

May 2021

## Incorporating Social Media into the Classroom: A Case Study on How TikTok can be Immersed into Classroom Pedagogy

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<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2021.EDU.02>

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<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2021.EDU.02>

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**Incorporating Social Media into the Classroom: A Case Study on the Use of  
TikTok in a Fifth Grade California Classroom**

By

Sara Solomon

A culminating thesis, submitted to the faculty of Dominican University of California in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education

Dominican University of California

San Rafael, CA

May 2021

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## Abstract

My research project focuses on the use of TikTok embedded within classroom pedagogy and how it can be used as a tool to support academic and social emotional wellbeing. There is a lack of research investigating how social media can be incorporated into the classroom to make up for potential academic losses, including the inevitable social/emotional needs of adolescents that need to be addressed due to the ramifications of COVID-19. In my research, I question ways in which students see this tool as supporting their wellbeing, in what ways parents see this tool as supporting their child's wellbeing, and why TikTok is unique to successfully building a community. This project offers valuable insights into Generation Z on a deeper social-emotional level through fieldwork observation notes, surveys, and interviews with students and parents. My findings show that social media and classroom curriculum can work in tandem as a tool to increase engagement and support social emotional wellbeing and academic success. The TikTok application requires demonstrating 21st century skills, enhances social relationships, and builds a connected classroom community. Finally, this project's findings demonstrate how educators can support the whole child through using tools such as TikTok to help provide social emotional support for highly anxious students. In the words of one participant, TikTok "makes everyone feel like they belong."

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, the biggest of admiration and tribute to Professor Katherine Lewis. Calling her a professor, a teacher, a mentor, a role model, a friend, or even a genuine, funny human being would be an understatement to her character. In the time I have known her through Dominican University, I have seen how she makes her students feel as though she is family, and goes beyond any expectations I've ever had for an educator and as a teacher of mine. Professor Katie Lewis is a key contributor to why Dominican University creates passionate, inspired, knowledgeable, well-rounded educators. On behalf of all of us, thank you.

This thesis paper is dedicated to my parents, Wendy and David, for always pushing me to do my personal best, particularly when I don't recognize myself that I am capable of doing more and bettering myself. I also would like to thank them for creating an everlasting support system throughout my life. As for all of my extended family; I am eternally grateful for their consistent love and support. With everything I have learned to become a teacher, the most important lessons I have ever learned were from the people who love me. They have taught me to persevere and, no matter how hard life may seem in the moment, to always put my best foot forward and give my personal best.

Finally, I am devoting my research in honor of Alexander Movahedi. He is a true example of how important it is to take care of ones' overall wellbeing. Alex will forever be a warrior of hope and guidance in my life's research to inspire genuine kindness, compassion, health, and continuous self improvement in this world.

## Table of Contents

|                                                                                                                |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Abstract.....                                                                                                  | iii |
| Acknowledgements.....                                                                                          | iv  |
| Introduction .....                                                                                             | 1   |
| Overview of the Research Design .....                                                                          | 4   |
| Significance of the Study .....                                                                                | 6   |
| Literature Review .....                                                                                        | 9   |
| Generation Z and Technology .....                                                                              | 10  |
| Development of the Whole Child .....                                                                           | 14  |
| Teaching the Whole Child.....                                                                                  | 16  |
| Kinesthetic Classrooms .....                                                                                   | 18  |
| Methods.....                                                                                                   | 24  |
| Research Questions .....                                                                                       | 24  |
| Description and Rationale for Research Approach .....                                                          | 25  |
| Research Design.....                                                                                           | 27  |
| Data Analysis .....                                                                                            | 33  |
| Validity.....                                                                                                  | 35  |
| Findings .....                                                                                                 | 40  |
| Increasing Student Engagement due to the Bridging of Social Media and Education in<br>Classroom Pedagogy ..... | 40  |
| Community Building.....                                                                                        | 47  |
| Discussion .....                                                                                               | 51  |
| Contributions to Academic Literature .....                                                                     | 51  |
| Implications .....                                                                                             | 54  |
| Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research .....                                              | 56  |
| Conclusion .....                                                                                               | 58  |
| References .....                                                                                               | 59  |
| Appendix A: Student Survey Questions .....                                                                     | 64  |
| Appendix B: Parent Survey Questions .....                                                                      | 67  |
| Appendix C: Student Interview Questions .....                                                                  | 70  |
| Appendix D: Parent Interview Questions.....                                                                    | 72  |

## Introduction

On March 13th, 2020, the world changed; no teacher was prepared for the year to come. A shift happened in education; in light of an unprecedented global pandemic, the nature of teaching drastically changed. Teachers were faced with quickly mastering virtual instruction with little to no training on how to do so. With both this shift and the wellbeing of my students in mind, I concluded that, as an educator, I must do something different from all years prior, something that not only filled the undeniable gap in learning that students were going to endure, but also something that would fill the void of interactive learning that is best provided with in-person schooling. Living through a pandemic is unquestionably a uniquely traumatic experience for all; therefore, I knew my research must also be trauma-informed and meaningful to my participants.

In order to support the whole child, I explored TikTok as a tool to support my students' wellbeing through both an academic and social/emotional approach. The definition of social emotional learning includes the development of skills necessary to manage and understand emotions, maintain positive relationships, and feel/show empathy for others (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2012). However, the concepts guiding my thesis research were intertwined, merging the concepts of both social emotional learning and learning through movement in classrooms. Dance is something I am passionate about. My background knowledge about dance and review of recent literature about dance movement therapy led me to using TikTok "dances" in my elementary classroom. Through the review of relevant literature, it is clear that applications like TikTok fall under modalities of kinesthetic learning—a physical and social way of learning. Essentially, online social media platforms



were designed for social interaction, which is an underlying objective for the outcome of my research project. It is important to keep in mind that, when it comes to teaching strategies, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. The application tool (TikTok) investigated in this research study is designed for universal approaches to education-to be modified as educators see fit to meet the needs of their students and preferential pedagogical practices.

I learned that the developmental characteristics of my 10 and 11 year old students, fused with the attributes of Generation Z and the influence of their upbringing, and that they have access to more social connections than ever before. Yet they are creating a “generation of disconnect.” Technology was initially created to form more accessible connections and develop closer relationships. However, generational influences of privileged kids including materialism, pressure to achieve, perfectionism, and disconnect have combined to create a serious crisis in the young people of this country (Levine, 2006). Through interviews, personal observations, and research, I discovered that some affluent parent practices can be toxic to healthy self-development which lead to depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse in the most unlikely of places (Levine, 2006).

Finally, I acquired knowledge about the importance of trauma-informed teaching while operating amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Hurley and Masonbrink, we “must advocate for stronger action to ensure the educational, nutritional, physical, and mental health needs of children are met during periods of school closures and addressed during plans for reopening” (2020, Table 1). They also addressed the psychological impact of the pandemic crisis on children including short- and long-term

implications: post traumatic stress, anxiety, and behavioral disorders (Hurley & Masonbrink, 2020). With this knowledge, educators must keep these trauma-inflicted stressors in mind when working towards creating meaningful, yet effective lessons and learning environments this school year specifically.

Hurley and Masonbrink's research made me think about the true mass of consequences due to the COVID-19 pandemic along with the need for continual support students not only want, but require throughout their education. I reflected on how educators already spent so much time doing their best to support their students pre-pandemic, yet with distance learning educators were asked to administer even more emotional support than ever before. To take on trauma-informed teaching techniques, I learned that teachers need to work on their capabilities offering emotional support, observing warning signs, and intervening for children at risk. It is important to collaborate with your school and community to create and disseminate innovative methods for whole child wellbeing and academic engagement.

Prior academic research is lacking knowledge regarding how forms of social media, such as TikTok, could be used as a tool to support social emotional wellbeing. TikTok is widely known as a social media application used for making short clips of entertaining videos that one involves themselves with during their "free" time (or the time they spend scrolling through social media). However, my project differs from those studies included in my research as it focuses on the ways students see TikTok as an effective tool as supporting their wellbeing in and out of the classroom and explores the ways parents see this tool as supporting their child's wellbeing as well.

My research project explored the social/emotional wellbeing difficulties of fifth grade students during remote learning. There are numerous underlying factors to the social emotional wellbeing of students and many factors come into play when considering the means of social emotional wellbeing including economic status, academic success, gender, relationships, and access to mental health support. Overall, this thesis demonstrates that students cannot fully focus and immerse themselves into their education if their wellbeing as a whole is not being addressed.

### **Overview of the Research Design**

The deliberate lines of inquiry that guided my research included the following research questions: How can TikTok be used as a tool to support students' academic and social emotional wellbeing? In what ways do students see this tool as supporting their wellbeing? In what ways the students' parents see this tool as supporting their child's wellbeing? Why is TikTok unique to building a community successfully? The study took place at a K-8 public school with 14 fifth grade students. My positionality was unique because I am a fifth grade teacher at that K-8 public school and those 14 participants were students in my class. Because of this, I was provided with the uncommon opportunity to incorporate my research into my own daily pedagogical practices and develop deep bonds with my participants. Due to my influential status, I found it pertinent to my research and its validity to dig deep into my research methodology.

My research methodology stemmed from Tuck (2009), Creswell (2018), Maxwell (2013), and Seidman (2019). The embodiment of these researchers' theories covered methodologies including extensive research on qualitative, quantitative, and mixed

collaborative method approaches. However, my research continued to expand across nationwide academic literature as I dove deep into my essential research design and the methodologies. These methodologies included both surveys and interviews, and my data analysis included coding, transcribing, concept maps and written reflections. As themes emerged, I focused on the building of ideas and concepts from one outcome to another, and implanting my findings within a greater framework.

