NEW LITERACIES PRACTICES OF EARLY CAREER ENGLISH TEACHERS: FROM DIGITAL SPACES TO THE CLASSROOM

Jonathan T. Bartels

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Education (Culture, Curriculum, & Change).

Chapel Hill
2013

Approved by:
Cheryl Mason Bolick
Julie Justice
George Noblit
Jim Trier
Carl A. Young
ABSTRACT

JONATHAN T. BARTELS: New Literacies Practices of Early Career English Teachers: From Digital Spaces to the Classroom (Under the direction of Dr. Cheryl Mason Bolick)

Within the field of education, the phrase technological revolution has become a popular trope in our society, particularly in the past decade. As new technologies are introduced, they are often touted to be the keystone to a new age of education. In the past hundred years, many technologies have come and gone, but not much has changed in education. The field of new literacies research takes a particular interest in new and emerging technologies and promotes the idea that new technologies have changed what it means to be literate in our society. In this, the perception of change that new literacies promotes is different as it places the emphasis on the social engagement the technologies facilitate as opposed to the technology itself. The millennial generation, who is now coming of age and entering the workforce, grew up alongside these technologies. Having never known a world without digital technologies, many scholars have written about this generation and the changes they may bring to the work place and society. This collective case study investigates the relationship of the new literacies practices this generation of early career English teachers engage in their use of popular, social technologies for personal reasons and their classroom practice as teachers. The findings of this study indicate that the new literacies practices the teachers use in their personal usage of social technologies can be seen echoing in their classroom teaching practices.
Table of Contents

I. Introduction ........................................................................................................13
   Social Media .....................................................................................................13
   Push for Rapid Transformation in Education ..................................................16
   Technology in the English Classroom ...............................................................18
   New Literacies ..................................................................................................19
   Rationale ...........................................................................................................20
   Research Questions ........................................................................................22
   Organization of Dissertation .........................................................................22
   Summary ..........................................................................................................22

II. Literature Review ..........................................................................................24
   The State of Social Media ...............................................................................24
   Educational Change Models ........................................................................26
   New Literacies ................................................................................................29
      New Literacies Studies (NLS) .................................................................29
      New literacies ............................................................................................31
      Defining a new literacies approach .........................................................34
         A concise, working definition of new literacies ...............................35
   New Literacies in the English Classroom .....................................................36
What does the new literacies literature tell us?..............................41
Political Economy of Communication.............................................41
Summary.......................................................................................43

III. Research Methodology..................................................................44
Research Approach..........................................................................44
Participants.......................................................................................46
Carla.................................................................................................48
Laura...............................................................................................48
Kevin...............................................................................................49
Research Sites..................................................................................50
Ethical Protection of Participants.................................................54
Researcher Positionality..............................................................54
Data Collection.................................................................................56
Classroom observations..............................................................56
Digital observations........................................................................57
Interviews.........................................................................................58
Data Analysis...................................................................................58
Summary.........................................................................................59

IV. Case 1 Findings: Carla.................................................................61
Carla’s Personal Use of Social Media.............................................61
Themes in Carla’s social media usage...........................................65
Political economy of communication
and Carla’s social media usage..................................................72
Carla in the Classroom.................................................................73
Physical setting.................................................................74
Classroom technology.......................................................75
Yearbook class.................................................................77
English IV class...............................................................79
Themes in Carla’s classroom..............................................84
Political economy of communication
and Carla’s classroom.....................................................90
Relationship of Social Media and Classroom Practices........91
Summary of Case 1 Findings.............................................92

V. Case 2 Findings: Laura..................................................93
Laura’s Personal Use of Social Media.................................93
Themes in Laura’s social media usage...............................96
Political economy of communication
and Laura’s social media usage.......................................103
Laura in the Classroom....................................................103
Physical setting...............................................................104
Classroom technology.....................................................106
Sixth grade English inclusion.........................................107
Themes in Laura’s classroom............................................110
Political economy of communication
and Laura’s classroom..................................................116
Relationship of Social Media and Classroom Practices.....117
Summary of Case 2 Findings.............................................119

VI. Case 3 Findings: Kevin...............................................121
Kevin’s Personal Use of Social Media...............................121
Themes in Kevin’s social media usage...............................122

Political economy of communication and Kevin’s social media usage...............................127

Kevin in the Classroom.................................................................127

Physical setting...........................................................................128

Classroom technology.................................................................129

English II......................................................................................130

Honors English II.........................................................................134

Themes in Kevin’s classroom.......................................................135

Political economy of communication and Kevin’s classroom.................................................140

Relationship of Social Media and Classroom Practices.........................................................141

Summary of Case 3 Findings.............................................................142

VII. Discussion..................................................................................144

Case 1: Carla..................................................................................144

How does Carla make personal use of social media?...........................................145

How does Carla negotiate the professional practice of teaching?.................................146

Identifying a relationship..................................................................149

Summary.........................................................................................151

Case 2: Laura..................................................................................151

How does Laura make personal use of social media?...........................................152

How does Laura negotiate the professional practice of teaching?.................................153

Identifying a relationship..................................................................154
| Summary | 157 |
| Case 3: Kevin | 157 |
| How does Kevin make personal use of social media? | 158 |
| How does Kevin negotiate the professional practice of teaching? | 158 |
| Identifying a relationship | 160 |
| Summary | 162 |
| The Echo | 162 |
| Refraction | 163 |
| Interference | 164 |
| Absorption | 164 |
| The echo relationship | 165 |
| Summary of Discussion | 165 |

**VIII. Conclusion** | 167 |
| Findings | 167 |
| How do millennial, early career English teachers make personal use of social media? | 167 |
| How do millennial, early career English teachers negotiate the professional practice of teaching? | 168 |
| What is the relationship between millennial, early career English teachers’ personal usage of social media and their daily classroom practices? | 168 |
| Theoretical Implications | 169 |
| Political economy of new literacies | 169 |
| Connected ethnography | 169 |
| Teaching Implications | 170 |
List of Tables

Table 1: Participants..............................................................................................47
Table 2: School Demographics..............................................................................52
Table 3: Social Media Site Demographics..............................................................53
Table 4: Sample Artifact Collection Table............................................................57
Table 5: Overview of Carla’s Social Media Usage...............................................63
Table 6: Carla’s Social Media Usage: Sharing......................................................65
Table 7: Carla’s Social Media Usage: Collective Intelligence..............................68
Table 8: Carla’s Social Media Usage: Multimodality...........................................70
Table 9: Carla’s Yearbook Activities....................................................................78
Table 10: Carla’s English IV Activities.................................................................80
Table 11: Carla’s Teaching: Practical Flexibility..................................................84
Table 12: Carla’s Teaching: Distributed Authority...............................................87
Table 13: Carla’s Teaching: Collective Intelligence.............................................89
Table 14: Comparison of Case 1 Themes.............................................................91
Table 15: Comparison of Case 1 Political Economy of Communication Moments.................................................................................92
Table 16: Overview of Laura’s Social Media Usage............................................94
Table 17: Laura’s Social Media Usage: #hashtagging........................................98
Table 18: #livetweetTWC....................................................................................100
Table 19: Laura’s Social Media Usage: Multimodality.......................................101
Table 20: Laura’s Sixth Grade English Activities.............................................108
Table 21: Laura’s Teaching: Directive Information............................................112
Table 22: Laura’s Teaching: Multimodality.........................................................114
Table 23: Comparison of Case 2 Themes............................................................118
Table 24: Comparison of Case 2 Political Economy
          of Communication Moments..............................................................119
Table 25: Overview of Kevin’s Social Media Usage........................................122
Table 26: Kevin’s Social Media Usage: Broadcasting....................................123
Table 27: Kevin’s Social Media Usage: Multimodality....................................125
Table 28: Kevin’s Social Media Usage: Connectivity.....................................126
Table 29: Kevin’s English II Activities............................................................132
Table 30: Kevin’s Teaching: Contextual Framing.............................................136
Table 31: Kevin’s Teaching: Multimodality......................................................137
Table 32: Kevin’s Teaching: Technological Management...............................138
Table 33: Comparison of Case 3 Themes..........................................................141
Table 34: Comparison of Case 3 Political Economy
          of Communication Moments..............................................................142
List of Figures

Figure 1: Carla’s Classroom ................................................................. 75
Figure 2: Difference in Laura’s Facebook and Twitter Postings ............. 95
Figure 3: Laura’s Classroom 1 ............................................................ 105
Figure 4: Laura’s Classroom 2 ............................................................ 106
Figure 5: Kevin’s Classroom .............................................................. 129
Chapter 1: Introduction

New and emerging digital technologies carry with them new sets of literacies and ways of approaching communication; however, little is currently known about the relationship of these literacies and education; very little research exploring the everyday literacies young teachers engage in their usage of these technologies exists today. In order to better understand the perceived gap between personal use of technology and professional practice, we must gain a better understanding of the literacy practices associated with these ubiquitous immersive technologies. This collective case study was designed to identify and examine the relationship between the literacies associated with early career English teachers’ personal use of social media and their general pedagogical approaches in the classroom.

Social Media

In the past decade, the Internet has grown and expanded at an astounding speed and become a ubiquitous aspect of public, social life. In this time, the Internet turned a conceptual social corner, becoming more interactive and commutation driven with the rise of social media. Recent studies by the Pew Internet and American Life Project estimated that approximately two thirds of all American adults online (Smith, 2011) and three fourths of young adults online have and use social media accounts (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, and Zickuhr, 2010). The primary cited uses of social media are communicating with friends and connecting with friends and individuals with shared
interests (Smith, 2011). The communication that happens over social media environments is different than previously used methods of correspondence because of the multimodal and dynamic nature of the digital environments.

Social media is a particular category of online application which falls under the heading of Web 2.0: a paradigm of web-based technologies which positions the responsibility of the creation and maintenance of content on the users, not the programmers (O’Reilly, 2004). While it is characterized by technical markers such as Rich Site Summary (RSS) and script that allows user-generated modifications, Web 2.0 is also centered on a different way of thinking—a collective intelligence (O’Reilly, 2004). “Web 2.0 is primarily interesting from a philosophical standpoint. It’s about relinquishing control, it’s about openness, trust, and authenticity. [The associated coding scripts, such as] APIs, tags, Ajax, mash-ups, and all that are symptoms, outputs, results of this philosophical bent” (Merholz, 2005, para. 5). The functions of Web 2.0 technologies have created a philosophy that is embodied in web-based applications where multiple parties are able to collaborate on content to be consumed and modified by other users, without need of coding knowledge or access to server space (Salz, 2005; Gordon-Murnane, 2006). Instead of providing content or a consumable product, an interface is provided for the consumer to create his or her own content or product. This generation of web-based applications often involves pre-fabricated templates for users to upload and download content of various forms (Macnamara, 2010). Web 2.0 technologies are a naturally collaborative, simple means of sharing multimedia content in an interchangeable and personal way (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). This conceptual shift created a new type of media which can be defined in many ways, but most
definitions include similar characteristics: multimodal, networked, digitally interactive, and dialogic (Logan, 2010).

Social media is a specific subset of Web 2.0 the online environments that emphasize the creation and exchange of all types of user-generated media within a digitally-mediated community (Kaplan & Haelein, 2010). Social media platforms often engage mobile technologies in addition to web-based interfaces. This portability is a contributing factor to the massive influence social media has had on the way our society communicates (Kietzmann & Hermkens, 2011). The practices enacted by the users of these technologies are often regarded as participatory culture. Jenkins (2006, p. 7) defines participatory culture as one:

1) with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement
2) with strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations
3) with some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices
4) where members believe their contributions matter.
5) where members feel some degree of social connection with one another. (p. 7)

Instead of it being centered on the page creator sharing or giving information, it is about the collective intelligence and gives agency to the page users. This emphasis on collaboration and sharing shifted the power structure of popular internet usage.

In thinking about power structures, previous web design was built on a hierarchical model where the page creator had the power and control. The shift to the Web 2.0 paradigm of user generated content illustrates a shift in the function in the general usage of the Internet from a medium of consumption to a medium of production for all users. The popularity and multiple uses of this paradigm shift received a great deal of attention from educators hoping to create a similar shift in educational systems.
Push for Rapid Transformation in Education

Since the launch of the personal computer in the early 1980’s, there has been a push on all levels to incorporate more technology into compulsory education. In the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report it was indicated that all high school graduates needed to be able to both understand and use computer technology (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* continued this emphasis on technology by forwarding the idea that students should be technologically literate by the time they enter high school (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2001). In 2010, the bar was raised when the *National Education Technology Plan* (NETP) issued a call for “revolutionary transformation [of education] rather than evolutionary tinkering” (Office of Educational Technology, 2010, p. ix). This model makes use of “learning powered by technology” (p. x) to enhance learning, assessment, teaching, and productivity. The call reflects the near ubiquitous state of technology in today’s society. “Just as technology is at the core of virtually every aspect of our daily lives and work, it is central to implementing the model of 21st century learning in this plan” (p. 3).

Koehler and Mishra (2008) identify that earlier technologies that have been successfully integrated into schools (e.g. the pencil, microscope, and overhead projector) are characterized by specificity, stability, and transparency of function. These technologies have a very clear use, they are very sustainable, and are generally mechanically understood. Unfortunately, computer and Internet technologies are none of these things; they are dynamic systems that do not have a singular specificity. Software updates, shifting online business models, and frequent hardware advances are just a few of the factors that make the computer-based technologies unstable, and, therefore,
difficult to sustain in schools. This is a contributing reason why schools have largely neglected to successfully incorporate them (Zhao, 2009).

Some would argue that schools are addressing new technologies; however, they are often incorporating new technologies as new tools to teach the same content in, fundamentally, the same way. Lankshear and Knobel (2006) refer to this practice of wrapping old content and pedagogy in new technology as the “old wine in new bottles syndrome.”

*The webpage or slide show stands in for paper, pencil and crayon as medium for presenting stories or recounts. The webquest stands in for the photocopied worksheet where the teacher poses a question or problem and provides a list of resources students are to use in tackling it. The school website stands in for an occasional newsletter or a printed prospectus or parent-teacher information evening. The blog stands in for homework notebooks. (p. 55)*

The keyboard replaces the pencil, the SmartBoard replaces the chalkboard, the MacBook replaces the notebook, but the epistemology of schools remains widely the same. In this, the school is failing to recognize the transformation brought about by the new technologies (Zhao, 2009). Harris, Mishra, and Koehler (2009) noted that there is often a discrepancy between the visions of transformative uses of technology in the classroom and the actual implementation and support of the uses of the technology in the classroom. They go on to suggest that there are five dominant approaches to integrating technology into education: (a) software-focused initiatives; (b) demonstrations of sample resources, lessons, and projects; (c) technology-based educational reform efforts; (d) structured/standardized professional development workshops or courses; and (e) technology-focused teacher education courses. Harris, Mishra, and Koehler (2009) pointed out that these approaches are too focused on the technology. In fact, “most [technological] innovations [in education] have focused inordinately on the technology
rather than more fundamental issues of how to approach teaching subject matter with these technologies” (Mishra, Koehler, & Kereluik, 2009, p. 49). Unfortunately, these types of approaches do not address the transformative nature of current technologies. Cuban (2001) points out that simply infusing the infrastructure of technology is not the same as using technology in empowering and meaningful ways.

**Technology in the English Classroom**

In a recent issue of *English Journal*, Hicks, Young, Kajder, and Hunt (2012) surveyed the complete history of the journal to track themes of preparing students to succeed as writers in the 21st century. Through their review, Hicks, et al. (2012) created a sound synthesis of the influence of new media in English over the past one hundred years. In their analysis, three central themes were identified.

1. *Given adequate support, all students write and we should encourage them to be published writers.*
2. *Used purposefully, newer technologies and media can influence, support, and extend writing practices.*
3. *Despite all the cultural and technological changes in the types of texts we are able to produce and consume, and the revolutionary predictions we have made, not much has really changed in the teaching of English over the past 100 years.* (p. 68)

Hicks et al. (2012) noted that the introduction of computers to the classroom garnered more celebration, as well as criticism, than any other single technology. However, the computer generated very little change in how English is taught. Hicks, et al. (2012) went on to note that the challenge for English educators is in “translating the promise of these new technologies and the ideas they inspire for adapting our approach to teaching into sustained practice” (p. 72). Again, it is not the technology that can foster change; instead, Hicks, et al. (2012), pointed to the fact that instructional approach is what can foster transformative change that we often credit to technology.
Digital technologies have become a part of everyday life in our society. The field of education has widely struggled to incorporate these technologies in meaningful ways. This is often a result of technological infrastructure instability (such as outdated hardware or software), unclear or undefined uses of the technology, and/or prioritization of the technology over the pedagogy.

**New Literacies**

In attempts to address the issues surrounding technology in education, this study engages the theoretical frameworks of new literacies (Lanshear & Knobel, 2011; Corio, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008; etc.) in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship of early career English teachers personal usage of social media and their pedagogical practices.

The field of new literacies work is one that is continuing to be developed, expanded, and refined. As such, there are multiple interpretations of the term ‘new literacies’ (Corio, et al., 2008). In order to identify how new literacies will be used in this study, it is useful to break the term down. The ‘new’ in new literacies signals both a paradigmatic and ontological shift (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). The paradigmatic shift can be seen in the ‘New Literacy Studies’ work of Street (1995, 1998) and Gee (1991, 1996), in which the term ‘new’ is used to signal a shift in literacy theory and research from a psycholinguistic focus to a sociocultural focus. ‘New Literacy,’ as opposed to ‘new literacy,’ is focused on meaning making, identity, and socially constructed literacies (Gee, 1996). Lankshear and Knobel (2006) identify “little l” literacy as the process of decoding and encoding multimodal texts, and “big L” Literacy as the practices of “meaning making, social significance-making, and identity-making” (p. 234). A key
concept of New Literacy is that the individual’s identities that are embedded in
discourses and literacies “mediate and are mediated by the texts they read, write, and talk
about” (Moje et al., 2009, p. 416).

The ontological shift of ‘new’ can be seen in the “digital turn” (Mills, 2010,
p.246) in literacy work, shifting the focus to the influence of emerging technologies,
particularly the Internet, on literacy practices (Corio et al., 2008). Lankshear and Knobel
(2011) refer to these technological tools as the ‘stuff’ of new literacies. This ‘stuff’ leads
to questions about the possible impact of technologies on literacy (Corio et al., 2008).

“The new literacies studies is about studying new types of literacy beyond print literacy,
especially digital literacies and literacy practices embedded in popular culture” (Gee,
2010, p. 31). The ‘new literacies,’ unlike ‘New Literacy,’ may focus on psycholinguistic
issues based in new and emerging technologies. The new literacies studies are plural in
that they are interested in looking at different types of digital literacy practices:
information literacy, ICT literacy, computer literacy, and so on (Corio, et al., 2008).

Rationale

While the trope of a digital revolution is widely over used, it cannot be denied that
we are currently in a moment of highly visible social change as a result of connective
technologies becoming ubiquitous in society. Houle (2008) refers to it as the Shift Age
and notes that this shift is being driven by the heightening level of electronic
connectiveness, the rise in global thinking and awareness, and the elevation of the
individual. Some promote the idea that schools in American are in the midst of an
information or knowledge revolution as a result of the volume of resources available via
the Internet. In the classroom, this information revolution repositions the teacher away
from being the source of knowledge because of the level of access to information through
digital mediums (Collins & Halverson, 2009).

The millennial generation comprises the second largest generation, following the
baby-boomer generation, in our society (Jones & Fox, 2009). Millennials are effectively
replacing the baby-boomers in the workforce as millennials are now entering the
workforce while baby-boomers are beginning to reach the age of retirement. While the
level of connectivity and use of technologies among millennials is widely varied (Jones,
Ramanau, Cross, & Healing, 2010), this generation comprises the largest demographic of
Internet and social media users. Currently, more than 90% of young adults, ages 18-24,
identify themselves as Internet users (Smith, Rainie, & Zickuhr, 2011). Of these users,
roughly 75% make use of some sort of social media (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr,
2010). While the particular websites and platforms are shifting, the number of users is
steadily growing. As a result of this generation being born into a world of personal
computers and growing up alongside the Internet, they exhibit a heightened level of
connectivity and a shift in engagement style (Savage, 2003).

In order for education programs to avoid the pitfalls that have been demonstrated
in many technology integration initiatives, it is important that we first understand how
this new generation of educators engage in connective technologies, such as social media,
and how this engagement can impact their pedagogical practices. Currently, there is very
little research focusing on early career teachers’ everyday literacy practices via digital
technologies (Wilber, 2008). This study seeks to bridge this gap in the literature in order
to better understand the relationship of personal technology usage and professional
classroom practice.
Research Questions

To help bridge this gap in the literature, this study is seeking to identify the relationship between millennial, early career English teachers’ use of social media and their teaching practice. To address this issue, the follow questions must be answered: (a) How do millennial, early career English teachers make personal use of social media? (b) How do millennial, early career English teachers negotiate their professional practice as classroom teachers? (c) What is the relationship between millennial, early career English teachers’ personal usage of social media and their daily classroom practices?

Organization of Dissertation

Following this introductory chapter, the current state of social media, theories of educational change and new literacies, research on new literacies, and the frame of the political economy of communication will be presented in the literature review. Chapter three describes the methodological approach of this study. Chapters four through six presents the findings from the three cases addressed in this study (chapter four presents the findings of case one, chapter five the findings of case two, and chapter six the findings of case three). The findings are discussed case-by-case in chapter seven along with the mapping of the emerging theory of the echo relationship. Chapter eight synthesizes the findings and discussions to succinctly answer the research questions and address the implications.

Summary

The rise and popularity of social media has created new sets of literacies. It is important that we gain a better understanding of these new literacies to better integrate technology in education, both at the K-12 and higher education levels, in meaningful
ways. This study seeks to identify the personal new literacy practices each early career English teacher participant employs in his or her personal use of social media as well as in the classroom. To the extent possible, this study will then identify how the new literacies these teachers enact in social media spaces are related to those enacted in their classroom teaching.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The field of new literacies has grown and expanded in the past decade and continues to change along with emerging technologies. New literacies’ many forms can be confusing and sometimes difficult to conceptualize for classroom practice, especially since the current research is fairly thin and often techno-centric. In moving forward with new literacies work, it is imperative to establish a working definition of new literacies to clearly define the paradigm in which one’s research is centered. These components will be addressed while situating the current study amongst the state of social media; proposed models of educational change; the historical roots of the primary theoretical framework of new literacies; the current state of research efforts in the area of new literacies and secondary English; and the potential use of political economy of communication as a framework for considering power relations.

The State of Social Media

In 2009, an estimated 47% of adult Internet users used some form of social networking site (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). By 2010, that number had increased to 59% of adult Internet users who had at least one social networking account. Among these users, a majority (92%) use Facebook. Additionally, when compared to Internet users who do not use social networking sites, these users are considered by researchers Hampton, Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell (2011) to be more trusting of other Internet users, have more access to peer support systems, and are more politically active.
In recent years, smartphones have started to replace laptop and desktop computers (as well as televisions) as a primary tool for accessing information and communicating with peers (Newspaper Association of America & New Media Innovation Lab, 2010). Between 2010 and 2011, the number of people with smartphone subscriptions increased by 45%; an analysis of teenagers cell phone bills indicated they used an average of 320 megabytes of data a month, an increase of 256% from the previous year’s survey. Additionally, teens indicated a preference for texting over voice calling (Nielsen, 2012). With a strong preference for text-based communication, youth and young adults are writing more than any previous generation. However, they do not consider this type of personal writing to have any relationship to writing as it is taught in schools (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, & MacGill, 2008).

Failing to see the two approaches towards writing as being one in the same may be due to the fact that today’s teaching practices are not aligned with the societal usage of technology. For example, school Internet content filters often hinder the use of web-based tools, which limits access to information, a particularly large problem for a generation used to having access to most everything at most anytime in most any place. When various digital tools are used, they are most often assigned as homework or to practice discrete skills and seen largely as a motivational device, as opposed to being used to increase cognitive, social, or psycholinguistic skills (Dredger, Woods, Beach, & Sagstetter, 2010). However, teachers are beginning to use more digital media in their classrooms. A majority of teachers (78%) strongly agree that digital media is best used when it is soundly integrated into instruction as opposed to serving as an add-on piece to a lesson. Within education, social media is beginning to emerge as a developing trend for
professional collaboration and communication (PBS, 2009). Schools and school districts are beginning to address the rise of influence of social media in policies and actions.

The uses and policies surrounding social media vary widely. Some school administrations have found social media to be a powerful and effective way to share information with parents and the surrounding communities. Other administrations are working to reconsider their acceptable use policies for technologies (Schachter, 2011). But when it comes to the personal social media use of teachers, there is still a great deal of uncertainty. Kist (2008) points to the fact that there has been apprehension, and even fear, with the introduction of many new forms of media (such as the moving picture, radio, and television), but social media faces so much fear that, in some cases, teachers have been banned from using the medium in their personal lives by their administrations. There are also those who believe that technologies such as social media hold the key to a new generation of education.

**Educational Change Models**

Promotion of educational reform through technology can be seen widely in academic literature. However, a majority of these assertions position technology as the central agent in the reform. What follows depicts conceptualizations of educational reform that they do not place the technology itself as the central change agent. Instead, these scholars identify key habits embodied in the technologies that can be harnessed in educational settings.

