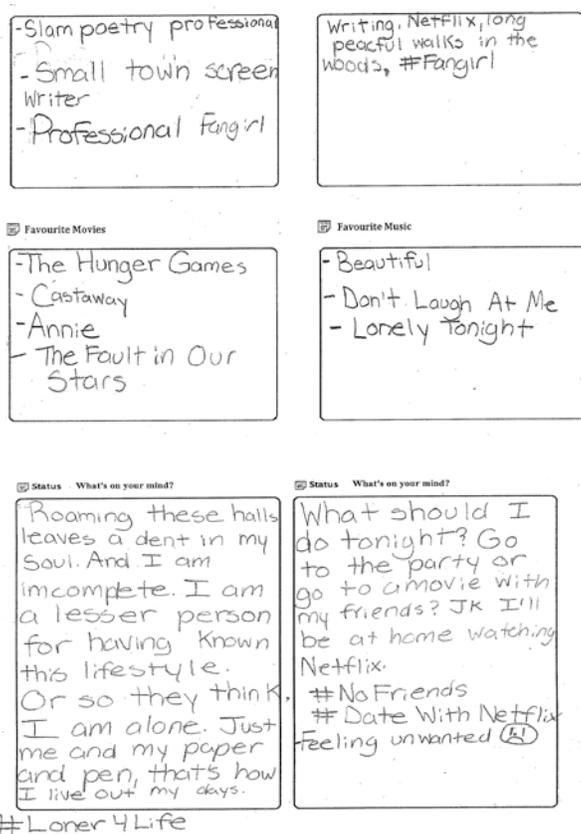


Figure 8: Superior Achievement, Debbie's Facebook Template Written Responses

Comparing Writing Activities

A key question guiding this study is to consider how, and in what ways, writing characteristics differ between each writing activity. Even with a relatively simple character analysis lesson delivered in one 45-minute class, it is evident that there are differences in writing style and quality between the Facebook-based activity and the descriptive writing exercise. Enhanced writing quality, to varying degrees, is evident in the Facebook-based writing samples at all levels of writing achievement –below

appropriate, appropriate, and superior—in all four domains of the writing assessment framework: voice, word choice, sentence structure and fluency, and conventions.

Voice: What is striking about the Facebook-based paper template writing samples as a whole is the sense of voice that prevails in even the most limited writing pieces, and how the three remaining assessment criteria work together with voice to facilitate and help convey the writer's style, personality, and personal experience. Voice comes through strongly across all three achievement levels. This appears to be because the writers needed to assume the persona of the poem's narrator, and therefore could write in the first person to generate far more expressive texts, all of which are enhanced through the use of hashtags, emoticons, and exclamation marks to convey the inner feelings and qualities of the writers. The conventional descriptive writers, in adopting a reader analysis stance, wrote in the third person, and therefore the writing captures voice far less effectively, perhaps due to the influence of the exemplar on the board, even if they are proficiently strong in the other three assessment categories.

The personal voice and stance Facebook writers could assume seemed to facilitate writing in more fluid, fluent, complete sentences, and there is also a greater variety and complexity of sentence types. This is evident even with the texts for the two below appropriate writers. For example, Cory expresses the narrator's sense of loneliness in his third sentence statement, "I think ther lonely because it said she is for once peace." Darren, on the other hand, in his Facebook status update far more expressively captures that sense of loneliness in both of his two lines, one stating "#No friends", which is followed by an emoticon of a sad face, and then, even if a bit dramatically, goes on to state, "I die a little bit every day." Again, with the two

appropriate level writers, Joey's descriptive sentence suggests that "The main character likes writing because the whole poem talks about how much that person loves writing how they are at peace and happiest when writing." Susan makes this same point in the 'job title section', when she says, "A writer or a person who writes poetry because when I write, the words just flow from my finger tips and its one of my favorite things to do!" However, not only does Susan's sentence have a stronger flow than Joey's, but it also illuminates both the narrator's passion for writing and her ease with the poetry writing craft as words simply flow from her fingertips.

Sentence structure and fluency; Word choice; and Conventions: The remaining three categories also have key differences that emerge when comparing both sets of students' writing. In terms of sentence fluency, students at all levels of the Facebook-based activity generally wrote more complex sentences with various structures, whereas students who completed the descriptive activity were much more formulaic in their responses, with the only noticeable evidence of varied sentence structure appearing at the superior achievement level, although formulaic elements still guided the sentence structure for these writers. Lilly's three sentences all start with "The main character is [trait] because", which falls in line with the example provided on the board, but then each statement varies in terms of sentence style and length. Nevertheless, Lilly's strict adherence to the conventional sentence structure beginning limits her ability to demonstrate the variety of sentence types that she may be capable of producing. On the other hand, Debbie is afforded the freedom to construct a wide variety of sentence styles of varying lengths, from a listing format used in the first four Facebook entries, to the poetic form and rhetorical questioning strategies used in her status updates.

What is perhaps most interesting is how the below appropriate exemplars from the Facebook-based activity still exhibit fairly strong sentence fluency, even if their overall writing is limited. For instance, Mary, another below appropriate writer, exclaims, “Can’t wait for tonight writing poems by myself again #bored”, which, in this particular instance, meets the appropriate achievement category criteria given that it reads clearly with minimal errors. Darren, as evident in his exemplar, also achieved appropriate sentence fluency on the occasion when he wrote, “I die a little Bit every day”, although his other sentences have enough errors in structure and word choice to warrant a below appropriate categorization. Nevertheless, these exemplars suggest that using a more personalized voice, and thus a more familiar writing form, results in stronger sentence fluency overall.

For discussion purposes, word choice and sentence fluency are considered together. In writing more complete sentences and developing ideas more fully, the Facebook-based paper template writers used more complex word choices and phrasing, and in most instances chose expressive words that were able to convey emotions through more vividly descriptive and colourful than witnessed in the descriptive writing samples. Even in the below appropriate achievement group, Darren colourfully, though dramatically, states, “I die a little Bit every day.” Unlike Cory, whose suggestion that the narrator is insecure is poorly supported by stating that they are “not worried what others think of me”, we see evidence of a creative and deliberate interpretation of the narrator’s thoughts and feelings, and had there been more time available, perhaps we could have seen a stronger connection developed with the text to support this interpretation.

