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Centre for English Teaching

DEC 10
Week 9

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

DEC 10 Week 9

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Wk 9 Reading 1: Social Media, Loneliness and Anxiety in Young People

Lesson Objectives
• Understand the purpose of different types of matching questions • Practise different types of matching questions

Adapted from Davey G. C. (2018). *Social media, loneliness, anxiety and young people*. Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/why-we-worry/201612/social-media-loneliness-and-anxiety-in-young-people

Part 1: Before you read

Complete the activities on Canvas

Part 2: Matching questions

Questions 1 – 6 Matching paragraph main ideas

Match the main idea of paragraphs A – F from the list of paragraph headings. NOTE: there are two extra paragraph headings you will not need.

Procedure

Read through each paragraph, decide what **you think the main idea of the paragraph is** and then try to match it to the paraphrase.

i.	Social Media provides the means to compare one's own popularity with others through constant checking, which contrasts with past ways of checking.
ii.	A possible two-way connection is indicated and a term is defined.
iii.	Increasing social isolation has resulted from a preference for online activities in both younger and older participants.
iv.	Extensive research confirms the role of some social media sites in attempts to reduce users' symptoms of loneliness.
v.	Initial speculation suggests the possibility of a connection between the factors but this has mixed value.
vi.	The use of social media sites leads to compulsive behavior resulting in extreme sleep deprivation as well as other physical symptoms.
vii.	The possible connection between social media and perceptions of loneliness is considered in a contemporary time period.
viii.	Excessive use of one very popular social media site can result in a number of negative health and behavior effects in users' lives.

1. Paragraph A _____
2. Paragraph B _____
3. Paragraph C _____
4. Paragraph D _____
5. Paragraph E _____
6. Paragraph F _____

Questions 7 – 11 Matching statements to researchers and ideas

Match each of the following statements with the researcher/researchers or individual who expressed them.
NOTE: Not all options will be used. Some options may be used more than once.

A. Reynol Junko

B. Campisi and associates

C. Morin-Major and associates

D. Miller McPherson and associates

E. Eric Klineberg

F. John Cacioppo

G. G.C. Davey (author of the text)

7. It is obvious that individuals may wish to alleviate feelings of loneliness through excessive use of some social media programs.

_____

8. Humans want to maintain close relationships with many different objects because of an inbuilt necessity.

_____

9. Evidence gathered over an almost 20-year period has identified a significant reduction in the number of close friends an individual has.

_____

10. After a certain point and taking into account a number of factors, a larger number of social network connections seems to lead to many stress-related issues.

_____

11. From the way that it is used i.e. in a passive way, the conclusion can be drawn that social media does indeed compound young people's anxiety issues.

_____

Questions 12 – 17 True, False, Not Given

Decide if the following statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG) according to the information in the text (Paragraphs A – H).

12. The author strongly acknowledges that there is a strong relationship between loneliness and social anxiety.

    _____

13. One drawback of social media is that it enables direct comparison of one's popularity with others, which can exacerbate negative feelings.

    _____

14. The negative relationship between students' grades and total use of Facebook has been strongly established.

    _____

15. Facebook use can be compared to cocaine in terms of its addictive effects.

    _____

16. Campisi and colleagues and Morin-Major and colleagues agree that there is a distinct relationship between an increase in users' health issues and the size of their Facebook networks.

    _____

17. Campisi and colleagues and Marin-Major and colleagues were part of larger collaborative effort to assess the negative effects of Facebook.

    _____

Questions 18 – 23 Summary

*Complete the summary of paragraphs I and J using no more than **one word from the text** for each answer.*

A number of health and other effects result from young people's interaction with social media. Feelings of being left out, combined with the need to constantly check social media are signs of an **18.**_____ . This turns low levels of involvement into a **19.**_____ with its associated stress and other health risks, which is **20.** _____ even though young people feel they can acknowledge some aspects of the problem. One study confirmed a reduction in the number of close confidants that individuals have today, an **21.** _____ fact according to one sociologist because of its quantitative rather than qualitative value in relation to loneliness. The significant fall in **22.** _____ has resulted in the substitution of other objects as replacements. At the same time, the **23.** _____ has provided another form of replacement.

Questions 24 & 25 Short Answer

*Answer the following questions using words from paragraph K **in the text using no more than five words for each answer.***

24. What is an example of the effect of interacting passively with Facebook?

_____

25. According to findings, what seems to be the initial reason for social networks being used in an addictive way?

_____

Afterwards check your answers together and decide how you reached your answers.