Through Gee’s (2007) work with video games, he has mapped out thirty-five learning principles present in popular video games and could be applied to classroom learning. Gee (2007) noted that “the theory of learning in good video games fits better
with the modern, high-tech, global world today’s children and teenagers live in than do the theories (and practices) of learning that they sometimes see in school” (p. 5). There are a few key themes that run through Gee’s (2007) principles of learning. First are issues of active and ongoing engagement. Video games are designed in a way that engage the player and keeps the player engaged through rapid, exaggerated feedback; individualized engagement; options for achievement; and scaffolded learning. Second, meaning is made in video games through multiple modes and is directly related to context. Finally, the player is not positioned as a passive consumer; the player has an active role in deciding how the game plays out and how he or she will exist within the game.

Davidson and Goldberg (2009) state that we, as a society, are early in a fast moving moment of development of online collaboration—what they identify as the most meaningful aspect of recent technological advances. Through collaborative work with colleagues to consider the significant impact of technologies on learning, they have come to ten principles they believe to be foundational to rethinking the future of education: (a) self-learning, (b) horizontal structures, (c) from presumed authority to collective credibility, (d) a de-centered pedagogy, (e) networked learning, (f) open source education, (g) learning as connectivity and interactivity, (h) lifelong learning, (i) learning institutions as mobilized networks, and (j) flexible scalability and simulation. Through these inter-related principles, Davidson and Goldberg (2009) convey how educational systems can mirror changes seen in society through the use of new technologies. Some significant components of the authors’ proposal include an emphasis on collaboration to enhance learning, navigation of information over memorization, and a responsive learning environment.
Houle and Cobb (2011) suggest that, as a result of the changing generational demographics and skill sets needed in the job market, transformation of the educational system is inevitable. They mapped out four concepts they believe will drive and shape the transformation in the coming decades: (a) community-centric schools, (b) five Cs—creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, content, and context,— (c) shape shifting, and (d) a simple collective choice. Houle and Cobb (2011) noted ways to connect schools to the local and global community in order to enhance “real world” learning. They also discuss the need to be responsive and flexible in our ideas of and approaches to education. The authors’ idea of the five Cs, which they believe need to be added to reading, writing, and arithmetic as core components of the educational process. The ideas of enhancing creativity, expanding collaboration, and developing critical thinking are fairly straightforward. Houle and Cobb (2011) pointed out that the very idea of content is no longer static. Through digital technologies content can be accessed, used and reused, shared, remixed, and created. They challenged traditional ideas of content and argue that it is more important that students become masters of context than masters of content. As a result of the heightened levels of access to so much information and content, a thorough understanding of context allows students to identify the pertinent information and content and understand how to use it in meaningful ways. Houle and Cobb (2011) concluded their recommendations by noting that the tools and knowledge needed to make a transformational shift are currently in our hands, we just need to decide to do something with them. While technology is an important factor in how our society is changing, it is not what will change our schools. Houle and Cobb (2011) cite leadership, vision, and
collective will as the three critical components that truly have the power to transform education.

While these three approaches to educational transformation use different approaches, they all come to some strikingly similar recommendations that mirror principles found in Web 2.0 technologies. Gee (2007), Davidson and Goldberg (2008), and Houle and Cobb (2011) all emphasize issues of collaboration, decentering of authority, reconsidering traditional content, and the significance of context. These themes are also key components for a new literacies stance.

**New Literacies**

Wikipedia identifies new literacies as “new forms of literacy made possible by digital technology developments, although new literacies do not necessarily have to involve use of digital technologies to be recognized as such” (“New literacies,” 2013, para. 1). While often considered to be a questionable source as a result of the fact that it is open to peer editing (Chen, 2010), Wikipedia is particularly appropriate for defining new literacies because it represents so many of the aspects that are important to the field of new literacies. The following section maps the theoretical history of new literacies and situate how new literacies will be frame within this study.

**New Literacy Studies (NLS).** The field of new literacies was born out of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) movement, which seeks to “study literacy (reading and writing) as a sociocultural achievement rather than a cognitive one” (Gee, 2010, p.9). The NLS positions literacy as a “social and cultural achievement—it was about ways of participating in social and cultural groups—not just a mental achievement [...] The NLS saw readers and writers as engaged in social or cultural practices.” (Gee, 2010, p. 17-18).
The way in which Gee (2010) distinguished between cognitive and social literacy is exemplified in his distinction between discourse and Discourse.

Gee (2008) generally identifies discourse (with a little/lowercase d) as the general usage of language. What he defines as a Discourse (with a big/capital D) involves language usage, but also much more.

A Discourse is a socially accepted association among ways of using language and other symbolic expressions of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting as well as using various tools, technologies, or props that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or “social network,” to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful “role,” or to signal that one is filling a social niche in a distinctively recognizable fashion. (Gee, 2008, p. 161)

In this approach to literacy, the cognitive work of decoding and encoding of alphabetic text is the discourse (little d) and the cultural practices associated with the decoding and encoding many forms of text to create meaning is the Discourse (big D). Big D Discourse also situates an individual’s identity as a way of being through how he or she makes meaning in the world beyond text alone.

Identity, in regards to Discourse (big D), is considered to be “the ability to be recognized as a ‘kind of person’ [...] within a given context” (Black, 2007, p. 118).

Further, identity is not situated as a singular or fixed representation.

Each of us is a member of many Discourses, and each Discourse represents one of our ever multiple identities. These Discourses need not, and often don’t, represent consistent and compatible values. There are conflicts among them, and each of us lives and breathes these conflicts as we act out our various Discourses. (Gee, 2008, p. 4)

Discourse (big D) is a way of being within various contexts. This sociocultural approach to literacy identifies literacy as being an act that if fundamentally interconnected with identity performance. It was this approach to literacy that was taken up with the new literacies.
**New literacies.** The study of new literacies builds on the sociocultural approach to literacy and specifically looks at how digital tools are used in, and influence, the creation and interpretation of meanings (Corio et al., 2008; Gee, 2004, 2007, 2010; Kist, 2005; Knobel and Lankshear, 2007; Kress, 2003; Lankshear, 1997; Lankshear and Knobel, 2006). New literacies identifies ‘literacies’ as existing beyond print and dealing with “new digital literacies and literacy practices embedded in contemporary popular culture” (Gee, 2010, p.9). Unlike traditional literacy, new literacies are not confined to the process of decoding written words and encoding in the same format. Instead, literacies are multiple (The New London Group, 1996), multimodal (Hull & Schultz, 2002), semiotic (Baker, 2001; Gee, 2007; Kress, 2003), social (Street, 1998), and are required by the Internet or other emerging, social technologies (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Gee (2010) notes that the study of new literacies is similar to NLS in that new literacies studies also argue that the meanings created with these technologies are determined by social, cultural, historical, and institutional practices which almost always involve more than just technology usage alone.

While many digital technologies (e.g. video games, e-readers, and video editing software) have been represented in in the studies of new literacies, the Internet is widely considered to be the central technology fueling new literacies because of its widespread use and social influence, rapid dissemination of new technologies, and creation of access points to vast amounts of information for all users.
No previous technology for literacy has been adopted by so many, in so many different places, in such a short period, and with such profound consequences. No previous technology for literacy permits the immediate dissemination of even new technologies of literacy to every person on the Internet by connecting to a single link on a screen. Finally, no previous technology for literacy has provided access to so much information that is so useful, to so many people, in the history of the world. (Corio, et al., 2008, p. 2-3)

The Internet does not mark a single point of change in the technology of literacies, but that the Internet, as a technology, is a source of immediate and continuous change to literacy technologies. This continuous movement and redefining of literacy positions new literacies as deictic—a linguistic term for words such as here, there, now, today, go, and come (Leu, et al., 2004). This situates new literacies as a highly contextual form of literacy that, by definition, will change and morph within different contexts. In this, new literacies, like the phrase ‘new technologies’, does not simply address one moment in time or a single idea.

While the movement of new literacies is directly related to the affordances of changing technologies, it is important to note that the study of new literacies is not about becoming proficient in a specific technology. Instead, new literacies is identified as “a larger mindset and the ability to continuously adapt to the new literacies required by the new technologies that rapidly and continuously spread” (Corio, et al., 2008, p. 5). For instance, it is not as important that a student understand the technical components needed to support a blogging platform as the student understands the larger conventions of communicating ideas through the medium of blogs.

Some researchers argue that developing a precise definition of new literacies may never be possible because of the significant fact that new literacies are in a constant state of change as a result of their relationship to new and emerging technologies and forms of
communication (Leu, et al., 2004). As a result, the definitions researchers and scholars individually ascribe to new literacies are often widely varied and more typically identify how they conceptually approach new literacies.

Leu et. al (2004) note that it is too early to ascribe a defining, comprehensive theory of new literacies, but that these ten characteristics should frame the central principals of new literacies.

1. The Internet and other ICTs [information and communication technologies] are central technologies for literacy within a global community in an information age.
2. The Internet and other ICTs require new literacies to fully access their potential.
3. New literacies are deictic.
4. The relationship between literacy and technology is transactional.
5. New literacies are multiple in nature.
6. Critical literacies are central to the new literacies.
7. New forms of strategic knowledge are central to the new literacies.
8. Speed counts in important ways within the new literacies.
9. Learning often is socially constructed within new literacies.
10. Teachers become more important, though their role changes, within new literacy classrooms. (p. 1589)

Moving across these ten principals four key themes stand out. First, the significance of information and communication technologies cannot be underestimated. As these technologies continue to grow and their use continues to expand, our interaction with them changes the very nature of communication. Second, as the technologies change the ways we are able to communicate, we are also influencing the technologies through how we employ them. Third, to navigate information in the changing world requires multiple forms of literacies as well as new methods of content evaluation in order to quickly make sense of information and communicate. Finally, with these huge changes in what it means to be literate in our society, learning and teaching also have to change. In order to address
how to enact these needed changes, we must first address how we approach new literacies.

**Defining a new literacies approach.** Lankshear and Knobel (2006) suggest that new literacies are specifically distinctive because they involve two distinctive aspects: ethos and technos. The ethos of new literacies refers to the “socially recognized ways of generating, communicating and negotiating meaningful content through the medium of encoded texts within contexts of participation in Discourses” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006, p. 64). Lankshear and Knoble (2006) make use of Gee’s (2008) work on (big D) Discourse. This approach is considered to work across several of the different constructs of new literacies. First, Lankshear and Knobel (2011) build the idea of ‘socially recognized ways’ from Scribner and Cole’s (1981, as cited in Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) notion of practices—“socially developed and patterned ways of using technology and knowledge to accomplish tasks” (p. 286). Second, they used the term “encoding” to identify more than simply creating words with letters. “Encoding means rendering texts in forms that allow them to be retrieved, worked with, and made available independently of the physical presence of an enunciator” (p. 286). Finally, Lankshear and Knobel (2011) identify that “social practices of literacy are discursive. Discourse can be seen as the underlying principle of meaning and meaningfulness” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 286).

The second new feature, the technos, involves practices used in digital mediums—including manipulating an interface using a mouse, creating hyperlinks between digital items, using emoticons, and identifying file types and sources amongst others. These types of ‘technos stuff,’ as they call it, are “mediated by post-typographic
forms of text” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006, p. 25), as opposed to the ‘ethos stuff’ which denotes a shift in mindset from more traditional literacy and depicts new literacies as more participatory, collaborative, and distributed than traditional, print-based literacy. Lankshear and Knobel (2003, 2006, & 2011) consider the ‘ethos stuff’ to be critical in identifying new literacies.

Lankshear and Knobel (2006) place more emphasis on the new ethos stuff than they do on the new technos stuff. “[I]f a literacy does not have what we call new ethos stuff we do not regard it as a new literacy, even if it has new technical stuff” (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007). This is a very important distinction between the use of new technologies and the use of new literacies. While new literacies are influenced and shaped with new technologies, the simple inclusion of new technologies does not mean that new literacies work is being done. In fact, new literacies work can be done outside of the new technologies for. “[...] New literacies may produce skills that support navigations of old media (i.e., print-on-paper media)” (Moje, 2009, p. 349). However, when considering the new literacies developed through personal use of new technologies, it can often be challenging to identify transferable applications to the classroom setting (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008).

A concise, working definition of new literacies. Since there are different approaches to framing and examining new literacies, it is important to explicitly identify exactly how new literacies is being defined for this work prior to moving forward. The working definition of new literacies, as engaged in this study, is built primarily out of Lankshear and Knobel’s (2006) definition cited above. This study adheres to the belief that new literacies are being comprised of multiple, socially recognized ways of
communication that involves both ‘new technos’ and ‘new ethos’ and are deeply connected within context but that the ‘new technos’ does not necessarily indicate the immediate presence of digital technologies.

**New Literacies in the English Classroom**

The literature selected in this review was selected in relation to the following criteria. First, that it represented new literacies work dealing with either secondary English classrooms or English education. Second, that it not be focused on a single activity or piece of technology, as Lankshear and Knobel recommend. Third, that it be timely enough to reflect recent changes and influence of social media technologies, which translates into research that reflects activities that have emerged within the last ten years. The following section will present the articles that met these criteria, identify themes amongst the articles, and situate the articles within a new literacies frame.

Different forms of media are very popular as a tool within the genre of new literacies work. Popular media, such as video games and blogs, were used as a jumping-off point for Gerber and Price (2011) in an article describing ways of using new media to engage students in various forms of writing. Gerber and Price (2011) promoted writing video game walk-throughs as a form of expository writing, blog posts about moral or ethical issues brought up in video games as persuasive writing, and writing fan fiction based on games as creative writing. They also argued that the use of popular media created an authentic learning experience for students.

Sewell and Denton (2011) shared their experience working to engage students through the creation of media within an authentic scenario. They approached new literacies from a multimodal perspective in their work engaging students in the
production of “multimodal, technology-infused projects” (Sewell & Denton, 2011, p. 61). The types of multimodal projects identified in their article included a podcasting assignment as a review of literary terms and an audio public service announcement for further engagement with the tested literary terms. Sewell and Denton (2011) noted that they faced struggles incorporating this type of assignment into their classroom syllabus. These struggles were in the form of needing to learn new software as well as adjusting their teaching styles to the multimodal positioning. Ultimately, the researchers, citing raised test scores among the students, deemed the project a success. Both of these studies would be challenged on their stance within new literacies, as it is defined by Lankshear and Knobel (2006) and defined above. Gerber and Price (2011) were engaging new technologies which require new literacies, but then produced entirely text-based products. Sewell and Denton (2011) were engaging students in new literacies productions, but to support the memorization of vocabulary terms—what some would consider to be “old literacy.” Both examples clearly involve the ‘new technos’ of new literacies, but it is unclear to what level the ‘new ethos’ is actually involved.

The ‘new ethos’ was fully embraced in Graham and Benson’s (2010) report of their own work in teaching to blur the boundaries of what is and is not text as they worked with preservice teachers designing “practical application of ‘new literacies’ theories” (p. 93). In this work they used a multimodal approach to new literacies focusing on non-traditional forms of text—visual, spatial, gestural, audio, and linguistic. The preservice teachers were asked to engage with multiple forms of a text where the primary text was in the form of an episode of a television show of their choosing. They were then asked to locate additional information about that episode online and analyze how the
different modes worked together. Finally, the preservice teachers were asked to create a lesson involving some form of non-print-based product. In the end, the preservice teachers were able to identify the different modes, but struggled to analyze why using different modes mattered; the non-print texts used in the lessons were only positioned as supplemental rather than central to the lesson plans.

Another challenge to traditional notions of text is presented by Gainer and Lapp (2010) in their descriptions of sample activities that remix old and new literacies as a way to get students personally involved with texts. The activities described include (a) creating a montage juxtaposing official and unofficial learning spaces in school, (b) creating a comic book-style dialogue between the students and authors, (c) creating a narrative history of an everyday item, and (d) creating poetry that informs its audience of a real-life event. Gainer and Lapp (2010) note that all of these activities “invite students to (1) directly, electronically, or virtually create a social community interface; (2) identify a task concept and plan; and (3) utilize media to physically, electronically, or verbally create, comment, and collaborate” (p. 59). The goal of these activities was to engage the students in the notion that, as readers, they are active creators of meaning. Gainer and Lapp (2010) promoted the expansion of what we generally consider to be a text in classroom spaces.

Both Graham and Benson (2010) and Gainer and Lapp (2010) depicted moments where the ‘new ethos’ was deemed more important than the ‘new technos.’ While Gainer and Lapp (2010) used technology in the creation of the products, the same multimodal products could have been created outside of computer mediation. Webb (2007) shared how, out of the necessity caused by the lack of delivery of the ordered anthologies, he
explored using digital forms of literature instead of printed copies in his teaching. He noted that “[t]eaching the ‘new literacies’ involves not only learning about and taking advantage of new materials, […] but also helping students learn to think carefully and critically about what they read, mass media reports as well as literature” (Webb, 2007, p. 88). Webb highlighted the interactivity possible with digital texts, which were not possible with print texts, such as hyperconnectivity and the ability to manipulate and modify texts. A particular note of interest in Webb’s (2007) article was his explicit and honest remarks on his own teaching, as he was “experimenting” with his class. Within new literacies work, the manipulation of media is commonly referred to as remixing, which has become an increasingly popular and common activity online (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008).

The common practices and literacies students, at both the secondary and post-secondary levels, use in their everyday lives are primarily disconnected from the literacies promoted in classrooms (Alvermann, 2008). “Regardless of how much we, as teachers and teacher educators, might […] admire the writing skills, inventiveness, and social intuitions exhibited by adolescents who create online content, these markers of student expertise are given scant attention in our everyday classroom practices” (Alvermann, 2008, p. 13). This point is illustrated in a large-scale survey conducted by Dredger, Woods, Beach, and Sagstetter (2010), in which students in grades 7-12 (N=444) were asked about what motivated them to write both in and out of school. The responses indicated that outside of school, most students enjoyed writing when it was for communicative purposes or for self-expression. This varied from their responses addressing writing in school, in which grades were cited as the primary motivational
factor. Armed with this knowledge, the authors recommended that to increase engagement in classroom writing activities, teachers create space within their instructional time that promotes the types of writing the students use in their personal lives. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to identify how students write when the writing is not assigned and how technology factors into their approaches to writing.

In a case study examining the role of technology in nine high school students’ writing processes, Turner and Katic (2009) found that students were using non-textual representations, developing arguments and organizing writing in non-linear ways, and that the technologies created both affordances as well as interruptions. Ultimately, it was determined that the advantages of the affordances of the technologies far outweighed the interruptions caused by them. The Turner and Katic (2009) recommended that non-linear models of writing and technologies be included in writing instruction. This would allow for the space needed to support and develop the kind of new literacies writing that is needed today.

In attempts to address the bridge between personal use and professional practice Schieble (2010) researched how the literacy practices of fifteen preservice English teachers employed in their personal use of social networking sites impacted their teaching of young adult literature in an online course via Moodle. The participants in this study were able to draw on their experiences with social media to interact with and increase the engagement of their students. Schieble (2010) recommend creating more spaces in teacher preparation for preservice teachers to employ their personal literacy practices and to promote the creation of online professional networks of preservice and inservice teachers to facilitate professional discussion and sharing. It is the social media tools that
are changing how we communicate and what it means to be literate in our society that can also change the ways we engage in professional discourse.

**What does the new literacies literature tell us?** Currently, the body of literature that addresses new literacies in ways beyond individual activities and/or with a primary focus on singular digital tools is very thin. A vast majority of the literature is heavy on the ‘new technos’ and incredibly light on the ‘new ethos.’ Hicks, et. al (2012) note that this type of techno-centric focus has not advanced the ways we teach English in the past hundred years. Additionally, the employment of ‘new literacies’ activities as a motivational factor for students is what Kist (2005) refers to as a “spoonful of sugar” approach. Instead of these lessons actually being based in new literacies, a new literacies-esk activity is included to make the traditional literacy lesson more palatable. Hicks, et. al (2012) remind us that we need to stop focusing on and elevating the tool and do what we were hired to do—help our students acquire and develop the literacies needed to navigate the diverse forms of communication they face in the world today and in the future.

**Political Economy of Communication**

A central issue when considering the study of communication is power relations; this is particularly true with the study of communicative technology. While there are many ways to address issues of power, political economy of communication is situated in a way that fits particularly well within the new literacies approach enacted in this study.

Political economy of communication can be defined as the study of the social creation and exchange of meaning, “particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources” (Mosco, 2009, p. 2). This theoretical approach asks us to consider the meaning of being a producer,
distributor, and/or consumer and how power and control shift positions through the processes of production, distribution, and consumption. The producer creates a resource, which has use value. The use value of a resource fills a need. The distributor converts the use value to exchange value, a process referred to as commodification in which a resource becomes a commodity. The exchange value is the monetary value that is assigned to the resource. The consumer then makes an exchange for the commodity. This exchange is typically in the form of currency or, when it comes to communication, some form of labor. In a power relationship, the producer and distributor hold the most power while the consumer is relatively powerless.

A simplified example of this can be easily seen in mass media. An individual, the producer of a resource, creates a television show. The television show, the resource, has no real monetary value unto itself. A television company, the distributor, then promotes the show and schedules the show. Part of this promotion may involve merchandising, ad sales, or premium channel subscriptions. The show is now generating monetary revenue and has become a commodity. The audience, the consumers, pay for watching the show by either monetarily paying for a subscription to a premium channel or by laboring in the form of watching commercials and being subjected to product placement. Through this example, the producer has power over the content, the distributor’s power is in determining the value of the content and identifying what content is of value, and the consumer is forced to accept the terms of payment for the content. Within a situation, it is possible to identify power dynamics by locating the producer, distributor, and consumer.

This approach to power fits well with the principles of new literacies. Political economy of communication recognizes communication as a sociolinguist event, similar
to Gee’s (2008) concept of Discourses (big D) and the sociolinguistic literacy work that new literacies builds on (Corio, et. al, 2008). Also, recognizing the shifting power dynamics in the processes of production and consumption is essential to the Web 2.0 paradigm because of how Web 2.0 technologies distributes powerful tools of production. This shifting power creates different ways of communicating, similar to the deictic nature of new literacies (Leu, et. al, 2004). For these reasons, identifying the positioning of the producers, distributors, and consumers in this study will help to identify where power is situated within the data in relevant ways to new literacies.

Summary

Building out of NLS, the field of new literacies was developed to help us consider the impact of technology on literacy. The definitions of new literacies are multiple and constantly changing along with new and emerging technologies. This study established a working definition of new literacies encompassing both the ‘new technos’ and ‘new ethos’ approach. Currently, the body of literature holistically addressing new literacies is thin and often techno-centric. A significant portion of this literature promotes the idea we are currently at a critical moment of change in education. Several scholars have mapped what this educational change should entail, including an emphasis on collaboration, decentering of authority, reconsidering traditional content, and the significance of context. Issues of power are central to many of these ideas; this study will use a lens of political economy of communication to address these power structures.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This collective case study was designed to identify the relationship between the new literacy practices of early career English teachers’ use of social media and their teaching practice. To address this issue, the follow questions will be answered: (a) How do millennial, early career English teachers make personal use of social media? (b) How do millennial, early career English teachers negotiate their professional practice as classroom teachers? (c) What is the relationship between millennial, early career English teachers’ personal usage of social media and their daily classroom practices?

Research Approach

Qualitative research is used to explore individual’s experiences with a phenomenon little is known about. Creswell (2008) identifies qualitative ethnographic research procedures as seeking to “describe, analyze, and interpret a cultural group’s shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time” (p. 61). Ethnographic research seeks to (a) recognize that understanding phenomena requires observation, (b) maintain openness to new data and new codes in order to understand and interpret the data, and (c) promote the fact that observations and interpretations are connected with time and place (Baszanger & Dodier, 1997). While Leander (2008) notes that the perceived disconnections of virtual worlds and real worlds have created a problematic binary in much of the recent ethnographic research, he suggests a connective
ethnography “where notions of the research site are being disrupted and relations are being traced among sociocultural practices and agents” could work better (p. 37).

A distinguishing factor of ethnographic research case studies is that they are framed within a “bounded system” (Creswell, 2008). The notion of the bounded system recognizes that cases are separated in some way for the purpose of research. Using multiple independent cases to explore a central theme or issue is referred to as a collective case study (Stake, 1995). In a collective case study, the researcher moves across the individual cases to describe similarities and differences in efforts to provide insight into the central theme or issue under examination (Yin, 2003). This allows the researcher to make generalizations about the observed practices across cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

This collective case study explored three separate cases dealing with the use of new literacies in social media spaces and the classroom. Because each case was unique to its own context, the cases were analyzed independently of one another. Comparisons across cases were only possible once the findings of each case had been established.

