

Social Media Doesn't Have to Be Isolating:
Using CMM Theory and Social Video to Make Meaning
between Parents and Teenagers
Caly Meyers
National Louis University

Overview

Paulo Freire, an educator, activist, and credited to be one of the founders of community psychology, urges us to dialogue. He believes that dialogue will not only help us achieve significance as individuals, it will also enable us to make changes and name the world, together. Coordinated Management of Meaning theory, created by Barnett Pearce, adopts the same idea by drawing our attention towards communication. But, what does dialogue look like? And how can we, as communicators in this world, work towards better dialogue? In this section, Coordinated Management of Meaning Theory (or CMM) will be outlined in order to answer some of those questions.

When Barnett Pearce examined the history of communication, he was able to cite some major changes in our communication patterns. In the middle of the 5th century, we began to believe in the “art of persuasion”, or the study of what makes a good/bad argument. In many ways, this approach is one-sided because it is only examining what we can do to make our argument better (or worse). But, our current landscape of globalization and pluralism has required us to interact with others who have very different beliefs and values than we. In these instances, taking a one-sided approach is potentially not effective and damaging to relationships. Barnett Pearce saw CMM as a response to these times and a way to adapt to new challenges presented in our current society and to create a more generative, holistic mode of communication. This is the difference between, what Barnett Pearce calls, “transmission mode” and “social construction” conversation. In the transmission mode, people believe the goal of conversation is to unload conversation to another person. This is similar to Freire’s concept of “banking” or depositing information to others (Freire, 1970). In the social construction mode, “communication is more of a way of making the social world rather than talking about it, and

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

this is always done with other people. Rather than ‘What did you mean by that?’ the relevant questions are ‘what are we making together’ ‘How are we making it?’ and ‘How can we make better social worlds?’”(Pearce, 2007, pg. 30-31). In order to begin operating in a social construction mode, we need to do a few things: 1) Focus on communication as a phenomenon, not just a “lens” to see other issues through. 2) Realize the richness of conversation: everything you bring to a conversation and others might bring to a conversation. 3) Slow down conversations to look for critical moments, patterns, and opportunities for change. 4) Always be looking towards the goal of creating better communication, and realize our role in that process. Although these steps seem as if they are also getting at mindful communication, or what Langer (1989) described as “active and fluid information processing, sensitivity to context and multiple perspectives, and ability to draw novel distinctions”, we would argue it is only a part of Pearce’s theory. While mindfulness is a part of the social construction mode that Barnett Pearce describes, they are not equal. In some ways, social construction conversations are not completely in-the-moment, as mindfulness suggests, because you consider past conversations and future goals. And, some key parts of traditional mindfulness, like meditation and accepting feelings is not an explicit part of the social construction conversation model. However, mindfulness is a part of Barnett Pearce’s model of social construction conversation and will be included as a part (both in the logic model and in evaluation of the program).

To add complication to this issue, we are now communicating via technology and social media—a way of communicating that is relatively new. Since younger generations have been called “digital natives” while older generations are “digital immigrants”, we can expect that intergenerational communication is complicated by the use of technology. For this reason, this

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

workshop will test how we might use CMM theory within the context of technology to work towards social construction communication.

Furthermore, although the CMM model does not explicitly address the issue of power, it is one of the core components of both Freire's work and Community Psychology. As Freire pointed out, the banking method often occurs when one group of people believe they have power over another group, want to "teach" others, or are not open to true dialogue. This is why we are introduced to the banking method in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, because we often see banking directed towards the oppressed. In contrast, Pearce and Freire encourage true dialogue and social construction communication. Through his examples, Pearce shows the reader that even in situations of power, both parties should continue to construct conversations, together. However, we can anticipate that in relationships with a power difference (perceived or real), social construction communication might be more difficult or require greater tact.

Tools

Daisy model. One of the practical tools of CMM theory is the Daisy Model. The Daisy Model will help us work towards step 2, as mentioned above: "Realize the richness of a conversation: everything you bring to a conversation and others might bring to a conversation." CMM states that people are embedded in multiple levels of context. When talking to a coworker, for example, you are not just talking to your coworker about a project in a vacuum; it depends on the context in which it occurs. It involves past relationships, identity, organizations, cultures, etc. Many times, we usually under-represent the social complexity of the situation (Pearce, 2007). Furthermore, the way a dialogue unfolds depends on the motivation. Many times, contextual and prefigurative motivations ("i.e., what the existing contexts were and what the other person did in those contexts") are more prevalent than practical or implicative motivations ("i.e., what contexts

