



Focus Groups 2023 Top Takeaways

Conducted By: Media Psychology Doctoral Candidate
at Fielding Graduate University, Perry Art Reed, MA
March-April '23



What Is Cyber Civics?

Cyber Civics is a comprehensive middle school digital literacy curriculum. Fully aligned with Tech & ELA standards, plus SEL Competencies, the program is packed with creative, hands-on activities that emphasize ethical and critical thinking. Topics are scaffolded so they make sense to students.

Includes 75+ turnkey lesson plans, slides w/embedded videos, student packets, parent engagement, plus full support.

LEVEL 1: DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

- ✓ Becoming a De-Tech-Tive
- ✓ Principles of Citizenship
- ✓ Digital Reputation
- ✓ Thinking Ethically Online
- ✓ Email Etiquette
- ✓ Texting/Video Conferencing
- ✓ Cyberbullying
- ✓ Digital Drama
- ✓ Offline Bullying
- ✓ Hate Speech
- ✓ Online Privacy
- ✓ Presenting Yourself Online



LEVEL 2: INFORMATION LITERACY

- ✓ Searching the Web
- ✓ Constructing Search Queries
- ✓ Reading a Results Page
- ✓ Personal Info Management
- ✓ Algorithms, Filter Bubbles
- ✓ Copyright, Plagiarism
- ✓ Balancing Online & Offline Life
- ✓ Online Safety, Online Scams
- ✓ Security Strategies
- ✓ Creative Commons
- ✓ Fair Use, Public Domain
- ✓ Using Wikipedia

LEVEL 3: MEDIA LITERACY FOR POSITIVE PARTICIPATION

- ✓ Consumption vs. Production
- ✓ Understanding Multitasking
- ✓ Persuasive Technologies
- ✓ Analyzing Information
- ✓ What's "News"?
- ✓ Visual Literacy
- ✓ Media Representation
- ✓ Clickbait, Deepfakes
- ✓ Sexting, Sextortion
- ✓ Advanced Research Skills
- ✓ Artificial Intelligence
- ✓ Ethical Thinking & Future Tech



Focus Groups

In March and April, 2023, Focus Groups were conducted by Perry Art Reed, MA. Reed is a Media Psychology Doctoral Candidate at Fielding Graduate University. Focus groups were conducted over Zoom with current Cyber Civics teachers to assess their experiences with the program.

Here are the top takeaways.



1

Hands-On Student Activities Are a Favorite Feature

Every Cyber Civics lesson includes a hands-on learning activity that calls on critical thinking, ethical discussion and decision making through hands-on projects, problem solving, and role-playing, and more.

These activities allow students to engage with their peers and have rich discussions about their online activities. This is how students negotiate the norms and behaviors they will take into the online world.





“I love all of the suggested activities for the kids that get them talking to each other. The kids like media because it's relevant to their world today, but they also really like thought-provoking questions and the opportunity to talk to each other about issues that feel immediate to them, like whether or not one has consent to share a friend's photo on social media.

Cyber Civics has well thought-through conversation starters, and the examples are so rich. For my kids, it's just like candy, and what we're talking about is good citizenship.”

Melanie Niemczura



2

Different Methods of Deploying the Lessons Meet Diverse Teaching & Learning Styles



Lesson plan and hands-on activities in-class



Lesson plan, activities, plus slides/videos in-class



Slides/videos uploaded to student's school-issued devices



Virtual (at-home) self-paced in online LMS

← ANALOG

DIGITAL →





“It’s hitting our current middle schoolers where they are, and meeting their different styles of learning.

For those learners who need it written, they have PDF guides. For those learners who need it shown, they have videos. For those that need interactivity with other kids, they have activities.”

Marshunda Smith



3

The Platform Where Lessons are Accessed is Efficient and Easy To Use

When schools, districts, or teachers subscribe to Cyber Civics, they get access to their own private portal where lesson plans, slides, parent letters, student forms and more are accessed.

The system keeps track of teacher progress, so each time they login they know just where they left off! Teachers like its ease-of-use.

