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Blaschko, Trina E. *An Evaluation of Communication in the Classroom using Social Media Tools in the Health Information Technology Program at Chippewa Valley Technical College*

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if social media was an effective form of communication in the classroom for students enrolled in the Health Information Technology (HIT) program at Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC).

The results of this study showed, overall, that social media is not an effective form of communication between faculty and student. Respectively students are utilizing CVTC e-mail and E360, CVTC's Learning Management System. It was also discovered that while students do not wish to utilize social media to communicate with instructors, students do wish to utilize social media to communicate and collaborate with students for coursework. As well as utilize Facebook to communicate with faculty and students after graduation.

Results of this study were not consistent with findings discovered in the literature in respect to using social media to communicate with faculty. Results were consistent with findings discovered in the literature and showed students do wish to use social media to communicate and collaborate with each other for coursework.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) has used school e-mail as its main form of communication with students for several years. Since the wave of social media has been on the rise, we find it more and more difficult to find an effective means of communication with our students. The importance of student to instructor communication is an essential element for student success. Students and instructors need to communicate with each other for guidance, mentoring and instruction. Students also need to communicate with each other to force active learning and interaction in this new era of online learning.

CVTC is a two-year technical college located in the western Wisconsin city of Eau Claire. The college is one of the 16 technical colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). CVTC offers two-year Associate Degree programs in specialty areas requiring specialized technical skills.

The Health Information Technology (HIT) Program has been offered at CVTC since 1971. This two-year program is designed to prepare students for a role in the health information management (HIM) profession in healthcare settings. HIM professionals are skilled in collecting, maintaining, analyzing, and disseminating clinical data for the healthcare community, while applying legal regulations to maintain the confidentiality and security of patient data. The program consists of a variety of health information technology core program courses, two professional practice experiences, and general studies courses. The HIT program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). CAHIIM currently accredits over 275 academic programs in the United States at the undergraduate and graduate academic levels (CAHIIM, 2011).

The enrollment in the HIT program at CVTC has seen a steady increase in the number of students over the past 10 years. This can be directly attributed to the college's initiative to expand the program. The highest enrollment in the HIT program at CVTC was in 2006 with 47 students. Currently the HIT program accepts new students each fall and spring semesters in a day-time, full-time, on-campus track. The HIT program does offer several courses in the hybrid and on-line delivery mode as well as the traditional face to face delivery.

HIT is one of the few professions that have shown signs of life in the job market, with some forecasters going as far to predict that available positions will soon outnumber qualified applicants. HIT programs are changing the curriculum in many program courses to keep up with the changes in the profession. Some schools are offering online course-work to attract nontraditional students, and many are finding ways to help their students receive hands-on experience with electronic records (Yeager, 2011). Many schools and universities now offer individual courses and entire programs through distance learning. The rise in interest in distance learning is evident at the associate, baccalaureate, and master's level of health information-related programs around the United States.

Chippewa Valley Technical College HIT program graduates are eligible to write the national certification examination offered by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) to become a Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT). To obtain the RHIT credential, an individual must graduate from a two-year associate degree program accredited by CAHIIM and pass the AHIMA-administered written examination.

Over time several innovations have been added to instructional design methods. The variety of tools that can be used to provide instruction and communication to students has evolved significantly from the early use of on-line presentations using Microsoft PowerPoint to

podcasts, wikis, blogs, Twitter and Facebook. The traditional method of face to face learning seems to be the minority and the majority is now the online classroom and hybrid methods of delivery.

In current educational settings all over the world, the internet is creating change. Colleges and universities are promoting growth in online course offerings in an effort to fight economic and enrollment decline. The promotion and growth of online education suggests that online courses are equivalent or superior to traditional on-campus courses in terms of improved student access, increased rate of degree completion, lowered costs, and appeal to non-traditional students (Allen & Seaman, 2007). Studies of online learning versus traditional classroom learning have focused on many aspects of learning including the effectiveness of technology (Schenker, 2007), knowledge transfer (Hansen, 2008), and student engagement, learning and satisfaction (Rabe-Hemp, et. al, 2009). Studies of online courses have provided insight into the use and effects of technological innovations such as interactive software usage for e-learning (Pena-Sanchez, 2009), and the creation of interactive learning environments (Everson & Garfiel, 2008). Research has also considered the evaluation of information technology integration in traditional courses (Christou & Dinow, 2010).

Now that the classroom setting has changed over the past two decades, the method of communication with students has changed as well. The communication methods will change between student and instructor as well as between the students that are involved in the class, regardless of the course mode of delivery. A Life Sciences instructor at Chippewa Valley Technical College is utilizing Facebook as a way to communicate with her students and a way for the students to communicate with each other. The instructor simply created a group on her own personal page and the students communicate with each other within that group.

It is apparent that the role social media is playing in our everyday life, major events are being reported by peers as they happen. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, “two-thirds (66 percent) of adults use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace or LinkedIn” (Smith, 2011). Facebook and Twitter are attracting more user’s every day – in fact 72% of young adults use social network sites according to a Pew Study in 2011 (Smith, 2011). This statistic is one reason social media is becoming an attractive platform for university leaders looking to establish relationships and maintain open conversations with the campus community. Incorporating social media into an educational platform will allow universities and colleges to communicate instantaneously and initiate and engage proactive interaction with students, faculty and staff (BlackBoard, 2011).

