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## SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG HIGHLY MOBILE HIGH-SCHOOL AGED POPULATIONS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF A STUDENT 2 STUDENT PROGRAM FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

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SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG HIGHLY MOBILE HIGH-SCHOOL AGED  
POPULATIONS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF A STUDENT 2 STUDENT  
PROGRAM FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

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DISSERTATION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of  
Education at the University of Kentucky

By  
Jennifer Mary Watson

Lexington, Kentucky

Chair: Dr. Joan Mazur, Professor, Department of Curriculum & Instruction

Lexington, Kentucky

2017

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## ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

### SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG HIGHLY MOBILE HIGH-SCHOOL AGED POPULATIONS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF A STUDENT 2 STUDENT PROGRAM FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

This dissertation presents an examination of social media use among highly mobile, military-connected high school aged populations using a multiple case study of a Student 2 Student Program. On average, students from military families move six to nine times over the course of their K-12 education. Multiple and frequent parent deployments further exacerbate this situation. Both situations independently effect military-connected students' social, emotional, and academic development. Offered through the Military Coalition Education Council, the Student 2 Student (S2S) Program was created for the precise purpose of providing military students with the social and instrumental support they need to successfully manage school transitions. Customized to meet the needs, climate, and culture of each individual school, S2S programs are student-led and school-managed. The study design is a holistic, multiple case study of military connected students' use of social media. Seven high schools with S2S programs, each with different individual characteristics, were the research sites, drawn from two school districts located in close proximity to one of the largest military installations in the southeast of the United States. Data from surveys, semi-formal interviews, discussions, direct observations and documents were analyzed in a two stage process: 1) a within-case analysis and 2) a cross-case analysis.

Findings indicate that S2S participants purposefully use various social media platforms in order to communicate and connect with and maintain their social networks. The roles that social media play in their lives include *blending the past and present, anchoring the past, adapting to the present, sharing worlds* and *reaching out*. The findings from this dissertation suggest adult S2S advisors play an important role in determining the extent to which social media are integrated and often fears about social media are in evidence. Regardless, students' use of social media persists. Implications include that social media platforms could be used more strategically as part of S2S programs to help these students adjust more easily to new schools and environments. Further research is needed to more fully explore these initial findings and promote student empowerment through social media use and positive networking.

**KEYWORDS:** Military Children, Student Mobility, School Transitions, Social Media, Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Jennifer Mary Watson

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April 17, 2017

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, Rollin and Norma Watson, whose love and support made this accomplishment possible. My daughter, Julia Spaulding, who amazes and inspires me every day. My sister and brother-in-law, Julie and Scott Dick, have never left my side and are very special. My nephew, Jim Dick, and niece, Jenna Dick, bring such joy to life and remind me why this work is important. My brother, David Watson, taught me what it means to be a great writer and scholar.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A lonely scholar sitting isolated in a tower someplace cannot accomplish this kind of study. It takes many people, cooperating with each other, to bring together the information that finds its way here, in what is hopefully a breakthrough study of an important aspect of American life. One of the limitations of this study from my perspective was that I lived three and a half hours away from the study area, so I had to rely on the graciousness of the S2S advisors, who were kind enough to adjust their own schedules to accommodate me. The Consortium was of great support to me, and this really was the key to accessing the subjects of the study. Both project directors provided me with information about the schools in their districts. In addition, because of my distance from the schools, it was difficult for me to make regular visits, as well as attend all meetings and events that might have been helpful. Therefore, I had to rely largely on what I learned from interviews and discussions with school and district officials. I was able to observe some of the important events and discussions, but I preferred to make direct observation of the interactions among the groups and with the mobile students themselves.

It has been my honor and privilege to work with outstanding scholars and practitioners as I have attempted to formulate from the parts of this study a meaningful synthesis of a complex and ever-changing subject matter. Needless to say, my professors at the University of Kentucky are in my mind what makes the University one of the nation's best and hopefully yields what I think is a profoundly important study, of a group too often overlooked in our mobile society.



Indeed, this is a study about a certain strain of mobility. To do the work of this study, I was a frequent visitor in two districts: the Freedom County Public School System and Proud County Public Schools. These two districts are a part of a Department of Defense Education Activity, four year grant, awarded in 2013, forming a consortium composed of representatives from UK, both districts, and Fort Boone.

Two people who have been instrumental in this study are Dr. Kimmie Sucharski with Sargeville and Ms. Susie Hart with Badgeville. Both have provided me with information, helped me make contact with the schools, answered many many questions, and so on. They are the project directors on the ground and lead the consortium meetings.

My professors Dr. Mazur and Dr. Henry are the UK representatives who provided me with this opportunity to follow my interest in the children of military personnel and conduct this study, which I hope will bring us to a better understanding of their situation.

It was my good fortune, some fourteen years ago, when I was just finishing my M.S. in Education Psychology, that I took a class with Dr. Joan Mazur. I had heard that she was a good teacher, but I did not fully understand what a great professor was until I sat in her class and had the good fortune to benefit from her counsel, see her deep concern for her students, and realize her willingness to go all out to help a promising student achieve understanding. Dr. Mazur seemed to understand, that as a single mother, I was striving to make the best life possible for my child and myself at the same time that I was thoroughly committed to learning and studying at a great University. She is, and always shall remain, my favorite teacher, my cherished mentor, and my gracious friend. She is a teacher beyond normal measure, an extraordinarily devoted person.

During my doctoral work, I also took classes with three other members of my committee. All have been so kind and so willing to share their knowledge; all have been understanding and compassionate with someone who has a little girl in tow; they are strong with sterling intellects and remarkable academic achievements. Dr. Laurie Henry, Dr. Kenneth Jones and Dr. Gary Anglin have been very helpful to me as I have worked in courses and on this project, and I am very grateful to these fine scholars for their kind counsel and support.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The term *highly mobile student* is used to describe students who have experienced six or more moves over the course of their K-12 education (Walls, 2003; Black, 2006b). Students from military families undisputedly fit this definition, moving an average of six to nine times (Garner, Arnold, & Nunnery, 2014). This situation may be intensified by the multiple and frequent deployments that have become commonplace. Children do not necessarily live with the civilian parent, but rather may live with an array of caregivers including stepparents, grandparents, neighbors, and friends. Indeed, some children may move several times during the parent's deployment.

Multiple school moves and parental deployment each independently affect children's social, emotional, and academic development. Military-connected adolescents, the focus of this research study, must cope with both multiple moves and parental deployment issues simultaneously. In moving from one school to the next, students encounter a number of variations, notably "differences in state-level academic standards, the school's awareness of military culture, a staff's capacity to respond to military life issues, and school climates" (Astor, De Pedro, Gilreath, Esqueda, & Benbenishty, 2013, p. 234).

Adaptation to new social environments is more challenging, as changing schools interferes with students' ability to build close friendships with peers, engage in school projects, and participate in social activities (Popp, Stronge, & Hindman, 2003). For

adolescents, this occurs at a time when they are engaged in the paradoxical tasks of forming an individual identity and “fitting in” with peers (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). At this stage of development, “the interplay between the need for one’s personal identity and the need for close personal ties and strong group affiliation permeates all domains of adolescents’ everyday lives” (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014, p. 2).

Also permeating the everyday lives of military-connected students is the reality of having a parent deployed to an active combat warzone. Young people today are growing up in an era marked by the global war on terror, which began with the start of the Iraq war in 2003, continuing with the prolonged wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and characterized by unusually long and multiple deployments, briefer stays at home between deployments, and great risk of physical and psychological trauma for military personnel (Aronson & Perkins, 2013; Astor et al., 2013; Atuel, Esqueda, & Jacobson, 2011; Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Park, 2011). The stresses associated with having a parent deployed to a combat zone are well documented. Anxiety is extremely common among children whose parents are or may be deployed (Chandra et al., 2011; Chandra & London, 2013; Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011). Adolescents are capable of comprehending the dangers of military deployment and the ways in which a parent’s deployment alters their lives (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013). Adolescents with parents (or siblings) in the military are at an elevated risk of depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts (Cederbaum et al., 2014; Reed, Bell, & Edwards, 2011). For some teens, binge



drinking becomes a maladaptive coping strategy (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013; Reed et al., 2011).

At the same time, studies suggest that youth from military families may be more resilient than their civilian peers. Compared with civilian youth, children from military families are more resourceful, adaptable, responsible, self-disciplined, confident in their ability to deal with challenges, and tolerant and empathetic toward individual differences (Park, 2011). Having already experienced multiple transitions, many teens have a repertoire of coping skills on which to rely when working through challenges (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013). Teachers describe many military children as highly resilient, but they are also aware that this resilience is being strained by the cumulative impact of prolonged and repeated deployments (Richardson et al., 2011).

In summary, the circumstances of active military life offer many resources that foster resilience in children and families, such as a strong sense of belonging, a clear sense of purpose, and a supportive community with shared values (Easterbrooks, Ginsburg, & Lerner, 2013). However, as Easterbrooks et al. (2013) observed, most studies of military children have focused on *family functioning* or on the risks associated with parents' deployments. Little research has focused on children's social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral strengths, or their civic skills and competencies. In particular, no prior studies have explored the use of social media by military-connected youth as a strategy for promoting their social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development and resilience.

## **Social Media Use and Today's Youth**

Social media provides an informal means of communication that transcends temporal and geographic boundaries in enabling which enables people to stay connected. For young people, social media has become a primary mode of communication, allowing them to maintain connections with others whether they are school peers or located across the globe (Kirschner, Paas, & Kirschner, 2009). One study exploring the role of social media in the lives of military families discovered that social media is pivotal to promoting communication between parents deployed overseas and their children at home (Matthews-Juarez, Juarez, & Faulkner, 2013). Social media allows children to communicate with their parents in real time, while parents stay updated on what is happening in their children's lives. Social media is even used as a tool for aiding the reintegration of military members into civilian life. However, while the study demonstrated that social media is valuable for supporting the reintegration of soldiers with their families and communities, it did not address the potential of social media to help the integration of military-connected youth into new communities.

The demographic term Generation Z is used to refer to young people born between 1993 and 2005. However, the more popular terms *I-generation*, *net-gen*, and *digital natives* are more illustrative of a generation whose members have never known life without the Internet and are coming of age in an era unprecedented of accessible technology. Consequently, today's youth "have become accustomed to interacting and communicating in a world that is connected at all times" (Turner, 2015, p. 104). The

lines between online and offline friendships have blurred so that friends made online have become an integral part of teens' social networks (Lenhart, Smith, Anderson, Duggan, & Perrin, 2015). For military-connected youth, social media allows friendships to be sustained beyond school transitions and provides a tool to form friendships with geographically dispersed peers who share similar experiences.

As Easterbrooks et al. (2013) noted, there is a gap in the empirical literature on the effects of parental deployment on children's social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development, particularly on their strengths. Moreover, few studies of highly mobile students focus specifically on children and youth from military families despite the uniqueness of their situation. Much of the insight into the lives of children from military families comes from RAND Corporation research (Chandra et al., 2011; Chandra & London, 2013; Richardson et al., 2011). While these studies include interviews with teachers and other school personnel, they represent only a tiny fragment of the large body of research on adolescents' academic and social development.

Young people's communication technology and social media use is a topic of growing interest. However, a serious shortcoming of many studies of adolescent friendship is that they are based on a false dichotomy between online and offline friends when the two groups overlap in reality (De Grove, 2014; Reich, Subrahmanyam, & Espinoza, 2012; Van Zalk, Van Zalk, Kerr, & Stattin, 2014). Early studies of online friendships were often based on the *poor get poorer* hypothesis, proposing that online friendships are shallow and unfulfilling. This hypothesis suggested that rather than

enriching the social lives of adolescents, especially those who are shy or anxious in social interactions, social media use might further impede their ability to form “real-world” friendships (Van Zalk et al., 2014). On the contrary, there is far more support for the *social compensation* hypothesis. This hypothesis states that virtual communication offers a safe, non-threatening milieu for self-expression that facilitates the development of supportive friendships and even boosts self-esteem, which transfers to face-to-face social situations (Lenhart, Madden, Smith, Purcell, & Zickuhr, 2011; Van Zalk et al., 2014).

### **Student 2 Student (S2S) Programs to Support Military Children**

The purpose of this multiple case study is to investigate and analyze social media use by high school students involved in Student 2 Student (S2S) programs. S2S operates under the direction of the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). This organization describes S2S as a strengths-based approach to help military children and families (Park, 2011). Designed to provide social and instrumental support to children and youth, in grades K-12, navigating the challenges of school transitions, S2S is unique in that it is student-led. Each school has a team consisting of an advisor, students, and a School Liaison Officer (SLO) trained in student transition issues (MCEC, 2016). By using a train-the-trainer approach to creating teams at each K-12 school campus, the training is grounded in three evidence-based modules: *Academics* (Requirements, Processes, Access), *Relationships* (Acceptance, Attributes, Friendship), and *Finding the way* (Attention, Orientation, Appreciation). Tailored to fit each school’s unique characteristics, the team works to facilitate a smooth school transition in order to ensure

the student is immediately made to feel welcome and is academically and socially integrated into life at the new school as quickly as possible.

S2S offers a unique, formal approach to helping military students feel connected with peers. In keeping with this broad goal, social media might be especially beneficial to military-connected adolescents. This study explores this assumption by examining how S2S participants use social media to interact with new peer groups, examines the various purposes for which these highly mobile youth use social media, and investigates the influence of social media engagement within S2S groups on the educational outcomes of this population.

### **Problem Statement**

By the time they are ready to graduate from high school, students from military families have moved an average of six to nine times (Garner et al., 2014). Moreover, the rate of mobility for this group (31%) exceeds that of other highly mobile student groups (DoDEA, 2015). Yet despite this reality, very few studies have examined the social contexts in which military-connected students navigate school transitions.

The high academic performance and purported resilience of students from military families may mask the challenges they face. Family and community support are regarded as critical resources that can protect military-connected students from the adverse academic and social consequences of multiple school moves (Boon, 2011). However, residential moves often leave military families adrift in civilian communities. Barely more than one-third (35%) of Active Duty military families live in military

housing and the overwhelming majority of military children (85%) attend public schools rather than Department of Defense (DoD) schools (National Military Family Association, 2010). Lacking knowledge of military culture, many teachers and school personnel are inhibited in their efforts to support students and help them integrate into the school community (Aronson, Caldwell, & Perkins, 2011; Aronson & Perkins, 2013; De Pedro et al., 2011; Garner et al., 2014; Ruff & Keim, 2014). Indeed, academic support for children and youth transitioning to a new school is often inadequate (Chandra & London, 2013). Social isolation can be a serious consequence of multiple moves in which students are forced to leave friends behind and try to make new friends with each school transition (National Military Family Association, 2010).

The two defining features of this generation, unprecedented technology access and the global war on terror, converge in the lives of military-connected youth. *Resilience* has become a keyword for today's military and promoting resilience is a primary aim of programs designed for military personnel and their families. Beyond the presence of formal programs, youth and adults use their own initiative to seek out resources and support. The interplay between risk and resilience factors has a powerful impact on the academic and mental health outcomes of military-connected adolescents (Lucier-Greer, O'Neal, Arnold, Mancini, & Wickrama, 2014). Parental deployment, frequent school transitions, parental rank (having a parent who is an enlisted service member), two parents in the military, foreign residence, and distance from base are all identified risk factors for poor outcomes. Social support consistently surfaces as an

important resource for helping adolescents cope with challenges such as parental deployment and relocation (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013). Milburn and Lightfoot (2013) called for further investigation into the various ways in which social connections affect the well-being of adolescents in military families and work to mitigate stress. This is based on the premise that S2S and social media are both valuable sources of social support for military-connected youth. To best serve these adolescents, it is important to understand how they make use of these resources and their effects on students' social and academic development.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this multiple case study is to explore social media use among participants in S2S programs in seven high schools. In particular the researcher examined how S2S participants used social media to interact with new peer groups and for other uses and to assess the influence of social media engagement within S2S groups on the educational outcomes of this highly mobile student population.

### **Significance of the Study**

Among a total DoD force of more than 3.5 million members, 42.1% of Active Duty and Selected Reserve personnel have children (DoD, 2014). Due to the relatively young age of service members, most have children under five years or of elementary school age. Adolescents from 12 to 18 years account for approximately one-quarter (24.4%) of the children of military parents. Perhaps as a result of their more limited

presence, few studies have focused on adolescents from military families in spite of their unique psychosocial needs (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013).

While S2S and other DoD programs for civilian spouses and children are designed to provide military families with strong social support networks (Park, 2011), many of these programs have been hastily rolled out and few have been evaluated. This study will thus provide insight into the experiences of high school students participating in S2S programs. Participants include both military-connected and non-military-connected students. The information gained from this study can be used for further program improvement. In addition, knowledge and understanding of students' social media use may suggest ways in which social media can be integrated into S2S programs that are flexible and adaptable by design.

Some teachers who work with children from military families feel that the school may serve as a "sanctuary" that protects them from the stress and disruption to their home life caused by a parent's deployment (Richardson et al., 2011). However, schools are not always a positive resource for military-connected adolescents (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013). Even schools with sizable numbers of students from military families are often inadequately equipped to provide support for students whose parents are deployed. Teachers, counselors, and principals are clearly aware of the stresses confronting these students but are not prepared to meet the needs of those who experience serious distress (Richardson et al., 2011). In many schools, teachers are not even aware of which children are members of military families. The findings from this study can also be used



to inform school policies and practices to create a welcoming environment for adolescents from military families. By extension, this information can be used to guide training for teachers, counselors, and other school personnel in schools that do not have a formal program such as S2S.

Whether or not the school has a formal program, adolescents' enthusiasm for social media may be harnessed to expand and enhance the social support networks of all students. Social media can also be used effectively as a learning tool (Journell, Ayers, & Beeson, 2014; Lapp, Fisher, Frey, & Gonzalez, 2014; Morgan, 2015). Overall, social media has great potential to engage students in authentic learning activities, but few teachers are capitalizing on it. Knowledge of how their students use social media could, therefore, serve as a springboard for developing imaginative and engaging learning experiences for use in the classroom.

Although adolescents from military families clearly face unique challenges, the findings from this study may also be useful for helping other groups of highly mobile students. Astor et al. (2013) stressed the critical role of belonging in creating a supportive school climate for military students. The knowledge gained from this study can thus be used to create a supportive school climate that helps all students flourish in the face of similar challenges (e.g., leaving familiar surroundings and classmates and adapting to the new school environment and new academic demands).

### **Research Questions**

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. With what social media platforms do military and non-military-connected students in S2S programs engage?
2. For what purposes (online chats, collaborative in-group activities, etc.) do students use each of these social media platforms?
3. What value do highly mobile S2S participants ascribe to the role of social media use in helping them achieve positive social and educational outcomes?
4. How do S2S advisors perceive the role of social media in the S2S groups?

### **Nature of the Study**

#### **Research Design**

The research design for this study was a holistic, multiple case study. Eight high schools, each with different individual characteristics, were originally chosen so this research project could examine differences between campuses as well as present in-depth exploration of the experiences of S2S participants at each site. However, Fort Boone High School was forced to withdraw from the study. The study includes both student and adult S2S participants. Consistent with the principles of case study research, data were collected from multiple sources at each school (Yin, 2013). Multiple sources included descriptive statistics from a social media use survey, semi-structured interviews with S2S advisors and students, informant interviews (and/or conversations) with officials associated with S2S, direct observations of S2S meetings and events, and archival documents.

## **Population and Sample**

Pseudonyms are used in place of names for case sites and the towns in which they are located. The population for this study will consist of S2S student and adult team members at two high schools located in the Freedom County Public School System (FCPS), and five high schools located in the Proud County Public Schools (PCPS). These schools were selected due to their proximity to a major military installation. Situated on the state line, Fort Boone hosts the 101st Airborne Division Air Assault. Fort Boone hosts the seventh largest population in the Department of Defense and the fifth largest population of service members (Military Installations, 2016). Fort Boone is home to approximately 32,000 active duty soldiers with 39,000 families living off of the military installation, along with 73,000 retiree family members. Roughly 1,000 active duty soldiers transition in and out of Fort Boone each month. Because the children of military families receive their education and live in close proximity to the civilian children from the local communities surrounding Fort Boone, this research project will be conducted in local high schools with an S2S program in place. These are:

- Southeast High School, which is part of the Proud County Public Schools (PCPS). The S2S membership includes 21 students, half from military families.
- Sargeville High School, also part of the PCPS, with a S2S membership including 50+ students.

- Center College, also part of the PCPS, is a school serving 120 junior and senior high school students who receive a high quality high school education combined with access to college courses at AP State University. Students must have an ACT score of 20 or higher and/or a GPA of 2.85 to be eligible to apply. The S2S membership includes 4 Student Officers and is open to all students.
- Southwest High School, also part of the PCPS, with a S2S membership including 20+ students.
- East River High School, also part of the PCPS, with a S2S membership including 15 members.
- Freedom County High School and Badgeville High School are part of the Freedom County Public Schools (FCPS). The advisors are school-based therapists and each school started the program with 14 S2S student members.

It is unfortunate that Fort Boone had to withdraw from the study as it is run by the DoD and has the most mobile student population of all the schools in the Fort Boone area. However, due to a purported “scandal” involving social media, the school suspended the students’ social media use.

At each school the student S2S participants were asked to fill out the survey questionnaire. Interviews were conducted with student volunteers and the S2S advisor at each school. The interview participants included other adults at the school.

## **Data Collection**

The data collection procedures included a quantitative survey, group and individual interviews, observations, and analyses of relevant documents. The student social media survey was composed of 19 items and included demographic data (age, gender, military affiliation), the devices the student owns, how often the student uses the Internet, and what social media sites the student uses and for what purposes.

Individual interviews were conducted with the advisors. The students were interviewed individually or in small groups. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The qualitative data were augmented by field notes, observations, and document analysis.

## **Data Analyses**

Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the students' responses to the quantitative social media questionnaire. For analysis of the qualitative data, the first step was to review the material gathered from the interview transcripts, field notes, and school documents. The data drawn from these sources were coded into categories of themes or relationships. The results were presented and discussed in relation to the five research questions. The data were analyzed to illuminate differences and similarities in the responses of the participants within and between schools.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study:

**Military-connected-students:** A term used to denote K-12 students with at least one parent currently serving in, or retired from, the U.S. Armed Forces.

**Highly mobile students:** The term, highly mobile students, refers to students who moved six times or more during their K-12 education and encompasses students from military families, along with students from migrant working families, families experiencing domestic violence, single-parent families, homeless families, immigrant families, and low-income families (Black, 2006a).

**Multiple school transitions:** Multiple school transitions refer to school moves beyond the natural progression through educational settings (elementary school, middle school, high school, postsecondary education) that result from family relocations and require students to adapt to new educational environments with potentially different academic standards and instructional practices and unfamiliar teachers and peers (Astor et al., 2013).

**Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC):** Described as a strengths-based approach to helping military children and families, MCEC works with different branches of the military, school districts, and parents to facilitate students' successful school transitions (Park (2011).

**Student 2 Student (S2S):** Operated under the auspices of the MCEC, S2S is a student-led, school-managed program designed to ease the challenge of managing school transitions by providing new students with three critical resources: (1) immediate peer credibility, (2) positive peer relationships, and (3) valued information (MCEC, 2016).

## **Brief Literature Review**

### **Social Media and Social Capital**

Several researchers have explored the use of social networking sites (SNSs) from the perspective of social capital (Ahn, 2012; Ellison et al., 2011; Mazzoni & Iannone, 2014). Ahn (2012) investigated the nature of bridging and bonding social capital in relation to adolescents' patterns of SNS use. SNS users, which represented 70% to 90% of the high school student population, experienced higher bonding social capital, supporting the theory that SNS interactions bolster offline friendships (Ahn, 2012). Further, while the findings for bridging social capital were mixed, they could be explained by the differences in the nature of friendships on Facebook and MySpace. MySpace appeared to be an avenue for intensifying school-based relationships rather than expanding social networks, while Facebook users were more inclined to use the site to expand their social networks.

Ellison et al. (2011) explored "connection strategies" in a study of college students based on the assumption that certain patterns of interactions on Facebook are more conducive to building connections. The researchers found that social information-seeking activities such as using Facebook to search for information about someone they knew enhanced bonding social capital. They concluded that the identity information presented on Facebook helped blend online and offline relationships, which encouraged users to engage with the person based on the new information.

In their study of SNS use and social capital, Mazzoni and Iannone (2014) focused on the transition from high school to college. The researchers viewed SNSs as “web artifacts” that mediate and promote the maintenance and development of social capital as young people navigate life transitions. The study centered on two types of transitions: leaving high school to attend college and leaving one’s hometown as a result (Mazzoni & Iannone, 2014). The questionnaire was derived from the earlier research by Ellison and colleagues (2011) covering demographic data, Facebook use, psychological well-being, and bridging, bonding, and maintained social capital. Bridging social capital was further divided into *contextual bridging social capital* and *relational bridging social capital*.

For university students, who were moving into an unknown social and academic environment, both types of bridging social capital were found to be particularly relevant (Mazzoni & Iannone, 2014). In particular, creating a new social network was important for university students compared with high school students, who were simply leaving a familiar environment as opposed to entering a new one. Nonetheless, the accumulation of maintained social capital was also important for university students. Further, while university students claimed that their offline friends were also SNS members, they were more intrinsically motivated to join. On the contrary, high school students experienced more pressure to join from offline friends. According to Mazzoni and Iannone (2014), high school students showed a greater need for affiliation, while university students needed social support and a sense of belonging.



The findings of this study may be especially relevant to the situation of military-connected high school students who are forced to navigate multiple school transitions. It seems reasonable that these students would want to maintain relationships with friends from the schools they are leaving as well as form new friendships at their new school and meet new friends online. Their friendships could thus be viewed from the perspectives of bonding, bridging, and maintained social capital as well as the two subtypes of bridging social capital.

### **Teaching with Social Media**

According to Lapp et al. (2014), the integration of social media into classroom learning is vital. Technology has the ability to provide students with authentic learning experiences that allow them to be creative and share their projects far beyond the scope of the school. Driving the work of these authors is the belief that students must move beyond being information consumers to become information creators. However, while many innovative teachers are capitalizing on their students' engagement with social media to enrich the learning experiences for all students, social media remains a largely untapped resource for educational purposes.

In their paper, Lapp et al. (2014) presented a series of digital projects created by ninth, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The 10<sup>th</sup> graders used Facebook as a platform for promoting the awareness of a "worthy cause," the theme of the project. All projects were meaningful and authentic. Projects of this type could provide military-connected

students with a channel through which to share their knowledge, skills, and expertise with peers, simultaneously encouraging academic learning and social connection.

Journell et al. (2014) presented one of the few applications of Twitter to classroom learning to appear in the educational literature. From their perspective, Twitter offers teachers unique opportunities to connect students to new information instantly. By creating and reading each other's tweets, students are exposed to a wide variety of opinions and perspectives; they also receive immediate feedback and can retweet the tweets of others.

The teachers began the so-called Tweeter project in fall 2012 and followed the two presidential candidates (Obama and Romney) as well as a third candidate of their choice (Journell et al., 2014). The school created a unique hashtag for students to use and students kept up with the campaign while they worked on an authentic project. As they live-tweeted a debate, the principal joined the conversation, thereby connecting students with two high schools in other states engaging in a similar activity.

Journell et al. (2014) acknowledged that conversations on Twitter do not necessarily lead to "productive dialogue" (p. 66). Teachers must be sensitive to the possibility that someone will make offensive comments. At the same time, teachers can make lessons using social media even more relevant by engaging students in dialogue about virtual citizenship. The authors declared that teachers must set clear guidelines for "proper online decorum and expectations" (p. 67). Noting that authentic learning is not common practice in American education, they asserted that "social media is the new face

of global communication and instead of blocking it schools should be embracing it” (p. 67).

### **Assumptions**

The main assumption guiding this study is that the participants will respond honestly and accurately to the survey questionnaire and interview questions. An additional assumption is that the students will be eager to discuss their social media use to ensure that their preferences and ideas can be integrated into the S2S and/or broader educational curriculum. An underlying assumption is that the students will welcome having a voice in creating new learning experiences, which may also enhance their sense of belonging.

### **Limitations**

All the schools selected for this study are located in the vicinity of Fort Boone, which has a large population of military families. The experiences of the students in the S2S programs may differ from those of military-connected adolescents residing in areas with smaller populations of military families. Moreover, while the practice of customizing each S2S program to the unique characteristics of each school is beneficial for students, adopting this approach may preclude the generalization of the students’ activities and experiences to other S2S programs.

In the chapters that follow, the conceptual framework and literature that frame the study are presented in Chapter Two, the methodology for the study is in Chapter Three,

findings are elaborated in Chapter Four and a discussion of findings, implications and further research are presented in Chapter Five to conclude the dissertation.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The primary foci of this chapter are to (a) present the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guide the study; (b) review literature in which to understand the lives and characteristics of military-connected students and their families; (c) identify the services, resources and social supports available as military-connected students transition to new places, and (d) review literature for understanding the role of social media in the lives of highly mobile military-connected youth and the influence of social media engagement on academic and social outcomes.

#### Conceptual Framework

##### Social Constructivism

Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism is often utilized as a framework for teaching and learning with technology. A key feature of Vygotsky's philosophy is that understanding of the self and the learning material is enhanced through discussion and interaction with others. From this perspective, psychological, intellectual, and social development is intrinsically interrelated. Vygotsky understood that learning is not the simple acquisition of knowledge, but rather a dynamic, ongoing process influenced by the learner within a community of learners.

The two most prominent and widely used features of social constructivism are the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) and the related concept of *scaffolding*. Vygotsky

(1978) defined the ZPD as “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peer” (p. 86). In other words, by interacting with others as part of the learning process, students are capable of discovery and mastery beyond what they could accomplish on their own. As the term implies, scaffolding implies building on and reinforcing current knowledge. Scaffolding breaks down complex concepts and activities into manageable chunks that enable the learner to draw meaning and apply new information to solving problems and performing more complex tasks. Through the dynamic, collaborative learning process, young learners internalize new knowledge, strategies, and skills that equip them to tackle more difficult learning tasks independently.

Tools are an essential element in the Vygotskian perspective as mediators of meaning, particularly in situations where scaffolding is in play. Activity theory, drawn from Vygotskian theory posits that tools *mediate* between subjects (persons) and objects (goals and purposes). Tools can be physical, cognitive or social in nature, but all tools *mediate* meaning and promote understandings often shared in social environments (cultures).

To keep students engaged, the teacher must be prepared to challenge their current levels of knowledge and proficiency. A central tenet of constructivist pedagogy is that the teacher assumes the role of mentor, facilitator, and/or coach. Collaborative learning is central to social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978). Collaboration is essential for many

technology-driven learning activities. Creating class blogs, web pages, and multimedia projects, using social media as a learning tool, and interacting with distant peers in virtual communities, all provide students with authentic, enriching learning experiences (Journell et al., 2014; Lapp et al., 2014; Morgan, 2015; Strom & Strom, 2012a, 2012b). They provide students with opportunities for self-expression and social interaction and consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) theory promote their social, psychological, and intellectual development.

### **Cognitive Constructivism**

The focus of Piaget's (1969) theory of cognitive constructivism is on individual development in the context of situated learning. Piaget outlined four predictable stages of human physical, emotional, and cognitive development: the sensorimotor stage, the preoperational stage, the concrete operational stage, and the formal operational stage. Each stage is shaped by the child's individual biological, psychological, and intellectual characteristics and by the social forces of the surrounding environment.

According to Piaget's (1969) theory, adolescents (ages 11 to 18) have reached the stage of formal operations whereby they begin to apply abstract principles and hypothetical logic to grasp meaning both within the school setting and in the larger context of their personal lives and the external social environment. Whether the stages of development unfold as neatly as Piaget proposed may be questionable. However, Piaget's theory may be useful for understanding the situation of adolescents from military families. As Milburn and Lightfoot (2013) observed, adolescents are at a stage of

development where they are capable of understanding the dangers of military deployment and the ways a parent's deployment changes (or disrupts) their lives. Older children are often given adult responsibilities during a parent's deployment (Richardson et al., 2011). Some youth find this situation burdensome, while in others, assuming adult responsibilities fosters a sense of autonomy, independence, and control. Adolescents may be likely to feel both sets of emotions. They may also feel conflicted when the parent returns home.

In the educational setting, highly mobile adolescents are adapting to a new academic and social environment at a time when they are in the process of building a sense of independent self-identity but are also more sensitive to the influence of the peer group (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). Understanding how youth construct meaning from their experience at this stage is important for promoting healthy psychological, intellectual, and social development.

### **Social Capital**

Social capital offers a useful perspective for examining the benefits of young people's online friendships (Ahn, 2012; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011; Johnston, Tanner, Lalla, & Kawalski, 2013; 2013; Mazzoni & Iannone, 2014). Broadly, social capital refers to actual or prospective resources acquired in the context of social relationships and social networks. Social capital can be divided into two types: *bridging* and *bonding*. Bridging social capital refers to external relationships or "weak ties" (Johnston et al., 2013). With emphasis on breadth rather than depth, bridging social



capital has the capacity to expand the nature and scope of available resources to a substantial degree. Bonding social capital exists between individuals with close relationships such as close friends and relatives and hinges on internal ties between actors. Bonding social capital bolsters internal ties but does not work to expand the social network. In fact, strong bonds among actors can inhibit the expansion of social networks. In a study of adolescents' use of social networking sites (SNS), Ahn (2012) found that SNS users experienced greater bonding social capital, supporting the theory that SNS interactions strengthen existing offline friends, and by extension that online and offline friendships overlap (De Grove, 2014; Reich et al., 2012; Van Zalk et al., 2014).

### **Relevant Literature**

The term Generation Z is used demographically to denote young people born between 1993 and 2005. However, the more popular terms *I-generation*, *net-gen*, and *digital natives* more aptly capture the defining characteristic of this generation: they have never known life without the Internet and are coming of age in an era of unprecedented, accessible technology. As a result, these youth “have become accustomed to interacting and communicating in a world that is connected at all times” (Turner, 2015, p. 104).

A second defining feature of this generation is that they are growing up in a time of war that also differs dramatically from previous eras (Park, 2011; Turner, 2015). The Global War on Terror, which began with the inception of the Iraq war in 2003 and encompasses the prolonged wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, is characterized by unusually long and multiple deployments, briefer stays at home between deployments, and

heightened risk of death, injury, and psychological trauma among military members (Aronson & Perkins, 2013; Astor, De Pedro, Gilreath, Esqueda, & Benbenishty, 2013; Atuel, Esqueda, & Jacobson, 2011; Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Park, 2011). Military life has many resources that foster resilience in children and families, such as a strong sense of belonging, strong sense of purpose, and a supportive community with shared values (Easterbrooks, Ginsburg, & Lerner, 2013). However, they point out that most studies of military children have focused on family functioning or on the risks associated with parents' deployment to the neglect of research on children's social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral strengths, or their civic skills and competencies.

Family and community support have been proposed as important resources that can protect military-connected students from the negative academic and social consequences of multiple school moves (Boon, 2011). However, residential moves may leave military families adrift in civilian communities. Only about 35% of Active Duty military families reside in military housing and close to 85% of military children attend public schools rather than Department of Defense (DoD) schools (National Military Family Association, 2010). Teachers and school personnel often lack knowledge of military culture that inhibits their efforts to support students and help them integrate into the school community (Aronson, Caldwell, & Perkins, 2011; Aronson & Perkins, 2013; De Pedro et al., 2011; Garner, Arnold, & Nunnery, 2014; Ruff & Keim, 2014). Many researchers have found that academic support for children and youth transitioning to a new school is often inadequate (Chandra & London, 2013). Social isolation can be a

consequence of multiple moves that force students to leave friends behind and make new friends with each relocation (NMFA, 2010).

Students from military families move an average of six to nine times over the course of their K-12 education (Garner et al., 2014). Multiple and frequent deployments further exacerbate this situation. Children do not necessarily live with the civilian parent during a parent's deployment (Richardson et al., 2011). According to teachers, children may live with a vast array of caregivers including stepparents, grandparents, extended family members, neighbors, or friends. Some children may even move several times during the parent's deployment, an occurrence that is particularly prevalent for children who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or psychological problems that the caregiver feels inadequately equipped to handle.

The numerous stresses associated with having a parent deployed to a war zone are amply documented. Anxiety is extremely common among children whose parents are may be deployed (Chandra et al., 2011; Chandra & London, 2013; Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011). Researchers have observed a dose effect for the impact of parental deployment on psychological health (Mansfield, Kaufman, Engel, & Gaynes, 2011). Adolescents are at a stage of development where they understand the dangers of military deployment and the ways their lives are changed by a parent's deployment (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013). Adolescents with parents (or siblings) in the military are at heightened risk for depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts (Cederbaum et al., 2014; Reed, Bell,

& Edwards, 2011). Some adolescents turn to binge drinking as a maladaptive coping strategy (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013; Reed et al., 2011).

At the same time, there is evidence that youth from military families may be more resilient than their civilian peers. Studies have found that compared to their civilian peers, children from military families are more resourceful, adaptable, responsible, self-disciplined, confident in their ability to deal with challenges, and more tolerant and empathetic toward individual differences (Park, 2011). Having already experienced multiple transitions, many adolescents have a repertoire of coping skills that enables them to work through challenges (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013). Older children often take on adult responsibilities during a parent's deployment which may be burdensome on one hand, but it can also foster a sense of autonomy, independence, and control. Teachers who observe children in school every day describe many military children as highly resilient, but at the same time they see the children's resilience being strained by the cumulative impact of prolonged and repeated deployments (Richardson et al., 2011).

Easterbrooks et al. (2013) outlined the *Seven C's* model of positive youth development which they apply to promoting resilience in military-connected youth. These are: Competence, Confidence, Character, Connection, Contribution, Coping, and Control. They find connection especially relevant in view of the strong sense of community in military families. In this context, connection denotes a meaningful relationship with at least one adult. Numerous studies have found that the presence of a supportive adult is central to the development of resilience. Meaningful and supportive

relationships between young people and adults are the hallmark of YAPs – youth-adult partnerships (Mitra, 2009; Mitra, Sanders, & Perkins, 2010; Mitra, Serriere, & Kirshner, 2014; Watson, Mazur, & Vincent, 2015). YAPs are included in the framework guiding this study.

Connection carries additional meaning in light of the central role of digital communication in the lives of young people. Driven by smartphone ownership, most students connect with peers through digital media on a daily basis and some report being connected most of the time (Lenhart, 2015). When young people first began spending more time online, studies of online communication were often driven by the perspective that Internet activity would have a negative impact on social development (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). It was presumed that devoting more time to virtual communication would interfere with real world interaction and lead to social isolation. Some early studies supported that theory although findings were questionable.