My findings were distinct. They indicated that TikTok was indeed an evolving tool which was only addressed at merely the cusp of how it can vastly be employed. It became clear that social media and classroom curriculum can work in tandem. Due to the collaboration of social media and classroom pedagogy, one of the most foremost findings was the amount of increased engagement among the students. Throughout the actual process of using TikTok in curriculum, relationships between students, students and their teacher, and students and their family/friends were enhanced. It was because of this process that the building of community began to unfold. In fact, the 21st century skills that this process consisted of (collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creativity) ended up being the platforms for community building success. All of this resulted in TikTok becoming a form of social emotional support for highly anxious students.

The TikTok platform is multi-fold; it is a form of social media, however it is also a “performance” type of social media in which the participants must show and record the dance movements in order to partake in the process. That being said, some participants viewed said process as a stress-inducing activity, specifically while being a student in the researchers’ classroom. In this sense, it enhanced student stress to perform well in

front of their peers/teacher. My findings demonstrate that teachers must differentiate for students who gain anxiety from a “performance” type of social media. Finally, a major finding for future use, as mentioned by parents of student participants, is that TikTok could be an excellent platform for breaching controversial topics in the classroom.

### **Significance of the Study**

My thesis differs from what has been studied before because it documents the undeniable benefits of the integration of social media in education using seldom explored forms of social media in the classroom. The findings illustrate how teachers can utilize social media for pedagogical purposes. The research resulted in serving a purpose to begin the uncharted waters of modeling appropriate behavior and direct modeling for pedagogical purposes using social media in the classroom. This is important because we live in a world that is bound to engage in social media for the foreseeable future. My findings demonstrate how social pragmatic skills can be taught in a user-friendly manner that is tailored to an educational program for students. The skills learned from student participation in this research (i.e. performance skills, communication/collaboration, social/emotional awareness, and academic knowledge) are transferable to other academic and non-academic content areas.

As the requirements for contemporary teachers expand, so does the bandwidth for students' educational needs. Simply put, modern educators must tailor their instructional practices to fit the needs of their students, whether their students' needs are academic or social/emotional. In order to address any academic/social/emotional shortfalls amidst a pandemic, while continuing to support these needs during future “normal” school years, and to satisfy the demands of knowledge on how to use social

media in the classroom, educators must begin to approach their field in a new light. Educators must focus acutely on building classroom community, developing strong relationships, and enhancing student engagement. The goal is to create close bonds between classmates/students and their teacher, foster a safe/welcoming classroom community, and improve student engagement throughout the learning process.

This can be done by schools offering professional development courses reviewing strategies for implementing and training on social media application use. The professional development will support educators in finding new tools to maintain their students engagement and sense of support/belonging in the classroom. This will help educators achieve meaningful impacts on their students academically and socially/emotionally. It is also important for teachers to have tangible curriculum with clear directions and learning goals, and for teachers to feel confident using a technological social media tool in their classroom. Educators must meet as grade levels to collaborate and stay consistent as a team. With tangible curriculum comes the opportunity to embed 21st century skills into the classroom.

Teachers in California are required to implement 21st century skills into their curriculum. These skills include: communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking (Battelle for Kids, n.d.). Based on the findings from my research conducted during the 2020-2021 academic year, I can confirm that remote learning has opened doors for implementing 21st century skills into school districts and classroom pedagogy. With the rapid development of 21st century skills, digitally native students are able to utilize social media usage and screen time spent in a constructive, academically, and socially/emotionally beneficial way.

My project has the potential to advance educational equity while concurrently utilizing 21st century skills by spreading deep changes to teaching and learning. An entry in the ERIC journal included information regarding equitable learning and its impacts on creating more meaningful learning environments (Hernández et al., 2019). Hernández et al. (2019) explains how incorporating “deeper learning approaches help students learn to think critically, collaborate, and communicate within and across disciplines, while they ‘learn how to learn’ and develop mindsets that increase perseverance and productive learning behaviors.” By using TikTok as an educational tool in the classroom, I created a deeper learning environment while researching equitable access for my students and how it impacted their academics and social/emotional wellbeing.

## Literature Review

This literature review seeks to become familiar with and understand students' social/emotional and academic response to the integration of TikTok as a supportive tool in the classroom. This is important in the field of education for a variety of reasons: our students need to be “whole” as human beings in order for them to focus on academics. In what follows, I first explore the broader umbrella of Generation Z and how technology is a core part of their upbringing and current existence. In this section, I examine how many Generation Z students require instant gratification due to the ramifications of their upbringing and social influencers. In addition, I investigate how Generation Z works in partnership with social media in their personal lives and academics.

In the second section of the literature review, I turn to a discussion of the development of the “whole” child. In order to support students as well-rounded human beings, their whole child must be addressed - not just academic needs. This includes emotional intelligence and the effects of traumatic events such as the COVID-19 on students' academic and social emotional wellbeing. If students feel/are aware they are not meeting content standards they, in effect, feel bad about themselves.

In the final section of this literature review I consider the use and benefits of kinesthetic learning in the general education, multiple subject classroom. This includes learning how the brain and body are interactive and interdependent and its benefits for kinesthetic learners. As my use of TikTok in my research was mainly made up of physical movement, I found it imperative to my project to research the effects of kinesthetic learning on students.



## **Generation Z and Technology**

Generation Z is motivated by instant gratification in social media due to the influences of their upbringing (McQueen, n.d.). The tech savvy generation is accustomed to instant connectivity as the norm and instant gratification. Due to the overexposure to screen time (in comparison to prior generations), for many children the majority of their childhood has been spent indoors (McQueen, n.d.). Meanwhile, attention, affection, and money are being showered upon some children in this generation due to the shrinking of some family sizes (McQueen, n.d.). The effects of smaller families creates a sense of empowerment in Gen Z; "It is almost as if children are now simply seen as miniature versions of adults" (McQueen, n.d.).

Since the beginning of the pandemic, TikTok became the next viral sensation online that this generation became hooked to. TikTok is a social networking application where users can watch, create, and share videos. It encompasses advanced video-editing features, viral dances and celebrity appearances that make the app so popular (Ucciferri, 2021). TikToks are built upon the concept of Gen Z's need for instant gratification; they are short clips of social content designed to entice viewers to continue watching and using the application. One of the cons to remote learning during the 2020-2021 academic year was the lack of in-person attention and affection students are used to at school pre-COVID-19. The use of TikTok within pedagogy had the potential to fill that gap during a school year filled with distance learning.

A study was conducted by Time Incorporated at Innerscope Research in May of 2013 in order to understand media use across generations. The findings in this study revealed that those who have grown up with technology, also known as "digital natives,"

switched their attention at the first sign of boredom every other minute (DeWeese, 2014). Digital Natives' emotional responses became limited due to their low attention spans. "This study strongly suggests a transformation in the time spent, patterns of visual attention and emotional consequences of modern media consumption that is rewiring the brains of a generation of Americans like never before" (DeWeese, 2014, p.19). When the brains are stressed in this process, they signal certain channels of their brain that, in the short run, boost energy levels and augment memory. In the long run, it impairs cognitive abilities, can lead to depression, and negatively affects the prefrontal cortex (the region that controls mood and thought) (DeWeese, 2014).

However, the impacts of Gen Z's upbringing in particular is affecting Gen Z's outlook on school. Studies show that privileged adolescents are experiencing epidemic rates of depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse (Levine, 2006). Various elements of their lived experiences, including materialism, pressure to achieve, perfectionism, and disconnect, are combining to create a serious crisis in the young people of this country. Privileged kids "lack the basic foundation of psychological development: an authentic sense of self" and instead project a good impression through false confidence (Levine, 2006, pg.1).

Some affluent parent practices (i.e. overwhelming their child with intense after-school extracurricular schedules, pressure to achieve, materialism, close supervision, etc.) can be toxic to healthy self-development (Levine, 2006). Many students have extremely high levels of anxiety, stemming from successful yet well-intentioned parents. Thus, they have extra pressure within themselves and are constantly comparing themselves to others. Therefore, they find themselves lacking certain skills such as

depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse, as Levine (2006) mentioned in her price of privilege article.

Whether it is one's upbringing or social influences, it is clear that Generation Z has had technology readily accessible their entire lives. With that in mind, we must prepare ourselves for changes in the classroom by gaining insight into our new generation of students. There are certain key characteristics Generation Z students have that are important to bring to our attention. According to McCarthy (2017), Gen Z students are more diverse than ever by constantly creating/sharing, questioning everything, and being more culturally and politically engaged than preceding generations. Knowing these changes in human thinking/behavior is important for curriculum development, lesson planning, and responding during behavioral situations with students.

Further, Gen Z students are infamous for being mobile-first and digitally connected, intuitive skills that older generations lack (McCarthy, 2017). Another difference in generational upbringing that affects Gen Z is in relation to parent pressure amongst Gen Z. While being raised in the great recession, Gen Z watched as their parents lost opportunities which led them (and their parents) to become hyper-concerned about their futures (McCarthy, 2017). Immersing ourselves into the lives of our students as much as possible can help educators create awareness of what may or may not be “triggering” for our students - particularly during this tough time of repeated economic struggles/lack of normalcy.

Thus, bringing social media into the classroom can provide an effective way to support students academically and their social emotional wellbeing. Prior academic

research has demonstrated that social media could facilitate teaching and learning at the college level. Chawinga (2017) found that two social media platforms are catalysts for the much hyped learner-centred approach to teaching (Chawinga, 2017). With the incorporation of Twitter and blogging into the college classroom curriculum, Chawinga's students consistently shared and discussed course materials, posted their course reflections and interacted amongst themselves and with their lecturer (Chawinga, 2017).

