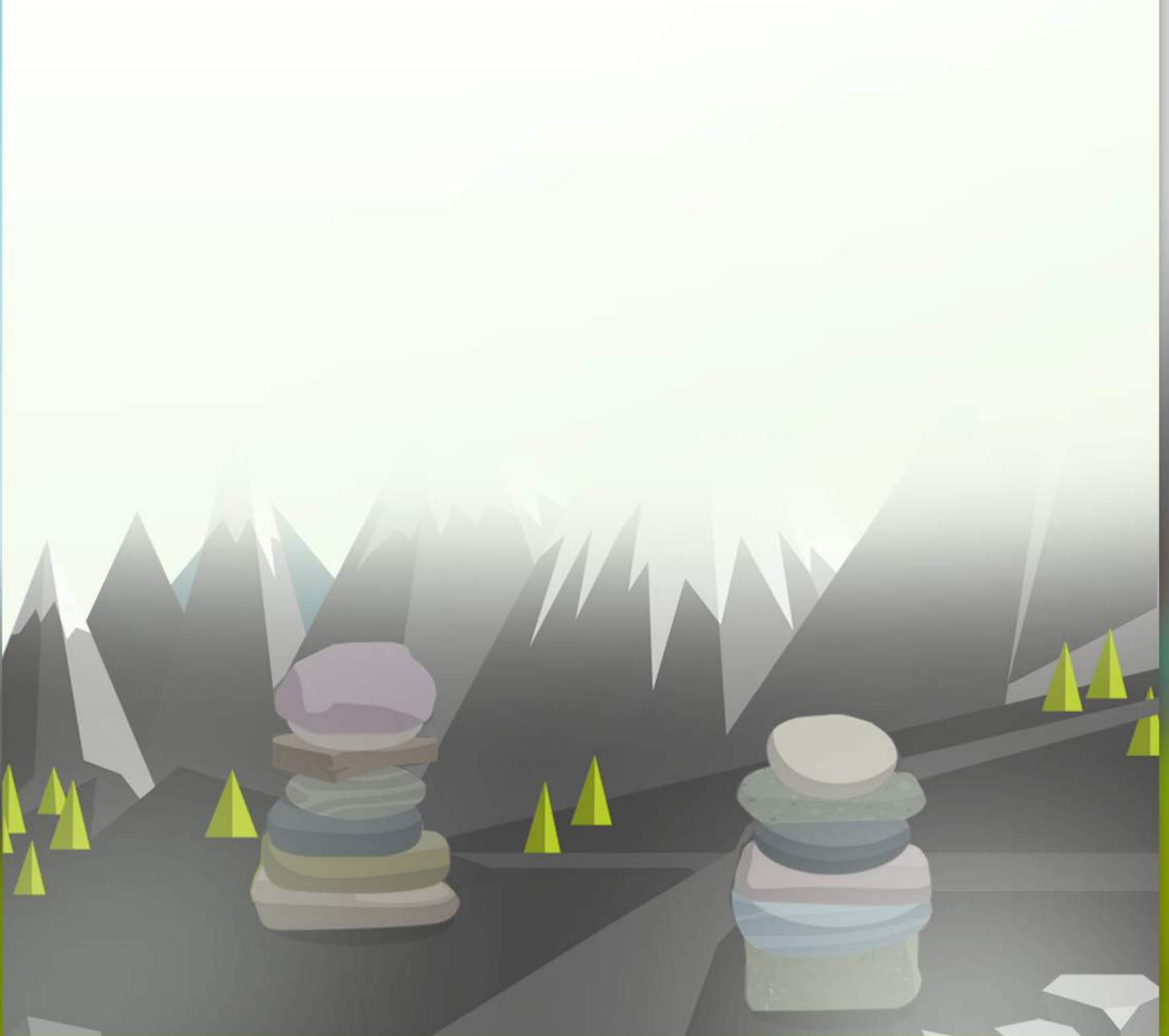


Part 1: Social Media and Us

In this module, students explore social media's presence in their own lives and those of their friends and family. Students develop their sense of social media's strengths and limitations in providing access to information, relationships, and community. This perspective sets the stage for investigation throughout the subsequent modules.