The advent of digital media and the rise of social networking sites (SNS) transformed the nature of virtual communication. Rather than grimly attempting to link online activities with social isolation, researchers are examining online friendships from the perspective of social capital (Ahn, 2011, 2012; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011; Johnston, Tanner, Lalla, & Kawalski, 2013; Mazzoni & Iannone, 2014). There is growing recognition that online and offline friendships are not separate and mutually exclusive entities (De Grove, 2014; Reich, Subrahmanyam, & Espinoza, 2012; Van Zalk,

Van Zalk, Kerr, & Stattin, 2014). SNS are designed with features meant to foster a sense of virtual community (Chen & Lin, 2014).

To be sure, cyberbullying casts a dark shadow with detrimental effects on psychological and physical well-being beyond the harmful effects of traditional bullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011). However, cyberbullying is not as ubiquitous as the popular media portrays it to be and young people are more likely to experience and exhibit kindness than cruelty in their interactions with others online (Lenhart, Madden, Smith, Purcell, & Zickuhr, 2011).

The purpose of this multiple case study was to investigate and analyze social media use in student-led Student 2 Student (S2S) programs in high schools. This study examined how program participants used social media to interact with new peer groups; explore the purposes in which program participants used social media; and study the influence of social media engagement within the S2S groups in shaping educational outcomes among highly mobile youth. The following section will provide background information on military families and the unique conditions that characterize the social development and school experiences of military youth.

### **Military Families**

Historically, the terms “military” and “family” were seen as almost antithetical. Even into the 1970s and 1980s, with an all-volunteer force in which most service members were married, personnel managers still clung to the adage from the World War II “if the Army wanted you to have a family, they would have issued you one!” (Clever

& Segal, 2013, p. 16). A popular saying today is that “when one person joins, the whole family serves” (Park, 2011, p. 65). On the whole, military members marry younger and start families earlier than civilians (Clever & Segal, 2013). Despite steady increases in their numbers, women still represent roughly 15% of the Department of Defense (DoD) Active Duty members, thus fathers comprise the vast majority of military parents (DoD, 2014). However, as Clever and Segal (2013) point out, despite certain distinguishing features, military families represent “a strikingly diverse population with diverse needs” (p. 13).

The total DoD force includes more than 3.5 million members, with Active Duty personnel numbering 1,326,273 as of 2014 (DoD, 2014). Among Active Duty and Selected Reserve personnel, 42.1% have children; 35.7% of service members are married with children and 6.2% are single parents. In view of the relatively young age of military personnel, most have children younger than five or of elementary school age.

Adolescents from 12 to 18 make up roughly one-quarter (24.4%) of children in military families. Perhaps due to their more limited presence, there are few studies of adolescents in military families despite their unique psychosocial needs (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013).

### **Adolescents and Social Support**

Social support is consistently recognized as important resource for helping adolescents cope with challenges such as parental deployment and relocation (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013). The DoD has initiated numerous programs for supporting military families although many have been hastily rolled out and are too new to have been

evaluated. One of the most successful programs for children and adolescents is Operation Purple Camp (OPC), a one-week summer program that has shown a positive impact on children and adolescents' perceptions of social acceptance, athletic proficiency, and global self-worth (Chawla & Wadsworth, 2012). S2S will be discussed later in this chapter.

Milburn and Lightfoot (2013) call for more research into the ways in which social connections affect the well-being of adolescents in military families and work to mitigate against stress. According to teachers who work with military children, for some children the students may serve as a "sanctuary" that protects them against the stress and disruption they may experience at home during deployment (Richardson et al., 2011). However, Milburn and Lightfoot (2013) argue that schools are not necessarily a positive resource for military-connected adolescents. Even schools with substantial numbers of students from military families are often poorly equipped to provide support for students whose parents are deployed. Teachers, counselors, and administrators can clearly articulate the stresses faced by these children but are not prepared to meet the needs of those who experience serious difficulties as a result (Richardson et al., 2011). In many cases teachers are not aware of which children are members of military families. Astor et al. (2013) emphasize the critical role of belonging in creating a supportive school climate for military students.

Notably, Milburn and Lightfoot (2013) point out that researchers have been slow to explore emerging areas related to adolescent development such as the role of social



media and how adolescents use it to stay connected. From their perspective, social media has definite implications for promoting healthy adolescent development in the face of geographic relocation and deployment. Adolescents can turn to social media to connect with the deployed parent as well as with other youth. There are actually increasing numbers of online programs that help military families to access information resources as well as connect with the deployed family member (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). MilitaryKidsConnect is a DoD program designed to foster resilience and provide information on health (Blasko, 2015).

The hallmark of adolescence is the development of an independent identity (Erikson, 1950/1993). As parental influence wanes and the peer group becomes more important adolescents are engaged in the paradoxical tasks of forming an individual identity and “fitting in” with peers (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). At this stage of development “the interplay between the need for one’s personal identity and the need for close personal ties and strong group affiliation permeates all domains of adolescents’ everyday lives” (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014, p. 2). Social Networking Sites use must be viewed in this context. SNS provide opportunities for adolescents to express their opinions to known and unknown others, project various aspects of their identity, and join groups of others who share their interests (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). They can gain immediate feedback from others through “likes.”

According to Shapiro and Margolin (2014), the evidence suggests that for adolescents, SNS serve as a venue both for displaying one’s emerging identity and for

receiving feedback that can alter one's self-perceptions. They view this as a dynamic process in which personal identity needs and affiliation needs constantly interact to shape the developing self. As this process plays out on SNS, the information adolescents decide to disclose, to whom, and how they are affected by feedback are all "highly relevant to understanding adolescents' social-emotional development" (p. 13).

### **Navigating School Transitions**

A number of challenges complicate the school transitions of military children. These include: delayed transfer of records and differences in curricula between schools, adapting to the new school environment and making new friends, limited access to extracurricular activities, poor understanding of military culture on the part of public school teachers and staff, tension at home and parental deployment (Clever & Segal, 2013; Ruff & Keim, 2014).

One study found that in some cases students had to wait as long as three weeks to enroll in a new school due to prolonged delays in the transfer of records (Ruff & Keim, 2014). Poor communication between the previous and the new school is a common phenomenon and adds to the stress of children and parents. Even more detrimental, students may be forced to repeat classes or even grades due to delayed record transfer, gaps in school attendance, or differences in curricula between schools. Garner et al. (2014) conducted focus groups with principals, school counselors, teachers, and instructional support staff members of seven elementary schools and one K-8 school located close to military installations to explore their perceptions of the impact of military

students on their schools. The teachers and principals noted that frequent transfers put students at risk for knowledge gaps.

Delayed record exchange may also prevent students from being appropriately placed in gifted or special education (Ruff & Keim, 2014). Clever and Segal (2013) note that there are public-private partnerships such as the Student Online Achievement Resources program that help families discover and correct educational gaps resulting from frequent school moves and enable deployed parents to follow their children's academic progress.

At a time when schools are adopting coordinated standards and data-driven approaches to school improvement there should be no reason that students should have to face these roadblocks to education. Atuel et al. (2011) strongly support the implementation of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (Interstate Compact) to provide ongoing support to military children and families in the areas where they repeatedly encounter difficulty in enrollment, placement, and graduation. Most states have endorsed the Interstate Compact as most have adopted the Common Core Standards, which are similar to the guidelines adopted by the DoD Education Activity Schools. Clear and consistent guidelines for what students are expected to learn and uniform standards for performance should keep students from having to unnecessarily repeat material or falling behind their peers. Atuel et al. (2011) also advocate for the creation of a data system at the state and national levels to enable schools to identify military students and thus serve their unique needs.

Beyond difficulties embedded in school policy and procedures, adapting to new school environments and making new friends is a persistent challenge. Having to constantly leave good friends can disrupt the ability of adolescents to form close friendships. A number of students admit that having to face the inevitable separation has made them unwilling to develop close friends (Ruff & Keim, 2014). It can be difficult for students who are at an age when needs for affiliation are strong to arrive at a new school mid-year when cliques and social networks have already formed to become part of a group (Shapire & Margolin, 2014). The sense of isolation that can result from being denied group membership may be exacerbated by limited access to extracurricular activities (Ruff & Keim, 2014).

The focus group members were acutely aware of the need to create a welcoming milieu for new transfers as well as the association between social-emotional well-being and academic performance (Garner et al., 2014). Some schools had adopted buddy systems to help new students become integrated into the life of the school. Many of the school professionals observed high levels of resilience in military students. Indeed, the resilience of military children is a common theme in the literature (Chandra et al., 2011; Clever & Segal, 2013; Easterbrooks et al., 2013; Park, 2011; Richardson et al., 2011). At the same time, they acknowledge that military families are currently facing conditions that can overwhelm even the most resilient and adaptable children.

In some of the schools with large populations of military children, culturally responsive pedagogy and cultural sensitivity included awareness of military culture and

family life (Garner et al., 2014). However, only 40% of the teachers possessed even basic knowledge of the military and less than half felt they fully understood the culture of military families. Less than 10% had any specialized training in working with military students. On the positive side, the overwhelming majority of teachers viewed the needs of military students as a top priority for professional development.

Holiday celebrations are typically integral to infusing schools with cultural sensitivity. For students with deployed parents, however, holidays like Christmas, Thanksgiving, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Veterans' Day can be distressing events (Garner et al., 2014). The study produced compelling evidence of the need for specialized programs and training to address the unique circumstances of military students. School-community partnerships were proposed as one type of approach to helping military students, but teachers expressed mixed reactions. Community organizations alone may serve as intermediaries in YAPs (Mitra et al., 2010).

### **Support for School Transitions**

Park (2011) classifies the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) as a strengths-based approach to helping military children and families. MCEC works with different branches of the military, school districts, and parents to facilitate students' successful school transitions. MCEC offers training for teachers and school counselors, involves civilian students, and disseminates information to all stakeholders. According to Park, MCEC is built on the assumption that military families are resourceful and resilient

but they nonetheless require specific and relevant information to ease children's school transitions.

**Student2Student.** The Student 2 Student Initiative (S2S) operates under the direction of the MCEC, providing social and instrumental support to children and youth navigating school transitions (Park, 2011). A unique feature of S2S is that the program is student-led. Each school has a team composed of an advisor, students, and a School Liaison Officer (SLO) trained in student transition issues and the program employs a train-the-trainer approach to creating teams at each campus (MCEC, 2016). Training for the team is grounded in three evidence-based modules: *Academics* (Requirements, Processes, Access), *Relationships* (Acceptance, Attributes, Friendship), and *Finding the way* (Attention, Orientation, Appreciation).

Training is customized by each team for the specific campus (MCEC, 2106). In view of the diversity of military personnel and families and the range of services needed, the most effective DoD programs are highly flexible and adaptable (Clever & Segal, 2013). S2S was designed in keeping with the needs of children and youth who are often intimidated by the prospect of moving to a new place, adapting to a new school and teachers, and having to make new friends (S2S, 2016). The team works to facilitate a smooth, non-traumatic school transition so the student is immediately made to feel welcome and is academically and socially integrated into the school as quickly as possible.

**School Liaisons.** The Student Liaison Officer (SLO) is an essential member of the S2S transition team. All branches of the military have SLOs, who can be involved in a number of different programs, all with the goal of supporting families with school-aged children and helping the children succeed academically and socially in the midst of school transitions (Aronson et al., 2011; Aronson & Perkins, 2013). The U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) began its School Liaison Program (SLP) in 2007, based primarily on the community and mental health models. Aronson et al. (2011) conducted the first study exploring the experiences and perceptions of school liaisons (SLs), involving interviews with all 20 USMC SLs.

On average, the SLs spent close to six hours each with working with school personnel (Aronson et al., 2011). They felt that they had good relationships with the schools and viewed school staff as sympathetic to the problems confronting Marine families. Yet despite the support they received from the school the SLs often found themselves dealing with school rules and regulations that complicated school transitions. The SLs expressed a need for specific programs designed to help children academically, socially, and emotionally through the school transition. S2S fulfills this need. Aronson et al. view school counselors and school psychologists as ideally positioned to help students with these issues as that is what they are trained to do. However, school personnel are not necessarily knowledgeable about military culture (Ruff & Keim, 2014).

In fact, the SLOs asserted that school personnel required more information about military family culture (Aronson et al., 2011). The researchers noted that organizations

such as the MCEC provide such information as well as other organizations such as the National Military Family Association and the Military Impacted Schools Association. The SLs also expressed the need for programs that offer military children opportunities for socialization, positive youth activities, and after-school and extracurricular programs. Individual schools vary tremendously in the extent they provide a welcoming atmosphere for military children that recognizes their unique circumstances and needs. However, Aronson et al. noted that several states have embarked on initiatives to educate school personnel about transition issues facing children of military families.

Aronson et al. (2011) observed that the SLs are dedicated but overburdened, which may predispose them to burnout. Having been in operation for only a few years, and having to deal with dynamic and unpredictable global conditions that exacerbate stress faced by military families and children, the USMC school liaison program is clearly a work in progress. The SLs accounts highlight the need for multiple sources of support to educate and assist school personnel so they in turn can help military students to have positive and enriching school experiences. Beyond smoothing the transition to a new school, military students need opportunities to engage in the same range of rewarding activities as their civilian peers.

Aronson and Perkins (2013) conducted further research with USMC SLs to gain insight into their perspectives of the challenges facing military children and families. From their observations there were two distinct sets of priorities. Children and adolescents mainly focused on issues related to school while family issues focused on the



challenges of deployment and reintegration. Whether the SLs were equipped to deal with the family issues, as the families that sought help from the program were probably especially distressed, may be somewhat questionable. Clever and Segal (2013) noted that over the last decade schools have become more aware of the needs of military students. Progress in addressing them seems to be slow but there are several effective and promising programs for helping children and adolescents through school transitions.

### **Youth-Adult Partnerships**

Older students and peers provide a powerful resource for youth dealing with challenging situations ranging from school transitions (Park, 2011; Ruffin & Keim, 2014) to cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011). However, youth need meaningful relationships with adults that provide them with essential support while allowing them to grow and develop independently. Youth-adult partnerships (YAPs) fulfill this need.

YAPs are defined as “relationships in which both youth and adults have the potential to contribute decision-making processes, to learn from one another, and to promote change” (Mitra, 2009, pp. 407-408). Shared goals and vision in the context of mutual teaching and learning are central to the nature of YAPs. Giving voice to young people whose perspectives are often absent from dialogue dominated by adults is a critical feature of YAPs (Mitra, 2009; Watson et al., 2015). Indeed, Mitra et al. (2014) frame youth participation in society in terms of *student voice*, denoting that youth have opportunities to participate in decisions that impact their lives and the lives of their peers. Through individual and collective action young people develop a strong sense of identity

that allows them to flourish and to know they have the potential to shape a better society for their own and future generations.

Successful YAPs are characterized by mutual trust and respect (Mitra, 2009). Analogous to the way learning communities must invest effort in learning how to best work collaboratively, Mitra argues that YAPs need to work at creating meaningful roles for all group members. By definition, a YAP is *not* a partnership of equals. Rather, they are built on recognition of the skills and expertise of all participants. In a supportive milieu, members develop a sense of shared ownership as they feel free to experiment with an array of different roles. In this environment members evolve individually and collectively.

According to Watson et al. (2015), democratic YAPs are successful because they provide opportunities for youth to display autonomy, creativity, and social engagement with the benefit of adult guidance and support. In the school setting, teachers and other adults contribute their knowledge and expertise while at the same time they are learning from students and are collaborating with students in a democratic process. In order to overcome challenges to creating a successful YAP, Watson et al. call on teachers to: (1) scrutinize their own attitudes toward relinquishing power and supporting student voice; (2) acknowledge and address existing power dynamics and the forces that shape them; (3) seek opportunities for students that empower them to influence decisions that affect them; and (4) secure support from adults in positions of power at the inception of the project to drive project direction and goals.

YAPs would seem to be excellent vehicles for helping military-connected youth work with school stakeholders to create a school culture that can meet their unique needs while giving equivalent support to their civilian peers. The *Toolkit for Military Teens* created by the National Military Family Association (2010) emphasizes the importance of soliciting students' views and experiences in helping them feel they are part of a supportive community. Military students have unique perspectives, skills, and experiences that they can share with others in the school community for mutual benefit (Rossen & Carter, 2012).

According to Mitra et al. (2010), intermediary organizations can boost the capacity and sustainability of YAPs in driving school change initiatives. In schools where military students are a substantial presence, nonprofits with programs that serve military students could make excellent partners. Such programs could give voice to the unique perspectives of military students and can create supportive school cultures.

### **School Moves and Coping**

Australia is similar to the U.S. in that both countries have very mobile populations (Boon, 2011). Moreover, in both countries children of military personnel are among the most mobile students. At the same time, children of military families as well as those of more affluent families may be less affected academically by multiple school moves than those whose families have fewer resources and supports. Boon explored the relationship between school moves and academic achievement from the perspective of stress and coping. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized to create a model

encompassing mobility, school suspensions, coping strategies, and academic achievement, while controlling for family structure and parental education. The analysis was based on a sample of 1,050 Australian secondary school students.

The findings revealed significant differences in the suspensions and academic achievement of mobile and non-mobile students, which is consistent with previous studies linking mobility with negative academic outcomes. However, Boon's (2011) main interest was examining within-group differences among mobile students. Within this group, higher achieving students utilized more positive and less projective coping. High rates of suspensions within the mobile students group were linked with behavior problems, which in turn, were linked with maladaptive coping. Positive coping was associated with both higher academic achievement and fewer behavior problems. How people cope with stress is highly individual, which accounts for both the high levels of resilience and the high levels of social, emotional, and behavioral problems observed in military children and youth (Lucier-Greer, O'Neal, Mancini, & Wickrama, 2014). Knowledge of how risk and vulnerability operate in adolescents is a starting point for identifying at-risk youth and designing appropriate interventions.

Lucier-Greer et al. (2014) approached the issue of military-connected adolescents' mental health and academic performance from a social ecological perspective of risk and resilience. Drawing on relevant theoretical and empirical literature they identified six military-related risk factors: parental deployment, frequent school transitions, parental rank (having a parent who is an enlisted service member), two parents in the military,

foreign residence, and distance from base. As a resilience factor they focused on the mediating role of persistence, which was assessed by the persistence subscale of the General Self-Efficacy Scale.

The sample consisted of 1,036 youth between the ages of 11 and 18 drawn from four U.S. Army Active Duty Garrisons in the Pacific, Western Europe, the Northwestern U.S., and Northeastern U.S. Lucier-Greer et al. (2014) tested an additive model of risk, a cumulative model, and a comparative model. All three models predicted depressive symptoms and academic performance through the mediator of persistence. However, each one revealed unique features of the relationships. The overall findings confirmed the detrimental effects of risk factors on the adolescents' psychological health and academic functioning.

### **Adolescents and Social Media Use**

The Pew Research Center has been conducting ongoing exploration of technology use by the American public. Two recent studies focused on adolescents' use of technology and social media, including one that centered on the role of technology in teens' social interactions and friendships (Lenhart, 2015; Lenhart, Smith, Anderson, Duggan, & Perrin, 2015). The nationally representative samples encompassed adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17. Reflecting a dramatic shift from previous studies, teens' technology use in 2014 and 2015 was driven by smartphones (Lenhart, 2015). Given the ubiquity and convenience of smartphones, the vast majority (92%) of

respondents reported going online every day, including roughly one-quarter (24%) who admitted to being online “almost constantly.”

Facebook was the most popular SNS, used by 71% of the adolescents, though Instagram (52%) and Snapchat (41%) are gaining in popularity (Lenhart, 2015). Twitter and Google+ each attract 33% of adolescents, followed by Vine (24%), Tumblr (14%), and other SNS (11%). As these figures demonstrate, most adolescents used more than one SNS (71%). Facebook attracts two-thirds of those who use only one SNS.

The patterns of adolescent social media use reveal that a digital divide still exists though in much different form than the digital divide of a decade or so ago between those who did and did not have access to online technology. Smartphone ownership is especially high among African American youth; 85% of African American adolescents have access to a smartphone compared to 71% of both White and Hispanic youth. African American and Hispanic teens are the most frequent Internet users, with 34% and 32%, respectively, going online “almost constantly” compared to 19% of White youth. However, greater smartphone use by adolescents of color may be explained by their lower access to desktop computers. Moreover, the lower number of White youth reporting they are online “almost constantly” is somewhat misleading, as White and more affluent youth typically go online several times daily.

Age has some effect on smartphone ownership, with 76% of 15- to 17-year-olds owning a smartphone, versus 68% of 13- and 14-year-olds (Lenhart, 2015). Within the last few years, early adolescents have been making greater use of SNS (Espinoza &

Juvonen, 2011). A survey by *Consumer Reports* found that two-thirds of parents whose 13- and 14-year-old children had profiles on Facebook friended them so they could monitor their activities and minimize risks (Strom & Strom, 2012a).

Although Facebook is by far the most popular SNS overall, Instagram and Snapchat tend to attract adolescents from more affluent families (Lenhart, 2015). Older girls are the most avid users of Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, online pinboard sites such as Pinterest, and video chat connections such as Skype and Facetime. Conversely, boys spend more time with online gaming. The overwhelming majority of boys (84%) play video games, a much higher proportion than the 59% of girls who play video games (Lenhart et al., 2015).

Only a small percentage of adolescents (11%) with cell phones use apps or sharing sites such as Yik Yak, Whisper, or Ask.FM that allow users to post comments or questions anonymously (Lenhart, 2015). One-third of all adolescents use Twitter; not surprisingly, age is a factor, as the proportion of Twitter users increases with each teen year. In the general population, young adults age 18 to 29 have the highest proportion of Twitter users (37%) of all age groups. A “typical” teenage Twitter user has 95 followers, although the average number of followers varies with gender and age.

Texting is the predominant mode used to by teens to keep in touch with their friends on daily basis (88%), but it is one of an increasing variety of ways that adolescents communicate (Lenhart et al., 2015). The devices, platforms and media used routinely to keep up with friends include: instant messaging (79%), social media (72%),

email (54%), video chat (59%), video games (52%), and messaging apps (42%). Only texting is utilized by a majority of teens every day. Nevertheless, having access to an increasing range of communication devices underscores the assertion that this is a generation “accustomed to interacting and communicating in a world that is connected at all times” (Turner, 2015, p. 104).

### **Affordances: Relationships between Technologies and Users**

In an article on affordances, Taina Bucher and Anne Helmond (2017) explain that an affordance is key to understanding relations between technology and the people who use it. “The concept of affordance is generally used to describe what material artifacts such as media technologies allow people to do (p. 3).” There is much debate about the meaning of affordances; the authors describe five different ways in which affordance has been conceptualized. In his seminal book, *The Approach to Visual Perceptions*, James Gibson (1979) first used affordance to refer to a specific kind of relationship between an animal and the environment. Gibson’s key insight was that humans do not perceive the environment as such, but rather perceive it through its affordances, the possibilities for action it may provide. Gibson said that “affordances do not cause behavior but constrain and control it.”

**Perceived Affordance.** Gibson’s idea was taken by Donald Norman (1988), who proposed “the concept of ‘perceived affordance’ to suggest that designers can and should indicate how the user is to interact with the device. Through affordances, clues are provided as to how things operate. For Norman, “The question was no longer how



organisms see, as was the case in Gibson's work, but rather how certain objects could be designed to encourage or constrain specific actions." Norman describes affordances as properties of things, placing power in the hands of designers. For Norman, the key is whether users actually perceive the intended possibilities for action inscribed into the design of an artifact. Affordances must be visible to the user or they are of little use (Bucher & Helmond, 2017).

**Social Affordance.** But affordances are not limited to the visible senses but can also be felt or heard. Gaver (1991) thought it was important. In his view, users know "what to do just by looking." Affordances can be both perceptible and hidden. Gaver sought to challenge researchers to avoid the temptation of ascribing social behavior to arbitrary customs and practices and instead focus on discovering the possibly complex environmental factors shaping social interaction. Many sociologists and communication scholars have used the notion of social affordances to refer to "the possibilities that technological changes afford for social relations and social structure. According to Gibson (2014), people on a sidewalk constantly adjust their own movements to other people in their pathway; thus, "what the other animal affords the observer is not only behavior but also social interaction." An example of a social affordances on Facebook was the addition of Facebook Messenger, which affords users the opportunity to communicate immediately and directly with online friends.

**Communicative Affordance.** Media and communication scholars think that actions that seem particularly apt to study are the ones that imply communication of some

sort. Thus they prefer the term “communicative affordances” to “social affordances.” The term “communicative affordances” has been used primarily on mobile media as a way of describing how mobile devices change communicative practices or habits. Helles (2013) suggested that “the central affordance of mobile phones is not the mobility of the device per se, but rather the fact that the user becomes a mobile terminus for mediated communicative interaction across the various contexts of daily life.” Humphreys (2005) showed that the range of social contexts in which mobile communication takes place afford new forms of social identity, as well the modification of tacit codes of social interactions. The role affordance plays in media studies and social media research is not to focus attention on any particular technology but on the new dynamics or types of communicative practices and social interactions that various features afford.

**High-level and Low-level Affordance.** Affordances tend to be conceptualized as either abstract high-level or a more concrete feature-oriented low level. Schrock (2015) sees affordances as something much broader than “buttons, screens, and operating systems.” Affordances exist on a higher level, including portability, availability, locatability, and multimodality; what mobile media afford has to do with the kinds of communicative practices and habits they enable or constrain. In contrast, low-level affordances are typically located in the materiality of the medium, in specific features, buttons, screens, and platforms.

While all conceptualizations of affordance take Gibson’s original framing of the term as a starting point, Bucher and Helmond (2017) point out, they differ in terms of

where and when they see affordances materializing (i.e., features, artifacts, social structures) and what affordances are supposed to activate or limit (particular communicative practices, sociality, publics, perception).

**Imagined affordance.** Recent contributions to the literature of affordance call for more precise and nuanced definition of the term. The notion of “imagined affordance” for instance, is a theory that better incorporates the material, the mediated, and the emotional aspects of human-technology interaction. Nagy and Neff (2015) say older notions of affordance fail to address the complexity of cognitive as well as emotional processes. Imagined affordances may not just affect how users approach social media platforms, they may performativity help to shape the platforms themselves. Facebook, for instance, makes user beliefs an important component in shaping the overall system behavior.

**Vernacular affordance.** Other scholars have developed the notion of “vernacular affordances.” Instead of researchers assigning affordances to social media, they derive the affordances from users discussing how they engage with the technology. One group of scholars said that “affordances are not experienced in isolation, but rather in relation to a complex ecology of other tools with other affordances. Thus, affordances simultaneously exist for people at multiple levels and across platform boundaries.

Bucher and Helmond say that “In order to do the concept of affordance justice we need to think much more relationally and multi-layered about the concept, while retaining

a sense of platform-sensitivity by take the medium-specificity of platforms into account (Bucher & Helmond, 2017).”

## **Affordances by Social Media Platforms**

### **Facebook**

The Facebook News Feed, the primary content distribution method on the platform, lists a variety of posts, profile changes, upcoming events, and other information on an infinitely scrolling page. This information is populated by an algorithm created to pick out content catered to an individual’s interests. In effect, the News Feed is then acting as an imagined affordance in that it alters an individual’s Facebook experience to their particular beliefs and interests. Users can also engage with other people’s posts by liking, commenting, or sharing. A recently added feature that allows users to display one of six different reactions (represented by various emoji expressions) gave users new ways in which to communicate with others, expanding the social affordances of the platform. The social affordances were also extended by the addition of Facebook Messenger, giving users the opportunity to communicate immediately and directly with online friends.

### **Instagram**

Instagram is a photo- and video-messaging platform acquired by Facebook in April 2012 for \$1 billion. Instagram formerly allowed users to engage with each other primarily through posting photos or videos with captions. Users can also follow other people’s pages to get updates sent to their home page. This home page used to be

populated purely chronologically until recently when Instagram switched to an algorithm sorter, mimicking the imagined affordance of Facebook. The social and communicative affordances of Instagram lie in commenting and the new built-in messaging feature called Instagram Direct. Like many other platforms, Instagram also incorporates the use of hashtags for sorting. The filter feature of Instagram is one of the app's main draws. It lets users alter their pictures to give them a more appealing style. Users can also edit their captions and delete comments on other users' posts as well. The incorporation of hashtags and the editing abilities of Instagram help to give it the high-level affordances of alterability and searchability.

### **Snapchat**

Snapchat's social affordances are a bit more playful than the other two platforms. Users are able to create, edit, and send photos and videos to friends but these images are deleted 1 to 10 seconds later. The high-level affordance of ephemerality is one of the most loved features of this platform as it creates a sense of playfulness among users. To add to that, Snapchat gives users a wide range of effects they can add directly to their photos like stickers, dog ears, and even written commentary.

To summarize then, we can see how useful the concept of affordances has become an important key to understanding social media and the way people use it. James Gibson's seminal work on affordances said that we do not perceive the environment, but rather see it through its affordances, which are the possibilities for action it may provide. Gibson's idea suggested that affordances define conceptually more than just physical

dimensions of what users can do with technologies. Later scholars took Gibson's notion of affordances and broadened and altered it, applying it to include cognitive, social, and even "imagined" affordances that can be ascribed to the use of technology. The work of media and communication scholars yield excellent insight into the use of social media by the young persons studied in this research. Technology affords a new kind of communication which empowers its users in important new ways. Ascertaining and understanding these new "affordances" are essentially the work of this study.

### **Adolescent Friendships and Electronic Media**

Several researchers point out that a major flaw in many studies of adolescent friendships is that they are based on a false dichotomy between online and offline friendships when in reality, the two groups overlap (De Grove, 2014; Reich et al., 2012; Van Zalk et al., 2014). The Pew friendship survey confirms that friends met online have become an integral part of the social networks of teens. More than half of the young respondents (57%) made at least one new friend online and 29% made five or more friends online (Lenhart et al., 2015). At the same time, only 20% met their new online friends in person. Older teens are more likely than younger teens to make friends online (60% versus 51%), though this could be a reflection of their greater presence on social networking sites and perhaps less parental monitoring of their friendships.

The gender differences in preferences for social media and gaming were evident in the venues met their online friends (Lenhart et al., 2015). Girls were more likely than boys to meet new friends on social media (78% versus 52%) whereas boys are far more

likely to meet new friends playing games (57% versus 13%). In fact, the researchers found that video games played a pivotal role in the development of boys online and offline friendships. The importance of games in friendship networks for both genders will be discussed later in this chapter. Sharing a common interest in games is an important aspect of friendship beyond simply playing the game together (De Grove, 2014).

Texting plays a pivotal role in keeping adolescents in touch with close friends (Lenhart et al., 2015). School is the primary venue where teens interact with close friends, which is one reason that school transitions are emotionally stressful events (Garner et al., 2014; Russ & Keim, 2014). However, similar proportions of adolescents reported spending time with their close friends at someone's home and online (58% and 55%, respectively) thereby illustrating the extent that virtual settings have come to occupy a prominent place in the friendships of adolescents, even with their closest friends (Lenhart et al., 2015).

Reich et al. (2012) explored the degree of overlap in the online and offline social networks of 251 students from three California high schools. The students ranged in age from 13 to 19 years and a majority were Latino (70%). An in-person survey of background information was augmented by an online survey completed by 126 participants describing their Internet use in more detail. Most of the students maintained a profile on a SNS to keep in touch with friends they did not see often in person (84%) or to keep in touch with relatives (52%). Virtually equal proportions of participants felt

their SNS had no effect on their relationships (44%) or made their friendships closer (43%). One-quarter of the participants had experienced some problems due to their SNS activities such as rumors, conflict, or disclosure of information with negative consequences with friends, a romantic partner, or parents. A higher proportion of teens in a Pew study (41%) reported similar negative incidents, with the most common being an SNS experience that led to a face-to-face confrontation or argument (25%) or an experience that ended a friendship (22%). Some 13% experienced an incident that caused a problem with parents (Lenhart et al, 2011).

Reich et al. (2012) observed a tremendous range in the size of the high school students' social networks, with a median size of about 130 friends. On average, the students interacted with more than three-quarters of their SNS friend networks (77%). Instant messaging was used primarily to communicate with friends they knew personally and the students' online friendship networks were composed mainly of people they knew offline. Nonetheless, Reich et al. view the ability to interact with an expansive network far beyond the limits of face-to-face communication as a major advantage for adolescents. From their perspective, SNS provide a non-threatening social milieu that allows adolescents to hone and practice social skills.

In view of the *familism*, or close family bonds, embedded in Latin culture, Reich et al. (2012) had expected the Latino students to devote more time online to interacting with relatives than their White peers. However, this was not the case. There were not ethnic differences in the students' friendship networks. Lenhart (2015) found some



ethnic differences in adolescents' preferences for different SNS, but that did not affect their interactions with friends. Reich et al. (2012) proposed that online interactions might be diminishing familism and instilling a greater sense of individualism in Latino adolescents. From a broader perspective, the sense of control and belonging that many teens experience in their virtual social interactions may simultaneously foster feelings of personal independence and connectedness with peers (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014).

**Social Capital.** Social capital offers a useful framework for examining the benefits of young people's online friendships (Ahn, 2012; Ellison et al., 2011; Johnston et al., 2013; Mazzoni & Iannone, 2014). Broadly, social capital refers to actual or potential resources obtained in the context of social relationships and social networks. Two types of social capital have been defined: *bridging* and *bonding*. Bridging social capital refers to external relationships or "weak ties" (Johnston et al., 2013). The emphasis in bridging social capital is *breadth*. Bridging social capital lacks depth but can greatly expand the nature and scope of available resources. Bonding social capital exists between individuals with close relationships such as close friends and relatives and centers on internal ties between actors. Bonding social capital strengthens internal ties but does work to expand the social network. Indeed, strong bonds among actors can stifle the expansion of social networks.

Ahn (2012) explored the nature of bridging and bonding social capital in relation to adolescents' patterns of SNS use. An online survey was conducted with students from two urban school districts. The participants were asked if they were members of

Facebook and/or MySpace and assessed on self-esteem and social capital. Two measures of social capital were derived from the Internet Social Capital Scales (ISCS). The word “high school” was emphasized in the bonding scale which focused on relationships and support within the school community. Bridging social capital was assessed by five items from the ISCS.

Across all ethnic groups, roughly 70% to 90% of the high school students used SNS (Ahn, 2012). These figures have climbed even higher with the advent of newer SNS (Lenhart, 2015). As in the national survey, Ahn’s (2012) survey showed that ethnicity influenced the choice of SNS. Academic achievement also influenced SNS use, as the highest achievers were members of Facebook, the lowers were members of MySpace, and those who utilized both sites were in the middle academically. Most students briefly logged on to their SNS, a pattern that has changed dramatically with the exponential growth in smartphone use (Lenhart, 2015).

Students who were SNS users experienced higher bonding social capital, supporting the theory that SNS interactions bolster existing (offline) friendships (Ahn, 2012). Findings for bridging social capital were mixed but could be explained by differences in the nature of friendships on the two sites. MySpace seemed to be more of a venue for deepening school-based relationships but not for expanding social networks, while Facebook users were more predisposed to use the site to broaden their social networks.

While spending time on SNS was not associated with bonding social capital, Ahn (2012) considers it conceivable that certain activities and experiences promote bonding relationships. They drew on the work of Ellison et al. (2011) who explored “connection strategies” in a study of 450 college students. The underlying assumption was that certain patterns of interactions on Facebook would be more effective for building connections. They discovered that social information-seeking activities such as using Facebook to search for information about someone they knew enhanced bonding social capital. Ellison et al. concluded that the identity information presented on Facebook helped to blend online and offline relationships, encouraging users to engage with the person as a result of the new information.

Most studies of social capital among SNS users have been conducted with college students or emerging adults. Mazzone and Iannone (2014) focused on the transition from high school to college. As described by the researchers, emerging adulthood, the stage of life between 18 and 25 is marked by many decisions and changes beginning with high school graduation. Emerging adults may pursue higher education, enter the workforce, leave home, and seek out more stable relationships, for example. Greater recourse to various sources of social capital could be highly advantageous for helping young adults navigate these life transitions. Mazzone and Iannone view SNS as “web artifacts” that can mediate and promote the maintenance and development of social capital.

The study, which took place in Italy, centered on two types of transitions: leaving high school to attend college and leaving one’s hometown as a result (Mazzone &

Iannone, 2014). The participants were 329 high school students and 598 university students. Roughly two-thirds of the participants were female. The questionnaire was derived from earlier research by Ellison and colleagues and covered demographic information, Facebook use, psychological well-being, and bridging, bonding, and maintained social capital. Bridging social capital was further divided into *contextual bridging social capital* and *relational bridging social capital*.

For the university students, who were moving into an unknown social and academic environment, both types of bridging social capital were especially pertinent (Mazzone & Iannone, 2014). Creating a new social network was especially important for the university students who were entering a new environment than for the high school students who were in the process of leaving a familiar one. At the same time, an accumulation of maintained social capital was also important for the university students. A notable difference between the university students and high school students was that while the university students claimed that their offline friends were also SNS members they were more intrinsically motivated to join while the high schools students experienced more pressure to join from offline friends. This distinction is not surprising given the difference in age and the greater recognition on the part of the university students of the potentially valuable resources the SNS offered. The university students used the SNS to stay in contact with their offline friends, get help with studying, locate useful information, and share music, videos, films, and other interests.

According to Mazzone and Iannone (2014), the high school students had greater needs for affiliation while the university students needed social support and a sense of belonging. Once the first set of needs was met, the researchers proposed that the university students would then focus on the realization of their personal goals. Their perspective essentially reflects Maslow's hierarchy of needs. For the university students who changed residence, the SNS expanded the scope of their social network as they navigated two types of changes to their physical world. Students who began college without changing their residence also experienced the possibilities of the new social network but were likely to have more support from their old network.

The study of Mazzone and Iannone (2014) may be especially relevant to the situation of military-connected high school students who are forced to navigate multiple school transitions. It seems plausible that these students desire to maintain relationships with some friends from the schools they are leaving as well as form new friendships at their new school and meet new friends online. Their friendships could be viewed from the perspectives of bonding, bridging, and maintained social capital as well as the two types of bridging social capital.

Johnston et al. (2013) explored the relationship of Facebook friends to social capital in a study of university students in South Africa, juxtaposing their findings with those from research by Ellison and colleagues conducted at Michigan State University (MSU). The South African sample was composed of 572 students drawn from seven universities. Slightly more than two-thirds were Facebook members compared to 94% of

the MSU sample. Both groups spent about 10-30 minutes a day on Facebook and the South African and MSU students had an average of 100-150 and 150-200 friends, respectively.

At MSU the students utilized Facebook primarily to interact with other students from the same university (Johnston et al., 2013). The South African students used Facebook to a greater degree for bridging social capital. Both student groups showed similar levels of Facebook intensity, which was linked with bonding social capital for both groups. One distinction, however, was that Facebook intensity was especially significant for maintaining social capital among the South African students. Despite the differences in student samples and the ways in which different researchers examine social capital in the context of SNS use, the findings of the various studies all confirm that SNS membership is related to bridging, bonding, and maintained social capital.