According to the Interact Media website (Cox-Otto, 2009) it states that social networking could help community college students become more engaged in their academics. Kay McCleeny is the director of the Texas based Center for Community College Student Engagement and recently published a report based on a survey of more than 400,000 students at 663 institutions. The report assesses how much effort students invest in their studies, whether they interact with faculty and staff, and whether they are challenged by their academics. Prior studies have shown that the more engaged students are in such activities and relationships, the more likely they are to learn. The survey results showed higher levels of engagement among students who said they used social media multiple times a day for academic purposes, such as communicating with other students, instructors or college staff about coursework, than students who said they didn’t use such tools at all. According to the Interact Media web-site (Cox-Otto, 2009) the statistics show that the educational arena is lagging when it comes to utilizing social media in the classroom. Listed below are statistics given by Interact Media:

- 95% of students ages 18 to 24 use social networking tools, including instant messages and texting, 64% use it multiple times a day.
- Yet just 18% do so for schoolwork, and 27% never do. Just 5% never use social networks.
- Among older students, 68% used social networking, 41% use it multiple times a day.
- But just 10% do so for school; 49% never used social media networking for school. (Cox-Otto, 2009)

According to all the research provided social media will improve communication in the classroom, but is it effective for our population at Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC)? Our population is multi-generational and many times we have returning students that have not been to school in 15-20 years. After a brief interview with Virginia Berge on March 11 (2010), she strongly opposes to making Facebook a mandatory form of communication in the classroom at CVTC. Virginia is a student that is back in the classroom at CVTC after more than 30 years. She graduated from the Health Information Technology Program at CVTC in 1972, she returns to CVTC to simply refresh her skills in the program after being laid off from her job. She stated that after returning she is overwhelmed with technology. She stated that when she went to school she had paper and pencil and that was it. Now there are on-line classes, hybrid schedules, distance learning software, Citrix, and more mindboggling things to learn. Virginia said if she would be required to sign up for some form of social media she isn't sure she could keep up with it all or remember all her passwords to access all of her programs.

As a faculty member the breakdown of communication with students happens time and time again. Many times students say, "Didn't you get my e-mail?" or "CVTC e-mail wasn't

working.” It is also very common for students to not check their e-mail on a regular basis, because of their reliance on social media, which poses a serious problem as this is how instructors communicate with on-line students.

CVTC has implemented a new Course Management Software, Edvance360 (E360), at the start of the 2012 academic school year. E360 has a built in mailbox that students can use to e-mail other students in the class as well as their instructor. Students can e-mail their entire class if they wanted; when the student receives a response that message goes to their E360 inbox. The students see this inbox every time they log into E360. When a student e-mails the instructor, that message goes to the instructors E360 mailbox as well as their faculty e-mail. The instructor can reply to the message either from their e-mail inbox or from the E360 mailbox.

The evolution of social media has certainly opened up a plethora of possibilities in the educational world. According to all the research provided social media will improve communication in the classroom, but one must be sure that whatever form of social media is chosen it must be used effectively in order for it to improve communication.

This research project strives to answer key questions that surround the effectiveness of using social media as a form of communication at CVTC, specifically in the HIT program. As our students become more mobile the HIT faculty at CVTC needs to consider what form of communication is going to work best with students.

Statement of the Problem

Chippewa Valley Technical College has used school e-mail as its main form of communication with students for several years. Since the inception of online communications, including course management software and social media, students often choose not to respond or read e-mail but use social media, such as Facebook, to communicate with one another. As HIT

faculty we find it more and more difficult to find an effective means of communication with our students. This study will attempt to determine what the most effective means of electronic communication tools to use in the HIT program at Chippewa Valley Technical College.

Purpose of the Study

The HIT faculty does not know the most effective form of communication to be used with their students. The purpose of this study is to determine what form of communication students utilize to communicate with instructors and students while enrolled at CVTC. Is social media a form of communication that the students will respond to in our classrooms at CVTC?

Research Questions

This study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What tool do Health Information Technology Students at Chippewa Valley Technical College utilize the most often when communicating with faculty members?
2. Which electronic communication tool do students use most often?
3. What communication tool provides the most efficient venue for discussion between faculty and student?
4. What is the students' perception of the use of social media to communicate with instructors and fellow students?
5. What is the students' perception of course management software (E360)?

Definitions of Terms

American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). Professional association of the health information management (HIM) professionals. AHIMA's more than

61,000 members are dedicated to the effective management of personal health information required delivery quality of healthcare to the public (AHIMA, 2011).

E-mail. A means or system for transmitting messages electronically (as between computers on a network) (Webster, Merriam Webster, 2012).

Facebook. A free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues (Rouse, 2009).

Health Information Technician (HIT). Also called Medical Records Technicians, they manage, analyze and organize patient medical records and databases for statistical reports and studies. They design and manage health information systems to ensure they meet medical, legal and ethical standards (All Allied Health Schools, 2011).

Health Information Technology Program. Health Information Technicians contribute to the quality of care by collecting, analyzing, organizing and reporting data. This requires knowledge of disease, treatments, computer systems and organizational skills. Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) offers an associate degree in this area. The HIT program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) (CVTC Program Catalog, 2010-2011).

Hybrid. The method of course delivery that is delivered fifty percent in the classroom and fifty percent online. The hybrid course is designed to take advantage of each of those learning environments and elaborate on one another.

Internet. The global connection of computers via interlinked networks across the World Wide Web (Bach, et.al, 2007).

Learning Management System. A learning management system (LMS) is a software application or Web-based technology used to plan, implement, and assess a specific learning process (Rouse, Learning Management System(LMS), 2005). A specific example of a learning management system is Edvance360.

Online. Learning that take place entirely over the Internet. In an online course, there is no physical classroom.

Social Media. Refers to forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (Webster, Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2012).

Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions of this study are that the subjects are Health Information Technology program students. The second assumption of this study is that the subjects of this study are that all subjects involved in this study have a Facebook account.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study include the possibility that some of our students do not have a Facebook account and if students do have a Facebook account students may have a lack of comfort with that tool.

This study will be limited to students enrolled in the Health Information Technology Program at Chippewa Valley Technical College and may not be representative of postsecondary students in general.

