



Activity: Technology and Real-Life Activities - A Balance

Topics included: A balanced approach to technology, real life activities, and emotional health.

PLEASE BE AWARE: THIS LESSON MAY CAUSE YOUTH TO THINK ABOUT A SITUATION THEY HAVE ALREADY EXPERIENCED OR ARE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING. IF THEY HAVE HAD A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE AS OUTLINED BELOW, THEY MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE TOLD A PARENT. PLEASE BE OBSERVANT AND NOTICE ANY CHANGES IN APPEARANCE, BEHAVIOR, OR MOOD.

ANNOUNCE THAT YOU ARE AVAILABLE TO TALK PRIVATELY AFTER CLASS WITH ANYONE THAT NEEDS HELP. TALK WITH ANY STRUGGLING STUDENTS PRIVATELY AND ASSURE THEM YOU CAN HELP. ALWAYS REFER STUDENTS TO THE APPROPRIATE ADMINISTRATOR IN THE SCHOOL TO HELP THE STUDENT AND ALWAYS NOTIFY A PARENT.

Lesson Overview:

This lesson is designed to help students recognize how much time they spend using technology, as well as to remind them of other ways to spend their time productively. This lesson should also help students identify when they are having unhealthy emotions due to technology use.

Key Ideas:

- A. Technology and real-life balance
 - B. Identifying unhealthy emotional feelings as a result of too much technology use
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Instructional Activities:

Instructor:

Have the following discussion with your students:

Think about how old you were when you started using technology, whether it was an iPod, a phone, tablet, or other device. Raise your hand if you were younger than 12. Younger than 10? Younger than 8? Younger than 5?

Keep track of the students who fall into these categories to group them together later in the lesson.

How much time do you spend outside of school each day on your devices using technology? Presuming you have your own device, did the adults who gave it to you have any rules for how long you were permitted to use them each day or what you were permitted to do with them?

Some typical responses might be:

- They could only text family members
- Passwords had to be known by parents
- Devices weren't permitted in their rooms after a certain time of night/at all

Has an adult ever had a discussion with you about your emotional health and how using technology might negatively impact your emotions?

Answers may vary, as many adults/parents struggle to understand this themselves.

Some pitfalls of technology that can negatively impact your emotional health can include: being preoccupied with checking your texts or social media often, constantly needing to know what others are doing, or wondering why you haven't gotten a text reply in what you deem an appropriate amount of time. If this is the case, it might be time to take a step back and do something that doesn't include technology.

Group students into the age categories from above and have them brainstorm a list of things they did to occupy their time before they had technology.

Lists may include, but are not limited to:

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| • Played outside | • Had play dates | • Played board games |
| • Arts/Crafts | • Read books | • Building Legos/blocks |
| • Wrote stories | • Did puzzles | • Had face-to-face conversations |
| • Went to the movies | • Rode bikes | • Played sports |
| • Went shopping | • Hiked/walked in the woods | |

Once completed, ask each group to share out to see how activities might differ based on the age they were when they received their devices.

Discuss how often the students do any of these activities now without being prompted by an adult.

Ask if they would like to go back to a time before they used technology as much as they do now. Why or why not?

Social-Emotional Learning:

Emotional health is as important as physical health. We take steps to keep our bodies healthy (eating a balanced diet, getting physical activity, going to a doctor if we do not feel well) and steps must be taken to keep our minds healthy. We must recognize when we are preoccupied by or feeling anxious or upset because of technology. This happens to adults too. When you feel that way, talk to a trusted adult and take a tech break. If not, feeling this way for too long could lead to you making bad decisions that could negatively impact you or others.

Assessment:

- A. Why does everyone need a technology-real life balance?
- B. What are 3 things you could do if you need a tech break.

Shape the Sky Resources:

- Pledging to Balance Time On/Offline:
<http://www.shapethesky.org/pledge/>
- Technology Contract between youth and parents:
<http://www.shapethesky.org/technology-contract/>

Additional Resource:

- Do your students know how to balance time spent online & offline?
<https://smartsocial.com/balance-time-spent-online/>