**Shyness and adolescent friendships.** As the Internet gained popularity, it became a common assumption that it would be especially attractive to adolescents who were inhibited in face-to-face social interactions (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). This belief is reflected in the *social compensation* hypothesis, which posits that the controlled and impersonal nature of online communication provides socially anxious or shy adolescents with a non-threatening milieu to express themselves and therefore helps them transcend inhibitions to face-to-face conversations. From the opposite standpoint, the *poor-get-poorer* hypothesis proposes that online friendships are shallow and fail to fulfill the relationship needs or resolve social problems for shy adolescents (Van Zalk et al., 2014).

From this perspective, rather than enriching the social lives of shy adolescents, online interactions may further limit their opportunities for form offline friendships.

According to Van Zalk et al. (2014), a problem with both hypotheses is that they are based on the erroneous assumption that adolescents' online and offline friendships are separate (De Grove, 2014; Reich et al., 2012). Van Zalk et al. (2014) divide adolescent friendships into three categories: *online-exclusive*, *offline-exclusive*, and *conjoint*, to denote interactions that take place online and offline. They noted that no prior study had recognized these three types of interactions in examining the role of shyness in adolescent friendships.

Utilizing the three types of friendships, Van Zalk et al. (2014) explored the moderating role of shyness in the long-term interaction between online and offline friendships in a sample of 389 Swedish adolescents in grades seven through nine. The project began with a group of 61 girls and 63 boys who then nominated their friends. Out of the total sample, 91% completed the full three assessments, which took place eight months apart. The participants were surveyed on friendships (listing up to 40 friends in each of the three categories), instant messaging and SNS use, self-esteem, and shyness, which was addressed by eight questions related to fears in various situations.

The findings supported the social compensation hypothesis (Van Zalk et al., 2014). Online-exclusive friendships were especially beneficial for shy adolescents, who enjoyed a significant increase in self-esteem. In turn, their enhanced self-esteem enabled shy adolescents to form more friendships online and offline and led to more online-

exclusive friendships. To Van Zalk et al., the powerful impact of self-esteem on friendship development is especially striking as it provides insight on *how* to help shy adolescents cultivate supportive friendships. Among teens involved in a Pew Internet survey of interactions on SNS, roughly two-thirds (65%) reported experiences that made them feel good about themselves and 58% said they felt closer to someone as a result of an experience on an SNS (Lenhart et al., 2011). Thus, it is not unusual for adolescents to experience a self-esteem boost or feel closer to others as a result of virtual interactions though it is significant that these experiences can be especially advantageous for young people who are customarily shy.

Engaging in online-exclusive friendships had comparable effects on the development of conjoint and exclusively offline friendships (Van Zalk et al., 2014). This could be a reflection of the extent that online social interactions have become integrated into adolescents' everyday lives. This effect was also evident in the finding that the use of instant messaging or SNS for virtual communication made no difference in the friendships of shy adolescents. The overall findings clearly refute the poor-get-poorer hypothesis which drove much of the early research on adolescents' Internet and support the social compensation hypothesis in relation to shy youth (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009).

**Social support, stress, and well-being.** The research of Nabi et al. (2013) into potential health benefits of SNS use was inspired by the large body of evidence demonstrating that social support can play a powerful role in buffering the harmful effects of stress. Studies consistently find that having access to a large social network



can offer resources for coping with stress. However, very few studies have examined social support and well-being in the context of SNS. Nabi et al. expanded the scope of any prior research by exploring the use of SNS in relation to perceived social support, stress, and physical and psychological well-being in young adults.

The sample was composed of 401 undergraduate Facebook users with a mean age of just under 20 years (Nabi et al., 2013). The overwhelming majority of the participants were female (78%). The participants were assessed on physical illness, perceived stress, stressful life events, perceived social support, and life satisfaction. Facebook use encompassed the duration of their Facebook accounts, the number of Facebook friends, and the number that they regarded as close friends. The Social Network Index (SNI) was utilized to assess the total size of the participants' interpersonal social networks.

As Nabi et al. (2013) anticipated, the number of Facebook friends was linked with greater perceived social support, which was linked with lower levels of stress, less physical illness, and superior psychological well-being. This effect diminished somewhat when interpersonal network size was included, but among participants that had been subjected to more life stressors, the number of Facebook friends still emerged as the key predictor of perceived social support. Thus, for the most highly stressed young adults, having a large number of Facebook friends was a uniquely positive resource, even amidst other sources of interpersonal support.

It is interesting that only the *number* of Facebook friends had the power to buffer stress. Nabi et al. (2013) propose that having a larger number of Facebook friends makes

people feel more connected regardless of the precise nature of the relationship, and this sense of connection may be especially comforting under high levels of stress. The findings of this study may be especially relevant to the well-being of military-connected adolescents in view of the numerous stressors they experience.

**Gaming and friendship.** According to De Grove (2014), given the prominent place of digital games in the leisure activities of so many young people, knowledge of how gaming-related practices affect the quality of friendships with players and non-players is an interesting and important channel for research. The author notes that most studies of friendship in online gaming tend to concentrate only on communication that takes place during the game, and many juxtapose online and offline friendships as if the two were mutually exclusive when that is rarely the case. Indeed, for avid teen gamers, game playing contributes to an expansive social network. The Pew survey found that most young gamers played games with others in person (89%) and online (75%), including with friends they only interacted with online (54%) and with (52%) other online gamers who were not regarded as friends (Lenhart et al., 2015).

The importance of games in the social connections of teen boys is highlighted by the fact that 38% cited their gaming handle as one of the first bits of information they shared with someone they desired to have as a friends (Lenhart et al., 2015). Only 7% of girls immediately shared their game handle, though this may be due to negative attitudes toward female gamers that could make them reluctant to disclose their interest in gaming to non-gamers. The use of voice connections in online playing (71% of boys and 28% of

girls) allows players to talk and collaborate, and compete verbally (“trash talk”), which enhances the sense of connection among players. In fact, 78% of teen gamers reported that games online made them feel more connected to friends and 52% felt more connected to other gamers. Although the gender differences persist, this sense of connection is prevalent among girls as well as boys: 84% of boys and 62% of girls feel more connected to friends they play games with online, and 56% of boys and 43% of girls feel more connected to other gamers who are not friends.

De Grove (2014) explored the salience of games in the social interactions of young players beyond playing the game together, proposing that conversations about games would be an important aspect of their friendships. They also examined the influence of gender on gaming-related practices and the relationship of gaming-related practices to friendship quality. The sample was composed of 100 high school students (67% male) with a mean age of 15.39 years. Participation was open to all students who had played any game on an electronic device in order to capture the various ways in which adolescents engage with digital games.

An average social network consisted of 10 friends (De Grove, 2014). The 100 friendship networks included 11% that were exclusively female, 24% that were exclusively male, and 21% in which all members played games. In virtually all the networks (97%), talking about games was a routine activity. In 89% of the networks, talking about games enhanced friendship quality and made the members feel more connected and this was equally true in male oriented and female oriented networks. In

contrast, games were played among friends in a much smaller proportion of networks (69%) and involved fewer network members. As in the Pew research study (Lenhart et al., 2015), playing games together fostered more of a sense of connection among boys (De Grove, 2014).

In relation to the friendship networks of military-connected adolescents, the findings of both studies suggest that games may be especially valuable for helping students build social relationships when they transfer to a new school as well as to maintain social connections with friends from their former school. Furthermore, digital games can be used as a learning tool that simultaneously fosters academic and social integration. Although gaming is especially prominent in the lives of teen boys, digital gaming is steadily attracting increasing numbers of girls. For girls and boys who enjoy digital games, interest in gaming may serve as a springboard for greater participation of military students in school and community activities, which should be encouraged (Rossen & Carter, 2012).

**Peer influence and friend network selection.** Initiatives to prevent or decrease risk behaviors in adolescents have traditionally been based on the premise that peer influence plays a dominant role in the uniformity of behaviors of members of the same social group. However, according to Huang, Soto, Fujimoto, and Valente (2014), there is increasing evidence for an alternative explanation; namely, that adolescents are inclined to form friendships with others who already share their behaviors. This predilection reflects *homophily*, “the tendency for similar people to be drawn to each other” (p. e51).

From this perspective, adolescents who engage in risk behaviors are likely to seek out friends who do the same, and these behaviors are reinforced by the time and activities shared. Studies of adolescents' alcohol consumption and smoking have found support for both *influence* and *selection*; in some studies the two mechanisms work together to predict teenagers' behavior.

Huang et al. (2014) explored the effects of influence and selection on adolescents' smoking and alcohol use in the context of SNS use. There is some speculation that SNS use may promote risky behaviors because youth may be less inhibited about discussing or showcasing risk behavior online than in a face-to-face setting. Indeed, a key concern for adults is that many adolescents may lack the maturity to realize the potential consequences of posting inappropriate message, photographs, or videos online (O'Keeffe et al., 2011). There are myriad anecdotes of young adults being denied college admissions or jobs because they posted photographs of themselves drunk or partying. Older teens tend to be aware of this hazard and are more prudent about posting material that could potentially damage their reputation (Lenhart et al., 2011). To Huang et al. (2014), exposure to such material may encourage underage drinking or smoking.

Huang et al. (2014) drew their data from the first two waves of the Social Network Study, which involves students from five California high schools. The analysis focused on 1,434 10<sup>th</sup> graders representing five friendship networks across the five schools. The findings confirmed a stronger impact of select effects over influence effects for alcohol use in particular. Students who drank tended to choose peers with similar

drinking habits as friends. Students who consumed alcohol tended to be more popular and outgoing and made more friends than their non-drinking peers. The peer influence effects observed for alcohol use did not extend to smoking, which no longer conveys an image of social sophistication. However, greater exposure to pictures of risk behaviors posted by friends was associated with an increase in smoking.

Huang et al. (2014) concluded that SNS can be integrated into interventions designed to identify at-risk youth and alter behavior. Binge drinking has been reported in studies of youth from military families, particularly among adolescent boys (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013; Reed et al., 2011). Only future research could tell what effect social networking might have on this behavior.

### **Negative Aspects of Social Media Use**

An accumulating body of evidence clearly refutes the negative assumption that initially surrounded the increasing involvement of young people in online activities (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). Privacy issues and posting inappropriate material can be problematic especially for young teens, who are less aware of, or concerned with, the consequences of their actions (Lenhart, 2015). In addition, young teens may be less disciplined and capable of controlling the extent that SNS use introduces into other areas of their lives.

**Intrusiveness.** In their study of young adolescents' SNS use, Espinoza and Juvonen (2011), included *intrusiveness*, to capture potentially negative effects of SNS on getting enough sleep, arriving at classes on time, or falling behind in schoolwork. The participants were 268 Los Angeles middle school students. The study examined Internet use, SNS use, connectedness (denoting the number of friends on their favorite SNS and the extent that they know their online friends), SNS intrusiveness, and concern for peer approval, captured by two items from the Fear of Negative Evaluation subscale of the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents.

Espinoza and Juvonen (2011) focused on young adolescents as an emerging and understudied group of SNS users. Although one-third of the respondents did not have a social network profile, many of that group were still active on SNS, posting and responding to comments. Most used SNS to communicate with peers they already knew, although the large numbers of friends implied that most online "friendships" were weak ties with peers such as "friends of friends." Only 16% of the students, reported that half their friends or more were people they had never met, but in view of their young age Espinoza and Juvonen found this troubling due to privacy risks. In terms of intrusiveness, 39% of the SNS users reported that they fell behind in their schoolwork and 37% lost sleep at least once the last year because they were visiting an SNS. These effects were more common for girls, who spent more time on SNS than their male peers.

**Safety concerns.** Vanderhoven, Schellens, Valcke, and Raes (2014) conducted an observational study examining the public and non-public profiles of 1,080 Flemish

Facebook users between the ages of 13 and 18. The researchers analyzed the type of information the teenagers posted, the extent that they protected their information with privacy settings, and how much risky information their profiles contained. Regarding the first question, the analysis confirmed that teenagers post a wide variety of information on SNS. Pictures made up a large proportion of the postings, with material revealing their interests and some basic information.

As interpreted by Vanderhoven et al. (2014), the information posted by the teenagers is consistent with their stage of development in that it is designed to construct and reveal a personal identity (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). However, this need to create an online identity complicates the issue of privacy protection because this identity is apparent to all users who view the postings (Vanderhoven et al., 2014). A significant number of teenagers made use of privacy settings thus restricting the content to some degree. At the same time, Vanderhoven et al. noted that the teenage Facebook members had an average of 384 friends: a number that seems to imply that their identity is visible to “*a lot of strangers* [original emphasis]” (p. 7).

An alternate way of protecting privacy is to be prudent in choosing the content to post online. Vanderhoven et al. (2014) observed that the profiles included very little contact information. They attribute this to ongoing safety messages to adolescents from parents, teachers, and societal campaigns and for the younger teens possibly to parental restrictions. Nevertheless, many profile pages contained material related to drinking, partying, and nudity. The older teenagers were most likely to post risky information. On



the whole, the Facebook profiles contained little information that could be construed as risky but some teens did seem to be careless in what they posted online.

In the Pew Internet survey on digital citizenship, the overwhelming majority of teens reported using privacy settings so only their friends could view their profiles (Lenhart et al., 2011). However, as Vanderhoven et al. (2014) observed for the Flemish teens, for SNS users with expansive social networks, restricting content to friends still implies that it is viewed by many friends-of-friends that they scarcely know. In the American study the oldest respondents, who are approaching high school graduation and preparing for college or employment are the most diligent about the material they post online.

**Internet addiction.** Smahel, Brown, & Blinka (2012) investigating associations between online friendship and Internet addiction in a representative sample of 394 Czech adolescents and young adults ranging in age from 12 to 26 ( $M = 18.58$ ). Based on data from the World Internet Project, the researchers noted that despite cross-cultural differences in the use of specific applications, patterns of Internet usage are remarkably similar across national boundaries. Thus their findings are likely to be applicable to young people in the U.S.

The prospect that Internet use could become an addictive behavior arose with the explosive growth and popularity of online communication, although there is no consensus on a definition of the phenomenon or even on whether Internet addiction is a legitimate and distinctive disorder (Smahel et al., 2012). For the purpose of their study, Smahel et

al. created a list of items derived from prior research and encompassing the six features of Internet addiction proposed by Griffiths (2000): *salience*, the overriding importance of the Internet in the person's life; *mood change*, such as an arousing "buzz" or "high," or conversely, a sense of escape or "numbing"; *tolerance*, whereby the person requires increasing amounts of Internet use of attain the mood effects; *withdrawal symptoms*, denoting unpleasant symptoms when Internet use is halted or reduced; *conflict* between the Internet user and others, with other activities, or within the self; and *relapse*, denoting reversion to excessive Internet use (p. 415). Internet addiction was examined in relation to online and offline friendship, self-esteem, preference for online communication, and hours spent online at home. Offline friends included those the respondents met online but also met with in person.

At the time of the World Internet Project, social networking sites in the Czech Republic were still in their infancy, thus a substantial proportion of respondents (43.2%) had no online friendships (Smahel et al., 2012). Those who reported online friends were classified as *face-to-face oriented* (30.6%) or *Internet-oriented* (26.2%), denoting that one-third or more of their friendships existed exclusively online. Although the Internet-oriented group had significantly more friends and close friends that they met online than the face-to-face oriented group, the face-to-face oriented group had the largest number of friends and close friends of all three groups, including the highest number of offline friends that they initially met online. No significant age or gender differences were found between groups.

The young people in the face-to-face oriented group appeared to be socially adept in both the virtual and the physical realms; social networking sites provided a venue for maintaining and expanding their social circles (Smahel et al., 2012). Initiating more friendships online emerged as the key factor in a predisposition toward Internet addiction, along with a preference for online communication, and more hours spend online at home. Smahel et al. suggested that young people with this pattern of interaction may have conflicts between their online and offline friendships that drive them to spend more time online. Their desire for online friends might lead them to neglect offline friendships, which could further fuel a quest for more friends online, or they could be compensating for lack of social support in their everyday lives. The researchers noted that longitudinal research would be needed to discern causal effects.

A notable though perhaps not unexpected finding was that higher predisposition toward Internet addiction was linked with lower levels of self-esteem (Smahel et al., 2012). In a study of 1,819 Australian high school students, *investment in social networking sites* was associated with lower self-esteem and more frequent depressed mood (Blomfield Neira & Barber, 2014). SNS investment was assessed by the degree of agreement with two items: “Facebook/MySpace/Bebo has become part of my daily routine” and “I feel out of touch when I haven’t logged into Facebook/MySpace/Bebo.” Both items could be construed as facets of Internet or SNS dependence. However, in contrast to the potentially negative effect of spending more time online observed by Smahel et al. (2012), among the Australian youth greater frequency of SNS use was

linked with higher social self-concept. Blomfield, Neira and Barber (2014) ascribed this to opportunities for social interaction provided by using SNS. From their perspective, SNS provide a venue for adolescents to practice their social skills, which may enhance their feelings of social competence. This seems to be especially true for shy adolescents (Van Zalk et al., 2014).

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying has been called the “dark side” of online communication (Strom & Strom, 2012a, p. 48). Defined as “deliberately using digital media to communicate false, embarrassing, or hostile information about another person,” cyberbullying is the most common type of online risk for adolescents (O’Keeffe et al., 2011, p. 801). Turner (2015) describes technological devices as “safe havens for bullies” (p. 110). Comments can be posted anonymously and the impersonal nature of virtual communication means that bullies can type out hateful messages without confronting their victims face-to-face or seeing their reactions (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; Turner, 2015). Even more insidious, the use of digital platforms enables bullies to attack their victims at any time of the day or night. One 14-year-old described being bullied online as “torment,” calling it worse than being bullied face-to-face (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011, p. 49).

**Prevalence.** Estimates of the number of adolescents who experience cyberbullying vary substantially depending upon the age range examined, the design of the survey, and the way cyberbullying is conceptualized (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011). For their own research, Hinduja and Patchin defined cyberbullying as “when someone

repeatedly makes fun of another person online, or repeatedly picks on another person through e-mail or text message, or when someone posts something online about another person they don't like" (p. 50). Among more than 4,400 randomly chosen students age 11 to 18, roughly 20% said they had been victims of cyberbullying at some point. A comparable proportion reported cyberbullying others and an additional 10% had been both victim and bully.

Pew researchers approached the issue of cyberbullying from the broader perspective of "digital citizenship" (Lenhart et al., 2011). For most of the survey hurtful actions were referred to as "meanness" or "cruelty" but with the inclusion of one question that specifically asked about bullying. The survey also explored prosocial behavior or "kindness" as well. The broad concept of "social media meanness" was derived from the work of Alice Marwick and dana boyd, who proposed that some interactions that adults call bullying may be viewed as "drama" by adolescents. According to Marwick and boyd, young people prefer the term "drama" because it allows them to feel a sense of agency or control that is negated by having the terms "victim" or "bully" imposed on their social interactions. At the same time, Lenhart et al. acknowledge that describing behavior as "mean and cruel" may be inadequate. This seems like an understatement given that documented negative outcomes of cyberbullying include depression, anxiety, extreme isolation, and even suicide (O'Keeffe et al., 2011).

The Pew survey was conducted through focus groups with adolescents from ages 12 to 19 and focused on social media (Lenhart et al., 2011). A strong majority (69%) felt

their peers were mainly kind to each other on SNS, but 20% held the reverse opinion (mostly unkind) and 11% thought “it depends.” These responses contrast with those from a survey of adult SNS users whereby 85% felt that people were mostly kind to one another and only 5% thought most were unkind.

If the adolescents were more cynical about cyber cruelty than adults, there was a practical reason: 88% of the teens had witnessed acts of cruelty on SNS compared to 69% of the adults (Lenhart et al., 2011). The largest segment of both groups reported witnessing this behavior only occasionally (47% of teens and 44% of adults), but adolescents were more likely to report witnessing “frequent” acts of cruelty (12% versus 7%). The proportion of teens who reported being victims of cruelty (15%) was lower than the 20% in the survey of Hinduja and Patchin (2011) who reported being victims of cyberbullying. However, when Lenhart et al. (2011) asked specifically about bullying, 19% admitted to being victims of bullying within the last year, although this figure included in-person bullying, which was experienced by 12% of the adolescents. Smaller proportions reported being bullied by text messages (9%), online, via email, instant messaging, or a social network site (8%), or by phone calls (7%). Girls were the major victims of cyberbullying while boys were the main victims of face-to-face bullying.

**Effects of cyberbullying.** The responses of the students surveyed by Hinduja and Patchin (2011) illustrate the harmful effects of cyberbullying documented in clinical research (O’Keeffe et al., 2011). One 17-year-old cyberbullying victim reported feeling “like I wanted to never go out of the house or talk to anyone ever again,” which led to

depression (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011, p. 49). The bully thought it was “funny,” which underscores the need to educate youth about cyberbullying. Depression, sadness, frustration, and anger were common reactions to being bullied. One student reported feeling hurt “physically and mentally,” adding “It scares me and takes away all my confidence. It makes me feel sick and worthless” (p. 50). According to Hinuja and Patchin, their research disclosed a connection between cyberbullying and low self-esteem, family problems, academic difficulties, school violence, and delinquent behaviors. These emotional, psychological, and behavioral problems are more prevalent among victims of cyberbullying than among their non-victimized peers as are thoughts of suicide.

Studies consistently find that the impact of cyberbullying is more detrimental than the impact of traditional bullying (Dredge, Gleeson, & de la Piedad Garcia, 2014). However, noting that that not all victims of cyberbullying are adversely affected, Dredge et al. surmised that certain coping strategies might have a protective effect. They explored this issue in a qualitative study of 25 Australian secondary school and university students between the ages of 15 and 24.

The analysis produced five themes covering factors that potentially heightened the negative impact of cyberbullying along with factors that decreased that impact. The first theme was *the role of publicity*; specifically, the more public the act of bullying, the more hurtful it was, whereas less public harassment was still hurtful but was perceived as more manageable (Dredge et al., 2014). The second theme was *the role of anonymity*; whether

the victim knew the bully's identity. Being harassed by an anonymous bully could be very frightening. However, what most participants found most hurtful was being bullied by someone with whom they were or had been close. To participants who were bullied anonymously, the possibility that it might be someone close to them was especially distressing.

The third theme related to the *unique features of the medium*. Many participants expressed "feelings of hopelessness and helplessness" because they could not remove cruel comments or photographs posted to another person's SNS profile pages (Dredge et al., 2014, p. 289). In some cases, the victims successfully persuaded someone to delete the offensive material, which relieved their distress. Their success in this matter might also have imbued them with a sense of control over the experience.

The *role of bystanders*, the fourth theme, has important implications for countering cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying. Not only was the harmful impact of bullying intensified by the fact that others were witnesses, but, "the impact was more severe when online bystanders did not stand up to the perpetrators in their behalf" (Dredge et al., 2014). This experience reduced the victims' sense of trust and social support from others and lowered their social self-esteem. Ideally, bystanders can be enlisted as a force to counteract bullying. Hinduja and Patchin (2011) recommend peer mentoring in which older students help younger students learn strategies for dealing with cyberbullying. The vast majority of teens in the Pew study witnessed online cruelty but ignored it (90%) or observed others ignoring cruelty (95%; Lenhart et al., 2011). On



other occasions, however, roughly 80% or more have defended a victim or told the harasser to stop, or observed others defending the victim or telling the harasser to stop. For some 20% to 27%, intervening or seeing others intervening was a frequent occurrence.

On the negative side, two-thirds of adolescents reported seeing others join in online cruelty and 21% admitted to joining in (Lenhart et al., 2011). Fifty-one percent of the girls and 20% of the boys who witnessed online cruelty sought advice, which most (92%) described as helpful. The lower proportion of boys who sought out advice is consistent with studies reporting that boys are less inclined than girls to ask others for help. However, the finding that many young people ignore cyberbullying and do not ask for advice on how to deal with the problem implies a need for formal programs for middle and high school students.

The final theme focused on *individual level factors* (Dredge et al., 2014). Several participants reported framing the cyberbullying incident as a joke and trying to laugh it off. Other attributes that protected participants from feeling victimized included high self-confidence, high self-esteem, a positive attitude, a thick skin, and being easygoing. To Dredge et al., these characteristics reflected a general picture of resilience, which is often found in military-connected children. The finding that individual characteristics protect against the harmful effects of cyberbullying is consistent with models of stress and coping (Boon, 2011; Lucier-Greer et al., 2014).

Several participants dismissed the potentially negative impact of cyberbullying by framing bullying as an expected feature of adolescence (Dredge et al., 2014). Indeed, for generations, bullying was viewed as a rite of passage for youth until a large body of empirical evidence confirmed its harmful effects. Dredge et al. acknowledged that rationalizing bullying as a normal event could decrease its negative impact on victims, but emphasized that “cyberbullying should not be considered something that happens at all” (p. 290).

**Prevention and intervention.** Hinduja and Patchin (2011) declare educating the school community to be the most important action schools take in promoting responsible Internet use and decreasing online aggression and bullying. The most effective strategy would be to call in a cyberbullying expert who works with school personnel to develop a comprehensive school strategy. The authors also suggest involving teachers, parents, in discussions to talk about how each would respond to specific cyberbullying incidents.

Notably, some of the strategies recommended by Hinduja and Patchin (2011) give an active role to students, such as having older students mentor younger ones. Similar strategies are recommended for helping military students transition successfully to new schools (Garnier et al., 2014; Ruff & Keim, 2014). YAPs, which are designed to promote positive youth development, could be adapted to support schoolwide cyberbullying prevention (Mitra, 2009).

## **Learning Opportunities**

Schools are notoriously slow to adopt new technologies. Journell et al (2014) point out that in era when people are surrounded by technology and adolescents are avid consumers of social media, schools are scarcely taking advantage of the inherent possibilities of using those technologies as learning tools. Indeed, surveys of students reveal strong support for teaching with technology to make learning more enriching and engaging, and furthermore, a compelling body of evidence supports the ability of technology tools to expand and enhance the learning experience. The way in which virtually all students use the Internet is to search for information.

**Information-seeking behavior.** One of the defining features of the Internet is the provision of access to vast information resources available at all times. On the positive side, this capability has the power to enhance students' formal and informal learning activities (Eynon & Malmberg, 2012). At the same time, harnessing this potential entails the ability to seek out the most appropriate channels and analyze the quality of the information provided. One of the major channels of research on young people's online information-seeking behavior centers on the skills needed for that endeavor. A second major channel of research focuses on the influence of demographic and socioeconomic factors on information-seeking behavior. What is missing from the empirical literature, according to Eynon and Malmberg, is knowledge of the various ways that support networks, specifically parents, teachers, and friends affect students' information-seeking behavior.

To address this issue, Eynon and Malmberg (2012) proposed and tested a model exploring the relationships between individual characteristics (age, gender, Socio-Economic Status (SES), home Internet access), networks of support (from parents', school, and friends' use of technology), and skills and competence (self-concept for learning and online information-seeking skills). It is interesting that Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism often serves as a framework for teaching and learning with technology. Collaboration is essential for activities such as creating class blogs, web pages, and multimedia projects, using social media as a learning tool, and interacting with distant peers in virtual communities (Journell, Ayers, & Beeson, 2014; Lapp, Fisher, Frey, 2014; Morgan, 2015; Strom & Strom, 2012a, 2012b). However, as Eynon and Malberg (2012) observed, despite recognition of the potential role of social factors in students' information seeking, the topic has rarely been explored.

The model was tested in a nationally representative sample of British children and youth ages 8, 12, 14, and 17-19 (Eynon & Malberg, 2012). The 1,069 participants were randomly drawn from a residential classification database, allowing the researchers to examine socio-demographic characteristics. The survey, which the participants completed in their homes, covered all the favorable items included in the conceptual model. Age emerged as the most important individual factor in information seeking. Information seeking increased steadily with age. This finding is not unexpected as older students engage in more challenging learning activities and seek information for their lives outside of and beyond school. SES was associated with information seeking for

homework and self-concept for learning but not with parents' support for using online resources at home. Eynon and Malberg suggested that parents of all socioeconomic classes are learning how best to support their children in using Internet resources.

Indeed, in many cases the children are more adept at technology use than their parents.

Both perceived skills and self-concept for learning were linked with accessing information online (Eynon & Malberg, 2012). In particular, stronger self-concept for learning predicted greater engagement in information seeking. The findings confirmed the important influence of networks of support. Parents supported information seeking indirectly by means of their influence on self-concept for learning, which in turn enhanced information seeking. Schools influenced both information seeking and self-concept for learning. The most striking finding was the powerful direct impact of friends' technology use on information seeking and self-concept for learning. The most effective role models for building self-concepts are those with whom learners can most identify (Bandura, 1997).

Support networks and self-concept for learning both merit further exploration and could be especially valuable for helping educators utilize social media tools to expand classroom learning opportunities. Ellison et al. (2011) demonstrated how seeking out information about offline friends and acquaintances strengthened bonding social capital. Support networks may play an even more prominent role in the ways young people seek information on social networks and various types of self-concept could be applied to the study of information-seeking on SNS.

**Teaching with social media.** Like Journell et al. (2014), Lapp et al. (2014) strongly advocate that educators integrate social media into classroom learning. Both sources stress the ability of technology tools to provide students with authentic learning experiences that allow them to be creative and share their projects far beyond the scope of the school. Lapp et al. described their experience in a school of more than 600 students where three-quarters are eligible for subsidized meals where the teachers committed themselves to using technology innovatively to improve teaching and learning. Their work was driven by the belief that students must move beyond being information consumers to become information creators.

Lapp et al. (2014) presented a series of digital projects created by ninth, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students respectively. For the 10<sup>th</sup> grade project, the students made use of Facebook, using it as a platform for promoting awareness of a “worthy cause,” the theme of the project. All of the projects were meaningful and authentic. Projects of this type could provide military students with a venue where they could share their knowledge, skills, and expertise with their peers, simultaneously encouraging academic learning and social connection. Many innovative teachers are harnessing their students’ engagement with social media to enrich the learning experiences for all students. However, it is clear that for educational purposes, social media is a largely untapped resource.

Having students create individual and/or class blogs is probably the most popular technique for teaching with social media. Morgan (2015) noted that teachers have successfully initiated blogging with students as young as kindergarten. Empirical resource on blogging is scarce but the few existing studies suggest it has many benefits for students. Morgan frames blogging within social constructivist theory in that students build knowledge by interacting with others, which in turn prepares them for communicating and collaborating in the real world (Vygotsky, 1978). Moreover, blogging is a multimedia enterprise encompassing videos, sound, images, text, and links to other online content, which makes it appealing to students regardless of learning styles or preferences (Morgan, 2015).

Blogging is an excellent way for teachers to support adolescents' social competence as well as their intellectual development (Morgan, 2015). Students are motivated to write more carefully because they are writing for a wide audience outside the classroom. Working on a class blog involves collaboration and encourages students to critically reflect on their work. Finally, producing a blog helps students become more proficient in using technology. Despite the ubiquity of technology in the lives of teenagers, they are not necessarily adept in using digital devices in the ways they will be required to use it in the workplace. Engaging them in technology projects will help students gain valuable skills and competencies.

Journell et al. (2014) described one of the few applications of Twitter to classroom learning to appear in the educational literature. According to Journell et al., Twitter affords teachers unique opportunities to instantly connect students to new and information. By creating and reading each other's tweets they are exposed to wide range of opinions and perspectives and they get immediate feedback and can retweet the Tweets of others.

In the study described by Journell et al. (2014) the teachers began the Tweeter project at the start of the fall 2012 semester and followed candidates Obama and Romney and a third party candidate of their choice. The students kept up with the campaign while they worked on an authentic project. The school created a unique hashtag for the students to use. As they live tweeted a debate the principal joined the conversation and linked the students with two other high schools in different states engaging a similar activity.



Journell et al. (2014) stated that conversations on Twitter do not necessarily stimulate “productive dialogue” (p. 66). Teachers engaging students in a project of this type must be sensitive to the possibility that someone will make offensive comments. However, teachers can make lessons using social media even more relevant by engaging students in dialogue about virtual citizenship. In fact, Journell et al. stated that teachers must establish clear guidelines for “proper online decorum and expectations” (p. 67). Noting that authentic learning is actually very unusual in American education, the authors declared that “Social media is the new face of global communication and instead of blocking it schools should be embracing it” (p. 67).

### **Conclusion**

Students from military families are highly mobile, with many relocating and switching schools six to nine times from kindergarten through high school (Garner et al., 2014). Although many military-connected youth are quite resilient, multiple school moves is one of several risk factors that can predispose them to emotional, social, and behavioral problems and poor academic performance (Lucier-Greer et al., 2014). Parents’ prolonged and multiple deployments intensify stress and may lead to even more residential moves, as children and adolescents may live with different caregivers during a parent’s deployment (Richardson et al., 2011). Some youth have two deployed parents.

Even schools that have large numbers of military students are often poorly prepared to provide them with needed support (Garner et al., 2014). Going through school, multiple school transitions mean that students are leaving close friends for a new environment where they have to make friends once again. They are often excluded from extracurricular activities enjoyed by non-mobile peers. Social networking sites offer a venue where adolescents can interact with offline friends and make new friends online and have ongoing access for social interactions with peers. Several studies find SNS to be a valuable source of bonding, bridging, and maintaining social capital (Ahn, 2012; Ellison et al., 2011; Johnston et al., 2013; Mazzoni & Iannone, 2014). In addition, the lines between online and offline friends are increasingly blurred (De Grove, 2014; Reich et al., 2012; Van Zalk et al., 2014). These features of SNS suggest that SNS can be valuable resources for allowing military high school students to maintain friendships and feel connected with peers

There is abundant evidence of the power of social support to protect against stress. However, this feature of social support has rarely been examined in the context of social media. Especially given the importance of social media in the lives of adolescents, engaging in peer interactions on social media should be advantageous to the social and emotional well-being of military-connected high school students.

## **Chapter 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this multiple-case study was to explore social media use among participants in S2S programs in high schools surrounding Fort Boone in two bordering states. This study employed a Type 3 design, that Yin (2013) named a “holistic multiple-case.” A holistic multiple-case study refers to research with more than one case study but with only one unit of analysis. Researchers examine multiple cases because they provide more evidence than a single case and add confidence to the findings (Hakim, 1987; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003). This chapter includes the research design, background of the study, site selection, context for the study, case selection, research participants, case profiles, the data sources, the data collection method, and the data analysis plan.

This study sought to answer these primary research questions:

1. With what social media platforms do military and non-military-connected students in S2S programs engage?
2. For what purposes (online chats, collaborative in-group activities, etc.) do students use each of the existing platforms?
3. What value do highly mobile S2S participants ascribe to the role of social media use in developing positive social and educational outcomes?
4. How do S2S advisors perceive the role of social media in the S2S groups?

#### **Research Design**

The purpose of any research is to answer a question and address a problem

(Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2003). Case study research was selected for this study as it was the most appropriate for the “how” and “why” questions (Yin, 2013) that broadly frame the study. Moreover, no research currently exists on the social media use of S2S programs. The single unit of analysis was the S2S group and their use of social media. As previously noted, the research design best suited for this study was a holistic, multiple-case study. Seven high schools with S2S programs, each with different individual characteristics, were drawn from two school districts located in close proximity to one of the largest military installations in the United States. The research explored S2S participants’ experiences with social media at each of the seven case sites and examined the differences and similarities between S2S programs.

A multiple-case study was chosen based on the following conditions: First was the belief that the research questions could be best answered through the dimensions of a compare and contrast process, which a multiple-case design provides. Secondly, a multiple-case study potentially adds more value to the existing body of research than a single-case study, a research design that is commonly criticized for being unique, idiosyncratic, and ultimately, limited in relevance to that single case (Green, Camilli, & Elmore, 2006).

### **Background for the Study**

Through the members of my doctoral committee, I learned of a university partnership with the Freedom County School System (FCPS) in Badgeville and the Proud County Public Schools (PCPS) in Sargeville. These two districts are a part of a

Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) four-year grant, *Partnering with Families for Student Success Project*, jointly awarded to both districts in 2013. The Project focuses on parent engagement, across the two districts, with a particular emphasis on military-connected families. Soon after the grant was awarded, a Consortium composed of representatives from the University of Kentucky, FCPS, PCPS and Fort Boone was formed to develop an engagement model that provides highly mobile families an effective and meaningful process for becoming connected to the schools and community with goals to positively impact students' academic achievement.

One focus of the Consortium is to engage highly mobile families through student engagement initiatives such as the S2S program. This aspect of their work resonated most with my research interest to study the use of social media with highly mobile youth within social and educational settings. The site, then, was ideal for this particular study as the districts border the Fort Boone military installation, and a large number of military families reside and attend the schools in both towns.

### **Context for the Study**

While the cities of Badgeville and Sargeville both border the Fort Boone military installation that straddles state lines, the two cities are markedly different in terms of their demographics and culture. Because it is important in case study research to analyze the contextual conditions in relation to the cases (Yin, 2013), this section explains the history and character of each of these locations as well as provide further insight into the economic and social effects of this military installation on its surrounding cities.

Moreover, in my recent work in these two communities, adjacent to a military installation, I have learned how integral the character, history and future of these towns is inextricably linked to the post. Thus, I provide rich descriptions of this local context.

### **The Local Military Installation: Fort Boone**

Fort Boone is one of the country's largest military installations. It supports one of the five largest military populations in the Army as well as one of the ten largest military populations in the Department of Defense. Its active duty military personnel number 29,784, with 53,116 family members. Retirees and their family members, and a reserve component, amount to 157,245 altogether.

The geographical spread of the military installation is commensurate with such a large population. With over 105,000 acres of land, straddling two contiguous states (two-thirds of which are in one state), Fort Boone offers 4,000 homes, seven schools, a major hospital, childcare facilities, banks, restaurants, and chapels, among other amenities. The high-quality facilities and superior services of the installation support its reputation for offering "The Best Soldier and Family Experience" (MilitaryINSTALLATIONS, 2017).

Fort Boone's large population and extensive size are due mostly to its strategic location that provides access to all four deployment transportation modes (air, rail, highway, and inland waterway).

In addition to the almost 240,000 military-related personnel that Fort Boone supports, it also employs 4,000 civilians, most of whom come from the two surrounding cities, Sargeville and Badgeville.

## **Badgeville**

Badgeville is one of the two border cities for Fort Boone. This small town (about 30.8 sq. mi.) is located 20 miles from the base and is home to 32,205 individuals. It is part of the Freedom County Public School System served by 10 elementary schools, three (3) middle schools, and two (2) high schools. It is also categorized as part of the Sargeville, two-states Metropolitan Statistical Area by the United States Census Bureau (2015).