Methodology

The methodology used for this research project included the collection of quantitative data related to social media and communication in the classroom. The three forms of communication that will be measured are CVTC e-mail, Facebook and CVTC's new learning management software, Edvance360. Response rates will be collected from two different classes. One class will be informed of the study and the other class will not be informed of the study, but the survey will still be sent out. The classes that will be used to gather the data are Healthcare Information Systems for Fall 2012 Semester and Healthcare IT for Fall 2012 semester. Healthcare Information Systems is a third semester course in the two year associate degree program and Healthcare IT is a first semester course in the two year associate degree program.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The literature review in this chapter contains relevant concepts pertaining to social media and social media use as an educational tool. The main focus of this review is to provide an understanding of topics directly related to current methods of social media use in education and practices and research tied to social media in education. The topics for discussion include history of communication and technology in education, how students communicate, history of social media and social media as an educational tool.

History of Communication and Technology in Education

The term communication is defined in the Merriam Webster's Dictionary as, "a technique for expressing ideas effectively (as in speech) and the technology of the transmission of information (as by print or telecommunication) (Webster, Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2012).

In 1982, internet technology protocols were developed, commonly known as TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol and Internet Protocol). This led to one of the first definitions of an "internet" being a connected set of networks (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The World Wide Web was launched to the public on August 6, 1991. With the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web, the potential for reaching students around the world increased greatly, and today's online learning offers rich educational resources in multiple media and the capability to support both real-time and asynchronous communication between instructors and learners, as well as among different learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

More people use the Internet to get connected to others, find information, conduct business, and share information than ever before in history. Properly used, the internet is certainly an important educational tool. It has transformed the way students and faculty communicate, amass information, and conduct research, putting onto desktop and laptop

computers immediate access to the world's libraries and research facilities. In this regard, it will play an essential role in the future of education (Botstein, 2007).

Yes, the internet will play an important role in the future of education, but it will not end face-to-face interactions, small group discussions, and one-on-one teaching that have been at the heart of education. Just as the internet will never bring about the demise of the book (as was once predicted), it will also never replace teaching and learning from one another face-to-face (Botstein, 2007).

The term *digitally mediated learning* (DML) is a way of learning provided by digital technology of some sort, and that interaction between participants and learning materials is not direct but rather carried out through the technology (Grudin, 2000). The convenience of DML is having the online environment as the primary delivery mode for adult/post-secondary education and training in general. A Sloan Foundation study of more than 2,500 colleges and universities found a 17% growth rate in online enrollments that percentage far exceeds the 1.2% growth rate in the overall higher education population (Allen & Seaman, 2010).

Another trend that has also been used is the use of blended learning. This delivery method includes using approaches that combine online and face to face delivery methods. The blended learning style will enrich students' learning experience, maximize time and use of facilities, and enhance program marketability (Mossavar-Rahmani & Larson-Daughtry, 2007).

Whether the course is being taught fully online, blended, or face-to-face, faculty members now have access to technologies that allow students and instructors to engage in cooperative and collaborative learning despite being separated in space and time (LeNoue, Hall, & Eighmy, 2011).

How Students Communicate, What They Expect

Instructors today will encounter learners who have developed in the presence of the internet. They make up what Tapscott (1999) termed as the net generations, and are “forcing a change in the model of pedagogy, from a teacher-focused approach based on instruction to a student-focused model based on collaboration” (Tapscott, 2009, p. 11). Today, students want to participate in the learning process; they look for greater autonomy, connectivity and socio-experiential learning, have a need to control their environments, and a need for constant connectivity and easy access to the staggering amount of content and knowledge available at their fingertips. Now, college students are now expecting communication with their academic life to simulate the communication in the rest of their lives. Students want to be connected constantly, informed instantaneously, and choosy of what they find suitable for immediate, if any response (Ratliff, 2011).

Two challenges for faculty of higher education are to identify how digital students learn as well as identify their preferred method of communication (Ratliff, 2011).

History of Social Media

The common terms used to describe social media when a simple search is conducted on the Internet include: information sharing, electronic communication, and social interaction. Social Media is an inexpensive outlet that provides a dynamic blend of technology and social interaction as well as accessibility to individuals of all backgrounds, educational status and socioeconomic background. In the beginning social media was a simple means for people to communicate on a personal interest and connect with friend, family, and co-horts. Information is now distributed through these avenues to educate, inform, survey, assemble, and protest

everything from classroom curriculum, family updates, to breaking news. Social media has taken communicating to an entirely new facet (Ratliff, 2011).

The most prevailing social media sites are: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and MySpace as well as others. Facebook is a social network that enables people to communicate with friends and exchange information. Mark Zuckerberg developed Facebook in February of 2004. Zuckerberg was a student at Harvard University at the time of development. Initially it was designed for communication between Harvard students. Later, it opened to schools located around Boston and within one year Facebook started to accept membership of all students and graduates from all schools in the United States of America within one year. In September 2006 Facebook was opened to all e-mails addresses with some age restrictions (Tiryakioglu & Erzurum, 2011). Facebook users (individuals, groups, organizations, business, etc.) can exchange information in a text, photo or video and share it with whomever they choose, all via their personal account. Facebook, can also provide a resource for people to carry on instant messaging and internal e-mail without ever leaving the site (Ratliff, 2011).

Facebook also allows users to create a group or a fan page. The group page feature is a platform for people of shared interest to converse and share information. The fan page is a chance to establish a professional presence. Campus programs will host a Facebook page or group, but the struggle is what type of information to disseminate and how often the Facebook page or group “status” needs to be updated (Ratliff, 2011).

Twitter is another form of social media and another favorite among college students. Twitter is defined as a microblog, because you can let people know what you are thinking, but only allows the user to use 140 characters. These pieces of information are referred to as

“tweets.” Twitter allows users to share and interact with people you do not know, but share the same interest (Ratliff, 2011).

According to a study done by Pearson Education (2010), “Social Media in Higher Education,” found YouTube as the most common social media service used to communicate with students. YouTube provides information such as lectures, podcast, and current news (Hester, Seaman, & Levy, 2010). YouTube is a free video sharing website where videos are uploaded. Over 100 million videos are available on YouTube (Ratliff, 2011). YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are noted as the most recognizable social media; however, the number of professionals actually using these in education is much lower (Bart, 2010).