Similar comparisons appear at the superior level, where Lilly’s descriptive sentence portrays the narrator as an introvert, noting that the poem indicates that the narrator likes being alone with her words and that they do not care what others think. Debbie’s Facebook-based assignment builds on this characterization, by presenting a status update in poetic form that demonstrates the happiness that introversion brings the narrator, while directly challenging societal pressures that would distract from writing when she says, “Or so they think”, while reflecting on the probable perceptions others hold that she has feelings of being alone and incomplete. Debbie further complicates this characterization with her second status update, suggesting that the narrator is not always happy spending time on her own, as she jokingly acknowledges that going “to a party or... to a movie with my friends” are not realistic options for her evening plans, and that she will instead be “watching Netflix” by herself, which ultimately leaves her “Feeling unwanted ☹️.”

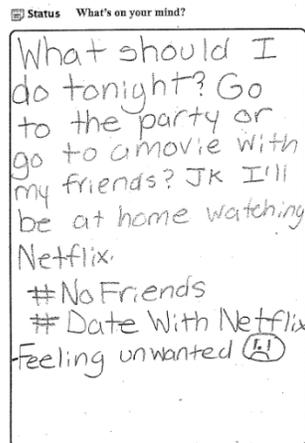


Figure 9: Debbie’s Second Status Update.

As evidenced above, the Facebook-based paper templates allow greater freedom for writers to take character trait concepts and explore them further. Similarly, writers participating in the Facebook-based activity tended to use stylistic conventions more

accurately compared with the descriptive writers; as such, there were fewer spelling errors, and a more apparent willingness to explore the narrator's personality traits.

Additional Factors to Consider

Quantity of Writing Produced: An added feature of interest is the comparative length of text generated by each group at each achievement level. In all cases, the amount of text written by the Facebook template group exceeded the length of texts written by the descriptive writing task class of students, as Figure 10 below demonstrates. A hallmark of any writing program is to create learning contexts in which students create longer texts, since writing is a craft that is learned through practice with developing ideas in writing. In all instances the Facebook template writers engaged in writing lengthier texts. There are two probable reasons for this length difference: the Facebook template writers had six clear prompts to respond to; and writers appear to be quite invested in and expressive when writing the two 'status update' sections of the template.

Average Word Count by Task and Achievement Level for Exemplars		
	<i>Descriptive Writing Task</i>	<i>Facebook Template Writing Task</i>
Below Appropriate	35	51
Appropriate	80	90
Superior	99	114

Figure 10: Average Word Count by Task and Achievement Level

Genre: Another factor to consider is the element of genre at play in this study, as the styles of writing produced are quite different from one another. The sentence writing activity represents a more artificial, school-based writing exercise that is

unlikely to be replicated by students in a real world context, whereas the Facebook-based activity allows students to write and express ideas in a familiar, more personal, and more naturalistic form. As such, most students, if not all, already knew the stylistic conventions required for writing on Facebook, and this served as a motivation for them to pursue the writing task more freely. The other group who wrote character trait statements was guided more by meeting a school-based writing task and therefore more concentrated on meeting teacher assignment expectations. The variation in genre could also reflect differing degrees of willingness to experiment with words and sentence structures, as the Facebook-based format is less restricted by the expectations of producing the correct grammar and spelling that they may associate with school-based writing exercises. As a result, students may have written more freely, which could also explain the increased writing production at all levels of the Facebook-based activity.

Student Engagement in the Writing Tasks

Field notes were gathered while observing both activities to help determine whether using paper-based Facebook templates increases student engagement with classroom learning. While both activities began in similar fashions, there is a distinct shift in student engagement, which arises from the introduction of each respective writing task onward.

It was evident from their overall commitment to the work that students completing the sentence-writing activity maintained their focus throughout each stage of the activity. What was interesting to note, however, was that there was never a significant shift in enthusiasm at any single moment from start-to-finish. This by no

means suggests that students were disengaged, as the majority of participants appeared to be actively listening and following along with the text when their classmates were making character trait suggestions. As the writing piece was introduced and students were shown an example sentence on the board, all but two students began to write immediately, with those two remaining students writing shortly afterwards. There was, however, minimal discussion between students during the writing portion, and students who sought assistance from the teacher quietly raised their hand or walked up to her desk. When students finished writing, they quietly put their pen down and only a few took that time to read over their sentences. When we asked students to share examples of their writing, over half of the students raised their hand, though there was minimal discussion outside of those sharing.

The paper-based Facebook template group started out in a very similar fashion to their sentence-writing counterparts. Again, the majority of students appeared to be actively listening, with a large number of those following along closely in the text when their classmates were making character trait suggestions. The significant shift in student activity occurred at the introduction of the paper-based Facebook templates. Instantly, many students began to discuss ideas with their classmates, and a collaborative approach was chosen by over half of the participants. A number of students also got up from their desk and collaborated with classmates at other tables, without seeking permission to do so from their classroom teacher. Numerous students were also actively engaged in sharing their writing with their peers, seeking immediate feedback for their ideas and displaying a sense of pride in their writing, activities that were not evident with the sentence-writing group.

There was little difference, if any, in the level of student engagement between groups during initial teacher-led discussions identifying and discussing character traits describing the poem's protagonist. In both classes, most students appeared to be paying attention, often checking the text as classmates made suggestions, which suggested a discernable level of interest at that stage of the activity. It was not until the activities diverged from one another that a dramatic shift in engagement levels became apparent, as the Facebook-based activity elicited a higher degree of student engagement when compared to the sentence-writing activity. This is not to suggest that the students completing the descriptive sentences were disengaged from the process, but there was a noticeable difference in student behaviours. Students from the sentence activity worked quietly and quickly, many completing the activity within the first ten minutes of writing time. Although some students asked for assistance, the majority worked quietly on their own, and there were few instances where students shared their writing with their peers without being prompted to do so following the activity. On the other hand, students completing the Facebook-based activity were actively sharing their writing with their peers, with some moving from table to table to discuss their ideas and to see what their peers had written. There was also a slower pace in terms of their writing, as students appeared to be putting a great deal of thought into what the characters' interests and thoughts would be.

