Teacher Companion

Social Media Class Lesson Plan

Difficult to deny, social media influences our daily decisions, who we know, and even how we get a job. Well-known social sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat are even easier to access and stay current on thanks to the advent of smart phones, tablets, and other digital readers. Social media can be fun, entertaining, and even an invaluable source (when used correctly) for networking. That time spent could actually become just as hazardous to a young person's job prospects if the teen becomes careless.

Employers regularly check social media profiles when exploring candidate backgrounds. Younger workers often don't think anything of posting photos of weekend or nightly exploits, only considering the immediacy of friend reaction or "looking cool." Posts featuring underage drinking, partying, and drug use may seem innocent enough to teenagers, but for potential employers, it's an immediate red flag. Eliminating such posts, or at least understanding privacy settings, can go a long way.

There are always posts potential employers do not want to see in addition to those involving partying and using illegal substances. Photos in provocative or inappropriate situations are typically frowned upon, as are narrow-minded comments about race, gender, or religion. Speaking negatively or using disparaging remarks about current or past employers may indicate to a hiring manager both immaturity and poor decision-making skills. Obvious lying about your qualifications may also set off alarm bells and disqualify candidates from hire.

On the flipside, social media can be a powerful tool to help young job seekers get jobs as well. Profiles that project a professional image may draw an employer's eye. Additionally, in today's competitive job market, a candidate that shows creativity, diverse attitudes, and exceptional communication skills may also warrant extra attention from hiring personnel. Employers may look to see if job seekers utilize social media to truly network in their chosen field. Sure signs of such involvement include participating in group discussions, appearing as a go-to source of knowledge on a work-related topic, and sharing industry articles.

Each individual site or app has its advantages and disadvantages, and students becoming aware of such uses remains vital to using social media correctly. Review the positives and negatives of each application, and discuss instances of using social media correctly and incorrectly to build an awareness among your students. Discuss using more professional websites, such as LinkedIn and Google+, so that students can become more aware of how social media can help down the line. It's not always just about getting a seasonal or after-school job; eventually it's going to be about building a career.

All slides should present themselves in a way that students understand the basics about using social media in a way that is conducive to getting and keeping a job. The accompanying video, links, and activities should be used at the teacher's discretion to help supplement the presentation itself. Thank you for choosing our job skills curriculum, and please look to our additional presentations to help your students move into the job market with confidence and success.