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High School Band Directors' Experiences Using Social Media in the Classroom

Heidi Welch
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Heidi JoAnn Welch

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

High School Band Directors' Experiences Using Social Media in the Classroom

by

Heidi JoAnn Welch

MA, New England College, 2004

BM, Keene State College, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education

Walden University

May 2019

Abstract

While social media is becoming an innovative tool in education for teacher and student use, little is known about how social media is being used in the high school band room to communicate with students, increase student-connectedness, or improve classroom community. Using Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, Siemens's theory of connectivism, and Wenger's community of practice theory as a framework, this study explored the phenomenon of social media as used in the high school band room for communication, student-connectedness, and classroom community. Participants included 10 high school band directors located throughout the United States who shared their experiences through 1-on-1 semistructured interviews and focus group interviews. Data analysis included coding and categorizing responses from interviews and focus groups to identify themes. Results indicated social media use contributed to improved communication, increased student-connectedness, and improved classroom community in the high school band classroom, though challenges of access, cyber-bulling, and a lack of training in social media use for the classroom were also revealed as concerns by participants. These findings could impact social change by providing evidence to support appropriate use of social media in high school band programs and change teacher mindset to embrace the power of social media for communication, for student connectedness, and to improve classroom community as well as in teacher preparation programs to encourage incorporating social media as a plausible teaching tool.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. To my husband Randy, who fed me literally and figuratively, who was honest when I needed honesty and nurturing when I needed support. For the fist-bumps in moments of getting over mountains to the supportive conversations when my mental and physical energy were gone, I could not have done this without him. To Brianna, Katie, and Noah for knowing when I was at the desk to not disturb me, for helping out with the little things around the house, and just for being the humor and light I needed some days to keep going. To every colleague and friend who expressed pride and gave praise with every hurdle I crossed, I thank you. To the ST0Y class of 2013, without you, there is literally NO WAY that I would have begun this journey. You are all forever my family.

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Secondly, Dr. Asoka Jayasena and Dr. Paula Dawidowicz who served as members of my committee. They both made me second-guess myself as a writer but also helped me learn by improving with each submission; they made me cry, but then get back up and work through the edits because they knew that I could. It was a combination of tough-love and support that made this possible to finish, and though they were tough, they always were in my corner, and I am so thankful for that. I can truly say with love that they are hard-core, and exactly what an academic writer needs to be successful.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Social media use is growing daily with monthly updates of usage provided by the major social media platforms. There were over 2 billion daily active users on Facebook as of December 31, 2017 (Facebook Statistics, 2018). There were 330 million monthly active users on Twitter as of January 2018 (Aslam, 2018). Though Facebook is still the dominant social media form to connect people with 68% of adults logging on (Smith & Anderson, 2018), both Facebook and Twitter can be used to connect students with teachers and peers outside of the traditional education environment. These social media platforms can serve as an innovative way to communicate with students, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community beyond the school day (Kocdar, Karadeniz, & Goksel, 2018; Platon, Caranica, & Catana, 2018).

Facebook is a social media platform that creates connections between people through group interaction via individual and group pages through the sharing of personal and professional information (Kocdar et al., 2018). Twitter serves as a similar platform to communicate and share materials to individuals within a group by following an account or attaching a hashtag to a posting that all members can subscribe to for updates, information, and learning materials (Homan, 2014; Neier & Zayer, 2015).

Social media is a tool that supports the creation of connections between teachers and students (Kocdar et al., 2018), as does a strong school band program that is built on student-to-student and teacher-to-student connections and a sense of community within the band classroom (Juchniewicz, Kelly, & Acklin, 2014; Lalama, 2016). Many band programs are designed to support student connectedness and classroom community, and

incorporate activities that encourage bonding and collaboration (Lalama, 2016; Rawlings & Stoddard, 2017). For example, schools with strong marching band programs begin practice weeks before the school year begins not only to rehearse and learn routines but to bring students together to connect with and learn from each other (Ma & Hall, 2018).

Some schools now use Facebook group pages and Twitter feeds to communicate information to students and provide ways to improve connections with and between students outside of the school day (Asterhan & Rosenberg, 2015). Beyond using social media for communication purposes or to convey information, it is unclear if or how high school band directors are using social media to create connections with and for students and improve classroom community.

There is lack of evidence supporting the usefulness of social media in increasing student connectedness and improving classroom community. More specifically, there is a gap in the research on how high school music teachers use social media for communication, to increase student connectedness, and to improve classroom community (Asterhan & Rosenberg, 2015; Garcia, Elbeltagi, Dungay, & Hardaker, 2015; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Homan, 2014; Kaur, Shri, & Mital, 2015). Findings could impact social change by providing evidence to support the use of social media in high school band programs and change teacher mindset to embrace the power of social media for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community. Findings could also lead to social change in teacher preparation programs to encourage incorporating social media as a plausible teaching tool.

The sections of this chapter include a background of the study, problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions, a theoretical framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and the significance of the study to the profession of band education.

Background of the Study

Social media is a prevalent and relevant form of communication that is beginning to permeate education as a tool for encouraging communication, student connectedness, and classroom community outside of the traditional classroom (Gooding, Yinger, & Gregory, 2016; Mbodila, Ndebele, & Muhandji, 2014; Mostafa, 2015; Selwyn & Stirling, 2016).

Though several studies have been conducted at the collegiate level regarding social media use for communication, student engagement, and academic achievement, there is a gap in research focused on band director experiences using social media to increase student connectedness and improve classroom community at the high school level (Evans, 2014; Gooding et al., 2016; Mostafa, 2015). A study determining if and how social media is being used in the high school band classroom and if band directors using social media have made a recognizable impact of its use for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community will shed more light on this aspect.

This study could help to fill the gap in the literature pertaining to the lived experiences of high school band directors who use social media in the classroom as an innovative tool for classroom communication, student connectedness, and classroom community. Findings could lead to social change in teacher preparation programs that

incorporate social media as a teaching tool. Findings from this study could also inform band directors, music teachers, other teachers, administrators, and school districts of the benefits and challenges in implementing social media in the classroom.

Problem Statement

Social media is a primary and relevant form of communication for students and teachers today (Selwyn & Stirling, 2016). Though current researchers have examined the use of social media in postsecondary settings for increasing student connectedness and improving classroom community (Barczyk & Duncan, 2017; Zimmerman & Nimon, 2017), there is a gap in the research particular to high school band directors' use of social media in the classroom to provide outlets for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of high school band directors using social media to communicate with students, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community. By examining the lived experiences of band directors using social media in the classroom, this study contributes to the knowledge needed to address the existing gap regarding social media and if it has a place in high school band classrooms. This study could help to fill the gap in the literature pertaining to the lived experiences of high school band directors who use social media in the classroom as an innovative tool for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community. Findings could lead to social change in teacher preparation programs that incorporate social media as a teaching tool. Findings from this study could

also inform band directors, music teachers, other teachers, administrators, and school districts of the benefits and challenges in implementing social media in the classroom.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the lived experiences of high school band directors who use social media in the classroom for communication, to increase student connectedness, and to improve classroom community. The following research questions served as guiding questions for this phenomenological study. There was one central research question followed by two subquestions.

Central research question: What are the experiences of high school band directors with the use of social media in their classroom?

Subquestion A (SQA): How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media in the classroom for communication?

Subquestion B (SQB): How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media in the classroom for student connectedness?

Subquestion C (SQC): How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media to improve classroom community?

Conceptual Framework

The phenomenon explored in this study was the use of social media in the high school band classroom for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community. Three theories helped create the lens to provide the framework for this study, including Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, Siemens's (2004) connectivism theory, and Wenger's (1998) communities of practice theory.

Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism theory suggests that knowledge is coconstructed in social environments through social interaction and both individual and group learning occur socially. Schrader (2015) proposed that

Constructivism...blends with the affordances that social media provides to connect learners in today's and tomorrow's technological world...these media create opportunities for community (interaction and creation) and possibilities for learning that are broader than the pioneers of constructivist theories could have imagined. (p. 36)

Social media provides a virtual platform for people to connect with each other and make meaning of the real world while breaking down traditional classroom boundaries and expanding communities of learners; as such, this theory provided a supportive lens for this study.

Siemens's (2004) theory of connectivism asserts that learners should be involved in digital networks to form connections to support collaboration, problem solving, and learning. This theory follows a six-step path from awareness and receptivity (where individuals acquire basic skills) to the last level of praxis, where individuals are "actively involved in recreating their own learning network" (Siemens, 2006, p. 46). According to Siemens (2006), the levels in between include connection forming, contribution and involvement, pattern recognition, and meaning making in an evolving digital landscape. Additionally, Siemens (2006) maintained,

Learners in a physical space should strive to enrich their own network with online tools and resources. Network creation enables learners to continue to stay current

in the face of rapidly developing knowledge. The pipe is more important than the content within the pipe (simply because content changes rapidly). (p. 32)

Learning takes place not just with the individual but within an ever-changing network. The connectivism theory is useful in examining education in a digital age and provided support for the use of social media in education as a means for communication, increasing student connectedness, and improving classroom community.

The third connective theory was Wenger's (1998) community of practice (COP) theory, which emphasizes learning as belonging, doing, experience, and becoming. In a COP, individuals achieve knowledge through common activities in joined relationships. Additionally, COPs provide a sense of community to individuals through socially active membership (Nistor et al., 2014). Further, Farnsworth, Kleanthous, and Wenger-Trayner (2016) explained COP not as a single community, but a "landscape of interrelated practices" (p. 143). High school band class is a forced social grouping of students all working together towards a common goal of creating music. In high school band, emphasis on social learning, collaboration, problem solving, communicating, and connecting with others is an imperative part of the process of creating strong musical experiences for students. The COP theory framed this study as high school bands are essentially COPs as the students share a common passion for making music regularly and improve based on their collaborative work.

The theories of Vygotsky (1978), Siemens (2004), and Wenger (1998) provided a framework for analyzing the benefits of increasing student connectedness and improving community through social groups. Social media provides a digital community for

students to collaborate, communicate, and connect with each other outside of the band classroom. Figure 1 is a graphic that shows how the three theories fit together to provide a framework for this study.

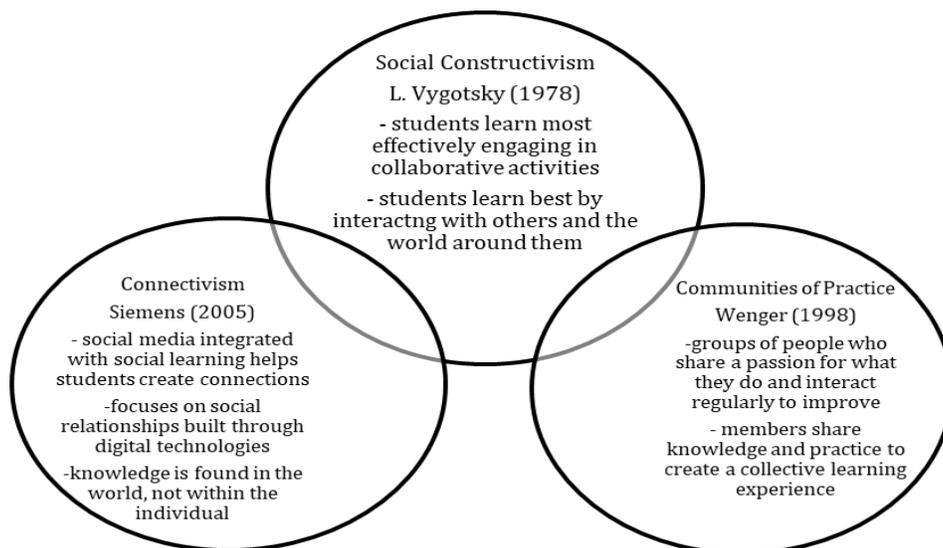


Figure 1. Conceptual framework relationships.

The conceptual framework also provided a foundation for teacher interviews that were focused on the research questions about their experiences regarding social media in the high school band classroom to communicate, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community. A complete analysis of the work of each of these theorists is found in Chapter 2 of this study.

Nature of the Study

I selected a qualitative phenomenological research tradition to explore the lived experiences of high school band directors' using social media to communicate with students, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community. The phenomenological tradition focuses on capturing the essence of a phenomenon from

those who have experienced the phenomenon (Patton, 2015). Additionally, phenomenological researchers have a personal interest in what they seek to understand and are intimately connected with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

This research design was selected because the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of high school band directors and their use of social media in the band classroom. The phenomenon of interest was social media in the context of the high school band classroom for communication with students, student connectedness, and improving classroom community. To better understand the phenomenon of social media as it applies to the high school band classroom, I interviewed 10 high school band directors purposively selected from an online band directors group Facebook page to gain understanding of their experiences using social media for communication, to increase student connectedness, and to improve classroom community. I conducted one-on-one semistructured Web-based call or telephone interviews with each participant and conducted a focus group with all participants via Web-based call depending on participant availability. I analyzed the data using hand-coding techniques in Word as well as the qualitative research software application NVivo to discover emergent themes.

Definitions

The following definitions are used as a guide in this study:

1:1 device: A practice employed by schools that either assigns each student a tablet, iPad, or other electronic device to be used over several years or the use of a classroom specific cart of devices used by students in the classroom (Fredrick, 2015).

Communities of practice (COP): A theory of learning that focuses on learning as a process of active social participation within a shared social community where identity is constructed in relation to the community (Wenger, 1998).

Connectivism: A theory of learning that focuses on the social and cultural context involving knowledge created through forming networks through digital technologies (Siemens, 2004).

Situated learning: Learning that takes place in the same authentic context as it is applied (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Social learning: A cognitive process that happens in a social context that can exist purely through observation or direct instruction (Vygotsky, 1978).

Social media: “Web-based services that allow individuals, communities, and organizations to collaborate, connect, interact, and build community by enabling them to create, cocreate, modify, share, and engage with user-generated content that is easily accessible” (McCay-Peet & Quan-Haase, 2016, p. 7).

Student connectedness: “The feeling of belonging and acceptance and the creation of bonding relationships” (Rovai, 2002, p. 201).

Web 2.0 technologies: Online technologies that allow for user interaction including blogs, wikis and social networking, and social media. For the purposes of this study, social media are referred to as Web 2.0 technologies (O’Bannon & Britt, 2012).

Assumptions

I assumed that all participants provided an accurate reflection of the experience with the phenomenon. Secondly, I assumed that all reflections were truthful and not

manipulated. Thirdly, I assumed that participants actively participated and conversed in the interviews and in the focus group.

Scope and Delimitations

In this qualitative study, I explored the experiences of 10 high school band directors selected from an online Facebook group, though the group boasts over 24,000 invite-only members. Band directors from all over the world from every level of instrumental study from elementary school to professional level interact on the Facebook page. The study was restricted to the online Facebook group because of discussions taking place within the group page related to social media use in high school band programs.

One delimitation of the study was the breadth of the term social media. Social media continues to be an evolving platform for communication and connection between students and teachers. I did not consider YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, or Google Classroom as social media tools in this study though they have been expressed as such in some definitions of the term. Assuring that this study's findings are transferable to other band directors and the field of music education is an important measure of its effectiveness (see Yin, 2018).

Limitations

There are a few limitations to this study. The first was in the number of interviews, which was limited to 10 high school band directors purposively selected from an online Facebook page based on their current use of social media to communicate, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community. Though a small

participant pool is acceptable for a qualitative study, the band directors ranged in age and levels of experience in the classroom. A second limitation was time. Band directors are among the busiest members of the music education profession due to commitments with marching band, concert band, lessons, elective classes, and performance requirements. Participants had to be willing to participate in interviews that took long periods of time in relation to their already busy schedules; therefore, this was considered a limitation. A third limitation relates to the level of transferability and whether the results from the sample can be generalized to the larger population of high school band directors, as it is possible that the participant sample was not indicative of the entire population of high school band directors in the United States.

Significance

The significance of this study is in relation to communication with students, improving student connectedness, and improving classroom community in the high school band room with the use of the innovative technology of social media. Band directors who currently use social media in the high school band classroom for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community could inform other high school band directors as well as teachers in other disciplines of the benefits and challenges of its use. Results of this study could provide support for integrating social media in high school band classrooms to support stronger communication, better classroom connectedness, and improved classroom community, providing outlets for students to identify as a connected member of the group.

This study could contribute to the growing literature relating to social media in education as social media continues to adapt to reflect the needs of millennial students. Furthermore, high school band is a discipline that is traditionally successful in connecting students and improving classroom community to achieve musical success as a group. Exploring the experiences of high school band directors' use of social media to communicate, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community could identify opportunities for high school band directors to join current social media technologies with traditional band classroom methods. Band directors who choose to implement social media in the classroom could create more ways to bring students together so that they feel connected to the high school band and the band director. Additionally, this study could be useful in identifying challenges that band directors face with social media integration in the classroom as well as benefits of social media integration, which could provide information to hesitant band directors of the positive outcomes of its use.

This study could help to fill the gap in the literature pertaining to the lived experiences of high school band directors who use social media in the classroom as an innovative tool for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community. Findings could lead to social change in teacher preparation programs that incorporate social media as a teaching tool. Findings from this study could also inform band directors, music teachers, other teachers, administrators, and school districts of the benefits and challenges in implementing social media in the classroom.

Summary

Social media is a world where millennial students exist daily. Teachers also live in this world in both personal and professional capacities to varying degrees. The increase in use of social media for professional and educational purposes as well as the increase in available social media platforms for educational use demands a closer examination of how or if social media is impacting student connectedness and classroom community in high school band classrooms. The high school band classroom was the point of interest as it is an area that inherently depends on frequent communication, student connectedness, and strong classroom community for success in practice and performance.

Much of the current research addresses social media use at the collegiate level for communication, student engagement in learning activities, and academic enrichment; however, a gap in current literature was identified with respect to social media use by high school band directors. There is very little research about band director experiences using social media for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community.

The research questions stemmed from the background, problem statement, and purpose of the study. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, Siemens's (2004) connectivism theory, and Wenger's (1998) COP theory were analyzed as the theoretical framework. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature related to the current state of social media use in education, opportunities and challenges of social media use in

education, and the use of social media to communicate, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Social media is a primary and relevant form of communication for students and teachers today (Selwyn & Stirling, 2016). Though current researchers have examined the use of social media in postsecondary settings for student connectedness and improving classroom community (Barczyk & Duncan, 2017; Zimmerman & Nimon, 2017), there is a gap in the research particular to high school band directors' use of social media in the classroom as an innovative tool to provide outlets for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community. Findings could lead to social change in teacher preparation programs that incorporate social media as a teaching tool.

The purpose of this study was to explore band directors' experiences using social media as an innovative way to communicate with students, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community. Social media is a tool that can provide teachers with a platform to communicate with students frequently; create exciting, energetic, and positive classroom experiences; and increase teacher-student and student-student connections, which impacts the classroom community (Asterhan & Rosenberg, 2015; Barczyk & Duncan, 2017; Dyson, Vickers, Turtle, Cowan, & Tassone, 2015; Evans, 2014; Gooding et al., 2016; Kaya & Bicen, 2016; Krutka, Nowell, & Whitlock, 2017; Mourlam, 2014; Platon et al., 2018).