After using the revised Corso et al (2013) model depicted in *Figure 2* in Chapter 3 to review both activities, it became more evident that the Facebook-based activity drove a discernibly higher degree of student engagement than the sentence writing activity, as it stimulated more organic instances of collaboration between students and

their classmates, as well as meaningful interactions with their teacher. During the Facebook-based activity, students were eager to seek feedback from their peers, not only at their only table but around the classroom as well. Many students were also interested in seeing what their peers were writing, or sought out ideas on what to write for their own assignment. These behaviors were not observed during the sentence writing activity, even though neither group was discouraged from consulting their peers. Why did the Facebook-style activity lend itself to collaborative efforts, while the sentence writing activity did not? There are many possible explanations for this phenomenon, but three possibilities stand out as most likely. First, the Facebook-based activity may have been viewed by students as a ‘fun’ and ‘enjoyable’ activity, which was different than activities they normally complete in class, thus causing them to behave in different ways than they normally would while completing an assignment in class (Williams, 2004). Another possibility is that activities based on social media platforms may naturally lend themselves to collaborative efforts, as students use these platforms to socialize and communicate with their peers. There is also the possibility that students may feel a deeper connection with their writing because they have used a more personal voice than their descriptive writing counterparts, which could have resulted in an increased desire to share their ideas and their writing with their peers.

Also using the revised Corso et al (2013) model, there was evidence of increased interaction between students and their classroom teacher, Mrs. Brooks (a pseudonym), during the Facebook-based activity in seeking positive reinforcement from her when they finished writing a section of the assignment. Student-teacher interactions emerged as an important element informing the data because it also speaks to the teacher’s

engagement with the learning content in this activity. During the sentence writing activity, Mrs. Brooks circulated throughout the room to talk with, help, and support writers as needed, but only a handful of students sought help with their writing, and few students were discernably eager to share their writing examples with her. Mrs. Brooks also took time to stop and read students' writing, but for the most part did not directly engage with them about what they had written. However, during the Facebook-based activity, this dynamic changed in significant ways as Mrs. Brooks became more actively engaged with students and their writing. She expressed interest in learning what had inspired students to write in the ways that they did, and was observed asking a few students to justify their song and movie choices in relation to the text. In these instances, we see a stronger correlation between the teacher and her students and their writing content given the increased sharing of ideas and opportunities for students to provide oral explanations for their writing pieces.

Moving beyond the revised Corso et al (2013) model, it became clear during classroom observations that the paper-based Facebook activity requires a different approach to classroom management than the sentence writing activity to be successful given the degree to which students moved around the room to talk and consult with peers. For some teachers, this may be a difficult phenomenon to allow at first, as a casual observer may view these students as being disruptive and off-task; however, the writing characteristics produced by the students in this study suggest that there is indeed value in permitting collaboration and free-flowing movement throughout the classroom to help students become inspired by and engaged with the writing process.

Conclusion

The above details the findings gathered during this study through students' writing samples and classroom observations. The writing samples were then divided into below appropriate, appropriate and superior achievement groups for each activity, using the writing analysis framework developed for this study. Student engagement was measured through classroom observation and field notes analysis.

There are a number of key findings that emerged from this study. First, when students' writing was analyzed, it became clear that the Facebook-based activity resulted in stronger voice at all categorized levels of writing (i.e., below appropriate, appropriate, and superior achievement) than the descriptive assignment, and saw similar variation in overall quality when sentence fluency, word choice, and conventions were considered. Students that completed the Facebook-based activity appeared to connect with the more personal narrative style, and were able to expand upon, and in some instances complicate, the character traits discussed in class. They also demonstrated a greater degree of experimentation with word choice, sentence structure and conventions than their counterparts, who, at all three levels of classification, adhered to similar sentence structures and limited vocabulary.

Second, students in the Facebook-based activity appeared to be more engaged with their classmates and their teacher, and demonstrated greater energy about the writing task at hand, resulting in a higher quantity of writing produced. While both classes worked diligently to complete their activity, the level of enthusiasm and energy was much higher in the Facebook-based activity group. Although Mrs. Brooks noted that the Facebook-based activity group was slightly more social than the other class, this

was not enough of a difference to account for the degree of difference between classroom responses. Students actively shared their writing with Mrs. Brooks and their classmates, which was not the case with the descriptive writing activity group. Thus, the Facebook-based activity group was most closely aligned with the revised Corso et al (2013) model (Figure 2), as there was ample evidence of collaboration between students, their peers and their teacher. The following chapter considers the strengths and limitations of the study, and sets out directions for future research. It also acknowledges study limitations, and highlights considerations for future research in this field.

Chapter V: Conclusion

Introduction

New technologies have expanded classrooms walls, broadening the scope of learning possibilities and increasing educators' responsibilities for preparing students for the modern world. In turn, literacy is similarly evolving, as digital communication now stands as a dominant force in students' lives. While this may be true, the high cost of technology, as well as various school and district policies, can sometimes limit teachers' abilities to engage with digital technologies with their students (Balajthy, 2000; Grabe & Grabe, 2001; Kist, 2010). As a result, it is necessary to develop strategies to overcome these barriers to learning, and allow all students to engage in digital-based literacies in any classroom setting, regardless of the technology available. The study presented here offers one such viable alternative to digitally-based communications without using computers during instructional time.

As online resources become more widely used in modern classrooms, the 'digital divide' that exists between students also continues to grow (Domine, 2009; Goode, 2010). A number of barriers contribute to this divide, including limited funding for technology, minimal training and support for teachers, and access to internet in rural areas (Domine, 2009; Gordon, 2003; Gura & Percy, 2005; King, 2002; Roy, 1999). Even in classrooms where these barriers are not present, district policies limiting the use of social media platforms can also prohibit students from online learning opportunities due to concerns over student privacy, bullying, plagiarism, and the perceived likelihood that students will be easily distracted by other activities online (Buckingham, 2007; Levinson, 2010). As a result of these barriers, not all students are getting access to

digitally enhanced learning opportunities, which is problematic when the literatures suggests numerous outcomes that can be derived from incorporating digital literacies and online resources into classrooms, including creating more positive and collaborative learning spaces, increasing creative and critical thinking, and producing stronger problem solving proficiency (Buckingham, 2007; C21 Canada, 2012; Hung & Yuen, 2010; Marzano & Heflebower, 2012).