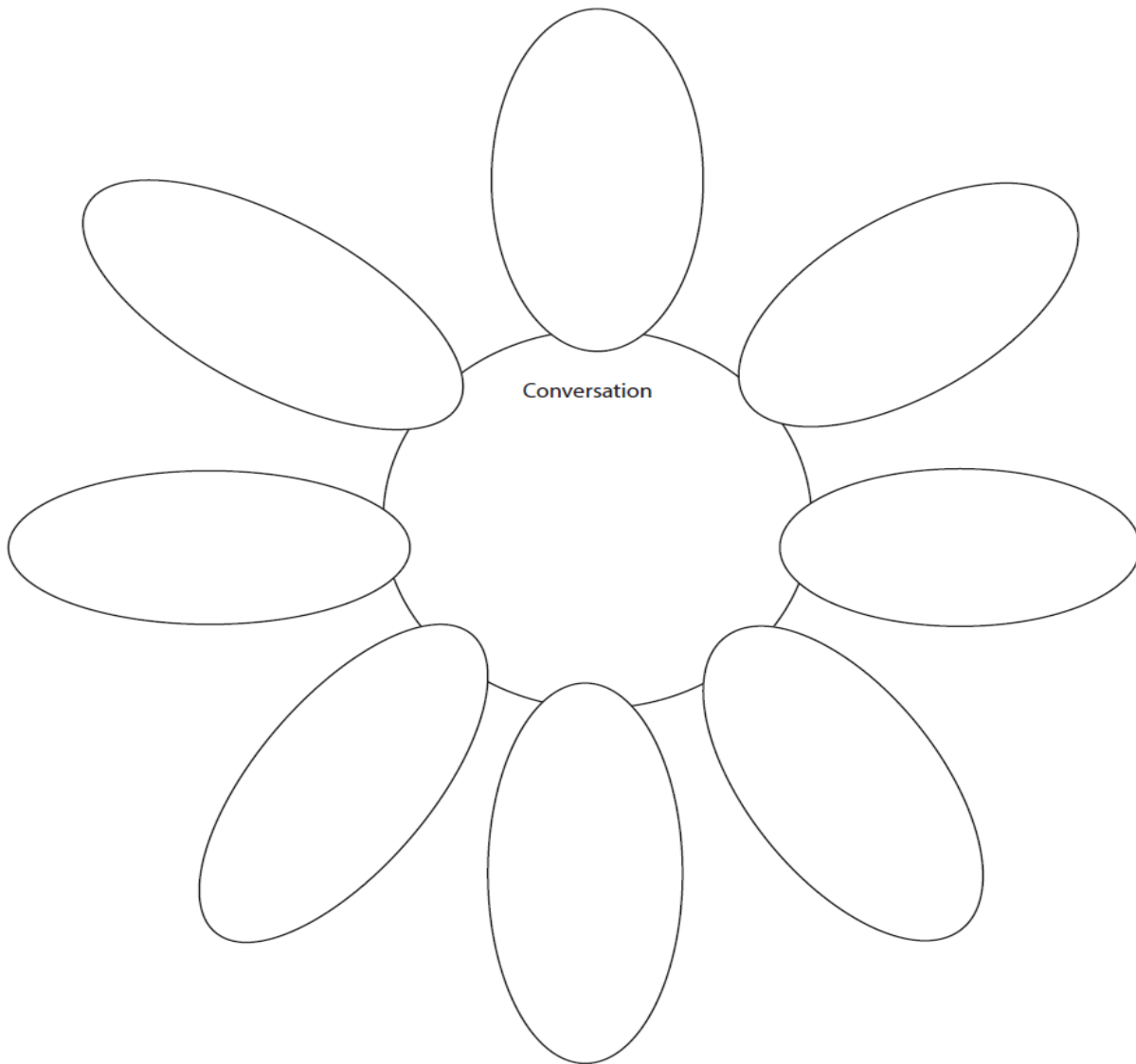
SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

they wanted to call into being or what they wanted the other to do—or not do—subsequently”).

By failing to recognize the “other” person as a person in context, this researcher believes that communication will likely be ineffective and possibly harmful. This is also similar to the way we see conversations. Many times, we look at conversations as an isolated event, responding to what the other person is doing, in-the-moment, instead of looking at other past conversations and patterns that are contributing to the current conversation. And, by failing to work towards practical and implicative motivations, we are just, as CMM puts it, “creating more of the same”. To put it another way, imagine an argument with your partner. Perhaps this argument looks very similar to other arguments in the past, as you react to roles and the current situation, saying things like, “You always do ____!” or, “I can’t believe you said that, let me say _____”. In many ways, we are repeating patterns of communication and focusing on what our partner did in that individual instance. Instead, we could try to examine our role in the conversation and what baggage we are both bringing to the table: with the end goal of creating a different communication pattern all together. This model explores what each person is bringing to communication, and begins to illustrate the richness of communication. The participants place a conversation in the center of the flower and place other “conversations” that play a role on the petals:

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

Daisy Model



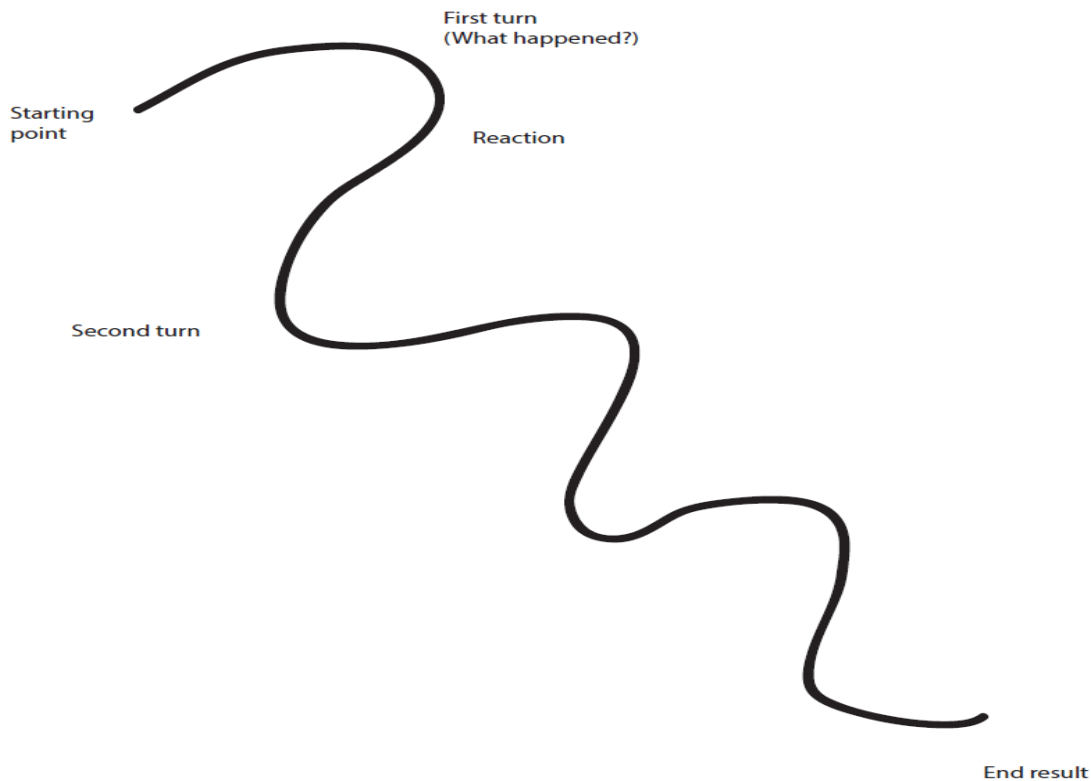
In the above partner example, you would place the argument in the middle, and each petal would show other conversations that impact the current conversation. A recent argument might go on one petal, a stressful interaction with your boss earlier in the day might go in another, family values might go in another. This leads to mindfulness in communication, as

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

participants learn more about the other, and begin to see communication as a rich process, with untold (mystery) stories. This model is based on the assumption that, “selves are made in communication, and that by bringing those patterns of communication into discourse, we can enable ourselves to understand who we are” (Pearce, 2007, pg. 181). As a community psychologist who appreciates focusing on strengths, this researcher would suggest placing a recent good conversation in the middle and examining what made it effective and satisfactory.