Qualitative research is used to address topics and theories that need to be explored and developed through the study of individuals in their natural settings (Creswell, 2008). Currently, much of the literature on new literacies is highly theoretical; there have been few empirical studies of this phenomenon in the classroom (Kist, 2005). This study will extend theories of new literacies practices through observations of practices in both networked digital spaces as well as the classroom.
Participants

Participants for this study were identified through snowball sampling—a technique for locating research subjects in which one participant gives the researcher the name of another potential participant who then gives the researcher the name of another potential participant and so on (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Snowball sampling is particularly useful for exploratory, qualitative research involving participants who are few in number or otherwise hard to reach (Baltar & Brunet, 2012). This type of recruitment was particularly appealing for this study because of the precarious positioning of personal usage of social media among educators (Kist, 2008) and the fact that participants for this study needed to meet three criteria. First, they needed to regularly use social media for personal reasons. It is important to distinguish between personal practices with social media and professional practices. In this situation, the personal use of social media is being distinguished from professional use in order to gain insight to how the participants engage in the social media spaces outside of the structures of their professional work. If the participants did use social media in their professional practice, it would be considered an aspect of their teaching practice. Second, they needed to currently be employed as an English teacher in a middle or high school classroom. English classrooms were particularly used because of my own familiarity with the curriculum and because English curriculum is focused on, in its simplest form, making and decoding meaning in various ways. This works particularly well for studying new literacies since new literacies addresses ways of making meaning. Third, as it is important that they be a part of the millennial generation, they needed to be no older than twenty-seven, within their first three years of teaching. It is particularly important that
they fit within this generation as it places them as having grown up amidst digital technologies.

Participant recruitment began in March 2012. Initial recruitment emails were sent to methods instructors with whom I had contact from across the state (at four large, state universities), which included information about the study, the criteria for participants, and a request for referral to potential participants (see Appendix A). By June 2012, no responses were received; shortly thereafter I began a second round of recruitment in which I contacted my former students from a graduate teaching program and teaching colleagues. The second round of recruitment yielded several potential participants; however, issues with the school district’s regulations on outside research thwarted my efforts. Luckily a few of my other students independently agreed to participate in the research and one of the university contacts put me in touch with a recent graduate who was interested in participating in the study. In the end, three participants participated: two of my former students and one from a referral (as referenced in Table 1). Below is a brief introduction to each participant. More detailed descriptions of each participant are included in the following chapters (Carla, chapter 4; Laura, chapter 5, and Kevin, chapter 6).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Social Media Platforms</th>
<th>Years of Social Media Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>7+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Facebook, Twitter</td>
<td>7+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Facebook, Twitter</td>
<td>5+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Carla.

*When I post something on Facebook, it has to be worth something, in a way. It either has to be funny, or it has to have relevance to a few people I know are going to see it, or it has to have some other value that I attribute to it.* (personal communication, September, 2012)

Carla, a twenty-four year old Caucasian female, was a twenty-four year old high school English teacher who graduated from a large public university 2011 with a Master’s of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in secondary English. The course of study in her MAT program did not require a technology course, which is important given that new literacies looks at practices related to both ethos and technos, the latter which may have been shaped or culminated in a formal manner during their professional training. After her first year teaching, Carla transferred to a school in an area of the state she found to be more desirable for personal reasons. In her second year of teaching, Carla was in a high school in rural, central North Carolina where she taught two sections of senior English and one section of Yearbook. The school was in its second year of a one-to-one laptop initiative. I first met Carla in the spring of 2011 when I was assigned as her university supervisor for her student teaching experience. We did not have any contact with each other in any social media until she joined this study.

Laura.

*I just like to see what other people are saying. I’m sort of voyeuristic I guess, but if I use #5k I can see what everyone else is doing. Like couch to 5K, we’re doing this pseudo-training program, I can see what their tips were. Or if someone was really frustrated with something, I can see that, and then it’s like, it’s ok, it’s not just you feeling frustrated, everyone else is too* (personal communication, September, 2012).

Laura, a twenty-four year old Caucasian female, was a twenty-four year old, first year middle school English teacher in an urban county in central North Carolina. She
graduated in 2012 with a MAT in secondary English from the same program as Carla. As there is no time of overlap between MAT cohorts at this institution, Laura and Carla did not know each other. Laura extended her teaching license from grade 9-12 to grades 6-12 upon graduation through taking an additional praxis exam and then began teaching sixth grade inclusion English in a middle school in its first year of implementing a one-to-one laptop initiative. I first met Laura in the summer of 2011 during her first term in the MAT program. Laura was a student in a section of a diversity of education course I was teaching. At the conclusion of the course, Laura sent me a friend request on Facebook and I accepted it as I occasionally follow up with my former students to see how they are doing and try to be accessible to them in the case that they wish to contact me to discuss educational situation as needed. While we were Facebook friends, we did not have any interactions on Facebook or other forms of social media prior to the start of this study.

Kevin.

*Social media keeps me sane, but not consumed* (personal communication, January, 2013).

Kevin, a twenty-two year old Caucasian male, first year high school English teacher, taught in a small, rural high school in eastern North Carolina. Kevin graduated in 2012 with a Bachelor’s of Science in secondary English education. The education program he graduated from did have a required, stand-alone technology course. Kevin taught one section of freshmen English, one section of sophomore English, and one section of sophomore honors English. Kevin’s school was also in its first year of a one-to-one laptop initiative. In addition to teaching high school English, Kevin is also involved in youth ministry at a church in the eastern part of the state, though not in the
same community he teaches in. I was first introduced to Kevin via email in the summer of 2012 as a part of the recruitment for this study.

**Research Sites**

The research sites for this study were comprised of both physical and digital sites. The physical sites were the participants’ classrooms: two rural, public high school English classrooms and one public middle school English classroom in an urban district (See Table 2 for details). Factors that seemed important to take into consideration included the schools’ location and performance, providing the reader with a general sense of the schools’ context; the state of the schools’ technology capabilities, as this might have an impact on the teachers’ use of technology and new literacies practices within the classroom; and the number of early career teachers, the focus of this study. Findings indicated that Salvador Middle had a significantly larger percentage of students (10%) performing at grade level as measured by end of course evaluation scores in reading (the focus teachers’ most closely aligned course) and that while Hundred Acre High School generally exceeded the state’s average class size by 33%, their tests scores were above the state averages’ as well. While all three schools had internet access in 100% of their classrooms, which was similar to the state’s averages, there were several discrepancies that stood out. First, both Hundred Acre and Sound had a significantly lower number of students per instructional devices; one might hypothesize this could be due to the schools’ latest one-to-one laptop initiative. Salvador Middle, on the other hand, had a much larger number of students per digital learning device, a whopping 4.76 compared to the state average of 1.79. Lastly, when examining levels of teachers in their induction years, Sound High School had double the amount of new hires (34% vs. 18%) compared
to the state; consequently, Salvador Middle displayed the opposite issue, with only 9% of its faculty having less than three years teaching experience.
Table 2

*School Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School State Averages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Size, English I: 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td># of students per instructional, internet-connected digital learning device: 1.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% students at Grade Level (in reading): 82.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 99.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 99.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 99.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 99.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 99.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hundred Acre High School Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td># of students per instructional, internet-connected digital learning device: 0.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Size, English I: 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 0.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% students at Grade Level (in reading): 86.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound High School Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td># of students per instructional, internet-connected digital learning device: 0.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Size, English I: 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 0.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% students at Grade Level (in reading): 79.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School State Averages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td># of students per instructional, internet-connected digital learning device: 1.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Size, English, 6th Grade: 22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 179%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% students at Grade Level (in reading): 71.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 99.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 99.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 99.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 99.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 99.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard M. Salvador Middle School Urban</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td># of students per instructional, internet-connected digital learning device: 4.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Size, English, 6th Grade: 23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 4.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% students at Grade Level (in reading): 81.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of classrooms constructed to internet: 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The digital sites observed in this study were the participants’ personal social media sites: Facebook and Twitter (see Table 3). Digital spaces of personal social media usage was exclusively targeted as research sites because this study is specifically interested in the literacy practices millennials engage outside of their teaching practices. This type of usage is of particular interest because millennials, unlike any previous generation, have grown up in the Discourse of digital technologies. The inclusion of teacher and/or education Discourses would yield different and trained literacy practices that are likely not analogous to the literacy practices naturally used in the spaces. However, if the participants are using social media spaces as a part of their classroom practice, data would be collected from that usage but be considered to be a part of the classroom research site.

Table 3

**Social Media Site Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Networking Site</th>
<th>% of Internet users who Used in this study by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>67% Women, adults ages 18-29 Carla, Kevin, Laura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>16% Adults, ages 18-29, African-Americans, urban residents Laura, Kevin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Demographic information was obtained by the Pew Research Center (Duggan & Brenner, 2013)*

While this study addresses the physical and digital research sites as separate, identifying the relationship between the new literacies practices used in the two spaces is in support of Leander’s (2008) work on connective ethnographies.
Ethical Protection of Participants

Each participant was given an introductory letter (See Appendix A) along with an informed consent form prior to participating in the study. The informed consent form provided information about (a) the stages of the research, (b) the intent of the research, (c) the data to be collected, (d) the time requirements of participating, (e) the potential risk of identification in the study, and (f) the steps that were be taken to assure the highest level of confidentiality possible. Participants were also made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time. To protect the participants’ identities, identifiers were removed at the time of data collection and each participant was assigned a code and all subsequent reports of this study used pseudonyms. All efforts were made to allow the data and participants to speak for themselves. This was accomplished through the open sharing of data and member checking, where each participant was given the opportunity to read through and/or discuss data collected to prevent misrepresentation, increasing the validity of the data. Participants were made aware that at any point during the research, they could request to see any and all of the data that had been collected from them. During the data collection, interviews were used to discuss the data and serve as opportunities for member checking.

Researcher Positionality

For as long as I can remember, I have been a tech-junkie. From dismantling audio tape decks as a kid to creating private websites just to play with html coding, I have always been fascinated by how different pieces of technology work and if it is possible for me to retool an existing technology for a different purpose. After fantasizing about the most elaborate technologies I can manage, I have always found that the simplest
technology is often the best form.

*Whenever I am asked about how I think technology should be used in the classroom, I respond, "In the simplest way possible." In other words, I don't advocate the use of technology for tech's sake. I believe in using the simplest technology possible for the task... In my personal life, I make use of the simplest forms of technology as possible while exploring more complicated technologies. For instance, I have yet to find a reason for a technology more advanced than my composition book for note taking. On the tech side, I am currently exploring a piece of software called Curio that is both complicated and amazing. I can't help but wonder if my own fascination with new tech tools and toys is creating conflict with what I say and how I say it. While I intended to promote the most minimal use of technology, I seemed to have implied the exclusive use of technology.* (Blog posting, July 8, 2011)

It is important to recognize my own professional motivation in this research as it is, as Strauss and Corbin (1998) pointed out that it is “not possible to be completely free of bias” (p. 97). As a researcher, I came to this particular study out of my own passion for and interest in social technologies and education. My personal passion for these technologies stems from my own use of web-based technologies and how I see their influence in my life. For example, when I first began my post-secondary studies, no one—including myself—expected me to become an English teacher. As a result of chronic inner ear problems as a child, reading and spelling were particularly difficult. While in college, and experiencing constant connectivity for the first time, I fell in love with the written word through online instant messaging. It was through playing with language in this digital medium that I found a passion for language. My developing love of language and an interest in teaching that lead me to an English education program. This love of language and technology continued into my professional career.

I began teaching high school English and advising yearbook in 2005 in a small, rural community in eastern North Carolina. Outside of my work teaching, I worked on technology initiatives with teacher organizations and a Web 2.0 company. Once I started
my graduate program, one of my assistantships was working for LEARN NC (an online, school of education outreach program), where I worked with the organization’s social media presence (developing strategic plans for the use of digital tools such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube as well as regularly posting and moderating the use of these tools) and blogged about practical application of university research in the classroom and educational applications of technology. Dissatisfied with much of the current technocentric work being done in the field, I became interested in looking past the technical tool to see its true change potential.

I have been a regular user of social media since 2005. My personal use of social media has always to keep in touch with friends who lived in other parts of the county and world: I use Facebook exclusively for personal interactions and check Facebook at least once a day. I have also used social media, primarily Twitter, as a professional tool. My Twitter account is used to share and consume professional resources with various colleagues. I access my Twitter account about once a week, unless I am at a conference; in those cases I am constantly connected to Twitter.

**Data Collection**

This study used three forms of data: classroom observations, digital observations, and interviews.

**Classroom Observation.** Classroom observations took place throughout Fall 2012. The purpose of these observations was to “[gather] open-ended, firsthand information […] at the research site” (Creswell, 2008, p. 221), specifically addressing how the participants interact with the content and students in their teaching practice. During these observations, descriptive and reflective field notes were taken. Five
observations were conducted in both Laura’s and Carla’s classrooms and four observations were conducted in Kevin’s classroom. The classroom observations in Kevin’s class were limited to four because the point of saturation had been reached and it was not logistically feasible to travel to Kevin’s location for an additional observation.

**Digital Observation.** Ongoing observations and artifact collection within digital spaces took place throughout the participants’ involvement in this study, from June 2012 to November 2012. The purpose of these digital observations was to identify trends in the participants’ digital practices within social media. The artifacts collected were catalogued on a secure digital medium and included items such as images, comments, blog postings, video postings, status updates, and profile modifications. These artifacts included items that were (a) posted by the participants and (b) visible on the participants’ profiles/sites. Data was not collected from the profiles/sites of third parties. All textual artifacts were copied into a table with information about the source and posted date of the artifact. Table 4 depicts how textual artifacts were archive from digital spaces. This was accomplished with Microsoft Word and allowed for space to include codes and notes as the data was analyzed.

Table 4

*Sample Artifact Collection Table*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/4</td>
<td>Facebook- Status update</td>
<td>Happy 4th, everyone! U-S-A! U-S-A!!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/8</td>
<td>Twitter- Tweet</td>
<td>So far so good on the sunburn front!</td>
<td>#knockonwood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All non-textual artifacts, images and videos, were saved and organized into digital folders. These artifacts were archived monthly.

**Interviews.** Three one-on-one interviews, which lasted from thirty to sixty minutes, were conducted with each participant (see Appendix B). The interviews were used to gather information about the participants’ perception about their own development as a teacher, their usage of social media, and to share and discuss preliminary findings of the study. These interviews were semi-structured to allow for flexibility and enabled me to remain responsive to the interviewees’ needs and responses (Lindolf & Taylor, 2002). Audio recordings and transcripts were used to record each interview, which were then reviewed multiple times to prevent misrepresentation and ensure validity.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected was first organized in a way to make it more navigable during the coding. The data collected from social media spaces was organized as depicted in Table 4. The field notes from classroom observations were broken down into a collection of bounded moments. These moments had a clear start and end point and included items such as classroom activities, the participants interacting with the classroom environment, and exchanges between the participants and their students.

Data was analyzed through open and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss, 1987) procedures. The artifacts collected through the digital observations and the field notes from the classroom observations were coded using an open coding procedure to break through the surface level of meaning in the data in order to better understand the phenomenon. A second set of selective codes were then applied that specifically
addressed ethos associated with new literacies. The code sets were created based on the work of Lankshear and Knobel (2006 & 2011; Knobel & Lankshear, 2007 & 2008) to address the main tenets of new literacies:

- Multimodality- The participant engaged mediums other than text alone in efforts to convey a specific message.
- Collective intelligence- The sharing of information and resources through collaboration to create new knowledge.
- Distributed authority- The participant promoted multiple, diverse voices in decision making processes.

Following the open and selective coding, the data was also coded using a political economy of communication framework. For this coding, individual pieces of data were coded for when the participant was situated as a producer of content, a distributor of content, and a consumer of content. All coding was done within Microsoft Word.

The data collected from each participant was treated as individual and separate cases. Data from digital and classroom observations were coded independently for each participant and then compared to identify areas of coordination as well as areas of contradiction. Finally, areas of comparison and contradiction were compared across participants.

**Summary**

This collective case study was designed to determine the relationship between the new literacy practices early career English teachers enact in their personal usage of social media and their classroom teaching practices. Data was collected about the participants’ usage of social media through digital observation and the archiving of digital artifacts. The participants teaching practices were documented through observation and field notes.
All data was reviewed with the participants in interviews. The data was then analyzed using open and selective coding.
Chapter 4: Case 1 Findings- Carla

Carla, the participant in case 1, was a second year, high school English teacher in a rural county in central North Carolina where she taught one section of Yearbook and two sections of English IV. While this was her second year teaching, it was her first year at this school. Classroom data was collected through five observations conducted in Carla’s classroom. Outside of the classroom, Carla used Facebook as a way to stay in touch with friends. Data was collected from her Facebook postings from June 19, 2012 to October 31, 2012. Additionally, Carla participated in semi-structured interviews to discuss the data that had been collected. In this chapter, the results of the data analysis of case 1 are presented.

Carla’s Personal Use of Social Media

Carla did not consider herself to be a techie; she was quick to point to the fact that she did not have a smartphone. Her cell phone allowed her to make phone calls and text, but did not have access to internet-based applications. While she did not consider herself to be particularly technologically savvy, her history with social media might suggest otherwise.

Carla had been using social media for many years; she could not remember exactly when she got her first account on a social media website, but she believed it was while she was in middle school. Her first account was on MySpace, a social networking website (Carla, personal communication, September, 2012). One distinguishing factor
about MySpace was the fact that users could access html code to customize the design of their individual page. I asked Carla if she ever accessed the coding in MySpace. Initially she said that she had not; however, after a moment of thought, she remembered that she had done some things to modify the appearance of her page.

All you had to do was highlight something in the little arrow... whatever they are... those little brackets and copy and paste it. But I did, because there was always a way that you could go into the coding, and there was a certain line you could delete that would take off the credit. But I did learn how to do that because I didn’t want that thing that says ‘created by so and so.’ And I think there were a few things that I could figure out like font sizes or something. You could find where the number is and you could change that. But that was the extent of what I ever tried to figure out how to do. (Carla, personal communication, September, 2012)

Carla used MySpace until Facebook became available to her while she was in high school. Facebook had become a part of Carla’s everyday life, which she accesses through her personal computer at home. While her school provided her with a MacBook Pro and she could access Facebook while at school, Carla made a concerted effort to not do “fun stuff” on her school laptop as a way to stay focused on work (Carla, personal communication, September, 2012). While Carla did not post to Facebook every day during the study, she did check it daily.

I check it every day; in the morning, and in the night. [...] When I get home [from work], that is probably one of the first things I do [...] I guess I just kind of feel like it keeps you up to date in some way. (Carla, personal communication, September, 2012)

Carla’s social media was observed from June 19, 2012 through October 31, 2012. During that time she posted forty-two times to Facebook (roughly one posting every three days). An overview of her postings can be seen in Table 5 (explanations of each type of update is included in Appendix C).
Table 5

Overview of Carla’s Social Media Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of updates</th>
<th>Number of occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook status updates</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook link shares</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook single-image shares</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook profile picture updates</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook cover photo updates</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook photo album updates</td>
<td>3 (Containing 146 photos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total updates</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Carla confessed that she used Facebook as a tool to stay connected with people she already knew but who were not necessarily a part of her daily life.

[I use Facebook] to keep in contact with people that I wouldn’t interact with on a daily basis, which is almost everyone. And, as horrible as it is to say, Facebook is a way to stay in touch with people that I wouldn’t choose to normally, but would like to have some sort of interaction with them. (Carla, personal communication, September, 2012)

However, the level of interaction Carla was interested in having with her Facebook friends varied. Based on her view of online friendship as a pseudo-friendship, she tended to accept some Facebook friends out of a sense of social obligation more than a genuine interest in interaction.

If someone requests friendship on Facebook and you say no, you are saying, “No, I don’t want to be your friend on this thing where I have a hundred friends who I still don’t really talk to.” That’s an even worse diss [than having limited access to content I post]. It’s like saying that you’re not even worth being not real friends on the Internet. There are people that I will accept, but I will put them in a limited profile because I don’t want to say no, but I don’t really want to be friends with them either. (Carla, personal communication, September, 2012)

Carla used tiered levels of access when accepting Facebook friends based on her desire to interact or not interact with the individual. When we discussed the topic of the tiered
access she had created for her Facebook friends, I asked Carla if her use of Facebook had come up in her classroom.

One of [my students] actually just asked if I would friend them on Facebook. And I said yeah, in ten years. [...] I have a problem when people friend their students. I think it’s weird, I think it’s creepy, I think it’s inappropriate. And that is why I changed my name on Facebook with my middle name. [...] Now people can’t find me by my last name, and that’s why I changed it, so students’ couldn’t find me. 
(Carla, personal communication, September, 2012)

From this statement, it was clear that Carla considered her private life to be just that: private. She actively took steps to prevent individuals she did not want to have access to her personal life on Facebook from finding it. Further, it marked a key distinction she made between her students and herself. Changing her last name on Facebook protected her privacy in two ways. First, it made it very difficult, if not impossible, for her students to find her on Facebook. Second, it made it more difficult for people Carla was not already friends with on Facebook to find her. Carla explained that she is fine with people not being able to search for and find her; she stated that she was no longer interested in expanding her network beyond people she already knows and actually interacts.

The issue of interaction was a critical component in Carla’s usage of Facebook. While Carla did not post something to Facebook every day, when she did post something she posted with a specific audience in mind.

When I post something on Facebook, it has to be worth something, in a way. It either has to be funny, or it has to have relevance to a few people I know are going to see it, or it has to have some other value that I attribute to it. Maybe it is a link to an article that I read that I think other people would like to see... Like with the M.A.T., I can post something on there that I know will get that group of people to like or comment on it. You know that if you post it, there is a specific audience you are targeting with it, and I guess part of it is that you want some sort of a response to it. Otherwise, why would you post it? You know that everyone is going to see it, so you have deemed it worthy in some way. [...] Facebook provides me with access to things that I would never find on my own. 
(Carla, personal communication, September, 2012)
Again, Carla placed an emphasis on interaction. The content she posted—status updates, photos, and links—was content that she thought her Facebook friends, or at least the ones she actually interacted with, would be interested in and would be likely to comment on. By placing this amount of thought and consideration onto what she posted, Carla’s Facebook profile was a cohesive and consistent collection of content.

**Themes in Carla’s social media usage.** The data collected from Carla’s Facebook activity, along with the data collected from interviews, was coded using ongoing open and selective coding; the selective codes included multimodality, collective intelligence, and distributed authority. Through analysis of her forty Facebook updates and information gathered from the interviews, the following were identified as dominant themes in Carla’s usage of social media: sharing, collective intelligence, and multimodal.

**Sharing.** The sharing code indicates times Carla distributed content not created by others. Her sharing of content that she did not create was a big part of how Carla engaged social media. Of Carla’s forty Facebook updates, ten were the sharing of links (depicted in Table 6). Among these links were four news articles, three music videos, two blog posts, and one meme.

**Table 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type of post</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/20/12</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Shared Link</td>
<td>Others’ gullibility is both hilarious and sad. [Fake news reporter pranks gullible New Yorkers (VIDEO)]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6/22/12 Facebook Shared Link
And...
9. "If you can't parent your own child, how do you expect me to?"
[8 Things All Teachers Want Parents to Know]

6/27/12 Facebook Shared Link
at least Ohio does ice cream right!
[America's best ice cream]

6/29/12 Facebook Shared Link
The number of these songs still played at high school dances is ridiculous.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=dMH0bHeiRNg
[Evolution of Dance - By Judson Laupply]

8/15/12 Facebook Shared Link
We <3 Cereal w/ friend
http://cereaously.blogspot.com/
[Cereaously.: Making a cereaous attempt to review every cereal out there.]

8/24/12 Facebook Shared Link
And now to enjoy my last truly free weekend for awhile!
http://andthosewhocant.blogspot.com/2012/08/the-kids-are-coming-on-monday.html
[The kids are coming on Monday...]

9/26/12 Facebook Shared Link
<3
http://www.npr.org/event/music/161710232/mumford-sons-the-power-of-babel
[Video: Mumford & Sons: The Power Of 'Babel']

10/4/12 Facebook Shared Link
Teacher robot, please!
[Boy with Severe Allergies Using Robot to Attend First Grade]

10/6/12 Facebook Shared Link
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=klIFJFHPNk4
[Ellie Goulding - Lights - Seth G. Violin Cover]

10/9/12 Facebook Shared Link
[First World Problems Read By Third World Kids: Ad Campaign Makes Use Of Ironic Meme (VIDEO)]
Some of the content she shared was content that she had personally found online, but most of the content was originally shared by another one of her friends on Facebook.

*I guess a lot of it is that I get it from someone else or I happen across it on some trail on the Internet—which probably stemmed from something I clicked on in Facebook. Facebook provides me with access to things that I would never find on my own.* (Carla, personal communication, September, 2012)

While Carla noted that what she shared was typically found through what someone else had posted, she did not include the Facebook generated tag line crediting the original poster of the content. She stated that she was not really sure why she removed the tag line, but she did so regularly.

**Collective intelligence.** The collective intelligence code indicates times Carla made use of the sharing of information and resources through collaboration to create new knowledge. The content that was curated on Carla’s Facebook page was not just a collection she had created; it was a collection that she and her Facebook friends composed by engaging and creating content together. Carla regularly and purposefully engaged others in conversation to develop and/or share ideas (see Table 13). Instead of her social media engagement being broadcast oriented, for Carla, its value was in the interaction and collaboration with others.