The study outlined above provides a possible alternative for classrooms facing barriers to technology, as students completing the Facebook-based paper template activity produced stronger writing characteristics, and demonstrated an increased level of engagement, than their counterparts who completed the descriptive writing assignment. This activity also addressed the gap between school-based activities and students' lived experiences that can exist with school-based writing activities, which can often contribute to higher disengagement levels, by creating an authentic learning opportunity that focuses on a familiar writing form (LeNoue et al, 2011; Warschauer, 2006); this familiarity can help motivate struggling writers, which was evident by the increased writing production present at all three levels: below appropriate, appropriate, and superior (Freeman & Brett, 2012). Students were also more naturally collaborative during the Facebook-based activity, excitedly sharing their writing with their peers and their teacher, a skill that could benefit them in future educational and career opportunities (Burke, 2007; C21 Canada, 2012; Ferriter & Garry, 2010; Fredericks, 2010).

Study Limitations

A key limitation of the study is the length of time committed to data collection for collecting writing samples and conducting observations during just the one class period for each group. There are two reasons for this limited duration. First, this study is to some extent an exploratory study meant to make an initial determination about whether the Facebook-inspired templates would prompt different and more complex writing when compared with the more traditional and conventional teaching approach asking students simply to generate basic character statements about a text read in class. The study does meet this objective, with a more comprehensive follow-up study design outlined below. A second factor limiting the study's data collection timeframe stemmed from Mrs. Brooks's unavailability of classroom time to commit more than the one period for each class to the study. In fact, even though this activity was Language Arts focused, the two participating classes instead used class periods dedicated to other subject areas to accommodate the activity, as there was simply insufficient time to allow this activity to occur during the regular Language Arts period. This could point to two things; the pressures that teachers face to prepare students for the New Brunswick Grade 7 provincial literacy assessment, as well as the pressure to meet curricular demands.

A second limitation is that the assessment of student engagement levels was derived purely from classroom observation notes, with no direct input from students themselves. This factor was mitigated to some extent because of the complete observer stance taken while students worked on their writing tasks that therefore facilitated taking detailed notes as students worked through their assignment. Additionally, however, it was clearly evident that students in the Facebook writing group displayed a greater

degree of engagement, as assessed and interpreted according to the revised Corso et al (2013) student engagement model. Finally, the study is also limited in that interview data was not gathered from the classroom teacher to gain her observations and opinions about how students and the two writing tasks compared. Collecting data from the teacher was an initial question posed for the study; but again, however, pressures to limit the study to just the two classes and Mrs. Brooks's clear need to return to her regular duties once student data had been collected meant that this question could not be adequately addressed.

Considerations for Future Research

In addition to incorporating additional measures for student engagement levels, future research in this field would benefit from both a larger sample size and a lengthier piece of writing from students to analyse. In terms of sample size, while using two classes was effective for this small-scale study, it is difficult to make generalizations beyond these particular classes, even though results are promising. Future research should also be conducted with schools in different geographic regions to discern whether and to what extent writing products and engagement levels differ. Efforts should also be made to collect writing samples from populations with differing socio-economic backgrounds to determine whether and how economic conditions inform the writing and classroom experiences for learners in both types of activities.

Future studies in which lengthier pieces of writing are selected for interpretive response and character analysis would also further inform the research questions posed here since it would give students more substantive reading material from which

conclusions and interpretations can be drawn. A lengthier reading would, in turn, most likely prompt more varied responses and more complex writing products from both groups. Studies designed to collect interview data from both students and teachers would also add significantly to the research aimed at determining whether, how, and to what extent using Facebook-inspired templates can be used successfully in Language Arts classrooms to promote an increase in the type, amount, and quality of the writing students produce when compared with the writing generated by students within more conventional sentence-based learning environments.

Finally, studies of this purpose and design may also benefit from the inclusion of computer-based social media activities for comparative purposes. A recent study by White and Hungerford-Kresser (2014) used a computer-based Facebook assignment, in which students created profile pages for literary characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, allowing them to interact with each other by writing comments on their respective status updates. Their study found that using social media to facilitate character study “engendered deeper interest in and understanding of characters and their contexts” (651), a finding similar to the conclusions drawn from this study. However, no studies could be located during the research period offering a comparison between hand-written and digitally produced writing samples. Would using technology directly increase student engagement, and does this impact how paper-based Facebook templates are viewed as an alternative to descriptive writing activities? The comparison between computer-based and paper-based Facebook activities might allow future researchers to propose effective strategies to strengthen paper-based assignments to make them more authentic and engaging for learners.

Conclusion

This study compared students' writing and engagement levels as two classes completed different activities to analyse the same poem. The data for this study found that students completing the Facebook-based activity produced stronger writing, to varying degrees, than the descriptive writing samples in all four characteristics defined in the assessment framework: voice, sentence fluency, word choice and conventions. Students completing the Facebook-based activity were able to expand upon, and complicate character descriptors by their choice of tone, words, sentence structure, and digital conventions, which was evident, again to varying degrees, at all categorization levels: below appropriate, appropriate, and superior.

Classroom observations indicate that using Facebook-inspired paper templates can significantly increase student engagement in comparison to similar activities focused on sentence composition, as well as increasing the overall volume of writing produced, which could have been strongly influenced by the types of writing genre selected for each respective assignment. Students were also more eager and willing to share their writing samples with the teacher and their peers, and actively provided feedback on their classmates' writing as well.

Emerging technologies are changing how students communicate, so it is therefore imperative that schools develop strategies to ensure that all students are learning about digital literacies in their classroom, regardless of available technologies and barriers to social media access that may limit opportunities for teachers to engage in these discussions. This study presents a viable option for teachers looking to teach students about the possibilities and limitations of digital communication without ever

needing access to social media sites or any form of technology in the classroom. This study's findings also suggest that using Facebook-based paper templates can enhance students' learning experiences, by improving the overall quality of their writing while also increasing their engagement with classroom learning and their willingness to collaborate with their peers to support one another. As outlined above, further research would further aid in determining whether findings in this study are applicable on a broader scope. This study does, however, present encouraging evidence that social media-inspired literacy learning can be successfully achieved in classrooms when only limited, if any, technology is available.