Serpentine model. The Serpentine Model is another CMM tool that involves mapping out a conversation while looking for twists and turns. This is a way of slowing down a conversation and examining patterns.

Serpentine Model



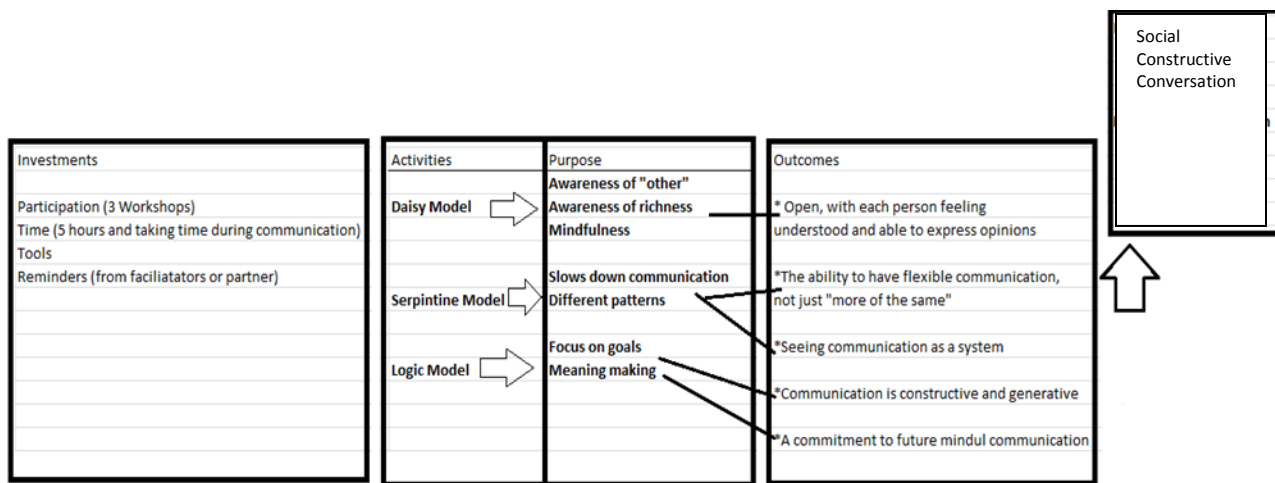
SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

After a conversation has concluded, and both parties are willing to look at the twists and turns, they create a timeline, together. By creating a timeline, we are already more aware of our story. Many times, people will leave parts of the conversation out in the beginning, but it is important to note each “turn” or critical moment in a conversation that caused some reaction (positive or negative) from the other person. Then, both people begin to explore the richness of the conversation, “What did I bring to this conversation? “What did my partner bring to this conversation?” (Daisy model). Then, we can see the serpentine model as three dimensional and examine which twists and turns were motivated by prefigurative forces (I have to do something *because of* what happened) vs. practical forces (I have to do something *in order to* bring something else about) (Pearce, 2007). Finally, we can examine what we could have done differently at each twist, turn, or critical moment in order to see how we contributed to creating a conversation and planning out what we can create differently next time.

Logic model for good communication. While planning out the workshop, this researcher wanted to use a third tool that helped participants keep the larger goal of constructive communication in mind. However, she was unable to find a CMM tool that would remind participants of the constructive goals and help link action to outcome. Logic models are often used to think about and plan a program. Because of their practical use, this researcher is introducing logic model development as a practical tool for CMM. Logic models are pictorial, and require “systematic thinking and planning”. They are flexible, “point out areas of strength and/or weakness and allow stakeholders to run through many possible scenarios to find the best” (Kellogg, 2004). A logic model’s flexibility and focus on outcome goals makes it a perfect tool for CMM theory. And, many agree that by focusing on outcomes during development, we can better predict success as a program. Likewise, by identifying what an outcome of good

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

communication would be, we can predict that we will be more successful in reaching them. For this workshop plan, this researcher created a logic model to explain resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. The ideal outcomes helped focus and shape the workshop itself. During the beginning stages of the workshop, pairs were asked to create their own logic model with “better communication” (whatever that means to them) as an outcome. It is predicted that by thinking about outcomes up front, participants will be more focused on the social construction communication that CMM theory values.



The new Logic Tool, the Daisy Model, and the Serpentine Model were all used in the workshop. Although other practical CMM tools are available, this researcher chose these tools because she believed they would be understandable and effective when working with the teenage population.

Literature Review

This workshop’s focus was on CMM, creating a practical workshop to implement social construction communication in teens and their parent partner. But, a secondary goal was to

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

examine how technology and social media is influencing our communication, with the hopes that we can learn how to use technology and social media as a way to create meaning, rather than a communication hindrance. For this reason, this paper will outline some past research on technology and social media use, with a focus on its impact on communication (especially for the teenage population).

Digital Media and Teens

There is no ignoring it; we live in a world permeated with recent technology impacting our social interactions. With 1 in 4 people using social media around the world in 2013 (Emarketer, 2013), social media has become a part of our lives, our work, and our studies. For teenagers, the internet is an integral part of life. Indeed, 93% of youth ages 12-17 report using the internet (Lenhart et al., 2007). The teenage group is considered the most active and responsive group on social media (Bennett, 2013). Because of this, many adults worry about potential dangers of this communication, or they lament that adolescence looks different from when they were teenagers. Teenagers, on the other hand, are becoming more comfortable with their technology use. For this reason, it is important to look at past research that examines the effects of social media and technology use on teenagers. However, it is important to remember, the way that adolescents interact with technology is a complicated process and social media/technology use does not occur in a vacuum. In other words, forces or situations outside of social media/technology use can be impacting adolescents at the same time. In this section, past research on social media/technology use will be explored.