LinkedIn is another social networking site designed strictly for the business community. Ultimately the goal of the site is to allow members to establish networks of people that they know and trust professionally. The members profile is a listing of employment and education. Members can establish connections with someone the member has worked with, knows professionally, or has gone to school with. LinkedIn started in May 2003 and currently has over 40 million members from 200 countries, representing 170 industries (Rouse, 2009).

According to the Pew Internet Project’s research on social media, 66% of online adults use social networking sites as of February 2012. As of August 2012, 12% of online adults say they use Pinterest, 12% of online adults say they use Instagram, 5% of online adults say they use Tumblr, 66% of online adults use Facebook, 20% use LinkedIn, and 16% use Twitter. Social networking is most popular within the ages of 18-49, those with some college education, and with a household income of less than \$30,000 a year. Looking at the difference between women and men, in May of 2011, 69% of women were users of social networking sites, compared to 60% of men. When looking at usage on a typical day, 48% of online adults use social

networking. This is up from 43% in August of 2011 and 27% in April of 2009. Facebook seems to rule the social networking arena; 92% of users were on Facebook; 29% used MySpace; 18% used LinkedIn; and 13% used Twitter. On an average day the survey found that on Facebook: 15% of Facebook users update their own status, 22% comment on another's post or status, 20% comment on another user's photos, 26% "Like" another user's content, 10% send another user a private message (Brenner, 2012).

Social Media as an Educational Tool

"Although technology is not new to the educational process of teaching and learning, education is one of the area's most heavily impacted by technology" (American Psychological Association, 2009, p. 455). "The internet and related technologies have the power to bring literature, research, information, and people from around the world directly into the classroom" (American Psychological Association, 2009, p. 456). The new technologies that are available today have the ability to improve the way interaction occurs among students and instructors (McCabe, 2012).

Many colleges and universities today utilize Learning Management Systems (LMS), such as Blackboard, D2L, and Edvance360. However, these learning management systems tend to be used for management of student enrollment, exams, assignments, course descriptions, lesson plans, messages, syllabi, and basic course materials. These systems are used for the management of course material not for the establishment of communication networks and collaboration (LeNoue, Hall, & Eighmy).

Social networks can improve communication skills, enhance participation and social commitment, reinforce peer support, and ensure realization of education based on collaboration. Social networking sites can easily be integrated into education and at almost no cost to the

university. There are several possibilities that these social networking sites can offer the educational arena. A few examples are socialization of individuals, ability to communicate with people living worldwide, the ability to be a member of a virtual group that can't be possible in real-life because of geographic location, self-expression and the ability to share information (Tiryakioglu & Erzurum, 2011).

According to a study done by the Waterloo Regional District School Board in Ontario the students responses indicated Facebook was a great benefit to their education. Those benefits included collaboration, extra help, homework discussion, or self-organization. The results showed the 73% of students answered yes to using Facebook for an educational tool (McCabe, 2012). Educators can now target and implement strategies using social media to “support the learning agendas” of their classrooms (McCabe, 2012).

Quality instruction will allow learners to actively participate rather than be passive consumers of instructional content. Learning should be a participative, social process intended to support personal life goals and needs. For the adult learner, they regard learning as an interactive phenomenon, not an isolated internal process. Adults need regular feedback from peers and instructors. Connection, interaction, and dialogue can be considered very important elements of the adult learning process. These principles support the use of social media in education. It would include useful communication tools, support for blogging, and private and instant messaging, all of which result in extensive interaction (LeNoue, Hall, & Eighmy).

Summary

The research is overwhelming that social media usage is on the rise in personal, professional and educational environments. Where the research is lacking is how much and to

what degree colleges and universities have implemented the use of social media in the classroom. It is evident that students are engaged through social networks, they are connected.

Chapter III: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine if students enrolled in the Health Information Technology (HIT) program at Chippewa Valley Technical College utilize CVTC e-mail, Edvance 360, or social media to communicate with faculty. The specific elements being investigated are CVTC e-mail, Edvance360, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIN.

Chapter Three includes information that describes the research design, research participants, instrumentation and data collection procedures, and data analysis. Chapter Three will conclude with a description of limitations of the study.

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What tool do the students utilize the most to communicate with faculty members?
2. What form of communication is checked regularly?
3. What form of communication tool provides the best venue for discussion between faculty and student?
4. Will social media be a better tool for communication versus CVTC e-mail and E360?

Research Design

The research was based on a quantitative model utilizing a survey for the data collection. The goal of quantitative research is to look at different elements to show how these elements are distributed across a particular population (Berry, 2005). In order to truly understand what form of communication is most often utilized in the HIT program at CVTC it was determined a quantitative study would be more appropriate to answer the research questions. Specifically a quantitative approach was applied and as such, the descriptive study was conducted.

The purpose of descriptive research is to collect data that will test a hypothesis or to answer specific questions; the research will measure the way things are at present (Gay, 1987).

The author in this study will measure what already exists through the process of data collection using a survey. The survey will be used to collect data from a qualified sample to determine the current status of that population, with value to one or more variables. Quantitative research is the optimum choice for answering the research questions of this study because it focuses on the participant's experiences and personal views. The data can be readily analyzed to investigate trends and reasoning (Gay, 1987).

Research Participants

The participants for the study were two different groups of students enrolled in the Health Information Technology Program at CVTC. The participants were enrolled during the 2012-2013 school year. The survey results represent the Fall 2012 semester.

A stratified method of sampling was used. The subgroups of the population are represented in the same way that they exist in the population (Gay, 1987). The first group of students are first year Health Information Technology program students enrolled in Healthcare IT. The second group are third semester Health Information Technology students enrolled in Healthcare Information Systems. All of the participants in the study are currently taking core HIT program courses. These students were selected based on the thought that their rank or classification may influence communication needs and practices.

The population size is 33 students. The sample size of the first semester students are 18 students and the third semester student sample size is 15.