Appendix A**Amelia Harmon's Poem *Ordinary, Extraordinary* (2011)**

Ordinary, Extraordinary
Every day is the same,
Ordinary,
With me wishing that something would happen,
Making it extraordinary,
The only time that I know I'm extraordinary,
Is when I write,
The words flowing from my fingertips,
At peace,
Not worried what others think of me,
For once,
Peace,
Solace,
In my crazy middle school days,
No worries,
All else fades,
And I am alone with my words,
No cares,
But to create beauty,
Something that will move someone,
That will touch someone in ways they can't explain.

Appendix B

Writing Analysis Framework

Writing Standard	Below Appropriate Achievement	Appropriate Achievement	Superior Achievement
Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses unclear and generic words which make it difficult for readers to understand meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses appropriate words within context of assignment which helps message become mostly clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses specific and meaningful words to develop a clear message
Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little to no evidence of author's style, personality and voice • Makes inappropriate writing choices within context of assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate evidence of author's style, personality and voice • Makes appropriate writing choices within context of assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong evidence of author's style, personality and voice • Makes unique and different writing choices within context of assignments
Sentence Structure/Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences are not fluid, writing does not read clearly • Uses mostly simple, short sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence fluency is appropriate, reads clearly with minimal errors • Evidence of varying sentence types and lengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sentence fluency, reads and flows easily • Uses a variety of simple and complex sentence types of varying lengths
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing has multiple punctuation errors, message is unclear • Little to no evidence of appropriate conventions to achieve message • Spelling and grammatical errors throughout writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing has punctuation errors, but message is mostly clear • Uses appropriate conventions occasionally to achieve message • Spelling and grammatical errors occasionally present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing has limited punctuation errors, message is clear • Uses appropriate conventions throughout writing to achieve message • Limited spelling and grammatical errors, if any

Appendix C

Facebook-Based Paper Templates

 Job Title

 Hobbies

 Favourite Movies

 Favourite Music

 Status What's on your mind?

 Status What's on your mind?

Appendix D

Lesson Plan: Descriptive Sentence Activity

Curricular Outcomes

Reading and Viewing #6- *Students will be expected to respond personally to a range of texts.*

- Specific Outcome for Grade 7: *Make evaluations and judgments about texts and learn to express personal points of view.*

Writing and Other Ways of Representing #8- *Students will be expected to use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; as to use their imagination.*

- Specific Outcome for Grade 7: *Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming...) to extend and explore learning.*

Materials Needed

- 30 Copies of poem
- Writing and Scrap Paper
- Observation Notebook

Lesson Structure

- 1) The class will read the poem together 3 times aloud (volunteers)
- 2) We will then have a five minute discussion on character traits that relate to the poem's protagonist. I will make a list of traits that students come up with on the board. I will ask them to give evidence of why they feel that these traits apply to these characters.
- 3) I will provide instructions (as well as an exemplar written on the whiteboard) for the writing activity. Students will be expected to write three sentences describing character traits for the poem's protagonist, with evidence from the poem to support these ideas.

Appendix E

Lesson Plan: Facebook-Based Activity

Curricular Outcomes

Reading and Viewing #6- *Students will be expected to respond personally to a range of texts.*

- Specific Outcome for Grade 7: *Make evaluations and judgments about texts and learn to express personal points of view.*

Writing and Other Ways of Representing #8- *Students will be expected to use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; as to use their imagination.*

- Specific Outcome for Grade 7: *Demonstrate an ability to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other forms of representation;... make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose.*

Materials Needed

- 30 Copies of poem
- 30 Copies of Facebook template
- Scrap Paper
- Observation Notebook

Lesson Structure

- 1) The class will read the poem together 3 times (volunteers).
- 2) We will then have a five minute discussion on character traits that relate to the poem's protagonist. I will make a list of traits that students come up with on the board. I will ask them to give evidence of why they feel that these traits apply to these characters.
- 3) I will provide instructions (and write them on the board) for students to complete their Facebook-based paper templates. I will provide an example if requested.

Works Cited

- Ashburn, E. A., & Floden, R. E. (2006). *Meaningful learning using technology: What teachers need to know and do*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Au, W. (2011). Teaching under the new Taylorism: High-stakes testing and the standardization of the 21st century curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 43(1), 25-45.
- Beach, R. (2012). Constructing digital learning commons in the literacy classroom. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 55(5), 448-451.
- Beach, R., Appleman, D., Hynds, S., & Wilhelm, J. (2011). *Teaching literature to adolescents: Second edition*. New York, NY; Routledge.
- Blanchard, J. S. (1999). *Educational computing in the schools: Technology, communication and literacy*. New York: Haworth Press.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Boyles, N. N. (2011). *Rethinking small-group instruction in the intermediate grades: Differentiation that makes a difference*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House Pub.

- Brunner, C., & Tally, W. (1999). *The new media literacy handbook: An educator's guide to bringing new media into the classroom*. New York, NY: Anchor Books Doubleday.
- Buckingham, D. (2007). *Beyond technology: Children's learning in the age of digital culture*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Burke, J. (2007). Teaching language arts in a "flat" world. In G. K. Beers, R. E. Probst and L. Rief (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy: Turning promise into practice* (pp. 149-166). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Cakir, H. (2013). Use of blogs in pre-service teacher education to improve student engagement. *Computers & Education*, 68, 244-252.
- Canadians for 21st Century Learning & Innovation (2012). *Shifting minds: A 21st century vision of public education in Canada*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.c21canada.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Shifting-Minds-Revised.pdf>
- Charles, A. S. (2012). Cell phones: Rule-setting, rule-breaking, and relationships in classrooms. *American Secondary Education*, 40(3), 4-16.