*You know that if you post it, there is a specific audience you are targeting with it, and I guess part of it is that you want some sort of a response to it. Otherwise, why would you post it?* (Carla, personal communication, September, 2012)

Of Carla’s seventeen Facebook status updates, eight were followed up by her responding to her Facebook friends’ comments. Table 7 depicts a sample of these engagements. (Following Carla’s original status updates, the comments included were not changed or edited, but pseudonyms were assigned to Carla’s Facebook friends who added comments.)
### Carla’s Social Media Usage: Collective Intelligence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type of post</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 7/23/12  | Facebook | Status update with comments | New job...check! Moving back to [North Carolina City]...check! Being super excited about both of those things...CHECK!  
[Jim]: Excite for you!  
[Sarah]: I cant wait to hear all about this!  
[Robert]: Congrats  
[Jane]: I heard you and [Steve Smith] are going to be neighbors. So exciting!!  
Carla: Thanks, everyone!  
[Philip]: I'm so happy for you, doll. I'm gonna miss the HELL outta you at [High School], though... Love you!  
Carla: love you too! you'll always be my one true work wife ☺ |
| 9/4/12   | Facebook | Status update with comments | attempting to make it to the gym by the time it opens = waking up within the 4th hour of the day. here's hoping?  
[Jill]: don't do it.  
[Bob]: Hahahaha.  
Carla: success! thanks for the support, [Bob].  
[Bob]: You're welcome! Now if you want real support, take [Steve] for a night. He'll have you up at 2 AND 4 for that extra dose of motivation.  
[Sean]: FB needs to have a "you is crazy" button  
Carla: [Sean]...it may happen again tomorrow...  
[Sean]: YOU IS CRAZY |
| 9/6/12   | Facebook | Status update with comments | I love when people speaking English have to be subtitled in English.  
[Sara]: Honey Boo Boo?  
[Rebecca]: You definitely needed subtitles for me, up until a few beers.  
Carla: [Rebecca]- haha true, true. I have england's flag up in my classroom (teaching British Lit) so students sometimes ask me if that's where I'm from. When I respond asking if it sounds like I have an accent, I always think about you teaching me to sound like I'm from Manchester. |
Sweatpants, hoodie, two blankets, and a comforter but still cold...and October has only just begun. If things keep up like this, I have a feeling I'm in for it this fall/winter.

[Robert]: wool gloves? Also igloos are surprisingly effective at conserving heat.

[Susan]: Just think how it'll be in Ohio in a month...oy.

Carla: [Robert], I opted for hot chocolate instead, but you're welcome to build an igloo for me in the future!

[Susan], I'd rather not think about that.

[Jill]: Carla you live in North Carolina. Some of us have real cold to deal with.

[Palo]: how cold is it?

Carla: cold enough for me to complain...so, below 70.

Off to stock up on pumpkin...the fall baking season has begun!


[Erica]: Might I suggest these (a pumpkin alternative)?

I just made them last night for a party, and they were quite a hit!

http://www.marthastewart.com/874528/coconut-thumprint-cookies-salted-caramel

Shauna: So glad I get to benefit from this.

Carla: [Shauna]- i'll trade you a trip with hunter to nc for these pumpkin spice cupcakes

[Erica]- those look amazing and like something i will be trying!

Carla: [Shauna]- my kitchen smells delicious right now...heading over in a few!

Jess]: bring me some of whatever you made please

Carla: [Jess]- leaving now. see you in 8.

Amy]: Sounds like I need to get [Rachel] to invite you over to our new place!

Carla: i will bake pumpkin treats for you anytime!

Amy]: Give us a few days to get the moving clutter sorted and I am sure we can arrange something. Now we're living so much closer together it should be easy peasy! I always enjoy being introduced to American seasonal treats; you saw that on The Fourth.

Carla: haha perfect! and right when i get there you can make me wear any color rain jacket you want.

In the comments following a status update, Carla explicitly engaged her friends in conversation by addressing questions and referencing her friends by name, at times going as far as to “tag” them in her comment which creates a notification alert for that person.
As Carla stated, she used Facebook to interact with people. This was clearly seen in how active Carla was in her commenting.

**Multimodality.** The multimodality code indicates times Carla engaged mediums other than text alone in efforts to convey a specific message. In the context of social media, these moments explicitly included times that Carla posted images as content, either in the form of individual images or image collections (photo albums). During the observation, Carla posted one hundred and forty-nine new photos to her Facebook across fifteen update events, which varied in size and scope. These updates are described in Table 8.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carla’s Social Media Usage: Multimodality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/24/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/24/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/24/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/24/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/26/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/6/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/13/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/22/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/29/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/03/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/14/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/11/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/24/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/12/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22/12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Carla’s rationale for uploading images was similar to her rationale for posting other content to Facebook. It was not identical because she saw the posting of photos as partially being driven by her own desire to revisit events and experiences.

*I think that posting pictures serves two purposes. One is because I want to go back and look at the pictures. I know, just based off my own interest in wanting to look at other people’s pictures, if someone posts an album and I am friends with that person, I’ll go look at it, but I probably won’t return to it again. But if I post pictures, I clearly want to look at it again, because I clearly want to revisit whatever it is that I just experienced. So I think part of it is just being able to have that in a place. [...] I guess in general, people don’t really care about pictures unless someone is in it or it is a really cool shot. So it either needs to be really interesting in some way or have people you know and can tag and say ‘come look at my pictures because you’re in one of them.’ [...] If I just wanted to look through them myself, I could just open up a file on my computer and look through them. But you want people to look through them.* (Carla, personal communication, September, 2012)

Just as Carla took time to carefully consider the value of the content she posted to Facebook, Carla stated that she always tried to make sure that the images she posted were as flattering as possible for the people in the pictures and as well as for the event they were representing.

**Political economy of communication and Carla’s social media usage.** Carla’s social media artifacts were analyzed using a lens of political economy of communication in order to identify when she was positioned as the producer of content, the distributor of content, or the consumer of content. Within the artifacts collected documenting Carla’s social media usage, there were twenty five updates that positioned her as the producer of content. These were artifacts in which Carla was the creator and sole owner of the content that she had uploaded: status updates and photo uploads. There were nine artifacts of Carla being positioned as a distributor within her updates in which she shared links to outside content. Carla’s usage of social media as a consumer was interesting but difficult
to clearly identify. Theoretically, there were approximately two hundred and seventy moments in which Carla was a consumer, as she admitted to accessing Facebook twice a day once every morning and again when she gets home from work. In the timespan of the data collection, this would equal two hundred and seventy times. During that same timespan, she posted forty updates. However, those forty updates did not include items that she posted to her friends’ Facebook pages or her comments on various items in Facebook (because those items were outside of the parameters of this study). There were eight artifacts within the parameters of this study in which Carla was positioned as both a producer and consumer at the same time. These artifacts were comprised of Carla’s visible interactions with her Facebook friends in the form of commenting.

**Carla in the Classroom**

At the time of this study, Carla was teaching two sections of English IV and one section of Yearbook. When I found out that Carla was teaching yearbook, I asked to observe that class in addition to one of her English IV classes. I was particularly interested in observing the yearbook class because, in my own experience as a yearbook advisor, it can position the teacher as more of a facilitator that traditional classes because the yearbook is a student publication. Based on my prior knowledge of Carla’s teaching as obtained through my observations of as her university supervisor during student teaching, I anticipated that how Carla navigated her role within the yearbook class, in comparison to her role in a traditional English class, could provide valuable insights into her perceptions of teaching. The Yearbook class was comprised of eleven students—four African American females, one Hispanic female, five Caucasian females, and one Caucasian male. Aside from a brief yearbook camp she attended over the summer, this
was Carla’s first experience with yearbook. Carla’s English IV class I observed had a total of twenty-seven students—ten females and seventeen males, six of the students were Hispanic, six were African American, and fifteen were Caucasian.

**Physical setting.** Carla’s classroom was large and the physical space had two distinct personalities as sections of the room were divided between use for her English classes and her Yearbook class. On the long front wall, the whiteboards were dedicated to her English IV classes. This board always had a copy of the seating chart, a list of due dates and upcoming events, and the day’s agenda. On the far right wall there was a whiteboard, half the size of the English IV whiteboard, used for Carla’s yearbook class. It contained a make-shift calendar made with masking tape to mark important yearbook events and a list yearbook-related tasks that needed to be accomplished along with the name of the student assigned to that task. There were two corkboards on the back wall, one in the center of the room, the other off to the left side. The corkboard in the center was primarily empty at the start of the year aside from the flag of England and a map of Shakespearean England. By the end of my observations, the corkboard was filled with student drawings of Grendel. The corkboard on the left side of the back wall was filled with flyers and school announcements. Carla’s desk was just under this corkboard, facing the middle of the room.

The rest of the classroom was divided into two sections—tables and storage for yearbook materials on the left, and student seating on the right. The yearbook section occupied about one fifth of the classroom space and was divided in half by a large cabinet extending out from the center of the far left wall. On the back side of the cabinet was a long cafeteria table, a filing cabinet, boxes of yearbook materials, and Carla’s desk. On
the front side, there were two tables and a miss-matched collection of chairs. In the remaining four fifths of the room, thirty student desks were divided into seven rows, two tables and a bookshelf were at the back of the room, and a projection cart was nestled in among the desks at the front of the center row. Carla commented that the rows of desks were not her ideal setup, but was the only option because of the small space.

Figure 1. Carla’s Classroom

Classroom technology. A one-to-one laptop initiative was launched at Carla’s school the year before her arrival. Through this program, every student was given an Apple MacBook that they carried throughout the day and took home at the end of the day. Teachers were given MacBook Pros. The school was in the process of installing software specifically for one-to-one classrooms on the teachers’ computers, but they had not yet gotten to Carla’s. Through the school, the teachers had access to Moodle, an online learning management system, for use with their classes. Carla voiced slight apprehension about the one-to-one initiative on the basis that she did not feel as prepared
as she would have liked to be to teach in a one-to-one classroom. She had not received any
professional development on the topic and had not previously thought much about what it
would be like to teach in a one-to-one setting. While Carla was not initially confident
about the one-to-one laptop initiative, she quickly embraced the presence of the
technology in her classroom.

[Students having their own computers] is great for research. Just because of the
fact that because it is their computer, they can leave the websites up and leave the
Word document open and just close [the computer]. And when they start, they can
actually get to work [instead of wasting time logging into school computers]. [...] I’m starting to use [Moodle] more and more, just because I am still getting used
to the fact that they have the computers with them all throughout the day; they
take them home and most of them have Internet access at home. So that’s really
useful. At first I was just uploading [class materials]. [...] Now I am uploading,
now that we are doing research papers, but I’ve uploaded tons of supplemental
information. Just helping them with the outlining process, and how to do
notecards, and linking to other resources. (Carla, personal communication,
October, 2012)

She began encouraging her students to use the internet as an at-hand resource. She would
recommend students Google information they were having a hard time locating or visit
Wikipedia to get information about a topic in class. The laptops and digital resources
became a great resource for information in Carla’s teaching.

I linked the SparkNotes with the modern translation on the Moodle site. And quite
honestly, I don’t really have a problem with it. I would rather them know what is
going on so we can do something with that information in class rather than
coming to class not knowing anything that is going on at all. [...] I don’t care
where they get the information from, I just care that they know what is going on.
That’s the whole point of reading outside the class anyways. [...] For research
stuff, I told them, I have no problem if you go to Wikipedia to find out what
something is, because it’s, often times, legitimate information. So I tell them to go
there to find information about the Dream Act, or whatever it is, if they don’t
know what it is. Read about it, follow the links to the resources that it links up to
and read those, and follow their sources. You’re not going to be able to find those
sources if you don’t know what you’re looking for. I just told them that I don’t
ever want to see Wikipedia as one of your cited sources. (Carla, personal
communication, October, 2012)
Carla commented that she believed that her openness to these types of digital resources had increased her students’ participation in class. She determined this through comments students made to her about her openness to the resources as well as through tracking who was accessing those resources through their class Moodle site.

In addition to the laptops, Carla also had a projection cart in her classroom that was equipped with a digital projector and computer speakers. The projector was used with a pull-down screen at the front of the room. Carla also had three high-end digital cameras for yearbook—only one of the cameras worked well.

**Yearbook class.** Carla’s yearbook class was scheduled in the third block of the day. As the students came in, Carla was sometimes standing just outside her door to monitor the activity in the hall; other times she was sitting at her desk organizing the materials from the previous class. When the students entered the room they set down their belongings. Some sat in desks, some at tables, and some on desks and tables; in general, it appeared they were comfortable in their classroom. There was no routine established in which to start the class. A few minutes after the bell rang, Carla would either check in with individual students or remind the entire class of upcoming deadlines. The students worked on self-directed activities needed to complete tasks for the creation and promotion of the yearbook.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Approximate time</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Collaborative/independent</th>
<th>Technology used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caption packet</td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
<td>Students were instructed to (a) look at pictures and think of ten questions they could ask the person in the picture, (b) write ten different lead-ins for a feature based on a picture, (c) write a feature based on one of the created lead-ins, and (d) write expanded captions for two pictures with all needed information.</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Students had the option of typing their work on their laptops or handwriting their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General yearbook activities</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>Self-directed work to complete yearbook tasks such as building templates, preparing for photography events, promoting the yearbook, and photographing individuals and events.</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>Laptops, digital cameras, and cell phones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms quiz</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Students completed a brief quiz on vocabulary associated with format and design elements of yearbooks.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Primarily, the class period consisted of the students working on their assigned pages on their laptops. The yearbook students regularly came and went into the classroom as needed. The students also regularly played music through the projection cart while everyone worked. The students, as well as Carla, discussed the musicians and several students would sing along. Carla used the yearbook class time to work with the yearbook editor to review the yearbook staff’s page submissions and to support the needs of her students.
other yearbook students as they worked. Carla positioned herself much more as a manager and collaborator within her yearbook class, a position she struggled with.

*I think it’s weird that for a whole period of the day I don’t really feel like I’m teaching. And there are little aspects that I guess I teach, but it’s not the same way as with a literature course. I guess I feel like that class is somehow... it’s like a cop-out a little bit, even though there are all of these extra things you have to deal with. It just feels like a mini-job within my teaching-job and not another part of teaching. I feel like less of a teacher in that class which makes me feel uncomfortable because that’s my job.* (Carla, personal communication, October, 2012)

The students took lunch during the third of four lunch blocks during the class period, roughly an hour after the start of class. During lunch, a few students always stayed in Carla’s classroom where they ate their lunch and watched videos online. Carla spent this time eating lunch at her desk and working on various tasks: reviewing yearbook templates, lesson planning, grading, etc. When the students returned from lunch, they spent the remaining thirty minutes of class continuing to work just as they had been before. As the end of the class drew near, the students would pack up and Carla would begin to set her classroom up for the incoming English IV class.

**English IV class.** The start of Carla’s English IV class was much more structured than the start of her yearbook class. She greeted the students at the door and regularly joked with them as they entered her classroom.

*I’m way too sarcastic with my kids, [...] and sometimes I get in trouble because of it because not all kids get sarcasm and I can be just a little too dry with them. Sometimes it works in my favor because some kids are receptive to it. For better or worse, that’s just the way I interact with people.* (Carla, personal communication, October, 2012)

During one particular site visit, at the beginning of a class period there was an announcement made over the school intercom. The announcement reminded students that the student dress code states that male students were not permitted to wear sleeveless
shirts to school. One of Carla’s male students was wearing a tank-top and immediately started flexing as the announcement concluded, “We’re just trying to give everyone tickets to the gun show, Ms. [Carla].” Carla quickly responded, “Not everyone wants to go,” then, without a moment’s hesitation, returned to reviewing the upcoming deadlines with the class (field notes, September 13, 2012). Even with the joking, Carla positioned herself in this class in a much more traditional teacher role.

Class time in Carla’s English IV class was also more structured than that in her yearbook class. Table 10 briefly describes the activities observed during this study over the course of five observations.

Table 10

Carla’s English IV Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Approximate time</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Collaborative/independent</th>
<th>Technology used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bell ringer</td>
<td>5-10 minutes</td>
<td>At the start of every class, students wrote a response to a question or activity dealing with the literature and/or topic(s) being covered in class. Explicit connection was made to class content.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Bell ringer projected from laptop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Ages notes</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Carla led the class through notes she had prepared about the Middle Ages in order to provide historical context to the literature they would be reading.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>PowerPoint and projector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mort d’Arthur reading guide</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Students returned to the previously read text with a partner to address questions about key aspects of the story.</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webquest</td>
<td>75 minutes</td>
<td>Students addressed questions posed by Carla on a handout and the class Moodle by investigating the Middle Ages online. Carla provided links to some digital resources and encouraged students to locate their own information sources online.</td>
<td>Independent, but could discuss with peers</td>
<td>Laptops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer revision</td>
<td>60-90 minutes</td>
<td>Using a guide for reviewing and editing notes, students reviewed a partner’s essay and provided detailed feedback. The essay was to function as a job application cover letter or college application essay.</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Laptops as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern ballad analysis</td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
<td>Students were provided an overview of the characteristics of ballads and were directed to locate a modern ballad of their choosing. Once a modern ballad was selected, they were to analyze the ballad using a guide provided to them.</td>
<td>Independent, but could discuss with peers</td>
<td>Laptops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing outlines</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Carla led the students in the creation of an outline for a research paper. She made particular note of the format of the outline.</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Laptops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research notecards</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Students created notecards with information to be cited in a research paper. Notecards included reference to source, topic, and one piece of information.</td>
<td>Independent, but could discuss with peers</td>
<td>Laptops as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macbeth Soliloquy analysis</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>Students followed a guide created by Carla to analyze soliloquys in Act I of Macbeth.</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Upon entering the room, Carla’s Bell Ringer activity for the day was projected on the board. These activities involved vocabulary associated with the literature they were reading. The following examples of Bell Ringer activities depict how Carla used this activity engage students in review of class content before moving on with new material.

**Bell Ringer 9.19: Code of Chivalry**
- From the table at the front, pick up a ‘cheat sheet’ identifying 10 rules to be followed within the Code of Chivalry. You can keep this in your binder.
- User Sir Gawain and the Green Knight to find evidence the code was being followed (or not) by Sir Gawain throughout the story.
- Find at least 5 examples (following or breaking) and include line numbers. (field notes, September 19, 2012)

Sometimes, the Bell Ringers were more open ended.

**Bell Ringer 10.26: CYOB**
- Happy Friday! Choose your own Bell Ringer today.
- Use at least ONE of the vocabulary words from your 10.23 Bell Ringer in this journal.
- 5 sentences. (field notes, September 26, 2012)

Carla’s students kept a notebook with their Bell Ringer activities, which Carla checked periodically. After reviewing and discussing the Bell Ringer activity, when applicable, Carla would start the class on the day’s activities.

The observed activities Carla designed for her English IV class were typically collaborative. When the assignment did require independent work, students were allowed to converse with their peers.

In that class, I think that group work is helpful for the class to progress as a whole. Because, in that class, I think a lot of the kids don’t do the reading, which means that they don’t know what’s going on. So, unless I want to stand up there and say, ‘this is what happened and then this happened and then this happened’ and have everyone fall asleep while I am going over it; it’s helpful for them to work with someone who has read it. [...] Sometimes I do think that I let them do too much partner work because it lets those kids get away with not reading, but [...] even if their partner is having to do most of the work, they are still having to write it down and contribute. (Carla, personal communication, October, 2012)
In addition to allowing students to collaborate on assignments, Carla also often gave students choices on what they were going to work on while in class. Carla presented all of the assignments with upcoming due dates on the whiteboard at the front of the room so the students could go ahead and work on other assignments when ready. With two or three assignments due in the following days, the students could work on any of the assignments they wanted to at that time. For instance, during one day’s observations, the students were all working on peer reviewing essays. With approximately thirty minutes left in class, Carla handed out a reading guide for the story *Mort d’Arthur* and told students that once they finished their peer revisions, they could either work on the reading guide or revise their essay; “whichever will be a better use of your time” (field notes, September 19, 2012). However, within these options Carla would sometimes recommend to the students that they work on a specific assignment first, later explaining why. As students worked, Carla walked through the class monitoring students’ progress and addressing questions while many worked with both their textbooks or paper handouts and their laptops, some listening to music through their headphones while working.

In efforts to manage classroom behavior, Carla purposefully placed her students who require the most attention—primarily due to discipline—on opposite edges of the seating chart to assure that she will not spend all of her time in one area of the classroom and will pass by all of her students while managing the class.

*At very least, what it has done, is it makes me hit my four points so I am just constantly moving in a circle around the classroom. Because it is like I have to go see each of those kids every two minutes*, (Carla, personal communication, October, 2012)

While monitoring the class, Carla also checked in with students for assignments that had not been turned in.
Themes in Carla’s classroom. The field notes from observations in Carla’s classroom were divided into ninety-seven discernible moments. These moments were comprised of exchanges Carla had with her students in the classroom as well as content Carla produced pertaining to her classes. Through ongoing open and selective coding of these moments, as well as the data collected through interviews, the following were identified as dominant themes in Carla’s classroom practices: practical flexibility, distributed authority, and collective intelligence.

Practical flexibility. Carla made concerted efforts in her teaching to provide flexibility for her students. This flexibility was seen from the student perspective as Carla’s willingness to modify assignments to meet students’ interests. From an instructional perspective, the practical flexibility was seen as Carla retooled or remixed situations and/or resources in order to create an efficient solution to an unanticipated problem, like when she allowed students to use their smartphones and a web-based interface to upload needed pictures when they encountered a problem with the school’s filters while uploading a project. Table 11 briefly describes some of the situations in which Carla’s teaching practice depicted a practical and flexible approach.

Table 11

Carla’s Teaching: Practical Flexibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief description of moment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/13/12</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>Webquest activity</td>
<td>Carla informed students that if they wanted or needed more time to complete their webquest, they could turn it in on the following Monday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/12</td>
<td>Yearbook</td>
<td>Self-directed work</td>
<td>Checking her grade book, Carla asked students if they would like to retake a quiz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/12</td>
<td>Yearbook</td>
<td>Self-directed work</td>
<td>In order to get notes from a previous day to a student who was absent, Carla used the Moodle site for her English IV class to quickly share the documents with the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/12</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>Carla told students that if they did not receive a paper back, they can use this time to write the essay instead of doing the peer review activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/12</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>Peer review (described in Table 6)</td>
<td>Carla explained to a student who had questions about the assignment the explicit skills she needed to be able to see from the work they hand in. She went on to tell the student that as long as he could demonstrate those skills, he could modify the assignment to suit his needs/desires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/29/12</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Carla told students that if they were recently absent and needed to complete make up work, they could use the class time to complete those assignments in order to get them in that day, before the end of the grading period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/17/12</td>
<td>Yearbook</td>
<td>Self-directed work</td>
<td>Students encountered problems uploading content to the yearbook website as a result of recent content filter changes. After quickly debating some potential solutions, Carla instructed the students to see if they can use an application the yearbook company had developed to allow any student or community member to send pictures to the yearbook staff. Students used their smartphones and a web-based interface to upload needed pictures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/17/12</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>Research notecards (described in Table 6)</td>
<td>Carla told the students that she needed to check to see that they had completed their first twenty-five notecards before they left her class. “So, if you are a few shy right now, you are in luck because you have until the end of class.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>While there was a seating chart, once students began work, they were free to move around the room to work in a space they found to be more comfortable and/or productive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within Carla’s assignments, when possible, she tried to make them useful for the students outside of class as well. During the peer review activity noted in Table 6, Carla stated, “I would rather you write about a career that you are actually interested in.” Carla then sat in an adjacent desk to the student to review the specifics of the assignment (field notes, September 19, 2012). While her students were motivated by the grades, she would rather her students firmly grasp a concept than maintain a rigid grading policy (Carla, personal communication, October, 2012). Carla worked to be explicit with her students about what she needed to see from them in different assignments. For example, she regularly discussed individual changes and modifications the students could make to address their needs or interests. She told her students, “As long as you can clearly demonstrate your understanding, it works for me” (field notes, October 2012). “It’s more important to me that they know how to do what they should have learned, rather than just doing one standard form” (Carla, personal communication, October, 2012). Carla created a great deal of flexible time within her classroom, which allowed her students to working on various projects as needed and, as she stated while they worked on essays, the freedom to do “[whatever] will be a better use of [their] time” (field notes, September 19, 2012).

**Distributed authority.** The distributed authority code identified moments in which Carla promoted multiple, diverse voices in decision making processes. The distributed authority seen in Carla’s classroom was an extension of the practical flexibility Carla enacted. It was through her flexibility that students were able to find spaces to be heard in the learning environment created in Carla’s classroom. In these situations, Carla was not positioned as an authoritarian presence; instead, she was helping to facilitate her students’
learning. Instructionally, Carla’s recognition of the diverse learning needs of her students created a space where students had autonomy to work as they needed to, within reason, in her classroom. Table 12 briefly describes moments depicting Carla’s distribution of authority.

Table 12

*Carla’s Teaching: Distributed Authority*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief description of moment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/13/12</td>
<td>Yearbook</td>
<td>Self-directed work</td>
<td>Carla deferred to the head editor of the yearbook in making critical decisions about the sequencing and organization of the yearbook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/12</td>
<td>Yearbook</td>
<td>Self-directed work</td>
<td>A student walked up to the projection cart and plugged in her MP3 player. Several students started quietly singing along once the music started. Others, including Carla, discussed the artists being played.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/12</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Carla had a paper that she had graded with no name on it. She took the paper to students around the room who had not received a paper back asking if it was their paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/12</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>Peer review (described in Table 6)</td>
<td>As some students began working on revisions, they put headphones on to listen to music while working. Carla only asked them to remove the headphones if she needed to speak with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/12</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Carla told students to keep working on peer review if they had not finished. Carla then handed out <em>Mort d’Arthur</em> reading guides and told students they could work on the reading guide or their revisions. Students should “do whichever they think would be the best use of their time.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Carla handed a stack of quizzes recently completed by the yearbook staff to the head editor. The editor reviewed the quizzes and discusses the staff’s performance with Carla. Carla regularly made use of the editor’s experience with yearbook to inform her instructional methods in the class.