There are some inequities that present themselves in the face of social media. Some of these challenges include the inaccessible Wi-Fi, cost of internet data bundles, poor bandwidths, inaccessible Wi-Fi, and insufficient computers (Chawinga, 2017). Some students only have access to Wi-Fi at the school library on a computer and they cannot afford it outside of school. The difficulty accessing social media directly affects student ability to access virtual content from the curriculum and participate in the classroom (Chawinga, 2017).

In a case study using Snapchat to motivate high school students, a teacher named Joanna Lee Johannes (2020) in La Jolla, California utilized a social media platform to create higher academic engagement with her students. In this case study, 90% of the students reported an increase in their motivation because of the pictures, images and humor associated with the Snapchat interventions (Johannes, 2020). Inferences can be made that there is a lack of motivation in the modern classroom because many teaching professionals are not understanding and utilizing social media and innovative techniques. The general lack of technological understanding in the professional world stems from teachers not deriving from the same generation as students, and moreover, the lack of technological professional development to make up

for those shortfalls. Generation Z is a production of an abundance of influencers that require utilizing social media and innovative techniques for an immediately engaging/productive learning experience and classroom environment.

### **Development of the Whole Child**

The well-rounded development of the whole child, including physical, cognitive, emotional, and social health, may be the most efficient route to addressing the consequences of technology for Generation Z. Educators need to focus on the “whole student” in order for them to be happy and successful students and overall human beings. Current academic research demonstrates pervasive inequities that affect the development of the whole child, including educational, systemic, and general absence to accessible technology/wifi & social media. Researchers Spyridoula et al. (2017) studied how structured physical activity in the classroom affected student self-perceptions and social-emotional classroom engagement. We need to focus on the “whole student” in order for said student to be entirely available via mind and body to access their education (Spyridoula et al., 2017). After focus groups of student participants in Spyridoula et al.’s (2017) research showed that the students with movement resulted in longer periods of verbal and social engagement during classroom periods that followed physical activity sessions (Spyridoula et al., 2017). The physical activity also generated a more positive student affect, and perceptions of general competence increased meaningfully.

There are different aspects of students’ social emotional needs that need to be addressed in order to develop a positive classroom environment. In order for students to manifest positive behavior, their teachers must address their positive respects, including

emotional intelligence (Ozorio, 2014). According to Psychology Today magazine, emotional intelligence is defined as follows:

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence is generally said to include at least three skills: emotional awareness, or the ability to identify and name one's own emotions; the ability to harness those emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem solving; and the ability to manage emotions, which includes both regulating one's own emotions when necessary and helping others to do the same. (paras. 1-2)

Ozario's (2017) research studied the process of gaining emotional intelligence and how having it helps a teacher "recognize and respond to their own feelings and the students' feelings" (p. 17), thus allowing teachers and students to more effectively carry out their school duties. When positive relationships are developed, the classroom environment becomes more motivating and engaging. It could be deduced that emotional intelligence allows students to better advocate for their "whole" selves and further develop student-teacher and student-student synchronicity in positive rapport and classroom environment. Emotional intelligence is not only a strong factor in carrying out school duties, it also is important for educators to take into consideration when children are experiencing collective trauma, such as what occurred when schooling abruptly shifted to remote teaching in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Teaching the Whole Child

There were diverse effects the **COVID-19 pandemic** caused on students learning remotely and affected the whole child's wellbeing. Nearly 60 million students were affected due to COVID-1, and because of this, students were no longer receiving critical educational and health resources (Hurley & Masonbrink, 2020). Students maintained their whole selves by relying on school for many different needs (food, counseling, peer interaction, etc). On top of that, during the 2020-2021 academic year, students were experiencing pandemic-related trauma and economic instability. We “must advocate for stronger action to ensure the educational, nutritional, physical, and mental health needs of children are met during periods of school closures and addressed during plans for reopening” (Hurley & Masonbrink, 2020, Table 1).

The current whole child encountered educational losses including lower test scores and educational attainment potential. Hurley and Masonbrink (2020) addressed the psychological impact of this crisis on children including short- and long-term implications: post traumatic stress, anxiety, and behavioral disorders. There are countless supports students no doubtedly needed during this pandemic. School closures have such an individualized impact on each students' lives that it is hard to be able to find out their needs and determine how teachers could specifically support them. With distance learning, teachers were being asked to administer more emotional support now more than ever before; a very hard task to accomplish remotely. Teachers were also mandated reporters and are often the first to observe warning signs of a mental health crisis or unsafe situation. It is important that teachers make use of their emotional intelligence to offer emotional support, observe warning signs, and intervene

for children at risk in order to support the whole child. Teachers should seek to collaborate with their school and community to create and disseminate innovative methods for remote engagement.

The pandemic presented teachers with an anomalous situation concerning learning and how “...educators have overcome beginning hurdles to not only survive, but thrive amidst this new challenge” (Wood et al. 2020, p. 8). The developmental needs of students were being considered further through the challenges and innovative ways teachers were learning to connect and motivate students. When students were not receiving the same physical, in-person learning they are used to, their wellbeing as a whole student began to decline. Be that as it may, online tools such as Kahoot and TikTok were used to encourage attendance, increase motivation, and meet the developmental needs of students (Wood et al. 2020). Developmentally, 10-11 year old students require methods of learning that align with their interests. During such a time with insufficient human connection, these students generationally needed far more connection than any other.

Following the challenges of remote teaching and the effects it had on the “whole” students perspective, alternative repercussions arose from COVID-19 in the field of education; consequences such as the need for trauma-informed teaching, economic instability, and overall loss of routine. In the United Kingdom, the mental health charity called YoungMinds did a survey with 2,111 participants of the age of 25 years and below; 26% of surveyors said they have been unable to access mental health support since the pandemic began (Lee, 2020). Specifically, face-to-face peer support groups and like services have been cancelled or maintained remotely. Some stated that



support by phone or online can be challenging for some young people (Lee, 2020). Lee (2020) also addressed how school routines are an important anchor in students' lives and the remote learning has caused considerable disruption, particularly to students with mental disorders and special education needs such as autism. Trauma-informed teaching comes into play when remote learning makes students develop emotional disorders or when remote learning affects students with certain emotional disorders. Realistically, student emotional factors need to be taken into account before any educational advances can be made, thus addressing the whole student.

### **Kinesthetic Classrooms**

The learning systems of the brain and body are interdependent and interactive. Anna Veelman (2017) researched dance education in an urban kindergarten classroom studying dance as a kinesthetic art form in regard to emotional wellbeing and consequently benefiting classroom culture. She postulated that implementation of movement in the classroom relieves stress, improves a child's overall mood, creates critical thinkers and enhances creativity. Veelman (2017) believed that movement is a relationship building strategy that is often under-looked for its effectiveness on social-emotional intervention. Consequently, a kinesthetic classroom is engaging and makes learning more accessible. Veelman explains how Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) increases self esteem and allows students to develop self-awareness, emotional expression and social functioning: "DMT is the psychotherapeutic use of movement and dance to support intellectual, emotional, and motor functions of the body. As a modality of the creative arts therapies, DMT looks at the correlation between movement and emotion" (American Dance Therapy Association, 2020, pg. 1).

Recent research conducted by the American Dance Association explored mind/body techniques to meet student needs with an emphasis on the effect of movement on students who have or are experiences trauma (2020). This research illuminates how pertinent kinesthetic movement is in regard to the effect of trauma, including the COVID-19 pandemic, on elementary school students. Veelman suggests that movement in the classroom is one strategy a general education teacher can implement into the classroom to support EBD (Emotional Behavioral Disturbance). “EBD is a general term that includes anxiety disorders, manic-depressive disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, reactive attachment disorder as well as many more” (Veelman, 2017, p. 14). Children who suffer from emotional disorders have a harder time enjoying life, excelling in school, and forming meaningful relationships with others (Veelman, 2017).

Kuczala and Lengel (2010) explain how the connection between physical activity and brain function is immeasurable. As students perform movements while reciting educational content, certain internal means are being addressed while mind/body connections are being made. For example, reading levels improve while personal interventions/remediations are simultaneously being conducted and recall becomes easier due to muscle memory (Kuczala & Lengel, 2010). The learning systems of the brain and body are interdependent and interactive and a kinesthetic classroom cultivates engagement, making learning more accessible. Kinesthetic learning is a multi sensory opportunity that allows whole-brain engagement and immediate rehearsal of new information.

Certain educational inequities must be taken into account when considering the well being of the whole child. Ergo, diversity in the classroom affects classroom management and in order to create educational equity, teachers must create awareness by addressing the diversity in their classrooms. However, sometimes a teacher's positionality affects their ability to adequately support diverse learners in the classroom. When diversity is taken into consideration, "teachers can see the big picture of social-interpersonal communication" (Ozorio, 2014, p.14). On top of positionality, the arts and technology are being underutilized to create educational equity to fulfill the gap in development in modernized approaches across many subject contents including art history, history, literature, art, music, philosophy and language (Alameda, 2018). We must study the way we deliver academic content and introduce it through advanced technology resources available.

Systemic inequalities also surface across education and for low-income families. First and foremost, remote learning requires equitable access to technology; children in poverty are at a greater disadvantage. Due to the economic effects of COVID-19, there was a decreased parental earning potential (unemployment/high-risk jobs) in addition to the lack of time some families could provide to support their child's remote learning (Hurley & Masonbrink, 2020). Only schools equipped with clinic-based providers (with resources to support children's mental health needs) address the mental and physical health requirements needed during this time (Hurley & Masonbrink, 2020). Hurley and Masonbrink also discuss the insufficient access to adequate nutrition among children in poverty and how children with disabilities endured setbacks during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020).

A review of the literature highlights the educational inequities between affluent and impoverished school districts, particularly the precedence affluent schooling unveils in regard to access to technology, health care, emotional support, and well-advised staff members on the academic and social emotional needs of their students. There are direct injustices correlated to remote learning pedagogy and availability of technology resources. Last but not least, there were economic inequalities due to the COVID-19 pandemic splintering affluent and marginalized communities. For instance, job instability, access to tutoring, technology, a loss of routine for those that do not participate in “normal” school while being in school online or do not attend in-person schooling yet (Lee, 2020).