The author is focused on the first and third semester student's voice because they are at critical junctures in the HIT program where communication with instructors is essential for guidance, mentoring and instruction.

Instrumentation

The survey was developed in concert with four other faculty members in the Health Information Technology Program. The research questions guided survey questions development. The focus of the research was to answer which form of communication were most effective between students and faculty members in the Health Information Technology Program. The faculty members wanted to discover if another form of communication will be more effective with students instead of the current form of communication being used. CVTC relies heavily on e-mail. The author consulted with the Planning, Assessment, Research and Quality office at UW-Stout for assistance in formulating the questions. This was done to ensure that the research questions would be answered. In addition, the Planning, Assessment, Research and Quality office also helped formulate a logical layout of the survey so that the participants would have a clear understanding of its purpose and expectations. This process was a valuable learning experience for the author. Wording of several questions and the design of the survey were changed as the result of the consult.

The survey was deployed utilizing UW-Stout Qualtrics software. Qualtrics is a web-based survey software tool that can help the author design, distribute and analyze the survey. Qualtrics is supported by the university and offers technical assistance to graduate students who chose to use it.

True to the qualitative design, the survey will analyze the meaning of the data to answer the authors questions (Gay, 1987). The survey instrument was designed by the author with the assistance of technical expertise. Specific questions were developed to understand what methods of communication they use most often to communicate with HIT instructors, HIT students and what methods of communication they would prefer to use to communicate with

HIT instructors and students. Demographic questions included were also included. The survey was 17 questions in length. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

The survey was sent to the survey participants via their CVTC email inbox. Included in the email was a cover letter from the researcher. The email also included directions, describing the importance of the survey, the utilization of the results, expectations, and deadlines. First semester HIT students were not informed that this survey would be appearing in their inbox. Third semester HIT students were informed that the survey would be appearing in their inbox. The author informed the third semester group of students by making an announcement in class about the survey, its purpose and where to locate the survey. The survey was left open for two weeks, with a reminder e-mail being sent out after the first week (see appendix).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The analysis procedure will consist of calculating and interpreting the descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics can measure central tendency, variability, relationship, and relative position (Gay, 1987)

When central tendency is measured, it will determine the average score of a group of scores and be presented by mean. Variability will measure how widespread a group of scores is and be presented using range. Relationships can indicate what degree the two sets of scores are related. Relative position can describe a subject's performance compared to the performance of all other subjects represented by standard deviation (Gay, 1987). After analysis, the findings will be summarized and the results presented in Chapter Four of this paper.

Limitations of the Study

The following are limitations of this study:

1. This study is limited to first and third semester students of the HIT program during the 2012-2013 school year. The survey represent the Fall semester 2012. Student experiences were limited to the students enrolled in the first and third semester courses during this time period and may not be applicable to students enrolled in the second and fourth semester of the program.
2. The survey focused on utilization of social media, CVTC student e-mail, and Edvance360. A limitation of this is that some of the students may not utilize any social media at all, such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIN.
3. The results of this study may influence the Health Information Technology Program faculty and may or may not be applicable to other programs offered at Chippewa Valley Technical College.

Ethical Issues

The author is a full-time instructor in the Health Information Technology Program at Chippewa Valley Technical College. The author completed several steps and maintained complete student confidentiality when collecting data for this research project.

The University of Wisconsin-Stout's IRB reviewed the study as required by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46. IRB approved the study under Category 1 of the Federal Exempt Guidelines on October 30, 2012 (see Appendix).

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to determine if social media could be an effective form of communication in the classroom. Based on anecdotal evidence students in the Health Information Technology (HIT) Program were not regularly checking their e-mail or using it to communicate with peers or the instructors. Research has shown that social media use in an instructional setting may be an effective form of communication with this population of students. The faculty members in the Health Information Technology program want to determine if social media could be an effective way to communicate with our students before we implement a new process.

Participants

The participants for the study were two different groups of students enrolled in the Health Information Technology Program at CVTC during the Fall semester of 2012.

The first group of students were first year HIT program students enrolled in Healthcare IT course. The second group are third semester HIT students enrolled in Healthcare Information Systems class.

Demographics

The survey was sent out to 33 students in the HIT program. The total number of students that completed the survey was 22 with one incomplete survey. This yielded a 67% response rate. There were 9 first semester students and 12 third semester students that completed the survey (Table 1).

Table 1

Response Rates

	n	%
Total Population Sampled	33	--
Responses	22	67
First Semester Student Responses	9	41
Third Semester Student Responses	12	55

The average age of the students completing the survey was 33. Based on the results, 77% of the respondents are full time students in the HIT program and 23% are part time students in the HIT program. The results also indicated that 68% of the respondents are working while enrolled in the HIT program and 32% are not working while enrolled in the HIT program.

When asked what form of internet access the respondents have, other than on-campus internet, 59% stated they have both a laptop/desktop at home and smartphone or cell phone with Internet access, while 41% of the respondents only have a laptop/desktop at home with internet access.

Research Question 2: Which electronic communication tool do students use most often? Table 2 displays the responses and percentages for how often students check CVTC e-mail, E360 mailbox, E360 discussion board, E360 chat, other E360 features and Facebook. The survey results indicated that 77% of the respondents currently have a Facebook account and 23% of respondents do not.

The results to this research question indicate that 45% of respondents check Facebook regularly and 41% check CVTC e-mail daily. The results also show that the majority (41%) of the respondents check the E360 discussion board 2-3 times a week. 91% of the respondents never utilize the E360 chat feature.