- Clarke, B. (2009). Rethinking listening to students: A preservice teacher's revisions. In A. Cook-Sather (Ed.), *Learning from the student's perspective: A sourcebook for effective teaching* (pp. 131-144). Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Coiro, J. (2005). Every teacher a Miss Rumphius: Empowering teachers with effective professional development. In R. A. Karchmer, M. H. Mallette, J. Kara-Soteriou, & D. J. Leu Jr. (Eds.), *Innovative approaches to literacy education: Using the internet to support new literacies* (pp. 199-219). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Cook-Sather, A., Fritz-Mauer, J., & Mausner, J. M. (2009). Designing engaging lessons. In A. Cook-Sather (Ed.), *Learning from the student's perspective: A sourcebook for effective teaching* (pp. 44-54). Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Corso, M. J., Bundick, M. J., Quaglia, R. J., & Haywood, D. E. (2013). Where student, teacher and content meet: Student engagement in the secondary school classroom. *American Secondary Education, 41*(3), 50-61.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2012). Reflections on some dangers to childhood creativity. *LEARNing Landscapes, 6*(1), 19-25.
- Cuban, L. (2001). *Oversold and underused: Computers in the classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cuban, S., & Cuban, L. (2007). *Partners in literacy: Schools and libraries building communities through technology*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Culham, R. (2005). *6+1 Traits of Writing*. Scholastic.

Cullen, J. (2011). Web 2.0 and the digital divide: What can Facebook and YouTube contribute? In L. K. Stergioulas & H. Drenoyianni (Eds.), *Pursuing Digital Literacy in Compulsory Education* (p. 100-116). New York, Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Davis, K., & James, C. (2012). Tweens' conceptions of privacy online: Implications for educators. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 38(1), 4-25.

DiVall, M. V., & Kirwin, J. L., (2012). Using Facebook to facilitate course-related discussion between students and faculty members. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 76(2), 1-32.

Domine, V. E. (2009). *Rethinking technology in schools*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Ltd.

Elavsky, C. M., Mislan, C., & Elavsky, S. (2011) When talking less is more: exploring outcomes of Twitter usage in the large-lecture hall. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 36(3), 215-233.

- Engelhard, C., & Seo, K. K. (2012). Going from obsolete to innovative: Empowering problem-based learning with online social media. In K. K. Seo, D. A. Pellegrino, & C. Engelhard (Eds.), *Designing Problem-Driven Instruction with Online Social Media* (p. 3-20). Charlotte, Information Age Publishing, Inc.
- Exeter, D. J., Ameratunga, S., Ratima, M., Morton, S., Dickson, M., Hsu, D., & Jackson, R. (2010). Student engagement in very large classes: The teachers' perspective. *Studies in Higher Education, 35*(7), 761-775.
- Farson, R. (2007). The case for failure: Risk, innovation, and engagement. In A. M. Blankstein, R. W. Cole, & P. D. Houston (Eds.), *Engaging every learner* (pp. 173-191). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Ferneding, K. A. (2003). *Questioning technology: Electronic technologies and educational reform*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Ferriter, W. M., & Garry, A. (2010). *Teaching the iGeneration: 5 easy ways to introduce essential skills with web 2.0 tools*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- Franz, K. R. (2003). Building better school-home connections with technology. In D. T. Gordon (Ed.), *Better teaching and learning in the digital classroom* (pp. 51-63). Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

Fredericks, A. D. (2010). *The teacher's handbook: Strategies for success*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Freeman, W., & Brett, C. (2012). Prompting authentic blogging practice in an online graduate course. *Computers & Education*, 59(3), 1032-1041.

Freishtat, R. L., & Sandlin, J. A. (2010). Shaping Youth Discourse About Technology: Technological Colonization, Manifest Destiny, and the Frontier Myth in Facebook's Public Pedagogy. *Educational Studies*, 46(5), 503-523.

García-Valcárcel, A., Basilotta, V., & López, C. (2014). ICT in Collaborative Learning in the Classrooms of Primary and Secondary Education. *Comunicar*, 21(42), 65-74.

Gardner, H. (2012). Getting at the heart of the creative experience. *LEARNIng Landscapes*, 6(1), 45-54.

Gay, L. R., & Airasian, P. (2003). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Goode, J. (2010). The digital identity divide: how technology knowledge impacts college students. *New Media & Society*, 12(3), 497-513.

Gordon, D. T. (2003). *Better teaching and learning in the digital classroom*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Grabe, M., & Grabe, C. (2001). *Integrating technology for meaningful learning: Third edition*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Greenhow, C., & Gleason, B. (2014). Social scholarship: Reconsidering scholarly practices in the age of social media. *British Journal Of Educational Technology*, 45(3), 392-402.

Greenhow, C., & Lewin, C. (2016). Social media and education: reconceptualizing the boundaries of formal and informal learning. *Learning, Media & Technology*, 41(1), 6-30.

Greenhow, C., & Robelia, B. (2009). Informal learning and identity formation in online social networks. *Learning, Media & Technology*, 34(2), 119-140.

Greenlaw, J. C., & Ebenezer, J. V. (2005). *English language arts and reading on the internet: A resource for K-12 teachers, second edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Gura, M., & Percy, B. (2005). *Recapturing technology for education: Keeping tomorrow in today's classrooms*. Lanham, Maryland: ScarecrowEducation.

- Handley, K., Price, M., & Millar, J. (2011). Beyond 'doing time': Investigating the concept of student engagement with feedback. *Oxford Review of Education*, 37(4). 543-560.
- Harmon, A. (2011). *Ordinary, Extraordinary*. Retrieved from:
http://www.poetrysoup.com/poem/ordinary,_extraordinary_328002
- Hartschuh, W. (1999). Technology's transformation: One state's efforts. In J. S. Blanchard (Ed.), *Educational computing in the schools: Technology, communication, and literacy* (pp. 13-17). New York: Haworth Press.
- Herro, D. (2015). Sustainable Innovations: Bringing Digital Media and Emerging Technologies to the Classroom. *Theory Into Practice*, 54(2), 117-127
- Hew, K., & Brush, T. (2007). Integrating technology into K-12 teaching and learning: Current knowledge gaps and recommendations for future research. *Educational Technology Research & Development*, 55(3), 223-252.
- Holfeld, B., & Grabe, M. (2012). Middle school students' perceptions of and responses to cyber bullying. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 46(4), 395-413.