## **Conclusion**

From a bird's eye view, the field of kinesthetic learning and social media in the classroom has been deeply researched. Both have had positive impacts on academic achievement, along with engagement and social emotional wellbeing (Kuczala & Lengel, 2010). Social media procured engagement within Generation Z which supports student acquaintance with technology and all that it entails, including instant gratification, a byproduct of generational upbringings and social influences from parents and peers. Furthermore, on the matter of the whole child, students must be addressed as well-rounded beings developing emotional intelligence along the way. Taking the whole child into consideration, the effects of COVID-19 on students' academic and social emotional wellbeing were considered, particularly through the lense of trauma-informed teaching. Finally, kinesthetic learning includes diverse, interdependent learning systems of the brain and body. My research harmonizes with the effects of EDs

(Emotional Disorders) (in regard to students' social/emotional aspects needing to be recognized and taken care of) as it explores the uncharted territory of remote learning through dance movement.

Although existing academic literature outlines many ways in which teaching practices can support students, few studies have explored the use of teaching methods that work to support overall student wellbeing during traumatic events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In a broader sense, the vast amount of information on social emotional wellbeing in education is consistently beneficial to all educators in the field. There are a variety of resources available examining kinesthetic learning and its effect on student academic performance and engagement. With this vast amount of applicable knowledge available, teachers need to begin to investigate new pedagogical pathways in order to take on dynamic, meaningful, student-centered teaching methods/instruction. Albeit, distance learning is a first for most living generations currently in school; it is vastly unmapped territory across all fields, including education.

Equally important, there is a lack of available information on the use of technology to increase kinesthetic learning in the field of education. It is uncharted territory that comes with a lot of unknowns. Thus far, kinesthetic learning in a mainstream multiple subject classroom is known as "...visual and/or auditory study techniques, producing multi-sensory learning" according to Laskey and Gibson (1997). However, through the use of TikTok kinesthetic learning occurs in the form of dance. Currently, there is a lack of research on the effects of incorporating TikTok into the classroom curriculum. The purpose of this research study is to explore and examine the experiences and perceptions of fifth graders that have participated in class TikToks.

Further, this study considers how student involvement has shaped their social emotional health throughout their COVID-19 pandemic schooling experience. This research study also serves to identify ways that students and their parents see TikTok as a tool to support their wellbeing.

## Methods

### Research Questions

This study seeks to understand how kinesthetic learning, in the form of TikTok dances, affects the social emotional wellbeing of fifth grade students. There have been countless research studies and behavioral theories that demonstrate the connection between dance as an art form in regard to emotional wellbeing (Veelman, 2017). Veelman postulates that movement is a relationship building strategy that is often under-looked as an efficient tool for social-emotional intervention (2017). In fact, research shows that movement in the classroom supports 21st century skills by creating critical thinkers, reinforcing creativity, and positively developing mental health such as stress and overall mood (Veelman, 2017). Benefits of kinesthetic learning have also been demonstrated through DMT (Dance Movement Therapy). DMT increases self esteem and allows students to develop self-awareness, emotional expression and social functioning, thus improving students' core competencies of social emotional awareness (CASEL 2020; Veelman, 2017).

However, little research has been done to study the effectiveness of the social media application known as TikTok when used as an academic and social emotional wellbeing tool in the general education classroom. My research studies this deficit within education, therefore exploring new learning techniques to meet student needs. The emphasis of movement on the effects of students who are experiencing inequalities prior to the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the relevance of this research. To this end, the research was designed based on the following central questions:

- 1) How can TikTok be used as a tool to support students' academic and social

emotional wellbeing?

2) In what ways do students see this tool as supporting their wellbeing?

3) In what ways do parents see this tool as supporting their child's wellbeing?

4) How is TikTok unique to building a community successfully?

### **Description and Rationale for Research Approach**

During the 2020-2021 academic year when this study was completed, students had experienced significant social/emotional challenges during this isolating pandemic. This research strived to change these developing challenges and give these students the care they needed through their education. Therefore, my approach to research is based in the transformative philosophical worldview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). With a transformative viewpoint, research investigations need to take a stand amongst politics and an agenda for political change in order to confront social oppression that emerges in society. This philosophical worldview intersects with my motivation for conducting research due to the lack of social emotional support students receive in school, particularly during traumatic events such as the Coronavirus pandemic.

Students are encountering exposure to different schooling experiences at extraordinary levels. Educators need to come together to find relevant, innovative ways to maintain their students' academic success and social emotional wellbeing. Brydon-Miller and Maguire (2009) explain how "...outsourcing responsibility for educational 'improvement' and 'significant gains' on standardized tests to classroom teachers, while leaving intact and unchallenged underlying social and economic inequities that have a profound impact on children's schooling experiences" has the effect of creating social emotional consequences (p. 7). In support of Brydon-Miller and Maguire's theory, my



efforts to change the position of the students in my research to collaborative partners begin with shifting the focus from intense academic rigor to what was really important- social/emotional well-being through engaging, collaborative, yet educational movement content.

Creswell's (2018) constructivist philosophical worldview supports research belonging to goals that rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied, allowing participants to construct their own meaning of the study through interactions with others. Through interaction with others, also known as social constructivism, my intent was to make sense of (or interpret) the meaning my students have about the world and their existence in it currently, particularly in their pre-established educational setting in which we (myself and my students) all took part in together.

My participants developed their individualized meanings of the study through feelings based on their personal experiences. Diaz-Strong et al. (2009) described how "feelings are not simply byproducts of organizing or research; they are a central component of contemporary political life" (p. 10). My research is not measured quantitatively, but more so qualitatively as it hones in on one's personal experience with my thesis topic. Therefore, "feelings," also known as my students' social/emotional response, serves as the backbone of my research and the lens of our contemporary worldviews as we all struggle with today's ever-changing lifestyle.

Qualitative data is better suited to study students' social/emotional response than quantitative research because it uses observation methods (i.e. one-to-one interviews and focus groups) to observe characterization and themes amongst non-numerical

responses. Interviewing is a purposeful way to gather qualitative data. I interview to seek worthwhile insight on the educational issues being studied. The “abstractions based on the concrete experience of people” gives the researcher access to educational issues through individuals’ consciousness (Seidman, 2019, p. 7). Further, interviewing serves as a basic mode of inquiry, allowing participants to symbolize their experience through language. “The best stories are those which stir people’s minds, hearts, and souls and by so doing give them new insights into themselves, their problems, and their human condition” (Seidman, 2019, p. 8). In order to deliver my students’ social/emotional security, I must guide them to see purpose in their participation efforts through the qualitative interview process.

## **Research Design**

### **Research [1] *Site and Entry into the Field***

In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the school and all participants in my research, I used pseudonyms throughout this thesis. Jade School is a small public K-8 school located in an affluent suburb in Northern California. I was hired as a long-term substitute in November of 2019 at Jade School as a first grade teacher. It was then that I became acclimated to the tight knit, inclusive school culture and high academic expectations. Following that semester, the school rehired me as a fifth grade classroom teacher for the 2020-2021 academic year. Jade School is the only school within its School District, consisting of 394 students (GREATSCHOOLS, 2020).

The student demographics consist of 88% white, with the next leading population being 6% hispanic (GREATSCHOOLS, 2020). Only one percent of the student body is classified as an English learner and two percent of the students are designated as “low-

income families,” based on the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (GREATSCHOOLS, 2020). The school has an average 12:1 ratio of students to teachers, compared to the California state average of 22:1 (GREATSCHOOLS, 2020).

The school offers arts media (computer/technology class), music (band, choir, and orchestra), visual arts, physical education, and foreign language (Spanish). Students also receive extensive mental health support through community circles within each grade level, push-in lessons within the classroom from the school counselor, and one-on-one meetings whenever they are needed with the school counselor, psychologist, principals, and teachers.

The school also offers a mentorship program organized by the school counselor. The program is a research-backed method to help students with a variety of needs such as positive behavior reinforcement, from attendance, to problem-solving skills. Commitment wise, Students in the mentoring program meet with their mentor for a 15-25 minutes check-in each week. The student and mentor determine the best time for them to meet throughout the school day. With COVID-19 in place, all meetings were held virtually. During these meetings, the mentor and mentee could play games, do art projects, help with homework, or anything the mentee needed as support. The goal of the program was for the student to have a support person at school that they feel comfortable with and can come to when they need help.

At Jade School, eighteen students in my fifth grade class were recruited to participate in my research study, along with their parents. The students were sent home with a consent form for their parents to sign for their child, and a consent form to sign for

themselves (with the survey included in the parent consent form). The consent form outlined the study's purpose, provided methodology and risk information, and detailed how data would be collected and protected.

At the start of the academic year I knew I had a group of students at the age of 10-11 years old, so I was aware of certain social/emotional and learning changes that were bound to occur. According to the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention), fifth graders begin to form more complex peer relationships, as it becomes more emotionally important to have friends (March 6, 2020). At this age, students also begin to experience more peer pressure and become more aware of their bodies as puberty approaches, creating a heightened sense of body image awareness and potential emergence of eating disorders (CDC, March 6, 2020). Children in this age group may begin to face more academic challenges at school as curriculum and expectations become more complicated, along with a yearning for independence from their family (CDC, March 6, 2020). With all of this knowledge in mind, I knew I had to be cognizant about my students' needs throughout my research and the approaches I take to connect and transform relationships with my students.