Table 2

Respondent's Usage of Communication Tools at CVTC

	Never		< than once a month		Once a month		2-3 times a month		Once a week		2-3 times a week		Daily	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
CVTC email	-	-	0	0	1	5	0	0	7	32	5	23	9	41
E360 Mailbox	-	-	3	14	0	0	1	5	4	18	7	32	7	32
E360 Discussion Board	-	-	2	9	0	0	2	9	6	27	9	41	3	14
E360 Chat	20	91	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other E360 Features	4	18	0	0	3	14	1	5	3	14	6	27	5	23
Facebook	6	27	1	5	1	5	1	5	1	5	2	9	10	45

Research Question 3: What communication tool provides the most efficient venue for discussion between faculty and student? The results of the two survey questions shown in Table 3 reveals the form of communication the respondents use to communicate with other students and what form of communication was used to communicate with instructors. 100 percent of the respondents were using CVTC e-mail to communicate with students and the instructors.

The second communication tool that was utilized most was E360, with 64% of the respondents using it to communicate with fellow students and 82% of the respondents using it to communicate with their instructors.

Respondents indicated that Facebook was also utilized to communicate with peers/instructors but at a much lower rate than CVTC e-mail or E360. The results indicate that 18% of the respondents utilized Facebook to communicate with fellow students and 5% utilized

Facebook to communicate with instructors. The survey also asked the respondents if they would like to use Facebook as a communication tool between student and instructor. The results indicate that 86% responded No and 14% responded Yes.

Table 3

Respondents Communication Preference with Other Students and Instructors

	Student		Instructor	
	N	%	n	%
Facebook	4	18	1	5
CVTC e-mail	22	100	22	100
E360	14	64	18	82
Twitter	0	0	0	0
LindedIN	0	0	0	0

Research Question 4: What is the students' perception of the use of social media to communicate with instructors and fellow students? Figure 1 indicates the respondent's perceived value of using social media to communicate or collaborate with other students for classes. The results show that 32% of respondents agree that social media would be helpful to communicate with other students for classes and 36% of respondents agree that social media would be helpful to collaborate with other students for classes.

When asked if they would use a form of social media to keep in touch with classmates and faculty after graduation, the majority of respondents (91%) indicated they might or would use social media to keep in touch after graduation. Of the 36% that answered yes, five out of eight stated they would utilize Facebook to communicate upon graduation. Two out of eight

indicated they would utilize cell phone and text messaging while one out of eight would use email.

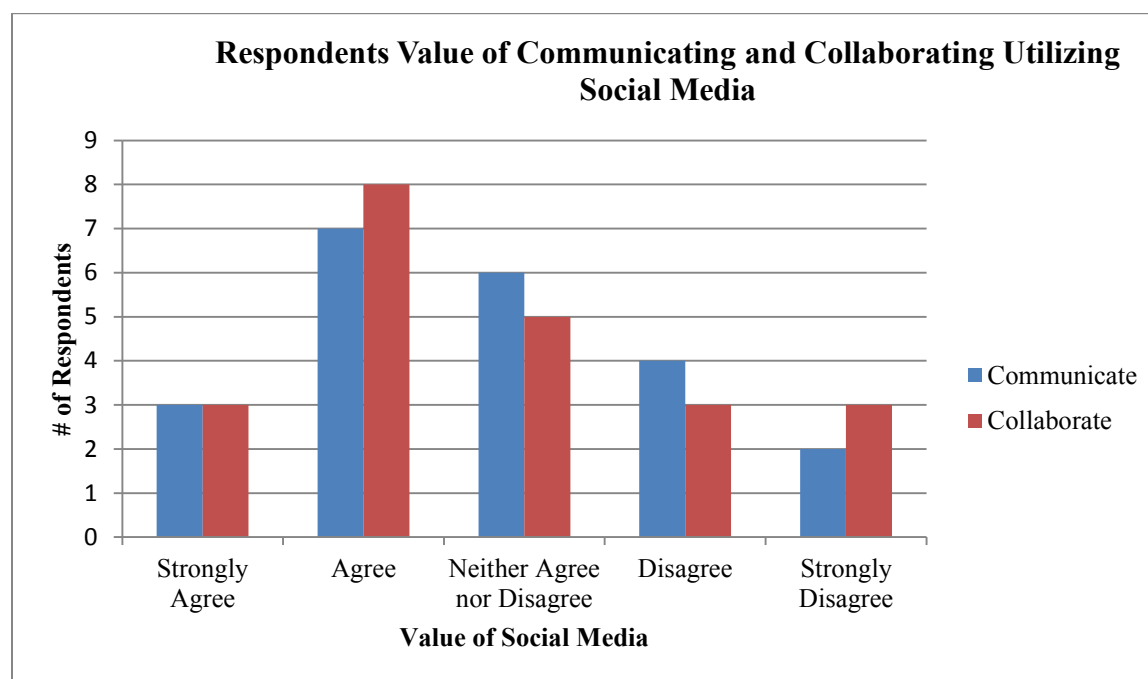


Figure 1. Respondents value of communicating and collaborating utilizing social media.

Figure 2 indicates the importance of using social media at CVTC as a means to promote the HIT program and profession. The majority of respondents indicated they strongly agree or agree (48%), while 24% strongly disagree or disagree that it would be helpful to use social media as a way to promote the HIT program and profession.