Identity. Identity formation is especially important for adolescents. Erik Erikson labeled the development of a personally meaningful, socially validated identity as a primary task for adolescence (Erikson, 1950). And, we know that the way we communicate with others plays a

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

central role in identity formation. So, how does the influence of digital media influence identity formation? For any of us engaged in the use of social networks via the internet, we know it is an identity journey. We are deciding who we are and who we want to portray. For example, I am aware that different social networks portray different identities or parts of my identities—LinkedIn for professional, Facebook for social/casual, Instagram for artsy. Teens also have different identities they are portraying and exploring. In some ways, the ability to present multiple aspects of one's identity to different audiences can be a freeing feeling—as people get to explore different parts of themselves and act in a virtual world. Exploring different identities is consistent with the *self-concept unity hypothesis* which states that online activity provides teens an opportunity to try-out different identities while receiving feedback (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). But, it can also be difficult to navigate these identities, especially because the worlds may mesh (when your mom comments on your Facebook conversation with friends, for example). Your online identity might not match your internal sense of self (Gardner & Davis, 2013) or may confuse others. Or, for teens who may not be comfortable with parts of their identities (teens in the LGBT population or kids being pressured by friends, for example), they could fear a collapse of a social world that reveals an identity (Boyd, 2014). Collapsing identities are consistent with the *self-concept fragmentation hypothesis* which warns that fragmented identities may not come together to form a unified whole (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). Studies have supported both the *self-concept fragmentation hypothesis* and the *self-concept unity hypothesis* with researchers noting fragmentation (as in the studies listed above), and researchers finding that internet use can encourage identity exploration, self-expression, and positive development in youths (Schmitt et al. 2008).

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

If we think about it, the way teens are exploring identity online is not so different from the way teenagers have traditionally explored their identity (Ahn, 2011) and we can see how teens posting pictures on Facebook is similar to posting pictures on their refrigerators or lockers. In fact, it was Erickson in 1950 who said that the fundamental stage of 13-19 year olds was identity vs. role confusion. Teenagers in the US have always faced this identity challenge, we just now see it playing out on the online stage. But, the fact that Erikson noted this challenge in the 1950's says that it is not a new struggle, teenagers have always been testing identity in this stage of their lives.

The Friendship Group and the Community. One of the biggest motivators for using social media and technology is to increase or strengthen social groups. To begin with, we know that adolescents' primary motivator for using social media is interpersonal communication (Beebe et al. 2004). There may be a concern that teenagers are interacting with strangers but, in reality, most U.S. youth use social networks to interact with friends, not strangers (Agosto & Abbas, 2010). And, studies have shown that far fewer teens are writing about risk or problem behaviors, instead they use social media for community building (Anderson-Butcher et al. 2010). The internet is, at its core, a responsive and active tool. Instead of sitting in front of a television, teenagers are interacting with others (or an audience) and therefore creating meaning with others. Even if you are unaware of your audience, you are essentially testing out parts of your identity, allowing others to understand and form judgments on your feelings and thoughts. Anyone who has ever written a blog or wrote an emotional post knows that this vulnerability can create a sense of community as people respond to your words. For many, social networks become a place to test out communication strategies and form connections in a way that produces less anxiety.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

Social media and technology has greatly increased access to information. That information can be shared, uncovered, and used to form opinions. Technology can also increase our social capital. We are able to connect with other people we may have never had access to before. We can link with others for political, cultural, or economic goals (Gardner & Davis, 2013). If we look at the Occupy movement, for example, people may have never been able to band together for common goals and communicate with other movements around the world without the use of social media and technology. In this way, social media enabled groups of people to work towards better communities. It kept people informed, let groups share ideas, and organized groups.

Self esteem, well-being, and life satisfaction. Teenagers engaged in social networks may widen their networks and increase their social capital. We can hypothesize that this widened network may lead to greater self-efficacy and self-esteem. In a 2007 study, researchers found that higher Facebook use was positively correlated with bridging and bonding social capital in college-age students (Ellison, Steinfield, Lampe, 2007). Researchers in this study also suggested that college students with low self-esteem or life satisfaction might benefit more from the social capital Facebook can provide. Other studies have found Facebook use is positively correlated to life satisfaction, social trust, and civic engagements, although correlations were small (Valenzuela et al. 2009).

Hazards. Many times, we view the social media world as foreign, scary, and even dangerous. With new books and articles that warn of the harmful effects of social media, it is easy to despair that social networks are making us isolated, disconnected, and numb. For instance, Catherine Steiner-Adair, author of *The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age*, wrote:

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

Tech, for all the wonderful ways it can enhance life, at this particular developmental juncture of adolescence sometimes does more to obscure and confuse than contribute helpfully to the human connectivity a teen needs... In extreme cases, detached from meaningful connections, some teens create a chilling world of their own in which self-injury or addiction precludes human connection, where porn replaces intimacy, and where disturbed thinking can turn tech connections into a weapon for social or emotional cruelty (195-196).

These are very scary statements. Her evidence for this conclusion comes from teens describing a soap opera-like life and a particular story where a girl texted her friend about an imaginary boyfriend. This author worries that constant access to technology escalates drama and that there is no app for emotional intimacy. In many ways, she is correct that social media presents some challenges that we've not encountered before. And, it is true that there are hazards online like pornography, groups that support unhealthy behaviors (like pro-anorexic groups), etc. But, it is also highlighting problems that are age-old. I too remember made-up boyfriends and days at high school that came straight from Hollywood. Of course, when I was in high school I passed notes and journals to friends instead of texts, but, in many ways, adults can recognize many similarities to the teens' stories. It is also important that, as adults, we caution ourselves to dialogue with teenagers about what they think is going on, instead of judging from an outsider perspective. And, research-driven facts will help inform and shape our interventions in the future. As adults that did not grow up as digital natives, we are most definitely on the outside looking in. In this paper, I hope to explore both the dangers and the teen-identified strengths.