Social Media, Loneliness, and Anxiety in Young People

What role does social media play in perpetuating anxiety and loneliness?

A Is there a role for social media in perpetuating anxiety through feelings of disconnection and loneliness? At first glance, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter seem to be a modern means of facilitating our connectedness with others, sharing activities and news, and keeping in touch with friends both old and new. But new technologies are usually a mixture of both good and bad, and modern social media are no different.

B First, loneliness appears to have a reciprocal relationship with social anxiety. Social anxiety is an anxiety problem where a person has an excessive and unreasonable fear of social situations. Social anxiety is known to facilitate loneliness; but loneliness also increases social anxiety and feelings of paranoia, and this may represent a cyclical process that is especially active in the young and in our modern times may be mediated by the use of social media[1].

C So how might social media be involved? Loneliness in the young is largely a function of perceived friendship networks. Effectively, feelings of loneliness increase the fewer friends that an individual has. In the modern day, social media such as Facebook and Twitter are a significant contributor to the friendship networks of young people, so whether you perceive yourself to be a successful user of social media is likely to have an impact on feelings of loneliness, anxiety, paranoia, and mental health generally.

D The relatively modern phenomenon of social media and its associated technology adds a new dimension to loneliness and anxiety by offering the young person a way of directly quantifying friendships, viewing the friendship networks of others for comparison, and providing immediate information about social events. You can compare your own popularity with that of your peers and manage that adolescent 'fear of missing out' (FOMO) by continually monitoring what's going on socially. So it's easy to see how technology use can take the place of more traditional social interaction and provide a yardstick for one's popularity – or more significantly, one's feelings of loneliness and alienation.

E There's no shortage of evidence that loneliness, social anxiety and social isolation can cause excessive use of social networking sites in young people. For example, a study of university students in the UK found that real life social interaction was negatively associated with excessive use of Twitter, and loneliness was a significant factor that mediated this relationship[2], so it's clear that many people use social networking sites in general to relieve themselves of their loneliness.

F Social anxiety and the need for social assurance are also associated with problematic use of Facebook to the point where Facebook use can become an addiction[3], and has even been shown to activate the same brain areas as addictive drugs such as cocaine[4]! This addiction poses a threat to physical and psychological well-being and interferes with performance at school or work, and staying away from Facebook is viewed by users as an act of 'self-sacrifice' or a 'detoxification'. So the vicious cycle is that loneliness and social anxiety generate use of social networking sites, but then problematic addiction to these sites itself causes further forms of anxiety and stress. For instance, a study of 1,839 college students by Reynol Junco at Lock Haven University in the US found that time spent on Facebook was strongly and significantly negatively related to overall grade point average (GPA), but it was only time spent socializing on Facebook that had this negative relationship with school performance[5]. Using Facebook for collecting and sharing information was positively

predictive of GPA – suggesting that, like most technologies, Facebook use can have some good as well as negative impacts. This study provides no real insight into the direction of cause here: Do lower grades lead to more Facebook use or does more Facebook use lead to lower grades (or does something else influence both at the same time)? However, if Facebook use is a genuine addiction that the user cannot easily control, it takes little imagination to see that Facebook use when it has become uncontrollable may be detrimental to academic performance.

G Secondly, a study of college student Facebook use by Jay Campisi and colleagues at Regis University in Colorado found that almost all respondents experienced some form of Facebook-induced stress and that this stress was directly associated with physical health problems such as upper respiratory infections[6]. But what was interesting was that this stress wasn't a function of how small a respondent's social network was, but how large it was – the larger the Facebook network, the greater the stress – so a large network of friends on social networking sites may also be an added source of stress to today's young people.

H The added stress and anxiety that large cyber social networks bring has been well illustrated in a study by Julie Morin-Major and colleagues at Harvard[7]. They found that after controlling for other relevant factors such as sex, age, time of awakening, perceived stress and perceived social support, the larger your Facebook network, the greater your diurnal cortisol production. Higher awakening cortisol levels are associated with chronic stress and worry, burnout, and are a vulnerability factor for depression. The authors of this study speculated that the number of Facebook friends you have might be positive up to a point, and offer social reassurance and social support, but after this optimum level is passed, this may switch social support into social pressure and lead to increased stress and higher cortisol levels.

