

**Mini-Unit Title:** “Utilizing Social Media in Establishing Personal Identity”

**Authors:** Rehana Ahmed, Carolyn Crumpler, Tess McLean Cannon  
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**Enduring Themes:** Narratives of Identity; Intersection of Culture and Media

**Common Core Standards:**

**Middle School:**

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.6:** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.7:** Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

**High School:**

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.6:** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

**Key Concepts:**

Social Studies, Literacy, Writing, Personal Development, Technology, Social Media

**Rationale:**

The rise of technology and social media is inevitable and unavoidable and it has become difficult for educators to effectively incorporate student usage of technology into appropriate and purposeful learning experiences. However, by utilizing the phenomenon of social media to develop students’ sense of identity and educating them of global implications, educators can better prepare our students for the world and job market. The purpose of this unit is to facilitate critical thinking about youth online and social media presence and create a positive online identity based on students’ personal culture and values.

**Mini-Unit Objectives:**

By the end of this mini-unit, students will be able to:

1. Understand local and global implications of social media presence;
2. Compare and contrast social media platforms based on appropriateness and effectiveness in different contexts;
3. Develop a personal “brand” based on personal interests and self-identity;
4. Recognize and use different modes of online communication;
5. Summarize and critique relevant articles in concise manner; and
6. Research and present educational and professional opportunities based on personal brand.

**Materials:**

The unit will begin with instructor-provided articles and videos and group discussion about the importance of social media and global implications. The teacher will provide and distribute appropriate articles, resources, and graphic organizers about social media, privacy, and the prevalence of social media. Activities will then transition to individual research and writing assignments, for which, computers and/or smart phones and Internet with access to social media will be necessary. For the “social media” aspect of this unit, we will use mock social media platforms to be as inclusive and fair as possible.

**Unit Methods:**

This unit begins with a lesson and discussion about social media, in terms of strengths and challenges of different platforms, international security of technology, and appropriateness of topics. Through readings and discussion, students are encouraged to critically examine their own online presence and understand some of the global implications of the message sent, as well as the longevity and permanence of posts sent. Next, this unit challenges students to create a brand or online identity based on an image that they would like to portray to the general public. By asking students to identify personal or professional interests and facilitating individual research, students are tasked with reflecting on their own values and culture and practice the importance of articulating and explaining their beliefs. The mini-unit ends with a culminating writing assignment that captures student reflections and experiences with social media.

**Modes of Assessment:**

Students will be assessed on multiple levels based on the completion of activities, completion of social media products, and reflective writing. The following guiding questions will be considered:

- What types of social media did you learn about today?
- What surprised you?
- What did you find most interesting?
- How do you think individuals can use social media to positively brand themselves?
- How are different social media platforms appropriate and effective for different occasions or for different audiences?
- How do you think you can use social media to positively shape and share your identity?
- Which platforms do you think you will use most often, for what, and why?

**Activities/Tasks:**

See attached lesson plans (pages 4-6).

**Access for All:**

To ensure inclusive learning for all students, multiple and varied learning and teaching methods will be utilized to include visual learners, auditory learners, and kinesthetic learners. We will use English language materials (language of instruction), but will encourage students to read and post materials in their home language or a foreign language of their choice. Because students will also be required to define their own brand, ranging personal interests will be accommodated and encouraged.

**Modifications/Accommodations:**

- Graphic organizers for scaffolded questioning (appropriate for ESOL, SPED, etc.)
- Reading comprehension strategies (vocabulary capture sheet, interactive reading tools, paired reading, etc.) (appropriate for ESOL, SPED, etc.)
- News videos about social media (instead of readings) about pros and cons of social media (appropriate for ESOL, SPED, etc.)
- Use of technology to audio record ideas and reflections (QuickVoice Pro, Dragon, Audacity, etc.) instead of writing (appropriate for ESOL, SPED, etc.)
- Alternative products to reflective essay (such as powerpoint, verbal presentation, Vine video, etc.) (appropriate for ESOL, SPED, etc.)

**Lesson #1 Title:** “Social Networking: Good or Bad?”

**Grade Level(s):** Grades 6-12 (lesson can be adapted for various content areas or specific topics)

**Essential Question:** What is a social network? How are social networks used? What are the benefits and harms of using social networks?

