Over the years, the internet has become more prevalent in our daily lives. Now, more than ever, children and adults are utilizing various features, programs, and websites on the World Wide Web. Recently, social networking has become extremely popular in our society. Social networking refers to web-based interactions through websites such as MySpace, LinkedIn and Facebook (Winder, 2007). In order for a site to be classified as a social networking site, it must encompass aspects such as making connections with others, sharing of content, *blogging*, and a user profile (Winder, 2007). For the purpose of this paper, the social networking site that will be analyzed is Facebook. Facebook allows users to maintain an online personal page for keeping in touch with networks of friends, family members or customers and sharing information, video and photos through its various applications and features (Lewis, 2010). It has two major aspects, a personal profile page, or a Facebook page, which is mainly used for business purposes. Individuals who accept a profile page are known as friends, and those who follow a business page are known as fans (Lewis, 2010). One of the most prominent features of Facebook, is that each page has a *wall*. This is a space on each profile designated for friends to write comments, messages, and post pictures or links as well as view their own communications. This space is seen as a two-way communication between yourself and your friends (Lewis, 2010). Within the *wall*, there are several features, which aid in creating more connections with friends. Features include comment, *like*, and *see friendship*. Comments that are seen on each individuals personal profile page include text, links, pictures, or videos from friends. The *like* button allows the user, friends, or friends of friends to give positive feedback on a certain post on the *wall*. The *see friendship* feature is fairly new to Facebook. It allows users to see all content and connections shared by two people who are friends. This includes photos that they are both tagged in, *wall* posts and comments between them, events they are both attending, their mutual friends, and what they have *liked*. This *wall* feature of Facebook and the other features it contains can be analyzed using the Desjardins Competency Model.

The Competency Model aims to understand how humans use and interact with various forms of ICT (Information and Communication Technology). The model is categorized into four different competencies. They are technical order, social order, informational order, and epistemological order (Desjardins, Lacasse, & Bélair, 2001). Technical order competencies focus on how humans interact with technology, specifically computer software and computer hardware. Second, social order competencies allows users to interact and communicate with other users (individuals or groups). Informational order competencies allow users to extract information through an ICT in an effective and efficient way. Lastly, competencies of the epistemological order allow users to make the most of computers to solve problems, test ideas and create or modify structures (Desjardins, Lacasse, & Bélair, 2001). Out of the four competencies, social order will be used to deconstruct the *wall* feature on Facebook.

In detail, “competencies of a social order allow us to interact with other individuals or groups by way of ICT. These are defined as the array of mostly procedural knowledge usually constructed while reflecting on communication, experiences, where a concern for the needs of others emerges, thus establishing a viable way of thinking and acting with other individuals or groups” (Desjardins, Lacasse, & Bélair, 2001, page 214). This means that users must analyze the social online environment in terms of issues of convention, ethics, rules, language, organization, tradition, and culture (Desjardins, 2005). For example, users should examine the repercussions of posting personal information such as their address or banking information on their Facebook *wall*. Within the social order competency, there are various theories that explain different types of computer mediated interactions. Engagement theory proposed by Greg Kearsley & Ben Shneiderman focuses on the idea of individuals collaborating in groups in order to have meaningful communication to result in positive learning (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1999).