Positive and negative factors influence teachers' use of social media in high schools and range from academic and social benefits to students to concerns regarding student safety and school personnel concerns regarding the purpose and value of social media in education (O'Bannon & Thomas, 2014). Additionally, the blurring of

boundaries that occur as a result of teacher-student contact beyond the traditional classroom is concerning to teachers (Asterhan & Rosenberg, 2015). The problem is that there has been little research of high school band directors' experiences using social media to communicate with students, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community.

In this chapter, I review findings of the literature based on the phenomenon of social media use in both high school and colleges in several ways: for communication, for student connectivity, for engaging students academically, and for improving classroom community.

Organization of the Chapter

Chapter 2 is organized into two sections. The first section includes the theoretical framework based on Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, Siemens's (2004) theory of connectivism, and Wenger's (1998) theory of COP. The second section includes a review of current research organized into several subheadings, including the current state of social media use in education, opportunities and challenges of social media use in the classroom, and the relationship between social media and communication, student connectedness, and classroom community. The current literature selected as relevant for this study includes the current state of social media use in education; definitions of social media pertaining to education; social media use and relevance to learning; opportunities and challenges of social media use in the classroom; and classroom use of social media for communication, student connectedness, and

improving classroom community. I conclude the chapter with a summary of important themes from the literature and focus on the gap that led to the need for this study.

Literature Search Strategy

The chapter is an organized review of current literature, including books, peer-reviewed journals, professional magazines, and websites in both paper and digital formats. Digital databases accessed in this research effort included the National Association for Music Education digital archives, the *Journal for Research in Music Education* digital archives, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and Walden Library databases ERIC and SAGE. Online search terms and keywords included *social media, music education, Twitter, Facebook, student engagement, student connectedness, band directors, high school band, community building, communities of practice, social learning, and 21st century skills*.

The Walden Library served as the primary source for initial searches. Reference pages of selected documents were examined for additional resources and authors that fit the research questions. Additionally, the National Association for Music Education and *Journal for Research in Music Education* digital archives provided downloadable and printable copies. Locating articles related to social media use in high school band classrooms was a challenge. Social media use at the postsecondary level has led to several topics of research; however, very little research was found that addressed social media in relation to high school band classrooms or high school classrooms in general.

Conceptual Framework

Three theories comprised the framework for this study: Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, Siemens's (2004) connectivism theory, and Wenger's (1998) COP theory. Although Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and Bruner's (1996) theory of social learning were considered, the combination of Vygotsky, Siemens, and Wenger provided strong connections to the use of social media in educational institutions for communication, student connectedness, and improving classroom community.

Vygotsky's Theory of Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is the theory that students learn most effectively by engaging in collaborative activities and interacting with others and the world around them to construct knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) argued that drive for cognitive and intellectual development stems from social interaction from people, including teachers, parents, and peers in the child's social environment. Essentially, cognitive development is determined as much by interactions as learning processes and materials (Vygotsky, 1978). Social media, though not a factor in Vygotsky's theory, could be considered as a social-cultural method of engagement, fostering cognitive development through interaction. Additionally, social media should be considered as part of the social constructivist theory as it supports student learning through social activity (McLoughlin & Lee, 2010).

Social media use in the classroom requires participation and contribution by members of the group, and those contributions lead to peer interaction and contributions to involvement (Albert, 2015). Social media requires frequent social discourse for

successful connection and collaboration, which aligns with this theory. Collaboration in an online setting aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) assertion that social construction of knowledge is created through discourse and dialogue (Churcher, Downs, & Tewksbury, 2014). Social media allows students to connect with and respond to each other in a virtual environment, thereby creating a social constructivist environment.

Vygotsky considered learning to be a natural, nonlinear phenomenon, which is why social media could be considered as a modern approach to Vygotsky's (1978) original theory because social media connects students outside of the traditional classroom setting. Churcher et al. (2014) add to this theory that social media holds relevance that connects to social learning as a pedagogical tool, but they argued that it is not considered a replacement for guided instruction and connection. High school music classrooms are a social learning environment; therefore, social constructivism was a fitting conceptual lens for this study. Learning in a social constructivist environment depends on engagement and participation, and high school band is a participatory culture based on the collective musical experiences of students.

Siemens's Theory of Connectivism

Siemens's (2004) theory is based on the tenets of behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism from emerging technologies' influence on learning but modernized for the digital age. Social media technologies are integrated with social learning to create connections between students instead of for students (Chen & Bryer, 2012). Rather than ascribing to the belief that learning occurs inside a person, Siemens asserted that educational constructs need to be aligned with a new understanding of the movement and

behavior of knowledge, which is a continual process of networking outside of the traditional classroom.

Connectivism connects to Vygotsky's theory with a focus on social relationships through digital technologies. Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory identified learning as the active discovery and construction of knowledge through cooperative learning, problem solving, shared meaning, and authentic social relationships. Siemens (2006) viewed communities as "connection-forming" spaces (p. 112). Siemens suggested that an individual should not go to a community, but the community should come to the individual because the connections formed between individuals provide value. Community-based learning systems create multifaceted views of a discipline that allow for diversity of social dialogue among participants (Siemens, 2006).

Unlike constructivism where knowledge is constructed through the process of an individual's learning through group interaction, connectivism asserts the existence of knowledge in the world rather than with the individual. Technologies such as social media facilitate connections between individuals to enhance the learning experience (Evans, 2014). It should be noted that connectivism should not be confused with constructionism in that Siemens's (2004) theory is an advancement of Vygotsky's theory for 21st century learning and considers new technologies that change the landscape of traditional learning methods and experiences. The theory of social constructivism or, more accurately, the branch of connectivism emphasizes the utilization of groups to construct individuals' knowledge that is a strong partner for social media (Churcher et al., 2014).

The eight principles of connectivism include the following:

- Learning and knowledge rests in the diversity of opinions,
- Learning is a process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources,
- Learning may reside in nonhuman appliances,
- Capacity to know more is more critical than what is currently known,
- Nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning,
- Ability to see connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill,
- Currency (accurate, up-to-date knowledge) is the intent of all connectivist learning activities, and
- Decision-making is itself a learning process. Choosing what to learn and the meaning of incoming information is seen through the lens of a shifting reality. While there is a right answer now, it may be wrong tomorrow due to alterations in the information climate affecting the decision (Siemens, 2006).

Connectivism follows a 6-stage path moving from basic to more complex ways for individuals to encounter and explore knowledge in a networked manner (Siemens, 2006), as shown in Figure 2.

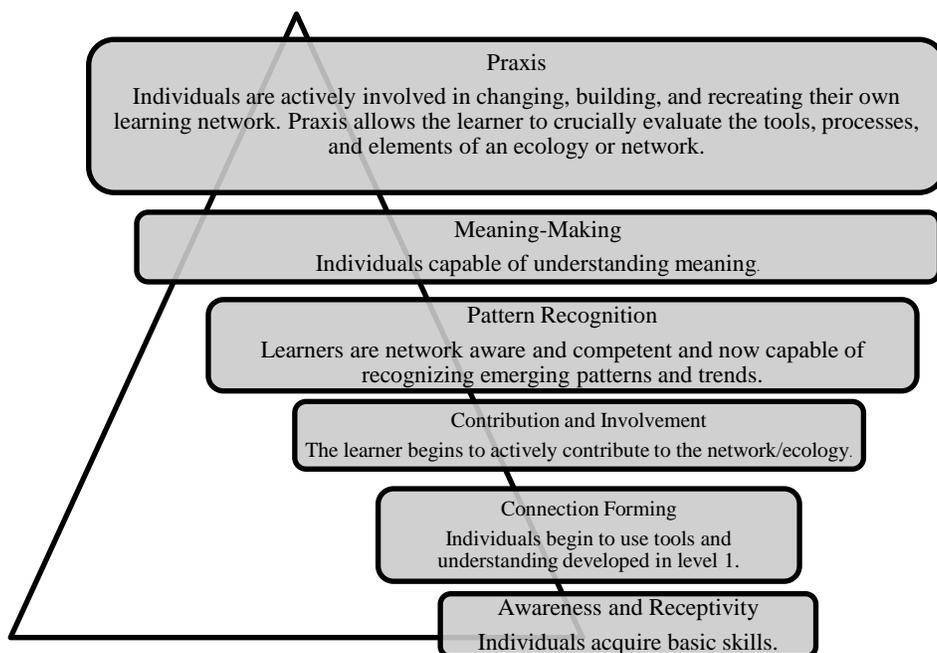


Figure 2. Six stages of connectivism. Adapted from “Knowing Knowledge,” by G. Siemens. 2006, pp. 45-46. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

Connectivism moves from engagement and participation in a constructivist framework within a network where meaning is created by individual learners (Vygotsky, 1978) to a model supporting a diverse network of learners in a technologically enhanced social setting as shown in Table 1. In short, connectivism allows teachers and to encourage their students to explore content instead of only creating content in a learning ecology (Siemens, 2006). Tinmaz (2012) asserted social networking sites can provide connections in the form of friendships which provide a context for implementing connectivism as a guiding theory, however, more research is needed to provide understanding of educational implementation.

Table 1

Constructivism and Connectivism from Traditional to the Digital Age

Constructivism	Connectivism	Links to study
Learning is a process of constructing subjective reality based Vygotsky	Learning is a process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources Siemens (basis including Vygotsky)	Social media can provide an extended learning opportunity as students connect and communicate outside of the classroom
Learning is social and created by each learner in a personal way Engagement and participation in a social and cultural environment	Learning is shared and distributed within a social and technologically enhanced network Diverse network of learners in and out of the classroom environment	Social media can provide a platform for students to connect with and learn from each other in the high school band room community. High school band is a participatory culture based on collective musical experiences of students

Note. Adapted from “Connectivism: A Learning Theory for the Digital Age,” by G. Siemens, 2004. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/1.0/>

Wenger’s Theory of Community of Practice

Interaction of students through social media provides a virtual community to share information, discussion, and build connections where they spend a great deal of their time outside of the classroom (Churcher et al., 2014). Communities of practice (COP) are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better (Wenger, 1998). COP have also been described as communicative forums or groups of practitioners who work collaboratively to learn, interact, share common goals and resources, and achieve goals. (Hung & Der-Thanq, 2001; Lewis & Rush, 2013). High school band students spend a great deal of time collaborating and connecting in rehearsal, on the marching band field, on trips, and in performance settings, and as such can be considered a COP.

COP include three characteristics: the *domain*, the *community*, and the *practice*.

The development of these three characteristics together cultivate a community (Wenger, 1998). The *domain* is defined by a shared area of interest and a commitment that distinguishes members from other people. High school band classes are domains that include students of various backgrounds with a shared interest in musical activities which foster purposeful engagement. Social media provides more than connections between acquaintances, but a common ground for idea, knowledge, and experience sharing to cultivate a sense of belonging (Albert, 2015).

The *community* is the relationships built from the engagement of members in joint activities and discussions; which enable the members to help each other, share information and learn from each other (Albert, 2015). Band members collectively create knowledge through rehearsal and performance of musical works as well as through collaboration and communication. Music learning involves mutual engagement as it involves the competence of individuals in the ensemble as much as our own competence to contribute meaningfully to the knowledge of others (Wenger, 1998).

The *practice* comes from the members serving as practitioners developing sharing practice through stories, experiences, resources, tools, and addressing problems (Wenger, 1998). The combined knowledge and experience of students in music ensembles is continuously cultivated through weeks, months, and in some cases, years. High school band classes usually include four grade levels of students and a myriad of musical experiences and ability levels. Social media platforms allow students to learn from each

other out of the music classroom as they share knowledge and experience, ask questions, and interact which leads to the distribution of knowledge (Albert, 2015).

Wenger asserted four premises in examining learning and the nature of learning. We are social beings, knowledge is a matter of competence with respect to valued enterprises, is a matter of participating in the pursuit of actively engaging in the world and experiencing the world in a meaningful way (Wenger, 1998). Additionally, according to Wenger (1998)'s theory, a sustained COP such as a musical ensemble connects participants in deeper ways creating tight interpersonal relationships in a nonhomogeneous setting as shown in Figure 3.

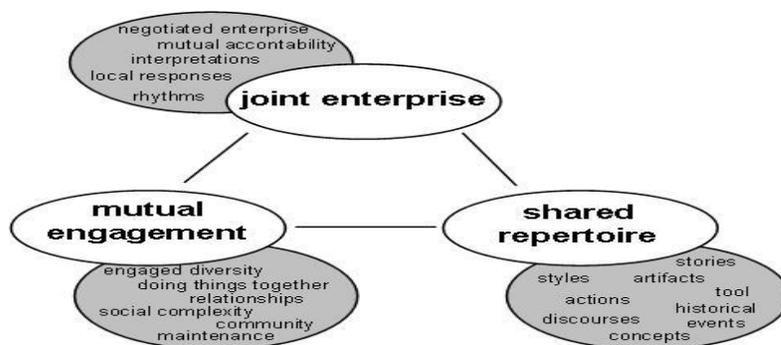


Figure 3. Dimensions of practice as the property of a community. (Wenger, 1998, p. 73).

Engagement in a learning community may foster student learning, student perceptions of connectedness, and overall sense of community as well as identity, meaning, and practice (Hatch, Hill, & Roegman, 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rawlings & Stoddard, 2017; Wenger, 1998). Students have opportunities to take on the roles and identities that are characteristic of that community. In the band ensemble, that role may be in the form of section leaders, ensemble managers, or music librarians. Lave and Wenger (1991) further explain learning in the context of a COP as a “social phenomenon

in the experienced world through participation in ongoing social practice” (p. 64). The component of community supports that learning is a result of “learning as belonging” (Wenger, 1998, p.74).

Students engaged in collaborative conversations through social media belong to a like-minded community in the band classroom as ideas are shared for the benefit of the group. Social media and COP foster a learning community for knowledge creation and sharing over a variety of social media platforms. Learning through interaction and dialogue with peers is an essential part of understanding and the generation of knowledge, and using social media connects at a level that is part of millennial students way of life thereby creating virtual communities of practice (Churcher et al., 2014; Lewis & Rush, 2013).

Hoadley (2012) discussed the educational implications of communities of practice. The connections to performance ensembles are inherent in each of the three components discussed. Performance ensembles are communities of practice demonstrated in three ways: First, members must have access to experts (i.e., the director or private instructors); and members must perceive themselves to be members or aspire to be members of the community are experts in their practice (i.e., student musicians in an ensemble must practice diligently to become experts on their instrument/voice to contribute to the whole of the ensemble). Secondly, a culture of a COP must already exist and have a culture and identity established. A high school band culture, for example, is often based on tradition and history. Third, the community must offer the ability for

peripheral participation. In a music ensemble, it is imperative that all students participate at a high level for the ensemble to be successful.

The combination of constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and connectivism (Siemens, 2006) combine with COP theory (Wenger, 1998) to enhance how learning occurs traditionally with traditional methods and moves towards a technologically enhanced model for digital learners of today as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Comparison of Vygotsky, Siemens, and Wenger

Theorist	How learning occurs	Methods
The social constructivist paradigm (Lev Vygotsky)	Active discovery and construction of knowledge. Authentic social-cultural relationships Cooperative learning Problem solving Shared meaning Zone of proximal development Past experiences and group collaboration Engagement and participation Culture affects development	Discovery Collaborative group work Scaffolding Self-guided learning based on personal experience Peer grading/review Teacher is a conduit Electronic forms of access
Theory of connectivism (George Siemens)	Network Social Technologically enhanced Connections Exploration Connection Creation Evaluation	Self-directed quest for content Sharing of content/sources Spontaneous learning groups Creates knowledge collaboratively
Communities of practice (Etienne Wenger)	Community learning Move from novice to expert Access to experts Learning by doing Relevance through authentic activities Contextualized learning	Social interaction Collaboration Modes of belonging

Note. Data for theories comparison compiled from Vygotsky (1978), Siemens (2004), and Wenger (1998).

Review of Literature

The Current State of Social Media Use in Education

Social media is a predominant form of communication for adults and students that has yet to find its way into education as a staple tool for communication, increasing student connectedness, and improving classroom community (Gooding et al., 2016; Mbodila et al., 2014; Mostafa, 2015.). Though several studies have been conducted at the collegiate level, few have focused on teacher experiences using social media to communicate, increase student connectedness, or improve classroom community in high school band classrooms (Evans, 2014; Gooding et al., 2016; Mostafa, 2015).

Social media use in classrooms is often impeded by school systems and how teachers perceive it as a tool for classroom use. Factors affecting social media use in the classroom range from negative perceptions of the academic usefulness of social media (Lu, Newman, & Miller, 2014) as well as the changing trends of social media from what is valued and used by students and what is obsolete.

Defining social media. The literature suggests broad and varied definitions of social media (Crawford, 2013; Friedman & Friedman, 2013; Krutka et al., 2017; Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2017), while a more current definition requires social media platforms incorporate three characteristics. First, social media platforms provide the capability to support user-generated content; secondly, social media provides a means for users to connect with one another; and third, social media supports various means for members of a community to engage with one another in the form of collaboration, community building, participation, and sharing (Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2017).

Dede (2016) categorized social media into three groups representing the progression of use by participants including sharing, thinking, and cocreating while Friedman and Friedman (2013) summarize the “5 C’s of social media” as “communication, collaboration, community, creativity, and convergence” (p. 4). Bryer and Zavattaro (2011) defined social media as “technologies that facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration, and enable deliberation across stakeholders using blogs, wikis, media (audio, photo, video, text) sharing tools, networking platforms (including Facebook), and virtual worlds” (p. 88). Platforms identified as social media are also debatable.

Analysis of definitions from academic literature by McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase (2016) provided three main themes in defining social media including what social media enables, how it enables activities, and the content contained in social media. Based on the definitions analyzed as shown in Table 3, they defined social media as “web-based services that allow individuals, communities, and organizations to collaborate, connect, interact, and build community by enabling them to create, cocreate, modify, share, and engage with user-generated content that is easily accessible” (p. 7).

Table 3

Social Media Definitions from Research Literature

Definitions of social media	Themes		
	What social media enables	How social media does it	Content of social media
Social media ‘provides a mechanism for the audience to connect, communicate, and interact with each other and their mutual friends through instant messaging or social networking sites’ (Correa, Hinsley, and de Zuniga, 2010: 247-248)	Mechanism for connecting, communicating, and interacting with others	Instant messaging sites; social networking sites	
‘Social Media is a form of computer-mediated communication (McIntyre, 2014: 6)	Communication	Computer-mediated	
‘Social media, derived from the social software movement, are a collection of Internet websites, services, and practices that support collaboration, community building, participation, and sharing’ (Otieno and Matoke, 2014: 962)	Support collaboration, community building, participation, and sharing	Internet websites, services, and practices	
‘‘Social Media’’ can be generally understood as Internet-based applications that carry consumer-generated content which encompasses ‘‘media impressions created by consumers, typically informed by relevant experience, and archived or shared online for easy access by other impressionable consumers’’ (Blackshaw, 2006)’ (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010: 180)	Carry content	Internet-based applications that carry content, archived or shared online for easy access by other consumers	Consumer-generated content; media impressions created by consumers informed by relevant experience

Note. From *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (p. 13), by L. McCay-Peet and A. Quan-Haase, 2016, Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications. Copyright 2016 by SAGE Publications. Adapted with permission.