The history of Badgeville dates back to 1796 when it was settled by Bartholomew Wood and his spouse Martha Ann. Bartholomew's service in the Revolutionary War was rewarded with the granting of 1,200 acres of land in the area. After relocating from another town in the state, the couple established a permanent residence in what is now Badgeville. Although Bartholomew passed away in 1827, the settlement steadily increased in popularity and the township became more established to include a courthouse and jail in the public square. During the Civil War, Badgeville was taken over at least half a dozen times by both the Union and Confederate forces.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, tobacco was in high demand in Europe. The American Tobacco Company was formed as a trust among many of the top industries and, as a result of the monopoly, it was able to reduce the prices paid to tobacco growers. Outraged tobacco farmers formed their own coalition to combat the monopoly. They sought to create a boycott to drive payment prices up and, after other farmers did not comply, ended up resorting to property destruction and violence that was

quelled only by the National Guard. The result was the mass destruction of crops, livestock, machinery, and multiple tobacco warehouses which were burnt to the ground.

Since its founding, Badgeville has remained a strongly agricultural community. In fact, Freedom County has been one of the state's top crop producers for decades. In 2015, Freedom County was named the top producer of both corn and wheat for the entire state.

Badgeville has seen periods of sporadic bursts throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mostly during the 1960s and 1980s. In general, however, the city's residents have seen gradual but steady development that has recently begun to decline. The population in 1990, for example, was 30,129 and more than 20 years later in 2013 that number climbed only to 32,582. This growth rate correlates with the national trend of slowed and sometimes negative growth in non-metro areas according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

### **Sargeville**

Sargeville, the second city that borders Fort Boone, is significantly different from Badgeville in terms of both size and culture. Located 10 miles from the fort, it has a population of 149,176 (four times the size of Badgeville) and covers an area of 95.5 sq. mi. (roughly three times the size of Badgeville). The city is also located on a major waterway that runs through almost 18,000 square miles of the states involved in the study.



First legally founded in 1784 by John Armstrong, the area had already been settled by a group led by James Robertson. Robertson came to what is now known as Sargeville under the same driving force as the founder of Badgeville: the granting of land due to service in the Revolutionary War. Despite a large number of Native American attacks, the town was pushed towards prosperity thanks to the rich and productive tobacco industry that brought life and trade to many cities in the area.

At the outset of the Civil War, Sargeville and the surrounding county had already grown to a population of over 20,000 residents. After the Civil War, reconstruction efforts contributed further to the city's growth through increased infrastructure development. Furthermore, the tobacco sector continued to offer extensive financial growth due mostly to Sargeville's close proximity to the Pine [pseudonym] River.

Education also became a focus for Sargeville. The Rural Academy was established in 1806 as a two-year junior college and teacher-training institution and evolved into a four-year public university, AP State University. The university now has an annual enrollment of over 10,000 students and is located in the heart of the city.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought more industry growth to Sargeville both for the improved communication and mechanical technology. As such, it moved away from an economy based primarily on agriculture and became a hub for various other markets as well. It expanded even further during the late 1900s due to a variety of growth factors, one of which was in 1975-76 when the growing city connected to the modern national transportation network through the completion of Interstate Highway I-24. This helped

bolster the city's already booming trade and business sectors as well as helped provide the infrastructure needed for rapid growth. In fact, the city is one of the fastest growing cities with a 1990 population of 77,785 almost doubling to 146,806 in 2014.

### **Sargeville and Badgeville: A Comparison**

While Sargeville and Badgeville have several similarities in their histories, their rates of growth are markedly different, as evidenced by their current vastly dissimilar populations (Sargeville: 149,176 and Badgeville: 32,205). However, racial demographics of the two remain comparable. Badgeville is composed of 62.6% whites, 31.9% African Americans, and 3.5% Hispanics. Sargeville also has a primarily white population (65.6%) with 23.2% African Americans. Hispanics and Latinos, however, make up 9.3% of its population. Hence, Sargeville's population is more diverse than that of Badgeville.

This greater proportion of diverse population likely results from the fact the majority of the off-post housing for the Fort Boone Army Base is located in Sargeville. According to the 2000 Census, nearly 14,500 active military individuals lived in Sargeville, a disproportionate amount compared with Badgeville. This indicator is but one of how Sargeville is more intricately involved with Fort Boone compared with its counterpart.

The differences between the two cities go beyond just population statistics though. For instance, the economic demographics of each city are vastly different: As shown in Table 3.1 below, Sargeville enjoys a median household income that is 35% higher than that in Badgeville, has 5% fewer citizens in poverty, features a median home

value that is more than \$20,000 higher, and can boast a 7.3% higher high school graduation rate as well. In summary, Sargeville is by far the more affluent of the two cities that border Fort Boone. The educational systems also appear to favor students in Sargeville. In addition to the higher high school graduation rate shown above, Sargeville has a higher percentage of citizens that go on to earn a Bachelor's degree (24.2%) compared with Badgeville (18.1%).

The grading of each city's educational system is proportional to, and likely influenced by, its economic strength. For instance, according to the GreatSchools' extensive grading criteria, the national educational nonprofit found that the two Badgeville high schools were rated at 5/10 and 2/10 (average of 3.5/10). Using the same grading criteria, Sargeville's high schools were rated at 9/10, 8/10, 6/10, 6/10, 6/10, and 6/10 (average of 6.8/10). While the number of institutions alone is not necessarily correlated with the quality of education, Sargeville has twice as many colleges of higher learning as well.

Table 3.1

*Economic comparison between two cities*

<i>Economic demographics</i>	Badgeville	Sargeville
Median Household Income	\$34,614	\$46,947
Persons in Poverty	22.5%	17.4%
Median Gross Rent	\$632	\$872
High School Graduate or Higher in Persons 25 yrs. +	84.9%	92.2%

## **Fort Boone's Impact**

### **Population Growth**

Given Sargeville's higher standard of living, many soldiers, both active and inactive, as well as their families live there. The U.S. Census data gathered in the report *The Economic Importance of the Military in Kentucky* (Coomes & Kelly, 2016) and sponsored by the Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs show that the majority of individuals stationed at Fort Boone (legally being in Freedom County) reside in Sargeville. This report shows that while Freedom County has 25,292 workers, an enormous 19,567 workers are from Proud County the majority of which are most likely to work at Fort Boone. This inclination, the report states, is part of a "decades-long trend" and is only expected to increase.

Further, more veterans are choosing to remain in more urban Sargeville after discharge compared with more rural Badgeville. For example, Badgeville has 2,937 veterans residing within its city limits, while Sargeville has 19,456. Beyond that, 194 veteran-owned businesses are registered in Badgeville with 998 such businesses in Sargeville.

All these statistics show that Sargeville is more integrated and dependent on Fort Boone than is Badgeville. While its economy is much stronger, the city's infrastructure is already built on a higher population of citizens associated with Fort Boone, meaning that a decrease in staffing at Fort Boone would have a greater effect on Sargeville.

### **Educational Impact: Funding**

One of the most substantial ways in which Fort Boone affects these two towns is in the educational sector. Many schools in both Badgeville and Sargeville receive sizable Federal Impact Aid funds due to their high enrollment numbers from military families.

The Impact Aid Program is used to distribute federal funds to school districts that are financially affected by the presence of tax-exempt federal property such as military installations. As this property is federal land, the installation does not pay any property tax, a major component in the funding of educational facilities. As such, the educational districts that accommodate children with military-connected parents do not receive funding proportional to the higher number of students. Impact Aid, then, is a way in which to combat this funding disparity.

The amount of funding each school district receives is directly correlated with the number of military-connected students in the district. School districts such as those of Badgeville and Sargeville typically request a declaration of military involvement annually in order to calculate the number of military-connected students in each school.

As the aid program primarily aims to relieve the burden created by a lack of property tax, students who live off-base bring in half the amount per student from Impact Aid compared with a student living on-base. The justification for funding off-base students is that while the property tax of their home will go to the district, personal property tax (boats, automobiles, etc.) is redirected to the soldier's home state through the Soldiers' and Sailors' Relief Act. Moreover, property tax from their place of

employment (i.e. the military base) is not collected. Although the family lives off-base, they still do not contribute as much income to the district. Thus, the funding for off-base students, albeit at a lower rate, is justified.

Sargeville's student population is made up of more military students than that in Badgeville. In a 2014 report released by the U.S.A. Environmental Command titled *Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Army 2020 Force Structure Realignment*, the authors point out that in the event of decreased military personnel at Fort Boone, "The Public Schools would experience the greatest loss in Federal Impact Aid funds because their share of military-connected students is greater than other school districts."

#### **Educational Impact: Success**

While identifying students from a military family is integral to the proper funding and sustainability of educational districts surrounding military bases, the benefits of knowing a student's military connectedness extend beyond funding. Children of a military family are faced with a number of difficult challenges that most of their peers simply do not experience. Many must cope with the recurring separation from one or even both parents due to deployment and a sizable amount have a harder time engaging in and maintaining crucial social relationships due to frequent relocation. In fact, the Military Child Education Coalition reports that military children move an average of three times more than their non-military peers, usually six to nine times during their school years.

As such, many military-connected students need extra support, both educationally and socially. Unfortunately, until recently, insufficient research has examined the performance of our nation's children of military families, due in part to the lack of data on the subject. To combat this statistical absence, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), poised to go into effect in the 2017-18 school year, includes a provision that makes the military identification of students mandatory for schools nationwide. While the identifier will also help speed up Impact Aid payments to schools, it will primarily serve as a way in which to build a more complete picture of the educational performance of this demographic.

**Fort Boone: Additional Service to Military Connected Families**

Many military installations already have numerous programs in place to ease the transition of students from recently transferred military families into their new educational districts. For instance, many military bases including Fort Boone have School Liaison Officers (SLOs) that help military families find the best educational resources and information to make the transition as painless as possible. SLOs act as a first point of contact for military families seeking information on a wide range of problems, from academic performance and tuition to transportation and emotional/social/behavioral problems. They also provide access to and information on certain educational programs and services open only to military families such as Military OneSource, Military Family Life Counselors (MFLCs), The Interstate Compact on

Educational Opportunity for Military Children (MIC3), and Tutor.com for U.S. Military Families.

These dedicated professionals do more than seek out solutions for individual problems though. They also establish strong long-term relationships and partnerships with the local school community, enabling them to influence sweeping changes to educational policy on a wider scope.

Fort Boone also participates in the S2S program from the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). This nationally successful program connects civilian student ambassadors to newly transferred military-connected students. These ambassadors serve as welcome committees, tour guides, and potential friends in order to establish a solid social foundation on which the new students can build. The key factor to this program's success lies both in the vigorous training program as well as the fact that the ambassadors are made up entirely of fellow students rather than faculty. Both Sargeville and Badgeville actively coordinate with Fort Boone through SLOs. Both districts also value military integration programs such as the S2S program.

Badgeville and Sargeville are both substantially affected by the presence of Fort Boone and their close proximity to it. However, Sargeville's economy is more closely tied to the well-being of the military installation because many military personnel from the base live there rather than in Badgeville both during and after active duty. Moreover, since the majority of students from military families attend Sargeville schools, the



district’s educational system is both built to accommodate and dependent on these military students.

**Negotiating Access**

The study was approved by the University of Kentucky Office of Research Integrity Protocol #15-0822-P4G in September 2015 and subsequent renewals were granted as required by the IRB. See Appendix A for the IRB Approval.

One of greatest challenges in conducting research successfully is the ability to obtain access to the research field. A researcher can spend a significant amount of time on this task, especially when the research requires an in-depth study (Okumus et al., 2007) and/or when the research involves a sensitive topic. Table 3.2 provides a timeline for negotiating access.

Table 3.2

*Timeline*

Year/Date	Activity
2015	
March 26, 2015	FCPS’s Project Director holds a meeting with school and district officials to discuss grant activities for the 2015-2016 school year. A plan was introduced to implement the S2S program in the district’s two high schools. S2S was presented as an additional means in which to identify the military-connected students in the schools. Because of the challenge of identifying students through the registration process, teachers and students are often unaware of who the military-connected students are in the high schools. Military-connected students in elementary schools are more clearly identifiable because parents are more engaged/involved. S2S can help by notifying teachers when a new student enrolls as well as connect new students to school/community activities.

Table 3.2

*Timeline* (continued)

Year/Date	Activity
2015	
September 2015	Obtained IRB Approval to conduct research in the two FCPS high schools
September 24, 2015	First joint S2S meeting was held for Freedom County High School and Badgeville High School. The purpose of the meeting was to select leadership and organize a program at each school.
September 24, 2015	First joint S2S meeting was held for Freedom County High School and Badgeville High School. The purpose of the meeting was to select leadership and organize a program at each school.
October 16, 2015	Freedom County High School and Badgeville High School hold their first S2S meeting.
October 28, 2015	Center College S2S at AP State University hosts the annual Area S2S Meeting in with students/advisors from 11 S2S programs in the nearby school districts, including PCPS, FCPS, and Fort Boone High School. At this meeting, I was able to garner support from the S2S advisors to conduct my research with their groups.
December 2, 2015	<p>Attended a DoDEA Consortium meeting in which I requested the support to conduct research in PCPS high schools with S2S programs. Request was granted, and the PCPS DoDEA Project Director suggested that I contact the S2S program advisors at Center College, Southeast High School, and Southwest High School. She sent an email to them to let them know that I would be in contact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fort Boone’s School Liaison Officer invited me to attend the S2S meeting with her at Fort Boone High School the next afternoon.</li> </ul>
December 3, 2015	I met with the S2S program advisor at Center College, and she agreed to participate in the study. I, then, stopped in on the S2S program advisors at Southwest High, Southeast High and Fort Boone High School. The advisors agreed to participate.

Table 3.2

*Timeline* (continued)

Year/Date	Activity
2015	
December 7, 2015	I meet with my doctoral Committee, and my dissertation proposal was approved.
December 10, 2015	I emailed the Director DoDEA Research and Evaluation, and she informed me that the Department of Defense requires that any research projects to take place in DoDEA schools must be reviewed and documented. She provided me with links to the policy and several forms that are required to conduct research at Fort Boone High School.
December 2015	Obtained letters of support from S2S advisors at SEHS, CC, and FCBS. I did not receive a response from SWHS. Submitted a modification request to the IRB.

**Case Selection**

Cases that were selected for this investigation met the following criteria: 1) high schools with new or established S2S programs; 2) high schools with active S2S members; 3) high schools located in school districts within close proximity to Fort Boone; 4) schools with highly mobile populations. Two cases from the Freedom County School System (FCPS) and five cases from the Proud County Public Schools (PCPS) were chosen to participate. The high school located at the Fort Boone military installation was also selected as a case; however, due to an incident that occurred midway through the study, DoDEA denied the Fort Boone High School S2S group from participating in the study (more about this incident in Chapter 4).

**Freedom County School System**

### **Freedom County High School**

Freedom County High School is the first of the two high schools being examined from the Freedom County Public School District. It is one of the furthest high schools from Fort Boone, located 21 miles north of the military installation on the north side of Badgeville. Freedom County has an estimated median household income of \$38,618, more than \$4,000 higher than the median household income for Badgeville (\$34,614). Total enrollment for this school according to 2014 data is approximately 1,257 students. This area is estimated to have a low percentage of active military individuals, only 2.14%.

This school features fifteen sports clubs, an advisory council for parents, connection with numerous volunteer programs, and seventeen additional clubs and programs including one military connected program and the S2S program.

### **Badgeville High School**

Badgeville High School is another facility serving the Freedom County Public School District. It is located at the southern part of Badgeville and is 18 miles north of Fort Boone. The median household income of its surrounding area is estimated to be \$52,206. When compared to the median household income for all of Badgeville, this area's income is \$17,592 higher.

Badgeville High School's total enrollment for 2014 was reported as 1078, and the surrounding area's military population is estimated to only make up 2.14% of Badgeville's total population. This school features seventeen sports clubs, and twenty-

seven additional clubs and programs, including one military connected program and the S2S program.

### **Proud County Public Schools**

The Proud County Public Schools (PCPS) include twenty-four elementary schools, seven (7) middle schools, one (1) alternative school, and eight (8) high schools. Of these schools' populations, over 9,020 students are from military dependent families, more than the number in the surrounding communities and those attending on-base schools at Fort Boone.

The Freedom County Public Schools (PCPS) is much smaller by comparison. This district serves approximately 9,400 students in ten (10) elementary schools, three (3) middle schools, and two (2) high schools. In addition to these schools, educational programs are offered at Bridgeway Academy and the Civilian Preschool Center. About 19.56% or 1,454 of these students are identified as military dependents.

This case study examines five of the Sargeville area high schools that educate a large portion of these military-connected students, as well as two Freedom County Public Schools Schools. Each of the schools features a different military dependent percentage and all of them also take part in the S2S program.

### **Southeast High School**

Southeast High School is located 11 miles east of Fort Boone in northern Sargeville in a zip code with a 5.27% military-connected population. The surrounding

area is quite affluent with a median household income of \$60,230, \$13,283 higher than the median income for all of Sargeville (\$46,947).

The school has a student body of about 1,255 students, 414 or 33% of which are military-connected. Thirty-three of these military-connected students (7.7%) have had a discipline concern.

Southeast High School is the site of the Computer and Information Technology Academy. Students who enter into this academy will be enrolled in a specialized curriculum tailored specifically to those that are interested in pursuing a career or degree in information technology and computers. Any student entering high school in the PCPS district can apply to this academy or any other academy hosted by the area's other schools. The school also hosts twenty sports clubs, thirty-two other clubs and programs (two of which are military connected in addition to S2S), as well as the Parent Partners organization which helps facilitate communication between staff, students, and parents.

### **Southwest High School**

Southwest High School can be found 8.6 miles south of Fort Boone in an area of Sargeville with a median household income of \$55,733. This is \$8,786 higher than the median household income of all of Sargeville. The population of this zip code is also made up of 17.11% military-connected individuals. The high school's population is 1,314 students, 16% (210) of which are military connected.

Students looking to build a strong foundation in medicine and wellness can attend the Academy of Health Science located at Southwest High School. The specialized

curriculum and facilities can enable a smooth transition into the medical field or college major. Southwest High School has twenty sports clubs along with forty additional programs and clubs, four of which are military connected along with S2S. There are also five parent-based clubs that center on fundraising for various sports clubs.

### **Center College**

Center College is an especially unique campus to the Proud County district in that it offers both junior and senior high school students the opportunity to earn university and career technical credits while still receiving a quality high school education.

With a small population of only 114 students, 26 (about 23%) of these are military-connected. A large portion of these military-connected students come from East River High School, which has the highest military dependent numbers in the area. The zip code of Center College's location is associated with a 5.27% military-connected population.

Center College is located about 12 miles southeast of Fort Boone in downtown Sargeville and within the AP State University. This fact is especially worth noting when considering the area's median household income (\$20,588) is significantly lower than the areas surrounding the other schools and the median Sargeville household income.

### **Sargeville High School**

This high school, at 18 miles southeast, is the furthest away from Fort Boone among those examined in this study. It is also situated in the most affluent area with a median household income of \$73,848. This is \$26,901 higher than the rest of Sargeville.

The zip code of this high school is associated with a 3.81% military-connected population.

The student body of around 1,270 is made up of 14% (178) military active duty dependents, 9% of which have had a discipline concern. These numbers show an increase from 2012 when the student body was made of 10% military active duty dependents, 8% of which had a discipline concern.

The school hosts the Academy of Business and Finance for the Proud County Public Schools, and also features twenty-one sports clubs, thirteen sports booster clubs for parents, a parent teacher organization, and thirty-seven additional clubs and programs, one of which is military connected in addition to the S2S program.

### **East River High School**

The final PCPS high school featured in this report is located 9 miles southeast of Fort Boone, one of the closest schools. The area surrounding East River High School has a median household income of \$48,562, not too far off from the rest of Sargeville (only \$1,615 higher).

The 1,414-sized student body is made up of 36% military dependents, by far the highest of the schools examined here. Part of this might be due to the fact that the school hosts the Academy of Criminal Justice and Homeland Security. The area is also associated with a 17.11% military-connected population.



This high school features twenty-four sports clubs, an advisory council for parents, and thirty-eight additional clubs and programs including two military connected programs and the S2S program.

Table 3.3 below details the number of students and advisors at each S2S case site. There were a total of 136 students across all sites. Of these 65 completed and returned surveys, 39 were interviewed (29 students/7 advisors) and observations were conducted at all the sites listed in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

*Study Participants by District and School*

Schools	Study Participants
<i>FCPS</i>	
Freedom County High	20 S2S members; 1 program advisor; 16 participants
Badgeville High	6 S2S members; 1 program advisor; 3 participants
<i>PCPS</i>	
Center College	4 S2S officers; 1 program advisor
Southeast High School	21 students; 1 program advisor; 16 active students
Sargeville High School	50 S2S students 1 program advisor; 11 students participated
Southwest High School	20 S2S members, 1 program advisor
East River High School	15 S2S members, 1 program advisor

## **Participants**

Based on the demographic section of the Social Media Use survey questions (described in measures below and shown in Appendix B) 65 S2S members across all seven S2S sites were the student participants in the study. These sixty-five were just under half of all the S2S members across all seven sites (65/136 total S2S members at the survey sites), a 48% response rate. Participants who responded were predominantly female (77%) with an average age of 16.35 years. Of the 65 students, 34 (52%) were military-connected.

Twenty-nine (29) of the 65 survey respondents (45%) also took part in an in-depth interview across the seven S2S sites. Only three male students participated in an interview and not the survey. Of the 32 students interviewed, 21 (66%) were military-connected. Eight additional in-depth interviews were conducted with eight S2S adult members (seven advisors and one guidance counselor), all of which were female. Further interview results will be presented as one data source in the within-case and cross-case analysis.

## **Data Sources**

Data were collected from multiple sources at each case site during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school year. Yin (2003b) suggested that researchers make use of six primary sources of evidence: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts. All of these sources strengthen the validity of using a case study approach. Although a complete list of

sources can be quite extensive, Yin noted that no single source has complete advantage over the others, and a good case study must rely on an array of “highly complementary” data sources. Therefore, as shown in Table 3.3, this multiple-case study uses descriptive statistics from a social media use survey, semi-structured interviews with S2S advisors and students, informant interviews (and/or conversations) with officials associated with S2S, direct observations of S2S meetings and events, and documentation that relates to S2S activities and social media use. The social media survey included items such as demographic information including age and gender, devices the subject owns, how often the subject uses the Internet and what social media websites they use and for what purposes. Questions are either categorical, where a subject chooses an answer from a number of discrete items (for example “which social media site do you use the most?”) or categorical ordinal where the subjects selects an item for a number of categorical items which have a natural order (for example “On average, how many hours a week do you spend on social media networks?”).

The complete survey is available in Appendix B. Semi-structured interviews generally began with questions such as “What social media platforms are being used for S2S?” “How do you use social media in the S2S program?” “How has social media helped you connect with other S2S participants?” then probes and elaborations solicited during the ongoing conversation. Military-connected students were asked additional questions such as “Has social media helped you meet and get to know new friends?” “Has social media made it easier for you to get familiar with your new home after you moved here? “How

important is it for you to stay connected with your old friends from other places you've lived?" "How has social media helped you stay connected?" Advisors were asked about their own social media use and how, or if, social media was part of their S2S program with such questions as "Describe the structure of the S2S program, such as advisor and student roles." "Tell me about your S2S program participants and their use of social media before the program started." Tell me about social media use among participants. How useful was it, and what did you find most or least useful about it?"

Table 3.4

*Data Sources*

Item	Description
Descriptive statistics	Generated from a 19-item social media use survey administered to S2S student members at each site (65 in all). See Appendix B. Summaries provide demographic information and a general understanding of how and why students use social media across sites as well as offer individual case perspective on social media use as part of S2S. Data source specifically addresses RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3.
Semi-structured Interviews	Conducted in-depth group and/or one-on-one interviews with S2S members (students and advisors) at each case site (39 interviews in all). The primary purpose was to learn more about the experiences of S2S members, social media use within S2S programs, and individual perspectives on social media, and to expound upon the responses given on survey questions. Also, interviews provide additional information about the structure, membership and leadership of the S2S programs. Data source addresses the four research questions.

Table 3.4

*Data Sources* (continued)

Item	Description
Informant Interviews	Conducted periodic interviews and/or had ongoing conversations with key informants throughout the research process, all of whom had some level of association with either the S2S program, the DoDEA initiative and/or the district and school in which the Program takes place (seven interviews in addition to the other 39 interviews). The purpose of these interviews was to ensure that an exhaustive effort was made to collect all relevant and contextual evidence that pertained to the overall understanding of each case.
Direct Observations	Conducted direct observations of the S2S groups as part of meetings and/or events, with particular given to the interaction among and between members. Such observations included leadership roles, student participation, and social media use among members. Data source addresses the four research questions. The purpose was to observe S2S members within their natural program setting, and observations often occurred during visits to gather other data from participants.
Documents	Obtained such documents as the districts' <i>Technology/Use/Electronic Media Use Policies</i> ; statements from district officials about social media use in the schools; DoDEA Consortium grant/activity reports; list of support services available through Fort Boone; email correspondence with S2S advisors and school/district officials; S2S program literature; data on the # of military dependents/military-connected in the schools. The purpose was to provide documentary evidence of how S2S operates within each case.

Yin (2003) described *converging lines of inquiry* as a “process of triangulation and corroboration” that is made possible by collecting data from multiple sources (p. 97-101). In using converging lines of inquiry to corroborate the findings from a case study,

the researcher must use multiple sources of evidence to address the same findings to ensure construct validity and reliability (Yin, 2003).

### **Data Collection**

In data collection, the validity and reliability of the data collected is a significant concern. In this multiple case study, construct validity was achieved using multiple sources of evidence and the establishment of a logical chain of events. The data were organized in order to compare and contrast what different findings meant. A logical line of events was established based on the findings from data collection. Internal validity was achieved by matching patterns in the data, which was easy to do in a multiple case study. Reliability was achieved by using a pre-defined case study protocol. The Yin (2003) Type 3 design was the basis for the study protocol in this research.

Yin's (2003) explanation of data gathering instruments includes "the procedures associated with using each source of evidence to" that is, the particularities of the data collection instruments with which researchers should become acquainted as part of their training. He also discussed the general principles that apply to all six instruments and the entire data gathering process. These general principles, which he claimed have been neglected in the past, include the use of (a) multiple sources of evidence (evidence from at least two sources, but converging on the same set of facts of findings for the purpose of triangulation), (b) a case study database (a formal assembly of evidence which helps the researcher understand how to handle and manage data), and (c) a chain of evidence (precise links between the questions asked, the data collected, and the conclusions

drawn). These principles, as he mentioned, are relevant to all sources and, when used properly, can help to “deal with the problems of establishing the construct validity and reliability of evidence.”

### **Timeline for Data Collection**

Table 3.5 details the timeline of data collection activities

Date	Activity
February 23, 2016	Met with S2S advisor and students at Center College. Collected consents, and administered the survey and conducted a group interview with 3 of the 4 S2S officers. Afterwards, I conducted an interview with the S2S advisor.
February 25, 2016	Attended a S2S meeting at SEH, informed the group of the study, gave out consents, and facilitated a short discussion on social media use. Talked with advisor in some length about her role as the new S2S advisor and the S2S activities.
February 26, 2016	Attended S2S meeting at (FCPS) Badgeville High School (BHS) to obtain consents and administer the social media usage survey. Facilitated a group discussion on their experiences with S2S as well as their thoughts on social media.
March 28, 2016	Talked in great length with the SLO at Fort Boone about her role with the S2S groups in the area as well as the supports FB offers the schools.
April 7, 2016	Attended a S2S meeting at SEH, collected consents, surveyed students, and conducted individual interviews with 5 students. Later, that week, I interviewed the advisor via phone.
April 8, 2016	I stopped by Sargeville High School (SHS) and met with the S2S program advisor. She agreed to participate in my study.
April 8, 2016	Attended a S2S meeting at BHS in which only 5 students attended. I conducted a group interview with three of these students. After the meeting, I interviewed the advisor with requests in regards to RQ 4 as well as the 1 <sup>st</sup> year as S2S group.

Table 3.5

*Timeline of data collection activities (continued)*

Date	Activity
April 15, 2016	Attended an S2S event at SHS.
April 18, 2016	I received a letter from the DoDEA Review Committee that my research proposal had been denied and that DoDEA was unable to support my research at this time.
April 20, 2016	Obtained University IRB Approval for a modification request to add of one more site: Sargeville High School.
April 26, 2016	Once I arrived at the school for a S2S meeting, I checked my email and saw that the advisor had cancelled the meeting due to a sick child. Instead, I interviewed the Military and Family Life Counselor.
April 27, 2016	Attended at S2S meeting at Freedom County High School. Collected consents and conducted a group interview with 3 three students, and an individual interview. I interviewed the Guidance Counselor who works closely with the S2S group as well as the S2S advisor.
May 10, 2016	Collected consents at Sargeville High School, surveyed students, and I conducted individual and group interviews with 10 S2S students

**Developing the Case Database and Chain of Evidence**

Yin's (2003) second principle of data collection involved the way in which the data is organized and collected for case studies. A case database enhances the reliability of the study because it allows other researchers to review all the evidence rather than just relying on what the initial researcher chose to report. In addition, not only does the database help to preserve the collected data, but also eases the data retrieval for analysis later.



The database for this study included field notes, which Yin (2003) argued is the most important component. Field notes were kept as part of an excel spreadsheet that contained case study details for each case site, including school and program profiles, date and nature of visits, and number counts related to participation in the survey and interviews. Other project data, as described in Table 3.3, were also organized and identified by case and stored in Dropbox files as part of the database. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim after case visits. Transcripts were organized by case, and then uploaded to their appropriate case folder. Documents collected during the course of the study were indexed as an annotated bibliography that included brief descriptions of each. Electronic copies of the documentation are also available in the database, including email correspondence with those involved during the course of the study. The descriptive data from surveys were generated with SPSS; the SPSS entries and outputs can also be found in the database in Appendix C.

To further increase the reliability of the case study, Yin (2003) urged researchers to follow a third principle, which is to maintain a chain of evidence. The case study protocol included: (a) an overview of the case study project, including objectives, issues, and relevant literature; (b) field procedures, including human subject protection procedures, sources of data, and procedures for data collection; and (c) case study questions, including both the questions and potential sources in the multiple-case study data to answer the questions. The questions guided the narrative in the case study database and served as a guide for the case study report (Yin, 2003). Yin also said that

all case study data must be available in order for a third party to evaluate the accuracy of the case study report. In addition, the database should enable another investigator to follow the chain of evidence along each step in the case study, including case study questions, protocol, citations to specific evidence in the database, and report.

### **Data Analysis**

The data from the surveys, interviews, discussions, direct observations, and documents were analyzed in a two-stage process:

- A within-case analysis that treats each case as a comprehensive case in and of itself.
- A cross-case analysis that illuminates the differences and similarities within and between the cases.

### **Statistical contribution**

Descriptive statistics were used to established demographic profiles of the sample of S2S students denoting specifically age, gender and military connected status

The analysis of qualitative data relied on a constant-comparison method in order to establish patterns in the data. In this approach the researcher continuously examines findings of each case taken in order to refine questions and to reach the point of saturation with regard to the data collected (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Continuous improvement of qualitative analysis procedures is useful in order to develop a more effective understanding of the research problem and related research questions.

## **Coding**

Coding was conducted in a cyclical manner, which means that data sources were read and reviewed several times until data saturation occurred (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Following Yin's (2009) recommendation of a comparative case analysis, within-case analysis was conducted prior to a cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To conduct the within-case analysis, all interview data sources, field notes, and archival documents were transcribed. Folders were created for each case to segregate the data for within-case analysis. After the data was organized, descriptive coding was performed. All the uploaded data was closely read and assigned codes. No thematic meaning was given to the labeling of the codes. Descriptive coding was conducted to label the data according to the topic of the text (King & Horrocks, 2010). After descriptive coding, interpretative coding was conducted (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Codes with similar topics were grouped. Meanings of the data in the codes were analyzed to identify patterns for grouping. Next, as patterns in the data emerged, relationships among the patterns were identified, and the overarching themes were derived. The overarching themes were then used to describe the case (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The within-case analysis was repeated with all of the cases, or as what Yin (2009) referred to as replicating the case study, to conduct the holistic, multiple-case study.

After the within-case analysis, cross-case analysis was conducted. The findings from the within-case analysis were used. The findings from all the cases were laid out, and initially, patterns among the most recurring themes were identified. Again, no

thematic meaning was interpreted at that point. After identifying highly recurring themes, the data were again read in order to understand the topic. Themes with similar topics were then grouped together to be analyzed for the final themes. Finally, the themes were read in the context of the data to interpret cross-case thematic meanings, and identify final themes to address the multiple case research questions.

### **Limitations**

The findings from the multiple-case study will not be fully generalizable, given the differences in the population and backgrounds of the survey respondents and interview participants at each site. The schools selected for this study are located in areas with a large population of military families. The experiences of the students in the S2S programs may differ from those of military-connected adolescents residing in areas with smaller populations of military families. Moreover, while the practice of customizing each S2S program to the unique characteristics of each school is beneficial for students, adopting this approach may preclude the generalization of the students' activities and experiences to other S2S program. The disruption to collect data at Fort Boone High School was a major limitation to the study in that it prevented the inclusion of a significant case site in which all students were military-connected and actively engaged through S2S activities.

## **Chapter 4**

### **RESULTS**

In this chapter, the results following the data collection and data analysis procedures described in the previous chapter are presented. To begin the findings section, descriptive Profiles of the S2S sites are provided. Then, findings are presented by research question. Within each question evidence from the multiple data sources at each case site is provided to support the thematic assertions along with a cross-case comparative analysis. A summary of findings concludes the chapter.

The research questions guided the analysis of the multiple sources of data:

1. With what social media platforms do military and non-military-connected students in S2S programs engage?
2. For what purposes (online chats, collaborative in-group activities, etc.) do students and advisors use each of the existing platforms?
3. What value do highly mobile S2S participants ascribe to the role of social media use in developing positive social and educational outcomes?
4. How do S2S advisors perceive the role of social media in the S2S groups?

Data were collected from two high schools in Badgeville, and five high schools from Sargeville. Each of the schools had a S2S program comprised of a program advisor, and military and non-military-connected student members. Although data were not collected from the S2S program at Fort Boone High School, a purported “scandal” involving social media contributes to the significance of the study. A more complete

description of the “scandal” at Fort Boone will be provided in the S2S Profile Section below.

*Profiles: The S2S Programs*

**Freedom County High.** The S2S group at Freedom County High was a newly-formed S2S in fall 2015. In fact, the formation of the group had actually been ‘directed’ by the district administration as part of their DoDEA grant work. During that first year, the program primarily focused on recruitment of members and building a foundation for S2S in the first year. It was a challenging first year. As documented in the researcher’s observational field notes, nearly all of the original S2S members were replaced with different students by the end of the school year. The advisor stated in an interview that the S2S officers were not participating in the S2S activities, as “they were officers of everything and did not have time for S2S.” She believed that the original group was not invested in S2S, because they understood their responsibilities to be an “assignment” rather than a “voluntary” effort. The advisor was also ‘assigned’ to advise the group.

However, the S2S group appeared to gain momentum towards the end of the school year with more enthusiastic members taking leadership and developing a process for greeting new students. With the advisor only there one day a week, she solicited the help from the school guidance counselor who was more than eager to collaborate with the S2S students. The students and the guidance counselor formed a close relationship and worked together to establish a seamless process for welcoming new students. As described by the guidance counselor, she notified them when a new student enrolled and

they provided the new students with a welcome packet and toured the students around the school. So as not to lose contact with the new students, the S2S members also performed “checks up on them and helped them build connections with organizations and people of interest.”

In addition to her job duties as a school-based therapist, the S2S advisor also runs a faith-based community outreach service from her home residence located in an under-resourced neighborhood right across the street from the school. Her home is one of six “Challenge Houses” in the city that offers a very low rent to “people of resource” who want to live their missionary lives in a restored “run-down house” and provide underprivileged children and families with resources and support ([challengehouse.org](http://challengehouse.org)).

Her home became a “gathering” place for the S2S members in which members engaged in several community service projects. The S2S group seemed excited to share the plethora of community resources with military-connected students and their families. At the last meeting of the school year, the group discussed several ideas to implement in the 2016-17 school year. One student said,

I want us get involved with the community in general and improve it, make other places want to fund it [S2S], and make other people want to come here, and do really big events and things...

Based on observations of the last meeting in their first year, the students appear to be empowered and excited about their contributions thus far and the future opportunities with S2S. In an interview, three students discussed the importance of creating awareness

about S2S in an effort to establish a school climate that acknowledges and is supportive of new students. One student said,

What got me in S2S was the fact that I always see new students. I never understood what I should talk about, or never understood what other schools were like. I can be improving my school [through S2S], because I now know that there is a program to help new students.

In interviews, they admitted that many teachers and students are often unaware of the military-connected students in the school. This lack of support and acceptance can lead to tension between the new students and the established social groups within the school. In fact, the students described an incident in which a boy with a speech impediment was bullied during a class presentation. The boy's mother had recently been deployed and he was really having a difficult time. After witnessing this incident, the S2S students decided it was absolutely necessary for the S2S group to ensure that all new students were made to feel welcome and that they belong.

**Badgeville High.** The S2S group at Badgeville High was the other newly-formed S2S in fall 2015. The formation of this group was also 'directed' by the district administration as part of their DoDEA grant work. As with Freedom County High, this S2S program too focused on recruitment of members and building a foundation for S2S. Field notes included that the S2S group appeared to have a lack of direction with the advisor being at school only once a week, a high turnover rate of the members, and non-voluntary membership in the group. The advisor decided not to continue in her role for the 2016-2017 school year.



The advisor, who is one of three district-wide school-based therapists, was selected to be the S2S advisor for her experience working with military-connected children and families. In her prior position, she worked in a nearby psychiatric hospital as an in-patient therapist for active duty soldiers. Thus, the S2S advisor job was a natural fit for her skill-set. However, she stated in an interview that she was at the school once a week and that was not enough time for the program to grow and prosper. She admitted that she felt “guilty if I'm not here or if I cannot meet with them [S2S members].”

She said that it was difficult to find times when students could meet, but the group managed to meet either before school and/or during a lunch period on some Fridays. Finding space for meetings seemed to be problematic as the group had to move from a room in the library to a classroom while in the middle of a meeting. She believed in order to adequately support the student-led program that she must be there regularly to ensure that the students establish important connections with school officials and form partnerships with other school-related groups. Apparently, this did not happen as the group did not accomplish much and did not seem to have access to resources (i.e. meeting space) from within the school. She said that it was difficult to run a program from afar. She said,

I don't really have anything as far as volunteer wise for them to do specifically. I would rather them get more involved in school. I've sent multiple emails, and to guidance and the principal. I just haven't gotten them to forward an email for me but that's the extent of it.