- Hung, D., & Khine, M. S. (Eds.). (2006). *Engaged learning with emerging technologies*. Netherlands: Springer.
- Hung, H. T., & Yuen, S. C. Y. (2010). Educational use of social networking technology in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education, 15*(6), 703-714.
- Hutchison, A. C., & Colwell, J. (2014). The Potential of Digital Technologies to Support Literacy Instruction Relevant to the Common Core State Standards. *Journal Of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 58*(2), 147-156.
- Irvin, J. L., Meltzer, J., & Dukes, M. S. (2007). *Taking action on adolescent literacy: An implementation guide for school leaders*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Janks, H. (2010). *Literacy and power*. New York: Routledge.
- Johnson, D. (2005). Miss Rumphius as a role model for preservice teachers. In R. A. Karchmer, M. H. Mallette, J. Kara-Soteriou, & D. J. Leu Jr. (Eds.), *Innovative approaches to literacy education: Using the internet to support new literacies* (pp. 182-198). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Junco, R., & Cotton, S. R. (2012). No A 4 U: The relationship between multitasking and academic performance. *Computers & Education, 59*(2), 505-514.

- Junco, R., Elavsky, C., & Heiberger, G. (2013). Putting twitter to the test: Assessing outcomes for student collaboration, engagement and success. *British Journal Of Educational Technology*, 44(2), 273-287.
- Junco, R. R., Heiberger, G. G., & Loken, E. E. (2011). The effect of Twitter on college student engagement and grades. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 27(2), 119-132.
- Kajder, S. B. (2007). Unleashing potential with emerging technologies. In G. K. Beers, R. E. Probst and L. Rief (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy: Turning promise into practice* (pp. 213-230). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Karchmer, R.A., Mallette, M. H., Kara-Soteriou, J. & Leu Jr., D. J. (2005). *Innovative approaches to literacy education: Using the internet to support new literacies*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- King, K. P. (2002). *Keeping pace with technology: Educational technology that transforms*. Creskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- King, S., & Watson, A. (2010). Teaching excellence for all our students. *Theory Into Practice*, 49(3), 175-184.

- Kinzer, C. K. (2010). Considering Literacy and Policy in the Context of Digital Environments. *Language Arts*, 88(1), 51-61.
- Kist, W. (2010). *The socially networked classroom: Teaching in the new media age*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Corwin.
- Kuznekoff, J. H., and Titsworth, S. (2013). The impact of mobile phone usage on student learning. *Communication Education*, 62(3), 232-252.
- Labbo, L. D. (2005). Fundamental qualities of effective internet literacy instruction: An exploration of worthwhile classroom practices. In R. A. Karchmer, M. H. Mallette, J. Kara-Soteriou, & D. J. Leu Jr. (Eds.), *Innovative approaches to literacy education: Using the internet to support new literacies* (pp. 165-179). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Larwin, K. (2012). Student prepared testing aids: A low-tech method of encouraging student engagement. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 39(2), 105-111.
- Lee, K. T. (2006). Creating ICT-enriched learning-centred environments: Myths, gaps and challenges. In D. Hung, & M. S. Khine (Eds.), *Engaged learning with emerging technologies* (pp. 203-223). Netherlands: Springer.

LeNoue, M., Hall, T., & Eighmy, M. A. (2011). Adult Education and the Social Media Revolution. *Adult Learning, 22*(2), 4-12.

Lester, J., & Perini, M. (2010). Potential of social networking sites for distance education student engagement. *New Directions For Community Colleges, 2010*(150), 67-77.

Leu Jr., D. J., Mallette, M. H., Karchmer, R. A., & Kara-Soteriou, J. (2005). Contextualizing the new literacies of information and communication technologies in theory, research and practice. In R. A. Karchmer, M. H. Mallette, J. Kara-Soteriou, & D. J. Leu Jr. (Eds.), *Innovative approaches to literacy education: Using the internet to support new literacies* (pp. 1-10). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Levinson, M. & International Society for Technology in Education (2010). *From fear to Facebook: One school's journey*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.

Luke, A., and Woods, A. (2009). Critical literacies in schools: A primer. *Voices from the Middle, 17*(2), 9-18.

Manning, M. (2001). Characterization. *Teaching Pre K-8, 31*(8), 84-87.

Marcus, S., & National Research Council (U.S.), (2006). *ICT, Information and Communications Technology Fluency and High Schools: A Workshop Summary*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Marzano, R. J., & Heflebower, T. (2012). *Teaching and assessing 21st century skills*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.

McMillan, J. H. (2004). *Educational research: Fundamentals for the consumer, 4th edition*. Boston. Pearson.

Miller-Cochran, S., & Gierdowski, D. (2013). Making Peace with the Rising Costs of Writing Technologies: Flexible Classroom Design as a Sustainable Solution. *Computers & Composition, 30*(1), 50-60.

New Brunswick Department of Education (2013). *Writing Achievement Standards End of Grade 7* [PDF document]. Retrieved from:
<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/curric/English/WritingAchievementStandard-Grade7.pdf>

New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2013). *Framework for provincial assessments*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.gnb.ca/0000/results/pdf/AssessmentFrameworkDocument.pdf>

New Brunswick Department of Education Curriculum Development Branch (1998).

Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: High School. Accessed

from

<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/curric/English/EnglishLanguageArts-HighSchool.pdf>

Norris, C. A., & Soloway, E. (2003). How handhelds can have an impact on the classroom: The teacher perspective. In D. T. Gordon (Ed.), *Better teaching and learning in the digital classroom* (pp. 111-125). Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

Palys, T. (2003). *Research designs: Quantitative and qualitative perspectives*. Ontario, Canada; Thomson.

Park, S. (2013). The potential of web 2.0: Tools to promote reading engagement in a general education course. *TechTrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improve Learning*, 57(2), 46-53.

Peck, J. J. (2012). Keeping it social: Engaging students online and in class. *Asian Social Science*, 8(14), 81-90.

Peha, S. (1995-2010). *Assessing Writers, Assessing Writing*. Teaching that Makes Sense website, retrieved from <http://www.ttms.org/>.

- Pellegrino, D. A., & Mahaffey, M. P. (2012). Repowering reading and writing: Energizing content area curriculum with online social media. In K. K. Seo, D. A. Pellegrino, & C. Engelhard (Eds.), *Designing Problem-Driven Instruction with Online Social Media* (p. 41-63). Charlotte, Information Age Publishing, Inc.
- Plester, B., Wood, C., & Joshi, P. (2009). Exploring the relationship between children's knowledge of text message abbreviations and school literacy outcomes. *British Journal Of Developmental Psychology*, 27(1), 145-161.
- Polly, D. (2014). Elementary School Teachers' Use of Technology During Mathematics Teaching. *Computers In The Schools*, 31(4), 271-292.
- Ponce, H., Mayer, R., & Lopez, M. (2013). A computer-based spatial learning strategy approach that improves reading comprehension and writing. *Educational Technology Research & Development*, 61(5), 819-840.
- Prensky, M. (2005). Listen to the Natives. *Educational Leadership*, 63(4), 8-13.
- Prescott, J. (2014). Teaching styles and attitudes towards Facebook as an educational tool. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 15(2), 117-128.