Given the variety of definitions for social media in education, for the purposes of this study, I will use McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase’s (2016) definition in this study. This definition includes varied approaches to social media use in classrooms which could be

used to communicate, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community.

Social media and relevance to learning. Social media is a relevant part of academic life as teachers connect content and learning with student use of social media platforms. It is important to examine the benefits and challenges to learning as well as communication, student connectedness, and classroom community when using social media in schools. Research in educational uses of social media in other countries have contributed to the literature more recently including studies in Indonesia (Palekahelu, Hunt, Thrupp, & Relmasira, 2016), Romania (Platon et al., 2018), Sweden (Persson & Thunman, 2017), Spain (González-Ramírez, Gascó, & Taverner, 2015), and the United Kingdom (Garcia et al., 2015). Each of these study findings support the use of social media for learning, especially in terms of communication and peer support.

An examination of studies in Europe and the United States using a social constructivist lens determined a difference in the use of social media in the classroom in a global context as European teachers focused on embedding social media in the classroom, where students in American classrooms drove social media activities in an informal manner through contributions to conversations and activities in a virtual format (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

Lu et al., (2014) studied social media use by high school and college students to determine the effects of social media on classroom learning. Findings indicated 95% of high school students utilized Facebook with 74% reporting use of more than once per day, while only one percent reported using social media in general for school/education.

Interestingly, 56% of those students indicated use of social media for exposure to new ideas while 26% perceived academic value of use in team building. Additionally, findings showed students believed social media was relevant and helpful to their learning, however, this perception wanes during their transition to a college environment. The most popular perceived value of social media use for educational reasons showed 57% of high school students valued exposure to new ideas and 26% valued the platform for cultivating a team-building environment (Lu et al., 2014).

Similarly, in a quantitative study by Bal and Bicen (2017), 170 university students were surveyed to determine the purpose of social media use and their perspectives on using social media for educational purposes. Findings indicated social media improved cooperative learning, information acquisition, and communication with all students answering 20 questions related to student perspectives on social media use in education with “completely agree” responses (p.180). Seventy-two percent of participants from three universities in a qualitative study by Krutka et al., (2017) responded that social media was a positive contributing factor to academic success in education courses, and that participation and student voice increased throughout courses using social media as part of the curriculum.

It is also important to consider college faculty awareness and use of social media as colleges adopt social media protocol for classrooms to engage students at the collegiate level, though it should be noted that colleges do not abide by the same restraints and protocol that high schools do.

In another study of college students, McGuckin and Sealey (2013) studied the use of Facebook in enhancing students' sense of belonging in university courses. Fifty-five university students enrolled in one of five sport and exercise degrees participated in an online survey. Forty-three percent of students logged into Facebook more than five times a day while 25.5% of participants logged in between three and five times each day. Ninety-four percent of respondents indicated that Facebook allowed for peer engagement and contributed positively to learning, overall student experience, and sense of belonging (McGuckin & Sealey, 2013). Likewise, Da Cunha Jr, Van Kruistum, & Van Oers (2016) study on teachers use of Facebook for communication and engagement in education found improvement between participants online and in the classroom on both fronts due to the collaborative environment that Facebook groups provided. Wang, Lin, Yu, and Wu (2013) also concluded that using Facebook in instructional methods at the university level resulted in higher achievement, and higher levels of student satisfaction with the university experience.

Some high school teachers are incorporating social media into the classroom for various reasons, though most are dedicated to the influence of social media on learning and collaboration, and not student communication, connectedness, or classroom community. Bartow (2014) examined five high school teachers using social media in the classroom in a multiple case study. Summary of the data indicated three subjectivity areas of "teacher as manager, teacher as learner, and teacher as change agent" (p. 47). In the teacher as manager designation, the teacher was involved in curriculum implementation and design, materials management and organization, monitoring and surveillance of

virtual spaces, and facilitating communication. As a teacher manager, findings indicated that the use of social media strengthened their performance while the teacher as constructivist role supported using social media to engage students in collaborative problem or project-based scenarios.

Findings of the Bartow (2014) study also indicated social media also impacted teacher identity as being agents of change due to the risks taken by teachers while operating beyond traditional school technology-based policies to drive change, though all participants believed student engagement and learning was improved with social media. Findings also showed teachers using social media to help build relationships and home/school connections, increase interactions with students and parents, and support activities that are collaborative in the classroom (Bartow, 2014).

A mixed-method study of Israeli secondary school teachers (Asterhan & Rosenberg, 2015) explored teacher to student interactions in secondary school contexts. One hundred seventy-eight teachers from various geographic areas participated in four-part surveys. Additionally, semistructured interviews were conducted with 11 teachers who communicated with students via Facebook for at least one year. Findings indicated three main purposes for using Facebook for teacher-student interaction including academic-instructional, social-relational, and psycho-pedagogical as shown in Figure 4.

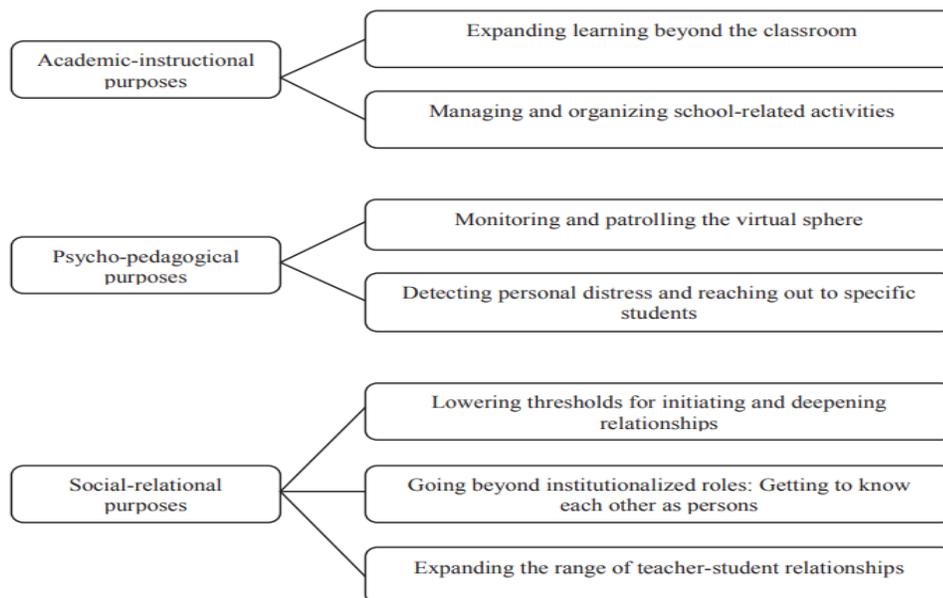


Figure 4. Purposes of teacher-student Facebook contact from “The Promise, Reality, and Dilemmas of Secondary School Teacher-Student Interactions in Facebook: The Teacher Perspective” by C. Asterhan and H. Rosenberg, 2015, *Computers & Education*, 85, p. 144. Copyright 2015 by Elsevier. Reprinted with permission.

The limited research of high school students and teachers using social media in the classroom has indicated beneficial results when using social media in the classroom to increase communication, student-student and student-teacher connections, and improvement of educational outcomes (Cao, Ajjan, & Hong, 2013).

Opportunities of Social Media Use in the Classroom

Increased communication. Two decades ago, Teacher and student interactions were limited to in-class conversations or telephone calls, and though email became a prominent method of communication over a decade ago for many teachers and parents, students were still not utilizing the tool to frequently communicate with teachers outside of the classroom. Fast forward to the instant communication that social media provides for students and teachers to interact with each other in a virtual world.

Students are becoming empowered to interact through asking questions, participation in online discussion, and forming groups and partnerships outside of the classroom. Krutka et al. (2017) surveyed 71 participants from three American universities to explore the benefits and challenges of social media in education classes. Seventy-five percent of student responses indicated there was a positive benefit with using social media for student connections and relationships with each other and instructors. Similar findings from a more global study including 583 teachers from 39 countries indicated that the main reason for a teacher to implement social media in the classroom is to exchange ideas, communicate, and share documents (Kilis, Gülbahar, & Rapp, 2016).

Asterhan and Rosenberg (2015) explored secondary school teacher-student interactions using Facebook in a mixed-methods study of 178 teachers in Israel. Findings indicated 80% of teachers recommend using Facebook in a closed discussion group setting to communicate with students. Ninety-eight percent of participants in a mixed methods study of secondary Indonesian students responded frequent use of social media at school for “enhancing knowledge, searching for information assigned by a teacher, finding the meaning of difficult words, translations, and for communicating learning materials and assignments given by a teacher” (Palekahelu et al., 2016, p.106).

Student engagement. Benefits of social media explored by researchers (Evans, 2014; Mao, 2014; Mostafa, 2015) indicate a growing acceptance of social media to connect students and improve classroom community at both the collegiate and high school levels for several reasons including cost effectiveness, the ability to communicate and connect with students, and increased student engagement in the classroom. First,

social media is an inexpensive and cost-efficient tool for teachers and schools to implement on a wider-scale in and out of buildings. Schools implementing 1:1 devices such as iPads or Chromebooks provide students with ways to connect with students and teachers beyond the classroom and at any hour through Google Classroom, Edmodo and a variety of social media platforms.

Whittaker, Howarth, & Lymn (2014) studied the use of Facebook in an undergraduate science course to determine if students were more engaged and had a higher rate of participation in comparison to traditional classroom discussion group formats. Findings indicated 78% of participants actively contributed to online discussion forums mainly to solve problems with peers and ask questions or share information about course content.

Mostafa (2015) found that student engagement via social media, specifically Twitter, was found to positively affect functional value, societal value, and emotional value. Similarly, researchers have investigated the impact of the use of social media on student learning in the areas of engagement and collaboration using Facebook (Mao, 2014; Mbodila et al., 2014; Mourlam, 2014; Northey, Bucic, Chylinski, & Govind, 2015). Findings showed that Facebook use significantly increased student collaboration and engagement in the classroom. Additionally, results showed a positive correlation between behavioral engagement and asynchronous learning opportunities (Evans, 2014; Gooding et al., 2016; Mourlam, 2014). It is evident in these cases that using social media in the classroom to engage students through collaboration positively impacts student engagement and classroom community.

Student connectedness. Participation in school ensembles include innate opportunities for student connectedness and improving classroom community as part of the process of making music as a group. Students in ensembles exhibit stronger connections to peers and contribute to a positive music classroom climate (Adderley, Berz, & Kennedy, 2003; Rawlings & Stoddard, 2017). Furthermore, students in ensembles are connected to each other beyond the school day due to the hours shared in practice and performance outside of the traditional school day and those ensembles are considered as a school-based home for students (Adderley et al., 2003).

The main purpose of social media is to provide social connections, and Facebook and Twitter can “create classroom connections to enhance social media discussion and instruction” (Agozzino, 2013, p. 43). Being connected to peers provides students with a sense of security, support, and the ability to solve social problems while having a sense of closeness and caring (Rawlings & Stoddard, 2017). Rawlings and Stoddard (2017) explored 317 middle school band students’ perceptions of peer connectedness in the band classroom and in the school improving. Findings indicated a moderately high level of student connectedness from social media interaction through Facebook outside of the classroom day. Likewise, Greenhow and Lewin (2016) found that social media use by students interacted with peers outside of the school day frequently as a result of classroom use which furthered knowledge construction.

Students in traditional performing ensembles such as band and chorus are organized into sections (e.g. soprano section, saxophone section, percussion section) based on their instrument families, which create smaller communities within the larger

ensemble community. Students often rehearse in sectional rehearsals and communicate with each other outside of the traditional school day to through social media to practice and interact in areas outside of the ensemble rehearsal. This outside interaction allows students to share experiences and build friendships that extend beyond the traditional band classroom and assist in the formation of long-term connections based on experiences and memories shared as part of the high school band experience.

Wenger stated the “work of engagement is basically the work of forming communities of practice” (Wenger, 1998, p. 184). It requires participation in meaningful activities, interaction in a productive and meaningful way, the creation and production of sharable artifacts, and the negotiation of new situations. High school music departments require participation of each student to contribute to the ensemble to achieve strong musical performances which are usually shared with in a public manner. To achieve strong musical performances, negotiation of new music and overcoming obstacles in a unified way are imperative to moving forward as an ensemble and achieving musically.

Facebook and Twitter are two of several social media platforms that support increased connections between students in both high school and collegiate spheres. Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2011) studied the use of Twitter as a medium to increase student participation in book discussions, ask questions, communicate and share events, provide academic support, and connect students beyond the classroom. Findings indicated Twitter had a positive effect on student connection when used for educational purposes.

Other studies of the impact of social media on student connectedness and engagement explored community-connectedness of first-year college students using social media (specifically Twitter) and microblogging (Casey, 2013; West, Moore, & Barry, 2015). Findings showed positive student perceptions of connectedness to classmates and the professor. Additionally, findings indicated that the simplicity of tools offered by social media in a hybrid face-to-face and virtual environment and understood by students led to positive student engagement (Casey, 2013; West et al., 2015). Positive engagement and interaction studied at the high school level has been done in some content areas including math and science, though they are generalized to be of benefit to other content areas (Rap & Blonder, 2016).

The collegiate level considers social media as an avenue for building campus community (Davis, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & González Canché, 2015; Dougherty & Andercheck, 2014; McGuckin & Sealey, 2013; Mourlam, 2014). Student perceptions of social media use in the collegiate classroom are positive and encourage real-time student engagement to enhance connections between teachers and students. Additionally, social media is an important tool to consider as an alternative way to motivate students to participate (Krutka et al., 2017; McGuckin & Sealey, 2013). The literature suggested a positive connection between social media and student engagement that could indicate success if social media is utilized in the high school music classroom.

In the band classroom, student connectedness is supported when the ensemble is an engaging community where students feel a sense of belonging. Wenger (1998) described engagement as a three-fold process including the ongoing negotiation of

meaning, the formation of trajectories, and the unfolding of histories of practice. The combination of the three processes turns engagement into a *mode of belonging* which contributes to a student's sense of identity as shown in Figure 5. Three modes of belonging including engagement, imagination, and alignment define communities of practice.

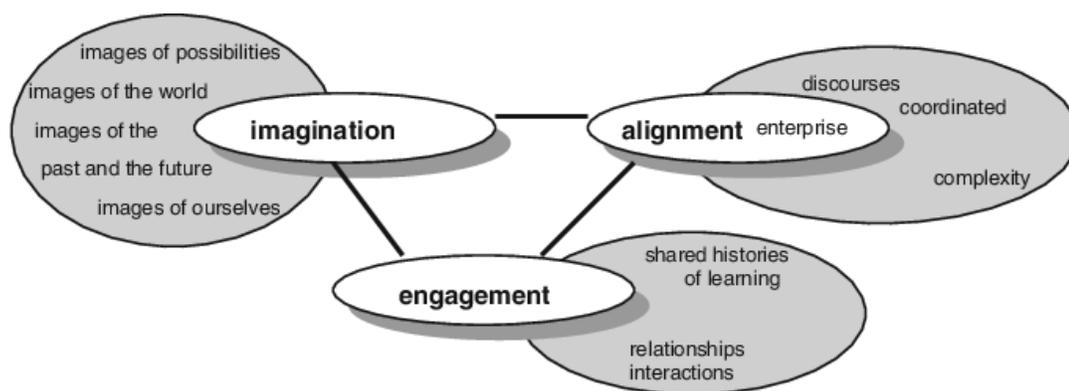


Figure 5. Modes of belonging. Wenger (1998, p. 174).

High School music ensembles tend to draw on all three modes as students engage actively in decision making to create meaning from a piece of music; create connections with music being studied and performed to personal experiences; and align activities to contribute to the whole of the ensemble. Mostafa (2015) found that connecting with students via social media, specifically Twitter, was found to positively affect functional value, societal value, and emotional value. Similarly, researchers have investigated the impact of the use of social media on student learning in the areas of engagement and collaboration using Facebook (Mao, 2014; Mbodila et al., 2014; Mourlam, 2014; and Northey et al., 2015). Findings showed that Facebook use significantly increased student collaboration in the classroom.

Additionally, results showed a positive correlation between behavioral engagement and asynchronous learning opportunities (Evans, 2014; Gooding et al., 2016; Mourlam, 2014). Student collaboration is a necessary part of the high school band experience where each member is an important piece of the whole, each student is engaged in the music making process, and each student feels a sense of belonging.

Sense of community. Using social media benefits students as part of a community because of the connection that social media applications provide students where they spend a great deal of time. Students using social media applications as part of the high school band programs often create “virtual communities of practice and a virtual public sphere for discussion” (Churcher et al., 2014, pg. 35). The technology promotes engagement and interaction and can be used to build communities of practitioners as students share common interests and experiences as well as exchange ideas in a virtual forum (Lewis & Rush, 2013). This is demonstrated in the high school band program as individual sections create subgroup pages for percussion, flutes, etc. to share information about playing technique, videos of exemplar performances showcasing their instrument, or communicating activities for their own section to be a part of.

Facebook communities are an innovative way for students to connect beyond the classroom hours to share information and participate in discussion thereby creating smaller classroom communities. Wendt and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2015) examined the impact of middle school students’ sense of community when participating in online collaborative learning in comparison to student participation through traditional face-to-face collaborative learning. The quasi-experimental study included 84 eighth grade

physical science students were divided into face-to-face and Edmodo educational platform collaborative activity groups. Findings showed that the students who participated in the face-to-face classroom and learning community had higher overall sense of community than students in the online environment. A study by Barczyk and Duncan (2017) found 54% of students were enabled to feel more connected to classmates through the use of Facebook for classroom use. Additionally, Facebook enhanced student perceptions of their COP and sense of classroom community.

Facebook discussion groups that are moderated by an adult teacher provide students with a safe online environment to share their opinions, concerns, and information with peers. Students who are shy or do not usually participate vocally in the classroom are more apt to participate in the virtual environment. Churcher et al., (2014) examined the pedagogical advantages and disadvantages of incorporating social media in the classroom in two case studies using Facebook and Wiki-based platforms. Findings indicated an increased use of Facebook by students as well as richer class discussions with deeper analysis and a better understanding of peer views and opinions.

Many participants responded positively regarding classroom interactions on the Facebook page and reported gained confidence through online discourse which translated into the traditional in-class discussions. Facebook use supported application and retention of knowledge by students in a nonconfrontational atmosphere and then continued in a more formal, traditional, classroom setting (Churcher et al., 2014). A high school band program includes students from all levels of ability and a variety of personalities both introverted and extroverted. Allowing all students to engage in the program at their

comfort level using social media as a tool for discussion and collaboration brings a level of community to the band classroom so that all students can be successful and feel part of the whole.

Challenges of Social Media Use in the Classroom

Teachers using social media in the classroom are faced with many challenges as they move beyond the traditional model of learning to exploring the digital world with their students (Agozzino, 2013; Bartow, 2014; Chen & Bryer, 2012). Additionally, concerns regarding access, privacy, and safety are noted which are often dictated by school policy (Elpus & Carter, 2016; Fewkes & McCabe, 2012; Mao, 2014; Mingle & Adams, 2015). The concerns of teachers and students using social media often inhibit integration at the high school level even if opportunities and benefits of its use are known and understood by policymakers.