Also, according to the advisor, the S2S students were not participating in

meetings either which also contributed to the problem. As documented in the researcher's observational field notes, by mid-year, the group had dwindled from 12 members to only six, half of whom were military-connected, and were not observed to be fully committed to the program. The advisor expressed this too when she said,

But, I mean at the same time I do feel like I do have a group of good five students. [Student's name] is the president, and I feel like that even her investment kind of goes back and forth. I've asked her to do things and then we have meeting and then she has not done them or tells me, "We're involved in so many different things" or that "we want the cords." I want this to be more, more than just getting the cords to walk in graduation.

One non-military-connected student expressed excitement about S2S though saying he joined S2S because "I wanted to like make people feel like they are people, and like show 'em around everything, and let them feel comfortable and know that they have someone by their side if they need something."

**Center College.** The Center College S2S group is actually located at a facility separate from the high school building and that functions as an early-college program for the district. The S2S program functions as a welcoming committee for all new students at Center College, not just military-connected students. They offer guided tours of the campus, one-on-one tutoring and recruit students from the surrounding schools in the district. A large portion of the military-connected students come from East River High School which has the highest military dependent numbers in the area. The advisor, also the Center College's guidance counselor, stated that it is the "disconnected, disengaged students" who are the most drawn to Center College and often benefit the most from the

experience. She, then, explained, the mobile “military-connected students are among this group.”

Military-connected students do not have the same kind of attachment to their [new] high school as their [non-mobile] peers. There is not the expectation from family to graduate from the same high school or join in on the same school traditions. [Often] These students arrive at a time when social and athletic groups have already formed. It is too late for them to be on a sports team or get involved in a club.

Center College offers these students an open, diverse environment which fits well with their mobile life-style. The advisor said that often the greatest challenge for military-connected students is to connect with others on campus and establish a social life. The advisor said that the students tend to perform well academically despite their lack of stability. She explains it this way:

You may not know where you're living, who you're living with, what your living situation's going to be like. You may not know if you're going to move, or not move. You may not know who's going to be your friend or not be your friend. When everything else in life is uncertain, the only thing you have is control over is your grades.

The S2S membership comprises four S2S officers, two of whom are military-connected, and the program advisor. Because the officers share common experiences with the desirable applicants and sometimes already know them, they are helpful in recruitment efforts. The advisor and the officers visit the schools and talk with students interested in applying to Center College. The officers assist in delivering presentations and share their experiences as Center College student. The advisor describes this as a

different component from other S2S programs in that “recruitment for a school program (the dual credit college program) is not something that most S2S programs do.”

**Southeast High.** This S2S program took on new leadership in 2015 to rejuvenate a dormant program. The new S2S advisor [also the Girls’ Basketball Coach] had learned about S2S while working with the school's At-Risk Program, which helps at-risk students become academically successful. In her role with the At-Risk Program, the advisor worked closely with the guidance counselor and principals to find ways to motivate struggling students to “work harder, want to pass, and want to be successful.”

In at-risk cases that involved military-affiliated students, especially those who also exhibited behavioral and emotional problems, the advisor worked with the Military and Family Life Counselor and the school-based therapist. She and her colleagues decided the student-led S2S program offered an effective means by which student leaders could mentor these at-risk students while also helping them adjust to their new surroundings.

The advisor attended the Military Child Education Coalition S2S training that was held for the two high schools in the neighboring district. As part of the training, which was facilitated by the School Liaison Officer, the Fort Boone High S2S students simulated an S2S meeting as a demonstration for the S2S student leaders at Badgeville High and Freedom County High. They also shared information about their program structure and activities, what they have done, and what has worked. The Area S2S

meeting, which 11 other schools from the Sargeville and Badgeville area attended, was the kick-off event for the Southeast S2S program.

The primary goal of the S2S group at Southeast High, according to the program advisor, was to target “every new kid that moved into Southeast,” and provide them with opportunities to adjust to their new environment. Initially, twelve students were selected to represent both the military-connected and non-military-connected population, including six in each group. By end of the school year, the membership had almost doubled. The advisor said,

If I can make it work, [the program will be] half military-affiliated, whether retired or active duty, and the other half not affiliated with the military. Our president is actually non-military affiliated, and the vice president is non-military affiliated. The other half of the group are mostly retired and active duty. There are a few that are active duty. Most of the younger ones are active duty, but most of the ones in 11th and 12th grade are retired parents.

This researcher observed that this S2S group appeared to be engaged, very united, and gaining momentum in the program’s movement. The president and the advisor were highly involved in the meetings. The president prepared an agenda and led the meeting. While the advisor was present, she let the students make the decisions.

The advisor served as a mentor and a guide as the students grew into their leadership roles and took on more leadership responsibilities. In reference to a fund-raising project, the advisor noted that the students took ownership of the project themselves:

They set it up, she says. They created everything. They worked it. They did an outstanding job. They delivered all the product. All I did was supervise so that they could stay after school and distribute the candy evenly into bags, making sure they had all the bags they needed, all the candy they needed. Everything else was done by them.

The advisor noted that experience with the S2S program encouraged students to become more socially motivated and expand their involvement in other activities.

You see the tension that all these [new] students had when they're nervous. They don't know what to expect on their first day. And then to have another student walk up to you and just give you conversation, give you attention. I noticed that a lot of students were more relaxed. They were more willing to join clubs. We had some new students actually join after moving there, because they're just like, 'Well, this seems fun.' We even had other students who weren't even in the club recommend that people join the club just because of the things that they saw the club doing.

One student member of the program explained that S2S had helped her develop social relationships at her new school:

I got involved with S2S because I'm always hanging around Coach. When she became a sponsor, and I found out she was going to open a club, I was like, 'Oh, Coach is going to sponsor that. I want to join.' Then I found out what it was about, and it kind of spoke to me a little because it helps you make friends and get to know people. I'm not really good at that, and I wanted to make friends quick. It's a great program.

**Sargeville High.** This researcher noted that the S2S group appeared to be the most active, over 50 members, and about half of whom were military-connected students. The group was well-guided by the advisor who has been the program's advisor for three out of four years since the program started.

Several of the students claimed that they joined the group because they liked the advisor. Both the students and the advisor believed that the program required a collaborative effort. One student described the success of the program as it relates to the relationships between the advisor and S2S members.

I think it's also helped that the people who started this program, like I've been for three years. Like, the same groups of people have been in it for three years. And so we've all developed a close relationship with [advisor], which also helps it succeed a lot more.

The S2S membership was comprised of representatives from each of the high school's primary social groups. The primary aim was to have members from each sport, club, organization, and department to serve as a S2S Liaison. The S2S Liaison's job was to report on their group's culture and activities to the overall S2S community. If a transferring student was interested in a particular type of sub-culture, the S2S matched that student with a S2S Ambassador with whom he/she was most likely to identify. The S2S group hosted one out-of-school social event each nine weeks and met monthly. If a student was military-connected, the student was introduced to the Military Family Life Counselor on campus who was there two and a half days a week. On the student's first day, he/she was given an informational flyer about S2S and a tour of the school. One student described his motivation with S2S in terms of helping others make connections:

I just like the social aspect, being to, like, take kids from completely different groups, from freshmen to seniors, and from athletes to theater kids, to anything in between, being able to get them to connect, and learn about each other, learn what makes a school work, and how all the different groups come together to make a community like this. We help by finding common things that people enjoy, like

going out and having free food, and cookout down by the Marina. Everyone likes food, and then games. I mean, anyone can enjoy stuff like that. And so you can, it really offers a wide variety of people a chance to connect. And so, and it works really well.

The group makes efforts to stay connected with the new students outside of S2S events.

“There’s a lot of people from our school that I probably wouldn’t even know, wouldn’t see them in the hallways unless I had gone to these Student2Student events, and found them.”

Although one member does not have the experiences of moving himself, he believes that new students benefit from S2S.

I haven’t had a whole lot of experience, but I’ve known a lot of people who have, that moving to a new school, I mean, it’s hard. You don’t know anyone. You have no, no source to get into. You have to find some connection to people, and it, it’s hard to make that first connection. And I think Student2Student really offers, like, a really solid chance to get in, and do that. I mean, even in our meetings, when we just play games at the end, just as social events, like, so, you’re going to find people to talk to that you never have before. And play a game, and use teamwork, so you get to know them, how they are as a person, and it’s a really good way to get people to connect who’ve, they don’t know anyone.

The group had several activities and events throughout the year, such as service projects for the military, and volunteer service with Operation Home Front, as observed in *Sargeville [pseudonym] High School’s S2S: A Social Club information sheet*. The researcher also observed the Purple Project, which involved raising awareness of the program by wearing purple, and encouraging other students to wear purple. A contest on who wore the most purple was held in light of the event. Purple cupcakes were also distributed to students with a military family.



**Southwest High.** The advisor, a school guidance counselor and a former “military brat,” took direction of the program in 2006. Since then, the group has helped dozens of new students each year while maintaining a large membership. However, according to the advisor, in the past year, the program has struggled to maintain interest and participation.

She noted that students generally were busy with other clubs, especially the seniors who “didn’t want to do it because they’re involved in other things.” She said,

It's really hard for any of the clubs, organizations, anything to meet unless it's after school. We aren't a neighborhood school. If you don't have a car, you can't stay after school, so it's really hard for them to get together. We didn't have one this semester.

My field notes cited another challenging aspect for S2S. Announcements with information about scholarships and different essay competitions are not made available to students, because “half the teachers don’t turn on the announcements and they don’t hear about our events.”

The aim of the S2S group was mainly to welcome new students, as observed in this researcher’s field notes. The group members also provide school tours, and have a lunch buddy program, in which S2S members sit with new students during lunch, and introduce them to other students. The program was established in the 2004-2005 school year as one of the first schools in the district with a S2S program.

The S2S does not have officers or leaders. “We don’t have leaders, because it’s a self-led thing” but S2S members do help with getting the word out. Also, teachers notify

the group when new students seem to have trouble “fitting-in, adjusting.” The advisor emails S2S students in advance when “something is going on” but sends a note directly to the member when a new student enrolls as often there is not much notice.

**East River High.** Established in 2008, the S2S program has thrived from the start as the high school has the highest population of military dependent students moving into the district. Not only that but the school also has a very transient population in general with economically disadvantaged students frequently moving in and out of the school. This S2S has maintained an active membership over the years; however, the advisor admitted in an interview that S2S was not as strong as it has been in previous years. Field notes included that students generally were busy with other clubs, some of which with comparable missions and activities to S2S. In the past, guidance typically notified S2S when new students enrolled but that has also tapered off in the recent years. The S2S group aim was to welcome new students and provide them with welcome packets.

S2S members learned of a new app called *Sit With Us* designed by a high school student who was bullied to help students find people to sit with at lunch. The app allows students to designate themselves as “ambassadors,” thereby inviting others to join them. Ambassadors can post “open lunch” events, which signals to those who seek companionship that they’re invited to join the ‘ambassadors’ table. Although S2S has considered using the app, they have not yet adopted it. Historically, guidance has notified S2S when new students seem to be without friends at lunch, but the S2S

members said that they often have made friends by the time S2S contacts them. The advisor said, “that really doesn't seem to be a problem in our lunches, from what I've seen, because everybody seems to have a friend.”

The students said in a group interview that the school offers a very welcoming and supportive climate to all students. One student gave a reason for this,

I think it's just because we're really diverse here with all the different people from everywhere. It makes us a lot more accepting and understanding of people, in my opinion, than other schools. It makes it easier for people to find a group or whatever. We have all these clubs, so it's not that hard to find people.

Of the S2S members who participated in the interview, all were very committed to the club.

Ever since I was in middle school, I've always wanted to join a group that would help the community, and help new kids, and stuff. I never really heard about S2S. I wasn't introduced to it until I was junior. That's why I wanted to join.

**Fort Boone High.** As previously noted (in Chapter Three) this S2S group is located on post at the installation high school. Originally, included as a research site with approval of the school's administration, due to the incident described below, the researcher was then prevented from continuing the site as part of this study. As a result, I was also prevented from any further data collection.

The incident began in 2016 and involved a situation in which the Assistant Principal organized a meeting with three students and one parent to resolve a bullying episode amicably before the problem got worse. The parent was the mother of the alleged bully and also the wife of a Brigadier General. The meeting was described by

one of the students as “cordial” and another stated that the Assistant Principal “handled it so well.”

In the following weeks, however, the Assistant Principal was transferred to an area middle school at the order of the District Superintendent, who insisted the move was not disciplinary in nature or in reaction to any situation in particular. Rather, it was based on the “common practice” of “temporarily place[ing] employees in alternative workplaces when there are concerns about school operations.”

Many students and parents, however, remained unconvinced. Instead, it was believed that the apparent bully and her mother used the Brigadier General’s high rank as leverage to ensure that the Assistant Principal was removed from his position. This was said to be in retribution for the Assistant Principal siding with the other students rather than the officer’s family. It is worth noting that the Assistant Principal was considered by most to be a model administrator. According to a local newspaper, evaluation documents showed that he was rated as “exemplary” or “proficient” throughout the evaluation and was a “positive and approachable leader with an open door to students, parents and staff members ... He is seen throughout the school building on a consistent basis facilitating and problem-solving with students and staff members.”

The father of one of the three students, stated that the Assistant Principal always goes “above and beyond” the typical role of educator. In fact, the father recalled that when his son had been injured while playing soccer in his freshman year, the Assistant

Principal had visited him in hospital. “He takes a vested interest in all the students,” the father said.

The public outrage over the issue was intense. Parents created a Facebook page to protest about the incident, which was presented as the improper use of power and rank by the Brigadier General. The page has thus garnered 397 likes and 394 follows by January 2017, impressive considering the school’s population of 476 students. With the quick and far-reaching dissemination provided by Facebook, community and student indignation grew. Many students began wearing black t-shirts with “#BringHoraceBack” (hashtag has been masked) printed in white across the front. Comments and posts on the page started to grow increasingly volatile:

*“The Fort Boone School System [pseudonym] continues to spin their web of lies as they circle the wagons in what now appears to be a massive cover up.”*

*“That girl has a high ranking daddy and I am sure [the] family uses his position and wears his rank. OMG the Principal is an Idiot and bowed down instead of standing up.”*

One student even put administration more on edge by standing atop a table during lunch hour to voice her dissent at the widely considered unjust treatment of a well-respected and largely adored school official.

Soon after this incident, Fort Boone sent a group of military police to the high school “as a measure of caution ... to ensure the safety of students, faculty and property

... [and] to prevent any misconduct by the disgruntled students and parents in response to the Superintendent's decision," a letter to parents from the Principal stated.

The letter also contained a request from the Principal for parents to reduce social media usage. Even though the BringHoraceBack Facebook page had actually been created by the parents rather than the students, the Principal asked that parents "monitor their students' use of cell phones and social media." He added: "Please encourage your student to act responsibly on known facts and to refrain from engaging in spreading false information or rumors." His letter also reiterated the school's policy on personal digital devices and stated that any student caught using cell phones in the halls or classroom would have the device confiscated.

The local paper later reported that it had received a leaked copy of an email between the Superintendent and the garrison commander. The contents included several issues the General's wife found offensive about the Assistant Principal's behavior at the meeting, including not removing one student who used brief foul language, referring to her as "young lady," Also saying he "had to potty," and asking where her daughter worked. These points led the garrison commander to request that "significant action" be taken against the Assistant Principal.

Since the incident, the Principal has been replaced, although it is uncertain whether this is directly related to the incident. The new Principal has implemented several changes to increase the communication between administrators and parents. For

instance, parents now receive a daily newsletter reporting on the day’s activities, upcoming events, finals schedules, and more.

### Summary of Student and Advisor S2S Participants at Case Sites

In Table 4.1 below, I summarize the participation of students and advisors within their respective S2S programs, as well as the types of data generated at each case site.

Table 4.1.

*Study participation by case site and S2S membership.*

Case Site	S2S Members	Surveyed	Interviewed
Freedom County High School	15-20 members; 1 advisor	16 students (1 military-connected)	4 students (1 military-connected) ;1 advisor;1 counselor
Badgeville High School	6 members (3 military-connected); 1advisor	5 students (3 military-connected)	3 students; (3 military-connected); 1 advisor
Center College High School	4 officers (2 military-connected); 1 advisor	3 students (2 military-connected)	3 students (2 military-connected); 1 advisor
Southeast High School	21 members (10 military-connected); 1 advisor	11 students (10 military-connected)	5 students (4 military-connected); 1 advisor
Sargeville High School	50+ members (half military-connected); 1 advisor	18 students (6 military-connected)	10 students (4 military-connected); 1 advisor
Southwest High School	20 members; 1 advisor	8 students (8 military-connected)	3 students (3 military-connected), 1 advisor
East River High School	15 members (3-4 active); 1 advisor	4 students (4 military-connected)	4 students (4 military-connected), 1 advisor

## **Study Research Questions: Individual and Cross Case Analyses**

The following findings are organized by research question. For each question, data are presented within cases and summarized with a cross-case analysis.

### ***Research Questions***

#### **Research Question #1. With what social media platforms do military and non-military-connected students in S2S programs engage?**

First, the results from the survey related to the social media platforms with which students engage is presented, then the data are supplemented with interview and observational field notes insights.

### **Survey Results**

The survey questions allowed for this researcher to establish and determine details about the S2S members across all seven S2S sites. Sixty-five (65/136 total S2S members in the survey sites) S2S students responded to the survey questionnaire, a 48% response rate. Participants who responded were predominantly female (77%) with an average age of 16.35 years. Of the 65 students, 34 (52%) were military-connected.

### **Use of Devices**

Survey question three asked the students what digital devices they owned. Of the 65 students surveyed, all owned at least one type of digital device with 63 or 97% of them reporting ownership of a cellphone or a smartphone. In addition, 50 of the 65 or 77% also owned a laptop or a desktop computer, and 38 or 59% owned a videogame console.



In survey question four, students were asked how they are able to access the internet and how often they browse the web. Of the 65 surveyed, 60 or 92%, use mobile phones to access the internet several times a day while home computers are used by 14 or 22% of respondents to access the internet several times a day. Only 11 students or 17% use school computers and only six (6) or 9% reported using tablets to access the internet several times a day. Survey question five asked the students about their preferred way to communicate with their friends. A majority of the participants, 43 of the 65 or 65%, prefer to communicate with friends in person. Thirteen respondents (13) or 20% noted they preferred to communicate with friends via text.

### **Social Media Use**

Of the 65 participants who answered the survey, 61 or 94% have their personal online profiles through a social media site. There were two participants or 3% of the respondents who do not have online profiles and another two or 3% failed to provide an answer regarding an online profile. The students were also asked how many hours a week they spend on social media websites and applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Two participants or 3% indicated that they use social media websites less than an hour a week. Four participants or 6% mentioned that they are on social media from 1 to 2 hours a week; 22 or 34% are on social media 3-5 hours a week; 16 or 25% shared that they spend time in social media 6-10 hours a week, while 19 or 29% use their social media accounts more than 10 hours a week. Two students or 3% mentioned that they do not use social media websites or applications at all.

### **Social Media Use by Military and Non-Military-connected Population**

Survey results also revealed that the most frequently reported social media platforms with which 65 students engaged were Snapchat with 26 or 40% users, 15 or 58% of whom were military-connected; Instagram with 20 or 31% users, 10 or 50% of whom were military-connected; and Facebook with 15 or 23% users, 7 or 47% of whom were military-connected. Of the 65 students, one (1) participant noted other social media sites he/she uses often such as Wattpad and Tumblr. Two (2) of the 65 participants also shared that there is no social media site which they use often. Table 4.2 summarizes the S2S students' self-report use data on social media platforms reported by military and non-military population.

Table 4.2

*S2S students' self-report use data on social media platforms military and non-military.*

Social Media Platforms	Military-Connected (n=34)	Non Military-Connected (n=31)	Total Survey Respondents (n=65)	Percentage of Occurrences MC (n=100%)	Percentage of Occurrences NMC (n=100%)
Snapchat	15	11	26	58%	43%
Instagram	10	10	20	50%	50%
None	1	1	2	5%	5%
Facebook	7	8	15	47%	53%
Twitter	1	1	2	5%	5%

Question nine asked about frequency of platforms accessed. Of platforms “used several times a day,” Snapchat use was reported several times a day by 39 of the 65 survey respondents or 60% of students, 21 of the 39 Snapchat users or 54% were also military-connected; followed by Instagram with 35 of the 65 students or 54% of students,

21 of the 35 Instagram users or 41% were also military-connected; YouTube with 27 of the 65 students or 42% of students, 13 of the 27 You Tube users or 48% were also military-connected; Facebook, with 25 of the 65 students or 39% of students, 12 of the 25 or 48% were also military-connected; and Twitter with 12 of the 65 students or 19% students, 9 of the 12 or 11% were also military-connected. Table 4.3 summarizes the S2S students' self-report data on the frequency social media platforms accessed.

Table 4.3

*S2S students' self-report data on the frequency social media platforms accessed*

Platform Accessed	Several Times a Day	Once a Day	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Less than once a Week	Never	No Response	Total
Snapchat	39	5	4	6	1	7	3	65
Instagram	35	8	7	4	1	7	3	65
Facebook	25	7	5	5	10	11	2	65
You Tube	27	9	8	4	7	8	2	65
Twitter	12	3	2	0	5	40	3	65

Table 4.4

*S2S students' self-report data on the social media platforms accessed 'several times a day' showing differences in the military and non-military-connected populations*

Platform Accessed Several Times a Day	Military-Connected (n=34)	Non Military-Connected (n=31)	Total
Snapchat	21	18	39
Instagram	21	14	35
Facebook	12	13	25
You Tube	13	14	27
Twitter	9	3	12

## **Emoji on Social Media**

The most prominent social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, now offer a wide variety of emojis, and the survey results reveal that students use emojis to engage through their social media. Although the term emoticon was used as part of survey questions 14 and 15, the responses were in regards to the emojis used and how often. The distinction between the terms is slight and often misunderstood as the same term, as it was in this case. However, to be explicit about the differences in terms, the emoticon is a typographic display of a facial representation, used to convey emotion in a text-only medium. For example ;) to signify a textual wink. Emojis by contrast are actual pictures, of everything from a set of painted nails to a silhouette of a flamingo dancer. And where emoticons were invented to portray emotion in environments where nothing but basic text is available, emojis are actually extensions to the character set used across numerous social media platforms (Kayle, Malone & Wall, 2017).

Sixty-nine percent, 45 of the 65 surveyed, reported that they either use emojis and/or internet slang ‘quite often, it’s a habit’ or ‘sometimes for fun.’ Twenty-two (22%) percent, 14 students, use emojis only when they need to express certain emotions. More than half of the 65 surveyed, 36 or 55%, use emojis on Snapchat; 24 of the 65 surveyed or 37% use emojis on Instagram; and 17 of the 65 students or 26% use emojis on Facebook.

An interesting dimension of emojis and internet slang use is that it appeals particularly to teenagers as it allows them to express themselves and communicate in ways in which only their peers understand. One student told this researcher that certain emojis have a completely different meaning for teenagers than they do for adults. For example, some fruits (i.e. eggplant, peach) reference sexual desire. She also said,

Some teenagers use the fruit emojis in a perverted way. Some people use emojis in a bad way. Like the laughing emoji, for instance, people are aren't actually laughing when they send that emoji. If I am laughing, I'll send hahaha, but when you send a laughing emoji after something, you mean something different. You can say almost anything and get away with it if you use a laughing emoji. Also, the emoji choice may vary depending on the social media platform.

Table 4.5 shows the emojis and internet slang that S2S students self-reported as some of the most popular among their peers. For the 'Slang Meaning' column this researcher consulted the article, *14 Slang Teen Words Decoded for Middle-Aged Parents*, found on the Huffington Post website ([huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com)) and also solicited clarifying information from her teenaged nephew (aged 16) and niece (aged 14).

Table 4.5

*S2S students' self-report data on most popular emojis and slang among their peers*

Most popular emojis	Most popular slang	Slang meaning
Crying-laughing	Lol	laugh out loud
Laughing face	Lit	something popular, like a party; drunk
Heart eyes	Af	as f#ç&
Heart face	Bae	before anyone else; babe or baby

Table 4.5

*Most popular emojis and slang among peers (continued)*

Most popular emojis	Most popular slang	Slang meaning
Wink face	turnt	loud, lively affair, or being inebriated
Scared face	amosc	add me on snapchat
Shocked face	wyd	what are you doing?
Kissing face	fam	family used with close friends
Sad face	slay	short for doing something well
Basketball	savage	brutal yet awesome; hardcore
Eggplant	ship	short for a romantic relationship
100 percent	fleek	when something looks good
peace sign	dead	something was hilarious
middle finger	respk	respect

As presented in Chapter 3, thirty-two students took part in in-depth interviews across the seven sites. Twenty-nine of them also responded to the survey in which 65 students participated. When asked during the interviews what social media platform students used, 24 of the 32 participants or 75% mentioned Instagram and Snapchat. Instagram and Snapchat were generally mentioned together.

Facebook was also mentioned several times in the interviews. Whereas 15 out of the 65 survey respondents (or 23%) claimed that Facebook was their most used social media platform, a slightly higher percentage of interviewees 14 out of the 32 (or 44%) mentioned Facebook as one of their regularly accessed platforms.

**Cross-Case Analysis of Social Media Self-report Use and Affordances**

Access to social media platforms were reported almost equally by both military (52%) and non-military-connected students (49%) as individual users in all S2S groups.

Snapchat and Instagram were the most used platforms, with 58% military-connected Snapchat users and 50% military-connected Instagram users. Among the S2S groups, none reported having a current Facebook page. However, several participants, especially the military-connected students, mentioned that Facebook was used to connect with family, and that generally, adults, such as their parents, used Facebook more often than they did. Facebook was also used to “keep up” with what was happening, and to post personal events and milestones to share with family. Southeast High was the only S2S group with an active Instagram page, while other S2S groups thought of creating a Facebook and/or Instagram page. Twitter was also mentioned three times (or 3%) as a potential platform for S2S.

Participants considered texting as a form of social media, and it was mentioned several times. Texting, especially group texting, was often discussed when asked about announcements and disseminating information about S2S. In addition, texting across sites was often coupled with an app such as Remind Me, GroupMe, or Remind101.

Email, also considered a form of social media, was mentioned seven times (22%) across sites when asked about communication preference with other S2S members.

Emoji and internet slang use was also prevalent in S2S students’ engagement with social media, across all S2S groups for both military and non-military-connected students.

**Research Question #2. For what purposes (online chats, collaborative in-group activities, etc.) do S2S students use each of the existing platforms?**

The results for Question #2, the survey data related to the purposes which students reported for their social media use is presented, then those data are supplemented with interview and observational field notes insights.

## **Survey Results**

### **Social Media in Students Everyday Lives**

Survey question 11 asked the students how social media is able to help them in their everyday lives. From the 65 responses, 55 or 85% of the participants, 27 or 49% of whom are military-connected, indicated that they use social media mainly to keep in touch with their friends. Meanwhile, 34 or 52% of the respondents, 14 or 41% of whom were military-connected, stated that they stay connected to their current school through social media. Thirty students (46%), 14 or 47% of whom were military-connected, shared that social media helps in collaborating on school projects. Additionally 28 or 43% of the total 65 respondents, 43% of whom were military-connected, use social media to stay connected with their current school clubs. The students also use social media to express themselves, 26 or 40% of respondents, 13 or 50% of whom are military-connected, indicated that they share their ideas, opinions, and beliefs online. Twenty-five, 25 or 39% of students (56% of whom are military-connected) reported the use the social media to show one's creativity. Table 4.6 shows the S2S military and non-military-connected students self-report data on the purpose of social media in their everyday lives.



Table 4.6

*S2S military and non-military-connected students self-report data on the purpose of social media use in their everyday lives.*

Purpose of social media in helping in everyday lives	Military-Connected (n=34)	Non Military-Connected (n=31)	Total Users	Percentage Occurrences <i>MC</i> (n=100%)	Percentage Occurrences <i>NMC</i> (n=100%)
Keeping in touch with friends	27	28	55	49%	51%
Connected to school through social media	14	20	34	41%	59%
Helping to collaborate on school projects	14	16	30	47%	53%
Connected with clubs	12	16	28	43%	54%
Share ideas, opinions, and beliefs	13	13	26	50%	50%
Show one's creativity	14	11	25	56%	44%

Survey question eight (8), which asked the students to select from a list of options to indicate how they used social networks also addressed the second research question. Participants provided write-in reasons on why and how often they use social networking sites. From this question, the majority, 53 or 82%, of the 65 participants, 29 or 55% of whom were military-connected, reasoned that they use the social media to pass time when they are bored. Fifty of the 65 surveyed or 77% respondents, 29 or 58% of whom were military-connected, respectively shared that they use social media for fun and as a form of communication. Another 29 or 45% of the respondents, 17 or 59% of whom

were military-connected, use social media to get information. Twenty-seven, 27 or 42% of students, 15 or 55% of whom were military-connected, use social media to share information. Twenty-five or 39% respondents, 16 or 64% of whom were military-connected, use the social networking sites to read or view others' profiles. Thirty-one or 48% respondents reported sharing opinions and voicing ideas, 17 or 55% of whom are military-connected. Twenty-three or 35% of participants, 11 or 48% were military-connected, meet new people who share common interests with them. Table 4.7 shows the S2S students self-report data on the reasons for using the different social media sites.

Table 4.7

*S2S military and non-military-connected students self-report data on the purpose*

Reasons for using social networking sites	Number of Occurrences ( <i>n</i> =65)	Percentage of Occurrences ( <i>n</i> =100%)	Military-Connected ( <i>n</i> =34)	Percentage of Occurrences ( <i>n</i> =100%)
To pass time when bored	53	82%	29	53%
For fun	50	77%	29	58%
To get information	29	45%	17	59%
To share information	27	42%	15	55%
To read or view others' files	25	39%	16	64%
To share and voice out their opinions or ideas	31	48%	17	55%
To meet new people who share common interests with them	23	35%	11	48%

The following sections are derived from student interviews and observation data across the sites and are presented by social media platforms identified as most popular with students and associated affordances that can be inferred from their descriptions.

### **Social Media Uses and Affordances Reported by S2S Students**

Students perceived Facebook as a platform generally used by their parents and other adults. As one member from the Sargeville High S2S group bluntly stated, “it [Facebook] helps like older people keep in touch.” His nodding peers agreed. “Yeah, a lot of kids don’t actually use Facebook anymore,” another student added. However, students reported that they access their school’s Facebook page as it is the most commonly used platform by most schools. Students reported that they check the site periodically for school news, updates and announcements. Also, five students mentioned that they connect with teachers on Facebook too. However, one Southeast High S2S student said that most teachers won’t “accept a friend request from a student” for professional and privacy reasons. In reference to a particular teacher, he said, “She never accepted my Facebook until after I left her class. She did not think it was acceptable and wanted to keep it [Facebook] private.”

Specifically perceived as designed for their generation, these high school aged students reported Snapchat to be the most popular platform. Students liked that Snapchat differentiates them from the older users on Facebook and the younger users on Instagram. The researcher’s 14-year old niece, said, “I am getting more into Snapchat and texting as I’m getting older. Instagram is fading away.”

Students generally described Snapchat as more private than the other social media networks, and some students seemed to really enjoy the affordances of the mobile application, such as the level of interactivity and intimacy it provides. Finding friends on Snapchat, for instance, requires knowledge of someone's username and/or contact information that results in smaller, more "closely-knit" connections. One student from the Sargeville High S2S group, speaking on behalf of her peers in the group interview, stated that "Snapchat is more personal, and so, if you want to snap [to your story] on Snapchat, your close friends will know it. But on Instagram or Facebook, anybody can see it [your post]."

The instant disappearance of photos and videos affords students with a closer connection as it requires an intense focus on the image before it disappears. Students reported that they also like that they are not inundated with posts as they are with Instagram and Facebook, and it helps them maintain a level of privacy among their close friends. One student from Southeast High S2S said:

If you post a lot, something that's even more helpful than Instagram is Snapchat, because it [photos and videos] goes away after a day. You can click on somebody's story, you can spam it a lot more than you can Instagram, because Instagram, people will get on you if you post so many pictures.

Instagram and Snapchat were generally reported mostly for personal use to chat and connect with friends. One Center College S2S officer described Instagram as way "to keep up with people who are here and then Facebook for people who are really far away."

Another Center College S2S officer preferred Instagram to Facebook because she doesn't "necessarily have time throughout the day to kind of look at everybody's Facebook status when they've got a whole novel written on there." Instagram affords students the opportunity to efficiently communicate with their friends through viewing photos, rather than text, which requires less time to cognitively process. The Center College S2S officer also said that "you can put a short, little caption" with the photo. Furthermore, she said that students can "read the first half of the caption, understand what you're saying based on the picture." Students liked that they can scroll through the images quickly and then Direct Message one or more of their friends privately for more in-depth conversation.

Students described the main difference of use between Snapchat and Instagram in regards to the nature of the interactivity. One student said,

It's [Snapchat] more of like a spectating sport, you're like watching from the sidelines, especially with their story. Like you're watching how they're growing, things like that, what's happening with them. I really don't utilize the messaging app on Snapchat. I feel like everything can convey in it online.

As an East River High S2S student explained it, Instagram is used "just for friends and people in general." He described Instagram as a lot more broad. "It's not like a small group. It's a lot of people." Students described another feature that is unique from other mobile applications. Students found Instagram useful for both public and private use. For instance, students choose when "to follow somebody" and "that person may not follow you back if they don't want to." In other words, as a Southwest High S2S student describes, "You can keep up with them without them keeping up on you and vice

versa and I think that's something you don't have with Facebook because with Facebook you have to. It has to be like mutual.”

### **Social Media Uses and Affordances for Military-Connected Students**

There were differences in the reported uses of social media between military and non-military connected students. Interestingly, for many military-connected students, Facebook was the preferred platform as it afforded them the opportunity to connect and communicate with family and friends who live far away. Military-connected students, in particular, admitted to checking their Facebook Timeline regularly to “keep up” with what was happening in the family and posting personal events and milestones to share with the family. One mobile student said that she “never posts anything to Facebook” but “knowing that they’re there [family and friends] and that I can just message them for something” is comforting. Another student explained that “a lot of my family don’t have Instagram so they’re always on Facebook so that’s how I connect with them.” Some of these students sync their Instagram and Facebook pages so that they do not have to duplicate their posts or have to frequent Facebook as much. Military-connected students also used the platform to find old friends and/or teachers from the past as “everyone has a Facebook account.” One military-connected student from Southwest High S2S said that:

I knew this girl in kindergarten. We're [she and a friend] scrolling through Facebook for somebody that I used to know. We're a trio. We had lost connection with the other one, and we'd actually found out that she was best friends with one of our other friends. She had stayed in the area. She just graduated.

Instagram and Snapchat were both reported as applications that military-connected students used heavily for communicating and staying in touch with friends. One military-connected student from Badgeville High said that she used Instagram the most. She claimed that, “On Instagram, I follow people and they follow me, people that I used to live with in Fort Freedom [pseudonym]. And, I mean, it's a way for me to communicate with them.” Several military-connected students mentioned that Instagram’s feature that allows users to scroll through the photos as a very beneficial feature for military-connected students. One military-connected student from Sargeville High likes scrolling through the images on Instagram because “that’s really beneficial as far as keeping up with someone because then you can text somebody, ‘Oh, I see you’re doing this...How are you doing?’” A military-student at Southwest High agreed,

You're looking a lot more [as a military-connected student], and it really helps as far as communication, keeping up with people because I mean it's a lot easier to talk to someone looking at a picture [on Instagram] that you just scroll them like look at to your list of contacts like, ‘Oh, I haven't talked to this person in three years. I should text them.’

One non-military S2S student from East River High commented on how she communicates with her military-connected friends.

I Snapchat with my cousin that has a dad in the military. I use it to send photos and stuff with her. Then [I use] Instagram, just to keep up with everything.

## **Cross Case Analyses:**

### **Personal S2S Member User vs. S2S Organizational Uses**

Themes for personal social media use among both military and non-military-connected students were reported across all study sites. Personal themes revealed differences in public and private communication uses. More public communications included *communications with family members and adults*, while private *communications among peers* were in evidence. Both public and private networks were used to connect to or find old friends or previous acquaintances.

Social media use also provided several organizational affordances to the S2S groups in this study. These themes were *connecting with new students, communicating within the S2S groups, promoting S2S events and activities*

### **Public Communications: Connecting with Family Members and Adults**

Students at all sites reported that Facebook was acknowledged as being more public and also more for ‘older generations’ of users and therefore was used for public communications, even among family members. Military-connected students from five of the seven S2S groups describe Facebook as “family-oriented” and a “virtual home-base for families to connect.” Students from all seven sites said that they primarily used Instagram and Snapchat for personal and social reasons. Military-connected students from all sites said that they largely used Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat to connect with family and friends afar.



### **Private Communications: Connecting with Peers**

Students reported especially the use of Snapchat and Instagram for more personal communications among peers, as communication was not archived, but could be accessed by Snapchat network stories. Snapchat and Instagram differences noted were that on Snapchat one could be more of an ‘observer’ of another’s life events through following their stories. Instagram was used more as an instant-messaging/contact tool. There were also differences among students at various sites regarding the development of an online ‘profile.’ Findings also included engagement with social media ‘hidden meanings’ with emoji use and also use of ‘internet slang’ that were thought to explicitly exclude adults from understanding the peer-to-peer communications.

### **Social Media for the S2S Organizations: Connecting with New Students**

S2S students from four of the seven sites claimed to use Facebook as a way to stay connected with the new students after they met upon enrollment. One student from Badgeville High S2S uses Facebook to befriend the new students in the school as she understands what it is like to be the “new kid”. A Center College S2S officer explained that “we [she and new students] Facebook message each other every other week or so to just check in with each other.” She said that this allows for an “instant friendship” to be made and “new students can rely on someone that has [their] back.” Students with the Freedom County High S2S group also use Facebook to “check-in” and/or “stay in touch” with new students after they enrolled.

Only one S2S group from Sargeville High stated that they actually use Snapchat to communicate with S2S members, but mostly used it with one another when they are bored. The Southeast High S2S has an active Instagram page, which was used to recruit new members, chat, make announcements, and post pictures from events. One student said that:

So we usually just make a chat on Instagram or we post announcements as pictures and we just tag all of our teammates, and we do that with basketball. S2S, that's pretty much how we show the kind of stuff we've been doing. Um, and then, get any announcements out.

### **Promoting the S2S Program Events and Activities**

A second S2S member added that Instagram was easy to use to promote the S2S group. She said that it was easy to tag students, and the students got notifications if they were tagged. She also said that the majority of the students have access to computers, Wi-Fi, smartphones, or iPads, and students who didn't have access generally knew someone who had access, and so dissemination of information was easier. Another added that:

Well, not really Snapchat, but more Instagram and Twitter, it's like, they were like the news. The new generation of news, because people would rather go on Instagram and find out what's going on with this versus seeing a paper or a flyer about it.

