**Introduction to Social Capital: 6th Grade**

**Summary**

Students will read and reflect on a letter from Hill Harper’s **Letter to a Young Brother**. Students will participate in a group activity called **Web of Relationships**.  They will learn the definition of ‘social capital’ and then brainstorm a list of people they know that can help them achieve their goals. Lastly, students will arrange the names of the people in their network in a bubble chart.

**Grades**

* 6

**Content Modules**

**Objectives**

Students will:

* Identify the people in their lives that can help them achieve their goals.
* Differentiate between beneficial and potentially harmful relationships.
* Analyze the definition of Social Capital.
* Connect the concept of social capital to their own lives.

**Length**

1 Session

**Additional Resources**

* [Letters and Responses from Letters to a Young Brother.pdf](https://www.6to16.org/files/attachments/eee0445e95ae9eae688b411d6c018405.pdf)
* [Who do I know.pdf](https://www.6to16.org/files/attachments/03089113bb3304947934c486ad25fabe.pdf)

**Related Lessons**

**Related E-Learning**

**Materials and Resources**

**Offline:**

* 6to16 Notebook
* Letter and Response from Letters to a Young Brother (Author: Hill Harper)
* 1-2 Balls of Yarn
* Who Do I Know?

**Higher-Level Thinking Skills**

Analysis, Reflection

**Vocabulary**

Social capital, Social network

**Assessment(s)**

**Who Do I Know?:** Students will complete the **Who Do I Know? Social Capital Chart** to visualize their support systems.

**Do Now (10 minutes)**

1)  Distribute the letter and response from **Letters to a Young Brother**. Ask students to read the letter with a neighbor and then individually answer the following questions in their **6to16 Notebooks**:

* How do you feel about Anthony’s response to the young brother?
* What advice would you give to the young man?
* How have you dealt with people who have not been supportive of your goals?

2)  Ask students to share their responses to the Do Now Question.

**Class Activity (35 minutes)**

1)  Write the following question on the board:

* Does it matter whom you choose to be your friend?

2)  Ask students to think of the relationship they have with their best friend and something beneficial that they bring to each other’s lives. Provide an example from your own life for students.

3)  Facilitate a brief class discussion about the benefits that can come along with friendship.

4)  Next, ask students to pair up and share about a negative relationship they have or have had in the past. Again, give a personal example to model for the class; explain the nature of the relationship and the ultimate outcome. In the pair share, students should consider how they deal with people who are not supportive of their goals. Walk around the room to monitor and check for understanding.

Activity (Web of Relationships): Resource Mapping (Materials: **1-2 Balls of Yarn**)

5)  Ask students to position their desks in a large circle and then think about their classmates and the benefits and resources that they bring to each other’s lives.

6)  Give a student the **Ball of Yarn**.

7)  Explain that during this activity, each student will have an opportunity to share his or her name, strength, weakness, and someone in the circle who can help them overcome that weakness. For example, “My name is James, I am good at writing, but I struggle with math. I think Lisa can help me with math because….” Note that students must identify and pass the **Ball of Yarn** to somebody who has not received the **Ball of Yarn** yet.

8)  After the student has identified who can help him or her, he or she will grab the end of the yarn and roll the ball to the person she or he identified.  Continue this process until all students have had a turn.

9)  Eventually the **Yarn** should resemble a web.

10)  Ask students to describe what they have created with the **Yarn**. Ask them to share what they learned about each other and themselves by doing the activity.

11)  Inform students that the **Yarn** symbolizes the web of relationships that the students have with each other. Explain that they all bring something valuable to the group. Explain that their fellow classmates are a part of their Social Network and that their Social Network can help them as they move through high school, college, and throughout their lives.

12)  Instruct students to return to their seats. Provide the following definition to student:

* **Social Network**: a community of people, such as family, friends, co-workers, classmates, and neighbors that a person is socially involved with.

13) Write the word **“social”** on the board. Ask students to discuss with a partner the meaning of the word ‘social.’ If students need help, provide the following definition:

* ***Social*:** tending to form cooperative and interdependent relationships with others of one's kind.(Source: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/social).

14)  Next, write the word **“capital”** on the board and ask students to provide examples of times they have heard the word.

15)  Instruct students to turn to a partner and come up with their own definition of the word ‘capital’. Ask a few pairs to share their definition of capital. Finally, give students the following definitions of the word capital:

1. Wealth and assets in the form of money or property, used or accumulated in a business by a person, partnership, or corporation.
2. Material wealth used, or available for use, in the production of more wealth. (Source: www.thefreedictionary.com/capital)

16)  Explain to students that people can also be capital. Inform the class that people can be capital by possessing a talent, an insight or a resource that is valuable to others. Provide the following examples:

* My friend Renee is very creative, so I know she can help me if I have an art project.
* My friend Erik is a good writer, so he helps me when I am writing a paper or article.
* My friend Marissa is a great listener, so I always call her when I need help with a problem.
* My neighbor Hector graduated from college with a degree in Biology, so he can give me good advice about college and can help me understand concepts in my science textbooks.

17)  Instruct students to turn to a partner and discuss the following questions:

* What are some talents or resources you have that are valuable to others?
* What talents and resources do you value in others?

18)  When people in our network have talents and resources that are useful to us, we characterize them as having social capital. When we make personal connections with others that can enhance or create success for us, we possess social capital.

19)  Explain that by doing the yarn activity, they were able to identify the valuable connections they have in their 6to16 class. Their classmates, who make up one of their social networks, all contribute to their social capital.

20)  Instruct students to list the names of valuable family members, friends, classmates, teachers or other members of their community that can help them reach their personal goals in their **6to16 Notebooks**: While students work, create your own list on the board.

**Homework**

1)  Distribute the **Who Do I Know? Social Capital Chart**. Explain to students that the bubble graph is a visual representation of their social capital. Their relationships with the people listed on their graph will help them fulfill their goals.

2)  Instruct students to write their names in the center bubble.  Explain that they will add the people from the list they created at the end of class to the appropriate bubble in the chart.

3)  Tell students that they can add additional social network bubbles that may be missing. Finally, students should add a bubble to their graph for people who they believe will be an asset to them reaching their goals, but are not currently a part of their social network.

4)  Remind students to answer the questions at the bottom of the worksheet in their **6to16 Notebooks** and bring the worksheet back to the next class.

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