- Ravenscroft, A. A., Warburton, S. S., Hatzipanagos, S. S., & Conole, G. G. (2012). Designing and evaluating social media for learning: shaping social networking into social learning? *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 28(3), 177-182.
- Revere, L., & Kovach, J. V. (2011). Online Technologies for engaged learning: A Meaningful Synthesis for Educators. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 12(2), 113-124.
- Romeo, G. (2006). Engage, empower, enable: Developing a shared vision for technology in education. In D. Hung, & M. S. Khine (Eds.), *Engaged learning with emerging technologies* (pp.149-175). Netherlands: Springer.
- Rovai, A. P. (2004). A constructivist approach to online college learning. *Internet & Higher Education*, 7(2), 79-93.
- Roy, L.. (1999). Multimedia authoring tools: Challenges to effective use? In J. S. Blanchard (Ed.), *Education computing in the schools: Technology, communication and literacy* (pp. 79-87). New York, Haworth Press.
- Rubin, D., & Kazanjian, C. (2011). "Just another brick in the wall": Standardization and the devaluing of education. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, 5(2), 94-108.

Saavedra, A. R., & Opfer, V. D. (2012). Learning 21st-century skills requires 21st-century teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *94*(2), 8-13.

Sadowski, M. (2003). Plagiarism.k12.us: What educators can do about it. In D. T. Gordon (Ed.), *Better teaching and learning in the digital classroom* (pp. 51-63). Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

Safar, A. H., & Alkhezzi, F. A. (2013). Beyond computer literacy: technology integration and curriculum transformation. *College Student Journal*, *47*(4), 614-626.

Schussler, D. (2009). Beyond content: How teachers manage classrooms to facilitate intellectual engagement for disengaged students. *Theory Into Practice*, *48*, 114-121.

Shaltry, C., Henriksen, D., Wu, M., & Dickson, W. W. (2013). Situated Learning with Online Portfolios, Classroom Websites and Facebook. *Techtrends: Linking Research & Practice To Improve Learning*, *57*(3), 20-25.

Shanahan, T. (2014). Educational Policy and Literacy Instruction. *Reading Teacher*, *68*(1), 7-12.

- Songer, N. B. (2006). Curriculum-focused professional development: Addressing the barriers to inquiry pedagogy in urban classrooms. In E. A. Ashburn & R. E. Floden (Eds.), *Meaningful learning using technology: What educators need to know and do* (pp. 70-86). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Sprague, M. E., & Parsons, J. (2012). The promise of creativity. *LEARNIng Landscapes*, 6(1), 389-407.
- Sundeen, T.H., & Sundeen, D. M. (2013). Instructional technology for rural schools: Access and acquisition. *Rural special education quarterly*, 32(2), 8-14.
- Taffe, S. W., & Gwinn, S. B. (2007). *Integrating literacy and technology: Effective practice for grades K-6*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Tsitouridou, M., & Vryzas, K. (2011). Digital literacies: Definitions, concepts and educational implications. In L. K. Stergioulas & H. Drenoyianni (Eds.), *Pursuing Digital Literacy in Compulsory Education* (p. 3-46). New York, Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Valmont, W. J. (2000). What do teachers do in technology-rich classrooms? In S. B. Wepner, W. J. Valmont, & R. Thurlow (Eds.), *Linking literacy and technology: A guide for K-8 classrooms* (pp. 160-202). Newark, DE, International Reading Association.

Voss, G. (2013). Gaming, Texting, Learning? Teaching Engineering Ethics Through Students' Lived Experiences With Technology. *Science & Engineering Ethics, 19*(3), 1375-1393.

Warschauer, M. (2006). *Laptops and literacy: Learning in the wireless classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Wepner, S. B., Valmont, W. J., & Thurlow, R. (Eds.). (2000). *Linking literacy and technology: A guide for K-8 classrooms*. Newark, DE, International Reading Association.

West, D. M. (2012). *Digital schools: How technology can transform education*. Washington, Brookings Institution Press.

White, J. W., & Hungerford-Kresser, H. (2014). Character journaling through social networks: Exemplifying tenets of the new literacy studies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 57*(8), 642-654.

Williams, B. T. (2004). Are we having fun yet? Students, social class, and the pleasures of literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 48*(4), 338-342.

Williams, B. T. (2008). "Tomorrow will not be like today": Literacy and identity in a world of multiliteracies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51(8), 682-686.

Wiske, M. S. (2006). Teaching for meaningful learning with new technologies. In E. A. Ashburn, & R. E. Floden (Eds.), *Meaningful learning using technology: What educators need to know and do* (pp. 26-44). New York: Teachers College Press.

Woodley, C., & Meredith, C. (2012). Supporting student transition through social media. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 26(2), 86-95.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Biographical

Surname: Fenelon

Given Names: Patrick Shannon

Degrees

Master of Education, *University of New Brunswick*, (July 2013 – Present)

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Elizabeth Sloat

Bachelor of Education, *University of New Brunswick*, (August 2008 – July 2009)

Bachelor of Arts, *St. Francis Xavier University*, (September 2004 – May 2008)

Publications

Canadian Teacher Magazine (January/February 2015 issue)

“Improv Exercises as a Back-up Lesson Plan” (p. 22)

Education Canada Magazine (November 2014 issue)

“Don’t Fear the Reaper, Juliet: How Blue Oyster Cult Solved the ‘Boy’s Problem’ in my Grade 9 English Class” (p. 46)

Conference Presentations

Atlantic Education Graduate Student Conference (July 2014)

Location: University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick

Presentation Title: Taking Facebook offline: Overcoming barriers to access to help students learn through social media

*Also served as conference co-chair

Graduate Symposium in the Department of Education 2014 (April 2014)

Location: Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec

Presentation Title: How Romeo “Friended” Juliet: Using Facebook to Help Students Better Understand Literary Concepts.