As for texting, the researcher observed (and documented in field notes) only one use of texting in this Badgeville S2S group, but it was used routinely for distributing group communications: The advisor would text one person for S2S related messages, and that person used the GroupMe app to disseminate the text to the other members.

Similarly, the students in the Southeast High S2S group also used student-initiated texting and texting apps to communicate and send out announcements to the group. One student said that:

GroupMe, everybody can send a message at the same time. You'll still receive 10,000 text messages, sometimes you'll get it an hour later, sometimes you'll get it five minutes later, so it's like, it's a good communication. But, we [also] use the [messaging feature on] Instagram. It's called Direct Message, so it's called DM.

For the Sargeville High S2S program, the members and the advisor communicated largely through face-2-face meetings, if not, through texting and the Remind101 app. The East River S2S group reported using Remind Me app and group texts for program-related messages. The members typically personally tracked down troubled new students with the help of the guidance counselor. During the group interview, the group collectively decided that having an Instagram page might help promote their program, and a member volunteered to be the “Instagram person.” The advisor mentioned that “I feel like if we have an Instagram page, and we followed some of the kids at school with them, maybe they would be more interested in joining it.” A student gladly volunteered, “I'll do it. I'm secretary.”

The Center College S2S group preferred to use e-mail when communicating program-related messages. Individual interviews with the advisor as well as a group interview with the three S2S officers revealed that the participants preferred e-mail for S2S communication. E-mail was the standard communication between professors and

students in the school. The president of this Center College S2S group said that she was recruited to the program through e-mail. She said that:

To begin with, last year, I was really good friends with an officer of S2S and she kept coming to me and asking me if I would go do, like, school stuff, you know, go to other schools and recruitment, stuff like that. I thought it was really fun. And then at the end of the year, [advisor Center College] sent an email asking for officers, and I just jumped on it. And I was like, "Why not?" You know, I think it's fun. I think we could really do something with it.

Officers and members from Freedom County High used texting to communicate S2S-related messages. One student said that, "We set a time, a date, and a place for meetings and stuff, and we let her know. Then we came up with the idea for an advisor lesson over the program." Similarly, S2S officer from Center College said that, "between all four of us officers and we kind of just sit there and text back and forth."

### **Reaching Out to Assist New Students**

Social media was also used by the S2S students to befriend new students in their schools, regardless of their military status. Students from six of the seven sites said that they use social media platforms informally to help new students, by keeping contact, checking in to see how they are adjusting, connecting them to others and inviting them to social events.

### **Research Question #3. What value do highly mobile S2S participants ascribe to the role of social media use in developing positive social and educational outcomes?**

When military-connected and non-military-connected students were asked the differences in their social media usage, they ascribed a different kind of value for

military-connected students in using social media to develop positive social and educational outcomes. To present the results for Question #3, the interview and observational data are categorized by themes: (1) *Blending the Past and Present*; (2) *Anchoring the Past*; (3) *Adapting to the Present*; (4) *Sharing Worlds*; (5) *Reaching Out through S2S*

### ***Blending the Past and Present***

With frequent moves and deployed parents overseas, these students described their experience as a “life of uncertainty” and “a feeling of constant displacement.” According to these students, it is particularly difficult when “you have to lose all your friends” and “move to a new place every three or four months.” One military-connected S2S student from Southwest High equated moving to a new place “like taking a polar bear and moving it to the desert.”

The sense of social isolation and loneliness that these students experience extends far beyond what most teenagers understand. Social isolation, as the student characterized as a polar bear re-locating to a desert, is often a consequence of multiple moves that force students to leave friends behind and make new friends with each relocation. This same student elaborates:

Yeah, it's like completely different. Even if the weather's the same, even if the place is the same, like, if you have family there, it's not the same. Like you don't have friends, you don't have those connections. You don't know anybody.

Adapting to new school environments and making new friends is a persistent challenge for these military-connected students. However, social media applications

afford these students the opportunity to maintain relationships with friends from schools they are leaving as well as form new friendships at their new school. Never before has there been a generation of disconnected students in which their past and present are anchored in both the physical and virtual world.

A military-connected student from Sargeville High School stated that she uses the different social media platforms (such as Snapchat and Instagram) and texting in order to communicate and connect with her friends near and far. She explains the difference in usage:

I've definitely seen it being [social media] differently used [between military-connected and non-military-connected]. I still keep in touch with my friends from, like, Alaska, or friends from Florida, and Chicago, and etc. But, I mean, it's kind of different because we'll still talk to each other, and we'll, like, text each other, or we'll send each other emails, and we'll... It's just kind of like a different connection.

Both texting and social media play a pivotal role in blending the two worlds. For military-connected students, in particular, virtual settings have become a prominent place for their past and present friendships to flourish.

The student further states that she only “connects with people” on Snapchat and Instagram that she already knows.

Yeah, I'm more of a person where, like, I don't have that many followers on Instagram because I only, like, follow the people that I do know, like, that I've met.

Another military-connected student from Sargeville High, who participated in a group interview, frequents Instagram, Snapchat and Tumbler. She claimed to have a “thousand-something” Instagram followers, most of whom are her friends but many are from “casual encounters” in which they decided to follow each other on Instagram.

People just ask...or if you have friends of a friend, they'll follow you, or if they see you, like, um, I'll have, like a friend at [a University], and so their friends will follow me because they'll just see what I post or they'll like it. It's just weird, like people you won't even know, they'll comment on your photos and you'll comment back, and just to be friendly. And it's not even like strangers from across the world or anything, it's just, like a connected group of people.

Military-connected students meet hundreds of people through their travels, and social media helps to create a virtual community that is a blend of past acquaintances and friends to which the new students they meet are added. This intentional blending is one way in which they create a sense of belonging using social media explicitly in response to the social isolation they often report.

### ***Anchoring the Past***

A non-military-connected student from Sargeville High School stated that for military-connected students, communication has become easier and much more efficient. Students are able to easily reach out to their friends from different places and get instant updates whenever they want to:

I think that for someone who is military-connected when they're using social media, it's more so than like just letting other people know what they're doing.

It's keeping in touch with people who they otherwise wouldn't be able to in a little more detailed way than just texting, "Hey, what are you doing?"

A military-connected student from Southwest High said that since she moved away from her best friend that her friendship has become more personal through social media.

We used to be best friends, but now I think we're closer since I moved away. Because like at school it was just like a ton of us, and we always were together, but now it's like I choose who I talk to. Since I moved we've become super-close. I know more about him now than I did when I was there.

Having to constantly leave good friends disrupts the ability for these military-connected students to maintain close friendships. However, social media helped her become closer with a friend from a previous residence which otherwise would have gradually faded into nothing but infrequent exchanges. No longer are friendships defined by the time in life in which they took place. Through their social media use, friendships from the past for these mobile students can be anchored – it does not have to be fleeting.

Another military-connected Southwest High student also described the value of social media in a way that shows a more in-depth purpose and less trivial social affordance:

I think that I used to [see] social media, as a way to connect to people and stay connected. Like I don't post about cats or flowers or... or post pictures of my food. Like it's [social media] a way for me to express who I am and make, allow other people to see my life. I don't want to share that type of personal information, but just the stuff that I'm interested in. This is like we actually get to see and learn more about each other, because we're like posting about what we're



doing and what we're interested in, because we want to keep each other updated rather than just, "Oh, look at how cute I am today."

For this student, social media was used to create a much more enriched level of communication than their non-mobile peers.

### ***Adapting to the Present***

Of course, for any teen moving to a new place is hard. However, a military-connected student from Southwest High attributed the 'climate of the school' as an important factor in the students' ability to adapt to a new environment. She compared her last school with the one she attends now. She said:

Here they understand what you're going through, but back in [my old town] they didn't. They had the same schools. They never moved. They didn't even move houses. And then like here it's like you have everything, everyone. Like here's so much diversity. So I think that like being exposed to that helps.

Starting in a new place comes with its' challenges, and sometimes it is difficult for students to adjust to their new environment. A military-connected student from East River High had a hard adjusting but social media helped him adapt to the present. He said:

I really had hard time when I first got here. I didn't make friends easily, and I missed the last place....I liked it there. I think I was angry....and wasn't ready to start over. But people are cool here. I use Snapchat with my friends here and it helps ...I made a lot of friends quickly because of it.

### ***Sharing Worlds***

Military-connected students share similar life circumstances, which offer them

instant comradery when they meet. In some cases, students re-connect with friends from other places and that can strengthen bonds and connect them to a unique global community in which only students like themselves belong. Not only that, but they can connect their old friends with new friends, virtually growing and shrinking their world at the same time. A military-connected student from Sargeville High believed that the social media platforms help mobile students and their friends and family keep connected and share their thoughts and other information:

It's like we have our own community. I meet people from everyone. I connect with them on Snapchat or Instagram. So nice to see a picture and see what they're up to, you know... and then my other friends will connect them. Then, we share friends with each other. I have friends from all over the world, and it's like we are connected in one place.

Another student from Southeast High added to that sentiment, and makes the point that looking at photos and sharing her contacts with new friends gives her a sense of community.

It's like weird, you know. It's easier to move when I know I can keep my friends. That's tough to leave. Instagram gives me that connection. I use Direct Message [on Instagram] a lot to keep up with my friends. I like their photos and makes me happy to see them. I share with my friends here and sometimes they become friends too. It's comforting. I feel like I have friends everywhere.

Another example of *Sharing Worlds* is from a military-connected student at Sargeville High School. He said that the platform, Facebook, can be used to keep others

updated about current hobbies and life events. The group chats also serve the same purpose, to communicate and stay in touch with others.

Pretty much like your family. They are excited to show the world. I guess I do that as well.

### ***Downside of Social Media – Creating distance***

Although only one student talked about negative aspects of internet connectivity, an excerpt from her interview is presented here, as a contrary point of view, perhaps worth exploring further. This student, from the Badgeville High S2S, claimed that, “I wish we didn't have like the Internet sometimes.” This participant felt that social media was pretentious, and said that she felt like social media was used to “keep up with the appearances.” She explained:

Like Spring break, if you are not doing anything and you are sitting at home and you wanna post a picture, but everyone's posting their beach pictures. Then you are like, I didn't go to the beach. Yeah you have to just, you have to conform to what everyone else is doing sometimes.

### ***Valuing Social Media within the S2S group***

A student from Southwest High S2S shared her experience with the lunch buddy program, which she preferred more than using social media. She perceived that the program was effective. She said that:

I see it as effective. It makes them feel a little more comfortable. They can come ... I want them to feel ... [There's somebody they can talk to.] Yeah, I want them to feel comfortable with the school because it's a new environment. It's really weird. I want them to feel like, "Hey, this is your new school, your new home. You can treat us like family and be welcomed here."

Another student from Southwest High S2S also preferred to check up on the new students personally than through social media. She claimed to “have little chit chats” with her lunch buddies in the hallway just to say hi, and she said that, “Normally, after their first week, I see them with some friends. I'm like, "OK, we're good. We're good."

### ***Adults and Students: Monitoring student social media use***

The students perceived that social media accounts were somewhat monitored by parents, especially since several parents used Facebook. In fact, one participant claimed that their S2S-related social media account was already monitored by the program advisor. Another participant claimed that:

Like with S coach, 'cause she was really smart, and this was really smart. During the beginning of the S2S, like before we started. She made sure that we signed a paper saying, "Your child may be on the Internet, so I hope it's not an issue. If you do have an issue, let us know, and your child won't be a part of that." And they can still be a part of S2S, but if your parents said, "I don't want you on...." So, yes, you were still part of the, you know, group, you still part of the classroom, but you just weren't part of what was being filmed. And same thing for S2S, if you don't wanna be posted online, we're not gonna post you online. That's mean. We're not gonna force you to be like, "Hey, I need you to come take a picture with me."

### ***Reaching Out through S2S***

Students from Badgeville High School said in the group interview that the use of social media for S2S was served two purposes: 1) to communicate with each other, and 2) make friends with the new student. However, the president of S2S perceived that personally interacting with the new student was better than adding them in social media.

I feel like if we did a Facebook or an Instagram, I would probably make a whole another account, and then add everyone that's in S2S.

### **Announcements**

A student from Sargeville High S2S specifically indicated that Facebook in particular allows a wide range of people to see posts or announcements. With the number of people who can view or access the post, announcements are conveyed more effectively:

Facebook is a really good thing to spread stuff, because if you post something, and she likes, and she's friends with her, but she's not friends with me, she likes it, she can see it.

Moreover, students in one group commented on the ineffectiveness of traditional print media in schools. One student flat out said that no one pays attention to school boards and printed flyers anymore. The social media platform is more useful and efficient for his generation:

Oh, absolutely because like in our school, we try to do...that's going on like what's sporting events in the night, like do the morning announcements or we have a big calendar up in the school like tell us what's going. No one pays attention to them.

This quote is an example of how the instant accessibility of social media supports individual students taking responsibility for initiating communications, and thus contributing to a fluid group effort within the S2S group, as well as the general social digital fabric of the school. One student simply added that social media platforms can be used to spread the word about big events and invite individuals to participate: “Uh, just

see what other people are doing. Mostly it was a big event when I thought and I think I'll post it.”

### **Recruiting New Students**

S2S members believed that social media should be helpful for the S2S program especially in getting new members and program recruits or volunteers. A student at Freedom County HighS2S said, “It would probably help get the word out, help us get new members, recruits.” He suggested using either Facebook, Snapchat, or Instagram, because “everybody's got one of those.”

Students at Freedom County High S2S think that S2S should start advertising S2S on a social media page. One student said,

I think we could start out advertising it on our page, so getting our friends and our family and different people to go to theirs. I think since we're county, and we're already ahead of the game, then it's going to bump up the rivalry with [Badgeville]

### **Research Question #4. How do S2S advisors perceive the role of social media in the S2S groups?**

To present the results for Question #4, the interview data from the advisor interviews are presented by the categories, (1) *Advisors' Perceptions on the Role of Social Media for Military-Connected Students*; (2) *Advisors' Perceptions on the Role of Social Media for S2S*. First, a brief synopsis about the advisors' connection to military life are provided to inform an understanding of their perspectives on social media use.

## Synopsis of Advisor Experiences and Connection to Military Life

Two S2S advisors were from military-connected families and understood the challenges and rewards of a mobile life-style. As expressed in their interviews, they knew what it was like to “start over again and again” with “new friends, new schools, new everything.” They know the pain of leaving friends behind while also missing a parent deployed overseas who may not return. One advisor served in active military in the Army during Desert Storm while another was a military spouse. They also understand the sacrifices that military families must make in order to serve their country. Both advisors spent much of their professional careers helping soldiers and their families heal from the emotional wounds that can be a part of war and military life. The other two advisors were not military-connected or involved specifically in military endeavors. One was an educator and the other was the school’s basketball coach and an administrative assistant for the At-Risk Program. They were observed to inherently understand the value and benefits in empowering youth with meaningful opportunities.

Table 4.8

### *Synopsis of Advisors’ Experience and Military Affiliation*

School	Advisor Position	Past Military Experience
Freedom County High	School-based Therapist	Former Army soldier in Desert Storm
Badgeville High	School-based Therapist	In-patient Therapist for active military soldiers
Center College High	Guidance Counselor	Former military child in the 1990s

Table 4.8

*Synopsis of Advisors' Experience and Military Affiliation (continued)*

School	Advisor Position	Past Military Experience
Sargeville High	Educator	Educator (no immediate connection to Military)_
Sargeville High	MFLC	Mother was a former military child
Southwest High	Guidance Counselor	Former military child in the 1960's
East River High	Educator	Military spouse

**Advisors' Perspectives on the Role of Social Media for Military-Connected Students**

Advisors agreed that social media applications have afforded mobile students the opportunity to stay connected with their friends and family, no matter the physical distance between them. The Southeast High S2S advisor believed that social media is “even more important to them [military-connected students] than to your regular students who are going to stay put for the majority of their life.” She explained that for military-connected students, social media and text-messaging allows them the “only way of reconnecting with friends” once they move away. In other words, as one advisor stated, “no friends are left behind” as military-connected students expand their social networks to include both their new and old friends. Non-mobile students add new friends too but only as others enter their world, not the other way around. This advisor noticed that “military-connected students are really big on social media and staying connected with their friends” and that is especially important to those “who want so badly to fit in” and “struggle to make friends at a new school.” The Southwest High S2S advisor also



acknowledged the important role of social media for military-connected students. She mentioned that in recent years, she too uses Facebook to stay in touch with a group of friends that she befriended while still a military-connected youth in Germany. Times were different in her generation and social media tools were not available to help her keep in touch with friends; however, she was able to maintain a “close-knit” connection with a certain few who shared a very similar journey. “You stay friends forever,” she said in speaking about the close bond that military-connected students form when hopping from place to place. The Military and Family Life Counselor at one school encouraged the use of social media. She said, “They [military-connected students] have their own community,” and “social media would help them to maintain friendships, and talk to their military-connected family.”

### **Role of Social Media for S2S**

Despite understanding the role of social media in the lives of military-connected students, the majority of advisors were reluctant for using it as part of S2S. The Badgeville High S2S advisor stated that her perception of social media was on the “guarded side” due to some negative experiences and occurrences in the past. She was a coach for a dance team at Badgeville High School in the early 2000’s when the girls on the team, who were not yet the required age, each started a Myspace page. She noticed that they were posting pictures and personal information while at dance practice and at games. She thought, “I’m responsible for 25 girls! I’m one person, what if someone sees that [age, sex, and location] and comes to the game and takes you from me?” At that

time, social media was fairly new to the scene with Myspace being the primary social network for teens, and adults were not typical users of social networks and were often inundated by the media messages of the ‘dangers’ that lurked in the virtual space. I observed that the advisor continued to resist social media use and seemed to still exhibit the mentality of that time which was, for adults, particularly parents, to remove it [social network sites] from use rather than embrace the potential benefits that it offered.

The Center College S2S advisor stated that a user should first be responsible and aware of the social media platform before fully enjoying its advantages and features. The lack of social media usage was also observed and noted by the researcher where social media was not used formally as a part of programming; however, it was observed that the officers do communicate with each other via social media.

We don't formally use any of that. I'm not saying that we never would. It's just, you need to have a certain level ... to officially have your name on something, you need to have a certain level of control, and also, maintaining and observing, and things like that.

The Sargeville High S2S advisor mentioned that social media can be used as a platform for cyber-bullying and thus being safety conscious and a responsible account user must be practiced by the young students. She said,

I know when the tennis team had a group chat a few years back. There were some comments said that some felt were harmful. That is why, with my Remind app, I keep my comments from being posted. I haven't had the issue, just because I've tried to avoid it, but I feel like that could be an issue of things getting posted that aren't appropriate.

This advisor did not necessarily discourage the use of social media for S2S if she had “the right kid.” However, she believed that the students, being teenagers, may easily “turn on teachers” and “turn on each other.” She said that:

So, for me, yeah, that's why I choose not to, to get to. I mean, I have kids in my groups that are historians or that are PRCs [public relations coordinators], but I only let them put up with what I tell them to pull out, so.

Although she admitted to using social media sparingly for personal purposes and did not oppose its’ use entirely, she claimed that, “I think here's something I don't know it's not going to encourage them, but I don't post very much, I share. I share a lot.” She exercised caution in what she put in her social media, as she perceived that, “If you put something out there that might hurt somebody.”

The advisors, for the most part, were open to the use of social media for S2S group if certain measures were taken to monitor and control the content posted. Some advisors did not feel that they were adequately equipped with the expertise to facilitate the use of social media and/or manage the page, and that seemed to be a main reason for their reluctance. The Sargeville High S2S advisor attributed some of her reluctance to the amount of work it would require to ensure that all the necessary safety measures were in place. She said,

It would require a lot of hard work which I am willing to put in that work, but I run about five or six of them [clubs], so I don't have time for those extra things.

As reported previously, students already used their personal social media accounts to communicate and connect with new members and/or for S2S purposes, such as to promote the program.

Advisors conceded that social media may be a good way to promote the program, including S2S events and activities. Students mentioned several times in the interviews of the impracticality of flyer and posters in promoting the program, which could be a reason for a lack of commitment from some members. Students are not engaged when activities are meaningless to them. The Southeast High S2S advisor agreed, she said that,

We can still do the posters and stuff where the students that pay attention to the stuff, but I think that social media will be a faster to kind of grasp them, and keep, and pull them in.

The East River High S2S said that having an Instagram page might increase the students' interest in the program. "If we have an Instagram page, and we followed some of the kids at school with them, maybe they would be more interested in joining it." The Freedom County HighS2S advisor said that she would be open to using Facebook to promote S2S but was told "that Facebook is old and no teenagers use Facebook anymore." She was not opposed to Twitter as a potential platform for S2S when a student brought it up in a meeting.

The Southeast High S2S advisor explained that the social media can be used by the students of the S2S programs to spread positive messages and for positive and beneficial causes:

And so, and I think that they could use it for even spreading some positive messages, not even events and stuff, just spreading, like, positive messages, you know, nice quotes. There's different things that they can do to really kind of turn the view of social media into something very positive.

### **Cross Case Analysis of Advisors' Perceptions of Role of Social Media Use for S2S**

All of the S2S advisors agreed that social media applications have afforded mobile students the opportunity to stay connected with their friends and family. The majority of the advisors were in favor of using social media for S2S, as long as rules were enforced. Nonetheless four of the seven advisors were reluctant to use social media whether for S2S or for personal use. However, a theme of general trepidation about the use of social media as communications that could easily get out of their control was noted. Several advisors were concerned about their level of technological expertise to monitor social media, and one bluntly acknowledged that such monitoring takes time to be vigilant; time she wasn't willing to commit. The majority of the S2S advisors perceived that social media was useful in contacting parents and promoting S2S program events and activities.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the findings by research questions using within-case and cross-case analyses. Multiple data sources including individual and group interviews, close-ended survey, and archival documents were used in this multiple-case study. S2S was generally perceived as student-led, and reason the majority of the members joined were their personal experience as a military youth or their desire to help new students fit in the school. In terms of social media usage, the findings revealed that S2S students and

advisors in the towns of Badgeville and Sargeville generally preferred personal interaction to perform S2S duties. For mobile students, though, social media afforded them a useful platform to engage with friends from past homes and family that may be stationed elsewhere. It allows them to interact with other students from similar circumstances and connect new friends to old ones. Based on the survey results, two students did not, or were not, allowed to use social media. However, the majority of the students used social media with some monitoring from their parents. Nonetheless, the students' purpose of social media was mainly for personal use. If social media were used for the organization purposes of S2S, the participants claimed that the purpose was mostly to promote upcoming events, to help new students, and to recruit new members.

Discussion of these findings, suggestions for further research and study limitations will be provided in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

A dissertation study of this kind could not have been made a generation ago. The development of electronic and telephonic communication – what we now call “social media”-- has changed the lives of children of military families. New discussions about the meaning of ways in which these young people are communicating are necessary if we are to understand how a very mobile group of our nation’s young people anchor themselves in both the present and past. To a great extent, the ways in which young people react to mobility have changed, because “involuntary mobility” no longer means breaking away from and losing close associates forever. The findings from this study provide researchers with insights into new directions supported by the affordances of social media for highly mobile populations.

#### **Social Media Engagement among Military Connected S2S Youth**

According to the Pew research study on adolescents’ social media use, Facebook remains the most popular social networking site with 71% of the adolescents using the network. At the same time, Instagram and Snapchat were rapidly gaining in popularity, used respectively by 52% and 42% of the young respondents (Lenhart, 2015). In this study, Facebook was mentioned in several interviews and 15 of 65 survey respondents claimed to use Facebook most often. Among the students, however, Facebook was utilized more for the purpose of connecting with family members rather than peers. Some students described Facebook as “family oriented.” On one hand, it allowed them to

keep up with family members; on the other hand, it implied that their parents and other family members could see their posts, which was unlikely with Snapchat and Instagram which were perceived as “more private.”

The ubiquitous use of smartphones was reflected in the Pew survey, which found that in a radical shift from earlier studies, adolescents’ technology use was driven by smartphones (Lenhart, 2015). In view of the convenience and ease of use, the overwhelming majority (92%) reported going online every day and roughly one-quarter admitted being online “almost constantly.” Among the students involved in S2S programs, virtually all (96%) owned a smartphone or cell phone and the same proportion as in the Pew survey (92%) used mobile phones to go online several times daily.

At the same time, texting was one of several platforms they used extensively, including instant messaging (79%), social media (72%), email (54%), video chat (59%), video games (52%), and messaging apps (42%). With the exception of video chat, the S2S participants mentioned all these channels although email was not widely used. Although not technically a form of social media, most of the S2S participants placed texting in this category. Texting, especially group texting, was a preferred mode of communication for S2S activities and announcements. Texting was often combined with an app such as Remind Me, GroupMe, or Remind (formerly Remind 101), which is used extensively for easy, efficient school communication.



## **Purposeful Use of Social Media Platforms among Military Connected Youth**

Among the teens in the 2015 Pew survey, the vast majority (88%) texting was the dominant mode of communication for keeping up with friends on a daily basis (Lenhart et al., 2015). At the same time, the dislike of email by the S2S students contrasts with the national survey in which more than half of the teens used email (Lenhart et al., 2015). There was one exception, however; the S2S group at Center College preferred to use email for communication among members.

The S2S participants, like their peers in the national survey, often used social media for fun and entertainment purposes. In addition to mobile phones, three-quarters of the S2S students (76%) reported owning a desktop or laptop computer and more than half (58%) owned a video game console. In the national survey, 84% of the boys and 59% of the girls played video games (Lenhart et al., 2015). In fact, video games played a critical role in the development of boys online and offline friendships. Girls were more likely than boys to meet new friends on social media (78% versus 52%) while boys were far more likely to meet new friends playing games (57% versus 13%). Although S2S participants in this study were predominately female (77%), gender differences in preferences for social media use were not examined.

For the S2S students, social media use seemed to be more of an opportunity to befriend new students at their school and maintain ties with distant friends, relatives, and acquaintances than to seek out new friendships in distant places. Until recently, studies of adolescent friendships were typically based on a false dichotomy between online and

offline friendships. In reality, the two groups overlap (De Grove, 2014; Reich et al., 2012; Van Zalk et al., 2014). The Pew exploration of friendships confirmed that friends met online have become an integral part of the social networks of teens. More than half the respondents (57%) made at least one new friend online and 29% made five or more friends online (Lenhart et al., 2015). Only 20%, however, met their new online friends in person.

Many students in the present study acknowledged that their parents monitored their social media use to some degree. This was most likely to happen with Facebook, where parents were members. A *Consumer Reports* survey found that two-thirds of parents whose 13- and 14-year-old children had Facebook profiles friended them so they could monitor their activities and minimize risks (Strom & Strom, 2012a). This may be less true for parents of older adolescents but nonetheless many parents did monitor their children's social media use. Moreover, since the S2S students deliberately used Facebook to communicate with family members, their postings would be accessible for them to see. The overarching impression was that the students felt more uninhibited interacting with peers on Snapchat and Instagram compared to Facebook where parents and other adults were more likely to view their posts.

### **The Value of Social Media for Developing Positive Social Educational Outcomes**

This study primarily addresses the social media use in developing positive social outcomes. Although a limited number of study participants did allude to potential implications of social media use in developing educational outcomes or academic uses,

the study did not elaborate on this aspect of social media use. Rather, the study focused on the affordances of social media in building social capital for military-connected students transitioning to new places. The nature of the research lent itself to more discussion around the social purposes of social media, rather than educational purposes. As articulated in Chapter Two, learning and education are a social process and are likely building social capital which can arguably be expected to substantially contribute to that process, both socially and intellectually. Indeed networking that results in social capital may be essential to the Vygotskian social dimensions of learning: collaboration, scaffolding, interacting with more knowledgeable others within a zone of proximal development. Thus, further study should elaborate on the educational value of social media and explore the survey data in which students indicated social media use for various academic purposes.

### **Roles of Social Media: Social Affordances**

Echoing the work of Matthews-Juarez, Juarez, & Faulkner (2013) for the military students in this study, affected both by parental deployment and multiple school moves, social media did, in fact, offer unique advantages. They were able to use social media to more seamlessly *blend their past to their present*. Through the more constant contact afforded them, the disruptions of moves is made more continuous, even though the many military moves are a jarring way to separate from one's past to their family's present military assignment.

Another social related affordance (Gaver, 1991) was *anchoring the past*. In addition to using social media to make moves more fluid and less disruptive, the military students used social media to anchor, and actually *have* a past they could refer to and document in social media communication. Also, they could easily and efficiently keep contact with old friends and schools. Before social media, those contacts would likely wane.

Both military and non-military connected students as well as advisors reported how useful social media was for *adapting to the present*. In their S2S groups, the school climate was also important, and social media was a good way to communicate with new members and for new students to communicate with peers.

Perhaps the most interesting finding was that social media afforded these military students, with vastly different backgrounds and experiences, ways to *share their worlds* and, in fact, provided a virtual way to decrease the emotional and social distance they were feeling – ‘social isolation’ as one student put it.

Non-military students in the S2S groups used social media extensively to *reach out* to new students. As was apparent as non-military students began to see how difficult it was for newer students, they made more use of social media. For both groups the use of more private, intimate social media platforms like Snapchat and Instagram were preferred for these peer-to-peer communications.

## **Social Capital**

Previous research explored young people's social media use from the perspective of two types of social capital (Ahn, 2012; Ellison et al., 2011; Johnston et al., 2013; Mazzoni & Iannone, 2014). Bridging social capital refers to external relationships or "weak ties," while bonding social capital exists between individuals with close relationships such as close friends and relatives and is based on internal ties between actors (Johnston et al., 2013). Both types of social capital arose in the S2S students' descriptions of their social media use. The social affordances granted by the various social media applications allowed for bonding social capital and were implicit in the way students described their use of social media to *blend their past and their present, anchor their past, adapt to their present, share their worlds and reach out to others*. Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat allow for the inclusion of a large social network; however, it is the particular affordances of these applications that promote either bridging or bonding. For military-connected students, Facebook was often used as a platform to bond existing relationships with family and close friends, rather than for bridging social capital in the addition of 'friends.' The Facebook Timeline, for example, afforded military-connected students the opportunity to "keep up" with what's happening in the family and update them with what's new in their life. Instagram's Direct Message feature afforded military-connected students an open line of communication with their old friends that allowed them to *anchor their past*, often strengthening an existing bond. Bridging social capital was evident in the students' portrayals of their postings (often photographs) on Snapchat

and Instagram, often with the aim of expanding their social networks. Highly mobile military-connected students often have a very large social network as they connect with new friends and acquaintances at each transition. Bridging takes place as they add to their existing networks; however, they also bond these relationships when they *share their worlds* when they connect their new friends with their old friends.

Mazzone and Iannone's (2014) exploration of social media use by students transitioning from high school to college seems especially relevant to the situation of military-connected high school students. The researchers further divided social capital into *contextual bridging social capital* and *relational bridging social capital*. Both types of bridging social capital were especially important for the new university students who were leaving a familiar place for an unknown social and academic environment. For these students, social media was a valuable resource for staying in contact with offline friends, getting help with studying, finding useful information, and sharing music, video, films, and other interests. Most of these uses of social media emerged as described in the five themes. Mobile students were especially eager to share music, graphics, both personal and related to S2S events.

Nabi et al. (2013) based their research into the potential health benefits of social media use on the abundant body of research documenting the positive effects of social support. Their findings with university students revealed that the number of Facebook friends was associated with lower levels of stress, less physical illness, and better psychological well-being. This effect was especially pronounced for students who had

experienced more life stress. As to why the pivotal factor was the *number* of friends, the researchers surmised that having more Facebook friends makes people feel more connected regardless of the exact nature of the relationship, and this sense of connection may be particularly comforting under high levels of stress. Add Snapchat and/or Instagram and this benefit of having a large social network may be especially pertinent to mobile military students, in particular those with family members deployed overseas (Chandra et al., 2011; Chandra & London, 2013). *Sharing worlds*, for example, offered military-connected students instant comradery when they met others like them, and social media afforded them the opportunity to re-connect with friends from other places and connect to a unique global community in which only students like themselves belonged.

Recent studies have effectively debunked the claim that online communication would have a negative impact on the real world friendships of youth (Valkenberg & Peter, 2009). There is increasing recognition that online and offline friendships are not mutually exclusive (De Grove, 2014; Reich et al., 2012; Van Zalk et al., 2014). There is no indication, from this study, or from previous research, that adolescents are forsaking face-to-face social interactions in favor of digital media interactions. Indeed, close to two-thirds (65%) of the students surveyed disagreed with the idea that social media communication is more comfortable than face-to-face communication. Most students preferred meeting new students in person, which they perceived as a more genuine gesture of friendship. For example, S2S students spoke of the value of reaching out to new students in person to solidify a more genuine connection.

It has often been observed that one disadvantage of online communication is the inability to see body language. Adolescents arriving at a new school typically have a strong need for belonging combined with a sense of insecurity about fitting in with their new peers (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). Military students may be dealing with the added stress of a parent's deployment. One student pointed out a potential hazard of communicating with new students via social media without meeting them personally:

I can definitely say that's when we're able to sometimes talk to them and catch them in that emotional state because they might text us they're OK, but when we go there they may not look OK, or seem OK, or comfortable there. By doing that we're able to read their emotions and see how they're really dealing with it.

The students also noted that social media provides the option of not following someone or not accepting a friend request:

So, if there's a new student and you follow them and they don't follow you back, I mean, you can address them in person and that way they can, like, exchange communication.

Meeting with peers in person allowed the students to address whatever reason there might have been for not responding, which might simply have been apprehension or misunderstanding. Cyberbullying was a concern among the advisors but rarely mentioned by students. Only one student explicitly expressed the belief that online communication detracted from face-to-face interaction but there was a decisive preference for meeting in person where possible. The overall implication is that digital



communication is fast, easy, and convenient but it does not take the place of face-to-face interactions.

### **Communications: Public & Private**

Most of the literature on social media use focuses on family use of platforms such as Facebook and Facetime video communication. The military students in this study reported more use of Facebook than their non-military peers in S2S for precisely this reason, their parents were on Facebook. However, both military and non-military groups of participants preferred to use Snapchat and Instagram and other ‘internet slang’ to distance themselves from adult ‘public’ conversations. The ‘secret language’ of emojis and internet slang is part of their social media worlds. Adult advisors were virtually clueless about this dimension of social media use.

### **S2S Organizational Uses of Social Media**

S2S was designed to provide social and instrumental support to children and adolescents navigating school transitions (Park, 2011; S2S, 2016). The program is defined by two major strong points: S2S is student-led and training is customized to fit the unique characteristics of each individual campus (MCEC, 2016). Each school has a team consisting of an advisor, students, and a School Liaison Officer (SLO) whose training is built on three evidence-based modules: *Academics* (Requirements, Processes, Access), *Relationships* (Acceptance, Attributes, Friendship), and *Finding the way* (Attention, Orientation, Appreciation). While these functions of S2S program were not specifically designed to align with social media use, the themes of the roles of social

media use in military students' lives noted above as social affordances dovetail nicely with these components of S2S. The advisors in this study were, unfortunately, very reluctant to use social media.

The S2S students used social media to expand their social networks as well as maintain their relationships. In the context of S2S, social media was a tool for promoting the program, reaching out to and helping new students, and communicating with program members. While Twitter was mentioned much less often than Snapchat, Instagram, or Facebook it was used by some S2S programs to communicate news and announcements. For example, one student from Southeast High noted that social media was convenient for promoting the program and its events because virtually all students had access to social media. Describing this as “the new generation of news,” the student commented that “people would rather go on Instagram and find out what’s going on ... versus seeing a paper or a flyer about it.”

With its numerous pages for organizations and interest groups Facebook offered a venue for students to connect with others who shared hobbies and other interests that were not necessarily shared by their classmates. In analyzing the students' portrayals of Facebook compared to Snapchat and Instagram the overall implication was that Facebook was more of a public forum while Snapchat and Instagram were more personal, even in relation to communicating about S2S, in which the students liked to add creative touches such as photographs they personally took. Another distinction was that using Facebook was often a more passive experience; students could read posts that interested them

though they did not necessarily comment. On the other hand, many students spoke excitedly about the photos they posted and interactions on Snapchat and Instagram.

### **Youth-Adult Partnerships**

Military children are often described as highly resilient (Chandra et al., 2011; Clever & Segal, 2013; Easterbrooks et al., 2013; Park, 2011; Richardson et al., 2011). However, their resilience is currently strained by conditions that can overwhelm even the most resilient and adaptable children. The broad category of “highly mobile students” encompasses adolescents whose residential moves are often driven by poverty, family disruption, or other manifestations of social disadvantage. Thus, they lack the family support enjoyed by a majority of military-connected children as well as the added resources of DoD programs designed specifically to help military families.

The S2S advisor at Citizen County High was also director of a faith-based community outreach service located in an under-resourced neighborhood near the school. Her home was one of six “Challenge Houses” restored to provide needed resources and support to disadvantaged children and families. Many members of the school S2S program were involved in community service projects. Initiatives, such as this, gives rise to a Youth-Adult Partnership model as a venue in which to connect new students to their school and community as well as creating a school culture that can meet the unique needs of military-connected students.

At Southeast High School the S2S advisor was the girls’ basketball coach and had worked with the school’s program for academically at-risk students. Other S2S

advisors were school guidance counselors. While these advisors may not be representative of S2S advisors in general (and indeed, some replaced S2S advisors who were apathetic or disengaged) it seems probable that the program attracts people for the position with backgrounds in helping others, whether professionally or as volunteers. Similarly, many student members expressed their desire to reach out and help new students.

Given that S2S was designed to be flexible and customized to the unique characteristics of each school setting there is no reason that the program model cannot be applied to various groups of highly mobile students. As stated previously, in some programs up to half the members were not from military families. At some schools, S2S members might need more academic help while at others they might need more emotional or behavioral counseling. The program can easily be adapted to meet those needs, by recruiting advisors with credentials that match the needs of the school or building connections with community or other external resources. Social media can be used for both those purposes, and indeed it has been by some S2S advisors. There is no reason that the S2S program model could not be effective in schools serving highly mobile non-military-connected students provided that it is adapted fit the needs of that particular school community.

#### **Adult S2S Advisors: Approach-Avoidance of Social Media Use**

On the whole, educators have been slow to integrate social media into classroom activities. Advocates of social media for educational purposes cite the potential

advantages of providing students with authentic, collaborative learning experiences that allow them to be creative and share their projects beyond the school (Journell, 2014; Lapp et al., 2014). The students more often use social media informally. Nearly half the S2S students (46%) used social media to collaborate on school projects. Slightly smaller proportions used social media for self-expression, sharing their ideas, opinions, and beliefs online (40%) and/or demonstrating their creativity (39%). The students' desires to show their creativity was evident in their descriptions of their postings on Instagram and Snapchat, which are designed to facilitate sharing of photographs and other graphic images.