The increasing use of social media by students and teachers has pushed educational leaders to question the validity of using social media in educational areas (Faizi, El Afia, & Chiheb, 2013). Not negating the positive aspects of including social media in the classroom, social media can also create challenges for the classroom teacher (Bal, Grewal, Mills, & Ottley, 2015; Bartow, 2014; Evans, 2014; Fewkes & McCabe, 2012; Krutka et al., 2017; Wendt & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2015; and West et al., 2015). Many reasons exist for the lack of social media use in high school classrooms including concerns over student safety, up-to-date technology, access for students and teachers, and teacher training and support (Albert, 2015; Bartow, 2014; Gooding et al., 2016; Mourlam, 2014; and Lu, et al., 2014).

Though Mostafa (2015) suggests that it is time for institutions to acknowledge the benefits of social media implementation in the learning environment despite challenges, it is important to note that other concerns for teachers are perceived lack of privacy, exposure, the blurring of personal/professional boundaries, and the belief that social media is for personal use and not for use in the work environment (Asterhan & Rosenberg, 2015; Graham, 2014).

The increase of teacher use of social media for professional and personal reasons indicates that with training, support, and access for students, teachers may be willing to use social media in classroom to communicate, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community. Furthermore, the next generation of teachers may be willing to implement social media in the classroom as the technology becomes more accessible.

Teachers and social media. Social media has only been a major part of educational conversation in the last several years as social media becomes more accessible and a daily activity for both students and teachers. Cao et al. (2013), conducted a quantitative study to explore uses of social media by teachers and the educational outcomes of social media in the classroom. Findings indicated a preponderance of YouTube adoption by teachers (78.6%), while a much smaller percentage have adopted social networking sites such as Twitter or Facebook in the classroom (11 %). Similar findings from a University of Phoenix study (University of Phoenix, 2015), indicated 87% of teachers have not incorporated social media into the classroom. There are several

factors for teacher hesitation in using social media in the classroom ranging from teacher age to classroom distraction.

Age is a considerable factor when examining social media experiences of faculty for personal, professional, and classroom use (O'Bannon and Thomas, 2014). Studies have primarily focused on collegiate faculty use, though teachers at all levels use social media for personal and professional connections. As younger teachers enter the field, it is apparent that they are more adept at using social media for personal and professional use and are beginning to integrate social media into daily instruction, however, these teachers require instructional modeling to be effective (O'Bannon & Thomas, 2014). A study by O'Bannon and Thomas (2014) of over 1,000 teachers revealed 75% percent of teacher participants owned smartphones and were more likely to use social media applications. Additionally, teachers in the O'Bannon and Thomas (2014) study who were over 50 years old were less inclined to using mobile phones in the classroom and none of the three age groups studied (32 and under; 33-49; 50 and older) overwhelmingly supported use of mobile phones in the classroom.

Though veteran teachers are hesitant to use social media in the classroom, preservice teachers are also unsure of how to fully utilize social media as an educational classroom tool, although they have grown up using the technology. Krutka et al., (2017) studied perceptions of social media use among education students and instructors to determine future use of social media use by teachers in classrooms. Results indicated social media use in education courses was educative, while seventy-five percent of participants stated classroom social media use created closer class relationships. The

same study revealed 47% of participants agreed that social media communication with classmates was an enjoyable experience while 72 % indicated social media use as a positive contributor to academic success (Krutka et al., 2017).

The University of Phoenix College of Education Harris Poll (2015) surveyed over 1,000 teachers and found that many teachers are intimidated by the students' knowledge and use of devices. Despite active use of social media for professional and personal use, teachers are less likely to use social media in the classroom for student connectedness and building classroom community.

Access to relevant technology. Within the last 10 years, social media technology has grown from a novelty to a ubiquitous mode of communication and connection. Some common social media technologies from a decade ago are nearly obsolete now as new social media applications rapidly become available. Though it is often assumed that most high school students have access to smartphones or other devices, it should not be assumed that all students have access to social media or knowledge of how to use it effectively and safely. Mao (2014) investigated high school students' uses of social media as well as their attitudes and beliefs, obstacles, and issues with social media platforms. Findings indicated that 84.4% of students enjoyed using social media in school, however, only 42.2% indicated positive connections regarding how social media is being used in the classroom. Participants expressed major concerns regarding current use of social media in education as out-of-date and limited due to school networking policies and lack of using social media appropriately with a lack of support and training of teachers (Mao, 2014).

Though positive correlations of student connectedness occur through sharing information in course-related activities (Evans, 2014; Gooding et al., 2016; Mostafa, 2015; Mourlam, 2014; West et al., 2015), there is still minimal classroom use by faculty and students. Increased technology infrastructure and planning for the constant changes in technology for classroom use is necessary for successful implementation of social media use in the classroom.

Training and support. Student use of social media in the classroom may improve student engagement and participation in high school, though only if training and support is included for both students and teachers using social media platforms (Rap & Blonder, 2016). Two major concerns of faculty in using social media in the classroom include time and training to learn platforms, and the need for administrative support (Cao et al., 2013). Constant and rapid changes in social media tools also present challenges to teachers and students as the learning of each platform may make former social media platforms obsolete. Teachers may have learned how to integrate one platform when a newer application begins to permeate the virtual learning landscape, therefore the learning curve for teachers and students can hinder social media implementation (Krutka et al., 2017).

Though the new generation of teachers is exposed and motivated to use social media for personal and professional use, they need to be trained in ways to use it in the classroom to increase student connectedness and improve classroom community (O'Bannon & Thomas, 2014). Krutka et al. (2017) found nearly half of participants in a qualitative study of college education students at three universities (40.1%) indicated

struggled to overcome a learning curve with social media due to technical difficulties or a lack of knowledge with social media platforms and use. Haning (2015) studied 46 undergraduate music education majors from 10 universities to investigate technology instruction in preservice training. Though a recent study in the age of social media use, training in social media was not discussed as a plausible educational tool for the music classroom, and training in other educational technologies was limited with the exception of music notation software (27%). Participants also indicated planned uses of technology in their future classrooms as being limited to e-mail (100%), grade calculation and recording (98%), planning and preparation of lessons (89%), and delivering instruction (83%).

If teachers and students do not receive consistent and updated training on how to use social media in the classroom, they will continue to be resistant to using it in the classroom, and even with training, some teachers may still be resistant (Palekahelu et al., 2016). A 2015 Harris Poll conducted by University of Phoenix surveyed over 1,000 full-time K-12 teachers in the United States. Eighty-seven percent of teachers surveyed have not incorporated social media use in the classroom though they had received some level of training (Bolkan, 2015). This percentage is an increase from the 2013 findings of the same survey when only 55% percent of teachers indicated hesitation regarding social media implementation in the classroom (Bolkan, 2015).

Teachers must have a reason to use social media in the classroom that contributes directly to student engagement, learning, student connectedness or classroom community, or it will not benefit the learning environment. Additionally, teachers must also be

consistent using social media to achieve beneficial results. This requires adequate training for teachers in ways to use social media effectively for classroom use (Cao et al., 2013). Mourlam (2014) examined the effects of implementing a Facebook group in a high school social studies course. Results indicated that though there was evidence to support the use of social media in the classroom and the potential of social media platforms to engage students, there was considerable lack of consistency in its use and faculty support throughout implementation. Six group interviews were conducted by Persson and Thunman (2017) with 25 secondary school teachers from four schools to examine how teachers manage boundaries when using Facebook as a communication tool with students. Though findings indicated that teachers were able to find a balance between personal and professional implementations of social media, there were concerns regarding teacher privacy.

The rapid advancement and continuous evolution of social media brings continued anxieties and roadblocks for veteran as well as preservice teachers. Krutka et al. (2017) examined Twitter use of postsecondary education majors and found disconnect between expectations of social media use and preferred uses in the classroom. Though students indicated positive relationships affected from the use of Twitter in the classroom and increased participation, students also indicated fear of use due to a learning curve for those not familiar with using Twitter. Many participants agreed, however, that over time fears and anxieties were quelled with Twitter use and classroom support.

There is support for teachers and school leaders to implement and use social media as an educational tool for the betterment of students if time is taken to try and

experiment and develop personal understanding of what it is and what it can do to create a more connected classroom environment (Lu et al., 2014), though they recommend training for personnel prior to integration. Torok-Ágoston adds that social media education is necessary for teachers and students in today's virtual landscape (2017).

Even with training and support, teachers may still be reticent to adopting social media in the classroom. Gülbahar, Kilis, Rapp, and Sitnikova (2017) developed a social media toolkit for educators after analyzing social media use for teaching and learning by 107 students and 37 teachers from four countries including Turkey, Germany, Russia, and Switzerland. Findings of the initial analysis revealed few teachers were aware of social media benefits and most students were against using social media for educational purposes. These findings were then utilized to develop a social media toolkit to guide instructors to implement social media in the classroom focusing on two core functions: (a) identification and display of the best forms of social media for the instructional scenario, and (b) provision of guidelines on using the technology for educational purposes (p. 26). A purposive sampling of 34 higher education educators were surveyed regarding their perceptions of social media as an instructional tool in combination with training and support from the social media toolkit (Gülbahar et al., 2017). Results indicated that over two-thirds of participants believed the use of the toolkit positively impacted the use of social media in the classroom, though even with the support of the toolkit, a third of teachers still did not find benefit in social media implementation.

The reviewed literature revealed that using social media in the classroom for increasing student engagement, collaboration, connectedness and classroom community

has yielded successful results at the collegiate level, however, little in the research discussed social media use for increasing student connectedness and improving classroom community specific to high school band classrooms.

Summary

This chapter included a comprehensive review of the literature related to social media use in educational settings for communication, increasing student connectedness, and improving classroom community. Current literature shows support for using social media for communication, increasing student connectedness, and improving classroom community while highlighting the challenges of the ever-changing social media landscape for teachers and students. Though research suggests a level of use at the collegiate level to communicate, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community, the concerns of teachers with a lack of skill in implementation, knowledge and resources as well as the variety of assumptions surrounding social media applications and uses is problematic. Though recent research is exploring the benefits and challenges in using social media for communication, to increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community at the collegiate level, there is a gap in the literature regarding social media use in high school band classrooms.

Chapter 3 includes a detailed description of the qualitative research method that I will be using for my study. This chapter includes the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and ethical concerns.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of high school band directors' using social media to communicate with students, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community. By examining the lived experiences of band directors' using social media in the classroom, this study contributes to the knowledge needed to address the gap regarding social media and whether it has a place in high school band classrooms.

Ten high school band directors were interviewed to determine if and how social media is being used in their classroom, the benefits and challenges of implementing social media in the classroom, if using social media in the classroom has improved teacher-student and student-student communications and student connectedness, and if using social media in the classroom has improved the classroom community.

Current research exists in higher education to support the use of social media to communicate with and engage students and to improve classroom community (Gooding et al., 2016; Mostafa, 2015); however, there is a gap in the literature specific to high school band directors' use of social media for communication to increase student connectedness and improve classroom community. The hope is that this study could provide insight to high school band directors to implement social media in the band classroom for communication to increase student connectedness and improve classroom community.

This chapter includes a rationale for the research and study design, a description of my role as the researcher, research questions, participant recruitment, participant selection, and instrumentation. In addition, procedures for data collection, data analysis strategy, and issues of trustworthiness related to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are discussed.

Research Design and Rationale

The research questions driving this study were created based on current literature related to band directors' use of social media for student connectedness and improving classroom community.

Central research question: What are the experiences of high school band directors with the use of social media in their classroom?

To help with organization when collecting data from the interviews and to provide a focus, the following subquestions were used:

SQA: How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media in the classroom for communication?

SQB: How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media in the classroom for student connectedness?

SQC: How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media to improve classroom community?

The central concepts that support this phenomenological study include communication, student connectedness, classroom community, and social media. This study followed a qualitative framework using a phenomenological approach. To

understand possible benefits to incorporating social media in the high school band classroom to benefit student connectedness and improve classroom community, Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism theory, Siemens's (2004) connectivism theory, and Wenger's (1998) COP learning theory were used to provide a foundation for this study.

Choice of Design

I selected a phenomenological approach grounded in the qualitative tradition for this study. Using this approach allowed me to explore the lived experiences of band directors' using social media in the classroom for communication to increase student connectedness and improve classroom community in a real-world setting (see Yin, 2016). Additionally, qualitative research represents participants' views and perspectives that give meaning to the real-world phenomenon (Yin, 2016).

A quantitative research design was considered and rejected as unsuitable for this study due to the size of the participant pool, and a questionnaire would not have yielded the rich data of participant lived experiences. I was interested in the personal lived accounts of band directors' use of social media in the classroom and not the numerical data of a measurable variable (see Punch & Oancea, 2014); therefore, a quantitative design was not selected.

The qualitative tradition of phenomenology provides a method of research where the aim is to determine what experiences participants have had and their lived experience descriptions of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Additionally, individual participant descriptions of the experiences can indicate general or universal meanings of the

phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) stated, “The understanding of meaningful concrete relations implicit in the original description of experience in the context of a particular situation is the primary target of phenomenological knowledge” (p. 14).

To understand band directors’ experiences using the phenomenon of social media in the situation of the band classroom, a phenomenological design was the best method for this study. Social media is a phenomenon that impacts teachers and students as it provides a way to connect and share information 24 hours a day. This phenomenon examined through a qualitative lens may give insight into the real-world challenges and benefits of incorporating social media into the band classroom as band directors respond to questions based on their experiences using social media to communicate, to increase student connectedness, and to improve classroom community.

I considered other qualitative research designs for this study, including case study and ethnographical approaches. I originally intended to use a case study design; however, I rejected it as a qualitative research design option because it relies on multiple sources of evidence (see Yin, 2016). I interviewed only high school band directors from a Band Directors Group Facebook page for this study and did not study participants at one site; therefore, that design would not have yielded data to support a case study. An ethnographic design would have been beneficial if I had collected data from in depth field observations over a long period of time (see Patton, 2015). However, due to time constraints and the fact that I did not explore a cultural understanding, I rejected ethnography as a plausible research method.

Role of the Researcher

My role as a single researcher included the recruitment and selection of participants and the collection, transcription, analysis, and interpretation of all data. Because the main data collection methods were one-on-one semistructured interviews and a focus group, my role included creating and following an interview protocol, providing questions for participants prior to interviews to allow participants reflection time and to provide transparency (see Patton, 2015), arranging interview times that were convenient for participants, and building rapport with participants while assuring and ensuring confidentiality, answering questions, and reassuring participants throughout the process.

My role as a researcher during the interview process was to establish rapport with participants, be an observer and active listener throughout interviews and the focus group, take clear and complete notes of interviews and the focus group, ask participants follow-up questions, and not interject my own personal classroom experiences into the interview to reduce the potential for bias. Considering that I have a connection to the teacher participants as a member of the Band Directors Group Facebook page and interact with the group regularly, this was a potential bias area for me to be cognizant of in the process of collecting and analyzing data, though I have no direct personal or professional relationships with any of the participants. I analyzed, coded and interpreted the data of the 10 audio-recorded Web-based calls and a Web-based call recorded focus group by using a detailed coding process in Word and NVivo software.

In terms of addressing conflict and bias, the use of my own workplace or

community was not conducive to the study as there is only one high school music teacher, and that was me. Therefore, the participants who I gathered and interacted with were not band directors I have worked with in the past or know personally. My personal experiences in the field of music education and education in general have provided me with strong feelings on the subject as I currently use social media in my own band room and advocate the expansion of social media use in schools. Awareness of this potential bias is imperative throughout the data collection and analysis process (Yin, 2018).

Methodology

This section contains the components of participant recruitment and selection, instruments for data collection, and a strategy for data analysis.

Participant Selection Logic

In this study, I examined the phenomenon of social media as used by high school band directors to communicate, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community. After IRB approval, I placed a post on the Band Directors Group Facebook page inviting interested high school band director members to complete a brief questionnaire (Appendix A) to determine their age, teaching experience, levels of personal and professional social media use, and how they use social media in the classroom. The Band Directors Group Facebook page is an online community of over 24,000 invitation-only band directors from all over the world. Band directors' range in age, experience, qualifications, and classroom responsibilities. Using this online resource provided an overview of social media use by band directors from a variety of ages, socioeconomically diverse districts, and geographical area.

The questionnaire (Appendix A) included questions about the participant's age, teaching experience, levels of personal and professional social media use, and how they use social media in the classroom. I created a spreadsheet of participant responses in Excel, transcribed all responses, and assigned each participant a pseudonym within each category. The only criteria for participants was that they are current high school band directors who use social media in the classroom.

After receiving responses, I selected 10 participants for the study who all had experience as high school band directors. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants who appropriately fit their study (Patton, 2015). There are no rules that dictate sample size in qualitative study; however, the size of the sample depends on several factors: "what the research is seeking to learn, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources" (Patton, 2015, p. 311). Purposive sampling is useful in qualitative study as participants are selected because they offer information about the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2015). Following participant interviews, I asked participants to participate in a focus group. A focus group is generally organized with 6 to 10 people with similar backgrounds, as in this study, all 10 participants were high school band directors (see Patton, 2015). This number of participants was the same as in a phenomenological study by Kay (2017), which used 10 participants.

Instrumentation

I used two researcher-created instruments to collect data from participants that align with types of data determined by Yin (2018): one-on-one audio-recorded

semistructured flexible interviews with all participants; and a Web-based call focus group consisting of all participants depending on their availability. Ten interviews should provide enough data to reach saturation, while the focus group should support triangulation of collected data. My goal was that participants would participate in both the interview and focus group sessions. While the one-on-one semistructured interviews yielded rich and in-depth responses, the focus group with directors who have a shared knowledge and experience enabled participants to share with each other experiences based on the phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

Interviews. Interviews are a strong method of data collection for qualitative studies as they are targeted and can focus directly on the research topic (Patton, 2015). Interviews also provide personal views and explanation allowing for insight to be gained from the participants (Yin, 2016). Though interviews are a strongly supported resource for data collection, poorly articulated questions could result in biased reporting of responses or inaccuracies due to poor transcription or recall (Yin, 2016). The goal was that all participants would be included in one-on-one semistructured audio-recorded interviews and a focus group. All 10 participants were interviewed in this format, though only seven high school band directors were able to participate in the focus group interviews.

Patton (2015) discussed 10 guiding principles in interviewing practices to cultivate prior to conducting interviews including

1. Ask open-ended questions which are meaningful and relevant and invite thoughtful in-depth responses.

2. Ask questions that are clear, focused, understandable, and answerable.
3. Listen attentively to responses and let participants know that they have been heard and respond appropriately to answers.
4. Follow up with participants in complete responses with clarifying probes.
5. Observe by watching the interviewee to guide the process and adapt as appropriate.
6. Be empathetic and neutral by showing interest and offering nonjudgmental encouragement.
7. Make transitions while helping guide the interviewee through the interview process.
8. Distinguish types of questions by separating descriptive questions and behavioral questions.
9. Be prepared for the unexpected by being flexible throughout the interview process.
10. Be present throughout the interview process by not becoming distracted, inattentive, or uninterested in the interviewees responses or actions (p. 428).