We can conceptualize humanizing approaches to research as the building of relationships of care and dignity, dialogic consciousness, reciprocity, and respect. A humanized approach to research is important because it allows the participants to feel valued by the researcher who, in turn, becomes a worthy witness. My research project ensured the utilization of a humanized approach by creating prior awareness identifying how the privileged aspects of my identity may have structured my life so my view of others does not affect my lens of power. Individual's consciousness gives us access to

educational issues based on their personal experiences (Seidman, 2019). People symbolize their experience through language and in order for us to understand lived experiences we must understand their language. As humans express the meaning they make of their experiences, it is important to make the process equitable and to have sincere interest in understanding that others' stories are important. My research emphasized a strong role in creating effective social/emotional learning outlets through virtual engagement. Personal connections and student wellness have been "over researched but underseen" across virtual learning communities (Tuck, 2009). In order to suspend this damage, we must hold researchers accountable for the frameworks and approach to research and serving our student communities.

Eighteen elementary school students in the researcher's fifth grade class were invited to participate at Jade School. In addition, 18 of the students and their parents from the researcher's fifth grade class were recruited to participate in anonymous online surveys and follow up interviews that were used as a qualitative research method. The researcher had a pre-existing relationship with the student participants as one of their classroom instructors. Students were introduced to the research study and informed about the invitation to participate verbally in class. Students who returned the parental consent form were given the surveys in class. Four students from the researcher's fifth grade class and three parents were asked to participate in one on one interviews with the researcher following the collection of survey data. All 18 students in the researcher's classroom were given the option to participate in the survey.

Jade School employees were recruited based on their connection to the field of education in regard to the researchers study i.e. administrators, I.T. (information

technology) support, and counselors. Interviewing a range of educators under the umbrella of subject matter my research is focusing on, allowed myself and the readers of my thesis to “deepen their understanding of the issues it [my research] reflects” based on the fundamental characteristic of a phenomenological approach to research (Seidman, 2019, p. 57).

All 18 students in the class participated in bi-weekly TikTok videos in class as part of their classroom instruction for the school year. (Note: The research was designed to explore student experience with the TikToks. The TikToks were currently embedded in the students’ curriculum.) The TikTok videos consisted of short clips that students participated in by learning the movements and then recording live in class. The movements included basic dance movements; for example, the arm “wave” or one of the more recent viral TikTok moves known as the “woah.” The recordings were used to support the social emotional wellbeing of the researcher’s students. The researcher was the only person who viewed these videos aside from the students and their families. The videos were on a secure Google drive in a private folder, and were password protected through the schools multidimensional cyber security system. One example of TikTok video used to teach academic content was developed on the topic of the five main story elements (characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution). Each setting corresponded to a kinesthetic movement from a basic TikTok dance.

Students and their parents partook in an anonymous open ended question survey. These surveys were set in place to measure how the TikToks have affected social/emotional wellbeing from parent and student perspectives. The surveys were stored virtually on a Google form platform stored solely through the researcher’s email

account and private Google drive. The student and parent interviews occurred in a written format via email exchanges. Three staff interviews with the 5-8 school principal, school counselor, and Network Administrator were via Google meet and the interview with the Network Administrator was audio recorded. The recorded Interview was voice recorded using the iPhone Voice Memos application and transcribed notes were typed up in a password-protected Google document.

The parent/student surveys were entirely anonymous with no names written down or associated in any way when submitting. Parent names were not tracked or submitted on the survey form with responses to the survey. Students who were selected to partake in an individual interview with the researcher were reassured that all of their thoughts and answers will remain confidential and that the researcher is impartial to how they might answer the question(s). Students also were informed that they have complete control over which questions they choose to answer and if at any reason they can at any time, stop the research process.

The survey and interview methods support Creswell's mixed method design for research. My research synthesizes both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (closed-ended) data, including rigorous methods of analysis of said data. Analysis exploration included but was not limited to comparing/contrasting data, the building of ideas and concepts from one outcome to another, and "embedding the data within a larger framework" of hypothesis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 215).

## Data Analysis

As a first step in data analysis, I wrote analytic memos after gathering survey and interview information to analyze my data with a focus on the underlying social emotional causes for the deterioration of my student's mental health. I took into account how kinesthetic learning and modern technology play a role within Generation Z's contemporary interests and overall disposition. Generation Z, also known as "digital natives," are notorious for needing instant gratification. With that knowledge, I drew connections between TikTok's short clips of enticing content and the specific needs of digital natives. However, Gen Z was also raised with pressure to be successful from a young age and therefore require constant attention/positive reinforcement (McQueen, n.d.). Through analytic memos, I considered how a kinesthetic social media application supported my students' digital native personas by addressing their personal wellbeing.

Analyzing interview data was important for a variety of reasons. Interview data allowed the researcher to understand the data in context, providing narrative analysis of interview transcripts. These interviews served as connecting strategies that look "for relationships that connect statements and events within a context into a coherent whole" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 113). To analyze the interview data, I first used open coding and then peer coding to organize codes found in my research. The transcribed interviews and survey data were first open coded by hand by identifying both expected and unexpected codes in the data. The coding process began by segmenting the text data by identifying key words and phrases. These segments were then labeled with expected codes, including parental involvement in their child's education, communication amongst teachers, parents, and school, and teacher autonomy. as well as unexpected



codes that arose in the surveys and interviews. I then looked for significant statements from participants to develop a description of their experiences, and to examine any commonalities or underlying variables among them.

Once I made note of the underlying themes, I analyzed the data by narrowing down my significant topics and other ideas through focused coding. Focused coding is “an inductive process of narrowing data into a few themes” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 237). In this process, I was able to narrow down my data into useful information and information that does not pertain to my main themes that could be disregarded. By first describing the major findings within my data, thematic development transcribed by forming an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon within my data. In collaboration with class attendees, themes were accentuated, laying the foreground for my focused coding.

In accordance with open and focused coding, Maxwell’s “concept maps” involve generating concepts about the phenomena you are studying. These concepts can be acquired from existing theory, personal experience, or from your research participants. I generated concepts about my study phenomena by adopting researchers pre-existing theories combined with my participant’s data and my own personal experience. Data was analyzed by creating concept maps in collaboration with my thesis class peers, and I appreciated their awareness of different perspectives, findings, and dispositions. Concept mapping was utilized for further explanation of the data by organizing the codes into categories, with the goal of searching for connections or gaps in the data. Themes emerged through the analysis of the concept map and written analytic memos on the relationships between each of the categories in the concept map.

## Validity

There are two specific kinds of validity threats: bias and reactivity. According to Maxwell, researcher bias involves the subjectivity of the researcher, and reactivity is the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied (2013, p. 124). I am the classroom teacher of the student participants in my study. That being said, being the classroom teacher affects both the setting and individuals involved in my research, bringing to surface reactivity as a major validity threat in my study. This may have influenced data collection because I had a personal investment in wanting the TikToks to positively affect my students' lives. The uncertainty and lack of familiarity that has accompanied this year has negatively affected the mental health of my students and I explored ways to combat that. Specific validity threats to my research include my entwined student-teacher relationship and overall position of power. That being said, the reactivity, or influence, of my position on my students may have caused my students to repress their true voice. In order to not try to control the results of research, Maxwell (2013) stipulated that "...the goal in a qualitative study is not to eliminate this influence, but to understand it and use it productively" (p. 125).

My biases derive from the importance of my students' social emotional health. In April of 2020, my first love very suddenly and tragically passed away. Since then, the world as I know it has never been the same. By undergoing such a transformative experience, I have developed a heightened sense of need for emotional support. In Jenae Casalnuovo's (2020) thesis, she said "... I became mesmerized by the way in which my grief transformed the trajectory of my life, as well as the way in which I understood my relationship to the universe" (p. 11). Emotional pain and lack of mental

health improvement is one of the reasons why I want to collaborate with my students in fostering the social/emotional change we all want and need amidst the repercussions of COVID-19. If I achieved anything at all with my research, it was making sure my students knew that I had their back.

The increasement of my students' social emotional abilities upheld a strong standpoint in my repertoire of biases; including but not limited to: emotional intelligence, and overall support of the "whole child." A main focus in relation to TikTok in the classroom involved kinesthetic learning as an intervention tool to improve student-teacher relations, and used as an independent learning system between the body and brain (Kuczala & Lengel, 2010). This study strived to understand how teachers can best maintain and develop students' social skills, emotional intelligence, and overall support of the "whole child." As a young educator, I am connected with current trends, one most specifically being a social media called TikTok. Preteens through adults are all partaking in the new TikTok craze - therefore my collaboration of social media presence/dance movement promoted my use of educational TikTok content for my class to complete with me. I have already begun pushing out content through my curriculum and have witnessed students smiling/referring back to the content they learned through my TikTok dances. Thus, the social change I am looking for is already occurring. My educational research was promoting 21st century skills such as communication and collaboration which were intensely and purposefully reinforced parallel to remote learning.

To address the threats to the validity of my study, during the data analysis process, I was cognizant of my researcher bias and searched for discrepant evidence to ensure that my bias of wanting the utilization of TikTok as an educational/mental health

tool to improve my students' lives did not prevent me from considering alternative perspectives. I tested the validity of my conclusions by meticulously examining all survey and interview data to assess the validity of my theories, while prolonging cognisance of data that did not support my conclusions. I increased the credibility of my conclusions through Maxwell's validity test strategies: intensive, long-term involvement with participants, respondent validation, triangulation, comparison, and searching for discrepant evidence. Qualitative data has a stigma for being subjective, so it was necessary for me to take certain measures to maintain awareness of my pre-existing values, expectations, theories, goals, preconceptions, and the selection of data that may "stand out" to myself, the researcher.

Therefore, by keeping Maxwell's concept of researcher bias in mind, I did not lose sight of the fact that "...validity in qualitative research research is not the result of indifference, but of integrity" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 124). I concur with Maxwell's belief that qualitative research validity is not a consequence of lack of interest, concern, or sympathy; it is a proceeding of honesty and signifying the importance of having strong moral principles.