I We've already seen that use of social media can affect physical health and college or work performance, but just as with any other forms of addiction, fear of not being able to use or access social networking sites causes added distress – in this case caused by feelings of social exclusion that would result from being unable to access these sites[8]. This is a significant sign of addiction – for many of us, our social media is often the first thing we check in the morning and the last thing we check before going to sleep! Social media such as Facebook and Twitter provide constant updates which can turn a mere interest in social networks into an unhealthy, stressful compulsion that not only affects stress levels, but leads to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. As empowering as our modern culture is, it's also dangerous. Young people can talk readily about their addiction to social media, but how candidly can they talk about the anxieties that it generates?

J A study of social isolation in America by Miller McPherson and colleagues found that between 1984 and 2005, the mean number of confidants a person had decreased from 2.94 to 2.08 – a significant drop in what we would call "real friends"[9]. This is important, because as the sociologist Eric Klinenberg pointed out, it's the quality of your social interactions, not the quantity, that defines loneliness[10]. This is something that older people are aware of, and life seems to have taught them that a few quality friends are more important than the quantity of connections in your friendship network. Yet although connectedness has fallen significantly over the past 40-50 years, we still have the compelling evolutionary need to connect with other human beings. As John Cacioppo has pointed out "forming connections with pets, or online friends, or even with God, is a noble attempt by an obligatory gregarious creature to satisfy a compelling need," and this continuing need in the face of creeping social isolation has coincided with the internet providing us with an "army of replacement confidants" – none of whom are confidants in the original meaning of the term.

K In this sense, social media such as Facebook have become surrogates for seeking connectedness, and as a consequence our connections grow broader but shallower.[11] But our use of social media to chase connectedness may merely make us feel more disconnected and lonelier. For example, feelings of disconnectedness are associated with passive interactions with Facebook, such as using it only to update your own activities or merely scanning the activities of friends. If you log on to Facebook every day like more than half of all Facebook users in the world do, and you use it in this passive way, it will merely reinforce your feelings of disconnectedness. What comes out of these findings about the use of social networking sites is that loneliness and social anxiety do indeed appear to facilitate use of these sites – often to the point of an addiction, when there is an unhealthy desire to spend hours each day checking these sites. However, even with a good sized social network on sites such as Facebook and Twitter, there come added stressors and feelings of disconnectedness, anxieties that can cause physical health problems and negatively affect academic performance in the young. It's fair to say that use of social media by young people is not just a consequence of their social anxieties but causes additional anxieties and stresses that are all grist for the modern day anxiety epidemic.

Part 3: Reflection

- What did you learn that you did not know already about this topic?

- Which findings were the most interesting to you?

- How does this affect you personally?

- What reading question type did you find the most difficult or easiest? What did you learn about techniques to approach these question types?

Listening

Wk 9 Transactional Listening 3: Looking for Accommodation

Section One

Questions 1 – 2

1. The students are looking for a flat which has:
    A   three bedrooms
    B   one bedroom
    C   two bedrooms

2. The students are looking for rent which is:
    A   low $300s
    B   below $300
    C $300

Questions 3 and 4.

Which TWO of the following do the students ask for in the rental property? Circle TWO letters.
    A   garage
    B   nice view
    C   dining room
    D   internal laundry
    E   gas stove
    F   study

Questions 5 – 10
Complete the table with a number or NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS

	Time to walk to uni	Price per week	Noise level	Date available
Glebe flat	10 -15 mins	(5) __$320_____	(6) _____**not too bad__**	(7) _**14th of June_**
Camperdown flat	(8) **20 minutes_**	(9) ___$350____	Quiet street	(10) __**now_____**

Section Two: Colloquial Language

Listen for these expressions in the conversation and number them according to the sequence. The first one has been done for you.

___ watch the world go by

___ We're on a bit of a budget.

___ it's in such good nick

_1_ (We're) wondering if you've got anything available.

___ another 2 bedder

___ We're not too fussy.

___ What kind of place are you after?

___ (They) tend to have no garage.

Now match the expressions to these similar meanings:

a. What are you looking for? ____

b. We have to be careful with our money. ____

c. Usually they have no garage.____

d. look at people and cars go past ____

e. in very good condition ____

f. Do you have anything available? _1_

g. another two bedroom place ____

h. We don't really mind/ we are fairly easygoing. ____

Section Three: Discussion

1. What kind of place are you currently living in?
2. How did you find it?
3. Are you very fussy about cleanliness around the house?
4. Do you like to just sit and watch the world go by?