Students in Carla’s classes began a conversational and non-linear discussion on the whiteboard at the front of the room. While it didn’t have anything to do with the content being taught, Carla left it on the board because she found it entertaining. Students in other classes continued to add to the discussion.

While there was a seating chart, once students began work, they were free to move around the room to work in a space they found to be more comfortable and/or productive.

The impact of the distributed authority in Carla’s classroom can be seen in the ways students took ownership of the classroom space: the students listening to music on their headphone while working, moving around the classroom to sit and work in various areas of the classroom, the Yearbook students playing music through Carla’s projection cart, and the students across classes writing their conversation on the whiteboard. In the Yearbook class, Carla’s distribution of authority went as far as working with the head editor to assess the other students and provide insights about the students’ performance. This was information that Carla could then use to make instructional decisions to move the class forward.

**Collective intelligence.** The collective intelligence code indicates moments which Carla makes space for the sharing of information and resources through collaboration to create new knowledge. Many of the assignments Carla gave her students involved some
level of collaboration with their peers. In some moments, the collaboration was explicitly integrated into the structure of the assignment, like when (include concrete example); in others, the collaboration was much more informal. The use of collaborative activities in Carla’s classroom denotes an emphasis on collective knowledge building. Additionally, Carla also promoted the use of the Internet as a collective intelligence resource. Table 13 briefly describes moments where Carla made space for collective intelligence in her classroom by allowing for group work and promoting resources that are crowd-sourced.

Table 13

**Carla’s Teaching: Collective Intelligence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief description of moment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/13/12</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>Webquest activity</td>
<td>Carla stepped in to advise a pair of students who were struggling to find the information needed on the websites Carla listed for the students. She advised, “or you can Google it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>All activities aside from Middle Ages notes and Bell ringer</td>
<td>The activities Carla created for this class were either designed to be collaborative, or she allows students to informally work together while working on their own products to hand in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/26/12</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>Modern ballad analysis</td>
<td>A student asks for Carla’s help because she was having trouble accessing some information because of the content filter. Carla advises the student to look it up on Wikipedia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/17/12</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>In this activity, Carla used a central topic that was thematically connected to the research papers the students were working on. She pulled information about the topic from her students to build a partial outline that could be used by the students in the class for their own paper if they so desired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Carla supplied her students with links to resources such as SparkNotes through Moodle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Carla noted in an interview, she would rather her students work together to get an understanding of what was going on in the literature they had read than be forced to review content through lecture. While she personally debated the moral implications of her use of group work, she ultimately decided that it was the best way to assure that the class as a whole continued to move forward (Carla, personal communication, October, 2012). In addition to her use of collective knowledge building in the classroom, Carla also regularly promoted the use of digital tools and resources online as collective intelligence repositories for students to use.

**Political economy of communication and Carla’s classroom.** The moments observed in Carla’s classroom were analyzed using a lens of political economy of communication in order to identify when she was positioned as the producer of content, the distributor of content, or the consumer of content. During the four conducted observations, there were six moments in which Carla was clearly situated as the producer of content. These moments included the Bell Ringer activities and the Middle Ages notes. Carla was the producer in these situations because the focus of the class was on content she had created. There were three moments in which Carla was situated as a distributor; she channeled specific content for her students to engage with in the Webquest, the *Mort d’Arthur* reading guide, and the *Macbeth* soliloquy analysis. There were a total of seven clear moments in which Carla was positioned as a consumer of student content. For example, Carla’s position as consumer was exemplified in an interaction she had with a student struggling to determine what to write about when given an open-ended prompt. The student requested Carla’s help, and Carla offered the following guidance, “Imagine if you had to read sixty Bell Ringer notebooks in one day, what would you want to read?”
(field notes, September 26, 2012). In this situation, Carla was explicitly pointing out to the student that she will be consuming whatever the student decides to produce.

**Relationship of Social Media and Classroom Practices**

In both the classroom and on social media platforms, Carla comes across as composed and carefully put together. Through classroom observation, social media artifact collection, and interviews, the following themes were discovered – practical flexibility, distributed authority, collective intelligence, sharing, and multimodality. The central themes identified in the two environments are identified in Table 14.

Table 14

*Comparison of Case 1 Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Practice</th>
<th>Social Media Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practical Flexibility</strong></td>
<td>Meeting students’ diverse needs and interests and being open and able to change as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distributed Authority</strong></td>
<td>The participant promoted multiple, diverse voices in decision making processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collective Intelligence</strong></td>
<td>The sharing of information and resources through collaboration to create new knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While both Carla’s teaching practice and social media usage each contained two of the selective new literacies codes this study was investigating, they only had one code in common: collective intelligence. In the classroom, collective intelligence was used as a way to keep things moving forward; within social media it was considered to be the driving purpose.
When considering the lens of political economy of communication, the number of moments of Carla being positioned as the producer, distributor, and consumer of content is noted in Table 15.

Table 15

*Comparison of Case 1 Political Economy of Communication Moments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teaching Practice</th>
<th>Social Media Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>Total %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer</td>
<td>6 37.5</td>
<td>25 59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributor</td>
<td>3 19</td>
<td>9 21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>7 43.5</td>
<td>8 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the numbers suggest a disconnect between Carla’s teaching practice and social media usage in the sequencing of these three roles, it is important to consider the unmeasured consumerism in Carla’s social media usage mentioned above. Implications will be explored in detail in the following chapter.

**Summary of Case 1 Findings**

Through the analysis of data collected in case 1, it was determined that Carla’s social media usage could be characterized as sharing links to outside resources, including multimodal content, and engaging collective intelligences (the sharing of information and resources through collaboration to create new knowledge) by creating content with her Facebook friends in the form of comments. In her classroom, Carla regularly distributed authority amongst her students, provided a flexible learning environment, and created spaces for her students to engage collective intelligence as they moved forward through their work. There was not a great deal of systematic overlap between the literacies Carla demonstrated in her social media usage and classroom practice; however, there were some interesting connections.
Chapter 5: Case 2 Findings- Laura

Laura was a twenty-four year old, first year, middle school English teacher in an urban county in Central North Carolina and an active, longtime user of Facebook and Twitter. Five classroom observations were conducted in Laura’s second period, sixth grade inclusion English class. Data was collected from her personal usage of Facebook and Twitter from June 1, 2012 to October 31, 2012. Data and preliminary findings were discussed with Laura during three interviews. This chapter will provide an overview of Laura’s personal use of social media and her teaching practices; describe the dominant themes found in her social media postings and discernible moments in the classroom; and will identify how Laura was situated in her use of social media and classroom practice through a political economy of communication lens.

Laura’s Personal Use of Social Media

Laura has used social media for approximately six years. Her years of personal social media use has resulted in patterned ways of using the social media technologies; in other words, the ethos of her social media usage was well established as a result of years of active social media usage. How active? Between June 1, 2012 and October 31, 2012, Laura posted a total of three hundred and ninety-one updates, three hundred and twenty-six Tweets and sixty-five Facebook posts (descriptions of types of updates are located in Appendix C).
Table 16

*Overview of Laura’s Social Media Usage*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of updates</th>
<th>Number of occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook status updates</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook link shares</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook single-image shares</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook profile picture updates</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook cover photo updates</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook photo album updates</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Facebook updates</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter posts with hashtags</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Containing 320 individual hashtags</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter retweets</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter image shares</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Twitter posts</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total social media posts/updates</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Laura’s usage of Facebook and Twitter were slightly different. According to Laura, her Twitter usage tended to be dominated by quick notes based in specific times and places.

*Twitter kind of gets everything. [...] Twitter is supposed to be in the moment, a here and now kind of Twitter-feed, but the world does not need to know what I ate for lunch last Thursday; I’ll eventually go back and delete [those posts].* (Laura, personal communication, September, 2012)

Her Facebook posts tended to be more substantial and not as dependent on context as her Twitter posts (see Figure 2). Laura’s Facebook posts also included much more personal information than her Twitter posts—such as information about her relationship with her boyfriend. For example, shortly after she began dating her boyfriend, she posted a picture to Facebook of her and her boyfriend with the caption, “that’s a good looking pair. #modesty.” She indicated this was in part, because her family did not follow Twitter but was on Facebook. “Everything that goes on Facebook is going to be non-controversial: politics especially. My family is very, very conservative, and so I don’t usually post
anything political at all” (Laura, personal communication, September, 2012). Figure 2 illustrates a moment in which Laura posted the same content to both Facebook and Twitter but with different phrasing captioning the image.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Got to school early for a meeting this morning and found two rainbows waiting for me!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twitter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Had to get to #school before the ass crack of dawn, but there was at least a #rainbow waiting for me. Happy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2. Difference in Laura’s Facebook and Twitter Postings*

This moment is an example of how Laura used self-censoring on Facebook, as it states the situation in a straight-forward fashion. In the Twitter post, on the other hand, there is an underlying subtext that Laura was not very pleased to have to be at work earlier than usual; this discontent was not detected in her Facebook post, as she did not use any profanity, nor was there any detection of sarcasm.

Laura often engaged with social media through her smartphone, particularly when posting pictures. “I post pictures on Facebook because I have an iPhone now so I take pictures of everything and over-photography my life” (Laura, personal communication, September, 2012). To post, Laura used an application called Instagram, a mobile app for posting images. While Instagram can function as a social network of its own, it is
primarily simply used as an extension tool for easily posting images to Twitter and Facebook from mobile devices, which was how Laura used it. For this reason, data was not directly collected from Instagram.

Despite engaging in the rather personal practice of sharing pictures of her and her life, Laura also went to great lengths to protect her privacy. For example Laura replaced her last name with her middle name on Facebook, making it more difficult to locate her. Additionally, her Facebook profile was only viewable by other Facebook users she had approved to access her profile. Her Twitter username had no relation to her actual name and only her first name was associated with her account; it was also set as a private account, meaning that access to her tweet required her permission. However, Laura recently changed the privacy setting on her Twitter account in order to engage with others through hashtags, a type of hyperlink embedded in Twitter posts (tweets) intended to connect tweets on similar topics across all Twitter users. Hashtags are identified with a pound sign just before the word or phrase identifying the topic of the content (example: #newliteracies #edresearch #just4fun).

Themes in Laura’s social media usage. The data collected from Laura’s Facebook and Twitter activity, in addition to the data collected during the interviews, was coded using open and selective coding; the selective codes included multimodality, collective intelligence, and distributed authority. Through analysis of her three hundred and eighty-six Facebook and Twitter updates, as well as the information gathered from the interviews, the following were identified as dominant themes in Laura’s usage of social media: #hashtagging, narrowcasting, and multimodality. These themes were
identified as dominant because of the consistency of presence/use and use of new literacies.

**#hashtagging.** The #hashtagging code indicated posts in which Laura made use of a feature in Twitter that functions as metadata for tweets and creates hyperlinks between tweets of all Twitter users including the same hashtag in their tweets. Laura regularly used hashtags within her tweets; approximately fifty-five percent of her tweets included at least one hashtag. When asked why she used hashtags, she responded:

*I just like to see what other people are saying. I’m sort of voyeuristic I guess, but if I use #5k I can see what everyone else is doing. Like couch to 5K, we’re doing this pseudo-training program, I can see what their tips were. Or if someone was really frustrated with something, I can see that, and then it’s like, it’s ok, it’s not just you feeling frustrated, everyone else is too. (Laura, personal communication, September, 2012)*

Table 17 depicts a sample of Laura’s tweets demonstrating the different ways her use of hashtags functioned within her content.
### Table 17

**Laura’s Social Media Usage: #hashtagging**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type of post</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/19/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>Why am I awake and so well rested before 8am?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#firstworldproblems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/21/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>Just applied to 14 teaching positions. Someone just hire me already?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#kthx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/29/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>Definitely making plans to go see #magicmike with the bestie [best friend] and giving both of us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#judgmentface lol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/19/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>I always feel like a super hero during a blood shortage. It's ok to call me in crisis, there's plenty of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>me to go around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#donatelife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/11/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>First attempt at #couponing. Just saved $20.10 and only on the things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>on my regular list!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#rockstar #soccermom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/22/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>First girl's mom wanted a pic with me. Second boy went for a hug.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#livetweetopenhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/13/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>Boyfriend gets a black eye just in time to meet the parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#mylife #typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/24/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>Having a bit of a Monday! Thank goodness I have lunch planning today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Only had 45 emails to sort through...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#teacherlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>Lost half my weekly lunch planning to a rained out recess. Boo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#teacherlife #TeacherProbs #firstworldproblems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>5.53 at a 12 minute mile!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#nbd #hardcore #death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/20/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>Aww. #eyeroll #vomit #okbutreallyitscute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://instagr.am/xxxxxxx">http://instagr.am/xxxxxxx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>Need a kickass #runningplaylist for my #10k. Ideas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#playlist #running #joggingplaylist #workoutmusic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>Officially submitted my first set of grades and now writing a quiz students will take online. So</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#techsavvy, #firstyearteacher #nbd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As she mentioned, some of the hashtags Laura used connected to larger groups in read and/or meaningful ways. For example, #Donatelife connected Laura’s posts to other posts primarily about donating blood, #couponing connected her posts to other posts about people engaging in couponing, and #firstworldproblems connected her posts to other posts from people complaining about something that they recognized is not really a
problem within the larger scope. Using a hashtag to connect to create a meaningful connection situated the individual tweet within the larger discussion about the given topic. However, not all of the hashtags Laura used created meaningful connections to other’s content; instead they were used as sarcastic add-on tweets, like when she used hashtags such as #soccermom, #kthx (ok, thanks), and #nbd (no big deal). Within Laura’s tweets, the use of the hashtags in this way served more as a commentary about the content of the tweet than it did in situating the tweet within the larger societal conversation. This reflects what she said above about using hashtags to connect with others on a similar topic.

Laura also used some of her own hashtags to add context to her own tweets. There were two moments in the data collected which Laura live tweeted an event, #livetweetopenhouse, mentioned above, in which she tweeted items from open house in her classroom and #livetweetTWC, described below, where she tweeted about a cable company service call. Laura used the hashtags, in addition to connecting to others, to provide a meta-narration, which gave additional content and/or insight to her tweets by indicating a situation or personal emotion directly related to the content of the tweet.

**Narrowcasting.** The narrowcasting code indicates the directional dissemination of information to a niche audience. The content that Laura posted to her social media space could be characterized as narrowcasting because it was primarily directional and focused on a narrow audience. In the recorded data, there were thirty-four visible moments in which Laura engaged her friends in conversation within her three hundred and eighty-six posts. This directional type of communication was similar to broadcasting in that content was sent out but generally not returned. It differed in that the content Laura was sending
out was not designed for a general audience as a broadcast would be. Instead, her content was designed for a narrow audience: narrowcasting. A prime example of the narrow audience Laura was tweeting for was seen one evening while Laura waited for the cable company to come repair a problem, which she live tweeted. Laura posted thirteen tweets using the hashtag #livetweetTWC to mark and link the tweets. See Figure 4.

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#livetweetTWC tweets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our cable is &quot;shorted out&quot; #livetweetTWC #stayposted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;it act like it tryin to come in&quot; &quot;that's jacked up&quot; it's funny cuz they're talking about a cable jack. #livetweetTWC #stayposted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT'S GETTING REAL! TWC is chastising maintenance. Maintenance ain't backing down! #livetweetTWC #stayposted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they've all gone outside to hunt for a cable after spending WAY too long in my closet where I'm drying intimates. #livetweetTWC #stayposted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH NO! I can hear neighbor yelling at TWC because they turned off her cable and her kids were watching Disney! #doom #livetweetTWC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alright, y'all. Looks like our exciting #livetweetTWC has come to an end. It's been fun. Now I have cable. And a cable guy. #leavenowplz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scope of the audience for posts such as this did not extend beyond personal friends.

While the content was high in entertainment value, it was also an example of how she she engaged with them through the content she produced.

**Multimodality.** The multimodality code indicates times Laura engaged mediums other than text alone in efforts to convey a specific message in a post. Laura commented in an interview, “I take pictures of everything and over-photography my life” (Laura, personal communication, September, 2012). While the fifty-eight images throughout the data collection period may not seem to be a significant number amidst the volume of content she posted, the way in which she used the images she posted to convey meaning
made the images a particularly interesting addition to her body of social media work.

Selections of her posted images are described in Table 19 below.

Table 19

*Laura’s Social Media Usage: Multimodality*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type of post</th>
<th>Brief description of content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/10/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet w/ Instagram</td>
<td>A picture of Laura standing at the corner of an intersection with a member of the band she had gone to see that night. He has his arm around her shoulder and they were both smiling and looking directly at the camera. The image was captioned, “#me and #goose of #sk6ers fame. #eveningmuse #charlotte #stephenkellogg #sixers #stephenkelloggandthesixers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/25/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet w/ Instagram</td>
<td>The image was captioned, “#fml”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/23/12</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Tweet w/ Instagram</td>
<td>A picture of Laura sitting on the ground in the woods with a friend. Both are smiling and looking upward at the camera. The image was captioned, “Breakfast in a Thoreau wonderland”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The images Laura posted depicted her and her friends and/or family, particular items of interest, or a setting with no one in the frame of the shot. The settings range from a view of a lake to a back of M&Ms and a diet Pepsi on Laura’s desk. The captions Laura wrote to accompany her images typically did not describe the content of the image; instead, she used the text of the caption to build out the message of the image. This creates an interesting visual documentation of Laura’s life as she chooses to represent it.
by framing and arranging the content of the images as well as how she captions the images to add meaning.

**Political economy of communication and Laura’s social media usage.** Laura’s social media artifacts were analyzed using a lens of political economy of communication in order to identify when she was positioned as the producer of content, the distributor of content, or the consumer of content. Within the artifacts collected documenting Laura’s social media usage, there were two hundred and eighty updates that positioned Laura as the sole producer of content in the form of the original content she tweeted and posted to Facebook. There were eighty artifacts in which she functioned as a distributor of content created by others. These artifacts include shared links on Facebook and retweets on Twitter. Finally, there were twenty-six clear artifacts in which Laura was positioned as a consumer as well as producer through her creation of content with her online friends through commenting. As mentioned previously while describing Carla’s positioning as a consumer, Laura also did much more consumption of content than was measurable by this study as this study only measured the content posted by the participants and did not track the number of time the participants accessed social media or the duration of time they spent in social media.

**Laura in the Classroom**

At the time of the observations conducted for this study, Laura was teaching sixth grade English. I observed her second period class, which was a special education inclusion class. The class had a total of eighteen students, evenly divided between males and females; seven of the students were African American, three were Hispanic, and
eight were Caucasian. Because this class was an inclusion class, a special education co-
teacher occasionally joined Laura to help facilitate the lessons.

Physical setting. The front wall of Laura’s classroom had long whiteboards that
nearly ran the length of the room with an interactive SmartBoard mounted in the middle.
There was a long table at the front of the room that Laura used as a secondary desk for
herself, a table on the far right wall that held a few classroom supplies, and a table on the
back wall where students turned in work. Laura’s assigned desk was positioned in the
back, right corner of the room. The SmartBoard at the front of the classroom was
connected to a desktop computer at Laura’s desk at the back of the room, along with
additional audio visual jacks for connecting media devices. The far left wall was entirely
taken up by a built-in bookshelf and cabinet. The cabinet was covered in student
drawings of penguins. There were some motivational posters about “Being an Individual”
up around the room and two Garfield posters on the front of Laura’s desk—one about
paying attention, the other about geography. At the start of the observations, the student
desks in the room were positioned in six pods of four desks.
Later, as she explained, for classroom management purposes, Laura reorganized the student desks into paired rows. This positioned every student facing forward and next to one or two partners.
Following an observation just after Laura rearranged her classroom, she commented to me that she was shocked at how much the new classroom arrangement improved student behavior.

**Classroom technology.** During the fall of 2012, Laura’s school was in the process of implementing a one-to-one initiative in which every student received a netbook. The students’ netbooks were restricted by an Internet content filter while at school and limited access profiles within the operating systems on the individual netbooks. Every teacher in the school was given access to Moodle sites for use with their classes. Laura noted that they were having several problems with the Moodle because the students had figured out how to use the chat feature in the Moodle platform for
backchannel conversations that the teacher could not access or track. Laura noted that the
use of the netbooks in her classroom was stifled by the fact that several students’
netbooks had been confiscated. While the students’ accounts did not have permissions to
download applications, many students figured out how to transfer and share games on
flash drives; this resulted in the administration taking the netbooks away from several of
Laura’s students. Laura also told me that another group of students figured out how to set
up a proxy server on their netbooks to bypass the schools Internet content filter; their
netbooks were also confiscated (Laura, personal communication, October, 2012). As a
result of so many students not having access to the netbooks the school gave them, Laura
did not make regular use of them in her classroom.

**Sixth grade English inclusion.** Laura greeted her students at the door everyday
as they entered her classroom and reminded them to get started on their Daily Grammar,
a warm-up activity which was projected on the SmartBoard and engaged the students in
grammar or language activities. The following examples depict some of the range of
these lesson-starting activities and were taken directly from what Laura provided her
students.

*Daily Grammar*
*Make up definitions for the following words that would make sense to someone
from another country:*
1) Smithereens (*ex: it was blown to smithereens*)
2) Pigskin (*ex: toss around the pigskin*)
3) Cantankerous (*ex: he’s being so cantankerous today*)
4) Kicked the bucket (*ex: he kicked the bucket*)
(Laura, field notes, October 5, 2012)

*Daily Grammar*
-Add Adj + Adv. to the sentence below to make it have stronger sensory language.
Write the sentence to include your words.
“*max went to buy some peanut butter at the market for his sandwich***”
(Laura, field notes, October 23, 2012)
After giving the class a few minutes to complete the warm-up activity, Laura reviewed the activities with the students, marking the editorial changes on the SmartBoard when applicable. The students copied the Daily Grammar activities into a notebook, which Laura checked every Friday by calling them back to her desk one by one while the class worked on an activity. Copies of each day’s Daily Grammar were posted to the classes’ Moodle site. If a student was absent, Laura instructed them to go to the Moodle to get the Daily Grammar they missed. Once the Daily Grammar was completed, Laura quickly moved the students into the day’s activity, briefly described below in Table 20.

Table 20

*Laura’s Sixth Grade English Activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Approximate time</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Collaborative/ independent</th>
<th>Technology used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily grammar</td>
<td>5-10 minutes</td>
<td>The daily grammar exercises engaged the students in grammar or language activities and reviews.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Teacher computer and projector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Frame comic</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>Students were to create a six frame comic that depicted the plot of a short story they had recently read and include quotes from the text to explain their illustrations.</td>
<td>Independent, but could discuss with peers</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library book checkout</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
<td>The class went to the library to receive an orientation and to check out a book for pleasure reading. They were told to check out any book they wanted to read.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“So strange”</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>Students wrote a speech as a group to explain a “strange” tradition. Every member of the group had a different role (scribe, reporter, etc.). The group then read their speech to the class.</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Special Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short story</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>Students were to read a selection from a short story in their textbook and answer questions about the plot. Some sections of the text were read aloud as a class, some were read silently.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map the story</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>Draw a map of the route taken by characters in the story. Include details and important locations.</td>
<td>Independent, but could discuss with peers</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Minute countdown</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
<td>Students were instructed to (a) hibernate their computers, (b) say something nice to someone around them, (c) clean their area, and (d) sit and wait to be dismissed.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun Fact Friday</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Depending on behavior and class progress, at the end of the class on Friday, Laura gave the students an option. As a class, they could either select a fun fact or a question. If they selected a fun fact, Laura would share an interesting fact that she had researched and prepared. If they selected question, they could, as a class, ask Laura one personal question that was not about her age.</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Laura presented the directions for each of her activities on the SmartBoard, reading and reviewing them several times before the students got started. While students worked on their assignments, Laura walked around the classroom monitoring student progress and behavior. Occasionally, one of the school’s special education teachers joined Laura for a portion of the class time to help address students’ needs. The special education teacher moved in and out of the classroom without disruption.
Laura’s teaching practices appeared to be heavily influence by the fact that she was teaching an inclusion sixth grade class as she stated, “I feel like we are going really slow, and sometimes I feel like we are going backwards. [...] sometimes it does feel astonishingly slow” (Laura, personal communication, October, 2012). While she struggled to engage content at the level she wanted to, Laura was able to find ways to mediate classroom management issues and move forward in her lessons with ample scaffolding. Ultimately, her perceptions of her role as a teacher moved away from being focused on content.

_I am theoretically teaching them language arts, but I am actually making sure that they are eating, and that they are not hitting each other, and making sure that they go home if they are sick and that there is someone for them to go home to [...] So... multitasking, yeah, that’s what teaching is._ (Laura, personal communication, October, 2012)

As Laura considered the differences in her own positioning as a middle school teacher as opposed to a secondary teacher (which she had been trained as), she moved away from the idea of the content being her dominant objective; instead, addressing her students’ diverse needs while teaching language arts had become her focus.