In order to examine the potential for risk, it is important to understand how social media presents different challenges than face-to-face communication. In her book, *It's Complicated*:

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

The Social lives of Networked Teens (2014), Danah Boyd presents 4 unique challenges that occur with social networks: 1) Persistence, or the idea that what you post, share, like, etc is enduring over time. 2) Visibility, meaning your audience is significantly bigger than when you speak face-to-face. 3) Spreadability, or the potential for information to become viral. 4) Searchability, the ability to seek out and find content. These have potential for great harm and teenagers do not always understand the risk. One teen may share her political opinion, without regard to how an employer might view the content. One teen may forget that even clicking “like” is searchable and viewable to others. In fact, in a study of 600 high school students, it was found that 20% admitted to sending a sexually explicit image of themselves—a very concerning statistic (Steiner-Adair, 2013). Take the 2014 case of a teen who tweeted a threat to American Airways which said, “I’m part of Al Qaida and on June 1st I’m gonna do something really big bye” (Abdelaziz, 2014). What started as a “joke”, ended as a very serious federal offense. Teenagers may sometimes forget about long term effects and if they share something “in the moment”, it could come back to haunt them.

These four characteristics (Persistence, Visability, Spreadability, and Searchabilty) contribute greatly to the cyber bullying we’ve seen recently. For kids that are being bullied, content, remarks, and harassment can be persistent and viral. Bullying is a hazard of social media use that will need to be examined and regulated. Sometimes these characteristics of social media can be good (when we are sharing good news for example). But, when words are used to spread hate or ridicule, a bad situation can escalate more quickly online than on-the-ground or face-to-face.

In addition, there are often hidden risks. For example, one study found that the advertising that teenager users were exposed to in social media was directly associated to the

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

teenagers materialistic values--and we know materialism can have negative effects like self-doubt, poor school performance, crime, and insecurity (Chang & Arkin, 2002; Deci & Ryan, 1995; Goldberg, Gorn, Peracchio, & Bamossy, 2003; Morris, 2001). With the increased sophistication of marketing strategies that we are seeing in social sites like Facebook (with targeted marketing), this may become a bigger problem. Other authors also speak about how social networks have changed our thinking in regards to how we measure success and failure, with a focus on greater efficiency and number of “likes” or “hits” (Garder & Davis, 2013). Marketing companies, for example, used to measure quality of content, relationship with the client, and qualitative feedback from the client. Now, the work is measured by number of followers, clicks on website links, etc. We need to question, is this measurement putting too much of a focus on quantity, not on quality? And, are the metrics really measuring success or failure?

It is important to note that rarely, if ever, have we seen a causal relationship between social media use and a social outcome (Ahn, 2011). Meaning, if we ask, “Does social media make kids more violent?” we often only find a relationship between violence and social media use. So, we cannot determine if one causes the other or if there are outside influences that can explain the behavior. And, like Ahn, 2011 noted, “What matters is not the computer, but the learning behaviors that occur within the software or educational program”. This makes the problem more manageable because it means that the presence of social media itself does not make our kids dumber, disconnected, or materialistic, rather, the learning behaviors (which we can examine and explore) have the potential for both harm and good. I’m not suggesting that we ignore these harmful effects; rather, I hope we can begin to explore them so that risks will be reduced.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

App Conundrum. We often hear, “There is an app for everything!” An app for banking, for video chatting, for identifying songs, but also applications that teach us how to communicate, how to share information, how to strategize. Some authors have pointed to the potential limiting effects of this phenomenon saying that we have begun to think only within the existing apps, not thinking outside-the-box and essentially becoming “app-dependent” (Gardner & Davis, 2013). The app effect is an important one to consider and we should look for and seek out ways that apps can inspire creativity, not discourage it. This may be as simple as engaging in conversations with our kids about a new app they would create, or assigning an imaginative/entrepreneurial project at school. As Gardner and Davis (2013) pointed out, there is a difference between young people “messing around” on social media (using it to share photos, look at clips—basically act within existing applications) and “geeking out” on social media (developing mastery and looking for ways to stretch an application or design something new). More active “geeking out” could be more beneficial for young minds and we should encourage more exploration.

Generational disconnect. Social media often produces tension between parents and their children. Social media has the potential to increase intergenerational conflicts, creating more distance between parents and adolescents. Internet/technology use has the potential to change the hierarchy of the family when adolescents become a source of technology knowledge other members rely on (Mesch, 2006). Also, many parents compare their childhood and adolescence to their children’s and find differences which may lead to arguments and restrictions in an effort to reconnect with the way “things used to be”. It is true that adolescents report frequent arguments over internet time (Livingstone, 2007). If we think about a parent enforcing (or trying to enforce) strict internet rules, while teenagers see the internet as an integral part of their meaning-making, we can see why there is conflict. Adults are trying to recreate a childhood like their own, or they

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

are concerned about safety/privacy online. Teenagers are more comfortable online and see it as a crucial part of their identity. But, if we look at this behavior and ask the CMM question, “What are they making together?” we can see a communication pattern where adults are enforcing restrictions that make a teenager feel threatened that will likely lead to continued conflict and increased distance between parent and child. Boyd (2014) sums it up by saying:

The answer to the disconnect between parent goals and teen desires is not rhetoric that pathologizes teen practices, nor is it panicked restrictions on teen sociality. Rather, adults must recognize that what teens are trying to achieve and work with them to find balance and help them think about what they are encountering. The need for parenting does not go away when teenagers are online, rather the way we interact with teenagers changes.

The method outlined in this paper, Social Videovoice is designed to help parents bridge that gap, using social media as a communication building tool, instead of a tool which leads to a breakdown of communication between parent and child. Instead of facing the same old argument, these pairs can ask a different question: “How can social media be utilized as a tool to create meaning between a parent and child?” or, “How can we create a better social world?” It is proposed that if we can learn to communicate while being mindful, considering untold stories, and working within the framework of CMM, we can use social media’s strengths and change our social world.

Rationale

Social media and technology behavior has often focused on individual risks or identity building. Rarely have we seen studies that focus on how technology and social media has affected teen and parent communication. And, there is a need for practical tools to use social media and technology towards good communication, not isolation. This workshop uses a theory

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

aimed at mindful and generative communication and utilizes it for a communication workshop where pairs learn how to use technology while still communicating in a social construction way.

