

Internet and Technology Etiquette: Using Your Digital Compass

Overview

In this activity, students will consider when it is appropriate to use technology.

Grades

9-12

Activity Type

Small group
Whole group

Materials

- Digital Compass scenarios, attached
- Digital Compass, attached

Duration

40 minutes

Instructions

1. Tell students:

“Today we are going to be talking about digital citizenship, which means making sure you have the best information to be savvy, responsible users of all types of technology. I know all of you have heard adults, either teachers or parents, tell you to turn off your cell phone, iPod or computer, and sometimes you might feel like they just don’t get how these gadgets work. Today we’re going to be exploring different situations and when and how technology is appropriate in each of them.”
2. Assign students to small groups of 2-4 students and distribute the attached digital compass and scenario sheet to each student. Instruct students to read through each scenario in their group and discuss where they would rate the action on the digital compass and why.
 - Explain to students that there is no right or wrong answer. Technology use is often a “gray area,” which is why it’s worth discussing, since we have to learn to use our best judgment.
 - Depending on the tone and pace of the group, you can invite students to move through the entire exercise, or go through the situations one at a time including a whole group discussion after each scenario.
 - For classes that need more movement to stay engaged, consider labeling different corners of the room with the indicators found on the digital compass, read the scenarios out loud, and have students cluster beneath the labels to indicate their opinions.
3. While discussing reactions to each scenario with the whole group, ask students with differing opinions to explain their reactions.
 - Why would someone else disagree with your position?
 - What would have to change about the scenario for you to feel like it was right/wrong?
 - Where do you think your mom/dad/guardian would be on the digital compass regarding this one? Where do you think most of your teachers would be?
 - How do you see our school’s/organization’s policies regarding technology?
 - If you were writing our school’s/organization’s technology policy, what would you include or change?

- What do you think are fair expectations for your parents to have about your technology use? Your teachers?
 - What would be an appropriate consequence, if any, for this scenario?
 - Does anyone have a scenario they'd like to share with the class and apply the digital compass to?
4. Afterwards, discuss with students how there is no easy answer for any of the scenarios. Why? Technology users are not always going to agree on what is right and wrong. Often when using technology there are "shades of gray" depending on who interprets the question. Some users may have had poor role models, developed bad habits or perhaps fail to think before they act. Others may not have the experience to understand the importance of digital communication and devices in your life. When interpreting any digital situation, we all need to consider our own feelings and those of others to make the best choice as informed, digital citizens.

Digital Compass Scenarios

Directions: Read the following scenarios and point to the compass direction that matches your opinion. After everyone makes a choice, discuss your answers.

Scenario #1 – A student sends a harassing e-mail to another student. The receiving student retaliates with a “flaming e-mail.” *Is sending harassing and flaming e-mail messages wrong?*

Scenario #2 – When hanging out with friends, one of the students gets a cell phone call and conducts a loud conversation. *Is talking in a loud voice on a mobile phone in a public place right?*

Scenario #3 – A student logs on to a file sharing website and downloads the newest song. *Is downloading music from a file-sharing site wrong?*

Scenario #4 – A student follows a questionable link to a website and downloads a malicious script which releases a Trojan Horse virus on to the school network. *Is downloading material from unknown sites appropriate?*

Scenario #5 – An hour before class, a student remembers that a writing assignment is due. The student goes to the library, logs on to a website, and copies/pastes information without giving credit to the authors. *Is using Internet materials without giving credit to the authors wrong?*

Scenario #6 – At home, a student uses a software package to copy movies and games from DVD’s for his or her friends. *Is copying copyrighted materials right?*

Scenario #7 – A student logs into the schools’ course management system to download a copy of the course syllabus that they had lost. *Is online learning appropriate for K-12 students?*

Scenario #8 – Two students use text messaging on their cellular phones to pass information with each other during class. *Is it wrong to send text-messages during class?*

Scenario #9 – A team of students create a website for a teacher at school, but the website cannot be read by students with special needs (disabilities). *Is it right to make websites that are not accessible to students with disabilities?*

Scenario #10 – A student brings a USB flash drive to school with all their assignments. The student checks with the teacher before connecting the drive to the schools’ computer. *Is it appropriate for students to bring foreign materials to be connected to school property?*

Scenario #11 – During class, students uses their handheld computers to share answers to an assignment. *Is it wrong to share information during class?*

Scenarios #12 – Students obtain a copy of the final exam for the teacher’s computer by "hacking" the password. *Is hacking into the teacher’s computer wrong?*

Digital Compass