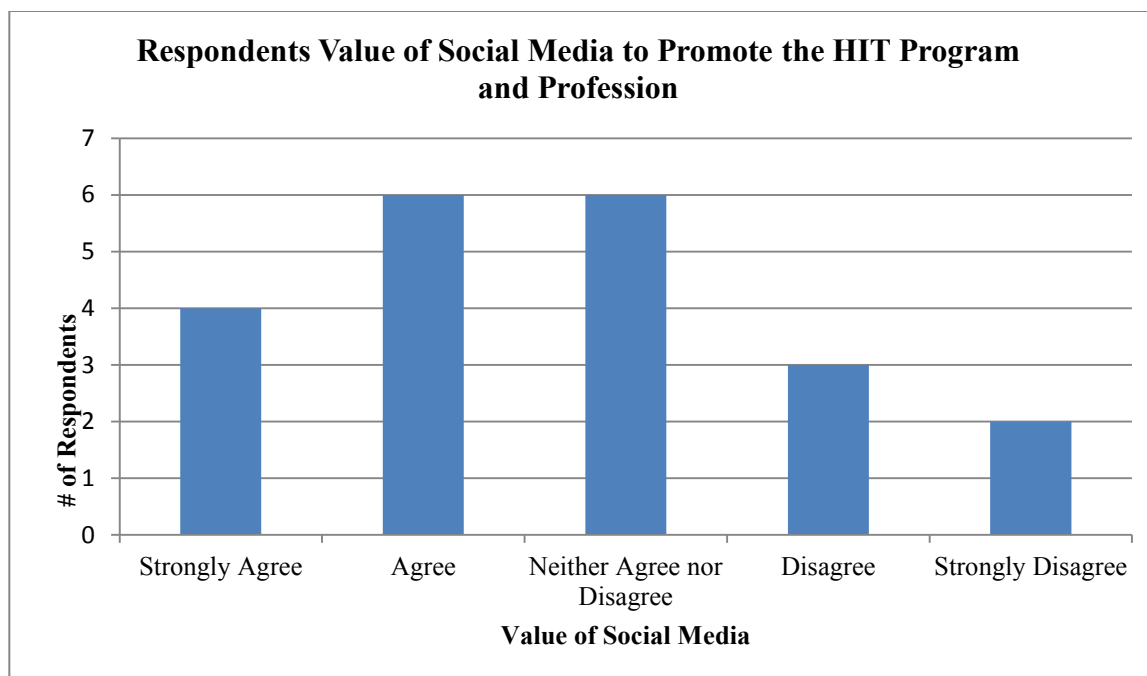


Figure 2. Respondents value of social media to promote the HIT program and profession.

Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that social media will not be a better form of communication at CVTC in the HIT program. The respondents have a desire to use social media to communicate and collaborate amongst themselves but not with instructors. Social media also seems to be the popular choice to keep in touch with faculty and classmates after graduation. In Chapter Five you will find a summary of the research project, conclusions and recommendations from the researcher.

Chapter V: Discussion

In this study, the research sought to discover if social media is an effective form of communication in the classroom for students enrolled in the Health Information Technology (HIT) program at Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC). The data for this study was collected utilizing a survey tool that was deployed utilizing UW-Stout Qualtrics software. The subjects of this study were those students that were enrolled in first and third semester HIT courses during the Fall 2012 semester.

Chapter Five provides a summary of the research findings. Conclusions are discussed and recommendations made about utilizing social media for communication in the classroom for the HIT students at Chippewa Valley Technical College.

Summary and Conclusions

The participants of this study consisted of 22 students that were enrolled in first and third semester HIT courses during the Fall 2012 semester. The average age of the student that participated in the study was 33. There were a total of 12 respondents from the third semester course and a total of 9 respondents from the first semester course.

The five research questions are addressed below.

Research Question 1. What tool do Health Information Technology Students at Chippewa Valley Technical College utilize most often when communicating with faculty members? Overall students utilize CVTC e-mail the most to communicate with faculty members. The other form of communication that is highly utilized between student and faculty is the E360 mailbox tool.

Research Question 2. Which electronic communication tool do students use most often?

The majority (86%) of the students check Facebook and CVTC e-mail daily. Students are also using the E360 discussion board 2-3 times a week as a form of communication.

Research Question 3. What communication tool provides the most efficient venue for discussion between faculty and student? The best communication tool between faculty and student is CVTC e-mail. The majority (100%) of respondents are utilizing the CVTC e-mail. The E360 mail feature is also a popular tool to communicate with faculty, with 82% of students using this feature for communicating.

Research Question 4. What is the students' perception of the use of social media to communicate with instructors and fellow students? It appears that the respondents do not wish to use any form of social media to communicate with instructors. When the respondents were asked if they would like to use Facebook as a communication tool between faculty and student, 86% responded No. The respondents are more interested in using social media with other students for communicating and collaborating for classes. The results show that 68% of respondents want to utilize a form of social media to communicate with other students. Another significant finding was the majority (91%) of respondents might or would use social media to keep in touch with classmates and faculty after graduation.

Research Question 5. What is the students' perception of course management software (E360)? The respondents are utilizing the E360 Learning Management system as a communication tool. The most popular feature of E360 is the mailbox tool to communicate with faculty and other students. The discussion board tool of E360 is another feature that students frequent weekly. The E360 chat tool is a tool that students have never used. Overall E360 is a good tool for communicating.

Recommendations

Results of this study are not consistent with findings discovered in literature. The literature review indicates that students want to use a form of social media to communicate with faculty for coursework; however, the study shows that students do not wish to use Facebook for communicating with faculty. As a result, the CVTC e-mail and E360 mailbox tool should still be utilized as the main form of communication with faculty. While this study was limited to HIT, the results may or may not be applicable to other programs offered at Chippewa Valley Technical College.

The findings of this study are consistent with the literature in regards to using social media for communicating and collaborating with other students in a class. The study also indicated that students would like to utilize Facebook to keep in touch with students and faculty after graduation.

The author recommends that further research needs to be done before utilizing social media as a means of communication in the classroom. It would need to be determined if Facebook would replace the E360 discussion tool, what courses social media would be most effective and if the HIT faculty would make Facebook a requirement for their classes. HIT faculty would need to have a discussion as a team to determine the best way to implement social media into any coursework.

It is my recommendation based on the findings, to set up a Facebook page for the HIT students to use as a communication tool after graduation. This Facebook page could be a HIT alumni page. The HIT Facebook alumni page would be developed and maintained by one faculty member. The Facebook page would be a great tool for students to communicate their current job status and location. The alumni page would also be a great communication tool for

HIT faculty. HIT faculty could use this page to locate students when we need to gather data for the graduate report for CVTC as well as data for our accrediting body (CAHIIM). The graduation report at CVTC is e-mailed out to students to their last listed e-mail address. Often times upon graduation students relocate and don't regularly check their e-mail accounts. Facebook would be a great way to contact students to get the most up to date data needed for reporting.