Research Questions. In this study, we aimed to answer the following questions:

- 1) Can we utilize CMM Theory to create a practical communication workshop for teens and their parents?
 - a. Will teens and parents report more social construction communication after completing the workshop?
 - b. Will teens and parents report more overall satisfaction of their communication processes after completing the workshop?
- 2) Can parents and teens identify more strengths of social media as a communication processes, and will they feel more confident about using technology and social media in the future?

These questions will be answered, in part, by data collected during group focus interviews completed after the workshop. Short surveys were also administered before and after the study to assess the effectiveness of the communication workshop and the social video project.

Method

Participants

The participants were 3 pairs of high-school aged (age 15-18) teenagers and their parent or older parental figure (for a total of 6 participants). The participants were all living in Chicago. Parents were recruited through high schools and local advertisements. Parents were recruited based on their interest in improving communication patterns with their teenager and/or learning more about their teen's social media/technology use. All parent members for the pilot group were moms, two had daughters and one had a son.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

Photovoice and Social Videovoice

Photovoice is a qualitative method under the community-based participatory research (CBPR) umbrella. It is a method that asks community participants to take their own photos, use those photos as a way to identify themes, and discuss those themes with others as a way to encourage change in their communities. Often, photovoice projects are centered around a topic or question like: “How can we promote healthy eating in this neighborhood?” or, “How do people interact with their environment?”, for example. In this way, photovoice is acknowledging that “people are the experts of their own lives” (Wang et al. 2004, p.911) and it values community members’ voices. Photovoice has three main goals. 1) To enable people to record and reflect on community strengths and concerns; 2) To promote dialogue that is critical and increase knowledge of communities through discussion; 3) To reach people who can be mobilized for change (Wang & Burris 1997). Photovoice is not just about exploring, it is about empowerment and sparking activism.

By using photovoice to map resources and strengths, photovoice allows for participants to tell stories about a community’s capabilities (Wang, 1999). By telling this story, photovoice has the potential to strengthen the individual and community’s “capacity to take action” (Wang, 1999). This commitment to action is creating an activism sense in our communities—creating activists that will be able to identify resources and problem areas while working towards a better world.

Photovoice has been utilized in many different communities. From aboriginal communities in Australia, to adults in a Winnipeg community psychosocial rehab community, to kids in a rural KwaZulu-Natal school, photovoice has been used as a way to explore and empower (Adams et al., 2012; Clements, 2011; Moletsane et al., 2007). The information

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

gathered from these projects can be used to inform staff, public officials, community members, or policy makers.

Researchers who have used photovoice have grappled with several issues, especially sorting and analyzing data and ensuring photographs are presented in a way the participant intended (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). If participants use a lot of photographs, it may be difficult for the researcher to sort those photographs or find the most salient ones to present. Also, although participants discuss their photos as a group and present findings to others, the process of acquiring photographs is usually an individual process. Although we label it as a community method, the way we acquire data can be more social. The individual aspect of photovoice, coupled with the media changes (more access to technology, an increase in aps, more video apps) we've seen over the last couple decades, calls for an update to the photovoice method. The current research project proposes and presents a new form of photovoice called *Social Videovoice*, as a way to address some of the challenges of photovoice, build on photovoice strengths/roots, and update photovoice for a new generation. Social Videovoice is set up in a similar way as photovoice: It asks participants to collect data, use that data to explore themes and critically think about community issues, and present the data in hopes of sparking change. However, the data in Social Videovoice was videos shot by participants, compiled into one video that is less than 4 minutes long, and was sharable to a group throughout the process. In that way, the collection of data is social, and allows the group to give feedback on video clips. This researcher believes Social Videovoice will eliminate concerns over choosing photographs and how to present photographs. Its social nature will also be more familiar to younger populations and will allow collaboration throughout the project. It will also capitalize on

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

the video boom (an increase in video as evident by the YouTube, Vine, Instagram video movement).

Research Design

The research design was active, meaning a program was designed that has practical applications for communities and cross-cultural communication. The program itself consisted of two initial meetings (each an hour and a half) and a final, open presentation of videos (1 hour), for a total commitment of 5 hours. At the end of the presentation, participants were asked to participate in a focus group (one hour in length). The meetings took place at National Louis University. The entire program lasted 3 weeks. The primary researcher also worked with a research assistant who was recruited from the undergraduate psychology program at National Louis University. The research assistant was trained in CMM theory prior to the beginning of the workshop.

The first meeting, was CMM training module, focused on meaning making between pairs. The facilitators (primary researcher and research assistant) presented a short role-play of ineffective, one-sided communication. They then discussed what they each brought to the conversation. Each member will be asked to create a Daisy Model based on a previous conversation to begin thinking about the richness of conversation. Then, the facilitators role-played another argument, and participants mapped out the conversation on a serpentine model, effectively slowing the conversation down and learning from it. The primary researcher presented the theory and the logic model for social construction communication. Based on this model, the pairs constructed a logic model for the pair, with an outcome of “good communication”. Finally, the project was introduced and explained.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

The Project. Each member of the group was set up on a social video site (Vimeo). A training on the functions of the site was conducted (during the second meeting). Each participant pair was asked to create one video to present to the group, 3 weeks after the first meeting. The participants were given the prompt question of: “How can we make a better social world?” As participants got footage, they were encouraged to post the video to the social site. Participants were encouraged to interact in the comments section, giving feedback to other group members. Each video had to be at least 10 seconds in length and made viewable to the group as a whole.

Second Meeting. This meeting began with participants filling out another daisy model to think about what they were bringing to the room. Then, the researchers presented a short Vimeo training. Participants were shown how to upload, edit, and share video. There was free time to break into family-teenager pairs to discuss, brainstorm, shoot video, or edit. During this meeting, facilitators roamed the room, encouraging examination of the process of communication. At the midpoint, the research assistant asked participants to reflect on communication between pairs and the group and encouraged members to work towards outcomes outlined in the logic model.

Third Meeting. This meeting took place 3 weeks after the first meeting and was a chance to present the videos created by the pair with the community. The audience consisted of family members and partners. Then, the group talked about the process. The group discussed the role of social video, using video as communication, the process of sharing videos with others, and the process of viewing other’s videos.