Wk 9 Listening 1: Effects of social media

Lesson Objectives
•   Practise strategies for multiple choice questions •   Practise strategies for matching questions •   Practise strategies for summary questions

Part 1: Before you listen

Complete the activities on Canvas

Part 2: Listening and note-taking

Listen to the lecture and take notes under the following headings.

Introduction

First example – a mental effect

A Contrasting example

Another negative finding about college students – other complications

Another issue related to college students - frequency

Another issue related to attention

A further issue related to college students – body image

Another point: e- isolation

Lack of physical interaction

Conclusion

Part 3: Using your notes

Question 1 Multiple Choice

1. From the speaker's introduction, it can be inferred that she believes the Internet

a. has surprised everyone with its fast development.

b. can have negative effects in some areas.

c. has been an unambiguous source of good.

d. is leading to increasing physical contact.

Questions 2. – 9. Matching

Match the following statements with the name associated with them. You may use the same name more than once.

> **LIST OF NAMES**
> **A Bragg**
> **B McDaniel et al.**
> **C Yang & Brown**
> **D Becker**
> **E Rutledge & Gilmore**
> **F Stapens**
> **G Casabio**
> **H The speaker**

2. A number of factors influence the level of students' satisfaction with their own body image. _____

3. Extended use of social media is not necessarily the issue but how it is used, especially in relation to physical activity. _____

4. It is not only college students who are affected by doing too many things at once according to personal anecdotes. _____

5. Research in recent years shows that social media is assisting college students to adjust to their new environment. _____

6. Two psychological programs provide evidence that Facebook does affect wellbeing. _____

7. Having actual physical contact with others is beneficial for countering depression, sleep problems and other mental issues. _____

8. One group seems to benefit from using social media at a particular point in their lives when they need emotional support. _____

9. Some claims about the effects of media interaction are exaggerated. _____

Questions 10 – 17 Summary

Choose NO MORE THAN TWO SUITABLE WORDS for each space.

A number of negative side effects have been identified related to **10.** _____ use of social media and the many apps now available. Many of these side effects relate to mental issues such as **11.** _____ and **12.** _____. A number of researchers have studied **13.** _____ and concluded that there are a number of variables that contribute to the problem. These include, for example, the number of **14.** _____ this group has and the amount of **15.** _____ spent on sites. It can be concluded that the best way to counter mental issues is to stay **16.** _____ with others and this would be very **17.** _____ for social media users.

Part 3: Reflection

Complete the activities on Canvas

Transcript

TRANSCRIPT Social Media Generation and Loneliness

Good afternoon. You'll all be aware that the Internet is rapidly changing the ways we communicate and socialize. We're now able to interact with one another without any physical contact – without actually catching up physically. It's due, of course, to our ability to use social media – programs such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and all those other apps we take for granted. And it's been a rapid change. Most of you will be able to recount stories about just how quickly your life has changed with new phones and all the apps we now use. However, we're increasingly aware of evidence that there are downsides. It doesn't really come as a real shock any more that the intensive use of social media can be more damaging to a person's mental state than had been thought in the past. We'll look at some examples of this in this lecture and I'll refer to research that's been carried out in recent years.

My first example of a negative mental effect from social media is depression, and this condition is related particularly to the use of Facebook. One rather early study was carried out by Michael Bragg – that's spelt BRAGG. In his article "Facebook use and adolescents' levels of depression", Bragg firstly identified college students as the majority of social media users. As an aside, I don't think that's necessarily the case today as many other groups beyond college students use Facebook – students' mothers and grandmothers, for example.

However, Bragg focussed on students. He did an in-depth study of over 76 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science and Nursing program in the Philippines. The main instruments he used were the Facebook Intensity Scale, known as FIS, and the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale, DASS. Based on these scales, his results were that Facebook definitely <u>does</u> affect people's feelings of well-being. Bragg's findings indicate that time spent on Facebook correlated significantly with depression and anxiety. In summary, his findings were that Facebook's use doesn't directly cause negative emotions but spending time on Facebook increases depression and anxiety scores. I think the study is a bit limited and it would be interesting to see if further studies confirm these findings.