I used the 10 Patton (2015) principles as both a guide for interview preparation and for development of an interview protocol based on the research questions. I used open-ended, semistructured, flexible researcher developed questions to address band directors' experiences with social media in personal and professional settings, social media use for communication with students, social media use in the classroom for student connectedness, and social media use in the classroom for improving classroom

community. Rather than a structured query, the questions were semistructured and allowed for a guided conversation approach (Yin, 2016), and each interview was between 30 and 60 minutes long. I asked additional probing questions as needed to achieve richer data for analysis.

Interview protocol for one-on-one interviews. The use of an interview protocol is helpful in conducting one-on-one interviews by serving as a guide for the interview conversation (Yin, 2016). Additionally, an interview protocol serves as a support for participants by providing them with a substantive piece to add weight to the interview process beyond a casual conversation (Yin, 2016).

The semistructured open-ended interview is a discussion-based approach which requires a limited set of open-ended questions prepared in advance on the topic (Patton, 2015; Appendix D). Follow-up questions allowed the interviewee to answer questions in detail with a narrow focus on the research question items. Semistructured interviews followed predetermined questions, though they allowed for variation and follow-up questions when the interviewer found it appropriate in the interview. Open-ended questions are the most important in a qualitative interview as they allow for the participants to use their own words instead of researcher terminology to answer questions fully (Yin, 2016). Yin also suggests using a qualitative open-ended question interview format because it is a less physically taxing format for the researcher (Yin, 2018). A strong rapport and trust between the interviewee and researcher are imperative to the success of this interview format as open-ended and follow-up questions require the interviewee to open-up and provide narrative data for analysis (Patton, 2015).

Using an interview protocol allows for guidance for the researcher throughout the interview while also encouraging constant analysis throughout the interview by directing the process and giving the researcher an understanding of when to shift topics and when to probe further or ask follow-up questions (Yin, 2016). I audio-recorded interviews using a Web-based call or telephone recording feature or app, however, if a participant refused permission or appears uncomfortable with being audio-recorded, an alternative option of note-taking only would have been offered (Yin, 2016).

Interview questions. I asked participants semistructured, flexible, open-ended interview questions reflecting experiences with social media in the classroom for communication, to increase student connectedness and improve classroom community. Additionally, I asked participants questions pertaining to personal and professional use of social media. I generated interview questions using Patton (2015)'s six types of questions as a guide including questions regarding backgrounds and demographics, experiences and behaviors, feelings, opinions, and beliefs. Interview questions were also aligned with the research questions (Patton, 2015). A panel of experts in the field of music education and/or social media reviewed interview questions and I revised questions based on feedback. In Appendix E, I show how my research questions connected to one-on-one interview questions.

Interview protocol for focus group. Focus groups bring together participants for a limited amount of time to answer questions in a group setting while the researcher role is now facilitator to keep the conversation moving with prepared open-ended questions (Yin, 2016). I used a responsive interview structure with a few questions as I facilitated

the group by moving the conversation along and keeping the group on task and focused (Patton, 2015). I followed an interview protocol for the focus group that is similar in format to the one-on-one semistructured open-ended interview format I used with individual participants (Appendix D). I prepared questions ahead of time to guide the conversation and kept a reflexive journal to record notes and thoughts throughout the focus group session. The focus group was audio-recorded using a web-based call's recording feature. A prepared interview guide assisted in the facilitation and moderation of the interview and provided a flexible yet focused group interview process (Patton, 2015). It was also important for the researcher to understand the dynamics of the focus group and mediate the discussion effectively (Yin, 2016).

Focus groups offer many strengths to the qualitative inquiry process including cost and time-effective data collection, the highlighting of diverse perspectives from a variety of participants, and the enhancement of data quality through participant interaction (Patton, 2015). Additionally, Yin (2016) suggested participants are more readily able to express themselves in a group setting with peer support rather than in a one-on-one interview setting. Since one-on-one interviews happened with all participants before the focus group session, focus group questions were adapted to include more in-depth questions to probe one-on-one interview questions further. Though a face-to-face focus group was preferred, time-commitments and varying schedules of participants were considered, therefore, an online Web-based call session which allowed for all participants to be active in the conversation was used. Additionally, web-based call sessions were easily recorded and downloaded to an external hard drive quickly for safe keeping.

Focus group questions. Researcher generated focus group questions were provided to teacher participants and were different than the one-on-one interview questions. Focus group questions were used to probe the entire group of high school music teacher participants about social media use for communication, student connectedness, and improving classroom community. After preliminary analysis of the interview data, I added to the focus group questions to reflect emergent themes from participant responses. Open-ended questions for the focus group allowed teachers to discuss and compare social media benefits and challenges which varied from school to school depending on technology infrastructure and administrative philosophy. Focus group questions were aligned with the research questions.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

First, I gained approval (Walden IRB approval number 10-05-18-0429154) from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to recruiting participants. Upon receipt of IRB approval, I posted a request for participants for those interested on the Band Directors Group Facebook page and invited them to private message me email information to contact each participant with a questionnaire (Appendix A). The scope of the study was shared with each participant through the consent form process. I sent an initial contact e-mail (Appendix B) to selected participants from the Band Directors Group Facebook page. I sent a follow-up e-mail (Appendix C) to the 10 selected participants. I used a brief questionnaire (Appendix A) to select a purposive sample of 10 high school band directors from received responses that fit the requirements of (a) being a high school and director, and (b) that they use social media in some form for

communicating with students, to connect with students, to connect students to each other, and to improve classroom community

I gave all participants pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and informed participants that all responses will remain confidential. I administered the demographic survey to interested participants using Google Forms. I collected all Google Forms in a designated password protected drive and downloaded them to an external hard-drive. I stored all data on an external hard drive used only for this research to be kept for 5 years and will destroy the data after that time.

I collected two points of data from the selected participants. The first was through audio recorded one-on-one participant web-based call interviews. Secondly, I conducted a focus group of seven of the 10 participants. I audio recorded all web-based call interviews, took additional notes during interviews and the focus group, and completed a reflexive journal throughout the data collection process. I transcribed all interview and focus group data. I downloaded and archived audio recordings for future reference and use. Data collection through audio recordings using web-based calls was conducted over the course of several weeks.

After the initial recordings were transcribed, I checked each transcript for accuracy by listening to each file while editing the transcript for discrepancies. I contacted participants for follow-up questions based on analysis of responses. Following data collection and preliminary analysis of individual Web-based call interview transcripts, focus group questions were revised to reflect responses of individual participants based on emerging themes. I used an interview protocol for one-on-one web-

based call interviews and for focus group sessions with participants. At the exit point for each interview and focus group, I thanked all participants for their willingness to participate in the study and reminded them of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time. I also confirmed contact information from the consent form with each participant upon exiting interview or focus group sessions.

Data Analysis Plan

Patton (2015) asserted, “Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes. But no recipe. Direction can and will be offered, but the final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when – and if – arrived at” (p. 521). After obtaining data through completing interviews and the focus group, I completed steps of the analysis process as discussed by Patton. As stated by Patton (2015), for the first step, I compiled and organized raw data, filled in any data gaps, and uploaded all data into Word and NVivo software as well as protected all data by backing it up on an external hard drive.

Step 2 includes identification of patterns, themes, and recurring content (Patton, 2015). As part of the second step, after reading the transcripts of interviews, I used the comments of Word to highlight and mark according to the following possible code categories: communication, age, teacher experience, school demographics, definitions of social media, classroom use, professional use, personal use, engagement, communication, community, school policy, classroom policy, student connectedness, classroom community, and barriers. Following the hand highlighting and commenting within the Word document, I created a macro by exporting the comments into a table for ease of

reading and analysis. The table included page numbers, the textual data associated with the code, and the date that it was coded. The visual provided an easy to see overview of all codes and the textual support for each code. The purpose of using Word first was to be able to read and hand-code the data prior to using the NVivo software program to discover similarities and differences between the two methods. Throughout the data analysis process, I continued to be mindful of what the research questions were focusing on in the study.

The third step began with creating a manageable coding scheme to work with the data in NVivo. The sample codes used in step 2 in the hand-coding informed some of the coding in NVivo; however, as differences emerge, those codes changed. Part of this step required examining the codes for recurring regularities (Patton, 2015, p. 555) which revealed patterns that are then sorted into two categories: internal heterogeneity (the extent to which the data that belong in a category combine in a meaningful way), and external heterogeneity (the extent that differences among categories are very clear).

Next, I interpreted the data as part of step 4. Patton (2015) stated “interpretation means to go beyond the descriptive data...to attach significance to what was found, make sense of findings, offer explanations, draw conclusions, extrapolate lessons, make inferences, consider meanings, and otherwise impose order on an unruly but surely patterned world” (p. 570). I confirmed what was supported by the data, eliminated misconceptions, and illuminated the important things previously unknown. The preceding four steps led to the fifth step of reporting the findings in a clear and concise manner. Figure 6 is a visual flowchart of Patton’s (2015) research and data analysis process.

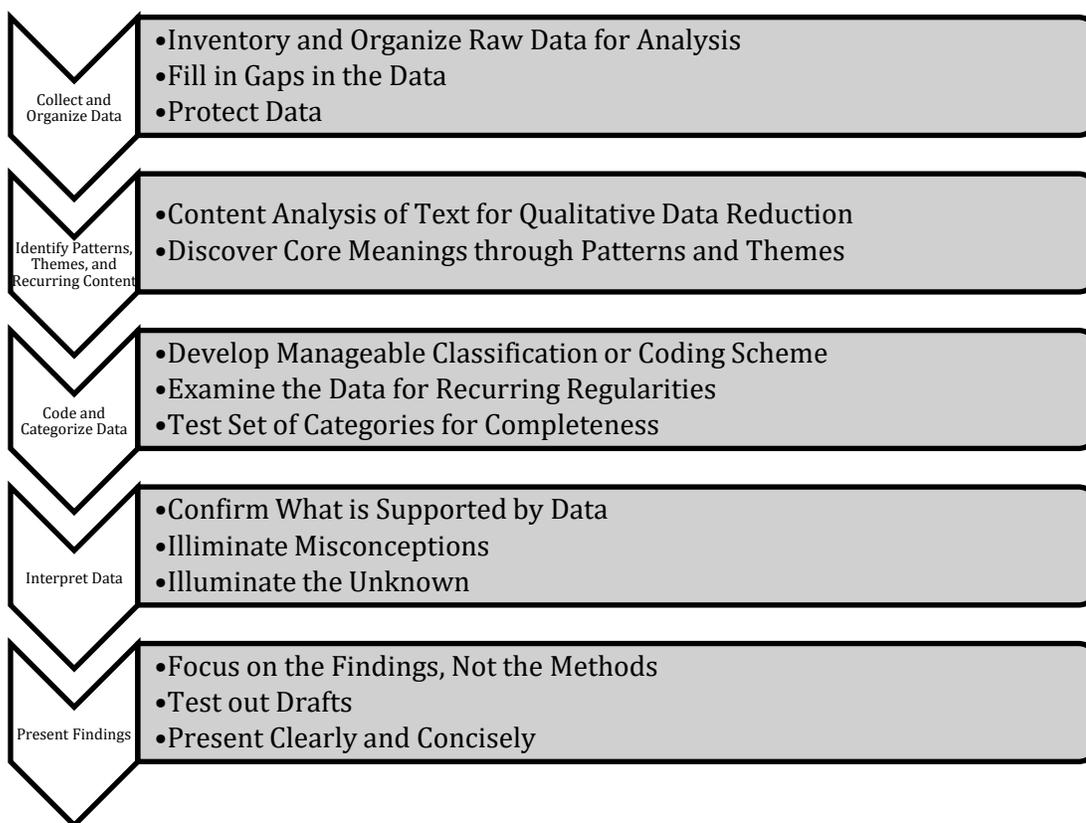


Figure 6. Qualitative research and analysis process

Issues of Trustworthiness

The rigor of qualitative interviews relates to the level of a study's trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of a research study is important to determining a study's worth by establishing credibility, (demonstration of confidence in the truth of study findings), transferability (the assertion that study findings can be applied in other contexts), dependability (demonstration that findings are consistent and can be replicated), and confirmability (the study is neutral and shaped by study participants and not research bias. (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2016).

Credibility. According to Patton (2015), credibility in qualitative inquiry depends on four related elements: (a) systemic, in depth fieldwork; (b) systematic and conscientious analysis of data; (c) inquirer credibility; and (d) reader and user philosophical belief in qualitative inquiry value. Additionally, Moustakas (1994) suggested further review and probing of participant responses to clarify and validate data to make participants feel a part of the process. Credibility was addressed by incorporating member checking methods with each participant and providing the opportunity for participants to clarify responses.

Following web-based call interviews, I transcribed each interview and reviewed each transcription line by line while listening and editing for discrepancies. I emailed each participant the interview transcript for member checking after preliminary data analysis had been conducted to determine if I captured the interview data accurately and reflected the participant's interpretation of the interview (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). After analysis of the initial interview data, I revised focus group questions based on the analysis and conducted a focus group with 7 out of the 10 participants. I triangulated the data obtained through participant interviews and a focus group.

Transferability. Assuring that this study's findings are transferable to other music teachers, teachers, schools, and the field of education is an important measure of its effectiveness (Yin, 2018). Thick description of the interviews assist readers in making conclusions from the interviews to transfer findings to other settings (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). To ensure transferability, I used a purposive sampling of high school band directors using a social media organization as a participant pool. Though demographics

of the selected participants differed due to socioeconomics and access to technology, considerations regarding social media use in other school districts was considered.

Dependability. Dependability ensures the process of the study and the researcher's responsibility for ensuring that the process was logical, traceable, and documented for consistent results (Patton, 2015). I recorded each step of the research process in a reflexive research journal to identify possible biases, information, and reflections. I achieved dependability with the use of an interview guide and the careful recording and archiving of email and recorded interviews. I also used an orderly process for data collection and analysis and continued to be aware of my role as the researcher and possible biases that I have regarding the research topic. I took clear and concise notes during interviews including observations about participant vocal inflection, hesitation, and responses.

Confirmability. The last standard of trustworthiness is ensuring confirmability of the study. Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest maintaining a reflexive journal with regular entries which enable the researcher to record methodological decisions and the rationale for decisions. Use of a reflexive journal helps the researcher to detect possible biases or perspectives towards participants and/or the interview process. I currently employ social media in the high school music classroom to increase student connectedness and improve classroom community, therefore I am aware of my possible influences on the data. To ensure confirmability through reflexivity, I kept a journal of my reflections throughout the research process in connection with my values and interests about the study topic (Yin, 2016).

Ethical Concerns

Once Walden IRB approval was obtained, I followed all protocols and procedures that were outlined in addition to any guidelines of the Band Directors Group Facebook page. Participant treatment throughout involvement was an important consideration for any study. Participation for this study was voluntary and participants did not receive compensation. Participants were able to opt-out of the study at any time, though no participants chose to opt out.

Each participant was provided with a consent form to review and sign prior to my conducting interviews. The consent form included an overview of the study's purpose, objectives, and the level of involvement required by participants, as well as the data collection procedure including the interview protocol. The consent form also addressed the potential minimal risks that participants should be aware of before agreeing to participate in the study.

Participant identity was kept confidential and pseudonyms were given to each participant to maintain anonymity. All audio-recordings were uploaded to my password-protected personal computer that is only accessible to me and backed up on an external hard drive used specifically for this study research. The data will be destroyed after 5 years as dictated by Walden University.

Summary

I discussed in Chapter 3 the research design and rationale for this phenomenological study, my role as the sole researcher for data collection and analysis following Patton's (2015) data analysis steps, and an overview of the methodology.

Additionally, I discussed issues of to ensure validity, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Results of this study could provide support for integrating social media in high school band classrooms for communication, to increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community providing an additional outlet to help students to identify as a connected member of the band ensemble. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the results of this study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of high school band directors' using social media to communicate with students, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community. The aim of this study was to examine the lived experiences of band directors who use social media in the classroom and to inform band directors, music teachers, other teachers, administrators, and school districts of the benefits and challenges in implementing social media in the classroom. In this chapter, I begin with a description of the study setting. This is followed by the demographics, data collection process, and analysis. I explain the methods employed to ensure trustworthiness of the study, and I describe how the study was completed according to the research plan. A comprehensive review of how the study was implemented and completed is included along with the results. A summary briefly describing the results of the study concludes the chapter.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

Central research question: What are the experiences of high school band directors with the use of social media in their classroom?

SQA: How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media in the classroom for communication?

SQB: How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media in the classroom for student connectedness?

SQC: How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media to improve classroom community?

I conducted semistructured interviews and focus group discussions to allow 10 high school band directors the opportunity to share their experiences using social media in the classroom for communication, student connectedness, and improving classroom community, which aligned with Yin's (2016) and Patton's (2015) research methods suggestions.

Setting

The setting of the study was an online band directors Facebook group. Band directors from all over the world from every level of instrumental study from elementary school to professional level interact on the Facebook page. The study was restricted to the online Facebook group because of discussions taking place within the group page related to social media use in high school band programs.

There are currently over 25,000 members on the Facebook group page who interact daily on a variety of band director topics. According to the group guidelines published on the Facebook page, it is a professional development group that is housed within Facebook. Interested members must apply to join, must follow a set of published guidelines to remain a member of the online group, and must be a music education major or a current or retired career band director. Members can be invited to join the group by existing members or can request membership by clicking join and answering questions about their status as a band director, which is then forwarded to a group administrator for final approval.

Demographics

All band directors interviewed were active high school band directors with 5 or more years of experience in the classroom and over a year experience teaching high school concert, marching, or jazz band in a classroom setting, as indicated in Table 3. I invited directors to participate in the study if they met the study specifications of being a high school band director who uses social media in the classroom. Every participant had experience using social media for personal, professional, and classroom use and were willing to share their experiences using social media in the classroom for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community. A total of 10 high school band directors participated in the study. Table 4 shows the participants, their level of teaching experience, and the level of technology provided by their school district in terms of 1:1 devices, which allow for student engagement and activity.

Table 4

Participant Pseudonym, Teaching Experience, School 1:1 Technology Devices

Participant pseudonym	Teaching experience	HS band teaching experience	Teaches in a school with 1:1 technology devices
Arthur	10 years	10 years	No
Melissa	21 years	21 years	Yes
Tiffany	5 years	2 years	No
Simon	22 years	22 years	Yes
Jessica	7 years	3 years	No
Catherine	10 years	10 years	No
Hannah	12 years	8 years	No
John	9 years	9 years	No
Nathan	7 years	1 year	No
Shannon	8 years	8 years	No

In addition to the basic demographic information obtained from participants, data results showed that none of the participants had training in using social media in the classroom, with the exception of a few workshops in Google Classroom provided by school districts. Each participant used a variety of social media applications for personal use as well as classroom use. All participants had a personal Facebook page, and eight out of 10 participants used Google Classroom. The Remind digital communication messaging platform was the next most used platform with all participants as a primary

form of communication with students. Figure 7 shows the variety of social media applications used by participants in this study. The *other* category includes the applications Schoology, Band, and Charms, which are similar to Google Classroom in application abilities.