**Themes in Laura’s classroom.** The field notes from the observations conducted in Laura’s classroom were divided into seventy-two discernible moments. These moments were comprised of exchanges Laura had with her students in the classroom, as well as content Laura produced for instructional purposes. Through ongoing open and selective coding of these moments, as well as the data collected through interviews, the following were identified as dominant themes in Laura’s classroom practices: directive/informative, multimodality, and collective intelligence.
**Directive information.** The directive information code signifies moments where Laura provided explicit instructions or information intended to elicit an immediate and observable action. One of the most regular things observed in Laura’s class room was her giving directive information to her students. When introducing a new activity, Laura presented the directions on the SmartBoard and read the directions to the students at least twice. Laura had several students in her classroom that had behavioral issues; the fact that her other students were easily distracted from classroom activities only exacerbated the situation. As a result, Laura regularly had to stop what she was saying to the class to address student behavior issues such as throwing things, shouting, and talking out of turn. Students in Laura’s class were expected to follow the rules, not question or push against them. There was a very clear power structure in the classroom.
**Table 21**

*Laura’s Teaching: Directive Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief description of moment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/21/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English N/A</td>
<td>While checking students’ homework assignment, one student told Laura that he did not complete his homework. Laura paused and stated, “I’m giving you judgment face right now.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/21/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English Daily grammar</td>
<td>Laura called the students, one by one, back to her desk to review their daily grammar notebooks. Laura pointed out what the students’ were doing well with their notebooks and specific items that needed to be improved upon.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/21/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English N/A</td>
<td>To get the class back on task, Laura stood at the front of the room and said, “all eyes up here. Most of you are not on task right now and that makes me really annoyed... this is not a happy face.” She pointed to her own face.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/21/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English N/A</td>
<td>“All eyes on me, right here. I want to see your faces. Guys, directions, right here.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/2/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English N/A</td>
<td>Laura, standing at the front of the class with her hands on her hips and feet shoulder width apart, stated, “I want all eyes right here.” She then gave students directions for the end of class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/5/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English N/A</td>
<td>A student told Laura that he forgot his daily grammar notebook at home. Laura responded with an over exaggerated expression of shock, putting her hands on her head and saying, “Oh no!”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/5/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English N/A</td>
<td>Just after asking students to turn in a writing assignment from a previous day on Moodle, Laura told the class, “I want to see everyone’s essays on their screens.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/26/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English N/A</td>
<td>Before the class period began, a student approached and began writing on the whiteboard. Laura walked up behind her and gently took the marker out of her hand and cleared what she wrote.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A common phrase that Laura used while giving direction was, “All eyes on me.” Laura used brief and explicit directives like this to elicit specific actions from her students. When her students were not following her directives, she let them know that she was disappointed; she indicated this with comments such as “this is not my happy face.” This type of meta-narration in her teaching gave students insight into her emotions in the moment and functioned as a type of warning. Students treated these meta-narrative comments similar to how a child may respond to a parent counting to three; many students froze in place and quickly managed their peers’ behavior. In response to a student telling Laura that he had forgotten to finish his work, she responded, “I’m giving you [my] judgment face right now” (Laura, field notes, September 21, 2012). Laura also used over-exaggerated facial expressions and gestures to convey an emotion in response to her students’ actions. These types of narratives that accompanied her instruction brought an interesting emphasis on what was going on in the classroom.

**Multimodality.** The multimodality code indicates moments when Laura engaged mediums other than text alone to convey a specific message. Laura regularly incorporated multimodal compositions in her classroom as a meaning-making and comprehension tool. She used drawing, in particular, to scaffold the students’ articulation of ideas. Laura felt that the use of multimodal activities was necessary for her students learning.
[I have them draw] because they can’t write sentences. And I trick them into writing sentences by having them draw first. I say, if you can visually represent what you are trying to tell me, then at least I have some sort of idea when I am trying to help you write it down. When I was talking to kids at the beginning of the year I would ask, what are you trying to say? Just tell me and we’ll figure out how to write it down. And some of them couldn’t even verbalize what they were trying to say. So if we are doing something simple like plot diagraming and I can see that you tried to draw a dragon, or whatever happened at the climax, then I know that you are on track and we can keep moving. (Laura, personal communication, October, 2012)

Table 22 briefly describes some of the activities in which Laura had her students construct meaning through the use of multimodal compositions.

Table 22

Laura’s Teaching: Multimodality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief description of moment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/21/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English</td>
<td>6 Frame comic (described in Table 15)</td>
<td>Students were instructed to create a comic that depicted the plot of a story they were reading in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/2/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English</td>
<td>Library book checkout (described in Table 15)</td>
<td>Students were instructed to checkout a book they would like to read. Some checked out novels, some checked out picture books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/05/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English</td>
<td>So strange (described in Table 15)</td>
<td>While students did write a speech about a selected topic, no written work was handed in. Instead, the group presented their work orally to the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/26/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English</td>
<td>Map the story (described in Table 15)</td>
<td>Students were instructed to draw a map depicting the journey of the main character in a story they were reading in class. The map was to include depictions of key moments in the plot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/26/12</td>
<td>Sixth Grade English</td>
<td>Extra credit assignment</td>
<td>Students were informed of an extra credit opportunity in the form of three mini assignments. Two of the three were traditional writing pieces. The third was to bring in a box of tissues that has been covered and decorated to represent a scene from something the student had read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In these moments, the drawings were used to demonstrate reading comprehension. For instance, by having her students create a graphic map of the main character journey, Laura was able to identify how much of the story they understood without the students having to rely solely on textual expression. In addition to using the drawing of images to convey meaning, Laura was also open to the use of images as reading. When she took her students to the library, they were tasked with checking out a book that they would like to read. Some of her students chose novel-like books and others chose picture books. While selecting their books, Laura circulated around the room talking with the students about their selections. She asked them why they were interested in particular books and commented on what she thought would be interesting in them. She did not address the picture books in any different way than the novels. Following the class period, Laura commented to me that she just wanted her students to read something that they would enjoy. For some students, that meant a picture book, and that was just fine.

**Collective intelligence.** The collective intelligence code indicates moments in which Laura provided space for the sharing of knowledge through collaboration to create new knowledge. In the case of Laura’s classroom, students were regularly allowed to work in groups or with partners to share and build knowledge collaboratively. While students worked on assignments that were not explicitly designed as group activities, they were allowed to discuss the activity with students around them. In part, Laura saw this as a school mandate.
We have been told that we [as teachers] need to do less teaching and more learning. [...] So if my students are doing group work I can walk around and work with individual students [...]. I think [group work] works in certain classes. I have been trying, when I do group work, to assign each person a task. So there will be one person who is task-master, always. And that is the person whose job it is to police so I don’t have to do that. Then one person is usually the scribe, one person is usually the idea-man, and then depending on what they are doing I have other roles. And that helps some, but it doesn’t always work. (Laura, personal communication, September, 2012)

While there was a classroom management aspect to Laura’s use of group work, it also allowed the students in her classroom to use each other as resources and build on collective intelligence. Even though Laura felt that she was being told by her administration to use group work, the layout of Laura’s classroom clearly indicated she valued collaboration as well. The initial arrangement of Laura’s classroom was designed to facilitate group work and collaboration over direct instruction. Students faced each other within their pods of desks instead of facing forward. When Laura rearranged her classroom to better manage behavior, the students, while all facing forward in this arrangement, were left with partners instead of positioning every desk separately. By physically situating her classroom in these ways, it appeared clear that Laura placed a great amount of value on collaboration and the construction of collective intelligence.

**Political economy of communication and Laura’s classroom.** Laura’s classroom observation data was coded using a political economy of communication lens for clear moments in which she was positioned as a producer, distributor, and consumer. There were four moments in two situations in which Laura was positioned as a producer in the data. These moments consisted of the Daily Grammar activities and Fun Fact Friday. In both of these moments, Laura was the one producing the focal content. Laura was situated as a distributor four times during the observations. These were moments in
which Laura channeled content to her students. Three of these four moments were through Laura’s use of content from the literature textbook in her class, and the fourth moment was when Laura took her students to the library for an orientation. In these situations, Laura was identifying what she considers to be valuable content and providing it to her class. There were four separate moments in which Laura was positioned as the consumer of her students’ products: her students’ creation of writing folders, strange events speeches, story maps, and the extra credit assignments. In these moments, the students were given general parameters and then left to produce a unique product.

**Relationship of Social Media and Classroom Practices**

Laura use of social media and classroom practices were particularly interesting because of the differences of usage within each space. Table 23 identifies the central themes in the two spaces as identified through classroom observation, social media artifact collection, and interviews.
Table 23

Comparison of Case 2 Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Practice</th>
<th>Social Media Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directive Information</td>
<td>The participant provides explicit instructions or information intended to elicit an immediate and observable action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimodality</td>
<td>The participant engaged mediums other than text alone in efforts to convey a specific message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Intelligence</td>
<td>The sharing of information and resources through collaboration to create new knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the classroom, Laura was directive with her students as she struggled with classroom management issues, yet has her room set up to facilitate collaboration. In social media she seemed to be fairly carefree in her Twitter usage while she was very conscientious about what she would post to Facebook, as to not upset her family. Perhaps one of the most interesting pairing of themes between teaching practice and social media usage in the directive information theme and the #hashtagging theme. Both of these groupings were dominant in the data and both engage forms of meta-narratives that provide additional information and/or insight into the situation.
Through using a lens of political economy of communication, it was possible to identify the positioning of power relationships. The findings from this analysis are noted in Table 24.

Table 24

*Comparison of Case 2 Political Economy of Communication Moments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teaching Practice</th>
<th>Social Media Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In considering how Laura was situated in the spaces, through a lens of political economy of communication, she was clearly positioned in roles of power in both the classroom space and social media space. The findings of this chapter will be explored in detail in the following chapter.

**Summary of Case 2 Findings**

Through the analysis of data collected for case 2, it was determined that Laura’s use of Facebook and Twitter could be described as a multimodal narrowcast that heavily used hashtags. Additionally, her use of Facebook and Twitter were differentiated in that Laura approaches Twitter as a place to post everything and Facebook as a place to post more carefully crafted items as a result of her audience. In the classroom, Laura’s teaching was explicit and often included opportunities for students to engage in multimodal activities and collaborate with their peers. There were striking similarities in the identified themes of Laura’s social media usage and classroom practice; particularly,
her use of hashtags and directive information in the classroom to both create a
metanarrative providing insight to the content being shares/presented.
Chapter 6: Case 3 Findings- Kevin

Kevin was a first year, high school English teacher in a rural county in central North Carolina where he taught English I, English II, and an honors section of English II. Kevin was also a regular user of Facebook and Twitter. Four observations were conducted in Kevin’s classroom and data was collected from his Facebook and Twitter postings from June 16, 2012 until October 31, 2012 as a part of this study. This chapter will provide an overview of Kevin’s personal use of social media and his teaching practices; describe the dominant themes found in his social media postings and discernible moments in the classroom; and will identify how Kevin was situated in his use of social media and classroom practice through a political economy of communication lens.

Kevin’s Personal Use of Social Media

Kevin’s use of social media changed over the course of the study. Within Kevin’s Facebook posts, he nearly exclusively posted items about events of interactions with the church youth group he works with. As time went on, he began sharing slightly more personal information through his Facebook posts. “You tend to post things that are important to you” (Kevin, personal communication, January, 2013). For Kevin, his youth ministry work was clearly very important. While Facebook received a majority of his content, Kevin also occasionally used a Twitter account. On Twitter, he typically shared slightly more personal information. Most of his tweets were posted from his smartphone.
and were about being at different places with people and included images via the online application, Instagram.

Between June 16 and October 31, Kevin posted fifty-five Facebook updates and thirty-three Twitter updates (see Table 25). Among these posts were twenty-two Instagram photos, six videos uploads, two hundred and twenty-seven photo uploads via photo albums, and twelve single-image uploads (descriptions of upload types included in Appendix C).

Table 25

Overview of Kevin’s Social Media Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of updates</th>
<th>Number of occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook status updates</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook link shares</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook video uploads</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook single-image shares</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook profile picture updates</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook cover photo updates</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook photo album updates</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Containing 227 photos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Facebook updates</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter posts with hashtags</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter retweets</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter image shares</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Twitter posts</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total social media posts/updates</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes in Kevin’s social media usage. The data collected from Kevin’s Facebook and Twitter activity, along with the data collected during the interviews, was coded using ongoing open and selective coding; the selective codes included multimodality, collective intelligence, and distributed authority. Through analysis of his eighty-eight Facebook and Twitter updates as well as the information gathered from the
interviews the following were identified as dominant themes in Kevin’s usage of social media: broadcasting, multimodality, and connectivity.

**Broadcasting.** The broadcasting code indicated artifacts directed towards a larger, public audience. These artifacts contained different forms of appeal and included minimal to no personal information. Kevin’s Facebook usage was primarily impersonal and predominantly related to work he did with a church youth group. In both his Facebook and Twitter usage, Kevin seldom engaged in public communication through comments. While his posts within Twitter did not seem to be geared for a mass audience, they were also more directional than conversational.

Table 26

*Kevin’s Social Media Usage: Broadcasting*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type of post</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/22/12</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Status update</td>
<td>Jesus makes this much clear: In the Kingdom of God, there will always be a cross before a crown. &quot;If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.&quot; – Luke 9:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/25/12</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Single Image Upload</td>
<td>Joe Cox speaking on discipline at Camp Connect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/10/12</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Photo Album and Status Update</td>
<td>PB&amp;J and Water Day (56 photos) Shouldn't be getting paid to have this much fun. It's really not fair.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Go where you grow, serve as you sow, and teach what you know." - The model of ministry I've always followed.

So much to do before school begins, but it feels great to have my classroom ready.

[Christian Church] / [Smith High School] People! At [Christian Church] this month, we have been intentional about making an impact on our community.

As [Smith High School] staff and students who are involved at Covenant, we have a unique opportunity, and perhaps responsibility, to make an impact on [Smith High School].

We have a landscaping project in the works which will add flowers to the front entrance near the auditorium and perhaps to the football field gate area.

Would you and your family be interested in joining me in the effort?

We cancelled the date for Saturday, Sept. 28 due to numerous conflicts.

For October, it looks like Saturday 10/6 could work as there is NO [University] football game because they play on Thursday, 10/4.

Also, Saturday, 10/20, [University] plays away in Alabama at 7:00 p.m. clearing out the morning for us.

For students, are you interested in helping? Can you forward this to your parents?

Which day do you prefer?

For staff members, please let me know if you are interested in helping and which date you may be available.

We will also need some folks to donate loriope (shown below) and hosta plants.

Details on where we can get them and other supplies we will need will follow.
Teaching my students the mediums of expression where words fail or cannot fully capture (today they learned how to Triple Step Swing Dance to Rihanna's "Disturbia") and then creating poetry based on their feelings and responses. Not only was it engaging for a difficult standard freshman class, but it was some of the better writing that they've produced. Proud of my kids!

Kevin’s postings that were identified as broadcast-oriented were also either related to his role as a youth minister or as a classroom teacher. In fact, nearly half of his posts did this. All of these posts could lead to a string of comments and collaboration; however, very few actually did.

**Multimodality.** The multimodality code indicated times Kevin engaged mediums other than text alone in efforts to convey a specific message. Within the space of Kevin’s social media usage, in both Facebook and Twitter, he regularly posted images. Table 27 displays the number of image files Kevin posted to his Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Table 27

*Kevin’s Social Media Usage: Multimodality*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images</th>
<th>Videos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Posts</strong></td>
<td><strong>Percentage of Total Posts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Files</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On Facebook in particular, Kevin told the stories of youth group events through the use of images found in photo albums. He also posted several videos of his youth group students performing skits and musical numbers. On Twitter, Kevin graphically shared moments in real time through pictures of locations. Of notice were that within the images Kevin posted, there were only two that were of himself with no one else. The first was a
picture of him in a stockade, posted to Twitter via Instagram on October 10, 2012, captioned, “Field Trip to Heritage Center. What used to happen to misbehaving students.” The second was his school picture, posted to Facebook on October 24, 2012, and was captioned, “First official "teacher" photo. Yikes.” All images that Kevin appeared in prior to these captured Kevin interacting with youth group members.

**Connectivity.** The connectivity code indicated artifacts in which Kevin had mentioned someone or included a geo-tag. When someone is mentioned in a Facebook or Twitter post, their name (or user name in Twitter) is displayed and hyperlinked to their profile. A geo-tag functions in a similar way mentions, except that the geo-tags connect information about the physical location where the post is being created. Kevin often included mentioned youth group members and included geo-tagging information in his posts. Table 28 indicates the number of posts that include a mention of individuals or a geo-tagged location.

Table 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kevin’s Social Media Usage: Connectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mentioning created links to individuals on Facebook, which created a type of social context. What that context meant for the audience’s understanding of the post was dependent on their knowledge of the individuals mentioned. The geo-tagging allowed the individual posting the content to share the location they were posting from. For Kevin, the geo-tags often identified the church where he was working from. This created a context that was more accessible to a general audience.
**Political economy of communication and Kevin’s social media usage.** Kevin’s social media artifacts were analyzed using a lens of political economy of communication in order to identify when she was positioned as the producer of content, the distributor of content, or the consumer of content. Within the documented artifacts of Kevin’s social media usage, there were fifty-nine post events that positioned him as the content producer. These events included the uploading of photo albums, status updates, and tweets. There were thirteen artifacts that positioned Kevin as the distributor of content created by others, such as online news articles and YouTube videos. There were eighteen artifacts which positioned Kevin as both a producer and consumer. These artifacts were comprised of his visible interactions with Facebook friends in the form of commenting and by reply tweeting in Twitter. As with Carla and Laura, a complete picture of Kevin’s consumption patterns in social media could not be determined because this study was not able to track consumption habits that did not involve the participants creating some form of content.

**Kevin in the Classroom**

At the time of the observations, Kevin was teaching English I, English II, and honors English II. My observations were centered on his English II class; I also sat in with his honors English II class on a few occasions. These two classes mostly followed the same schedule. Kevin’s English II class was comprised of nineteen students, twelve males and seven females; seven of the students were African American, and twelve were Caucasian. His honors English II class had twenty students in it, eleven males and nine females; two of the students were Hispanic, one was African American, and seventeen were Caucasian.
Physical setting. The student desks in Kevin’s classroom were divided into two sections, each with three rows of four desks. The two sections were angled toward each other nearly at a ninety degree angle, jointly facing the front right corner of the room, where a podium was positioned. On the front wall there was a long whiteboard Kevin used for teaching, which was bookended by a storage cabinet and a bookshelf. The back wall also had a long whiteboard, which contained the daily schedule for Kevin’s classes. Kevin’s desk was positioned against the back wall in the right corner facing the left wall. On the far right wall, there was a wall mounted interactive SmartBoard with a ceiling mounted projector; it was used to project the daily starter activity, as well as any digital media Kevin was using in class. Around the room, Kevin had several posters that were designed to look like street signs but contained messages like “no cell phone zone” and “no excuses.” Behind his desk Kevin had a canvas painting of the cover of the novel Night.
Kevin’s classroom was equipped with a SmartBoard and a ceiling-mounted projector that connected to a desktop computer on Kevin’s desk. Kevin also had a personal laptop that he regularly used in class. Kevin would occasionally check out a laptop cart to use with his students; if the laptop cart was not available, he would take his students to a computer lab in the building. Within the timeframe of the observations conducted for this study, the school Kevin was teaching at rolled out a one-to-one laptop initiative in which all of the students received Dell laptops they were able to carry with them and take home at the end of the day; however, teachers did not receive new computers. While initially very exciting, the laptops created a classroom management issue for Kevin, as well as other teachers in the school, as several students regularly played games on their laptops instead of participating in class activities. Additionally, Kevin had a challenging time using the laptops regularly in his class.
because some of his students’ laptops had to be turned in for repairs and students frequently forgot to bring their laptops to school (Kevin, personal communication, January, 2013). Interestingly, Kevin was interested in incorporating technology into his classroom; at the conclusion of this study Kevin was working on getting a classroom set of iPads.

**English II.** At the start of every class, Kevin met his students at the door where he greeted them by name. As they entered his classroom, he encouraged his students to get started on their Daily Starter activity, which was projected on the SmartBoard. The Daily Starters and his other class documents were stored in Google Docs. Once the bell rung, Kevin entered the classroom, reminded the students that they needed to be working on their Daily Starter, and preceded to his desk to take role. The Daily Starter activities that Kevin prepared took several forms; sometimes they were journal entries, sometimes vocabulary reviews, and other times they were simply things students needed to have in order to be prepared for class. Every Daily Starter included a riddle for the students to try to figure out. This daily activity functioned as a way to get students settled into class and to prepare them for what was going to happen that day in class. The following are two examples of Kevin’s Daily Starters.

*Daily Starter*

-When bell rings, please find your seat
-take out your vocab list, a pencil or pen, and a sheet of paper.
-be ready to begin immediately after the Pledge of Allegiance
-Riddle of the Day (Kevin, field notes, September 12, 2012)

*Daily Starter*

-Please complete the following entry in your journal
-Should parents be allowed to monitor their children’s technology use? Why or why not? (Facebook, texting, web history, etc.)
-What should be done for better monitoring of kids today on the internet?
-Riddle of the day (Kevin, field notes, September 18, 2012)
Kevin gave his students about five minutes during the beginning of class to work on the Daily Starter and then reviewed and discussed it with the class. In these discussions, he challenged and problematized students’ ideas, if they were reviewing an opinion-based prompt. In these conversations he navigated issues such as the legalization of marijuana, immigration reform, media, and school surveillance. He allowed his students the space to state their opinions and encouraged them to think critically about what informed their opinions as well as the implications. During the discussions, Kevin appeared to be calm and composed and was always interested in hearing more. “I tell my students on day-one that I will never give my opinion in class. I want to ask questions; I don’t want to influence” (Kevin, personal communication, January, 2013). Kevin went on to comment that he had to walk a fine line because of his ministry work: this was likely a contributing factor in Kevin keeping a distinct personal distance in his classroom. Once the discussion of the Daily Starter concluded, Kevin directed the class into the day’s activities. Below, in Table 29, is a brief description of the activities observed through the duration of this study.
Table 29

Kevin’s English II Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Approximate time</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Collaborative/independent</th>
<th>Technology used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily starter</td>
<td>5-10 minutes</td>
<td>The Daily Starter activities that Kevin prepared took several forms. Sometimes they were journal entries, sometimes vocabulary reviews, and other times they were simply things students need to have in order to be prepared for class. Every Daily Started included a riddle for the students to try to figure out.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Google docs and projector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mythology review</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Kevin wrote key terms from a previous day’s notes about mythology on the board while asking students questions about the notes they had taken.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create-a-myth</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>Students worked with a partner to create a myth based on the notes taken about the characteristics of mythology. It had to be illustrated and the story had to explain something found in nature.</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignite presentation</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Kevin showed an “ignite talk” from TED talks and a clip about cyber bullying. Students then went to the computer lab to begin working on an ignite talk about cyber bullying they created themselves.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Computer lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary review</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Kevin wrote the week’s terms on board and then discussed the part of speech and definition of each term with the students. This activity was repeated on several observations.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocab wars</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>First, students had five minutes to review their vocabulary. Then, they were given four minutes to circle desks—two teams in the class—and everyone in the group chose a different vocabulary word. Then, they identified at least one synonym for the vocabulary word. The students had three minutes to come up with one sentence using the synonym of the vocabulary word afterwards. Then, the students had two minutes to write their sentence on a notecard. Finally, the students had one minute to trade index cards with the other group. Students then raced to figure out what vocabulary word went with what sentence and who wrote it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
<td>Kevin led a discussion analyzing these two historical documents, line by line, exploring the application of these documents and connecting them to the students’ everyday lives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social war</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Kevin provided an article explaining how the military can gain intelligence from social media; he then facilitated a conversation about privacy issues of social media.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World War II timelines</td>
<td>80 minutes</td>
<td>Students worked in groups of two or three to create a visual timeline of one to two years of World War II. Students then gave a brief presentation to the class explaining the significance of the events presented on their timelines.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kevin told groups who had finished their work early to go to isidewith.com and take their political quiz.

Kevin asked students what writing is, then began reading an article by Steve Peha about writing that he had just handed out.

Anytime students asked Kevin questions about his personal life, he either avoided the question or focused his response on things he did outside of school that were directly related to teaching such as grading papers, preparing lessons, and removing a virus from his laptop after letting a student borrow it.

At the end to the class periods, there did not seem to be any sort of organized routine. If the students had completed their work for the day, they collected their things and waited by the door while Kevin used this time to tie up loose ends with various students, by checking up on missing work or other issues he needed to speak with individuals about.

**Honors English II.** Kevin’s Honors English II class followed the same schedule as his standard English II class; the same Daily Starters were used, and the class followed the same sequence of activities. The Honors English II class was differentiated by the level and depth of student engagement, as well as the fact that Kevin positioned himself much more as a facilitator with the honors students, allowing them to guide the discussions more than in the standard level English II class. While discussing the *Bill of Rights*, a student brought up issues she felt were present with trials by jury. As the discussion shifted towards that issue, Kevin asked, “How many people are on a jury?” No one in the room knew the answer right away. “I’ll look it up,” Kevin turned to his computer to retrieve the answer. Kevin did not just allow the classroom discussion to
follow the students’ directives in his honors class, he actively supported the changing
directions.