Each of the advisors was grounded in a military background to varying degrees, either personally or professionally. Their experiences made them well aware of both the challenges and rewards of a military life-style. Most grew up in either Badgeville or Sargeville, and even the children of military veterans who moved around, considered these their hometowns. For the two advisors who grew up as military-connected, they understood the challenges with military life. Both were counselors. Surprisingly, though, they were not necessarily proponents of social media as part of S2S, although they had no objections to students using it on a personal level to contact new students. As experts in adolescent development, they understood the need for youth to connect with their peers and expand their social support networks. But, despite seeing its value and purpose, they didn't see it as a necessity, or at least not for formal programmatic purposes.

The Southwest High S2S advisor, who grew up in the 1960s as a military-connected youth, spent most of her life without social media. She mentioned that in her generation youth had to be tough. She even implied that social media is just an indulgence. The Badgeville High advisor had a concern, referring to a MySpace incident of a few years ago, in which she realized that social media exposed children to strangers and predators. Neither approached social media as a way in which to use it for any broader educational purposes.

### **Implications of Findings**

The students recognized that social media is a valuable tool for communication whether for personal use or for conveying information about S2S and other school or community events. As part of an organization dedicated to reaching out to new students and helping them integrate into the school community, social media is especially useful. This aspect of social media was highlighted by the student who commented that “people would rather go on Instagram and find out what’s going on...versus seeing a paper or a flyer about it.” Although geotagging was not mentioned often, it is a feature of social media that is uniquely suited to the goals of S2S of greeting new students and making them feel they are part of the social community.

While some students in the survey reported use of social media to work with peers on school projects and stay connected with clubs, there was virtually no mention of this activity in interviews with students. Given the reluctance of the advisors to use social media in their S2S setting, likely there are few arenas for social media use in instruction

at these sites. In particular the Fort Boone situation highlights how averse adults continue to be, especially in military contexts, to using social media they can't control. This attitude toward social media has implications for how often S2S groups will actually take advantage of the many opportunities it provides for students, and that they recognize as valuable. These implications echo other concerns expressed by researchers and social media use generally. Implicitly, positive psychosocial well-being represents a positive social outcome of social media use. It is amply documented that adolescents with deployed parents (or siblings) are vulnerable to emotional and behavioral problems (Cederbaum et al., 2014; Chandra et al., 2011; Chandra & London, 2013; Esposito & Smythers, 2011; Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013; Reed et al., 2011). Milburn and Lightfoot (2013) are among few researchers who recognized that "the role of social media has implications for the impact of geographic relocation and deployment on healthy adolescent development as adolescents in military families can use social media to stay connected with other military adolescents or communicate with deployed service member parents" (p. 275). In fact, they were critical of the neglect of this topic by most researchers (and more broadly, the neglect of adolescents in research on children of military families).

### **Limitations of the Study**

A limitation of all case study-based research is that it is focused on a small, select sample that may not be representative of the larger population from which the participants are drawn. Within this constraint, several data sources as well as a multiple

case study design were used to reduce and minimize the potential limitations. An additional, unforeseen limitation created by external circumstances or an external incident beyond your control, was the inability to include Fort Boone High School, which specifically serves a large military population. Another limitation is the exclusion of military parents' perception and experiences related to the use of social media by their children. Ideally, the study should have included all stakeholder groups including parents or other caregivers. Finally, in view of the individual nature of each S2S program the results of this study may not be generalizable to other schools serving military-connected students, including schools with S2S programs.

### **Conclusion and Further Research**

This study was the first of its kind in examining the role of social media in the lives of military-connected students in the context of Student 2 Student groups at seven case sites. Previous social media studies with the military have focused on adults and family connections. With the initial findings from this study additional investigations could be conducted with a focus on exploring in depth the five themes identified as roles that social media play for these military-connected students. Finally, understanding the breadth of social media use in the S2S setting can inform more in-depth examinations of how these technologies affect students' academic engagement and success.

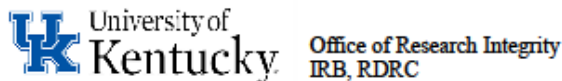
Children from military families are routinely described as resilient but they are also confronted with the dual challenges presented by multiple school moves and in many cases, a parent's deployment overseas. For adolescents, this situation is even more



challenging as they are at a stage of cognitive development where they are aware of the dangers of military deployment and social development where they simultaneously desire to forge an independent identity and fit in with peers. S2S programs were created to ease the school transitions of mobile military students by providing them with a welcoming atmosphere and social and academic support. Notably, the S2S membership at the schools in this study included non-military-connected as well as military-connected students. Overall, the students conveyed a desire to reach out to and help new students, as did the advisors.

Social media plays a powerful role in the lives of all adolescents today, but for these highly mobile students it is especially valuable for enabling them to maintain ties with geographically distant family members and friends. Digital media can also be a valuable tool for befriending new students, conveying S2S related information, and communicating with other members. However, the data revealed that the students used social media overwhelmingly for personal use. Perhaps due to the negative attitudes expressed by many advisors, the potential advantages of social media for achieving the S2S goals of welcoming and supporting all new students are largely untapped. Future research on this topic may be used to illuminate ways that other school programs are using social media to advantage for the ultimate benefit of military-connected students and their families.

## Appendix A



### Continuation Expedited Review

Approval Ends  
October 5, 2017

IRB Number  
15-0822-P4G

TO: Jennifer Watson,  
Education  
335 Dickey Hall  
0017  
PI phone #: (859)257-7399

FROM: Chairperson/Vice Chairperson  
Non-medical Institutional Review Board (IRB)

SUBJECT: Approval of Protocol Number 15-0822-P4G

DATE: October 25, 2016

On October 6, 2016, the Non-medical Institutional Review Board approved your protocol entitled:

*Social Media Use Among Highly Mobile High School Aged Populations: A Case Study of a Student-to-Student (S2S) Program for Military-Connected Students*

Approval is effective from October 6, 2016 until October 5, 2017 and extends to any consent/assent form, cover letter, and/or phone script. If applicable, attached is the IRB approved consent/assent document(s) to be used when enrolling subjects. [Note, subjects can only be enrolled using consent/assent forms which have a valid "IRB Approval" stamp unless special waiver has been obtained from the IRB.] Prior to the end of this period, you will be sent a Continuation Review Report Form which must be completed and returned to the Office of Research Integrity so that the protocol can be reviewed and approved for the next period.

In implementing the research activities, you are responsible for complying with IRB decisions, conditions and requirements. The research procedures should be implemented as approved in the IRB protocol. It is the principal investigator's responsibility to ensure any changes planned for the research are submitted for review and approval by the IRB prior to implementation. Protocol changes made without prior IRB approval to eliminate apparent hazards to the subject(s) should be reported in writing immediately to the IRB. Furthermore, discontinuing a study or completion of a study is considered a change in the protocol's status and therefore the IRB should be promptly notified in writing.

For information describing investigator responsibilities after obtaining IRB approval, download and read the document "PI Guidance to Responsibilities, Qualifications, Records and Documentation of Human Subjects Research" from the Office of Research Integrity's IRB Survival Handbook web page [<http://www.research.uky.edu/ori/IRB-Survival-Handbook.html#PIresponsibilities>]. Additional information regarding IRB review, federal regulations, and institutional policies may be found through ORI's web site [<http://www.research.uky.edu/ori>]. If you have questions, need additional information, or would like a paper copy of the above mentioned document, contact the Office of Research Integrity at (859) 257-9428.

*Norm Van Tubergen, Ph.D., TG*  
Chairperson/Vice Chairperson

see blue.

315 Kinkead Hall | Lexington, KY 40506-0057 | P: 859-257-9428 | F: 859-257-8995 | [www.research.uky.edu/ori/](http://www.research.uky.edu/ori/)

an equal opportunity workplace

## Appendix B

Form M: Student Survey



### Social Media Use Survey

Please answer the following questions, providing your own opinion and not the opinion of anyone else, such as your friends or your parents. For each of the items, identify whether the situation represents your feelings or opinions, or not. Rest assured that your identity will not be disclosed in this study. Rate this by checking the answer(s) which best correspond to your choice.



Form M: Student Survey







1. How old are you?

- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19

2. What is your gender?


- Male
- Female

3. Check any of the devices that you own:

-  A cell phone, mobile phone or smartphone
-  A laptop or desktop computer
-  iPod Touch or similar device
-  iPad or similar tablet-type device
-  A video game player such as a Wii, PlayStation, or Xbox
-  A handheld game player such as Gamebo PSP, or DS

NONE

**4. How do you access the internet? How often?**

	Several times a day	Once a day	Several times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week	Never
On a school computer						
On a home computer or laptop						
On a mobile phone/smart phone						
On a tablet device like an iPad						
On a MP3, like iPod Touch						
Through a video game player such as a Wii, PlayStation, or XBox						



5. Which of the following is your favorite way to communicate with your friends? (Check only one)





- In person
- Talking on the phone
- Texting
- Through a social networking site
- Using IM or some other online chat program
- Using a video program like Skype, iChat, or Facetime
- Through email
- By chatting or talking online in a video or computer game
- Through Twitter
- Other \_\_\_\_\_




6. On average, how many hours a week do you spend on social media networks?

- None [skip to question 18]
- Less than 1
- 1-2
- 3-5
- 6-10
- More than 10

7. Which social media site do you use the most? (choose one)

-  Facebook
-  Snapchat
-  Instagram
-  Twitter
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**8. I use social networks for...**






	A Lot	Some	Almost Never	Never
getting information about music, sports, politics and/or other interests				
fun and entertainment				
meeting new people with common interests				
sharing information and photos about myself				
communicating with my friends				
passing the time when bored				
sharing my own opinions and ideas				
reading other people's profiles				

**9. How often do you check, use or post on the following sites?**


	Several times a day	Once a day	Several times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week	Never
 Facebook						
 Twitter						
 Instagram						
 Vine						
 Tumblr						
 Snapchat						
 Whisper						
 Kik						
 Pinterest						




Form M: Student Survey

 Ask FM						
 Youtube						
 Flickr						
 Reddit						
 Google+						
Other (Name) _____						


**10. Check "yes" or "no" to the following questions**

	Yes	No	Don't Know
I have created an online profile on a social networking site like Facebook or Twitter			
My parents or guardians monitor what I post online			
I communicate often with adults like my parents/guardians, relatives, program leaders, coaches or teachers through social media			


**11. How much does Social Media help you...**

	A Lot	Some	Almost Never	Never
collaborate with others in doing school projects or assignments?				
stay connected with your school?				
stay in touch with your friends?				
stay connected with your clubs, teams, church or other social organizations?				
show your creativity?				
share your ideas, beliefs and opinions?				

**12. Check whether you agree or disagree with the following statements**

	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
I feel safe when using social media to interact with others online			
I'm comfortable if certain adults like parents/guardians, teachers, program leaders or coaches communicate with me through social media			
Social media helps me be more productive with activities that are important in my life			
My friends and family encourage and support me on my social networking site(s)			
I feel peer pressure about what I say and do on social networking sites			
I waste far too much time using social media when I could be doing other more productive activities			

**13. Check whether you agree or disagree with the following statements**

	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
I learn a lot about the world and current events by using social media			
Cyberbullying is something that concerns me			
I take great care to ensure that everything I post on social media is considerate to others' feelings			
I feel more comfortable communicating via social media than by phone or in person			
Social media has helped me be a better communicator			
Using social media helps me feel like I'm in greater control of my life			
I often model after what others do online			
Social media helps me control how others see me			
Using social media helps me feel better about myself			

## Appendix C

```

GET
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DATASET NAME DataSet1 WINDOW=FRONT.
DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=id sid mc q1 q2 q3a q3b q3c q3d q3e q3f q3g q4a q4b q4c q4d q4e q4f q5 q6 q7
  q8a q8b q8c q8d q8e q8f q8g q8h q9a q9b q9c q9d q9e q9f q9g q9h q9i q9j q9k q9l q9m q9n q9o q10a
  q10b q10c q11a q11b q11c q11d q11e q11f q12a q12b q12c q12d q12e q12f q13a q13b q13c q13d q13e q13f
  q13g q13h q13i q14a q14b q14c q14d q14e q14f q15 q18 q19
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```

### Descriptives