Research was collected through observations during the interview process with school staff participants and coding of that research. In addition, quantitative data was collected through surveys, given to both the students and their parents before students' participation in class TikToks. These various data sources provided triangulation to increase the validity of the study because I analyzed data to look for themes that emerged from many sources. This "reduces the risk of chance associations and of

systemic biases due to a specific method, and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that one develops" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 128).

In addition, my project is based on my deep-rooted involvement in the community. There are unquestionable pros that concur with the intensive, long-term involvement of a classroom teacher with their students. As my students' full-time classroom teacher, the use of TikToks has been aligned with my fifth grade pedagogy through the duration of this academic year; as opposed to a brief, premeditated arrangement for a researcher to work with a subject group for an allotted period of time. In addition, the combination of long-term involvement and intensive interviews enabled the collection of rich data. Use of verbatim transcripts of interviews and descriptive note-taking provided a detailed picture of evidence (Maxwell, 2013). In the construction of my research validity, the Likert scale method on surveys helped ease validity threats by predicting data on measurable participant feedback (a 1-5 strongly agree to strongly disagree scale).

Data analysis justified my research credibility on account of the comprehensive range of strategies exercised to address validity threats. Maxwell (2013) established certain strategies for dealing with validity threats which I applied when collecting and analyzing my data. Respondent validation, also known as member checks, was a strategy I depended on. In Maxwell's words, respondent validation is "systematically soliciting feedback about your data and conclusions from the people you are studying" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126). Member checking is when you go back to your participants with your conclusions (i.e., the central categories of your concept map) and ask the participants if they agree with these conclusions. Respondent validation was also

carried out in my research by initiating follow-up interviews regarding themes or discrepancies among survey data. In order to demonstrate the authenticity of my research, Maxwell's validity threat techniques served to mitigate any disputes in findings that arose.

## Findings

This research demonstrated that the majority of participating students and their parents saw TikTok as a tool to support social emotional wellbeing, as well as TikTok being a unique platform for building community successfully. The research behind this theory helped identify two major themes that contribute to the use of TikTok in the classroom as a social emotional tool. In what follows, I first examine how social media and teaching academic content can go hand-in-hand. In this section, I outline why the incorporation of social media creates heightened student engagement. In the second theme, I conclude the chapter by explaining how the TikTok process cultivates community building within the classroom. The questions guiding my research focused on using TikTok as a tool to support the whole student and cultivating a secure classroom community. Social media ended up being an important tool for student learning, both by advancing social emotional experiences individually and for the whole class.

### **Increasing Student Engagement due to the Bridging of Social Media and Education in Classroom Pedagogy**

First and foremost, one of the main themes that emerged in the data was the bridging TikTok provided between social media and the classroom. The data demonstrates a clear connection between social media and how it can be effectively used in engaging pedagogical ways. Students were enlivened about the fact that social media and school can work in tandem. During a student interview, one student said, “It changes the way I learn because I have more fun doing it instead of sitting down for an hour doing a math lesson or writing lesson, I am dancing and learning.” Additionally,

seeing how the two worlds could work in partnership directly impacts each student's learning in the classroom. A clear link between social media and education began to develop as another student said, "I think I would have a very different personality and I think I would view this class a lot differently because I feel that TikToks are in a way part of this class." This student felt as if their participation in schooling would not be what it is if they did not have this social media platform as a part of their learning since the beginning of the school year. When asked how TikTok changes the way they learn, one student's feedback was, "During covid it is hard to say because we are socially distancing but it is fun to watch my classmates dance and if someone makes a funny mistake it is fun to have a good laugh." As described in the literature review, adolescents are inherently aware of how they are perceived in front of others. That being said, it is significant that research participants felt comfortable enough to not only make mistakes, but laugh with each other when mistakes are made.

It became a platform that allowed students to connect with each other while implementing the core ideas of school subjects. Out of 11 parent responses in the anonymous survey, six parents strongly agreed/agreed to the following statement, and one parent was neutral when responding to, "The TikToks positively affected your child's personal happiness/wellbeing during remote learning." These parents reported that their child really enjoyed the use of TikTok in the classroom. "[She] seemed excited about the fact that Tik Tok and school could go hand in hand!!"

Another point of increased engagement that emerged from the data was the enrichment of the survey and interview data. In this feedback, students and parents both reported how TikToks created an enhanced eagerness to learn. Working together



to learn the movements, and practicing the movements repetitively helped the students bond more and memorize curriculum. According to students, they were a good reminder for directions and general subject content.

Two of the responses from the anonymous student survey included: “It helped me memorize information that was needed for the rest of the semester + year” and “it was a good reminder of directions.” The findings clearly showed that students were able to simultaneously bond with their classmates while engaging in and learning academic content. For example, in a follow-up interview with a participant after the survey, she explained the process of learning one of the TikToks: “To learn a new TikTok dance we first see a video of someone doing the dance, next we slowly learn the first part and do it all together, then we learn the other parts of the dance slowly too. It is like doing a fun video with your friends, and I feel more connected to the other people in my class.” She followed that statement by also saying, “TikTok changes the way I learn by allowing me a way to connect with other people and get the idea of the subject in my head” and “Doing TikToks has made me more interested in what I’m learning and how I can use the things I learn.” This is an explicit example of a first-hand participant perspective with reference to the TikTok process and how it supports student learning and engagement.

When asked if the TikToks helped student engage in their academics, students disclosed that “they did because I was excited to go to your class,” and yes, “because I was engaging in the TikToks which inspired me to engage in class more.” Students also listed that it helped them memorize information that was needed for the rest of the semester/year, it was helpful to look back to if they forget how to, for example, write a paragraph, and it helped a lot with grammar when we practiced grammar TikToks

repetitively. My research provided strong evidence that TikToks helped students learn “differently” and is an effective platform to teach academic content and support student wellbeing socially/emotionally. TikTok provided a unique method of learning- one that combines technology, kinesthetic movement, and group collaboration/collective learning.

TikTok became a medium for culturally relevant teaching. Essentially, as a computer-savvy generation, Gen Z is accustomed to instant connectivity as the norm and instant gratification. In this sense, TikTok is relevant to my student’s worlds. Additionally, TikTok naturally supports the 21st century skills that have been identified as being required for success in 21st century society. These skills include: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Students must work together, make use of performance techniques and memorization strategies to complete the TikTok process using 21st century skills. Above all, parents of my students identified TikTok as a useful platform that could be used to discuss topics that are difficult in the abstract to proactively discuss with 10-11 year olds. I believe parents have noticed that their students are so engaged in curricula, their teacher, and each other, that they realized TikTok could be a great tool to breach controversial topics; very important aspects of life to strategically make adolescents aware of. One parent's feedback included:

TikTok and talking about posts to TikTok has certainly been a creative outlet and positive way to connect with friends and the community. It has also provided a good and relatable mechanism to talk about BLM, racism, anti-Semitism, body image, kindness, politics - topics that are difficult in the abstract to proactively

discuss with an 11 year old girl.

On top of TikTok being perceived as a constructive tool beyond social/emotional support, it was also viewed as an additional way to support the California fifth grade Common Core State Standard requirements, beyond the core curriculum incorporated into the TikToks. The fifth grade standard ([CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5](#)) listed under "Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas" is defined as "Include[ing] multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes." Parent feedback showed that in addition to pedagogical support, the TikToks also helped ease kids into performing in front of others. As one parent explained, "I think they help her gain a bit of self confidence when it comes to public speaking in a certain way." This type of feedback brought to light how TikToks can be classified within the category of "presenting," particularly in relation to the state standard listed above.

All of that being said, there prevails some truth to TikTok having the opposite effect on academic engagement. Some students shared that the TikToks weren't helpful to their academics because they just watched the teacher do the movements instead of looking at the curriculum popping up on the screen. Others just listed that it didn't really affect them positively or negatively with their academics, or only sometimes made the content more engaging. Mostly, there were a few outliers in the data collected that reflected TikTok was an anxiety inducing activity for a minority of students.

According to various student and parent feedback shared within follow-up interviews, the secondary anxiety derived from diverse grounds for rationale. Personal

comfort zones were pushed and students feared the potential for being singled out if they chose not to participate. Furthermore, due to the fact that the researcher was also the participants' classroom teacher, some students felt the need to impress their teacher through unwanted participation and even felt that their class grade may be threatened if they did not participate in TikToks. One parent said, "... I am not there to observe the interaction, but I do know from talking at home that there is a level of frustration when he has to do a TikTok video. He feels that if he doesn't participate enthusiastically for his teacher he will suffer from bad grades or worse for him, singled out in class." While another parent shared, "I think that at times, my son is hyper-aware of himself, his peers, and his relationships. When doing the TikTok videos he is most concerned about making sure he does all of the moves exactly like his peers so he doesn't stand out or mess up. I guess it heightens already elevated awareness..."

Additionally, a couple of parents voiced their frustration that too much in-class school time is focused on social/emotional learning at this school specifically (at the expense of focus on academia). From their perspective, "It [TikTok] seems to be more life skills than actual academia" and "I'm fine with the group building and movement as a break in the day but prefer the focus to be on academia." One parent in particular unveiled an in-depth, personal reflection to the use of TikToks at this school especially:

As a parent, I am indifferent to the use of TikToks as a tool used in the classroom for fun, movement, and group activity. I would be more concerned and vocal if the TikTok videos were used as a grade, or they became a bigger portion of the academic teaching. In general, I feel like **a lot** of classroom time throughout Jade School is used for social-emotional development, which I think is just one component of education. I am a little "Old School" so I get frustrated when there seems to be more time spent in this area than others. I do understand that I am not in the classroom and since there is no homework [!] don't see time spent on what I would consider core academic work. Since joining Jade School instead of extracurricular activities being fun, group/social activities we have shifted focus as parents to academics (tutors, book clubs, etc) since it feels like this is an area where we can round out what our children are receiving at school.