In contrast to Bragg's negative findings regarding one social group – college students - another social group has been studied which indicate positive results from using social media. These are new mothers. In an article titled "New mothers and media use", McDaniel, Cole and Holmes – I'll repeat those names - McDaniel, Cole and Holmes – discuss how social media can help wellbeing of new mothers by triggering feelings of connection and emotional support. So, this is one way that social media has actually helped the mental state of a person. I think this is good news although a wider range of subjects would have been helpful in this study.

So, we have some positive findings here about mothers but getting back to college students, there are other negative findings beyond those of Bragg's. Based on 2017 research, Yang and Brown – YANG and Brown - suggest that the use of social media can cause other complications for college students. These include their ability to adjust to college life and to manage social relationships. This is very important for college students because they're learning how to build relationships. In their study, Yang and Brown recorded the students' motives for using Facebook and their patterns of Facebook activity in a college setting. They observed that the updating of their status was influenced by their motive to maintain relationships, that is, college students want to keep in touch with their new friends with posts – often on more than a daily basis. That's no surprise is it?

Another negative result of increased use of social media relates to the frequency of posting and interaction. In an article titled "Media multitasking is associated with symptoms of depression and social anxiety", Michael Becker (spelt BECKER) discusses how face-to-face interaction is becoming extinct due to the use of media. I think that sounds a bit exaggerated, don't you? However, Becker claims that the more social media interaction there is, the less quality social interactions there are. He maintains that this negatively affects our psychological functioning.

He also points out another issue which has had a lot of attention recently – reduced attention span. Our reduced attention span is because of multitasking, that is, doing several things at once – "surface skimming" if you like. Becker explains that the amount of multitasking in the past decade has increased at an extremely fast rate of 119%. Multitasking can cause poor attention control and poor mental health. That's certainly concerning, and personal anecdotes tell me that reduced attention span is certainly an issue in different social groups beyond college students.

Here's another issue related to college students – problems related to body image. Rutledge and Gilmore (Rutledge - spelt RUTLEDGE and Gilmore - GILMORE) address this issue in their article titled "Does this profile picture make me look fat? - Facebook and body image in college students". They find that 68- 78% percent of college students are dissatisfied with their body image and this issue to the unrealistic images they see on Facebook. Rutledge and Gilmore considered the following variables: how many friends the person has; the amount of time they spend on Facebook; and the emotional investment they have in the site. Their results show that those students who were more emotionally attached to Facebook were more concerned with their appearance – no surprise really.

Another point of view is examined by Sarah Goodchild – Goodchild. In her article "Are you suffering from e-isolation?" (that is, e hyphen isolation) Goodchild makes the point that, although social media and mobile devices are meant to keep us in contact with one another, in reality these technologies could be pulling us apart. She goes on to discuss the ideas of psychologist Erik Stapens (spelt STAPENS), who believes that everyone is at risk of personal isolation and this will ultimately hurt our health. Stapens says that everyone needs to counteract depression and to develop trust,

which is only possible when we're interacting physically with another person. Another related issue he says is that e-socialization is causing sleeping issues for many. There are many ways to end e-isolation, for example, don't take your device to bed, learn how to sit in silence and write someone a letter. I think you'll all agree with me that this is easier said than done.

Another point relates to the possible effects of loneliness through lack of actual interaction with people. Neuroscientist John Casabio (spelt CASABIO) wrote an article titled "Don't be lonely" in which he stressed that staying connected to others socially is important for good health. Loneliness, he says, can be measured through levels of stress hormones, immune function, and cardiovascular function. People who are lonely drink more, exercise less, lose sleep and may prematurely age.

However, his idea of how social media connections play into this is somewhat different from the ideas of other researchers. He believes that it is how a person uses this media to communicate that is important rather than that it overall causes isolation. If it is used as a substitute for physical interaction then it can cause increased loneliness but, for example, if a disabled person who is physically unable to leave home can use it, then social media can have the opposite effect, allowing for a person to feel connected. So, for some groups the interaction is very important.

Let's conclude. It is safe, overall, to say that staying physically connected with people and having an in-person social life will contribute to a healthier life and mental state. If the use of social media is substituting physical connections for e-communication, this will make a person more susceptible to experiencing loneliness, and therefore should be identified as a mentally unhealthy environment. If more people were informed about these risks, it could raise awareness of the idea to spend more

time physically with others. Let's say in conclusion that the way that technology is advancing is extraordinary, but it is now up to us to identify the most beneficial ways to adapt to these technologies.

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