

Digital Citizenship Lesson Plan

Pressure to Post

General Topic (as defined in the Digital Literacy Framework)	DC6 DF7
Digital Citizenship c) Relationships and Communication and f) Self-Image and Identity	
Applicable Grade Range	
10-12	
Outcome(s) to be Addressed	The student understands the different pressures teens face when it comes to editing, posting, and commenting on photos online.
Importance / Significance of Lesson	Peer pressure is an issue that all teens face in some form or another. With the advent of social media, the extreme feelings and issues that result from peer pressure are compounded by the number of people who can access, comment, share and potentially bully people based on content posted online.
Duration	45 minutes
Overview	Students will work in groups to define a number of terms and share stories of editing and posting content online (could be text based, video or picture format of their own or of stories from the media). Students will then identify why posts or pictures are edited and the far reaching effects of altering one's reality to change how people view you or other people.
Required Resources	Computer hooked up to a projector Class set of laptops/access to the computer lab OR class set of iPads/iPods Set of class accounts for chosen collage program

Lesson Plan and Extension Activities

Divide students into groups of three or four and have them research pictures online to create collages or presentations (using a program of their choice) with the following topics (students can create a page for each or each group can be tasked with one term – note privacy concerns and don't allow students to use pictures of people they know).

Terms:

Pretty	Beautiful	Scary
Bad	Sad	Happy
Strong	Cool	Helpless
Fun		

(others of your choosing that are applicable to the age group)

Ask students to think about and define characteristics that they were looking for when they were searching for pictures to include in their work. Look for stereotypes or self-image language that would denote things like – to be beautiful you have to be skinny or have blue eyes, or stereotypes considered bad.

Talk about how social media has changed the pressure teens feel to look perfect or to be something that they aren't. The mass sharing capabilities and instant feedback options have created an era teens (and adults) constantly seeking feedback about their choices and appearance and experiencing highs and lows according to the responses that they receive on content that they have posted.

Have students read <http://www.today.com/style/social-medias-camera-ready-pressure-bad-teen-body-image-2D79601219> and <http://www.childmind.org/en/posts/articles/2013-11-26-self-esteem-and-anxiety-digital-age>. Discuss the pressures that teens face in this digital age and the effects of these pressures, including the need to post more risqué photos, the call for help posts ('I really need a shoulder to cry on right now', or 'how could I have been so stupid?' which will likely elicit numerous responses), the requests for feedback fishing for compliments ('how

do I look?', 'can someone tell me which outfit to wear?') and the obviously manipulated photographs that usually cause a backlash for trying to seem skinnier, have bigger muscles, have different coloured eyes, etc.

Ask students to revisit their picture collages. Pose to them the question: 'if you didn't have to worry about what anybody else thought of your posts, if you were able to include images that you truly felt captured beauty, fun, happiness, etc. – would you change the pictures you have used here? Why or why not?'

Students can choose to modify their original work or keep it the same based on their feelings after the class discussions.

Adaptations

Younger students will already be feeling peer pressure around social media posts because of their experiences watching their parents and older siblings or friends post content. It is important that they recognize these pressures, however the content here might be a bit above their level of understanding.

Older students will be able to dig deeper into the issues of peer pressure and social media. Perhaps they could look at why people only post the good pictures or happily tell people all the amazing things that they are doing, but leave out the boring or mundane activities. Perhaps they could look at long term effects of peer pressure and how it can lead to depression.

Additional Resources

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kristen-race-phd/6-ways-to-help-your-teens-cope-with-social-media-stress_b_4931490.html

<http://www.qustodio.com/blog/2014/06/the-dangerous-link-between-likes-followers-and-your-childs-self-esteem>

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/post/social-media-makes-kids-more-likely-to-drink-do-drugs-study-says/2011/08/24/gIQAbzFZbJ_blog.html

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tag/facebook-envy/> a great resource for how to avoid Facebook envy

Cross-curricular Outcomes Also Addressed

Health and Career Prep – self-image, healthy lifestyles, effects of peer pressure

Fine arts – gathering and creating works to represent feelings

~developed by Kristin Sward, 2014



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