The parental consensus within the data seemed to conclude that, although their child was pushed out of their comfort zone for one reason or another, they still believed the TikToks were useful and important as a support of their "whole child." That is, just because it didn't support their academics, doesn't mean it didn't begin to supplement other foundational aspects in the development of the whole child, including physical, cognitive, emotional, and social health. One parent offered insight by saying, "I don't think you have to offer any alternative or support. Just being aware that some people may not share in the excitement is enough. In fact, I think that any signaling out would make him feel worse and some days he may enjoy the break/activity. I actually think it's

a valuable tool for [him] to be pushed out of his comfort zone and this is a nice, short tool/activity for that to happen in a group environment with an adult around.” Inevitable data such as this only provides more opportunity for differentiation and improvement upon future implementation in the classroom, which will be discussed further in chapter five. As one parent quotes, “...some of the things we don't want to do end up being the most fun. It's just all part of growing up.”

### **Community Building**

The second theme uncovered in the data was community building; this sense of community unfolded through the TikTok process and, more concisely, the relationships it built henceforth. Student participation in this research project fostered dynamic support in relationships between students, the students and their teacher, students and their families, and students and their friends outside of school. Within the feedback, the TikToks were referred to as a very “social” activity during a very antisocial time (amidst the COVID-19 pandemic shelter in place, remote schooling, etc). The TikToks were reported to have made the students feel more comfortable around peers they have never met before (when the school year first began). One parent communicated that participation in class TikToks even became a topic of conversation at the family dinner table. Thus, community building occurred inside and outside of the classroom, amongst students and amongst families. This cultivated feelings of emotional safety, particularly within the classroom. The enriched relationships this community building supports is the foundation for a “responsive classroom” described as “the core belief that in order for our students to be successful in and out of school, they must first learn a set of social and emotional competencies...” (Starr, n.d.). Students continued to develop their

relationships by bonding, while carrying out the TikTok process with their teacher. This built a sense of rapport and security between the student and teacher.

Within comprehensive data lies deviation to any expected outcome. With that in mind, a small quantity of feedback was revealed to have negative effects on familial relationships. “My child really enjoys TikTok, but it has caused some friction between child and parents because we don’t allow its use at home” a parent confided in the anonymous survey. Some parents may have been unclear that students were not required or asked to download the TikTok application in any form, a communication oversight that could be considered and addressed in future use. The researcher did upload the videos to a private Google folder for the students to access at their own discretion. On the other hand, the majority of the data indicated effervescent support of the use of TikTok as a social/emotional tool and a strong proponent to the classroom community. A parent said that “the TikToks honestly helped her [her child] get to know Ms. Solomon, feel more comfortable around her peers who she literally did not know, perhaps help her find her footing when it comes to participating and engaging in front of others, and certainly got her excited about school!”

When asked if they were not given the opportunity to participate in the TikToks this year, some students reported they would have felt sad or left out, and they wouldn’t be as close as they are with each other. In the survey, students were asked to pick one of their social-emotional skills that had been affected the most since participating in the class TikToks (positively or negatively) another student shared, “I feel like it makes me closer with my peers and makes our class more of a community because in COVID many people feel very isolated.” When asked how TikTok affected the way students

interact with other students in the class, one student said, “I would have to say relationships because, like I said, it is fun to have a good laugh with someone if you make a mistake. This is a good thing not bad.” Due to the strength of student relationships, they were able to laugh at each other’s mistakes in a positive way.

Moreover, when students were asked how participation with the whole class for the TikToks influenced how they adjusted to the new school year, one expressed, “...it is enjoyable and it makes me feel like I am more a part of a community.” In fact, an interesting observation made by a parent included that there is much more cross-gender bonding than they have seen in prior years of schooling. The school year began with full time remote learning, providing valuable insight on the effects TikTok has while distance learning. “TikTok may have been a way to help these kids engage from their bedrooms, while only on the screens and not in person... They were able to get to know each other, come together to collaborate, and just feel a sense of connection, when they were unable to do so in the traditional school format.” Parent feedback was pivotal to the effects of my research on the whole child - especially while remote learning.

Finally, in contrast to other feedback previously considered in this chapter, the data shows ample social/emotional support for highly anxious students. There are individual causes for these students specifically to be highly anxious beyond the requirement to participate in TikToks. For example, parental stressors, defining success by high academic achievement, struggling to “fit in” with peers, and socioeconomic status. A student shared that the TikTok process “makes everyone feel like they belong.” Amid that process, TikTok was used as a tool for students to develop their emotional intelligence by being able to laugh with each other at each other's mistakes



while praising when someone did well. It brought them closer because they were uniting as a class and laughing together. As one student asserted, “I absolutely think this definitely made my friendship with my friends and my amazing teacher much stronger and a lot closer and made me feel much more appreciated as a student.”

## **Conclusion**

Not only is TikTok a tool to support social/emotional wellbeing, the whole child is supported through the application of TikTok in the classroom because it fills the lack of available instructional use between social media (an important factor to the modern adolescents' life) and the pedagogical classroom. The ties between social media and the classroom are crucial to whole child welfare because it increases student engagement and reinforces positive relationships.

The comprehensive questions that guided my research first sought to answer how TikTok can be used as a tool to support students academic and social emotional wellbeing, and how their parents perceived TikTok as a tool that supported their child's wellbeing as well. Overall, both students and their parents saw TikTok as some form of enhancement tool, whether that be academically and/or socially/emotionally. Although the findings seemed to show superior results using TikTok as a social/emotional tool, as opposed to an academic strategy. This research also analyzed why TikTok is unique to building a community successfully. Teaching and learning remotely during a pandemic provided all educators and students with unconventional barriers this year.

Implementing the use of TikTok in class pedagogy fostered multifaceted relationships in each student's life and formed a unique union within the “classroom,” even though we were not always physically together.

## Discussion

### Contributions to Academic Literature

My initial theoretical frameworks were built upon since the fulfillment of my research project. Chapter four explains how the use of a “performing” social media activity in school, in collaboration with a student’s peers and classroom teacher can be an anxiety inducing activity. With that in mind, the student research group (at the researcher’s school in particular) stems from a notoriously affluent background. Levine (2006) discusses how privileged adolescents’ psychological development has clear gaps (2006). The outcomes being projected false confidence, in lieu of a genuine sense of self (Levine, 2006).

The unanticipated findings in my anonymous research feedback was that some students were extremely uncomfortable participating in the TikTok process, although their actions did not exhibit this, a direct example of Levin’s (2006) theory of false confidence. Previous research indicates that there are certain aspects to my student’s lives which affect their overall ability to perform physically/academically and to participate to their fullest potential inside and outside of class. Possibilities include the need to instinctively uphold the stereotypical persona of their socio-economic status and represent who they are within the strata of society whose actions begin to perpetuate that same hierarchy tirelessly amongst generations and peers in these student’s lives.

There can also be truth to my student’s lack of true self hidden by false confidence tied within Kristen Ozario’s (2014) thesis research, “Understanding Social and Emotional Needs as an Approach in Developing a Positive Classroom Environment.” Her research on emotional intelligence examines the issue of students

not being able to “recognize and respond” to their own feelings (p.17). On par with my research findings, Levine (2006) and Ozario (2014) cumulatively gather that the ability to perceive one’s true self (whether that be personal morals, characteristics, feelings, etc.) is key to developing positive relationships, a motivating and engaging classroom environment, and for students to become better advocates for their “whole” selves.

Other theoretical frameworks that demonstrate useful teaching methods include student-centered and trauma-informed approaches. Chawinga (2017) describes how social media is a stimulus for learner-centered education. My findings concur that social media is a motivating incentive and that the experiences of TikToks with classmates contributed to a major increase in student engagement.

To go along with Chawinga’s theory, codes identified within my research gathered data regarding trauma-informed teaching. Trauma-informed teaching became usable, distinctly during this school year, because students' learning was being affected; remote learning can affect students with certain emotional disorders and/or remote learning can make students develop emotional disorders (Lee, 2020). Lee (2020) creates awareness of the need for student’s emotional capacities to be taken into account before any educational advances can be made. In my research project, students developed positive relationships amongst a variety of peers and adults in their lives, thus creating a safe space within their classroom environment. According to words derived from parent and student responses, the classroom became more “motivating, engaging, and welcoming.” Feelings of security and engagement are all part of what make up student-centered and trauma-informed teaching.

Accompanying these theories emanates movement as a strategy for trauma-informed teaching. Following the report of Veelman (2017), a previous masters student who discusses movement in the classroom, children who suffer from emotional disorders have a harder time enjoying life, excelling in school, and forming meaningful relationships with others. By incorporating movement into classroom pedagogy, educators can work to support feelings of isolation, lack of friendships, and overall anxiety from this school year. The data I received from extensive surveys and interviews concluded that the use of meticulously planned use of social media in the classroom encompasses trauma-informed and student-centered interventions.

In a staff interview, the school psychologist discussed how students have extremely high levels of anxiety, one contributing factor (amongst many) stemming from successful yet well-intentioned parents. Both the school psychologist and Levine (2006) touched on the lack of interpersonal skills developed in adolescents due to the ramifications of their parents' influences. These influences create extra pressure within themselves and are constantly comparing themselves to others (Levine, 2006). A couple of the parents in the anonymous parent survey and one parent from a follow-up interview voiced their frustrations that, at this school specifically, the curriculum as a whole spends too much in-class school time focused on social/emotional learning, in place of academia. Although parent voice is meant to be heard and taken into consideration, there is no doubt that parent practices such as this are toxic to healthy self-development students required to be successful, well-rounded learners and human beings.