1. Social Media in Our Lives

Overview

We are immersed in digital media that is available on-demand and allows its users to participate as commentators, curators, and creators. The lesson explores the way social media permeates and influences students' lives and relationships.

Time

Two class periods

Resources Needed

- Chart/easel paper: four sheets.
- Printout the "Questions for chart/easel paper," and attach each group of questions to one sheet of the chart paper.
- Tape to affix the paper to the wall.
- Two markers for each group of students.

Learning Goals

Concepts

- Analyze the impact of social media on our lives in terms of our: friends and family, access to news, politics, and entertainment; experience in school; privacy.

Skills and Dispositions

- Recognize the value of personal experience as a form of knowing.
- Practice note-taking as a way to organize and examine relationships between ideas.
- Build awareness of discussion as a form of prewriting.
- Strengthen public speaking and writing competencies.
- Strengthen listening and small-group discussion skills.

Guide for Conceptual Scaffolding

Students may express conflicting feelings about social media. Encourage students to explore different feelings or notice tensions that emerge, such as breadth versus depth of connection, or constant availability to a peer group on social media versus time for oneself, or the performance of identities online versus in person.

Pre-class Preparation

Put four pieces of chart paper spaced out across the walls of the classroom. Title them: Social Media's Role in Your Life, Society, School, and Privacy and Expression. Then, print out the color-coded question pages, below. Put each color-coded set of questions onto a single sheet of chart paper.

Introduction

Introduce/elicit the idea that social media plays a role in many different parts of our lives. (Who knows what social media is? What are some examples? What do you use it for?) Explain that the class will do a gallery walk to focus on the different ways that social media shape our lives. Share/elicit an example from the category described on each sheet of easel/chart paper before splitting students into groups to do their gallery walk. See the appendix for the list of questions spread across the following printout pages.

Group Discussion

Break students into four groups and have each group move to one of the pieces of chart paper and discuss the aspect of social media described by the questions on that paper. Depending on the needs of your students, you may want to have students select a recorder to make notes or ask all students to contribute notes on the chart paper.

Rotate Groups

Every five minutes, move the groups to a different sheet of chart paper. Ask them to first review the notes made by the previous team, noting their agreement or disagreement with plusses and minuses. Then, encourage them to add more notes to the chart paper to add new ideas and offer nuance and depth to the ideas already present.

Summarize

With the fifth rotation, students will arrive at their original location. They'll see that the chart they started has been transformed by other people's ideas. Ask groups to read through the ideas and discuss the comments that were added. Have one or two students from each group offer a summary of the most interesting comments.

Homework

Explain that writing and thinking are related, and as a result of sharing ideas with others, this activity has prepared students to express their unique point of view. Offer these choices to students:

Option 1. Write a personal reflection of your own experience with one of the aspects of social media, considering some of the key ideas that emerged from the classroom conversation.

Option 2. Select one specific example of social media, such as instagram or youtube, and reflect on it using some of the questions on the chart paper.

Expressive Options: If you prefer, students may complete this assignment as a blog entry or as a spoken word performance.

Read, Respond, and Share

Have students select a favorite sentence from their homework to read aloud. Then ask students to partner with a peer and read each other's work. Ask the partner to select a different favorite sentence and have that student read it aloud.

Whole Group Discussion

This writing assignment should stimulate more rich conversation about the different aspects of social media in our lives. Encourage students to comment or offer a thought.

Summarize

Offer some reflections on your own experience with social media and point out how powerful it is to share and discuss the many paradoxes associated with the media that are so pervasive in our lives.

Assign the Online Relationships Interview as homework -- see the activity description for introduction text and handout.

Appendix: Questions for Chart/Easel Paper

Social Media's Role In Your Life

- How many hours a day do you spend with Social Media?
- What are the main things you do on Social Networks? How big of a role do you think Social Media have in your life?
- What are the most positive and negative influences of Social Media in general? In your life specifically?

Society

- Where do you get your info about news and politics?
- How do you communicate with people about news and politics?
- Where do you go online for entertainment, such as movies, music, television series, and magazines or other publications?