It is my recommendation to continue to use CVTC e-mail and the E360 mail tool as the main form of communication between faculty and student. Further research needs to be conducted before utilizing any type of social media as a form of communication amongst students for coursework.

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Appendix A: Electronic Message for Online Survey Link

Hello!

As a student enrolled in the HIT Program at CVTC I am interested in your thoughts about the use of social media in the classroom. The results of this research will help direct the faculty in the HIT program and improve communication and collaboration efforts with our students.

The survey will take you no more than 15 minutes to complete.

The survey will be available to you until November 14th. All responses are confidential.

Finally, I greatly value your time in completing this short survey. Like you, I am a student completing the final component for my Master of Science degree in Training and Development.

Thank you for your participation in this important research study.

Sincerely,

Trina Blaschko, Instructor
HIT Program

Follow this link to the Survey:

[\\${://SurveyLink?d=Take%20the%20Survey}](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

https://uwstout.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_e3beue3oL1XEtXT

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:

[\\${://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}](#)

Appendix B: Electronic Survey Reminder E-mail

Hello!

This is a reminder to complete the short survey regarding social media in the classroom.

This survey will help the HIT faculty improve communication and collaboration with the HIT program.

Like you, I am a student completing the final component of my Master of Science degree in Training and Development.

Your time and participation is greatly appreciated.

Follow this link to the Survey:

`#{1://SurveyLink?d=Take%20the%20Survey}`

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

https://uwstout.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_e3beue3oL1XEtXT

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:

`#{1://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}`

Appendix C: IRB Implied Consent Form

The process of obtaining informed consent must comply with the requirements of US Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections title 45 Code of Federal Regulations 46.116 (45 CFR 46.116). The documentation of informed consent must comply with 45 CFR 46.117. For further clarification of informed consent refer to UW-Stout IRB training or contact the UW-Stout IRB.

UW-Stout Implied Consent Statement for Research Involving Human Subjects

Consent to Participate In UW-Stout Approved Research

Title: An Evaluation of Communication in the classroom using Social Media Tools in the Health Information Technology Program at Chippewa Valley Technical College.

Research Sponsor:
Carol Mooney
Office: 232
Communications
Technology
Phone: 715/232-1444
Email:
mooneyc@uwstout.edu

Investigator:

Trina Blaschko
608-797-4823
Chippewa Valley Technical College
Office # - 715-833-6423
Office Location: Health Education Center
Office 235

Description:

I am performing an online survey to discover the most effective form on communication in the classroom in the Health Information Technology Program at Chippewa Valley Technical College

Risks and Benefits:

There are no risks with completing this survey. Results are all confidential and anonymous. The benefits of completing this survey will only help the faculty in the HIT program utilize the most effective from of communication with their students.

Special Populations: N/A

Time Commitment and Payment: N/A

Confidentiality:

Your name will not be included on any documents. We do not believe that you can be identified from any of this information.

Right to Withdraw:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate without any adverse consequences to you. You have the right to stop the survey at any time. However, should you choose to participate and later wish to withdraw from the study, there is no way to identify your anonymous document after it has been turned into the investigator. If you are participating in an anonymous online survey, once you submit your response, the data cannot be linked to you and cannot be withdrawn.

IRB Approval:

This study has been reviewed and approved by The University of Wisconsin-Stout's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by federal law and University policies. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study please contact the Investigator or Advisor. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB Administrator.

Investigator:

Trina Blaschko
608-797-4823
Chippewa Valley Technical College
Office # - 715-833-6423
Office Location: Health Education Center
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Email: mooneyc@uwstout.edu

Statement of Consent:

By completing the following survey you agree to participate in the project entitled, An Evaluation of Communication in the classroom using Social Media Tools in the Health Information Technology Program at Chippewa Valley Technical College.

Appendix D: Qualtrics Online Survey Instrument

Social Media in the Classroom

Social Media in the Classroom As a faculty member in the Health Information Technology Program, I am interested in your opinions concerning social media in the classroom. This survey will help complete my data collection chapter for my Master's in the Training and Development Program. I value your time in completing this short survey. Your completion of this survey will be interpreted as consent. All responses are kept confidential. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Trina Blaschko, Instructor Health Information Technology Program

This research has been approved by the UW-Stout IRB as required by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46.

Q1 In addition to on-campus internet access what are your other internet access options

- I have a laptop/desktop at home with Internet access
- I have a smartphone or cell phone with Internet Access
- All of the above
- None of the above

Q2 During a semester, how often do you check your CVTC e-mail?

- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

Q3 During a semester, how often do you check your E360 mailbox?

- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

Q4 During a semester, how often do you check your E360 discussion board?

- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

Q5 During a semester, how often do you utilize the chat feature in E360?

- Never
- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

Q6 During a semester, how often do you utilize the other features of the E360 course management system?

- Never
- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

Q7 Do you currently have a Facebook account

- Yes
- No

Q8 How often do you check your Facebook account?

- Never
- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

Q9 Would you like to use Facebook as a communication tool between student and instructor?

- Yes
- No

Q10 What form of communication do you use to communicate with other students? Check all that apply.

- Facebook
- CVTC e-mail
- Edvance360(E360)
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

Q11 What form of communication do you use to communicate with instructors? Check all that apply

- Facebook
- CVTC e-mail
- Edvance360(E360)
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

Q12 Would you find it helpful to use a form of social media to communicate with classmates for classes?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q13 Would you find it helpful to use a form of social media to collaborate with classmates for classes?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q14 Will you use a form of social media to keep in touch with classmates and faculty after graduation?

- Yes If yes, what tool? _____
- No
- Maybe

Q15 I would find it helpful, to have social media used at CVTC as a way to promote the HIT program and profession.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q16 What is your age?

Q17 Are you a full time or part time student in the HIT program?

- Full time
- Part time

Q18 Are you working while enrolled in the HIT program?

- Yes
- No

Please click on the "Submit" button below to record your responses.