Kearsley and Schneiderman (1999) believe that technology-based learning can aid in students engaging in different ways. There are three basic principles of engagement theory. They are “relate,” “create” and “donate.” The first principal “relate”, refers to communication, planning, management, and social skills in groups. When students work in teams, they have the chance to collaborate with others who have different backgrounds. This enables them to gain an understanding of diversity and multiple perspectives (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1999). In terms of Facebook, teachers can create a group or profile of the specific classroom. Within the profile, teachers can create discussion topics where students can engage in. Once a topic has been started, students can use the *wall* feature to post comments. Students can use the *like* feature of the *wall* to show a positive interest in a peers comment. Furthermore, they can elaborate on why they *liked* the comment by clicking on the comment feature of the *wall*. In doing this, students will be able to engage in meaningful online discussions about various topics. In turn, this enables students to be involved in a community of learners. A positive turn to this is that teachers are able to monitor and regulate the discussion and *wall* posts. The comments that are left on a Facebook *wall* appear in a chat-like manner. This way, teacher could recognize which comments were left first and what direction the discussion is heading. This will aid the teacher in face-to-face classroom discussions to prompt further comments made on *wall*s. Persell (2004) conducted a study focusing on web-based discussions used to improve student engagement and deeper understanding. Some of the evidence gathered during the study showed, “using the Web is correlated with more interdependency, more engagement, and greater complexity of thought through time” (Persell, 2004, page 73). Lastly, students can make connections and networks through the *see friendship* button. By seeing how they are connected with their peers and how their peers are connected to each other, students will be able to determine likes and dislikes of others. This will consequently result in students becoming more engaged in online *wall* discussions and will built their online social skills.

Engagement theory’s second principle, “create”, refers to making learning a more creative and purposeful activity. This can be done by having the students defining the project or problem and focusing on applying ideas to a specific context (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1999). This is very similar to project-based learning where students have control over their learning. Facebook’s *wall* feature assists in making problem solving and classroom discussions more creative. The *wall* feature of Facebook allows for various forms of creativity. For example, students are able to add links, pictures, and/or videos to their comments. Teachers can use the *wall* feature of Facebook to suggest a list of topics for students to create projects on. In addition, the teacher can insert links to similar projects created in the past and materials used (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1999). This will make it much easier for students to access information, as all necessary information will be posted in the *wall*. Students who work together on projects should be familiar with each other. Thus is it important for students to have access to some sort of biography of their peers (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1999). The *see friendship* feature of the *wall* is an excellent tool for learning about an individual because it briefly states, what the user is interested in. Once students are completed their projects, they can create a new discussion board and post their final project on there. This provides an easily accessible source for students to use the *wall* to start a discussion with their peers about their project. Students can engage in the discussion by commenting in the *wall* or simply clicking the *like* button. Even though students are not formally writing their comments, they are still being engaged in discussion by using the *like* button because it shows that they have read their peers comment and agree with what has been stated.

The last principle in engagement theory is “donate”. This principle refers to the value of making a useful contribution while learning. This principle emphasizes the overall focus of the activity that students are engaged in and who it is intended for (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1999). In addition, this component allows students to be motivated learners because they are engaged in an activity they hold value in (Marshall, 2007). As students are engaged in online discussions about their projects through the Facebook *wall*, teachers must screen all comments and posts that are being made. It is the educator’s responsibility to monitor student’s online interactions with each other. If a student of groups of students are going off track in their discussions than the teacher can simply delete their comments. Furthermore, if students are struggling with their topics than teachers and peers can post links to the *wall* to guide their thinking. In addition, students should be aware of their comments and ensure that they are posting relevant comments and focusing on the intended topics of discussion. In engaging in online discussion through the Facebook *wall*, students are able to create a community of learners through learning skills of teamwork and online communication.

Facebook offers various features and applications that aid in user engagement. The Facebook *wall* feature is the most prominent as it is automatically a part of any profile created on Facebook. Features of the *wall*, such as comment, *like* and *see friendship* assist in creating a more engaging online environment. Users have the choice of engaging through writing a comment or by liking someone else’s comment. They can also build a community and networks through the *see friendship* feature. Within the social order competency, engagement theory provides a framework and lens through which the *wall* feature of Facebook could be interpreted through in terms of user engagement. Using the *wall* feature, students are able to be engaged in meaningful discussions which result in a community of learners, effective learning that is creative, meaningful and authentic, and an increase in online social skills (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1999). Facebook’s wall feature facilitates engagement through comments and posting of pictures, videos and links. It allows students to design, plan, problem-solve and present information through postings and discussions. Overall, the use of Facebook features play a positive role in human interactions, engagement and networks.

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