Digital Citizenship: Hillary
Lesson Title: Online Community Building
Grade Level: High School

Lesson Topic

Healthy communities on the Internet

Essential Question

How can Internet communities help us to feel connected?

Materials

- Online communities web handout
- Student computers if available
- Writing utensil

Procedure

1. **Ask students** to think about the term "world wide web" (remind them that the "www" in web addresses stands for "world wide web"). What does the term "world wide web" make them think of? What images does the term evoke?

   - As students share the images it evokes and/or the things that the term makes them think of, create a bullet point list at the front of the room.

2. **Explain to students** that a "web" in the context of the Internet can be something that captures people's interests, and connects different individuals, organizations, and communities around shared ideas and interests.

   - Ask students: How do you use the Internet to connect to other people or groups with shared interests? Record student responses.

3. **Remind students:** In the video Hillary explains that she used the Internet to connect to online communities of people who were anorexic on pro-ana websites. While the way that Hillary connected to groups of people with similar, unhealthy interests, the Internet can be used to connect groups of people in very healthy and helpful ways.

4. **Explain to students** that they are going work in small groups to further explore this idea of the Internet as a tool for connecting people and building communities.

5. **Organize students into groups** of three to think specifically about how the Internet is a world wide web that connects individuals and builds communities around a particular topic or area of interest.

   • Ask each group to choose an area of interest to focus on. For example groups could focus on topics such as basketball (or another sport), a TV show, video games, cooking, books, travel, etc. (Alternatively, if you are integrating this activity into another unit of study, you could assign relevant areas of interest for each group to explore)
   • Each group should fill out the Online Communities Web worksheet to show how individuals and groups may come together to form online communities around a shared area of interest.
   • Possible Extension: If students have access to computers, ask them to research actual websites that connect people and build online communities around the topic that they are exploring (for example – if they are researching cooking they might list "allrecipes.com").

6. **Bring the class back together to discuss the question:** In what ways does the Internet help individuals to connect around shared interests? They should give examples from their group work in their discussion.

Conclusion

Share with students that researcher and author Sherry Turkle says in her book ***Alone Together***, that in the digital age "we expect more from technology and less from each other." How can the Internet help us to feel connected to other people? Can Internet communities replace human communities?

Notes

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Worksheet: Online Communities Web

Directions

In your group fill out the web below to show how individuals can connect through the World Wide Web to form communities around an area of interest.

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│                  │          │                  │
└──────────────────┘          └──────────────────┘
            \                    /
         ┌──────────────────────────┐
         │  People/Groups interested │
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│ Websites that connect     │  │ Ways to connect on the WWW │
│ people around the topic:   │  │ (e.g.: blogs,             │
│                           │  │ discussion boards, social  │
│                           │  │ media, etc.)               │
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