Focus Group Questions. The following questions were asked in the focus group:

- 1) What was your reaction to the videos that were just shared?

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

- 2) What were you thinking/feeling when you came to the workshop on the first day, three weeks ago?
- 3) What was it like to go through this process with your partner?
- 4) Tell me a story of how you've used the daisy model, serpentine model, or logic model outside of the workshop.
- 5) Tell me how your communication with your partner has changed (if it has changed) and give an example.
- 6) What is your opinion of social media and has it changed after this workshop?
- 7) You went through this workshop with a partner who was a different age than you/ in a different generation, how did that impact how the workshop went?
- 8) What would you change about the workshop?
 - a. Which parts were most helpful? Least helpful?
- 9) Is there anything else you would like to share with the group?

Data Analysis

Quantitative data. The quantitative data (results from the pre and post test survey) will be analyzed after the second or third wave of the workshop, when we have data from at least 12 people.

Qualitative data. A focus group was conducted with participants. The focus group was recorded, transcribed, and separated into main themes as they related to both the research questions and focus group questions.

Results

All participants noticed a difference in the way teenagers communicated and the way adults communicated, supporting the past literature on intergenerational communication. And, all

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

groups also noted how teenagers responded differently to the question, “How can we make a better social world”, wanting to include social media as part of the answer. The teen girl pointed out this difference during her part of the video when she said, “I like to play on my iphone while my mom likes to watch Lifetime movies and go to sleep”. Here is an example from another pair: “You know what, since I’m not computer savvy, I had a problem with it. But you know what, we did have similarities and you can tell there were different generations. And when I say that, it was because he put everything media on there, you know Facebook, Instagram, whatever else. And I put pictures. You know, pictures (AS2)”.

Although all three moms reported frustration at using and learning about social media, two of the moms seemed to be more dismissive of social media in general. For example, one mom expressed, “I don’t like sitting! This [social media] drives me nuts.” (AS10). One mom, although she stated she would never be as active on social media as her daughter said, “It can be a bit much. Once you start getting into it you are like, what are they doing? Who are they connected to? It is too much” (AN6). At the same time, this participant was also able to understand and guide her child through their social media process: “I let her communicate the way she communicates. I realize it is totally different from how I grew up. Totally different from what I was exposed to. But I can’t put my head in the sand and pretend it is not happening. So I kinda let her be and guide her at what she should be looking at and what she shouldn’t—conversations she should be engaged in. I don’t necessarily try to change it. But, I don’t know if I would cross all the way over to that realm (AN7)”. For this pair, although they recognized the difference in the way they communicated, they chose to frame it as an opportunity to “respect” their “differences”.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

At the end of the project, workshop members reported they felt the workshop was very beneficial. Although we don't yet have enough participants to run a true quantitative analysis, all of those surveyed with the question "I am glad I participated in the video project" responded "Strongly agree". The reasons given for why the workshop was helpful are broken down into themes:

Something Special

One participant noted that the video project was something special just her and her daughter could do together:

"Well for us it was a way to connect outside of our normal, "Ok I need you to clean your room", you know, outside of the normal tasks. So, this was a fun project. Actually, just us coming down here together just to work on something that was outside of our normal routine, it was kinda exciting and it kinda bonded us a little bit further because we had to work together as a team and talk about our communication" (AN1).

Increased Mindfulness

Three of the participants mentioned increased mindfulness of the other person as an outcome of the workshop:

"Do you mean has our communication improved? I think it has. For me, I think I'm more mindful of what she is coming to the table with and, again, it's usually me saying, "Ok, I need you to do this, and this and that". And if she's quiet, then I'm not automatically like, "Oh, it is something I said". There could be some other stuff going on in her world that I'm not even aware of" (AN4).

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

“Right, because I actually have to think about them. I think about them but not in the way that I should. Because I’m thinking, “Well, I need to go here, here, here, here”. I need to be more personable. I have five kids so I get in a habit but I can’t because they are all individuals”(AS6).

It is interesting that, for mothers, this outcome was important because it took them out of their “mom role”, and was a step-back for them, thinking about what their sons/daughters were feeling and experiencing. It seemed to help them slow down their busy lives, and as one mother said, consider their kids as individuals, not part of a group.

Increased Patience and Listening

One of the members reported that she was more patient after completing the workshop, “I’m more patient. I listen more” (AS15). Interestingly, almost all the members also reported increased listening as an outcome. Although listening was not specifically targeted as a skill that we worked on, it seemed to occur as a natural outcome of slowing the conversation down and learning to be more mindful of the richness of conversation. Example: “I guess listening to the other person’s side of the story. Thinking about the other person rather than thinking of your own ideas” (N4).

Increased Communication

One teenage participant, who described himself as not very verbal, said that the tools encouraged him to talk more. This was appreciated by his mother who enjoyed more conversation with him.

Tools

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

All the participants mentioned the daisy model as a useful tool and could identify examples where they used the daisy model in their lives. The daisy model was connected to the outcome of being more mindful of their partner and listening more. One participant also noted the usefulness of the serpentine model and its ability to slow a conversation down. The daisy model is a very visual tool, and is one that participants could think about easily, which may be why participants reported it as the most useful.

Discussion

Practical Uses of CMM

Overall, participants were reporting that the workshop was “fun”, “good”, and “improved conversation”. Our target goals were increasing awareness of richness of conversation, slowing down a conversation and learning from it, and keeping in-mind the larger goal of good (social construction) conversation. Of these goals, participants reported increased mindfulness in regards to their partner. They also reported slowing down a conversation, listening to one another, and thinking about their conversations. They reported these goals were met by the workshop and the introduction of the daisy and serpentine model. We also got unanticipated results, as participants reported the specialness of the project, learning to respect each other’s differences, and feeling the need to communicate more. The result of respecting each other’s differences was particularly interesting, and is an outcome and an idea that should be explored. For these participants, there was recognition of differences and an appreciation of those same differences which lead to better communication. For me, this shows that Barnett Pearce’s model is usable in today’s world, a world where one-sided communication will not be effective. If the theory itself led to participants respecting each other’s differences more, it will be a significant result and will

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

increase its applicability. Because of the results of this pilot study, respecting differences will be measured in future pre and post surveys.