**Enduring Understanding:** Identifying, comparing and explaining the impacts and application of social networks.

**Estimated Time:** One 50-minute class period with a homework extension

**Materials/Resources:**

- Student handouts (background article, pro/con fact sheets, article notes capture sheet and homework assignment)
- Student devices (computers, laptops, and/or Smart Phones);
- Access to Internet

**Lesson Procedure:**

1. **Preview/Hook (5-7 minutes):**

Ask students which of these facts apply to them or of which they are aware.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- Social networking sites are a top news source for 27.8% of Americans, ranking below newspapers (28.8%) and above radio (18.8%) and print publications (6%).
- Students who used social networking sites while studying scored 20% lower on tests and students who used social media had an average GPA of 3.06 versus non-users who had an average GPA of 3.82.
- 35 global heads of state, every US Cabinet agency, 84% of US state governors, every major candidate for US President, and more than 40% of top global religious leaders are on Twitter.
- In July 2012 Americans spent 74.0 billion minutes on social media via a home computer, 40.8 billion minutes via apps, and 5.7 billion minutes via mobile web browsers, a total of 121.1 billion minutes on social networking sites.

2. **Background of Social Media:**

- **(10 minutes)** Read aloud Background Article with students and have students annotate as they follow along. Then have students do a second read through and list five facts from the article on their graphic organizer.
- **(20 minutes)** Have students get into groups of 2-3. Handout various pro fact sheets to some groups and various con sheets to some students. Students will jigsaw, discuss, and record pros and cons in five minute intervals.

3. **Assessment:** Select 2-3 social media sites you are on (or would choose to be on) and create a T-Chart or Venn Diagram of the Pros/Cons of each of the sites you use/choose to use. As an exit pass, you will create a bumper sticker, online banner ad, t-shirt design, or other form of propaganda to promote or discourage the use of one of these forms of social media.

**Lesson Resource:** <http://socialnetworking.procon.org/>

## **Lesson #2 Title:** “Branding” Yourself on Social Media

**Grade Level(s):** Grades 6-12 (lesson can be adapted for various content areas or specific topics)

**Essential Question:** How do you identify yourself? How do you want others to perceive you? How can technology and social media play a role in expressing your identity?

**Enduring Understanding:** Identifying, embracing, and expressing your own identity is important in building a strong and accepting community and world. Technology and social media are influential and pivotal tools in sharing your identity with others.

**Estimated Time:** One 50-minute class period (Activity can be assigned for homework)

### **Materials/Resources\*:**

- Student handouts (preview questions; instructions for social media assignment);
- Student devices (computers, laptops, and/or Smart Phones);
- Access to Internet

\*Students who do not have personal devices or Internet access can complete the assignment by creating a “mock” profile on paper or in a Word document, but will also need access to additional resources for pictures, newspapers, magazines, etc.

### **Lesson Procedure:**

#### **1. Preview/Hook (5-10 minutes):**

- How would you identify yourself? What shapes your identity? How do others perceive you?
- What is important to you? Consider your values, traditions, passions, and hobbies.
- What general words, categories, or descriptors does our society use to categorize and identify people?
- Which of the following logos or symbols do you recognize? Underline them. Which of the following logos or symbols have meaning to you or do you associate with your identity? Circle the. (*Include chart with images of various logos, brands, symbols.*)

#### **2. Creating Your Identity on Social Media (30 minutes):** You will create a profile (or add onto an existing profile) on one of the following social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, or a personal blog. (If you wish to use another form of social media, please check with your teacher first!) If your family does not allow you to use social media, there are various websites available for the creation of “mock” pages that will not be published online. Feel free to personalize and embellish your profile page however you wish! The following elements are required:

- **Post a picture or video** that depicts something important to you and write a concise explanation (100 words or less) about why this image/video has significance to you
- **Find and post a link to a current event (from the last 2 weeks)** that you find important and write a concise statement of your opinion on the event (100 words or less)
- **Post song or poetry lyrics** (they can be original or borrowed) or include a link to the song or poem (it does not have to be the entire song or poem) and write a concise explanation of the song/poem and why it has meaning to you (100 words or less)

3. **Assessment (10-15 minutes, or for homework extension):** Write a 2-3 paragraph reflection explaining why your identity is important to you, and how you think social media can be helpful or harmful to presenting your identity. Consider the following prompts as you write your reflection (but you do not have to respond to all of them!) and be careful of spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and quality of writing.
- *Where do you come from? Why does this matter?*
  - *How do you think people perceive you?*
  - *What do you want people to know about you and why?*
  - *How do you think social media can be an asset to establishing your identity, and how can it be damaging?*
  - *Do you plan to continue to use these forms of social media to express yourself? Why or why not?*