School

- Are social media used as part of your classes? How?
- Have you ever collaborated with other students online?
- What kind of websites do you use to do research or homework?

Privacy and Expression

- Do you feel like your identity is secure online?
- Do you think social media are going to have an influence on your career?
- Are you comfortable with all the public sharing that happens with personal information? Why or why not?

2. Online Relationships: Conducting an Interview

Overview

Social media connects diverse people in surprising and interesting ways. Students will understand social media more deeply by taking the conversation beyond the classroom walls to other important figures in their lives, such as friends and family. Students are also welcome to conduct the interview with more distant relations via social media.

The interview process also provides students with a chance to engage in some initial reflection about social media's affordances and limitations.

Time

5-10 minutes to describe the assignment at the end of class, two evenings to do the assignment, and twenty minutes for the think-pair-share activity.

Resources Needed

- Printouts and/or electronic versions of the interview questions.

Learning Goals

Concepts

- Articulate the impact of social media on our close and distant connections.
- Articulate the strengths and weaknesses of social media as a tool for communication.

Skills and Dispositions

- Recognize the value of personal experience as a form of knowing.
- Draw on social networks to support academic learning.
- Conduct interviews, record answers, summarize and share answers.

Guide for Conceptual Scaffolding

When assigning the interview and leading the think-pair-share, encourage students to explore the different uses of social media by students in the class versus peers elsewhere, and between youth and adults. This module's exploration of media use by diverse groups will build students' empathy and sense of possibility, which will be key to developing and carrying out their action plan in modules five and six.

Process

1. Select a friend, a family member, or another adult to interview about his or her experiences with online relationships.
2. Take notes to capture main ideas and details.
3. Provide a summary of key ideas in paragraph form.
4. In class: Think-pair-share about the most interesting answers students received for each category of questions. This scaffolds a whole-class discussion about social media's affordances and limitations.

"Online relationships" include communicating via e-mail, text, video games, or social media sites like Facebook or Twitter. Interaction may be with the following types of people:

- People they know well (family and friends)
- People they work with (coworkers, colleagues, classmates)
- Acquaintances-People they have met briefly in the real world
- Online friends-People they have met online but not in person
- Online strangers-People they have interacted with online but do not know well

Online Relationship Interview

Name of Interviewee: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

Interviewee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Close Connections

- Are all your family members on social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat? Are you Facebook friends with your family, or do you follow them on Instagram?
- How do you think Social Media has influenced your family relationships? Do you feel it has made you closer? More distant? In what ways?
- Are there examples of times when you have entered into an awkward family situation because of Social Media?
- How has Social Media affected your relationships with your friends? Has it made you closer? More distant? In what ways?

Distant Connections

- Have you joined new communities through social media? Built new friendships or other relationships?
- Have you ever encountered information through social media that has changed your views or relationships with your friends or family?

Social Media on the Edge

- Are there certain things you would express only on social media? Are there any opinions or experiences that you would never share on social media?
- Is there anything you wish were different about social media?
- Is there anything you love about it? Is there anything you hate about it?

Create Your Own Question Here:

Social Media's Role In Your Life

How many
hours a day do
you spend with
Social Media?

Social Media's Role In Your Life

What are the
main things you
do on Social
Networks?

How big a role do
you think Social
Media have in
your life?

Social Media's Role In Your Life

What the most
positive and
negative influences
of Social Media in
general?

In your life
specifically?

Society

Where do you
get your info
about news
and politics?

Society

How do you
communicate
with people
about news
and politics?

Society

Where do you go online for entertainment, such as movies, music, television series, and magazines or other publications?

School

Are social
media used as
part of your
classes? How?

School

Have you ever
collaborated
with other
students online?

School

What kind of
websites do
you use to do
research or
homework?

Privacy and Expression

Do you feel like
your identity is
secure online?

Privacy and Expression

Do you think
social media are
going to have
an influence on
your career?

Privacy and Expression

Are you
comfortable with
all the public
sharing that
happens with
personal
information?
Why or why not?