## Implications

There are explicit implications manifested from my research that are important to note for future educational policies and practices. As a whole, TikTok offered itself as a valuable social/emotional and academic resource in the classroom and is practical for educators to consider using in this way. However, it is paramount to seek out resources and support to prepare for successful immersion into the classroom. Preparation for TikTok use can include: familiarity with the TikTok application and the steps to create one's own video through the application, identifying how to combine movements/school-appropriate TikTok songs to school curriculum, developing a safe space, and introduction for students and their parents to the use of social media in the classroom.

Teachers can enhance educational equity for their students by taking into account the diversity of their students in the classroom and planning accordingly. As addressed above, students come to school with diverse social/emotional awareness and needs that are very likely affecting their ability to learn and partake in successful interactions and learning. As shown in my research, teachers need to be aware of issues pertaining to educational equity, particularly while trying to immerse students in a dynamic, pedagogical social media experience. Raised throughout Generation Z, these technology-raised students react positively to its use in their education.

Technology should be used to create educational equity to fulfill the gap in development of modernized approaches to teaching and learning. Distance learning during the 2020-2021 school year built direct injustices correlated to remote learning pedagogy and availability of technology resources. After extensive research and

experiencing first-hand the importance of technology during remote learning, teachers can consider exploring grant opportunities, such as "donorschoose" to provide students with additional technological resources for remote learning. This exploration began my grant proposal project. I applied for a grant from donorschoose.org to support the additional technological needs my students could gain from this year. My grant is titled, "Let's SEE What You Can Do" and it proposes a project to help give my students 1:1 portable USB document cameras for remote learning. Remote learning requires equitable access to technology and the COVID-19 pandemic has had undeniable effects on distance learners and their access to proper meaningful education. Students are encountering educational losses in addition to the lack of time some families can provide to support their child's remote learning (Hurley & Masonbrink, 2020). With a portable document camera for each of my students, I will further be able to provide equitable access to their education.

A principal educational practice is to have clear communication with not only students, but their families as well. In regard to the specifics of my research project, there is more that teachers can do to make the process more accessible for parents. From the get-go, it is important to provide parents with a clear understanding of the plan and what is to come. This information could perhaps be provided in a weekly newsletter or other form of communication (ClassDojo, Google classroom, Gmail, etc). Feedback from my research indicated that some parents worried that too much in-class school time focused on social/emotional learning. A possible implication from that type of parent interpretation is that teachers need to explicitly communicate with parents what is

learned through TikTok, and how classroom community is a necessary foundation for academic learning.

Indispensable parent feedback concerning the use of TikTok in the classroom (or really any social media platform), is how it could be put to better use to discuss “challenging” or controversial topics with youth. TikTok is a platform famous for use across all subject matters, however it was brought to my attention that it could be used to incorporate the facilitation of difficult conversations, primarily in the classroom. Only a safe space could allow for such topics to be approached, a place in which is clearly developed as shown in the findings of my research and the theoretical framework listed above. However, there are ways in which this would need to be approached in the future.

### **Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research**

To approach TikTok as an educational tool to discuss challenging/controversial topics with 10-11 year olds, an educator must do that in a methodical and responsible way. I did not put this theory into motion as I believe I would need more time overall to prepare and access more resources. Breaching social media and controversial topics in the school classroom without doubt requires various types of teacher support beforehand: professional development, joint collaboration with the school counselor/psychologist, and curriculum development partnership with administrators and grade-level teachers.

Some of the findings revealed anomalies in the data reflecting TikTok being an anxiety inducing activity for some students. As previously discussed in this chapter, educators need to acknowledge the diversity their students bring and plan accordingly.

For this reason, there are certain measures teachers can take when embracing a type of “performing” social media tool in the classroom. Rather than taking minutes out of class-time to do the TikToks, a teacher can utilize previously scheduled brain break time to carry out this movement activity. Another measure could be to ask another available teacher or co-teacher to take the group of students who don’t wish to participate out of the classroom for a brain break so they don’t feel “left out” as their other classmates partake.

In addition, another method for future use (for the students who don’t wish to participate in the actual recording part of the activity) could be to incorporate them as a “teachers assistant(s)” up at the front of the class while teaching the movements to the whole class. This, in turn, makes the “teachers' assistant(s)” feel unique as to not feel left out when the recording portion of the process occurs. A final suggestion for creating a modified activity/accommodation for students who find learning the movements more anxiety-inducing would be to send your entire class a pre-recorded video of the movements with visual annotations days or even a full week before your actual recording day in class. This type of accommodation, in regard to learning a set of movements, is also known as a tutorial. When taking my data feedback into account, I decided to try making a tutorial with written words that pop up to describe each movement on the screen as I did them for my students. I posted the tutorial in our Google classroom on a Monday morning, and we recorded the TikTok in class on Friday (after also learning the movements in class). I received very positive feedback about the tutorial being helpful throughout the week.



## Conclusion

My research project was developed to further explore the use of technology to increase kinesthetic learning and to figure out ways to meaningfully incorporate TikTok into classroom curriculum. Taking into consideration the rationale behind my research, I have been able to divulge the uniqueness of using TikTok as an educational tool and how student and parent involvement has been affected. And, consequently, examine the effects TikTok has had on social emotional health throughout their COVID-19 pandemic schooling experience.

The use of social media as a tool for social/emotional and academic support in the classroom is designed for any and all educators who have a passion for upholding the wellbeing of their learners and for designing fun and engaging modern curriculum. It is for open-minded adults seeking to educate learners while being the learner concurrently. This type of pedagogy does not have any clear rules or terms to follow. Instead, it is designed for a malleable learning environment as another accessible tool to be taken advantage of as you see fit.

Overall, students and their parents see TikTok as a tool to support social emotional wellbeing and it became a unique platform for building community successfully when used as a social emotional tool. At the end of the day, TikTok is only one of many enticing social media platforms to use as an academically and social/emotionally constructive pedagogical tool.

*"If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn"*

*-Ignacio Estrada*

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## **Appendix A: Student Survey Questions**

**Likert Scale Statements**

1- Strongly Agree

2-Agree

3-Neutral

4-Disagree

5-Strongly Disagree

- Doing TikToks with my class made me feel included and engaged.
- Making TikToks as a class made me feel like we had a positive classroom community.
- Doing TikToks in class supported my engagement in academics.
- TikTok is a good use of technology in the classroom.
- TikTok is an engaging way to learn as opposed to, for example, listening to the teacher talk or doing a worksheet.
- TikToks supported my personal happiness during remote learning.

**Short Answer**

1. Did you use TikToks at home or with your friends outside of school? If so, write about one time you used TikToks outside of school

2. Did creating tiktoks in class make you feel like you were becoming closer with your classmates? Like part of a community? Happy? Why do you think making tiktoks made you feel this way?

3. Did participating in TikToks help your engagement in your academics? Did they help you with Math, Reading, Grammar, classroom expectations, etc? Why?



4. How would your academics and/or personal wellbeing be different if you did not participate in the class Tik Tok this year throughout remote learning and transitioning to in person learning?

## **Appendix B: Parent Survey Questions**

**Likert Scale Statements**

1- Strongly Agree

2-Agree

3-Neutral

4-Disagree

5-Strongly Disagree

- The TikToks were helpful to your child's social-emotional wellbeing.
- The TikToks were effective in fostering a positive classroom environment/community.
- Your child's participation in class TikToks benefited their engagement in academics.
- TikTok is a worthwhile use of technology in the classroom.
- TikTok is an engaging kinesthetic teaching strategy.
- The TikToks positively affected your child's personal happiness/wellbeing during remote learning.
- The class TikToks helped build rapport between your child and their teacher & your child and their classmates.

**Short Answer**

1. Have the TikToks carried over to your life at home or with your child's friends? If so, how?
2. Please explain how your child's participation in our class TikToks have affected their wellbeing as a human being and/or as a student this year during remote learning.

3. How has the use of TikTok implemented a greater sense of community and/or social/emotional awareness for your child during this abnormal academic year?

## **Appendix C: Student Interview Questions**

1. Can you describe the process of how you learn a new TikTok dance? What is it like for you? How does it make you feel?
2. How is learning a TikTok different from other forms of learning in the classroom?
3. How does TikTok change the way you learn?
4. How does TikTok affect the way you feel?
5. How does TikTok affect the way you interact with other students in the class?
6. How does TikTok affect the way you interact with your teacher?
7. If you had to pick one of these social emotional skills: self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making, which would you say has been affected the most since participating in our class TikTok's? Was this in a positive or negative way? Explain.
8. How has your participation in our class TikTok's affected your attitude and beliefs about yourself, others, and school?
9. How has your participation with the whole class in [the researcher's] TikTok's influenced how you have adjusted to a new school year?
10. How has your participation in class TikTok's changed your engagement in academics?
11. Is there anything else regarding your participation in class TikTok's that you would like to share?

## **Appendix D: Parent Interview Questions**

1. Can you describe the process of how your child learns a new TikTok?
2. How does your child respond to the process?
3. What is it like for your child?
4. How does it make your child feel?
5. How is learning a TikTok different from other forms of learning in the classroom?
6. How does TikTok change the way your child learns?
7. How does TikTok affect the way your child interacts with other students in the class?
8. How does TikTok affect the way your child interacts with me as the teacher?
9. Social emotional learning is implemented to promote students' self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making skills. How has your child's participation in [the researcher's] class TikToks affected them in these areas?
10. How has your child's participation in [the researcher's] class TikTok's affected their attitude and beliefs about themselves, others, and school?
11. How has the class participation in [the researcher's] TikTok's affected their adjustment to a new school year?
12. How has your child's participation in [the researcher's] TikTok's affected their engagement in academics?
13. Is there anything else regarding your child's participation in class TikTok's that you would like to share?