

Instagram Supplemental Paper

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For my final project, I chose to do an Instagram page that was dedicated to helping college graduates navigate post-graduate life. I chose to do research into this topic because it is something that I am navigating right now since I am graduating in May. I decided to make an Instagram account because most, if not all, students have social media and I thought this would be a useful way for them to learn information about post-graduate life. I made 11 posts on the Instagram page and each post discusses a different topic that college graduates can relate to. Three theories I used to guide my research were uncertainty theorizing, communicated narrative sense-making theory, and the theory of motivated information management. The theories helped me decide what types of things I wanted to research for this project. I knew that there can be a lot of uncertainty when we graduate from college, so I wanted to explore ways to overcome that uncertainty. The first Instagram post is a welcome post. It welcomes the followers to the page and briefly explains what kind of information would be shared on the page.

The second post discusses how to maintain long distance friendships. For this post, I used information from the article “Changes in friendship commitment: Comparing geographically close and long-distance young-adult friendships.” This article discusses how maintaining close relationships with your friends who live far away is possible, and most of the participants in the study shared that their levels of commitment in the long-distance friendship were increase. This is important information to share with graduating college students because when we graduate from college, we often will not be living close to our college friends. Sometimes people think they won’t be able to maintain the relationships with their college friends, but this post was made

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to be reassuring. This post also gives tips on how to keep in touch with your friends who live further away.

The third post on the Instagram page involves skills that are essential in the work force. For this post, I used information from the article “What is most important to focus on now for success after college? Students’ responses mirror and diverge from what employers consider essential skills.” This article discusses what skills employers deem as important in a job as well as what skills students deem as important in a job. The findings showed that employers and students do not see eye-to-eye with which skills are important for work. This information is useful to share with post-graduate students because we all are searching for work when we graduate. It is important to be open-minded to the types of skills employers are looking for in a person as well as how to be able to strengthen the skills they are looking for. In this post, I also offer advice on how to overcome this disconnect and ways that college graduates can be successful in their job search.

The fourth post on the Instagram page talks about ways to get out of your comfort zone after college. For this post, I used information from the article “The theory of motivated information management and posttraumatic growth: Emerging adults’ uncertainty management in response to an adverse life experience.” This study found that when emerging adults were faced with uncertainty, they experienced many negative emotions and emotional distress that prevented them from being able to cope with the uncertainty. I related this information to trying to step out of your comfort zone after college and do things that you normally would not do. I shared how these new activities can cause uncertainty, but I also gave ideas on how to manage the uncertainty. I think it is important to continue to step out of your comfort zone when you

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graduate from college, so you can learn new things about yourself and push yourself beyond what you think you are capable of doing.

The fifth Instagram post is about creating a healthy lifestyle post-graduation. For this post, I used information from the article “Examining co-patterns of depression and alcohol misuse in emerging adults following university graduation.” The information that was found in this study is incredibly important to share with recent college graduates. Some of the information found in this article consisted of individuals who had elevated depression and alcohol misuse before graduation were more likely to maintain those problems after graduation and the transition out of college may be when depression-related drinking begins to stray away from the drinking patterns of non-depressed emerging adults. This is important for college students to understand because research shows we can be at risk for becoming dependent on alcohol after our graduation. I listed multiple different ideas to help create a healthy lifestyle after college graduation and ways we can get help if we are struggling with depression. I thought this topic was important to share on the page because more and more we are hearing of so many individuals who are struggling with their mental health, so I think it is important to be proactive and get help to overcome those struggles before it worsens.

The seventh Instagram post is about maintaining friendships through communicated narrative sense-making. For this post, I used information from the article “Communicated perspective-taking (CPT) and storytelling: Testing the impact of CPT in the context of friends telling stories of difficulty. This article shared how storytelling helps us make sense of situations, gain feelings of control, seek social support, and confirm our identities. This specific study focused on communicated perspective taking which is when we put ourselves in the other person’s shoes. When we do this, it leads to an overall improved well-being of the storyteller and

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positive perceptions of the story listener. I thought this information was useful to talk about because we can all become better listeners, and this will have a positive impact on our friendships. I also gave ideas on how to become an active listener when your friend is telling you something.

The eighth Instagram post is about stress in college and in post-graduation life. For this post, I used the article “A comparative study on sources of stress and coping styles between graduation and post-graduation students.” This article shares how stress levels can be high while in college, but they sometimes can be higher post-graduation. I wanted to be able to normalize stress after college graduation and for the followers to understand it is normal to still be stressed when we graduate from college. In this post, I included ten different ways to cope with stress that are good for both the mind and body.

The ninth Instagram post is about opportunities after college graduation. For this post, I used information from the article “Understanding US college migration.” This post discussed the different job opportunities that can be presented in both the same city as the college you went to and a different city. I explored the idea of branching out and moving somewhere new, as well as being open to work in the city of your university because oftentimes that city has lots of potential work opportunities. I also gave ideas on how to help find jobs in the local area as well as some of the best cities to live in for college graduates. Personally, I want to move out of Wisconsin when I graduate, so this article was eye opening to me to understand that there are still a lot of opportunities around St Norbert College for me to pursue.

The tenth Instagram post is about post-graduate uncertainty. For this post, I used information from the article “Uncertainty selective exposure and message efficacy during life transitions.” This article discussed how there can be lots of uncertainty associated with big life

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transitions. Graduating from college is a major life event which can cause uncertainty. This article found that when there is a lot of uncertainty, people often become close-minded and don't want to put themselves in uncomfortable situations. I wanted to be able to share that dealing with this uncertainty is normal and it is important for college graduates to be open-minded and optimistic. I have found that when I try things I normally wouldn't do, I learn a lot about myself, so I wanted to be able to express that to college graduates who might be struggling with uncertainty after graduation.

The final Instagram post is an overview of everything that was shared on the account as well as a few more resources that could be beneficial after graduation. I listed a few different Facebook pages that people can join as well as podcasts to listen to. I have joined some of the Facebook pages and I have found them to be extremely beneficial already. I also think podcasts can be a great way to get more information, so I listed some that I love to listen to as well as some that were recommended by business professionals. My hope was to be able to give college graduates as much information as possible to make the transition out of college smooth and less daunting.

Through this project, not only was I able to provide information to graduating college students, but I also learned so much that I will be able to carry with me for the rest of my life. The studies I found and resources I shared are very beneficial and have helped me understand that college graduation doesn't need to be scary and unsettling. While I am very excited to graduate, I know that there is a lot of uncertainty that comes with it. I will keep all of the information I researched in the back of my mind especially during the next few months to also help myself during this big life transition.

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