Digital Citizenship: Arts Integrated Lessons
Lesson Title: Likes or Dislikes: What We Create on Social Media
Grade Level: High School

Essential Question:

How do photos posted on social media affect our thoughts and feelings?

Materials

- Teachers will need to go to social media sites of celebrities to select pictures. This must be completed before the class session. Teacher can print out the pictures or use them as slides.

Discussion Guideline

1. Review the four (4) categories for examining a photograph:

    - **Composition:** What do we see in the picture? What don't we see in the picture? Consider things such as details of faces, blurred street signs, parts of objects out of the frame, etc
    - **Timeframe:** What is the moment being captured? Consider things such as events, points in relationships, etc.
    - **Setting:** What is the location? How is the location made clear?
    - **Focal point:** Where is our attention drawn? How does the artist draw our eye to that point?

2. Review the definitions of explicit and implicit interpretations:

    - **Explicit:** the photograph clearly communicates who, what, when, and where.
    - **Implicit:** the viewers make assumptions about who, what, when, and where.

3. Ask students why they post pictures on social media. What are some of the possible intentions behind posting pictures? What are some good intentions and outcomes? What are some negative intentions and outcomes?

4. Ask students how often they respond to a post on social media with a thumbs up or "like." When they post on social media, do they check for "like" responses? Discuss how those likes or responses make them feel. (Are students constantly in need of positive reinforcement and attention? Does consciously not responding to another's post also send an underlying negative message of "Who cares?")

5. Ask students if they are familiar with the acronym **FOMO: Fear of Missing Out**. What does that mean to them? How have they experienced this?

6. Explain that experts study the emotions that people feel when they look at photos on social media, sometimes known today as social media anxiety. Often, what we see causes us to create stories about the picture, elaborate scenarios based on our emotional reactions. Why do you think this happens?

7. On the board, make a list of positive and negative emotions stirred by photographs in social media. Would these emotions be a result of explicit or implicit interpretations? Why?

8. Show a picture from a celebrity's social media site. Have students work with a partner to create a story that stirs one of the emotions listed above.

9. Share stories.

10. Discuss the kinds of stories created:

    • Were most of the stories positive or negative? How could you tell?
    • Were the stories based on explicit or implicit interpretations of the photographs? Explain your answer.

11. Experts claim that most of the emotions stirred by social media (and its accompanying social anxiety) are negative: jealousy, anxiety, stress, and depression. Did the stories created by your group prove or disprove this theory? Explain your answer.

12. If time, repeat the exercise with another photograph of from a celebrity's social media site.

Conclusion:

Why do we need to beware of how we interpret photos on social media? Why do we need to be aware of how others will interpret our photos that we post on social media? Why do we need to check our emotions about the people in the photos and the people posting the photos before we react and/or create a story?