Based on these preliminary results, we can say that, in-part, an effective workshop was created to utilize some of the tools of CMM (our first research question). Yet, we still need to analyze the last goal of increasing awareness of the goal of better communication and realizing that communication can be created. In the post surveys, all participants noted that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement: “I think, if you want to, you can change the way you communicate with someone”. As more data is collected, we can analyze if there are any significant differences in pre and posttest answers for this question and similar questions. However, no participants reported using the logic model in the focus group. In future sessions, we need to explore if the logic model is a useful tool for teaching this goal of CMM theory, or if we need to design another tool that helps participants consider the social construction communication that CMM values.

Social Media

As anticipated, participants did notice a dichotomy of feelings related to social media. This difference caused frustration for the adults and led to either more movement away from social media or learning to respect the different form of communication. In the literature review, it was noted that social media often threatens power relationships in a family. Suddenly, we have teenagers that are much more knowledgeable about a process than their parents. During the workshops, all moms commented on, with degrees of discomfort, how their sons/daughters needed to teach them what to do on social media sites. Although this is recognized as a threat (if parents become uncomfortable or angry about this role-shift), we can also see it as an

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

opportunity. In this workshop, teenagers took on the role of teacher and, as parents reported, it caused them to listen to their kids more and respect them as an individual. There are many opportunities for parents to become students and their kids to play teacher in social media. If we are open to those opportunities, it is another way to connect.

The role of power is one that needs to be explored in greater detail. When we talk about parent-child relationships, power does play a part in communication. As one mom said, she “always knows what is right” because she wants to protect her daughter. In this role and many other roles, power influences how we communicate with others. Whenever possible, we need to check our own level of power and continue to be open to true dialogue.

Finally, social media contains another unique challenge: it is presenting us with ways of communicating that we might not understand or even recognize as communication. But, our teenagers are reporting that social media is an important and crucial part of their communication process. As adults, we may not understand videos, blog posts, facebook posts, or video games as a valid form of communication. But, for our kids, they are. In that way, our reaction to the social media use is reflective of our answer to their conversation. If we ignore it, yell about it, celebrate it, or forbid it, we are playing a role in that conversation and the teenagers take note. As one participant said, do we want to “put our head in the sand” or do we want to figure out how social media can be used as a meaning-making tool? Again, social media presents both a threat (of distancing in relationships) and an opportunity (connecting and meaning making through social media). But, no doubt, we are playing a role in the conversation that is social media in our society. And, I believe, we can change this conversation to create a better social (social media?) world. Begin.

References

- Adames, K., Burns, C., Liebzeit, A., Ryschka, J., Thorpe, S., & Browne, J. (2012). Use of participatory research and photo-voice to support urban aboriginal healthy eating. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 20(5), 497-505.
- Agosto, D.E. & Abbas, J. (2010). High school seniors' social network and other ict use preference and concerns. *American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 47(1), 1-10.
- Ahn, J. (2011). The effect of social network sites on adolescents' social and academic development: Current theories and controversies. *Advances in Information Science*, 62(8), 1435-1445.
- Anderson-Butcher, D., Lasseigne, A., Ball, A., Brzozowski, M., Lehnert, M., & McCormick, B.L. (2010). Adolescent weblog use: Risky or protective? *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 27, 63-77.
- Beebe, T.J., Asche, S.E., Harrison, P.A., & Quinlan, K.B. (2004). Heightened vulnerability and increased risk-taking among adolescent chat room users: Results from a statewide school survey. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 35, 116-123.
- Bennet, S. (2013). How teens are changing social networking. *All Twitter*. Retrieved from: http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/teens-social-networking_b46903
- Boyd, D. (2014). *It's complicated: The social lives of networked teens*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Clements, K. (2012). Participatory action research and photovoice in a psychiatric nursing/clubhouse collaboration exploring recovery narrative. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 19, 785-791.
- Gardner, H. & Davis, B. (2013). *The app generation: How today's youth navigate identity, intimacy, and imagination in a digital world*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gudykunst, W.B. (2005). *Theorizing about intercultural communication*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Ellison, N.B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of facebook 'friends': Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4).
- Emarketer (2013). Social networking reaches nearly one in four around the world. Retrieved from: <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Social-Networking-Reaches-Nearly-One-Four-Around-World/1009976>
- Erikson, E. H.(1950). *Childhood and Society*. New York:Norton & Company.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Kellogg, (2004). Using logic models to bring together planning, evaluation, and action: Logic model development guide.
- Lenhart, A., Madden, M., Macgill, A.R., & Smith, A. (2007). *Teens and social media*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet and American Life Project.
- Livingstone, S. (2007). Strategies of parental regulation in the media rich home. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 23(3), 920-941.
- Pearce, W.B. (2007). *Making social worlds:A communication perspective*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Mesch, G.S. (2006). The family and the internet: Exploring a social boundaries approach. *Journal of Family Communication*, 6(2), 119-138.
- Moletsane, R., Lange, N., Mitchell, C., Stuart, J., Buthelezi, T., & Taylor, M. (2007). Photo-

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CMM

- voice as a tool for analysis and activism in response to HIV and AIDS stigmatization in rural KwaZulu-Natal school. *Journal for Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 19(1), 19-26.
- Schmitt, K.L., Dayanim, S., & Matthias, S. (2008). Personal homepage construction as an expression of social development. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(2), 496-506.
- Steiner-Adair, C. (2013). *The big disconnect: Protecting childhood and family relationships in the digital age*. New York: Harper Books.
- Valenzuela, S., Park, N., & Kee, K.F. (2009). Is there social capital in a social network site? Facebook use and college students' life satisfaction, trust, and participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14(4), 875-901.
- Wang, C. & Burris, M. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education Behavior*, 24, 369.
- Wang, C. (1999). Photovoice: A participatory action research strategy applied to women's health. *Journal of Women's Health*, 8 (2), 185-192.
- Wang, C. & Redwood-Jones, Y.A. (2001). Photovoice ethics: Perspectives from flint photovoice. *Health Education & Behavior*, 28, 560-572.