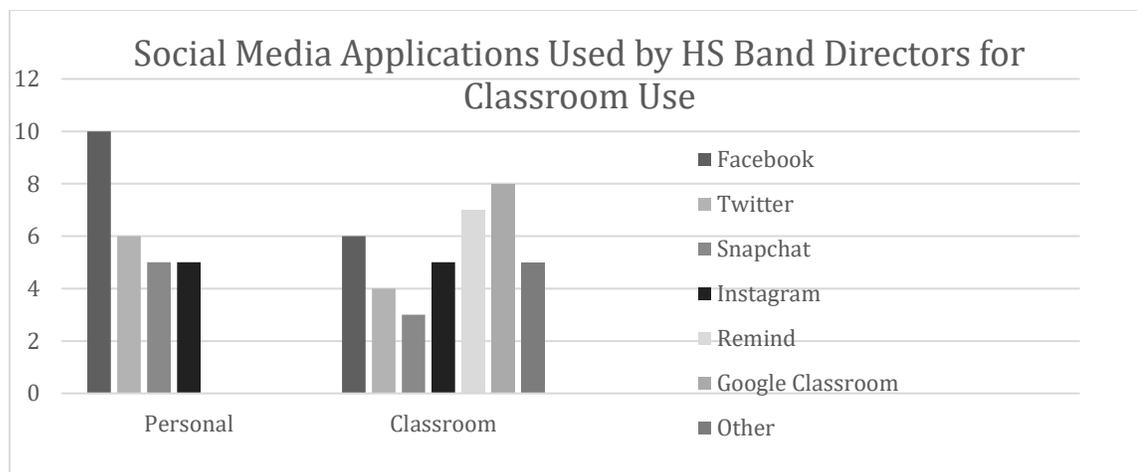


Figure 7. Social media applications and participant use.

Data Collection

The data collection process included one-on-one semistructured interviews ranging from 30 to 45 minutes in length with 10 high school band directors who shared their experiences using social media in the classroom for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community. Additionally, two focus groups were conducted, one with four participants and one with two participants, following the completion of the 10 individual participant interviews. The location of the interviews was online using a web-based call platform. The interviews were completed over the course of 2 months.

Prior to interviews, participants received and returned consent forms and were provided with a copy of the interview protocol, which included the questions that would be asked in the interview. During interviews, participants were asked about experiences using social media in the classroom for communication, student connectedness, and classroom community. Participants were asked to share both positive experiences and challenges using social media as a classroom tool. All participants were asked the interview questions listed on the interview protocol in Appendix D and were given time to respond as they found appropriate.

The interviews were recorded with a web-based call embedded recording device and notes that I took in a reflexive journal during the interviews. The data collection plan was executed as described in Chapter 3. All interviews were completed as scheduled, and no participants chose to withdraw from the study. The interviews were not subject to any disruptions or otherwise aberrant conditions that may have impacted the study. All data collected were downloaded and password protected on an external hard drive as described in the research plan.

The first focus group was made up of four participants, and the second focus group had two participants. Though the original plan called for two focus groups with five participants in each focus group, the coordination of schedules proved challenging, and two participants who had committed to the second focus group had last minute family emergencies and could not call in. One of the original participants interviewed was unable to coordinate schedules to fit any of the offered focus group times though many options were made available.

Participants were emailed a copy of their interview transcription for review and clarification. Throughout the interview and focus group process, all participants were reminded of confidentiality, anonymity, and their ability to withdraw at any time. No participant chose to withdraw from the study.

Data Analysis

After each interview was completed, the recording was downloaded to my secure, password-protected desktop computer and copied to an external hard drive. I listened to the recordings carefully and transcribed the interviews line by line. Completed transcripts were shared with each study participant. The participants were given time to respond with feedback via email if they felt their interview was inaccurate or if they had any additional thoughts or feedback. No participants responded with any changes to the transcript.

I compiled and organized all data, filled in data gaps, and uploaded all data into Word and NVivo software into my personal password protected computer and backed all data up to an external hard drive. I then created a table for ease of finding information that included participant pseudonyms, which applications each participant used, if the participant had training related to using social media in the classroom, if the participant's school or district had a social media policy in place, dates of interviews and focus group participation, and if participants had a set of classroom expectations for social media for student interaction. I created a graph of social media applications used by participants as seen in Figure 8, and an overview table of participant knowledge of school or district social media policy, classroom expectations for social media use by students in the classroom, and if participants had any training on using social media in the classroom, as

shown in Figure 8. This visual interpretation of the data informed my analysis and development of codes by providing further insight into the types of districts participants were working in and the level of implementation of social media for those teachers in accordance with district expectations in terms of student and teacher access, types of applications used by participants, and safety and privacy concerns.

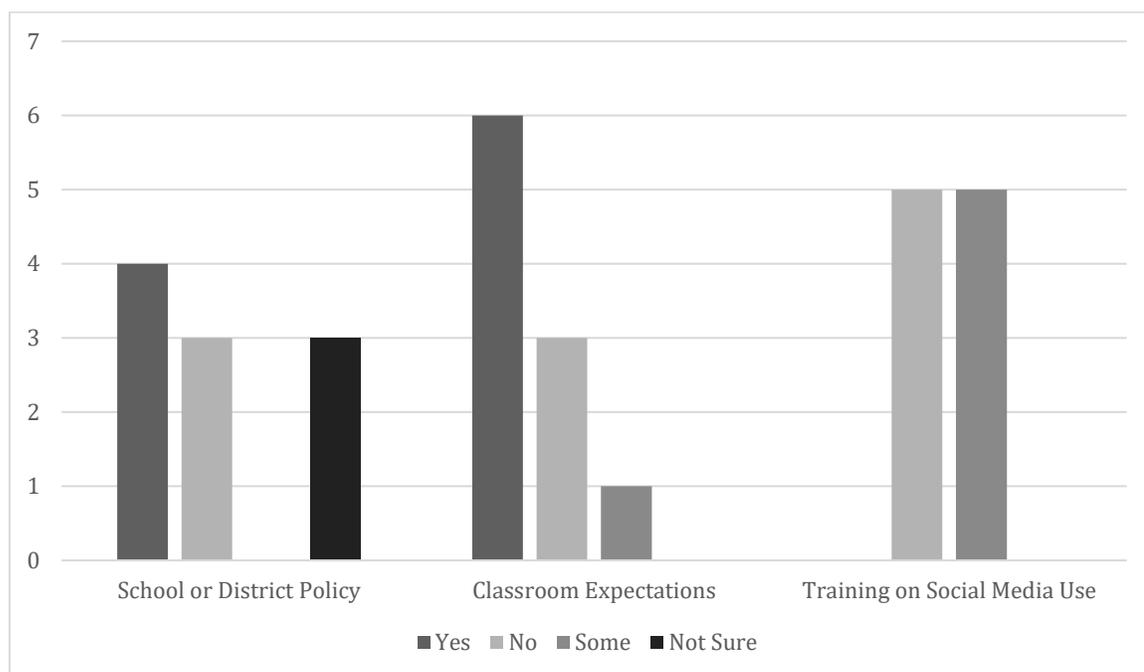


Figure 8. Participant social media policies and training.

I highlighted and marked passages using comments in Word according to the following code categories: communication, teacher experience, school demographics, definitions of social media, classroom use, personal use, student connectedness, engagement, classroom community, school policy, challenges, and barriers. Following the hand highlighting and commenting within the Word document, I created a macro by exporting the comments into a table for ease of reading and analysis. The table included page numbers, the textual data associated with the code, and the date that it was coded.

After hand coding in Word, I used the qualitative analysis program NVivo to organize the data. Identities of participants were replaced with pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

After uploading interview and focus group transcripts to NVivo, I ran a query search for repeated terms including social media application types, communication, student connectedness, classroom community, challenges, benefits, training, and policies. Following the initial query, I developed nodes based on the research questions and as suggested by Patton (2015), I analyzed the content of text to discover core meanings through patterns and themes. I created nodes in NVivo of participant responses into the two main categories of positive experiences and challenges. Subcategories were created within nodes to reflect experiences based on the research questions of communication, student connectedness, and improving classroom community as well as teaching strategies, definitions of social media, and other benefits and challenges.

I analyzed the interview and focus group transcript data further in NVivo to identify similar statements of participants that aligned with each node category which were identified by numbers of occurrences in each node. After further examining the nodes of information, I created a table to show an overview of responses and connections to the research questions. Table 5 shows a breakdown of each subquestion and the benefits and challenges experienced by band directors as indicated by the data.

Table 5

Benefits and Challenges of Social Media Use in the Classroom by Band Directors

	Benefits experienced	Challenges experienced
Social media and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time saving • Efficient • Relevance • Expands classroom to school and greater community as a public relations tool • Easy to set “office hours” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance of all platforms • Privacy/boundaries • Maintaining a personal life on social media
Social media and student connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance to students gives band directors a <i>coolness</i> factor • Increased student-to-student and student-to-teacher relationships in and out of the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student access • Cyber-bulling concerns • Parental allowance of social media use by students • Student accountability for actions on social media
Social media and classroom community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of classroom into community • Ability to share student accolades and experiences • Increased student leadership, student initiative and student-to-student mentorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student access • Rapid changing social media platforms and relevance

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility concerns were addressed by incorporating member checking methods with each participant to provide the opportunity for participants to clarify responses. The results presented convey an accurate account of band directors' experiences using social media in the classroom for communication, student connectedness, and improving classroom community. Participants were interviewed in a manner that aligned with the approved research plan. There were no conditions that caused a deviation to the original protocol or research plan. All participants voluntarily shared their experiences using social media in the classroom for communication, student connectedness, and improving classroom community.

Confidentiality of participants was maintained as described in the approved research plan. Each participant was given a pseudonym and asked to not reveal their name in interview or focus group interactions. Interviews were transcribed and edited line by line to identify discrepancies. Each participant was provided a copy of their interview transcript following analysis for member checking to clarify responses and each participant was given a week to respond with inaccuracies. Focus group questions were revised following interview analysis to reflect questions that would support and facilitate more in-depth results. Triangulation of data was achieved through participant interviews, reflexive journal notes, and the information gathered in the two focus group discussion. Participants were recruited from an online Facebook group page and I had no professional working relationship with any of the participants. Data was collected using a

web-based calling platform which allowed for clear recordings to ensure accurate transcripts of interviews and focus groups.

Transferability

Transferability was ensured by using a purposive sampling of high school band directors using a social media organization as a participant pool of varying demographics. This study could be recreated in different curriculum areas including middle school music programs or choral music programs as well as traditional content areas at any level. This study could also be adapted for implementation at a collegiate level. Findings from this type of study could inform other high school band directors, music directors, administrators, and school stakeholders of the benefits and challenges of using social media for communication, student connectedness, and improving classroom community. Additionally, findings from this study may provide support for social media integration in high school band classrooms, music classrooms, and other educational areas to support stronger communication, increased student connectedness, and improved classroom community to provide outlets for students to identify as a connected member of the group.

Dependability

Dependability of this study was maintained through consistent research methods. An interview protocol was used for all participant interviews, each participant was asked the same questions in the same order, and the same focus group protocol was used for both focus groups with the same questions asked of both groups. I used an orderly process for data collection and analysis.

Confirmability

Confirmability was maintained by keeping a reflexive journal during all participant interviews and focus groups notes and I maintained constant awareness of my role as a researcher and possible biases.

Results

The results of the study are demonstrated below to further illustrate the findings and divided for each of the research subquestions that stem from the central research question. The results of the study which are presented in relation to the research questions discussing both positive experiences and challenges described by high school band director participants using social media for communication, student connectedness, and improving classroom community. Responses are explained in further depth with direct quotations from study participants.

Central research question: What are the experiences of high school band directors with the use of social media in their classroom?

Prior to examining the themes of the subquestions that stemmed from the central research question, exploring participant definitions of social media was necessary as part of the study. Definitions of social media varied from director to director and evolved from the beginning of the interview through the course of the interview as participants realized other applications that could now be considered social media. Though at the beginning of each interview, directors associated social media as mostly Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram, they soon began to include Google Classroom, Schoology, BAND, and Remind in their description of experiences. Arthur L shared,

It's interesting because most people are going to say Facebook, Twitter, things like that. Really, I think it's any electronic medium now... So really to me social media is any type of electronic interaction.

Through the course of interviews, participant social media application use expanded to include other platforms that were accessible to students and teachers through school supported applications including Remind, Google Classroom, Schoology, and BAND as noted by Nathan P:

For the most part, it (communication) seems to be happening in school using devices. I think they see Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Snapchat as recreational, but they see Google apps as useful. As educational. But I also noticed that they're even planning parties on a Google doc. They're talking about their weekends on a Google Doc. 'Hey, who wants to go bowling?' You know, 'type it to this sheet when you can do it'. And quite honestly, I think it's, well because it's free and it's so useful. I think they use it for just about everything.

Resulting data from subquestions reflected the use of a wide variety of applications based on the varied definitions of social media discussed by band directors. Data was broken down into themes and further supported with direct quotations from participants.

SQA

How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media in the classroom for communication?

Positive experiences and benefits. Resulting data indicated experiences of high

school band directors with social media for communication were generally positive and helped them to maintain an efficient and consistent program. Overwhelmingly, applications that were used by participants focus on a communication tool to relay calendar information, reminders, and other classroom housekeeping details. A variety of applications were used by participants, though Remind, Twitter, and Facebook are the most used across all participants. Emerging themes from the data include time, organization, building relationships, community benefits, and privacy and safety benefits. Further, responses are broken down into positive experiences and challenges.

Time. The most discussed benefit of using social media for communication with high school band directors was as a time-saving tool. The band directors interviewed all expressed the weight of their schedules and the need for balance which was assisted with the ability to use social media to communicate with students quickly in a variety of situations, among multiple platforms to include all stakeholders including traditional classroom items such as reminders, homework, performance assessments, calendar information, and performance attire needs. All participants discussed the time benefits of using social media as they found students to be more on time, more prepared, and the ability to schedule and send out information quickly on a variety of platforms to save time. Jessica H. discussed how using social media for communication has simplified organization and scheduling for her and her students:

My students are more on time. They're always on their phones in the first place.

Of course, even in class when we tell them not to be, but if they're always on their phones, it's a faster way for me to tell them what time they need to be somewhere

or if there's a last-minute change. I find that I get a lot less questions sending stuff out through social media than just the old paper handouts or just telling them in class.

Band directors were able to schedule announcement and communications via the Remind application that were preminiprogrammed and went out at certain times of the day or week to relay important information. Additionally, band directors were able to set office hours to limit access from students to create balance with home and work life. For Melissa B, the ability to balance home and school was managed more easily with social media:

It is helpful for me as a mom of two teenage boys, and I work between 50 and 90 hours a week. I don't want to be dealing with emails at 11, 12:00 at night. I basically send out information if we're going on a trip, let's say, and the time changes because the bus is running late or something, I can communicate with my parents on Twitter, Facebook, and Schoology, and send an email out with those four platforms and I won't have one phone call or one email so I can deal with other things with the students that come up.

Organization. In addition to the time benefit, Google Classroom and Remind gave directors the ability to provide information to certain groups of students instead of sending information to everyone at once. For example, a director with multiple ensembles could create a group in Remind or Google Classroom to get information to just the Jazz Ensemble so that students in other ensembles would not get information that was unnecessary to them which then prevented an overabundance of information being ignored

because students did not think it was applicable to them. The Remind application was shared by many high school band directors in this study as an easy and efficient way to organize students for quick communication. Simon S. shared,

We use Remind a lot. We are getting ready to go to Disney World in a couple of weeks and we set up a separate Remind communication tool for the jazz band, a separate Remind for the marching band, another for the orchestra, and one just for the choir. This is very beneficial for our communications with this trip as well as within the ensembles that are performing on the trip.

This ease and efficiency was echoed by other band directors throughout interviews and focus groups who shared the benefit of being able to provide students with information quickly and in a way that communicates a variety of information at any time. Nathan P claimed,

What I like to use social media for is to keep the information in their minds when they are at the dinner table, hopefully not looking at their phones, but before they come to the dinner table, they're thinking about band, or they're thinking about orchestra or whatever is going on and communicating that with parents.

Similar reflection on social media use for organization was explained by John M. who discussed the ability to use Google Classroom as an efficient way to communicate with several classrooms at one time. "If I go into my Google Classroom, I must have 15 or 20 classrooms that I'm a part of and we find it to be a very effective way to get information out and it seems to work very well."

Building relationships. Participants shared the need for building relationships in the classroom to create a strong band program and that though a lot of relationship building happens in the classroom, social media helps to create another way to interact and bond with students in a manner that is closer to where students live in their daily world. Relevance to students and bringing information to them in the world they live in was another positive contributor to using social media for communication as expressed by Melissa B.:

I think it connects with kids in a way that they think I'm cool. I'm kidding, they don't think I'm cool (laughs), but they feel confident that I have their back.

Using social media for communication also expanded and improved director-student relationships by providing an outlet for students to communicate questions to directors or other students in a less-stressful environment as shared by Jessica H.:

There are some kids that are still too afraid to ask me questions or they're too shy of course to ask somebody else and get on the chat and say 'hey, what are we going to be tested on today?' So they ask each other to get prepared for a class

Community benefits. Another benefit discussed was the ability to expand the classroom in the broader school community for public relations through Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to notify the public of concert announcements, department accolades, awards, and pictures of students involved in activities. Similar to providing the community with a window into the classroom as discussed earlier, using social media has allowed some participants to share information to a larger audience than previously achieved with newspaper articles or word of mouth invitation. In addition, this expansion

of the classroom has informed administrators of classroom needs which in some cases has provided benefits in terms of equipment or funding as in the example shared by Nathan P.:

In my professional life, I use it to show snapshots of what's going on in my classroom and in our program so that people who are not there can be the, you know, that proverbial fly on the wall. I like to use it to reassure working parents and guardians that...even though they're not in my classroom, their students are in good hands.

Many directors shared that using social media has created a greater awareness of the music program in the community at large as well as the school community and school administration. Melissa B. shared about her ability to bring awareness of program needs to her administration using social media:

I tweet out a lot of marching band stuff, so on top of the tweeting, my central office and my principal and my activities director retweet everything I tweet. My superintendent and administrators in my building adore my program and yesterday my flag coach, went to see my principal. He had asked to see her and he goes, 'I hear you're fundraising for flag uniforms'. He said, 'that's great, but let me give you the money instead'. Just a few years ago, he said, 'I hear you need pianos', and he got us three upright pianos. He would have never done that 10 years ago. I really think that the exposure from Twitter, Schoology, Facebook and being on the field has supported my program tremendously.

Additionally, as administrators and school districts become more accepting of social media as a beneficial tool for communication, band directors are being encouraged to share classroom experiences with the community as expressed by Simon S.:

When social media first came out, it was the big taboo. Don't be on Facebook, you can't have a Facebook account and don't dare have Instagram, Twitter, all that. Now that has completely changed in our school district. We still have acceptable use policies that everybody signs off on and follow...but our superintendent is all over Twitter and he's encouraging the school spirit piece...he has a hashtag for the district. He's constantly like, 'tag me. I'll share it out. Anything that's going on'. So that's been neat to see that we've almost come 360 on that whole thing.