```

[DataSet1] C:\Users\jmwats02\Desktop\Big Book\JW SPSS files Dissertation\social media survey entry 1.24.17.sav

```

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
id number	65	101.00	804.00	429.8462	240.62784
school id	65	100.00	800.00	423.0769	240.94166
military-connected	65	1.00	2.00	1.4769	.50335
Age	65	14.00	18.00	16.3538	1.08153
Gender	65	1.00	2.00	1.7846	.41429
Own: phone	65	.00	1.00	.9692	.17404
Own: computer	65	.00	1.00	.7692	.42460
Own: ipod	65	.00	1.00	.2615	.44289
Own: tablet	65	.00	1.00	.4769	.50335
Own: game player	65	.00	1.00	.5846	.49662
Own: handheld game player	65	.00	1.00	.2154	.41429
Own: none	65	.00	.00	.0000	.00000
Internet: school computer	64	1.00	6.00	3.1875	1.57233
Internet: home computer	63	1.00	6.00	3.2698	1.70584
Internet: mobile phone	65	1.00	6.00	1.2615	.98864
Internet: tablet	63	1.00	6.00	4.4286	1.65309
Internet: mp3	62	1.00	6.00	5.4032	1.27343

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Internet: video game player	62	1.00	6.00	4.8387	1.41646
Favorite way communicate w friends	65	1.00	6.00	1.7846	1.25614
# hrs a week on social media	65	.00	5.00	3.6154	1.23355
Social media site used most often	63	1.00	5.00	2.1587	.86521
Use sns: getting info	63	1.00	4.00	1.6825	.75830
Use sns: fun	63	1.00	4.00	1.2540	.56706
Use sns: meet new people/common interests	62	1.00	4.00	2.5161	.84430
Use sns: sharing info	62	1.00	5.00	1.8387	.90886
Use sns: communicating w friends	63	1.00	4.00	1.2698	.54496
Use sns: passing time when bored	63	1.00	3.00	1.1905	.47032
Use sns: sharing opinions/ideas	63	1.00	4.00	2.0952	.83694
Use sns: reading others profiles	63	1.00	4.00	1.9365	.94822
How often: facebook	63	1.00	6.00	3.0159	2.01200
How often: twitter	62	1.00	6.00	4.6613	2.06408
How often: instagram	62	1.00	6.00	2.1774	1.70365
How often: vine	62	1.00	6.00	5.5323	1.09721
How often: tumblr	62	1.00	6.00	5.2742	1.53825
How often: snapchat	62	1.00	6.00	2.1290	1.75073
How often: whisper	62	1.00	6.00	5.8548	.74320
How often: kik	62	1.00	6.00	5.3710	1.45122
How often: pinterest	63	1.00	6.00	4.7302	1.80685
How often: ask FM	62	5.00	6.00	5.9677	.17813
How often: Youtube	63	1.00	6.00	2.6667	1.85785
How often: Flickr	62	6.00	6.00	6.0000	.00000
How often: Reddit	62	1.00	6.00	5.8871	.65549
How often: google +	63	1.00	6.00	4.6349	1.97812
How often: other	12	1.00	6.00	4.0833	2.39159
Created online profile	63	1.00	2.00	1.0317	.17673
Parents monitor my posts	63	1.00	3.00	1.6032	.75219
Communicate often w adults thru social media	63	1.00	3.00	1.3333	.50800

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Help: collaborate on school projects	63	1.00	6.00	1.9683	.98322
Help: stay connected w school	63	1.00	6.00	1.9683	.89746
Help: stay in touch w friends	63	1.00	6.00	1.1905	.69229
Help: stay connected w clubs	63	1.00	6.00	1.7937	.90087
Help: show your creativity	63	1.00	6.00	1.9841	1.07000
Help: share ideas, beliefs, opinions	63	1.00	6.00	1.9365	1.01398
Feel safe using sms	63	1.00	3.00	1.7302	.90173
Comfortable w adults communicating w me thru sms	63	1.00	3.00	1.3016	.66320
Sms helps me be more productive	63	1.00	3.00	1.5873	.73254
Friends/family encourage me on my sms site	63	1.00	3.00	1.5714	.81744
Feel peer pressure re: what I say/do on sms sites	63	1.00	3.00	1.9683	.47411
Waste far too much time using sms	63	1.00	3.00	1.4286	.66513
Learn a lot about world/current events using sms	63	1.00	3.00	1.2222	.60760
Cyberbullying concerns me	63	1.00	3.00	1.4921	.71556
Take care my posts are considerate to others	63	1.00	3.00	1.6349	.82894
Am more comfortable w/ sms vs. phone or in person	63	1.00	3.00	2.0317	.59482
Sms helped me be better communicator	63	1.00	3.00	1.8095	.69229
Sms helps me feel greater control of my life	63	1.00	3.00	1.8730	.70693
Often model after what others do online	63	1.00	3.00	2.0159	.55335
Sms helps me control how others see me	63	1.00	3.00	1.6984	.71018
Using sms helps me feel better about myself	63	1.00	3.00	1.9683	.71771



id number

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	101.00	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
	102.00	1	1.5	1.5	3.1
	103.00	1	1.5	1.5	4.6
	104.00	1	1.5	1.5	6.2
	105.00	1	1.5	1.5	7.7
	106.00	1	1.5	1.5	9.2
	107.00	1	1.5	1.5	10.8
	108.00	1	1.5	1.5	12.3
	109.00	1	1.5	1.5	13.8
	110.00	1	1.5	1.5	15.4
	111.00	1	1.5	1.5	16.9
	112.00	1	1.5	1.5	18.5
	113.00	1	1.5	1.5	20.0
	114.00	1	1.5	1.5	21.5
	115.00	1	1.5	1.5	23.1
	116.00	1	1.5	1.5	24.6
	201.00	1	1.5	1.5	26.2
	202.00	1	1.5	1.5	27.7
	203.00	1	1.5	1.5	29.2
	204.00	1	1.5	1.5	30.8
	205.00	1	1.5	1.5	32.3
	301.00	1	1.5	1.5	33.8
	302.00	1	1.5	1.5	35.4
	303.00	1	1.5	1.5	36.9
	401.00	1	1.5	1.5	38.5
	402.00	1	1.5	1.5	40.0
	403.00	1	1.5	1.5	41.5
	404.00	1	1.5	1.5	43.1
	405.00	1	1.5	1.5	44.6
	406.00	1	1.5	1.5	46.2
	407.00	1	1.5	1.5	47.7
	408.00	1	1.5	1.5	49.2
	409.00	1	1.5	1.5	50.8
	410.00	1	1.5	1.5	52.3
	411.00	1	1.5	1.5	53.8
	601.00	1	1.5	1.5	55.4
	602.00	1	1.5	1.5	56.9
	603.00	1	1.5	1.5	58.5



id number

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
604.00	1	1.5	1.5	60.0
605.00	1	1.5	1.5	61.5
606.00	1	1.5	1.5	63.1
607.00	1	1.5	1.5	64.6
608.00	1	1.5	1.5	66.2
609.00	1	1.5	1.5	67.7
610.00	1	1.5	1.5	69.2
611.00	1	1.5	1.5	70.8
612.00	1	1.5	1.5	72.3
613.00	1	1.5	1.5	73.8
614.00	1	1.5	1.5	75.4
615.00	1	1.5	1.5	76.9
616.00	1	1.5	1.5	78.5
617.00	1	1.5	1.5	80.0
618.00	1	1.5	1.5	81.5
701.00	1	1.5	1.5	83.1
702.00	1	1.5	1.5	84.6
703.00	1	1.5	1.5	86.2
704.00	1	1.5	1.5	87.7
705.00	1	1.5	1.5	89.2
706.00	1	1.5	1.5	90.8
707.00	1	1.5	1.5	92.3
708.00	1	1.5	1.5	93.8
801.00	1	1.5	1.5	95.4
802.00	1	1.5	1.5	96.9
803.00	1	1.5	1.5	98.5
804.00	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	65	100.0	100.0	

school id

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	100.00	16	24.6	24.6	24.6
	200.00	5	7.7	7.7	32.3
	300.00	3	4.6	4.6	36.9
	400.00	11	16.9	16.9	53.8
	600.00	18	27.7	27.7	81.5
	700.00	8	12.3	12.3	93.8
	800.00	4	6.2	6.2	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

First name

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Alanah	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Alyssa	1	1.5	1.5	3.1
	Amanda	1	1.5	1.5	4.6
	Andrea	1	1.5	1.5	6.2
	Angelia	1	1.5	1.5	7.7
	Anna	1	1.5	1.5	9.2
	Antonio	1	1.5	1.5	10.8
	Azia'na	1	1.5	1.5	12.3
	Bailee	1	1.5	1.5	13.8
	Belle	1	1.5	1.5	15.4
	Brian	1	1.5	1.5	16.9
	Brianna	1	1.5	1.5	18.5
	Brianna	1	1.5	1.5	20.0
	Brittney	1	1.5	1.5	21.5
	Carly	1	1.5	1.5	23.1
	Celeste	1	1.5	1.5	24.6
	Chandler	1	1.5	1.5	26.2
	Corrionna	1	1.5	1.5	27.7
	Dakota	1	1.5	1.5	29.2
	Danayla	1	1.5	1.5	30.8
	Daphny	1	1.5	1.5	32.3
	Destiny	1	1.5	1.5	33.8
	Emily	1	1.5	1.5	35.4
	Essence	1	1.5	1.5	36.9
	Gabrielle	1	1.5	1.5	38.5
	Jared	1	1.5	1.5	40.0

First name

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Jasmine	1	1.5	1.5	41.5
Jill	1	1.5	1.5	43.1
Jo Ellen	1	1.5	1.5	44.6
Josua	1	1.5	1.5	46.2
Kailiee	1	1.5	1.5	47.7
Katy	1	1.5	1.5	49.2
Kaylana	1	1.5	1.5	50.8
Kendra	1	1.5	1.5	52.3
Laiki	1	1.5	1.5	53.8
Lakeisha	1	1.5	1.5	55.4
LeAnne	1	1.5	1.5	56.9
Mallory	1	1.5	1.5	58.5
Maria	1	1.5	1.5	60.0
Markayla	1	1.5	1.5	61.5
Matthew	2	3.1	3.1	64.6
Michaela	1	1.5	1.5	66.2
Monica	1	1.5	1.5	67.7
Nadia	1	1.5	1.5	69.2
Natalie	1	1.5	1.5	70.8
No	3	4.6	4.6	75.4
Olivia	1	1.5	1.5	76.9
Paige	2	3.1	3.1	80.0
Patrick	2	3.1	3.1	83.1
Payton	1	1.5	1.5	84.6
Presely	1	1.5	1.5	86.2
Rebecca	1	1.5	1.5	87.7
Robert	1	1.5	1.5	89.2
Russell	1	1.5	1.5	90.8
Sepe	1	1.5	1.5	92.3
Smith	1	1.5	1.5	93.8
Tasha	1	1.5	1.5	95.4
Trevor	1	1.5	1.5	96.9
Victoria	1	1.5	1.5	98.5
Whitney	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Last name

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Barne	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
Brown	1	1.5	1.5	3.1
Butler	1	1.5	1.5	4.6
C Pia Rosario	1	1.5	1.5	6.2
Chavis	1	1.5	1.5	7.7
Clayton	1	1.5	1.5	9.2
Davis	1	1.5	1.5	10.8
Decker	1	1.5	1.5	12.3
Demorest	1	1.5	1.5	13.8
Dickerson	1	1.5	1.5	15.4
Ealy	1	1.5	1.5	16.9
Frank	1	1.5	1.5	18.5
George-Brown	1	1.5	1.5	20.0
Griffis	1	1.5	1.5	21.5
Hall	1	1.5	1.5	23.1
Handy	1	1.5	1.5	24.6
Hartsock	1	1.5	1.5	26.2
Hassell	1	1.5	1.5	27.7
Henry	1	1.5	1.5	29.2
Higgins	1	1.5	1.5	30.8
Huggins	1	1.5	1.5	32.3
Hughes	1	1.5	1.5	33.8
Johnson	1	1.5	1.5	35.4
Lackey	1	1.5	1.5	36.9
LeBlanc	1	1.5	1.5	38.5
Lewis	1	1.5	1.5	40.0
Little	1	1.5	1.5	41.5
Lung	1	1.5	1.5	43.1
Maldonado	1	1.5	1.5	44.6
Mann	1	1.5	1.5	46.2
Marr	1	1.5	1.5	47.7
McDaniel	1	1.5	1.5	49.2
Moore	1	1.5	1.5	50.8
Moultry	1	1.5	1.5	52.3
Name	3	4.6	4.6	56.9
Nicholas	1	1.5	1.5	58.5
Odom West	1	1.5	1.5	60.0
Otero	1	1.5	1.5	61.5

Last name

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Parker	1	1.5	1.5	63.1
Phillips	1	1.5	1.5	64.6
Points	1	1.5	1.5	66.2
Poythress	1	1.5	1.5	67.7
Quarles	2	3.1	3.1	70.8
Raybuck	1	1.5	1.5	72.3
Reynolds	1	1.5	1.5	73.8
Rice	1	1.5	1.5	75.4
Richards	1	1.5	1.5	76.9
Rivers	1	1.5	1.5	78.5
Ross	1	1.5	1.5	80.0
Schnek	1	1.5	1.5	81.5
Scott	1	1.5	1.5	83.1
Shaut	1	1.5	1.5	84.6
Shaw	1	1.5	1.5	86.2
Smith	3	4.6	4.6	90.8
Suvilis	1	1.5	1.5	92.3
Tackett	1	1.5	1.5	93.8
Thomas	1	1.5	1.5	95.4
Tolar	1	1.5	1.5	96.9
Vinci	1	1.5	1.5	98.5
Wilson	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	65	100.0	100.0	

military-connected

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	34	52.3	52.3	52.3
No	31	47.7	47.7	100.0
Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	14.00	4	6.2	6.2	6.2
	15.00	9	13.8	13.8	20.0
	16.00	21	32.3	32.3	52.3
	17.00	22	33.8	33.8	86.2
	18.00	9	13.8	13.8	100.0
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	14	21.5	21.5	21.5
	Female	51	78.5	78.5	100.0
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Own: phone

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Yes	63	96.9	96.9	100.0
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Own: computer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	15	23.1	23.1	23.1
	Yes	50	76.9	76.9	100.0
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Own: ipod

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	48	73.8	73.8	73.8
	Yes	17	26.2	26.2	100.0
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Own: tablet

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	34	52.3	52.3	52.3
	Yes	31	47.7	47.7	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Own: game player

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	27	41.5	41.5	41.5
	Yes	38	58.5	58.5	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Own: handheld game player

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	51	78.5	78.5	78.5
	Yes	14	21.5	21.5	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Own: none

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	65	100.0	100.0	100.0

Internet: school computer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	11	16.9	17.2	17.2
	Once a day	12	18.5	18.8	35.9
	Several times a week	17	26.2	26.6	62.5
	Once a week	8	12.3	12.5	75.0
	Less than once a week	10	15.4	15.6	90.6
	Never	6	9.2	9.4	100.0
	Total	64	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.5		
	Total	65	100.0		

Internet: home computer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	14	21.5	22.2	22.2
	Once a day	8	12.3	12.7	34.9
	Several times a week	14	21.5	22.2	57.1
	Once a week	9	13.8	14.3	71.4
	Less than once a week	10	15.4	15.9	87.3
	Never	8	12.3	12.7	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Internet: mobile phone

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	60	92.3	92.3	92.3
	Several times a week	2	3.1	3.1	95.4
	Once a week	1	1.5	1.5	96.9
	Never	2	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Internet: tablet

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	6	9.2	9.5	9.5
	Once a day	4	6.2	6.3	15.9
	Several times a week	8	12.3	12.7	28.6
	Once a week	5	7.7	7.9	36.5
	Less than once a week	19	29.2	30.2	66.7
	Never	21	32.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		



Internet: mp3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	3	4.6	4.8	4.8
	Once a day	1	1.5	1.6	6.5
	Several times a week	2	3.1	3.2	9.7
	Less than once a week	12	18.5	19.4	29.0
	Never	44	67.7	71.0	100.0
	Total	62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

Internet: video game player

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	3	4.6	4.8	4.8
	Once a day	2	3.1	3.2	8.1
	Several times a week	7	10.8	11.3	19.4
	Once a week	4	6.2	6.5	25.8
	Less than once a week	20	30.8	32.3	58.1
	Never	26	40.0	41.9	100.0
	Total	62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

Favorite way communicate w friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	In person	43	66.2	66.2	66.2
	Talking on phone	3	4.6	4.6	70.8
	Texting	13	20.0	20.0	90.8
	Thru sns	4	6.2	6.2	96.9
	Video program, skype, ichtat, facetime	2	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Other favorite way communicate specified

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	65	100.0	100.0	100.0

# hrs a week on social media

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid None	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
Less than 1 hour/week	2	3.1	3.1	6.2
1-2 hrs/week	4	6.2	6.2	12.3
3-5 hrs/week	22	33.8	33.8	46.2
6-10 hrs/week	16	24.6	24.6	70.8
> 10 hrs/week	19	29.2	29.2	100.0
Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Social media site used most often

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Facebook	15	23.1	23.8	23.8
Snapchat	26	40.0	41.3	65.1
Instagram	20	30.8	31.7	96.8
Twitter	1	1.5	1.6	98.4
Other	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing System	2	3.1		
Total	65	100.0		

Other social media used most often specified

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	63	96.9	96.9	96.9
Tumblr	1	1.5	1.5	98.5
watt pad	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Use sns: getting info

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid A lot	29	44.6	46.0	46.0
Some	27	41.5	42.9	88.9
Almost never	5	7.7	7.9	96.8
Never	2	3.1	3.2	100.0
Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing System	2	3.1		
Total	65	100.0		

Use sns: fun

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	50	76.9	79.4	79.4
	Some	11	16.9	17.5	96.8
	Almost never	1	1.5	1.6	98.4
	Never	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Use sns: meet new people/common interests

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	7	10.8	11.3	11.3
	Some	23	35.4	37.1	48.4
	Almost never	25	38.5	40.3	88.7
	Never	7	10.8	11.3	100.0
	Total	62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

Use sns: sharing info

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	25	38.5	40.3	40.3
	Some	27	41.5	43.5	83.9
	Almost never	6	9.2	9.7	93.5
	Never	3	4.6	4.8	98.4
	5.00	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

Use sns: communicating w friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	48	73.8	76.2	76.2
	Some	14	21.5	22.2	98.4
	Never	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Use sns: passing time when bored

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	53	81.5	84.1	84.1
	Some	8	12.3	12.7	96.8
	Almost never	2	3.1	3.2	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Use sns: sharing opinions/ideas

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	15	23.1	23.8	23.8
	Some	31	47.7	49.2	73.0
	Almost never	13	20.0	20.6	93.7
	Never	4	6.2	6.3	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Use sns: reading others profiles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	24	36.9	38.1	38.1
	Some	25	38.5	39.7	77.8
	Almost never	8	12.3	12.7	90.5
	Never	6	9.2	9.5	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: facebook

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	25	38.5	39.7	39.7
	Once a day	7	10.8	11.1	50.8
	Several times a week	5	7.7	7.9	58.7
	Once a week	5	7.7	7.9	66.7
	Less than once a week	10	15.4	15.9	82.5
	Never	11	16.9	17.5	100.0
Total		63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: twitter

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	12	18.5	19.4	19.4
	Once a day	3	4.6	4.8	24.2
	Several times a week	2	3.1	3.2	27.4
	Less than once a week	5	7.7	8.1	35.5
	Never	40	61.5	64.5	100.0
	Total	62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: instagram

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	35	53.8	56.5	56.5
	Once a day	8	12.3	12.9	69.4
	Several times a week	7	10.8	11.3	80.6
	Once a week	4	6.2	6.5	87.1
	Less than once a week	1	1.5	1.6	88.7
	Never	7	10.8	11.3	100.0
Total		62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: vine

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	1	1.5	1.6	1.6
	Once a day	1	1.5	1.6	3.2
	Several times a week	4	6.2	6.5	9.7
	Once a week	1	1.5	1.6	11.3
	Less than once a week	6	9.2	9.7	21.0
	Never	49	75.4	79.0	100.0
Total		62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: tumblr

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	5	7.7	8.1	8.1
	Once a day	1	1.5	1.6	9.7
	Several times a week	3	4.6	4.8	14.5
	Once a week	1	1.5	1.6	16.1
	Less than once a week	5	7.7	8.1	24.2
	Never	47	72.3	75.8	100.0
Total		62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: snapchat

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	39	60.0	62.9	62.9
	Once a day	5	7.7	8.1	71.0
	Several times a week	4	6.2	6.5	77.4
	Once a week	6	9.2	9.7	87.1
	Less than once a week	1	1.5	1.6	88.7
	Never	7	10.8	11.3	100.0
Total		62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: whisper

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	1	1.5	1.6	1.6
	Several times a week	1	1.5	1.6	3.2
	Less than once a week	1	1.5	1.6	4.8
	Never	59	90.8	95.2	100.0
	Total	62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: kik

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	4	6.2	6.5	6.5
	Once a day	1	1.5	1.6	8.1
	Several times a week	3	4.6	4.8	12.9
	Once a week	2	3.1	3.2	16.1
	Less than once a week	2	3.1	3.2	19.4
	Never	50	76.9	80.6	100.0
	Total	62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: pinterest

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	7	10.8	11.1	11.1
	Once a day	2	3.1	3.2	14.3
	Several times a week	9	13.8	14.3	28.6
	Once a week	3	4.6	4.8	33.3
	Less than once a week	4	6.2	6.3	39.7
	Never	38	58.5	60.3	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: ask FM

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than once a week	2	3.1	3.2	3.2
	Never	60	92.3	96.8	100.0
	Total	62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: Youtube

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	27	41.5	42.9	42.9
	Once a day	9	13.8	14.3	57.1
	Several times a week	8	12.3	12.7	69.8
	Once a week	4	6.2	6.3	76.2
	Less than once a week	7	10.8	11.1	87.3
	Never	8	12.3	12.7	100.0
Total		63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: Flickr

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	62	95.4	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: Reddit

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	1	1.5	1.6	1.6
	Less than once a week	2	3.1	3.2	4.8
	Never	59	90.8	95.2	100.0
Total		62	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.6		
Total		65	100.0		



How often: google +

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	10	15.4	15.9	15.9
	Once a day	5	7.7	7.9	23.8
	Several times a week	1	1.5	1.6	25.4
	Once a week	4	6.2	6.3	31.7
	Less than once a week	5	7.7	7.9	39.7
	Never	38	58.5	60.3	100.0
Total		63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

How often: other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Several times a day	3	4.6	25.0	25.0
	Once a day	2	3.1	16.7	41.7
	Never	7	10.8	58.3	100.0
	Total	12	18.5	100.0	
Missing	System	53	81.5		
Total		65	100.0		

Other site specified

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		59	90.8	90.8	90.8
	Clash Royale	1	1.5	1.5	92.3
	GroupMe	2	3.1	3.1	95.4
	Pandora	1	1.5	1.5	96.9
	watt pad	1	1.5	1.5	98.5
	Yik Yak	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Created online profile

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	61	93.8	96.8	96.8
	No	2	3.1	3.2	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Parents monitor my posts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	35	53.8	55.6	55.6
	No	18	27.7	28.6	84.1
	DK	10	15.4	15.9	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Communicate often w adults thru social media

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	43	66.2	68.3	68.3
	No	19	29.2	30.2	98.4
	DK	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Help: collaborate on school projects

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	21	32.3	33.3	33.3
	Some	30	46.2	47.6	81.0
	Almost never	7	10.8	11.1	92.1
	Never	4	6.2	6.3	98.4
	6.00	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Help: stay connected w school

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	18	27.7	28.6	28.6
	Some	34	52.3	54.0	82.5
	Almost never	8	12.3	12.7	95.2
	Never	2	3.1	3.2	98.4
	6.00	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Help: stay in touch w friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	55	84.6	87.3	87.3
	Some	7	10.8	11.1	98.4
	6.00	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Help: stay connected w clubs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	26	40.0	41.3	41.3
	Some	28	43.1	44.4	85.7
	Almost never	7	10.8	11.1	96.8
	Never	1	1.5	1.6	98.4
	6.00	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Help: show your creativity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	25	38.5	39.7	39.7
	Some	22	33.8	34.9	74.6
	Almost never	10	15.4	15.9	90.5
	Never	5	7.7	7.9	98.4
	6.00	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Help: share ideas, beliefs, opinions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	24	36.9	38.1	38.1
	Some	26	40.0	41.3	79.4
	Almost never	8	12.3	12.7	92.1
	Never	4	6.2	6.3	98.4
	6.00	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Feel safe using sms

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	36	55.4	57.1	57.1
	Disagree	8	12.3	12.7	69.8
	No opinion	19	29.2	30.2	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Comfortable w adults communicating w me thru sms

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	51	78.5	81.0	81.0
	Disagree	5	7.7	7.9	88.9
	No opinion	7	10.8	11.1	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Sms helps me be more productive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	35	53.8	55.6	55.6
	Disagree	19	29.2	30.2	85.7
	No opinion	9	13.8	14.3	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Friends/family encourage me on my sms site

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	40	61.5	63.5	63.5
	Disagree	10	15.4	15.9	79.4
	No opinion	13	20.0	20.6	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Feel peer pressure re: what I say/do on sms sites

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	8	12.3	12.7	12.7
	Disagree	49	75.4	77.8	90.5
	No opinion	6	9.2	9.5	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

**Waste far too much time using sms**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	42	64.6	66.7	66.7
	Disagree	15	23.1	23.8	90.5
	No opinion	6	9.2	9.5	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

**Learn a lot about world/current events using sms**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	55	84.6	87.3	87.3
	Disagree	2	3.1	3.2	90.5
	No opinion	6	9.2	9.5	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

**Cyberbullying concerns me**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	40	61.5	63.5	63.5
	Disagree	15	23.1	23.8	87.3
	No opinion	8	12.3	12.7	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

**Take care my posts are considerate to others**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	37	56.9	58.7	58.7
	Disagree	12	18.5	19.0	77.8
	No opinion	14	21.5	22.2	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

**Am more comfortable w/ sms vs. phone or in person**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	10	15.4	15.9	15.9
	Disagree	41	63.1	65.1	81.0
	No opinion	12	18.5	19.0	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

**Sms helped me be better communicator**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	22	33.8	34.9	34.9
	Disagree	31	47.7	49.2	84.1
	No opinion	10	15.4	15.9	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

**Sms helps me feel greater control of my life**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	20	30.8	31.7	31.7
	Disagree	31	47.7	49.2	81.0
	No opinion	12	18.5	19.0	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

**Often model after what others do online**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	9	13.8	14.3	14.3
	Disagree	44	67.7	69.8	84.1
	No opinion	10	15.4	15.9	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Sms helps me control how others see me

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	28	43.1	44.4	44.4
	Disagree	26	40.0	41.3	85.7
	No opinion	9	13.8	14.3	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Using sms helps me feel better about myself

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	17	26.2	27.0	27.0
	Disagree	31	47.7	49.2	76.2
	No opinion	15	23.1	23.8	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Emoticons: facebook

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	46	70.8	73.0	73.0
	Yes	17	26.2	27.0	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

Emoticons: snapchat

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	28	40.0	41.3	41.3
	Yes	36	55.4	57.1	98.4
	2.00	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		



**Emoticons: instagram**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	39	60.0	61.9	61.9
	Yes	24	36.9	38.1	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

**Emoticons: twitter**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	56	86.2	88.9	88.9
	Yes	7	10.8	11.1	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

**Emoticons: other**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	61	93.8	96.8	96.8
	Yes	2	3.1	3.2	100.0
	Total	63	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.1		
Total		65	100.0		

**Emoticons: other specified**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		64	98.5	98.5	98.5
	Tumblr	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Emoticons: do not use

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	58	89.2	95.1	95.1
	Yes	3	4.6	4.9	100.0
	Total	61	93.8	100.0	
Missing	System	4	6.2		
Total		65	100.0		

How often use emoticons/internet slang

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	2	3.1	3.3	3.3
	Sometimes, just for fun	21	32.3	34.4	37.7
	Only when I need to express certain emotions	14	21.5	23.0	60.7
	Quite often, it's a habit	24	36.9	39.3	100.0
	Total	61	93.8	100.0	
Missing	System	4	6.2		
Total		65	100.0		

Which emoticon think is most popular among your peers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		4	6.2	6.2	6.2
	crying laughing	1	1.5	1.5	7.7
	crying laughing face	1	1.5	1.5	9.2
	crying-laugning	1	1.5	1.5	10.8
	don't have one	1	1.5	1.5	12.3
	eggplant	1	1.5	1.5	13.8
	Heart eyes	1	1.5	1.5	15.4
	heart eyes face	1	1.5	1.5	16.9
	heart eyes, basketball, crying eyes	1	1.5	1.5	18.5
	heart face, wink face, crying laughing, scared face, shocked face	1	1.5	1.5	20.0
	I don't know	1	1.5	1.5	21.5
	I'm not sure	1	1.5	1.5	23.1
	Laughing	1	1.5	1.5	24.6
	laughing emoji	4	6.2	6.2	30.8
	laughing emoticon	1	1.5	1.5	32.3

Which emoticon think is most popular among your peers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
laughing face	3	4.6	4.6	36.9
laughing, crying face, heart eyes	1	1.5	1.5	38.5
lauging emoji	1	1.5	1.5	40.0
lauging face, deuces, and more	1	1.5	1.5	41.5
me laughing	1	1.5	1.5	43.1
middle finger	1	1.5	1.5	44.6
NA	1	1.5	1.5	46.2
peace sign	1	1.5	1.5	47.7
poop	1	1.5	1.5	49.2
poop, laughing-crying, hear	1	1.5	1.5	50.8
quesitoning face	1	1.5	1.5	52.3
relationship with others	1	1.5	1.5	53.8
sad face	1	1.5	1.5	55.4
silly	1	1.5	1.5	56.9
smiley face	2	3.1	3.1	60.0
smiley face or crying face`	1	1.5	1.5	61.5
Smiling Face With Heart-Shaped Eyes	1	1.5	1.5	63.1
snapchat	3	4.6	4.6	67.7
snapchat, facebook	1	1.5	1.5	69.2
The "laughing crying face"	1	1.5	1.5	70.8
the crying laughing emoji	1	1.5	1.5	72.3
the egg plant or the 100 kiss face	1	1.5	1.5	73.8
the funny/laughing with tears	1	1.5	1.5	75.4
the heart eyed emoji	1	1.5	1.5	76.9
the heart eyes	1	1.5	1.5	78.5
the laugh cry emoticon	1	1.5	1.5	80.0
the laughing emoji	5	7.7	7.7	87.7
the laughing emoji, upside down smiley face	1	1.5	1.5	89.2
the laughing emoticon	1	1.5	1.5	90.8
the laughing emoticon with tears	1	1.5	1.5	92.3
the laughing face or heart	1	1.5	1.5	93.8

Which emoticon think is most popular among your peers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
the laughing so hard it makes you cry face	1	1.5	1.5	95.4
the smiley face with the sweat drop	1	1.5	1.5	96.9
upside down smiley face	1	1.5	1.5	98.5
water drops	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Which internet slang think is most popular among your peers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	6	9.2	9.2	9.2
"amosc" - add me on snap chat	1	1.5	1.5	10.8
abbreviations (omg,lmao)	1	1.5	1.5	12.3
af	1	1.5	1.5	13.8
af, lol	2	3.1	3.1	16.9
aint, respk, wyd	1	1.5	1.5	18.5
Bae	1	1.5	1.5	20.0
can't say here	1	1.5	1.5	21.5
don't know	2	3.1	3.1	24.6
facebook	2	3.1	3.1	27.7
fam, lit, turnt, hella	1	1.5	1.5	29.2
fleek	1	1.5	1.5	30.8
fr	1	1.5	1.5	32.3
glick, fam, lit, turnt, hella	1	1.5	1.5	33.8
h1h2; lol	1	1.5	1.5	35.4
I don't know	1	1.5	1.5	36.9
I'm not sure	1	1.5	1.5	38.5
I'm weak; dead	1	1.5	1.5	40.0
IDK	1	1.5	1.5	41.5
Lit	1	1.5	1.5	43.1
lit, fam, kys	1	1.5	1.5	44.6
lit, same, true, fam, kms	1	1.5	1.5	46.2
lol	6	9.2	9.2	55.4
Lol	1	1.5	1.5	56.9
LOL	2	3.1	3.1	60.0
lol, asf, wtf	1	1.5	1.5	61.5
lol, wyd	1	1.5	1.5	63.1

Which internet slang think is most popular among your peers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
misspelling words or shortening them like 'I don't know' IDK	1	1.5	1.5	64.6
NA	2	3.1	3.1	67.7
no clue	1	1.5	1.5	69.2
no opinion	2	3.1	3.1	72.3
not sure	1	1.5	1.5	73.8
OMG!	1	1.5	1.5	75.4
oomf	1	1.5	1.5	76.9
same, lit, lol	1	1.5	1.5	78.5
savage	1	1.5	1.5	80.0
shook, weak, dead	1	1.5	1.5	81.5
skreet, aint no way, and more	1	1.5	1.5	83.1
slay, shook, cutting up	1	1.5	1.5	84.6
tbh	1	1.5	1.5	86.2
tbh, smh, lmao, jk	1	1.5	1.5	87.7
twitter, instagram, snapchat	1	1.5	1.5	89.2
using abbreviations	1	1.5	1.5	90.8
wat	1	1.5	1.5	92.3
what are those	1	1.5	1.5	93.8
wyd	1	1.5	1.5	95.4
wyd (what you doing)	1	1.5	1.5	96.9
wyd wya	1	1.5	1.5	98.5
wyd? (what you doing?)	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	65	100.0	100.0	

If not use sms: main reason don't use sms

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Parents won't let me	2	3.1	66.7	66.7
Concerned re: putting person info	1	1.5	33.3	100.0
Total	3	4.6	100.0	
Missing System	62	95.4		
Total	65	100.0		

Other reason not use sms specified

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	65	100.0	100.0	100.0

If access to sms thru school, interested in sms to work/collaborate

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	4	6.2	66.7	66.7
	No	2	3.1	33.3	100.0
	Total	6	9.2	100.0	
Missing	System	59	90.8		
Total		65	100.0		

Future use explained

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		63	96.9	96.9	96.9
	Because Google Classroom is a great choice	1	1.5	1.5	98.5
	I think it would be a quick, easy way to talk to people and work on a project.	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

## Appendix D

### Interview Transcript: Center College

**\*Pseudonyms are used for school and student names**

#### **S2S Officers: Group Interview**

**Interviewer:** Well, again, my name is [Interviewer] and let me go round the room. So you're Sharon.

**Interviewer:** Sally.

**Sally:** Yes, ma'am.

**Interviewer:** And Renee?

**Renee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** OK, great. Let's do it this way. Let me start with you, Sharon. Would you mind just telling me a little bit about who you are? If you're a military connected student, what you're, a little bit about your background?

**Sharon:** OK. I am not military connected. I have my, some of family, but my parents were not in the military. I moved here to Tennessee about three years ago, from Missouri. So, I moved in with my mom.

I've been here, and this is my second year in Center College, and I absolutely love it, and I adore S2S, because I think it's a good program to let the military students -- and anyone else who just, you know, wants to come in -- we're all like a big family, so I like being able to help everyone.

**Interviewer:** So, good, good. OK. I'll come back to some questions about S2S. Thank you. Sally?

**Sally:** I'm Sally. So,

**Sally:** We're in the state pretty much for 12 years. , I was a military connected and my stepdad was in the military, now he's medically retired and things like that. So we did have a lot of hopping from places to places, which, I grew up in Sargeville and so..., this is also my second year of Center College. It's been absolutely awesome.

**Interviewer:** So you're juniors, you said?

**Sally:** No. Senior, seniors.

**Interviewer:** Sorry, you're all seniors.

**Interviewer:** You're all seniors?

**Sally:** Mm-hmm.

**Interviewer:** So, what were some of the places you hopped around to?

**Sally:** We originally went to San Diego.

**Sally:** So that was the best. [laughs]

**Interviewer:** Oh, nice. [laughs] Yeah, I was gonna say.

**Sally:** Yeah, best one. [laughs] I hated leaving it for Sargeville and then we, I went to Oak Grove and then we just decided to move down to Sargeville because it's a bigger city...

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Sally:** and things like that, better opportunities.



**Interviewer:** Yeah, and I bet you like it pretty well even though you had to leave San Diego behind.

[laughter]

**Sally:** It's nice. It's definitely nice. I wouldn't have been here if we stayed in San Diego.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that's true.

**Sally:** I would have gotten opportunities.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, sometimes new experience and...

[crosstalk]

**Sally:** You have to give up the beach for a little bit of education.

[laughter]

**Interviewer:** You can always visit.

**Sally:** Exactly. [laughs]

**Interviewer:** What about you, Renee?

**Renee:** I was born and raised in Puerto Rico and about three or four years ago, [laughs] my mom joined the military and we got stationed here. And I went to public high school and then, my two other brothers have gone through Center College so, also I came.

[laughs]

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. OK. So, will you want to tell me a little bit about your experience and how you got to Center College? And then we'll talk a little more about S2S. So we can start right with you again? What brought you here?

**Sharon:** Well, I really did like the previous school that I was at but I felt like I needed more of a challenge.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hmm.

**Sharon:** Because I came from a school that was on a 10-point-scale to McGregor County, which was a completely different scale and all my grades were a lot higher than I actually expected. And the previous school, my counselor told me that he wasn't going to put in an honors program because it was too late in the year. I came in September.

So I felt like that wasn't really fair, so I figured I can challenge myself more because I want to be a pediatrician, so I'm always looking for something that challenge myself and use my education. I found out about Center College and I say, "Oh, well, I can take college classes," and I felt like that would be a challenge especially for a junior.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sharon:** So I decided I was going to try it. I had no thought that I would actually get in because I thought the requirements were a lot higher than I was meeting but then I went through the interview process and then I got my [inaudible 03:56] and I was like, "Huh? OK."

[crosstalk]

**Interviewer:** And so are you liking that [inaudible 04:00] experience? [laughs]

[crosstalk]

**Sharon:** Oh, I love it. I love it. I love it. I love it. I love it.

**Interviewer:** Oh, all right, good. What about you, Marie?

**Sally:** Just the same thing. , it was more of a challenge, you know. It was also an opportunity to get a head start getting in and gain things like that, you know.

**Interviewer:** [clears throat]

**Sally:** There's not many seniors who graduate saying that they already have a lot of their prereqs covered and all things like that. I was the same way, but I didn't expect myself to get accepted, [inaudible 04:28] interview.

**Sally:** Because I remember when interviews are going around, my friend got interviewed and I didn't hear anything for two periods and I like, chew my nails completely off.

[laughter]

**Sally:** I was like, "Oh, my God. I didn't get in." But then I got the [Center College] letter and I literally cried.

**Interviewer:** That's great!

[laughter]

**Sally:** I was like, "I did it," and now, and now I'm here.

**Interviewer:** Oh, that's great.

**Sally:** So...[laughs]

**Interviewer:** Congratulations. That's great.

**Sally:** Thank you.

**Interviewer:** What about you...? And you said your brother is in Center College.

**Renee:** Yeah, my brothers did Center College so, uh, I was highly encouraged by them and I also really like the idea of precollege credits because college really....

[crosstalk]

[laughter]

**Renee:** getting the head start, like they said, it's nice. And I think it's, uh, a thing that makes you unique, may to look for college and starting...

[crosstalk]

**Interviewer:** I think it would be and you're going to be a pediatrician. Oh, would...no...

[crosstalk]

[laughter]

**Interviewer:** So you're going to be the pediatrician. Do you know what you're going to take?

**Renee:** I'm debating things. I'm probably going to be in medical field.

**Interviewer:** OK, cool. What about you, Sally? Do you know yet?

**Sally:** Computer Science.

**Interviewer:** Awesome.

**Sally:** [laughs]

[crosstalk]

**Sally:** I've juggled medical too, though. I've juggled medical too. I was gonna go for nursing but I finally settled with Computer Science.

**Interviewer:** Oh, wow. All of the above are really good fields to be in right now too. So...

**Sally:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** It's great.

**Sally:** I want to be a medical person, but technology is growing, so...

[laughter]

**Interviewer:** [laughs] There's so many fields that are opening with technologies, like everyday there is something new, so I'm sure, yeah, [inaudible 05:55]...

**Sally:** Yeah, I know.

**Interviewer:** OK. Well, let's get to S2S then. We know how you got to Center College and some of your dreams. What got you involved in student-to-student, Sharon?

**Sharon:** Well, to begin with, last year, I was really good friend with an officer of S2S and she kept coming to me and asking me if I would go do, like, school stuff, you know, go to other schools and recruitment, stuff like that. I thought it was really fun.

And then at the end of the year, Ms. Lancaster sent an email asking for officers, and I just applied on it. And I was like, "Why not?" You know, I think its fun. I think we could really do something with it.

And this year, I was hoping that we could, you know, make it big and huge. I think we've kind of done that a little bit. I mean, our area-wide meeting we've got to host this year, so we made that really big and I've had a lot of fun with S2S. I think it's a great program.

**Interviewer:** What's your...? What do you love most about it? Is there a particular thing that you do or aspect of it you love the most?

**Sharon:** Yeah, actually there is, and I think it's just getting the kids, the new kids used to everything and bringing them in, putting them under our wing, you know, letting them be

our Center College family. Because as the new student when I moved to Sargeville, I had a hard time finding friends, because, you know, no one wants to talk to the new girl. So, I was like, "I don't...I will never want anybody to be like that."

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Sharon:** So, it's really good for me to help people who are in those shoes because I've been there before.

**Interviewer:** You really can identify with that.

**Sharon:** Oh yeah.

**Interviewer:** And, I'll ask you all this too but what are ways that you connect with these new students, other than some of the events and things that you might do. Do you stay connected with them throughout the year?

**Sharon:** Yeah. I try to. At the beginning of the year, I like to learn everyone's name and right now I think I have every student's name down. So, in case like, I give them my cell phone number in case they ever need anything.

So, and I'll see them in the hallway like, "Hey," you know, and ask them how they're doing. And I'm often open. I tell them at the beginning of the year that if they ever need a lunch buddy, I like food.

**Interviewer:** [laughs]

**Sharon:** So, I'm always willing. So I like to say that to them, in case they ever need anything.

**Interviewer:** And do they take you up on that?

**Sharon:** Oh, yeah. I've had, I've had a few, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Cool.

**Sharon:** We went and got coffee at Einstein's and everything. It's great. I love it.

**Interviewer:** [inaudible 08:22]. So, OK, so what about you then?

**Sharon:** I'm president.

**Interviewer:** You're president. And, and tell me about your S2S experience, Sally.

**Sally:** I love the ability to transition new kids into Center College because...I remember junior year, when I first came here, I knew nothing of what was happening. I still had, like, the campus map in front of me, like two weeks later. It was bad.

And, it, like, we can identify with what they're feeling exactly. Like, it's not just, , a regular school where everyone's coming from a different place and different circumstances till one, you know, can join school, things like that.

You can't really identify because you're not going into the same class as they are, same fields that they have. But Center College kids are coming into the same environment as you were. They're having one college class a semester but no, they're still having to keep track of their high school things.

So, you know the overwhelming experience and that's why they start in school, one college class and then, you know, it's a process to get them used to it but the first day is really the best because they're like, they don't know what to do but you're there and you feel this sense to help, you know, everyone you meet. So...

**Interviewer:** And what, and what is your approach with those students? How would you describe yourself and how you interact and what, how do you get them to feel comfortable?

**Sally:** Right. I go off the bat, instantly friendly, like I want absolutely no, no grey area that I'm not an approachable person. I will first approach them like, "Hey. This is Center College." I did that with one of the new juniors that came in, in August and, , she was, she didn't know where the university center was and I was just like off the bat, I went, "Hey."

Now we Facebook message each other every other, you know, week or so and just checking with each other. It's like that one moment makes all the difference to a lasting friendship. You know, like, because they see you as the person who... You know, instantly someone to rely on, someone that has your back, you know.

**Interviewer:** And you mentioned Facebook and since this is kind of a study that looks at social media, what role do you see social media playing in doing that and keeping that connection?

**Sally:** Definitely, uh, definite connector because with different schedules, different, you know, things like that, there's not always time to email. Especially if you take on a job, things like that, there's really little time to meet in person.

You know, we all have really different schedules even though we're, you know, in the same institution. But, , it really helps because even if you're going [inaudible 11:22] shoot them a quick message, even if you're on the other side of campus but you still want to talk, you know. So it keeps you connected even if you're not able to, like [inaudible 11:33] face to face.

**Interviewer:** And, what which platform do you prefer using for that kind of stuff?

**Sally:** I prefer Instagram.

**Interviewer:** Instagram.

**Sally:** I like Instagram.



**Interviewer:** What about you?

**Sharon:** I use Instagram. I don't have Facebook at all, so...

**Interviewer:** I wondered if Facebook is becoming totally adult.

[laughter]

**Sharon:** I just, I boycotted a bunch of social media when I first moved here, so I never got Facebook, so...

**Interviewer:** So, Instagram. Is Snapchat...? I hear a lot about Snapchat.

**Sharon:** Me and Sally Snapchat each other all the time. She looks at my puppy on Snapchat, so...

**Sally:** Always. And I replay with him constantly. That puppy is adorable.

**Interviewer:** I'm going to come back to your...the connections you have with each other, but I want to make sure I hear from Renee first. But you're vice president?

**Sally:** I'm the secretary.

**Interviewer:** You're the secretary. So Sally's the secretary. Sharon's president. OK, what about you Renee? What's your position?

**Renee:** I'm co-vice president.

**Interviewer:** Co-vice president. OK, so tell me a little bit about how you got involved in S2S, and why?

**Renee:** I got involved in S2S first at my previous school. From freshman year, all throughout, like, high school basically, and the reason why I joined S2S was, well, first a

teacher approached, approached me because I was bilingual and she thought that I'd be good with anyone that was bilingual and I could help them.

But also because I, like, [inaudible 12:51] experiencing the idea of like being the new kid. And I felt so overwhelmed, especially because I didn't know how to get lunch. I didn't know where the classrooms were. When I was in 8th grade, like the first day, I was just too overwhelmed. I don't want anyone to feel like that.

**Interviewer:** And so, well then, I asked kind of this to Sharon and Sally, what's your approach with these new students? Do you come up and say, "Hey" and start right off or do you have kind of another approach that you like to bring them in?

[laughter]

**Renee:** I don't like to be too pressuring because on the contrary with Sharon, when I first came here, I felt like everyone wanted to talk to me and just, I was lost. Even though I felt, like, surrounded by people, I was kind of like...So I like to be like a little more personal with a person.

**Interviewer:** OK. So do you use social media at all to stay connected?

**Renee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And what do you, what do you, what's your choice?

**Renee:** I would say Instagram, to keep up with, like, people who are here and then Facebook for people who are really far away. Especially like adults because adults use Facebook.

**Interviewer:** We're all on here.

[laughter]

**Renee:** Yeah. And any, anything like, big, like, if I got accepted into like Center College, I would put it on Facebook. But to talk every day, I would choose, like Instagram and Snapchat.

**Interviewer:** OK, so Instagram sounds like that's kind of the platform you all like to use to communicate with the people that you're around. What is it about Instagram that you choose? I know that's one of the popular ones with your age group but why? What is it about Instagram that makes it easier to connect despite...?

**Sharon:** I would say it's probably that for me, because I mean, I don't necessarily have time throughout the day to kind of look at everybody's Facebook status when they've got a whole novel written on there.

So, I mean, that's one of the reasons I'm still on Facebook. But, with Instagram, you know, you can put a short, little caption, you put a long, little caption. I can read the first half of the caption, understand what you're saying based on the picture. So, it's, I think it's that, honestly.

**Sally:** It's really short, sweet, to the point. And it's, uh, definitely gratifying for the person that posted the photo, when they get, you know, likes and comments. I like comments actually. I'm always like looking [inaudible 15:19]...

[laughter]

**Interviewer:** So if you were going to meet one of the students that you met through this, how would you use Instagram to connect? Would you message them and say, "Hey, what you doing?" Or, how would you connect that way?

**Renee:** I think first of all, you need to follow them and I think that's one of the things that's good about Instagram. You can follow somebody and people don't have to follow you back if they don't want to.

So, if there's a new student and you follow them and they don't follow you back, I mean, you can address them in person and that way they can, like, exchange communication. You can keep up with them without them keeping up on you and vice versa and I think that's something you don't have with Facebook because with Facebook you have to. It has to be like mutual, yeah.

**Interviewer:** That's true. What about Snapchat? What's the appeal with using Snapchat and do you use that with your S2S?

**Renee:** No.

**Sally:** Not with S2S specifically but I use it a lot with just personal connections.

**Sharon:** I'll put pictures of you guys on my story when we have meetings, gosh.

**Interviewer:** [laughs]

**Sally:** I just recently got into Snapchat. I feel like an old timer. People were always, "Oh, Sally, Snapchat's awesome." Then I finally downloaded it.

**Sharon:** It's OK. I sent her a video one time and she didn't look at it for 3 weeks.

**Sally:** I was just stupid, all right? Now I get back and you're [inaudible 16:43]. You know, I've come a long way from Snapchat.

**Interviewer:** You're moving up. You're moving up.

**Sally:** Exactly.

**Interviewer:** So, then, is Snapchat something you use more informally with your friends and hanging out and Instagram you can use kind of more kind of structurally with making connections with S2S?

**Sally:** Especially with Snapchat. It's more of like a spectating, you're like watching from the sidelines, especially with their story. Like you're watching how they're growing, things like that, what's happening with them. I really don't utilize the messaging app on Snapchat. I feel like everything can convey in it online. Especially if you [inaudible 17:20].

**Renee:** That's what I do. I don't ever chat with people.

**Sally:** I don't use the messaging. Yeah.

**Sharon:** Well, if you've got my number, you can text me. It'll be OK.

**Interviewer:** So you're all officers. So how do you stay in contact with each other? Like if you're planning something or you're...

**Sally:** We have a group message going on right now.

**Interviewer:** A group message?

**Sally:** Yeah, between all four of us officers and we kind of just sit there and text back and forth, like, [inaudible 17:47].

**Interviewer:** So primarily texting is how you stay connected together? Would you agree with that too? How many officers? Four officers? Do you all do most of your communicating through texting? Or do you also do a lot of face to face?

**Sharon:** We don't have the same schedule. None of us have the same schedule. Sometimes it's hard for us to get together and do stuff but, , like if two of us can get together, like me and Sally got together for our area-wide S2S meeting and then Renee got with us, you know. But, we do a lot of it through texting because we have so many different schedules and so many different times, so.

**Interviewer:** So do you all kind of come up with the events or is that something that Ms. Lancaster's role is or how does that...? How does your relationship with her work in all of this?

**Sally:** We have meetings and then she'll tell us what's coming up and then she gives us the opportunity to, , sort of take it on and plan, kind of what we want to do.

**Interviewer:** So you feel you'd had a big leadership role in the planning and the deciding and all of that?

**Renee:** We have customizing and tailoring it to the vision that we all have of it. You know, we want it to be successful. We also want it to be integrated fun, things like that. We don't want anybody feel out of place in our meetings. Especially with the area-wide meeting, we really went out of, you know, our way with, you know, like, fliers.

We got candy, prizes, and things like that because we wanted everyone to feel together. Like, we had people from different schools at each table. They've never seen each other in their life. We had them talking.

[crosstalk]

**Sally:** be together. The same...

**Renee:** They didn't wanted to, but at the end we had them talk and like they knew each other forever, you know.

**Interviewer:** Now, do you stay in touch with them as well, those students from the other classes? Other schools, I mean.

**Renee:** No, I have not.

**Sally:** I do from our previous school.

**Renee:** I follow them on Instagram.

**Interviewer:** Oh, you do?

[laughter]

**Sharon:** Everyone is like, follow on Instagram?

**Renee:** Especially because some of them, they, I reconnected basically because they went to Westford, which is my past school and, uh, I just reconnected because they were also in S2S, and I was like, "Oh, I miss you guys."

**Interviewer:** Oh, cool. And do they tend to follow you back?

**Renee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Sally:** I was very popular among the young souls.

[laughter]

**Sharon:** Young souls.

[crosstalk]

**Interviewer:** What? It's interesting to hear because, you know, I know that, you know, from an older person's perspective, seeing how social media has become a big way for people to communicate and really you're in a generation where you've never really done the old school way. [laughs]

So, looking at how this is playing a role in not just kind of our social world but in education. So it's interesting to hear that. One thing has us really interested in, is how do

you communicate with Ms. Lancaster? Do you text? Do you Facebook? Is it all face-to-face?

**Renee:** Mostly email.

**Sally:** Email.

**Sharon:** It's all email. I don't text or Facebook with students. That's just [inaudible 21:12].

**Interviewer:** Is that a personal...? Oh, OK that's a personal policy.

**Sharon:** Yes. We have some teachers that the students have their cell phone numbers. Every student should have the principal's cell phone number and then some of the teachers use text messages to communicate.

In terms of Facebook, I don't know what any of the other teachers do. [inaudible 21:30] after students have graduated, are more comfortable with that. I just never...It's just, it's not a personal thing. It's just across, completely. No student has my cell phone number. No student has my Facebook. That way, it's not, I'm playing favorites. "Well, I'll give it to you but I didn't give it to this student."

**Interviewer:** And that is, maybe it's tricky balance to find.

**Sharon:** That's just how I [inaudible 21:54]. I can't say I'll do that forever.

**Interviewer:** I think that you find that in most programs that, adults use the email.

[laughter]

**Renee:** But also, I think, for me, I can come here most of the time and the teachers won't be here because they have like their own office. It's not like a school where they have classrooms.



**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Renee:** So, if I have a question, I just come in here and I ask her about transcripts or like S2S or anything.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that makes it better for you.

**Sally:** The other reason that we do a lot with email is that with me being the only counselor and with [inaudible 22:34] school that we have where, you know, this coming year, I'm out of the offices as much as I'm in it during recruitment activities and that's something they haven't really talked to you about either that was a big thing to us as well, is the recruitment activities.

I'm out with that and if they will email me, sometimes I'm out at a, you know, off-site location and if I'll have the iPad, I can check into my email and reply back to them. Because sometimes it's a matter of, like, "Oh, I need a transcript."

Well, you don't need to come see me. All you have to do is go fill one out and I can reply back immediately and say, "Transcript request forms are on the bookcase. Turn that into the secretary. She'll get that out this afternoon." As opposed to...

**Sharon:** So you pretty much have been waiting for me to finally get back in the office and finally to find me and all for me to say, "Oh no, this is what you need to do..."

[crosstalk]

**Renee:** That's a great thing about having an iPad or an iPhone. You get it instantly anyway.

**Renee:** Right, right.

**Sally:** So you respond to them.

**Sally:** Yeah. I can feel like I can kind of direct them. I can still have that contact with them even when they're not in an office setting.

**Interviewer:** And what do you all think? Does that, that system work well for you too when communicating and all of that?

**Sharon:** Yeah.

**Renee:** For sure Center College is centered a lot around email, so it's really the primary way to contact Center College students because if they're on top of their game, they will see the email as soon as it's issued, especially with phones and things like that, you get a notification instantly through an email.

**Interviewer:** Like I have an email on my phone right now.

**Renee:** It's just so... You know.

**Interviewer:** Do you all email each other? I know you do a lot with your adults and teachers but do you use email with one another? Is that something that you use?

**Sally:** Not really. I usually use it for teachers and more of school work purposes like if I...

[crosstalk]

**Renee:** I will communicate with like a peer for like a group project, things like that, like [inaudible 24:33], things like that but, just as a daily to daily contact, I don't use email all the time.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Renee:** Or if I want, like, help from another student or to meet up, it'd have to be like something well thought out. Because when I email somebody, I have to think about it.

**Sally:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Renee:** Format it.

[laughter]

**Interviewer:** Yeah. It's like a letter, isn't it? [laughs].

**Renee:** It's more formal, I feel.

**Interviewer:** But anyway, with each generation...

**Renee:** It's different.

**Interviewer:** So, I guess the last thing I want to know, I didn't really ask you too much about what are some of the activities that you do with [inaudible 25:30]. You mentioned the [inaudible 25:31] meeting but what are some of the other activities and events that you do?

**Sharon:** We go to the schools a lot. And, we take students who are here and we'll take them to all of the different schools. We'll go visit every school in McGregor County and, we like to call it our recruitment.

But a lot of the students at other schools, we find, don't know about Center College or don't know really what it is. So, we like to go and kind of explain everything to them and, you know. Center College is not for everyone. So we also tell them that because, like Ms. Champion and Ms. Lancaster say all the time that they can't accept every student. So, sometimes it's just not for certain people but we do a lot by going to the schools and stuff, so...

**Interviewer:** Anything else?

**Sally:** Well, we do orientation and I think that S2S is like, the one that drives, the club that drives orientation.

As we like do tours and then two weeks after orientation, which I really like, what we do is we meet with our groups that we tour with and make sure and check in, like, "Do you find your schedules OK? Do you find your classes OK? And do you have any problems, like, getting anywhere?" So, I think that's something that our school does that is like special, sort of like helping them.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Sally:** Because after the first day, you might feel like, "Oh, I got it." But then after a week, maybe you feel like, don't know how...where to point or like how to get into your email or any, anything, like, comes up and that's an opportunity for them to...

**Interviewer:** Do you decide what group you're responsible for or do you do that together?

**Sally:** With officers, what happens is we put another senior in charge of junior groups. So we put juniors in a group and we have a senior take them on a tour. With the two week follow up, we, as officers, sit down and we look at our schedules and we attend one of the, or multiple meetings.

Uh, so we have a senior that's touring them as well as an officer with the follow up meeting. That way, we're still...They're still with their, you know, comfortable tour guide but they also have that helping hand with S2S too and we're making sure that everything's going all right.

**Renee:** Oh, they have a second, kind of, contact person that they get to kind of start getting to know. [inaudible 27:58] they have the tour leader but then they also have at least one of the other officers there for resources for them to make connections.

**Interviewer:** Oh, cool.

**Sharon:** Multiple times we've paired up, I know we've paired up with a follow up meeting, we did clicking the colored pencils, you know, things like that to...

**Renee:** To learn...

**Sharon:** Yeah, it's more of another, like, learn about each other experience. It's just for...

**Interviewer:** So you had mentioned, one of you had mentioned earlier about, it's growing, one of your goals is really making it larger. Has it, this year? Is this, is this...how are you doing?

[crosstalk]

**Renee:** Graduating classes are really large. I mean, we've accepted a lot of juniors into the school but I [inaudible 28:47].

**Interviewer:** So, what are...What would you be as you leave S2S and you graduate, I guess [inaudible 28:54].

**Sally:** Oh, don't say that.

[laughter]

[crosstalk]

**Interviewer:** What are your hopes for those that fill your shoes and what kind of legacy are you leaving them? How do you see it growing?

**Sharon:** I hope they have as much pride as we have when we come into S2S because we came in with full force and we all wanted this really bad because we wanted to make it exceptional. I'm not saying anything bad about the previous S2S that we had but I felt like whenever I stepped into the office that I wanted to better.

That's just a personal thing. I always want to try to do better than someone before me or anything like that. So, I try to set the standard really high but I'm really hoping that they come with a lot of pride.

**Sally:** I'd love to see that pride with the new S2S officers. Like, I'm not saying we did a terrible job or anything but I want them to look at our run and go, "We can outdo it." I want them to outdo it. I want them to grow this.

**Sharon:** That's what I want.

**Sally:** I want them to see what we did, "We can do better." And I want them to feel...

**Interviewer:** It sounds like you give them a good foundation to build upon. What about you, Renee?

**Renee:** I just, I don't, I mean if it doesn't grow, I hope it maintains the same that everyone feels welcome, that officers learn to be friendly and to [inaudible 30:20].

**Interviewer:** OK, well, I'm hoping I'll be back before you all graduate. And I hope to come back and I'll try to come to the next area meeting as well as [inaudible 30:36].

[laughter]

**Interviewer:** What kinds of events, and then also, speaking of emails, is it OK if we maybe get the...?

**Sally:** Oh yeah, absolutely. That's the main way we communicate with, you know, email and everything, so they're used to...

**Interviewer:** They're used to that email.

**Sally:** what college professors do as well, so...

**Renee:** They're used to email.

**Sally:** They are very well versed of emails.

**Interviewer:** Please if you have thoughts or comments or ideas, especially for this particular study, I see this something that could have an impact with S2S programs, I'm hoping, so please email me.

**Sally:** It was a pleasure talking to you.

**Interviewer:** You too. Thank you for such great information!

**Sharon:** It was nice meeting you.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, it was nice meeting you too. All of you are very impressive group.

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Yin, R. K. (2003b). *Applications of case study research*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

# VITA

## JENNIFER WATSON

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### EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS

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- M.S. Master of Science in Educational Psychology, University of Kentucky, 2003  
B.A. Bachelor of Arts in Communications, University of Kentucky, 1997
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### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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- UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION** 2011 – Present  
*Curriculum Development Consultant, SE Center for Agricultural Health & Injury Prevention, 2017-Present*  
*Research Coordinator, SE Center for Agricultural Health & Injury Prevention, 2014 – Present*  
*Research Assistant, SE Center for Agricultural Health & Injury Prevention, 2011 – 2014*  
*External Evaluator, Dept. of Defense Educational Activity Grant, 2015 – Present*  
*Instructor, Out of School Initiatives and STEAM Academy, 2011 – 2014*  
*Teaching Assistant, Doctoral Program, University of Kentucky, College of Education 2011 – 2012*  
*Skill-Up Program Assistant, 2011*
- genNOW CONSULTING** 2009 – Present  
*Principal/Professional Trainer*
- KENTUCKY CHILD NOW** 2006 – 2009  
*Youth Development Training Manager*
- KENTUCKY CENTER FOR SCHOOL SAFETY** 2005 – 2006  
*Project Safer Neighborhoods Coordinator*
- INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR** 2001 – 2005  
*School Safety Consultant*
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### PUBLICATIONS

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- Cole, H. P., Myers, M. L., Westneat, S. C., Mazur, J. M., & Watson, J. M. (2016). Rural Kentucky High School Students' Exposure to All-Terrain Vehicle Riding and Injuries. *Journal of Agromedicine, 21*(1), 5-14.
- Mazur, J.M, Vincent, S., Watson, J., & Westneat, S. (2015). Integrating Cost-effective Rollover Protective Structure Installation in High School Agricultural Mechanics: A Feasibility Study. *Journal of Agromedicine, 149-159.*
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ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

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Cassidy, A., Watson, J.M., Wickman, A. *Does Marketing through Social Media Increase YouTube Viewership?* Poster presented at the 2016 International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH).

Mazur, JM, Nelson, J, Olion B. NASD 2.0: Designing & Testing An Interactive Online Training Environment. Poster presented at the International Society of Agricultural Safety & Health (ISASH). Omaha, Nebraska; 2014, Jun 23-27.

Mazur, JM, Nelson, J., Olion, B., Watson, JM. (2016). Virtual Tractor Inspection Tool for Agricultural Educators: Use Online or Farm. Presentation at the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) 2016 Convention. New Orleans, LA., November 2015.

Mazur JM, Vincent S, Hains B, Meister J, Hoagland R, Watson J. Hazard Ridge. Educational Display. 2013 Annual meeting of the International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH). Sandusky, OH; 2013 Jun 23-27.

Mazur JM, Vincent S, Watson J. Cost effective ROPS programs in high school agricultural mechanics classes: A feasibility study. International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health Conference (ISASH), Sandusky, OH (2013); Omaha, NE (2014)

Mazur JM, Vincent S, Watson JM. Integration of cost-effective ROPS (CROPS) construction and installations into agricultural mechanics courses in four rural Kentucky counties. Paper presented at the 2013 Annual meeting of the International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH). Sandusky, OH; 2013 Jun 23-27. SE Center feasibility project, 09/30/2012-09/29/2013.

Mazur, JM, Vincent, S., Watson, JM. (2016) Economics of Prevention: Free Online Farm Safety and Economics and Curriculum. Presentation at the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) 2016 Convention. New Orleans, LA., November 2015.

Mazur, J.M., Watson, J.M., Franklin, R., Muertties, C., & Clouse, T. *Next Generation NASD: A Virtual Tractor Inspection Training Tool (VIT) An Examination of the Implementation of the VIT into KY High Schools* Poster presented at the 2016 International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH).

Mazur, JM., Watson, J. Wood, K. Nelson, J., Olion, B. (2015). NASD 2.0: Beta Testing An Interactive Online Training Environment with Agricultural Mechanics High School Students. Poster Presentation at the International Society of Agricultural Safety & Health (ISASH). Normal, IL, June, 2015.

Schafbuch, M. M. L., Vincent, S. K., & Mazur, J. (2016, February). Establishing a Crowdfunding Sustainability Project for Resource-Depleted Secondary Agricultural Education Programs. In *Southern Region Conference of the American Association for Agricultural Education* (p. 34).

Vincent, S. K., Schafbuch, M., Mazur, J., Watson, J., & Westneat, S. (2015). *Evaluating the apprenticeship of observation in rural Appalachian youth through a farm safety curriculum experiment*. Paper presented at the International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health Annual Conference (ISASH), Bloomington, IL.

Vincent SK, Welch B, Mazur J, Watson J, Maxwell L, Alston A. Human learning and transformational play: Using electronic gaming and agricultural education to reduce fatalities among teenage youth. Conference of the Southern Agricultural Economics Association. Dallas, TX. 2014 Feb 10-13.