**Themes in Kevin’s classroom.** The data collected from classroom observations
and interviews was coded using ongoing open and selective coding; the selective codes
included multimodality, collective intelligence, and distributed authority. The field notes
from observations in Kevin’s classroom were divided into one hundred discernible
moments. These moments were comprised of exchanges Kevin had with his students in
the classroom, as well as the materials Kevin used in the classroom. Through ongoing
open and selective coding, the following were identified as dominant themes: contextual
framing, multimodality, and technological management.

**Contextual framing.** The code contextual framing indicated moments in the
classroom in which the context of a piece of content or activity was explicitly addressed.
For example, before reading a text, Kevin devoted significant class time to establishing
the historical context of the text. “Context is king! You have to understand the historical
background in order to fully understand a piece of literature” (Kevin, personal
communication, January, 2013). He also created context for other pieces of content in the
classroom ascribing value to the content that was being contextualized. Table 30
identifies moments in the classroom in which Kevin built context around pieces of
classroom content.
Kevin’s Teaching: Contextual Framing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief description of moment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/3/12</td>
<td>English II &amp;</td>
<td>Analyzing the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence</td>
<td>This activity was situated just prior to a presidential election. Kevin made explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English II H</td>
<td></td>
<td>connections to political debates and advertisements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Analyzing the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence</td>
<td>“Tonight at 7:00 what is going to happen? Yes, the debate, you should watch that. You guys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>are old enough to be keeping up with politics and you should be.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Analyzing the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence</td>
<td>Student: This is not History (class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kevin: It’s not, but we need to know the history of texts before we read them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24/12</td>
<td>English II &amp;</td>
<td>Social War</td>
<td>Kevin provided an article explaining how the military can gain intelligence from social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English II H</td>
<td></td>
<td>media and facilitated a conversation about privacy issues of social media. Kevin made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>explicit connections to the school having access to information about everything students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>do on their school laptops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24/12</td>
<td>English II &amp;</td>
<td>iSideWith.com</td>
<td>Kevin had his students go to this website and complete the quiz on debated political issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English II H</td>
<td></td>
<td>Based on the entered quiz responses, the website identified which presidential candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the students were most aligned with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24/12</td>
<td>English II H</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>“Let’s not put English in a vacuum. This can apply to all subjects and everything you write.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24/12</td>
<td>English II H</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Holding up Peha’s article on writing: “Do not throw this information away. I used this in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>college.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kevin’s emphasis on context included both historical and social. For example, his inclusion of an analysis of historical American documents provided the historical context Kevin wanted his students to have as a way to prepare to read a piece of literature. He
placed emphasis on the social context of the historical documents by connecting them to the presidential election. Kevin used historical context to create a knowledge base for understanding and interpreting literature, and social context to place value on items. The idea of social context as a value-adding maneuver could be seen when Kevin pointed to an article on writing he had just handed out and told his students that he used that article in college. Kevin’s positioning of the article as college-level content placed that article in a social context of achievement: a context he was employing to appeal to his honors students.

Multimodality. The multimodality code indicated times Kevin engaged mediums other than text alone in efforts to convey a specific message. “When they create something that is multimodal, they are drawing on all aspects of what they are learning at school: creation is the highest order thinking skill in Bloom’s taxonomy” (Kevin, personal communication, January, 2013). When creating multimedia products, the students were typically allowed to work in collaborative groups.

Table 31

Kevin’s Teaching: Multimodality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief description of moment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/12/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Create-A-Myth</td>
<td>As an aspect of the myth students were creating, they were required to incorporate images that enhance the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18/12</td>
<td>English II &amp; English II H</td>
<td>Ignite Presentations</td>
<td>Digital video clips were used as primary texts in this activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18/12</td>
<td>English II &amp; English II H</td>
<td>Ignite Presentations</td>
<td>Students were tasked with creating a visual presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24/12</td>
<td>English II &amp; English II H</td>
<td>World War II Timeline</td>
<td>The creation of the World War II timeline required the inclusion of representative images.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While Kevin’s employment of multimodality was primarily in composition, his inclusion of digital video clips as a primary text also situated his perceptions of multimodality as a beneficial tool for encoding and decoding meaning.

**Technological management.** The technological management code identified moments in which Kevin was either managing student use of technologies or using technology to manage an aspect of his teaching. The moments associated with technological management are briefly described in Table 32.

Table 32

*Kevin’s Teaching: Technological Management*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief description of moment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Kevin kept two computers at his desk. One was a desktop; it was connected to the SmartBoard. The other was a laptop that he used to take attendance and then used periodically throughout the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Create-a-Myth</td>
<td>After Kevin repeatedly reminded the students of what they should have been working on, several were still off task. Kevin then told the students, “If there is something off-topic on your computer screen, it’s automatically 10 points off your grade.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Daily Starter</td>
<td>Kevin kept all of the Daily Starters in a Google Drive folder. Each day the Daily Starter was saved as a Google Presentation file.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Daily Starter</td>
<td>The Daily Starter prompt read, “Should parents be allowed to monitor their children’s technology use? Why or why not? (facebook, texting, web history, etc.)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Ignite Presentation</td>
<td>Kevin pulled up two video clips he had bookmarked on his desktop computer (connected to the SmartBoard) for the class to watch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Ignite Presentation</td>
<td>Kevin shared a Google Doc that contained useful links and information about the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Ignite Presentation</td>
<td>Kevin shared the Google Doc with his students via a bit.ly address.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Ignite Presentation</td>
<td>Once in the computer lab, Kevin gave his students a brief introduction to the Citation Machine website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Ignite Presentation</td>
<td>“Guys, you can go through your email at a different time. Remember we talked about time management.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Ignite Presentation</td>
<td>Near the end of class, Kevin instructed his students to save their work on their own Google Drive. (All of the students had Google accounts through the school.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Vocab review</td>
<td>“Please put your phones away, unless your vocab is on there.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Vocab review</td>
<td>[to student on laptop] “Is your vocab really that interesting? Close it out or I will take it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3/12</td>
<td>English II H</td>
<td>Declaration of Independence analysis</td>
<td>“How many people are on a jury? I’ll look it up.” Goes to laptop to look up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>“If you have your definition essay and didn’t hand it in yesterday, you can give it to me today... Yes, if you emailed it to me, I’ve got it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24/12</td>
<td>English II &amp; English II H</td>
<td>Daily Starter</td>
<td>At the bottom of the Daily Starter, in bold, it read, “Do not be on games or your cell phone.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24/12</td>
<td>English II &amp; English II H</td>
<td>World War II Timeline</td>
<td>Students used their laptops to look up information and images to use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Isidewith.com</td>
<td>Students pulled the political quiz up on their laptops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24/12</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>Isidewith.com</td>
<td>Kevin tells students that if there was something they don’t know, like the Patriot Act, they should Google it. He would tell them, but he may misrepresent it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the period of observations for this study, technology was predominantly a classroom management issue for Kevin. As seen in Table 32, often spoke with his students about their laptops: “Is your vocab really that interesting? Close it out or I will take it;” “Guys, you can go through your email at a different time. Remember we talked
about time management;” “If there is something off-topic on your computer screen, it’s automatically 10 points off your grade.” His efforts were placed into mitigating off-task behaviors in the usage of technologies (primarily their school issued laptops). Speaking with Kevin after the observation period, he told me that he had recently received a classroom set of iPads through a grant. Citing the issues with the one-to-one laptop implementation previously mentioned (primarily broken laptops and laptops forgotten at home), Kevin said that he was finding the iPads to be easier to use in productive ways within his classroom simply because the entire class set was always present (Kevin, personal communication, January, 2013).

Political economy of communication and Kevin’s classroom. Kevin’s classroom observation data was coded using a political economy of communication lens for moments in which he was positioned as a producer, distributor, and consumer. There were two activities in which Kevin was positioned as the producer of the focal content. These moments included the Daily Starter activity and the vocabulary review. These activities were observed multiple times and each focused on the content that Kevin created specifically for use in the class. In four moments, Kevin was positioned as a distributor. In these moments, Kevin provided content that he had not produced but identified as quality content to be consumed in the classroom. Kevin’s positioning as a distributor was particularly interesting because the content he was observed distributing was not traditional content for the English classroom; this content included the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, an article about the Department of Defense’s Use of Social Media, and digital videos on bullying. There were three moments in which Kevin was positioned as a consumer. In these situations, the students
were creating the content, the myth, the World War II timelines, and the Ignite presentations and he was (explain how he was the consumer of this information).

**Relationship of Social Media and Classroom Practices**

In both the classroom and in social media spaces, Kevin engaged in similar activities. Within the dominant themes discovered in Kevin’s teaching practice and social media usage (Table 33), there were some interesting intersections.

Table 33

*Comparison of Case 3 Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Practice</th>
<th>Social Media Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual Framing</strong></td>
<td>Moments in the classroom in which the context of a piece of content or activity was explicitly addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multimodality</strong></td>
<td>The participant engaged mediums other than text alone in efforts to convey a specific message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technological Management</strong></td>
<td>Moments in which Kevin was either managing student use of technologies or using technology to manage an aspect of his teaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Between the two hundred and forty pictures Kevin posted to social media and his use of images and digital video, Kevin’s multimodal engagement was clearly connected as he used so many multimodal objects as meaning-making devices. In social media this meaning making was in the form of sharing youth group events as photo albums; in the classroom it was in students incorporating images into their work to enhance meanings.
and messages. In the classroom Kevin also placed a significant emphasis on historical and social context awareness; this was also seen in the connectivity of his social media postings. By mentioning individuals and tagging the geographical location of a post, Kevin was creating a context for the post that provided the audience additional information in the same way the historical context added layers of information to a piece of literature.

While there was consistency between Kevin’s social media usage and teaching practices, his positioning in terms of political economy of communication was flipped.

Table 34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison of Case 3 Political Economy of Communication Moments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In social media spaces, Kevin was primarily positioned as the producer of content, as a result of the broadcast nature of his social media usage. In the classroom, however, Kevin was positioned as the producer of content the fewest number of times and a distributor of content the most. This could be a result of Kevin’s desire to situate discussion as the primary way of learning in his classroom.

Summary of Case 3 Findings

The analysis of data in case 3 indicated that Kevin used social media as a type of broadcast tool through which he contextualized the content he posted by tagging individuals and geographical locations and shared a large amount of multimodal content. In this, he was typically the producer of the content being shared and the communication
was largely directional. In the classroom, Kevin also placed an emphasis on contextual awareness and multimodality. Another significant aspect of his teaching was the management of technologies in his classroom; instead of the technology serving as a opening to a wealth of information and resources, the technologies were dealt with as a classroom management issue. The themes that emerged from the coding of the data collected from Kevin’s classroom and social media usage appear to be strongly connected. His use of contextual information and connectivity clearly complement each other, and the fact that his communication style was generally directional was also present in both the classroom and social media spaces.
Chapter 7: Discussion

Extensive data was collected from each of the three participants’ classrooms and social media usage. The data collected was used to address two of the research questions posed by this study: a) How do early career English teachers make personal use of social media? b) How do early career English teachers negotiate the professional practice of teaching? The answers to these questions were then compared to one another to answer the central question of this research study: What is the relationship of early career English teachers’ personal usage of social media and their professional classroom practice? In this chapter, I will review each case individually. Then, I will discuss the findings from a new literacies and political economy of communication stance. Finally, I will compare the findings of each case – in which a relationship appears between their social media usage and their teaching practices, a relationship I refer to as an echo, which I will explain following the discussion of the three cases.

Case 1: Carla

Carla, a second year high school English teacher who taught English IV and Yearbook, regularly used Facebook as a personal communication tool. Her posts often shared links to outside resources, included multimodal content, and engaged collective intelligences, the sharing of information and resources through collaboration to create new knowledge, by creating content with her Facebook friends in the form of comments. In her classroom, she regularly distributed authority amongst her students, provided a
flexible learning environment, and created spaces for her students to engage collective intelligence as they moved forward through their work. While there was little overlap in the themes identified in Carla’s data, there were striking similarities in how she situated herself in both Facebook and her classroom.

**How did Carla make personal use of social media?** While Carla was not a heavy user of social media in comparison to the other teachers, and did not consider herself to be a particularly tech-savvy person, her usage habits clearly indicated that she was invested in the medium through her high level of engagement with her Facebook friends. Leu et al. (2004) stated that a key feature of the technologies that are shaping new literacies is that they change the ways we are able to communicate. Carla echoed this idea in an interview, noting that she thinks texting is so popular because you are able to easily control the conversation, whereas with a phone call, “the person you are calling may pull you into a conversation that you do not really want to have.” Carla saw Facebook functioning in the same way as texts, giving her more control. As such, she was comfortable using Facebook as a communicative medium to maintain relationships with individuals she otherwise would not.

However, Carla was not comfortable using either medium while at school. While she could access Facebook with her teacher account on the school network, Carla only accessed Facebook from her personal computer at home. This resulted in Facebook not functioning as a mobile communication medium for Carla, illustrating a certain level of personal detachment or filtration in how she engaged social media. Similarly, she rarely texted while at school. When she did, it was during lunch, done in a discrete manner below her desk, away from the line of vision of her students.
The one area where a difference was noted in how Carla approached texting and Facebook was related to the tools she used to do so. While the mobile applications of social media are rapidly increasing in popularity (as noted by Nielsen, 2012), Carla did not have the ability to access Facebook via her cell phone because it was not a smartphone, which is not typical (Newspaper Association of America & New Media Innovation Lab, 2010). Thus, while theoretically she would have the option to use the same tool (a smartphone) if she purchased one to engage in both activities, Carla had chosen not to. It is unknown if she would have discretely used Facebook during lunch in much the way she texted; based on the data though, it appeared that she was intentional in her stance against bringing her personal social media into her classroom.

Carla’s Facebook postings were not raw or spur of the moment; they were intentional, perhaps even calculated. This was made clear in an interview when she stated,

*When I post something on Facebook, it has to be worth something, in a way. It either has to be funny, or it has to have relevance to a few people I know are going to see it, or it has to have some other value that I attribute to it.* (Carla, personal communication, September, 2012)

Carla’s idea of creating value in her Facebook posts illustrated the point that she carefully considered the content she shared and why she shared it. This resulted in a purposefully created sense of identity within the Discourse of her social media.

**How did Carla negotiate the professional practice of teaching?** When considering how Carla approached her teaching, her quote about teaching yearbook painted an interesting picture of how she conceptualized the work of an English teacher.

*I think it’s weird that for a whole period of the day I don’t really feel like I’m teaching. And there are little aspects that I guess I teach, but it’s not the same way as with a literature course. I guess I feel like that class is somehow... it’s like*
It was evident that she understood that a yearbook teacher could be positioned in multiple ways, but the fact that she juxtaposed the facilitation that was done in a yearbook class to the teaching that was done with literature content was a signifier that she feels the professional practice of teaching is a more formal practice. Carla’s conceptual positioning of the content was disconnected from the models of educational change mapped out by Davidson and Goldberg (2009), Gee (2007), and Houle and Cobb (2011) who all suggested reconsidering content and the positioning of content in the classroom.

**Technology integration.** Technology played an unexpected role in Carla’s classroom. At the start of this study, Carla voiced apprehension about teaching in a one-to-one classroom. In the previous year, Carla’s school purchased Apple MacBooks for all of the students to use in their classes and at home. By the conclusion of the observations period, the technologies in Carla’s classroom were being used in ways that transformed her classroom space. The technologies being used could be seen as being divided between school-based technology (technology usage through direct instruction) and student-based technology (self-directed technology usage). The following paragraphs will explain how technologies were positioned and leveraged within Carla’s classroom.

**School-based technology.** The technologies used in direct instruction could be seen as what Lankshear and Knobel (2006) call “old wine in new bottles”. In these moments, the technologies being used did not fundamentally change what was happening in the classroom. For instance, Carla used the digital projector at the start of every class
period to display the bell ringer activity. In this usage, the technology was simply serving as a platform for the consumption of content and could be accomplished through other, non-technological means; for example, she could have written the bell ringer activity on a piece of chart paper or on a chalk board. Additionally, Carla’s webquest activity did not function much differently than a traditional worksheet activity. While she did encourage her students to use resources other than the ones she explicitly directed them to, the overall activity was focused within set parameters. These activities appear to engage the “new technos” aspect of new literacies, but they did not engage the “new ethos” of new literacies, as they did not reflect the Discourse of the Internet as a complex and robust information resource. As a result, Lankshear and Knobel (2011) would not identify these activities as truly being new literacies activities. On the other hand, Carla’s use of the student-based technologies did engage the “new ethos.”

*Student-based technology.* Carla considered the laptops the students were issued to be their own pieces of technology. She noted how helpful it was that the students were able to save their work to their own laptop so that they had access to what they needed right away when getting started in the classroom. Aside from a few moments in which Carla asked her students to put their laptops away to work on an assignment, she typically allowed her students to use their laptops as needed throughout class with great autonomy, allowing them to regularly listen to music while working and encouraging them to use a wide variety of Internet-based resources to gather information and accomplish tasks in the classroom. Leander (2007) refers to this type of instructional space in which the Internet is promoted as an expansive information resource for students to engage as an open-knowledge classroom. This type of practice fully embraces the information
Discourse of the Internet and fundamentally changes the structure of the classroom because it decenters the teacher as the supplier of information. As such, it is combining both aspects of new literacies as identified by Lankshear and Knobel (2011).

**Identifying a relationship.** A common theme from the coding of Carla’s data from both Facebook and her classroom was the theme of collective intelligence, which indicated moments in which Carla made space for the sharing of information and resources through collaboration in order to create new knowledge. This type of created space did position Carla in a particular way within power constructs; however, the identified trends of her positioning within a political economy of communication frame differed between Facebook and classroom spaces. While the relationships between the identified themes and power structures of Carla’s social media use and classroom practice had a limited relationship, the way Carla positioned herself within Discourses of those spaces was very similar.

**Themes.** The themes that emerged from the data collected from Carla’s social media usage and teaching practice were common in one area: Carla’s engagement of collective intelligence. On Facebook, Carla engaged collective intelligence through creating content with her Facebook friends in the form of comments. As noted from her interview, this type of interaction was a significant driving force in her decisions of what to post to Facebook. In the classroom, Carla engaged collective intelligence by regularly allowing her students to work in cooperative groups as well as her embracing of the Internet as a knowledge building resource. Carla’s use of collective intelligence engagements in both Facebook and her classroom decentered her in the power constructs of those spaces, a characteristic that is consistent with both social media technologies.
(Logan, 2007) and educational change models (Davidson & Goldberg, 2009; Gee, 2007; Houle & Cobb, 2011).

**Power relations.** Through a lens of political economy of communication, Carla positioned herself in very different ways in her social media and classroom spaces (see Table 52). In the classroom, she regularly positioned herself as a consumer of content produced by the students, while the observable data collected from her social media usage positioned her predominantly as a producer of content. While this does seem to position Carla on opposite ends of the power relations in the two spaces, there were complicating factors that pointed to more similarities.

In the classroom, Carla was the teacher. In this position, she held all of the power in the classroom. The pieces of content that the students were producing and Carla was consuming were, to varying degrees, directed by Carla. By creating the classroom assignments, Carla was providing her students with guidelines for what they would produce for her consumption. The same thing was happening within Carla’s social media. As she stated, she only posted content that she knew would hold some value for her Facebook friends. In this, her consumers were indirectly dictating what was and was not acceptable for Carla to post. This dual positioning as a producer and consumer was a result of how she situated herself in the classroom and social media spaces.

**Situated in Discourse across spaces.** The Discourses Carla engaged in social media and her classroom an identify that she was actively constructing (Black, 2007; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Gee, 2008). Through Carla’s purposeful usage of social media, she clearly situated herself as a provider of meaningful content in relation to the interests of her Facebook friends. By selecting content to post that is both relevant to her
and her friends, Carla positioned herself in the Discourse of her social media usage as a teacher through the links and status updates she shared about education, a music lover through the links to music videos she shared, and an engaged friend through her photo albums and commenting interactions filled with playful banter. The combination of these pieces depicted Carla as a well-thought out individual who carefully and purposefully monitored how she represented herself.

In the classroom, Carla situated herself within the Discourse and identity of “teacher” through practices that were very similar to her careful engagement with social media. Just as Carla shared limited personal information on Facebook, she purposefully lived outside of the community she taught in to create a personal boundary between herself and her students. Carla’s interactions with her students, while often filled with playful banter, were always focused on content. Over the course of the observations, Carla did not engage any content that did not have direct relation to her classroom.

**Summary.** Carla’s purposeful engagement with social media created a very distinct identity within the Discourse of social media. Her emphasis on using social media as a tool for collaboration and engagement was echoed in her classroom practices as she regularly engages her students in activities that use collective intelligences. Carla’s positioning of content in her English class did not correspond with new literacies or characteristics of the theorized future of education. However, her interactions and engagement with her student did reflect these changes.

**Case 2: Laura**

Laura, a first year middle school teacher who taught sixth grade language arts, was a frequent and consistent user of social media. Her use of Facebook and Twitter
could be described as a multimodal narrowcast that heavily used hashtags. In the classroom, Laura’s teaching was explicit and often included opportunities for students to engage in multimodal activities and collaborate with their peers. There were striking similarities in the identified themes of Laura’s social media usage and classroom practice. She also situated herself within the Discourses of social media and her classroom in similar ways.

**How does Laura make personal use of social media?** As Laura discussed social media, she noted how it had become a ubiquitous part of her life. Just as Carla did, Laura always pointed to what Leu et al. (2004) identified as a key aspect of literacy shaping technology: the transformation of communication habits.

*It’s interesting how pervasive [social media] is. [...] Facebook is a verb now; I’m going to Facebook you. I don’t think I’m dependent on social media; I think I could, hopefully, go cold-turkey and not use it, but I’m on Facebook every day.*

(Laura, personal communication, September, 2012)

Laura identified Facebook as more than just a social media platform; for her, Facebook was an action. She went on to note that she no longer emails her friends; she sends them a message on Facebook. This is a particularly useful and easy practice because she, like a rapidly growing number of people, primarily accesses her social media accounts through her smartphone (Newspaper Association of America & New Media Innovation Lab, 2010; Nielsen, 2012). She also differentiated her usage of Facebook and Twitter.

Laura commented that she did not post content that could be considered controversial to Facebook because she is “Facebook Friends” with many members of her family, who are more conservative than she is. This resulted in her Facebook posts being tempered by her knowledge of her audience. Her Twitter account, which she used more regularly, was a different story.
Twitter kind of gets everything. [...] Twitter is supposed to be in the moment, a here and now kind of Twitter-feed, but the world does not need to know what I ate for lunch last Thursday; I’ll eventually go back and delete that. (Laura, personal communication, September, 2012)

This sharp differentiation in the usage of these social media tools – one where she carefully regulated what she shared and did not share in order to not upset people and the other that documented her immediate feelings and life happenings—created two separate Discourses in social media and the classroom in which Laura was positioned. This type of dual persona was also seen in how she approaches her job as a teacher.

**How does Laura negotiate the professional practice of teaching?** In the classroom, Laura did not consider content to be her driving force. After teaching for a couple of months, she considered her job as a teacher to be one of multitasking.

*I am theoretically teaching them language arts, but I am actually making sure that they are eating, and that they are not hitting each other, and making sure that they go home if they are sick and that there is someone for them to go home to [...] So... multitasking, yeah, that’s what teaching is.* (Laura, personal communication, October, 2012)

This is not to say that Laura did not consider teaching language arts content to be part of her job; she did. Laura was simply illustrating the fact that she had not anticipated how much like a care-giver she would be for her students, especially given the time, energy, and resources they needed to become successful. When it came to language arts content, Laura worked hard to create avenues for students to feel successful in her classroom. This work could be seen in the intense scaffolding she provided for her students.

Upon realizing that some of her students struggled to linguistically articulate their understanding of the literature they were readings, Laura began using multimodal activities as a knowledge production tool. She noted that while her students, at times, struggled to verbally and/or textually describe items from the text(s) they were reading,
the students could draw the content of the texts. Laura used this type of activity to help the students step toward articulating and writing descriptions of textual content. Within a new literacies frame, this was a wonderful example of literacy being something that is beyond print-based text (Gee, 2010). The students used images to encode and decode meaning.

**Technology integration.** The technology usage in Laura’s classroom was limited. As a result of disciplinary actions, several of her students did not have their netbooks with them on a regular basis. This resulted in the netbooks not being used as a regular part of Laura’s class. The one piece of technology that Laura did use on a daily basis was her SmartBoard, where she projected the Daily Grammar activities. This type of usage did not engage the ‘new ethos,’ and, therefore, would not be considered a new literacies practice (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). While school administrators do seem to boast the number of SmartBoards they have in their schools, they are seldom used as anything other than a projection screen. They are just old wine in new bottles (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006).

**Identifying a relationship.** The coding of data collected from Laura’s social media usage and classroom practice yielded two areas of similarity: a) she engaged multimodal content as a means to create meaning and b) her use of hashtags and directive information both provide a type of meta-information for content within the given context. When the content of Laura’s social media postings was analyzed with the political economy of communication, she was predominantly situated as the producer of content. In the classroom, Laura positioned herself equally in the roles of producer, distributor, and consumer as seen when she engaged her students with content she had created; when
she directed students to content that had been created by others; and when she focused her teaching on the students’ production of content. This type of combination of roles in the classroom was also reflected in Laura’s classroom Discourse, which seemed to reflect similar elements of both her Facebook and Twitter Discourses.