An unexpected benefit of the use of social media was for transmitting information to students and the greater community in emergency situations as directors took the opportunity to reach out to the community due to the ability to communicate to large groups of people quickly through the Remind app. Tiffany D. shared how invaluable the use of social media was in a natural disaster situation for her students and their families as well as the greater community affected:

Social media travels a lot faster than I would like it to sometimes. But the good thing is when we had the hurricane, I was about two hours away in my hometown where my parents are but the service was spotty for everybody else, and it was really bad. I was able to take screenshots of where you can get gas and water and health and food and all those other things, and I was sending that out over Remind

so it became not so much a social media thing, but a necessity thing so that they were able to find the help that they could get. So that is definitely one positive that came out of that experience.

Safety and privacy. Safety and privacy concerns for both participants and students were discussed as keeping cell phone numbers, addresses, or student information private can be a challenge when sharing information through social media applications. Some of these concerns were addressed by participants by using the Remind app which was used by most of the band directors interviewed. As shared by Catherine T., the ability to create various groups, set office hours, and have quick and easy contact while maintaining the privacy of cell phone numbers was a key advantage to using this tool for communication with directors:

Every year we take a trip to the local amusement park and it's a nightmare getting people back on the bus, but if something happens they can just text me on Remind and it shows up on my phone and I know where they are and I can contact them. That is a big positive and parents really like that I can communicate with them through that, and they (students and parents) don't need to exchange phone numbers if they're not comfortable doing that, too. So that's been a huge plus

This is echoed in John M's statement: "I've tended to steer away from too much personal communication. I guess the thing about Google Classroom that I like is that I can control it from my end as far as how interactions go."

Challenges and negative experiences. Some challenges to using social media for communication were discussed though minimal in comparison to the positive experiences

shared by directors. The main concern expressed by band directors was privacy and boundaries, though access was also mentioned as a concern for both students and high school band directors.

Privacy, boundaries, and balance. Social media has allowed a 24-hour instant access for sending messages and asking questions. Concerns regarding privacy, boundaries, and balancing social media platforms, classroom work, and home life were often a challenge. Participants shared that student and parent access to them via social media occurs all the time for a variety of reasons. In some cases, these were simple questions about concerts, attire, or events, though information had been provided to students and/or parents in previous social media communications. Band directors found unique ways to proactively combat the challenge of constant accessibility by creating office hours times or reminding students and parents of the need to send an email or meet with them face-to-face. Additionally, some participants found it challenging to balance personal social media with professional or classroom social media. Concerns about students, parents, administration, and community members misinterpreting personal social media posts has forced some participants to create more than one account, while others like Tiffany D. have abandoned personal accounts for professional, school only accounts:

The biggest annoyance right now is that when I'm trying to relax or when I'm sleeping, I get messages at five in the morning and I'm asleep. I don't know what you're doing asking me about what to wear for the concert at five in the morning when we've talked about it for I don't know how many weeks in a row...so yeah,

that's the biggest downside is that they're able to access me all the time and I don't always want to because I have a life outside of band.

In addition to privacy and boundary concerns, another challenge faced by band directors was balancing personal and school social media accounts. Though some felt strongly that personal social media was for personal use, many described the need to keep all social media communications professional and stay away from controversial subjects, inappropriate language, and political debate. Tiffany D. continued to discuss the need for personal and professional space as well as creating social media boundaries:

I don't use my personal pages as my professional page necessarily. Whatever I do on my Facebook is mine and it's private. I don't add the kids on my own personal Facebook or Instagram or anything like that, but we do have band specific ones. So there's kind of a separation between the two.

A similar response by Melissa B. expanded on the idea of personal social media privacy while noting a need for boundaries and awareness of who can see what is being posted:

Personally, I write things on Facebook such as politics and words that may be considered inappropriate for my students to see. I'm human and I want to share with my friends and family. When I first began using Facebook, I got called into the office by my principal because I wrote something about local taxes...so my principal called me in and said, 'you can't be friends with students or if you are, be very careful about what you write'. And that's right. And that's when I said I don't want to be careful about what I write on Facebook. I want to be who I am

and I'm going to make another page, so I made another Facebook page at that time.

Some high school band directors also shared concerns regarding access as a challenge to using social media for communication. In some cases, the use of social media varied depending on which school they were teaching in as experienced by Shannon C. in a focus group interview:

The school that I am at right now does not allow phones in the classroom without prior approval, so in our weekly lesson plans, we have to get prior approval before we can have kids use them. So I know kids are connected outside of school, but it's a hindrance in comparison to what I used to be able to do at previous schools when I could tell kids 'yeah, pull this up right now from the Facebook feed' or whatever, and they can all pull out their phones and do it right then and there. I can't do that anymore.

This concern was echoed by Catherine T. during the same focus group who shared:

I've noticed there are different rules which does make that a little bit hard especially being in a low-income area. My biggest problem is that not all of my kids have phones, so I feel like half of the students are connected and know what is going on and the other half are a little bit clueless even when I am sending home letters and things and then the students use that as an excuse not to know information.

Overall, high school band directors had mostly positive experiences using social media for communication especially for sharing information quickly, organizing students, and to provide a sense of safety for both teachers and students. Though concerns noted the need for professionalism, boundaries, and communicating expectations, they were not much of a concern to high school band directors who shared the benefits of using social media for communication outweighed the concerns.

SQB

How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media in the classroom for student connectedness?

Student connectedness is “the feeling of belonging and acceptance and the creation of bonding relationships” (Rovai, 2002, p.201). Band directors shared many positive experiences using social media to increase student connectedness in the classroom including. Creating relationships in the band classroom is an important part of the process working as an ensemble which often extends beyond the traditional classroom-day interactions. Though band directors felt strongly that social media was not a replacement for making connections, most shared experiences of how social media was used as a tool that allowed for expanding and growing student-to-student, teacher-to-student, and student-to-teacher connections. Positive experiences yielded themes of relevance, student-to student relationships, and student-to-teacher relationships. Challenges experienced by participants indicated themes of cyber-bullying and issues with student access as a result of using social media for student connectedness.

Positive experiences and benefits.

Relevance. The theme of relevance was expressed in terms of using social media for communication which reappeared under the umbrella of student connectedness that stemmed from communicating through social media. Participants expressed a sense of pride in being able to adapt to social media trends to stay relevant and be a part of an online social environment where students live, though it was frequently shared that social media connections should not be a substitute for face-to-face conversations. Simon S. shared his experience with adapting to the new technologies:

I think that the fact that using the technology and that's the where the kids live, you know, to take a kid's cell phone now is like taking their right arm. It's kind of funny, you know. I think that to try to be relevant in their lives, it's good for us. And I think that posting things, reaching them where they're at, where they are, where they live. It really does help to draw that sense of connectedness

Similarly, Arthur P. compared this generation to his own and the differences in relationships before social media use and today.

You or I or folks of our generation are probably more comfortable with face to face. Today's students are so increasingly reliant on media for social interaction that I think that certainly bridges a gap when you can make yourself available that way and now maybe start a conversation that they would not have started face to face that then you can move face to face.

High school band directors using social media for student connectedness experienced an increased ability to provide quick feedback to students on assignments as described in the focus group interview by Catherine T.:

I feel more connected to the kids in general...if they have a question about an assignment or something or just in terms of assignments, I don't have to rely on the old cassette tapes where I would have students go home and tape record themselves and bring them in to me. They can just pull out a phone or a tablet and record themselves and send it to me and if they have a question or if their instrument isn't working right, they can send it to me over the weekend and I can check it.

This was also supported by Nathan P. in the same focus group interview who added:

I think Google Classroom is especially useful with assignments because not only can you receive videos of students which is super useful, but sometimes, I can video myself or a lesson and sometimes it sends a more personal message when you are describing an assignment. Sometimes I'll just post a video of myself explaining rather than an email...it puts the kids at ease because they're pretty stressed out as it is, and that just helps relieve the tension for them.

Student-to-student connectedness. Experiences using social media for student-to-student connectedness were varied as band directors did not always know whether gatherings or student interactions were a result of the use of social media or not, however, experiences were shared that demonstrated. Some participants including expressed

knowledge of student connections outside of the classroom in terms of sectional bonding activities and birthday celebrations but view the classroom as the primary area of student connection as shared in this statement from Catherine T.:

My kids have always had their own bonding days. I never really have to worry about getting them connected with each other, but I have found when I do post things and the kids reply, there are a lot of them that reply back to each other whether it's encouragement or ragging on each other in a joking, loving manner, of course. But they do respond and interact with each other...and I do feel like the kids feel like I'm more in tune with their, I don't want to say their lives, but the kids think they feel more connected to me and like I'm more accessible, but I think they also are realizing that I'm a person because they know that if they try to get hold of me after maybe 6:30 or 7:00 PM on a non game night, I'm not going to answer.

Challenges and negative experiences.

Cyber-bulling. Few participants expressed concern or shared major challenges using social media to increase student connectedness. Cyber-bullying was explained further as an unseen concern as band directors expressed that they do not feel that the issue is because of social media use and that if bullying behaviors are not expressed in the confines of the classroom and are not on a social media feed that band directors have control over or access to, they are not privy to occurrences. Though not a major challenge or concern expressed by participants, it was noted as an area of concern by Tiffany D. to

be aware of and one that should be considered as social media continues to grow in use in the classroom:

I don't see negative experiences come around because of the social media. I think that's more of like what's actually happening in the classroom is that we have our little cliques and everybody goes to their normal group of friends. I don't see that necessarily because of the social media side. All of our kids integrate really well with each other.

Similar to Tiffany D., Hannah F. explained that it is hard to know what is going on if as a band director, you do not have first-hand knowledge of a concerning occurrence. She did share a story that was a negative experience that turned into a more positive experience as a result of her awareness and ability to act on a potentially life-or-death situation because of social media interaction.

I think that's hard because the student would have to actually express something negative. I guess the only real negative thing that has happened to me personally is last Christmas I checked Twitter and my band account followed a student who had mentioned suicide on twitter. So like literally on Christmas Eve, I had to contact my principal but I didn't have his phone number so I had to contact another admin and get him to get the principal to call me and we had to really quickly take care of that and on Facebook that wouldn't ever happen because I don't friend students on Facebook, but on Twitter I follow students as my band program and the ramifications of that were pretty intense that one time.

The lack of accountability that social media provides for students was expressed by directors as social media allows students to behave in more mean or unkind ways without considering after effects. This led to further discussion by participants regarding the need for face-to-face interaction as an important communication tool that should not be thrown out for social media. John M. shared his thoughts on the need to continue to be aware of both the benefits and the issues related to social media use:

I do think that some of the interactions though are faceless and I think the kids are interacting sometimes in more of a mean way. I'm not sure that any of the social media that I use with them is where that happens, but I think that in their lives, socially and at school, social media is oftentimes the cause of anxiety and stress tied to things that they see on something like Snapchat. Just today I had a kid sort of jokingly, you know, singing...making up a song about a girl who blocked him on snapchat and he was upset over that. I do see some dark sides of social media, but I guess the dark side of it that I see is when the kids are using it in an unregulated way.

This was further expressed and explained by Simon S. who discussed not only the concerns regarding social media as a way to alienate some students and the repercussions to the ensemble as a result:

There are not many negative experiences that I can really recall. You know, I think there's part of it, I don't know if I would call it as a result of social media or not, but some of it's just kids being kids. Maybe three weeks ago on a Friday night before a football game, one of the kids was just sitting in the band room by

himself kind of early. And I'm like, 'Hey, is everything okay?' And he's like, 'well, not really' and I said 'what's the matter?' And he said, 'well, normally I go out with these six people, we're all friends and get something to eat before we have to come back for the football game.' And he said, 'I got dropped from the group chat and they all decided to go out for dinner and not include me' and you know, and there's more detail to it, but that's the gist of it. That's the negative side of it...that in some ways I think it's just gotten too personal and too almost invasive in terms of the connectedness because then kids know, 'Hey, I'm not connected, I'm not included'. I've seen that side of it not necessarily in my classroom, but with the kids in my classroom and it has affected the students in that way.

Though Snapchat was used as a main social media tool for the classroom by one participant, others felt strongly that Snapchat was the social media application that they feared the most due to the ability to make "snaps" disappear in seconds which leaves students feeling that they are gone forever and do not have long-term repercussions. Catherine T. expressed her concerns with Snapchat though she does use the platform for personal use:

The negativity that I find with students and social media stems mostly from Snapchat. I think kids think they can get away with a lot on Snapchat, especially in the chat part of Snapchat where they can type to each other. And I use Snapchat personally, definitely not professionally. I luckily haven't had to do a lot with kids not getting along on their phones, but I don't know if that's because they know

that I'm going to get on their case if they do that. I can't imagine it's just because they're good kids. Maybe they're hiding it from me and I don't know that.

Access. Another challenge to using social media for increasing student connectedness expressed by participants is due to socioeconomic disparity and student access. Arthur L. teaches at a low socioeconomic, high refugee and ESL population school:

Access is definitely an issue. The socioeconomic background of my campus was one that had refugees and English language learners or ESL students that would sit side by side with students of very affluent parents. There were kids who had the newest iPhone right after Christmas and there were kids who would never have dreamed of having a phone in their pocket because they worked evenings to help keep the lights on and food on the table. So you end up with all these small barriers that snowball into big things.

Similarly, John M. expressed concerns with disparity of access, but also attributed some of the concern to parents not allowing social media or electronic devices at all.

I will say that I think I see a lot of negatives with social media and it probably stems from just maybe how different kids are, how they use it, which I think is tied a lot of times to their families and the parents and the way their parents are and the expectations their parents have. I've seen kids that are definitely out of the loop because maybe their parents don't let them have social media....but I think that's probably becoming few and far between.

Arthur L. echoed John M.'s concerns and shared his experience with parental limitations as well:

Another limitation is some parents still won't allow their high school students to be part of social media at all...which is totally their decision. But that's one thing I would bring up at the beginning of year meeting as we use those resources frankly a lot. And I as a teacher and a parent would push for one more adult being that voice in your student's ear. But I'm not going to override you and say they must, we'll have to find a way.

The experiences high school band directors using social media to increase student connectedness were positive, though the concerns with the potential for misuse and cyber-bullying by students was clear, student access was the main concern shared by high school band directors. Students at socioeconomic disadvantage may not share the same benefits of classroom social media use as those with access to smartphones or social media enabled devices, though the use of Google Classroom in schools has helped to provide an outlet for these students.

SQC

How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media to improve classroom community?

The last subquestion also gleaned mostly positive responses from participants as they shared experiences using social media to build not only classroom community by sharing celebrations, birthdays, trips, parades, festivals, and classroom learning experiences with students in their band programs, but also to share these experiences to

the entire school community, parents, and the community at-large. Positive experiences were expressed in the themes of parent and school community involvement, student leadership initiatives, and student motivation.

Positive experiences and benefits.

A window into the classroom. For some high school band directors, the term community expanded beyond the classroom as they viewed social media as a way to provide parents and community members a window into their daily world. Some participants expressed the need to utilize social media as a public relations tool to inform the school community and outer community of events happening and student accomplishments to serve as a conduit for building community support and involvement as well as showcase students beyond the classroom. Hannah F. explained:

I like to take pictures of big events that we do...every game, I'm there taking pictures, taking video and posting it so if parents aren't there they can see their student playing. Sometimes we have guest artists in our classroom and I'll take a picture or a video and then post that so that people who are outside see what is happening. One of the most interesting things about my Twitter stuff is I find that when I post, more people who are coaches and teachers around the school follow us and pay attention to that. So I think that it's not even just building community here in our music hallway...it makes us feel more connected in that we know what our kids are doing on the weekends and evenings and we have a better picture of what our life looks like inside and outside of school.

In addition to using social media as a window for the community into the band classroom, social media has also become a way for students to provide community service as shared by Tiffany D.:

We are in the area where Hurricane Michael hit, and when we talk about building community, it wasn't just in the band area, but we did a toy drive for kids that might not have had a Christmas because of the hurricane. The drive went out over email, Charms, Remind, Facebook, and Instagram, and we were able to donate 122 toys. So it was reaching out into that community and being able to bring it to us so that we could help somebody else. That's definitely a positive that came out of that.

Student leadership. Band directors also expressed the positive experiences of seeing students take leadership initiative to plan events and foster the growth of their peers and younger students as a result of social media which fostered improving community in the band classroom. Student leadership in the form of student-led ensemble organization, and student led and organized community-building activities as shared by Shannon C.:

Well, I know with the Facebook group, there's been a couple of events that my kids have spontaneously decided to schedule themselves and then share with the group, which is fine. Like in the summer, we don't have any set summer band things or anything like that, but I've had it happen a couple times where one of my junior or senior high school band members will post on the Facebook group page 'Hey, we have this opportunity to play for this. Anybody want to join us'? We

played the National Anthem for the local fireworks show a couple of summers ago because of something like that, we have a movie in the park event that happens at the end of every summer here in town that we played at...we had a homecoming band barbecue that got started via social media. I think kids are taking more initiative than they would if they were just having to do it by paper posters or in class.

Similarly, Hannah F. discussed classroom community building activities that brought her students together through social media as well as the impact on student leadership, though she also believed that social media was not wholly responsible for this impact:

The one big thing we did was an end of the year scavenger hunt and I they had to take a picture of their team together at that location and then post it on social media and the team that posted their pictures of all of those locations the fastest got a prize. We have a band council and we have the Tri-M students and they'll get agendas ready to go. I have students who volunteer to make order forms or volunteer to do bulletin boards, so they are really active, but it doesn't always revolve around social media.

Similar to Hannah's experiences with social media and student leadership, Jessica H. discussed the initiative of her student leadership in creating classroom community building activities through gaining feedback from peers via a poll on the social media platform:

Before our first competition, everyone was still kind of nervous and students weren't really connecting with the freshmen, so my student leaders had an idea of doing a poll using BAND and finding out what kind of things students wanted to do to connect with each other and get to know each other better. And they came up with a movie night right before our first competition and that turned into a 'hey, let's do this before every competition' kind of thing. And it got more and more of the freshmen kind of out of their shells. I wasn't expecting the new students to really bond with the kids so early on, but I'd say by the end of the first competition, they were hanging out at each other's houses. They didn't care if it was a freshman hanging out with the senior, they acted as if they had already known each other for years and years.

Student motivation. Another way that participants expressed using social media to improve classroom community was in motivating students to practice, motivate each other, and build excitement within the band program which supported community in ways that were sometimes unacknowledged when said by the band director in class. Hannah F. discussed her student leadership using the BAND app platform to motivate their peers:

My captains and my drum majors, when we have a bad rehearsal, they'll go onto the BAND app and they'll post, 'hey, this wasn't a really good rehearsal. I know that we have done and can do better. I know you have it in you, we've only got x amount of days until this performance. So let's really get on the ball', whatever

kind of encouragement words that they can come up with and the kids react a lot faster than when I say the exact same thing in a rehearsal.