**Themes.** Two ubiquitous themes emerged from the analysis of the data collected from Laura’s social media usage and classroom practice. Her use of hashtags in Twitter and directive information in the classroom both functioned to provide additional information, or meta-information, about the content of the exchange. Multimodality was also engaged in both spaces as a tool for meaning making.

**#information.** Within Laura’s use of hashtags, there were many moments in which the hashtag she was using did not seem to connect in meaningful ways to other content but instead provided additional information about the tweet itself. The hashtag following many of Laura’s tweets provided context for the tweet or her personal reaction to the content of the tweet. In the classroom many of her directive information moments followed this same structure. Some content was provided either by Laura or a student, and Laura then followed it up with a brief add-on that either identified her emotion or clarified the content. These two structures follow the same grammatical pattern: Today, we are going to read *The Scarlet Ibis* #ThisIsMyTeacherFace. Using hashtags as a communication has emerged from the technologies within the past few years. Laura’s use of hashtags was a great illustration of the deictic nature of new literacies (Leu, et al., 2004). While Laura used the grammatical structure across spaces, the functionality of its usage was reliant on its immediate context(s).
Multimodality. Images were widely used in both her social media usage and classroom practice as a means of constructing meaning. Within her social media usage, the images often conveyed messages and the text captions provided commentary on the meaning embedded in the image. For example, the image she posted to Twitter of a flat car tire with the caption “#fml.” Laura never textually identified the situation because that message was conveyed through the image. This is the same way she structured the use of multimodality in her classroom; to help students create and express meaning, Laura regularly had them draw pictures.

Power relations. Using a lens of political economy of communication to analyze the content Laura used in her classroom and the content she posted through social media, it is clear that Laura’s positioning in the power-relations of production and consumption were very different in her classroom and her social media. In the classroom, Laura was positioned as producer, distributor, and consumer of content evenly. While she was clearly in charge of her classroom as the teacher, she was in a neutral position in her relationship to the content of the classroom. Her social media usage, on the other hand, positioned her firmly as the producer of content with very few moments in which she is positioned as the consumer. This situated her in a position of power within her social media context.

Situated in Discourse across spaces. In her Facebook Discourse, Laura was noncontroversial and generally cheerful; in her Twitter Discourse, she was raw in the content that she posts which is, at times, profane and edgy. This distinction between the two Discourses is illustrated in Figure 2. While her Facebook caption pointed to the happy aspect of the image (a rainbow over the school early in the morning), her Twitter
caption hinted at her dissatisfaction of having to be at school “before the ass crack of
dawn.” The dimensions of Laura’s classroom Discourse were demonstrated in her Fun
Fact Friday activity. Laura was very willing to share aspects of her personal life in her
classroom. She was also excited to share content, just as she did with her social media,
with her students; however, they seldom picked the fun fact over asking Laura a personal
question. Within her social media and classroom Discourses, Laura situated herself as a
provider of content who is both raw and real as well as calculated.

**Summary.** Laura demonstrated a strong relationship between her social media
usage and her classroom practices. This was most noticeable in the transference of her
use of hashtags in Twitter and her meta-narrations in the classroom. While fairly simple,
this illustrates a mode of meaning making that started with the technology and echoes
clearly in her communication practices outside the technology.

**Case 3: Kevin**

Kevin, a first year high school English teacher who taught English II and honors
English II, used social media as a type of broadcast tool through which he contextualized
the content he posted by providing the connectivity of the posts to people and locations
through mentioning and geo-tagging and shared a large amount of multimodal content. In
the classroom, Kevin also placed an emphasis on contextual awareness and
multimodality. Another significant aspect of his teaching was the management of
technologies in his classroom. The themes that emerged from the coding of the data
collected from Kevin’s classroom and social media usage appeared to be strongly
connected.
**How does Kevin make personal use of social media?** Kevin’s use of social media was particularly interesting because of how he chose to engage it. While Carla and Laura positioned social media as a part of their daily lives, Kevin maintained a personal distance in his usage. This distance was created both in the fact that he did not often post content about himself and how he approached social media. In an interview, Kevin commented that it was important to him that he not be consumed by social media; it was just something that he used to share things that are important to him. For Kevin, his experiences and engagement with social media did not correlate with Leu, et al.’s (2004) positioning of influential technologies as changing the ways we communicate. While it did provide a different outlet than was previously available, Kevin’s personal distance from the technology suggests that social media was not an influential technology in his communication habits.

Kevin’s primary use of social media was to share content about his youth ministry work; after a couple months of teaching, he also began to share some content about his teaching practice. When asked how he decided what to post to social media, Kevin responded, “you tend to post things that are important to you” (Kevin, personal communication, January, 2013). The content that he posted included several large photo albums depicting youth events at his church and updates pertaining to church happenings. Kevin regularly mentioned individuals in posts he made about his ministry work, as well as linking the church on Facebook via geo-tags.

**How does Kevin negotiate the professional practice of teaching?** Kevin’s approach to teaching was focused on discussion. He actively engaged his students in discussions about controversial topics to draw them in as active participants in class.
While he brought up topics to engage his students on a personal level, he tried not to give his own opinion and to keep his personal life completely out of the classroom. He noted that he did not want to influence his students at all; he wanted them to come to their own conclusions about the issues. Kevin did not voice his opinion and did his best to not provide any personal information in his classes.

Kevin positioned context as a vitally critical component in his classroom. Throughout my observations in Kevin’s classroom, I never actually saw him engage traditional English literature (poems, short stories, novels, plays, etc.) with his students. During my observations, the students researched the historical and/or social context around bodies of literature that they had not yet read.

Kevin’s classroom practices of collaborative discussion guided by students and emphasis on context align his teaching with many of the characteristics of educational change mapped out by Davidson and Goldberg (2009), Gee (2007), and Houle and Cobb (2011).

Technology integration. Kevin regularly used technology in his classroom practice. Sometimes, this included the students using technology in their learning while at other times, it reflected how Kevin was using technology as a management tool for his own organization and teaching practice. He used Google Drive to organize the content he had created for his classes. As needed for various assignments, Kevin gave the students a link to Google documents with pertinent information, a task usually accomplished with bit.ly (a url shortening tool). Like Laura, Kevin’s use of the SmartBoard in his classroom was simply used as a projection screen and sound bar. As a result of students forgetting
their laptops at home or their laptops being broken, Kevin did not regularly use the laptops in his lessons.

Kevin’s own usage of technology in his classroom could be considered to be a new literacies practice because he was engaging digital technologies to save and share content in ways not possible through non-digital means. However, his use of technologies with his students would likely not be considered new literacies because it lack the ‘new ethos’ required (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006).

In our last interview, Kevin told me that he had just recently received a classroom set of iPads that he has been using with his students. He stated that one benefit was that they would stay in the classroom, so they would always be there for his students. Kevin’s procurement of the iPads illustrated his commitment to incorporating new technologies into his classroom. From our conversation, it sounded as if he was engaging the ‘new ethos’ with his new tools.

**Identifying a relationship.** Analysis of the data collected from Kevin’s personal social media usage and his teaching practices illustrated a strong connection between the two spaces. The central themes running through Kevin’s classroom data and social media data had multiple similarities. While Kevin’s position within the power structures differed, his position within the Discourses was consistent.

**Themes.** In both his social media usage and classroom practices, Kevin regularly engaged multimodality to create meaning and placed a particular emphasis on context through his mentioning of people and tagging of locations on Facebook and contextual framing of content in his classroom.
**Multimodality.** Kevin used multimodality in both his teaching practice and his social media usage. In the classroom, Kevin used multimodal creation as a way to engage his students in higher-order and abstract thinking. In his social media usage, Kevin used a large number of images to tell the story of youth group events. He also posted several videos of youth group activities, as described in Table 27. While the use of the content differed from social media to the classroom, the mode of the content was the same.

**Contextually connected.** Kevin made exceptional efforts to assure that his students had access to and understood the context of the content they would discuss in his class. He considered context to be central to understanding literature. “Context is king,” he boldly stated in an interview (Kevin, personal communication, January, 2013). Similarly, Kevin also provided context to his Facebook posts by mentioning individuals and geotagging locations. This created a tangible location and socially situated his posts by providing the contextual information of where the post was coming from and who was present.

**Power relations.** Using the political economy of communication to analyze the content in Kevin’s classroom and social media postings, Kevin was positioned as a provider of content in both settings. In social media, Kevin was predominantly positioned as the producer of content. This was not surprising as he used social media in a broadcast manner. In the classroom, Kevin was positioned primarily as the distributor of content by his sharing of resources. Both of these roles place Kevin in a position of power and control in that he was responsible for the content of focus. This possession of power was a significant tool for Kevin as he consciously worked to present a specific identity, particularly within the classroom Discourse.
Situated in Discourse across spaces. In both the classroom and social media spaces, Kevin kept a great deal of personal distance by situating himself as a manager. In social media, he was managing the content of the broadcast he was producing. While he did state that he simply posted what was important to him, he still had to determine what to post and what not to post. The items he selected to post created a professional presence of a youth minister with very little pertaining to his personal life. In the classroom Kevin situated himself as the manager of content as well as student activities. Because of the focus he placed on discussion in his classroom, Kevin was not positioned as the focus of the class. Instead, he managed the direction of the conversations as well as student behavior and engagement. This allowed him to completely isolate aspects of his personal life, such as being a youth minister, from his classroom Discourse.

Summary. Moving between Kevin’s classroom practice and use of social media, there was a clear connection between his implementation of multimodal item to encode meaning and his emphasis on context. What is more interesting is that, while done for different reasons, he creates a great deal of personal space both in what he posts to social media and what he shares about himself in his classroom. The identities that he had created in the two spaces were different, but he used the same set of Literacies (big L) to create those identities. Additionally, his teaching practices demonstrated a majority of the characteristics of the theorized future of education that is based in a new literacies compliant framework.

Echo

Upon evaluation of the findings, there does appear to be a relationship between the participants’ personal usage of social media and their professional practice as
teachers. The relationship of practices is not easy to identify because it is complicated by many variables. While this relationship did not show up in the same way with every participant, the type of relationship does seem to be similar across all three participants. Because the new literacies practices associated with social media are not directly employed and reflected in teaching practices, it can be difficult to identify exactly where or how this cross-over of literacies is happening. It is because of this current layer of ambiguity that I refer to the relationship of personal social media usage and teaching practice as an echo.

> A repetition of sounds, which is produced by the reflexion of the sound-waves due to their incidence on something denser than the aerial medium in which they are propagated; hence concr. a secondary or imitative sound produced by reflected waves, as distinguished from the original sound caused by the direct waves. (“Echo,” 1998)

The echo is a particularly apt metaphor for this relationship because of its physical properties; the sound waves are not visible and respond in varied ways dependent upon the context. There are several different variables that influence the transformation of the sound waves. These variables can help illustrate how the new literacies practices may be transformed in their enactment as classroom practices.

**Refraction.** The first form of transformation, refractions, occurs as a result of the transference from one medium to another.

> The phenomenon whereby a ray of light (or other electromagnetic radiation) is diverted or deflected from its previous course in passing from one medium into another, or in traversing a medium of varying density. More widely: change in the direction of propagation of any wave as a result of its travelling at different speeds at different points on the wave front. (“Refraction,” 2009)

Just as the sound wave is mutated as it moves from one medium to another, new literacies cannot be enacted in the exact same way between different contexts. Some examples of
this type of context shift can be from Facebook to wikis or from digital technologies to physical artifacts. This is not to say that these literacies cannot move from one context to another; they just cannot be identical in different contexts. In this study, the context of the new literacies is within personal social media.

**Interference.** A second possible form of transformation is interference; “[t]he mutual action of two waves or systems of waves, in reinforcing or neutralizing each other, when their paths meet or cross” (“Interference,” 1989). When multiple waves interact with each other, the combination can create completely new waves. Within the context of this study, it could be argued that there are two separate waves: a wave comprised of the new literacies practices established through the personal usage of social media and a wave comprised of pedagogical practices established through personal experience, teacher training, and personal conceptions of education. When the new literacies wave and the pedagogy wave meet in the classroom, they interfere with each other. These waves may be reinforcing one another, neutralizing one another, or coexisting with one another.

**Absorption.** A final possible form of transformation is absorption; “[t]he reduction in intensity of sound waves by a material, through the conversion of sound energy into other forms” (“Absorption,” 2011). Absorption is slightly different than refraction and interference in that absorption is something that is often purposefully done. With sound waves, absorption is often achieved through sound dampening efforts such as affixing foam materials to the walls of a recording studio or hanging fabrics on the walls of a large hall. Within the context of this study, absorption of new literacies can happen
through the purposeful separation of personal life and professional practice or highly restricted access to technological tools.

The echo relationship. These types of transformations morph the new literacies practices as they move from personal usage of social media to the classroom practices of the participating early career English teachers. Through these transformations, some of the new literacies practices demonstrated in social media were likely rendered unrecognizable. Because the new literacies practices that were transfer into the classroom had to be transformed in some way, any recognition of the new literacies practices once in the classroom could be considered a significant marker of the relationship of new literacies practices associated with social media and pedagogical practices. It is the echo of new literacies that lets us know that something is there.

Summary of Discussion

All of the participants in the study used social media in different and multiple ways. They all used the social media platforms to share content and connect with people: Carla purposefully connected to people she knew and wanted to engage with, Laura connected with people through the use of hashtags, and Kevin connected with people by mentioning them in posts and geotagging locations. In their classrooms, all three participants incorporated a significant amount of collaboration into their classroom activities. Interestingly, only Carla had the actual ability to make use of the one-to-one laptop setting because of the issues Kevin and Laura faced with discipline and functioning hardware. All of the participants demonstrated some level of consistency in the new literacies their used in their own social media usage and the new literacies they incorporated into their teaching practices. The presence of new literacy practices in both
digital and physical spaces suggests a relationship in the modes of new literacies
enactments. Though the relationship may not be a direct one, an echo of new literacies
practices is seen reverberating in both the participants’ classroom practice and social
media usage. While the exact parameters and nature of these echoes is not yet known or
fully understood, the marking of its presence is a step forward for the field of new
literacies research.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

This study set out to explore the relationship between the personal social media usage and classroom teaching practices of early career English teachers who grew up in a world of digital technologies. Despite the lack of literature on the topic, the study was able to uncover a relationship of the participants’ practices in social media spaces and their classrooms. In order to locate this relationship, the study sought to address the following questions:

- How do millennial, early career English teachers make personal use of social media?
- How do millennial, early career English teachers negotiate the professional practice of teaching?
- What is the relationship between millennial, early career English teachers’ personal usage of social media and their daily classroom practices?

The findings of the study have provided new insights that have the potential to advance the understanding of new literacies and the meaningful integration of technologies in classrooms.

Findings

The main findings of each case in this study were mapped out in chapters four, five and six. Moving across the cases, the three research questions can be addressed for the participants in this study by synthesizing the findings across the three cases.

How do millennial, early career English teachers make personal use of social media? There are a variety of reasons why the participants engage in social media.
Weather they engage in social media to maintain connections with friends or to use social media as a tool for disseminating information or content, there are some common practices. Social media platforms are multifaceted, in addition to a presentation of text posted by the users, social media sites include tools such as photo albums, the ability to share linked content, the ability to link directly to others within the social media space, and so on. The participants of the study do engage in multiple components of the platforms. Additionally, if they have a smartphone with a data plan, they do use their phone as a primary tool to access their social media platforms.

How do millennial, early career English teachers negotiate the professional practice of teaching? Within this study, all of the participants placed a significant emphasis on collaboration as a part of classroom learning. Technology was best incorporated when it was not forced into a fixed task, but instead allowed to function as a resource as needed. A final consistency among the participants was that their instructional methods were directly tied to their students’ needs and would not likely be as effective in different contexts. To varying degrees, they all demonstrated aspects of what theorists are projecting to be characteristics of the future of education.

What is the relationship between millennial, early career English teachers’ personal usage of social media and their daily classroom practices? There are a wide variety of factors that impact the visibility of the relationship of social media and classroom practices. As a result of these complications, the clarity of the relationship between social media usage and classroom practice varies. Some literacy practices, such as Laura’s use of hashtags on Twitter and meta-narration in her classroom, have very clear and direct relationships between social media and the classroom. Other practices, such as
the literacies Kevin enacts to situate himself in the Discourse of the classroom and social media spaces in ways that maintain a personal distance, are challenging to see if not for the outcome of the practices. The relationship between social media and classroom practice is considered to be an echo relationship.

Theoretical Implications

This study resulted in two significant theoretical implications for the field of new literacies. First, it extends the current work being done in new literacies by incorporating concepts found in political economy of communication. Second, supports and illustrates Leader’s (2008) work on connected ethnographic work that disrupts the binary of physical and digital space.

Political economy of new literacies. The use of political economy of communication in new literacies research is unique to this study. However, because the theories of new literacies identify the production and consumption of digital media as a central component, studying the power structures within those actions of consumption and production could provide valuable and new insights.

Connected ethnography. I believe the field of new literacies is rapidly approaching a significant shift similar to the digital turn (Mills, 2010). As new communication technologies are becoming a ubiquitous of society, new literacies are also approaching that same ubiquitous status. This ubiquitous positioning can been seen in Leander’s (2008) work on connected ethnography. While this study does initially address social media spaces and classrooms as separate entities, the study ultimately works to blur the line between the physical and digital spaces through identifying the relationship of the new literacies practices. As such, this work supports Leander’s (2008) work in
connective ethnography, in which “notions of the research site are being disrupted and relations are being traced among sociocultural practices and agents” (p. 37). Through this, the current study will be used to challenge the techno-centric approaches to technology integration and instead consider the technologies in terms of social practices. “The online/offline, virtual world/real world, and cyberspace/physical space binaries need to be disrupted not simply because they are imperfect, fuzzy distinctions, but because they provide a priori answers to some of the most intriguing questions about Internet practices” (Leander, 2008, p. 37). It is through this that the true transformative power of technology will be able to be identified and engaged in the classroom. While this study was largely exploratory, the relationship identified between the literacies of digital and physical is an important step toward reconsidering what ubiquitous new literacies may look like.

**Teaching Implications**

This study provides concrete examples of how the sociocultural basis of a technology can provide more transformation in the classroom than the technology itself. Much of the literature on new literacies is highly theoretical, and there have been few empirical studies of this phenomenon in the classroom (Kist, 2005). “Existing research on the impact of newer technologies on students’ literacy tends to be anecdotal and descriptive rather than definitive and prescriptive” (Swenson, Rozema, Young, McGrail, & Whitin, 2005, p. 218). While this report is almost a decade old, it still rings true for the current state of the field. This current study made strides towards ways of identifying new literacies associated with new technologies as they move across spaces. This new
knowledge can be applied to teaching practices in consideration of meaningful technology integration.

**Technological change agent.** Over a decade ago, Cuban (2001) pointed out that simply infusing the infrastructure of technology is not the same as using technology in empowering and meaningful ways. Mishra, Koehler, and Kereluik (2009) point out, “most [technological] innovations [in education] have focused inordinately on the technology rather than more fundamental issues of how to approach teaching subject matter with these technologies” (p. 49). As Hicks et. al (2012) pointed out that in the past century, every emerging pieces of technology touted as the keystone to educational change has failed to produce any significant change in the English classroom. While the body of literature addressing new literacies in secondary English classrooms tends to focus on the use of pieces of technology and/or descriptions of new literacies classroom activity, this study approached technology from a sociocultural perspective, which has not yet been used in new literacies research to identify the relationship of personal technology usage and classroom practice. While all three participants were in one-to-one laptop classrooms, only Carla’s classroom found real, transformative use of the laptops. This was not an issue of Apple products verses Microsoft products; the technological hardware had nothing to do with it. The change occurred when Carla repositioned herself as teacher in relation to the access to information the technology provided. This type of sociocultural move is what can make the real change in classrooms when it comes to technology integration.
Future Research

There is a great deal of potential research directions through the extension of new literacies theory suggested in this study. Currently, plans are being put in place to extend this research in two ways: inclusion of preservice teachers and the development of an assessment protocol. These future endeavors will build on the findings of this research to extend the notion of the echo relationship as it relates to new literacies associated with personal use of technology and professional practice as well as work to create more concrete and direct ways for identifying these new literacies practices. These studies will advance the field of new literacies research by focusing on a population (preservice teachers) that is currently under-researched (Wilber, 2008) and by providing means to study new literacies in ways that are not purely anecdotal or theoretical (Kist, 2005; Swenson et. al, 2005).

Preservice teacher self-study. The inclusion of preservice teachers is an important direction for this research that could help to facilitate meaningful change in pedagogical practice at all levels. Working with preservice teachers to identify the new literacy practices they enact in their own personal involvement with technologies could help them consider what the impact of those technologies means for their future pedagogical practices. Also, having a better understanding of the personal new literacies used by preservice teacher would be an incredibly valuable resource for teacher preparation program.

Assessment protocol. In order to advance the understanding of the relationship of personal new literacy practices and professional teaching practices, a systematic protocol for assessing this relationship is needed. Building on the findings of this study, a protocol
will be developed to identify the presence of various forms of new literacies in a precise, not anecdotal, way. Ideally, this protocol will be able to be used in digital as well as physical spaces.

**Limitations**

This study was hindered by two primary limitations. First, the research base for this type of study is incredibly shallow and resulted in this study necessarily functioning as an exploratory study. Second, there were several factors that made accessing research sites particularly challenging.

**Lack of research base.** The initial concept of this study was to identify and assess the degree of the relationship of the new literacies of personal social media usage and professional practice of teaching. However, it was quickly realized that the literature base for such a study is virtually nonexistent (Wilber, 2008). This is a result of new literacies research positioning as a highly theoretical field (Kist, 2005), and the research on new literacies that is not focused on theory is generally anecdotal and descriptive (Swenson, et. al, 2005). This research base was not able to provide guidance for identifying new literacies practices across digital and physical spaces. As a result of the lack of research, it was not possible to assess the new literacies the participants were engaging because a method of identifying the new literacies across spaces was first required.

**Access to research sites.** Another limiting factor was gaining access to research sites. As Kist (2008) points out, teachers’ usage of social media is still a debated topic. While it is becoming less of a touchy issue, there still is a high level of secrecy about social media usage among teachers and wariness among administrators (Schachter,
2011). Even within the university, negotiating what data I was and was not allowed to collect from social media was problematic because of the ambiguity of what is considered to be public and what is private within social media spaces.

**Conclusion**

As the communication technologies in our society have shifted and changed, particularly in the past decade, and our educational system has failed to keep pace with, or even understand, the societal implications of how these technologies are harnessing and shaping literacies. In spite of the lack of research in the field and the misunderstandings of these transformational technologies, the findings of this study indicate that there is a relationship between the literacies associated with the personal usage of social media and the professional practices of millennial, early career English teachers. As a result, this study works to reframe current thinking about the technologies and what relationship they have with the classroom.
Appendix A

Email Recruitment

Dear [insert subject’s name],

[insert referrer’s name] recommended that I contact you about a research project I am currently conducting. This research project is seeking to better understand the relationship of popular social media and today’s classroom.

This research study will consist of a survey, three (3) one-on-one interviews, up to five (5) classroom observations, and five (5) months of social media observation (approximately 6/01/2012-11/01/2012). The interviews will last approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour and the classroom observations would last for one (1) class period a piece. There will be no special preparation needed for the interviews or observations.

I am currently seeking early-career grades 6-12 English language arts teachers who are no older than 27 years old and are interested in participating in this research project. This age group, often classified as millennials or the Net Gen, is of particular interest because of their projected influence on education and their relationship to technology. All participants in this research project are being identified through recommendation. As such, if you know of anyone else who is also grades 6-12 English language arts teacher no older than 27, and who may be interested in participating in this study, I would be very grateful if you could share that information with me.

If you are interested in joining me in this project, please read over, complete, and return via email the attached consent form. If you don’t have a scanner readily available, you can leave the signature line blank for now and I will bring a copy for you to sign at our first face-to-face meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Jonathan T. Bartels
[contact information]
Appendix B

Interview Protocol

The three (3) interviews with each subject will be centered on reviewing data collected from that individual subject.

What data do we have to date?
- Electronic questionnaire
- Number of social media artifacts
- Types of social media artifacts
- Number of interviews
- Interview transcripts
- Number of observations
- Observation field notes

Are there any trends or patterns?

Can you tell me more about [specific piece of collected data]?

Would you like to add anything else?

Do you have any questions?
# Appendix C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of updates</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook status updates</td>
<td>Text based information posted by the user to his/her own timeline/wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook link shares</td>
<td>The sharing of a link to content outside of Facebook on own timeline/wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook single-image shares</td>
<td>Uploading a single image to own timeline/wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook profile picture updates</td>
<td>Identifying an uploaded picture to serve is the primary identifying picture associated with Facebook profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook cover photo updates</td>
<td>Selecting/uploading a Facebook picture to serve as a banner image at the top of the user’s Facebook page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook photo album updates</td>
<td>Uploading a group up images to an album, not directly to the Facebook timeline/wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter posts with hashtags</td>
<td>A Twitter post using one or more hashtags (indicated with a # then text)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter retweets</td>
<td>A Twitter post that was originally posted by another user then reposted/shared by the participant (indicated by RT[username] at the beginning of post)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter image shares</td>
<td>Uploading an image in a Twitter post (typically through service such as Instagram)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total social media posts/updates</td>
<td>Total of all posts identified above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


183