Likewise, Nathan P. had similar experiences using social media to bring his large ensemble of over 400 students closer together:

Yeah, the positive experiences are that the students get to see the band from a different perspective, from the audience's perspective, whereas all they ever see is the conductor's podium or the drum major and the person in front of them. They're not seeing the faces of the other ensemble members and in a band of 400, a lot of them don't know each other. The moment they go on Twitter, they see a picture of one of the mellophone players or they see one of the dance team members and you're a Tuba player. You're 30 yards at closest from these people and you never talked to them. It allows them to connect and realize that they are all part of one band. And I noticed that there's a little bit more respect for the sections, especially band front and the instrumentalists.

Shannon C. shared her experiences using Snapchat as a way to build classroom community on trips to create culture for students in an online forum by allowing students to create their own group names and share photos and information with each other as well as provide a safe and efficient way for students to check-in:

Using Snapchat is huge for me and my kids in creating culture. When we go somewhere on a trip or for a festival, it's a big deal when they decide what the Snapchat group name is going to be for wherever we're going and that's just the way I stay connected with my kids. The kids talk about and share stuff all the

time. There are photos that kids share that end up on our band webpage ... and if kids are doing something goofy or videos of them playing...it creates a culture and builds the community.

Challenges and negative experiences.

Access. Though few challenges or negative experiences were shared regarding social media and improving classroom community, those that were shared reflected back to student access including this experience by Shannon C.:

I have several families whose kids don't get cell phones until they're in high school. They're not allowed to have their own Facebook page and some students do feel left out sometimes, especially if the kids walk into class saying, 'Oh yeah, on the Facebook Blah, blah, We saw this'. But for the most part I think because we are such a small community and a small school, everybody eventually is included in everything. I don't think anybody is left out permanently. They just kind of get left out from the get-go. I think people find out about things sooner from the social media.

Relevance. In addition to access, in some cases band directors expressed that some social media platforms are now outdated or *uncool* for students to use, though most band directors rely on Facebook and Twitter as primary social media tools. Catherine T. explained the concern regarding social media changing so quickly:

I haven't seen too many negatives. The only negative that I've had is I had at one time heard a snare drummer make a comment to another kid because they were like, 'oh yeah, I saw that on the Facebook page' and they were like 'who uses

Facebook anymore'. And then it was like, all right, don't be a jerk, but there haven't been too many negatives. Like wow, I have really lucked out of some trouble.

Another negative experience shared was in the case of accidentally leaving a student out of a picture or social media post or not giving enough attention to all students as expressed by Nathan P.:

I think that in this district it would be the parents and guardians who might be more upset by their kid not being in the picture....so far I haven't heard of that stuff. It's been more positive than negative when it comes to Twitter and Instagram because I think it's just pictures and not a whole lot of word content. So mostly positive there. I try to rotate and have as many different pictures of people in different sections as I can.

Unexpected benefits of high school band directors using social media to improve classroom community included improvements in student leadership and motivation by providing an outlet for students to interact with each other and the band director outside of the classroom while also allowing the school community a window into the classroom to inform in a way that was not available before social media implementation. It is important to note, however, the need for improved access for students, and training for teachers with rapidly changing social media platforms should continue to be addressed.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I discussed the results of a qualitative study concerning experiences of high school band directors using social media for communication, increasing student

connectedness, and improving classroom community. SQA data analysis yielded positive experiences and challenges with the time, relevance, public relations. SQB data analysis yielded positive experiences and challenges through themes of relevance, student-to-student relationships, student-to-teacher relationships, student access, and student accountability due to cyber-bullying behaviors. SQC data analysis yielded positive experiences and challenges through themes of classroom community expansion, student accolades, community service, and student initiative, leadership and mentorship. This chapter also included methods of data collection and data analysis. Chapter 5 contains a detailed discussion of the results which includes conclusions about the findings and how the findings connect to the literature and conceptual framework. Additionally, future recommendations will be discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of high school band directors using social media to communicate with students, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community. In this study, high school band directors shared their experiences using social media in the classroom in semistructured interviews and focus groups, which allowed them to share their experiences with this phenomenon.

Research has been conducted regarding the use of social media in the classroom at the collegiate level for communication, student engagement, and academic achievement, but little research had been conducted that specifically explored high school band directors' experiences with the phenomenon of social media. Therefore, this study contributes to the body of research of how high school band directors are using social media for communication, increasing student connectedness, and improving classroom community.

A phenomenological design was used to collect and analyze interview and focus group data to answer my research questions including interviews and focus groups of high school band directors. I used Patton's (2015) five-step research and data analysis process to guide my process. Key findings from this study revealed that

1. The definition of social media is varied, with high school band directors using a variety of applications to reach students, including traditional applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, but the definition of

social media has expanded by high school band directors to include classroom applications such as Google Classroom, BAND, Charms, and Remind.

2. High school band directors are using social media for increased academic uses as well as communication, student connectedness, and classroom community.
3. High school band directors rely on a variety of social media platforms as a positive and relevant way to communicate with students, parents, and the school community about events, homework, schedules, and a plethora of classroom informational details.
4. High school band directors use social media to interact with students and connect students within and outside of the band classroom, yielding student peer initiatives, student leadership, and a safe environment for students to share and participate.
5. High school band directors use social media to improve classroom community through sharing student successes and accolades and creating activities for classroom bonding through involvement and engagement.
6. A main barrier to successful social media integration is student access due to socioeconomic issues or negative parent support.
7. High school band directors are concerned about the future role of social media in education in terms of cyber-bullying, increased platforms with a lack of time, a lack of professional development using social media in the classroom, and a lack of training in social media uses for the classroom in preservice programs.

In this chapter, I present an interpretation of the findings and discuss ways that study findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline of band education and social media use for communication, increasing student connectedness, and improving classroom community. To accomplish this, I compare the findings with what was found in the peer-reviewed literature presented in Chapter 2. Additionally, I analyze and interpret the findings in the context of this study's conceptual framework, which is comprised of Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, Wenger's (1998) COP theory, and Siemens's (2004) theory of connectivism. I also discuss the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for social change.

Interpretation of the Findings

Experiences of HS Band Directors Using Social Media for Communication

Findings of this study indicated that high school band directors' primary use of social media in the classroom was for communication, which is supported by Kilis et al.'s (2016) findings that the main reason to implement social media in the classroom is for idea exchange, communication, and document sharing. This finding is also supported by Cao et al. (2013) and Krutka et al. (2017), who found that high school students and teachers using social media in the classroom indicated beneficial results when using social media to increase communication.

High school band directors in this study indicated that the primary use of social media in the classroom was for communication and that using social media for communication had improved their ability to communicate with students by using several

platforms, getting information out efficiently in a timely manner, and being able to reach students, parents, and the community on a variety of platforms in a less time-consuming manner than the previous method of sending paper communications home with students. This aligns with several studies that support teacher use of social media for communication with students (see Asterhan & Rosenberg, 2015; Kilis et al., 2016; Palekahelu et al., 2016).

Remind, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Google Classroom allowed band directors in this study to share large amounts of information with specific student groups, parents, or community members for academic reasons such as assignments and projects, scheduling reasons such as performances, festivals, fundraisers, and rehearsals, and informational purposes such as attire, due date for fees, and in some cases, community service projects and community assistance. High school band directors in this study agreed that using social media for communication gave them the ability to transmit information conveniently and frequently, while keeping their personal contact information private.

Experiences of HS Band Directors Using Social Media for Increasing Student Connectedness

Siemens (2006) built on Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism theory by integrating social media technologies with social learning experiences in the digital age. Siemens believed that his theory advanced Vygotsky's for the 21st century learner and considered new technologies such as social media and that connectivism asserts the

existence of knowledge in the world rather than with the individual. High school band directors indicated the need to meet students where they live in terms of technology.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Siemens (2006) viewed communities as connection-forming spaces and that the community should come to the individual. Additionally, the six stages of connectivism culminate in the praxis stage where individuals are actively involved in changing, building, and recreating their own learning network (Siemens, 2006). High school band directors shared experiences that showed this level of praxis as discussed by Siemens (2006) in their classrooms as students created communication groups with peers to share information, discuss classroom assignments, and organize and coordinate events for the benefit of the ensemble.

Consistent with the findings of Adderley et al. (2003) and Rawlings and Stoddard (2017), the findings of this study showed an inherent connection between students in the high school band classroom as part of the ensemble experience. For example, high school band directors expressed difficulty in pinpointing social media as a reason for increased student connectedness or as a contributing factor to what was already occurring as part of the inherent nature of the ensemble process. Participants agreed, however, that they have witnessed increased student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction throughout the school day and outside of the school day on social media applications. This finding aligns with the findings of Greenhow and Lewin (2016), Rawlings and Stoddard (2017), and West et al. (2015).

Bartow (2014) found that teachers used social media to help build relationships and home-to-school connections as well as increase interactions with students and

parents. Likewise, the high school band directors in this study indicated that the use of social media increased their ability to connect with their students and connect students to other students, which also aligns with Krutka et al.'s (2017) findings, indicating a positive benefit using social media for student connections and relationships with students and instructors.

Contrary to the findings of Agozzino (2013), which used Facebook and Twitter as primary modes of student connectedness, high school band directors in this study indicated the use of Google Classroom as a main form of social media to connect students to each other in and out of the traditional classroom setting though Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were also shared as applications frequently used for similar affect. High school band directors also shared that experiences using social media to increase student connectedness enabled students to feel more connected to each other and the band director, which is consistent with the Barczyk and Duncan (2017) study. Findings of this study are also similar to Krutka et al. (2017), who found a positive benefit using social media for student connectedness.

Experiences of HS Band Directors Using Social Media for Improving Classroom Community

Wenger (1998) asserted four premises in examining learning and the nature of learning, including learners being social beings and that knowledge is a matter of participating in the pursuit of actively engaging in the world and experiencing the world in a meaningful way. The three characteristics of COP are the *domain*, the *community*,

and the *practice*, and it is in the development of these three characteristics that cultivate the community.

High school band directors in this study already have a domain in the high school band classroom as a shared area of interest for a variety of student participants. High school band directors use social media to improve community in the classroom through online discussion, sharing information, and collaborating on assignments. Lastly, in terms of practice, high school band directors indicated using social media as a forum to engage with students and encourage students to engage with each other through sharing documents, ideas, and resources in an online forum.

Consistent with the findings of Churcher et al. (2014) and Lewis and Rush (2013), high school band directors cited specific experiences regarding using social media for improving classroom community, including sharing student successes and accolades and creating activities for classroom bonding through involvement and engagement. The term community also expanded to include school community stake-holders such as parents, administration, and community partners.

Findings of this study were also consistent with other studies (Wendt & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2015; and Barczyk & Duncan, 2017) that showed an increase in student sense of community with students participating in online collaborative platforms using Facebook and Edmodo. Additionally, high school band directors discussed the ability for students to feel more of a part of the conversation in a virtual environment despite being timid in the classroom which aligns with Churcher et al. (2014) findings.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study was the number of interviews and focus groups conducted and the time in which they had to be completed. This study was conducted with 10 high school band directors in 30-45 minute interviews and an additional 30-45 minute focus group interaction using a web-based call platform. Three of the 10 original interviewed participants were not able to be a part of the focus group interviews due to scheduling conflicts. Additionally, this study was limited to one online band directors group that I participate in. From this group, there were only 10 participants out of a possible 24,000 band director members, and those that responded were already using social media in the high school band classroom. Another possible limitation is the varied backgrounds and experiences of participants in this study could have had an impact on their ideas and opinions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Additional research should focus on the use of social media in high school band, choral, and traditional classrooms. Most of the existing research was focused on the collegiate level focusing on student engagement and collaboration, and there was minimal research on social media in any educational setting for communication, student-connectedness, or improving classroom community. Research should also expand the participant pool to include high school band directors from other band director groups as well as high school band directors that have stopped using social media for classroom use or have negative experiences using social media in the classroom.

The second recommendation is to replicate the study to include participants who use social media as a communication tool with parents. This study only considered high school band director's use of social media for communication with students, though experiences with other stakeholders should be examined. A future study examining high school band directors use of social media for communication with parents of students may be beneficial in identifying benefits and challenges of its use for current and future high school band directors.

A third recommendation is to conduct a similar study using another content discipline area, a specific grade level, extracurricular organization or athletic activity, or the staff of a high school. The current study explores the phenomenon of using social media with students in high school band programs; however, examining social media in education is necessary to inform educators and educational stakeholders of the benefits and challenges of embracing the platform for increased communication, student connectedness, and improving classroom community.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this research study contribute to current literature in the field of band education on the use of social media for communication, student connectedness, and improving classroom community. This study may help high school band directors with assistance in implementing innovative social media applications in the classroom for communication, increasing student connectedness, and improving classroom community. Additionally, high school band directors who currently use social media applications like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram might have information that could help them use other

applications like Remind or Snap Chat as worthy applications to implement and may also expand definitions of social media to include applications that they may already be using such as Google Classroom and Charms as extensions of social media in the classroom further expanding their reach to students to better communicate, increase student connectedness and improve classroom community.

Lastly, findings could also assist with social change in teacher preparation programs that incorporate social media as a teaching tool and also inform band directors, music teachers, other teachers, administrators, and school districts of the benefits and challenges in implementing social media in the classroom for the benefit of future students and the school community.

Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of high school band directors using social media to communicate with students, increase student connectedness, and improve classroom community. The findings of this study add to the body of literature about the uses of social media in education for communication, increasing student connectedness, and improving classroom community. High school band directors who implement social media in the classroom have experienced an increased ability to communicate quickly and efficiently with students, foster increased student connectedness and improve classroom community.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

How many years have you been teaching? _____

How many years have you been teaching High School Band? _____

How many years have you been in your current school? _____

What courses do you currently teach?

Is your school a 1:1 school in terms of technology? (A device for every student?) _____

Appendix B: Email of Initial Contact

My name is Heidi Welch and I am currently working on my dissertation for my PhD degree in education through Walden University. I have been in the field of education for 22 years, primarily as a High School music teacher.

I am interested in including band directors who currently use social media with their band students for communication, to connect with students, to connect students with each other, and improve classroom community.

Involvement will require a short questionnaire and an interview taking between 30 and 60 minutes for each participant. A follow-up interview to check information will also occur. Additionally, it will require participation in a 30-45 minute focus group session with all participants. There will also be some email follow-up work verifying that comments have been accurately recorded.

Please contact me if you are interested in providing evidence that will advance knowledge about this topic.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,
Heidi Welch

Appendix C: Follow-Up Email to Those Interested

Over two decades as a classroom music educator has afforded me the opportunity to see the many changes technology has brought to instructional, curriculum, and assessment practices. The influence of social media is an avenue that is becoming a more frequent extension of the traditional music classroom as a form of communication, collaboration, and connection for students and teachers. As I have adjusted to the use of social media as a possible instructional tool, I began to wonder if other music teachers have also begun to utilize social media to connect high school music students and improve classroom community beyond the music room walls, and how that was being accomplished.

While beginning the research process on this topic, I found a lot of research on the use of social media to engage students of a variety of disciplines at the collegiate level. At the high school level, and especially in the discipline of music, very little research is available on the impact of social media to connect students and improve classroom community.

I then decided that my dissertation model should address the experiences and uses of social media for communication, student connectedness and improving classroom community with high school band directors. I am very curious to understand how or if it is being used in classrooms, and if it is an effective tool for schools to embrace or an impediment to instructional time and technology resources.

I would love to further discuss my study with you if you have continued interest in participating. Please feel free to reach out with any other questions you have, and I will be glad to answer them in a timely manner. My hope is that this research can have a positive impact on students by informing teachers of the experiences of current band directors using social media in the classroom and provide them with tools to continue to develop classroom community and develop student connections through performance ensembles.

Thank you very much for considering this research opportunity.

Sincerely,

Heidi J Welch

Appendix D: HS Band Director Interview Protocol

Study: The experiences of high school music teachers using social media to increase student engagement and improve classroom community

Date:

Time of Interview:

Method:

Interviewee Alphanumerical Code:

Script:

My name is Heidi Welch and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. Thank you again for your willingness to participate in my study. The purpose of this interview is to examine the experiences of high school band directors who use social media to increase student connectedness and improve classroom community. In order to protect your identity, please refrain from using your name at any point in this interview. I will be recording this interview in order to obtain a permanent record. Is it okay with you if I begin recording now?

General experiences with social media:

1. How would you define social media or social networking media?
2. How do you use social media in your professional life?
3. What are the applications you are using?
4. What kind of prior preparation do you make when using social media in the class?
5. Please describe any training you received pertaining to the use of social media in the classroom?
6. Please describe your experiences of using social media in the classroom.
7. What are your experiences using social media for communication with students?
8. Please describe some of the positive experiences using social media for communication with students.
9. Please describe some of the negative experiences using social media for communication with students.
10. How do you use social media in the classroom for student connectedness?
11. Please describe some of the positive experiences using social media for student connectedness.
12. Please describe some of the negative experiences using social media for student connectedness.
13. What are your experiences with using social media in your classroom for improving community? Can you elaborate and discuss specific examples?

Concluding Statement:

Is there anything else that you would like to share with me before we finish this interview? Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in my study. Your responses will remain confidential, and I appreciate your cooperation.

Appendix E: HS Band Director Focus Group Protocol

Study: The experiences of high school music teachers using social media to increase student engagement and improve classroom community

Date:

Time of Focus Group:

Method:

Interviewee Alphanumerical Codes:

Script:

My name is Heidi Welch and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. Thank you again for your willingness to participate in my study. The purpose of this focus group is to examine the experiences of high school band directors grouped by years of experience who use social media to increase student connectedness and improve classroom community. In order to protect your identity, please refrain from using your name at any point in this interview. I will be recording this interview in order to obtain a permanent record. Is it okay with you if I begin recording now?

Sample Questions:

1. Please discuss if you have thought about anything regarding your use of social media in the classroom since our interview?
2. Is there anything that you would add that you have thought about since the interview?
3. Can you please describe how your teaching has changed since you began using social media in the classroom?
4. Can you please discuss how using social media has impacted relationships with parents and/or the school community?
5. Can you please discuss any experiences with balancing social media implementation with classroom/rehearsal time?
6. Can you please share any other benefits or concerns using social media in the classroom?

Concluding Statement:

Is there anything else that you would like to share with me before we finish this interview? Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in my study. Your responses will remain confidential, and I appreciate your cooperation.

Appendix F: Connecting Research Subquestions A and B With Interview Questions

Research sub questions	Interview questions
SQB: How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media in the classroom for communication?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How would you define social media or social networking media? 2. How do you use social media in your professional life? 3. What are the applications you are using? 4. What kind of prior preparation do you make when using social media in the class? 5. Please tell me something about the type of training you received for implementing social media in the classroom. 6. Please describe your experiences using social media in the classroom. 7. What are your experiences using social media for communication with students? 8. Please describe some of the positive experiences using social media for communication with students. 9. Please describe some of the negative experiences using social media for communication with students.
SQB: How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media to increase student connectedness?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please describe some of the positive experiences using social media for student connectedness. 2. Please describe some of the negative experiences using social media for student connectedness.
SQC: How do high school band directors describe their experiences using social media to improve classroom community?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are your experiences with using social media in your classroom for improving community? Can you elaborate and discuss specific examples? <p>See interview protocol (Appendix C).</p>