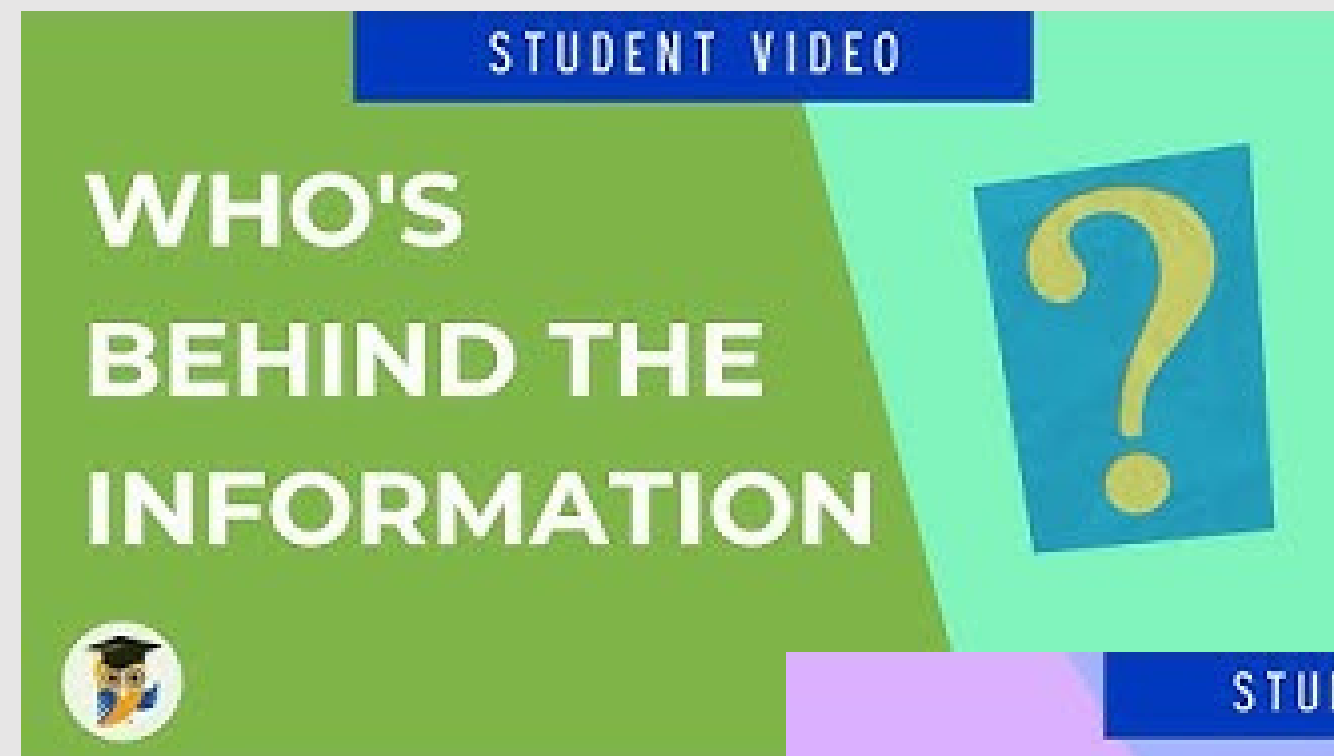


4

The Videos Are a Hit with Students

We've created over 60 original, entertaining videos and embedded them into the Slides that accompany every lesson.

These make the topics easy for teachers to deliver, plus the students love them!



5

Requires Very Little Prep

Teachers in the Focus Groups said they liked that Cyber Civics lessons are turnkey and ready to go.

In previous surveys, we learned that it takes teachers only 5-10 minutes to read the lesson plan and be ready to teach.





“It’s really nice to have something to go to every week that’s already planned out for you, and it’s super convenient. It’s all right there and really easy to access. I’ll print off the packet of the lesson we’re going to do that week and then go through it and make notes. It’s just really simple and it’s been really user friendly for me too, which is just one of those nice things. I know we have Cyber Civics at the end of the day every Thursday, and I don’t have to think about it that much.”

Jessie Stege





Alignment with Ed. Standards is a Plus!

Every Cyber Civics lesson is fully aligned with Common Core ELA Standards, ISTE Tech Standards, and CASEL SEL Competencies.

Teachers said that providing the teaching standards with curriculum was helpful and an timesaver for those who have to report this to their administration.

4. The Five Principles of Citizenship

Every student will use technology to connect with others, becoming a “citizen” of all sorts of online communities. Knowing how to be a good citizen offline is fairly easy as the world is governed by rules, laws, and norms that have been established over time. But that’s not the case online. Many online communities still lack rules, laws, or norms, and if there are any they are sometimes hard to figure out (or buried in “terms of use”). Plus, there are no “police” safeguarding the Internet. That’s why it’s important to introduce students to the five principles of citizenship. These principles will help them know how to conduct themselves online, and off.

-The Five Principles of Citizenship come from [Education World](#).

Key Standards—CCSS.ELA-LITERACY: RL.5.2, W.5.2, W.5.2.A, SL.5.1, SL.5.1.A, SL.5.1.B, SL.5.1.C; RL.6.2, RL.6.5, SL.6.1, SL.6.1.A, SL.6.1.B, SL.6.1.C, L.6.6. ISTE: 3d, 4d. CASEL: 3d, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5d, 5e, 5f.





Lesson Length is Just Right

The current lesson length works well for most teachers most of the time. Typically, teachers are covering a single lesson in a 40- to 50- minute period, although many noted that the activity discussions could continue much longer.





Teachers Like Adaptable Parent Letters

Send-home parent/guardian letters outline activities families can do to reinforce what students learn in school. Teachers like to adapt and use these letters for their parents who, teachers say, are grateful for this program.

CYBER CIVICS LEVEL 1: FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Your children have just embarked upon their third unit of **Cyber Civics** "digital citizenship" lessons. In this very important unit they will learn that they have, or will have, **online** or **digital reputations** that can be searched, copied, shared, seen by large, invisible audiences, and will last forever! Many people will judge them by what they see online, so it is important for students to understand how to manage their digital reputations.

Here are some suggested at-home activities that will support what they are learning in school. Remember, these are important to do because it takes a village to raise **ethical, safe and productive digital citizens**.


ABOUT UNIT 3: YOUR DIGITAL REPUTATION

It is vital for students to learn that online information can be both helpful and harmful to their reputations. Additionally, they should understand that their online actions not only impact their own digital reputations, but also the digital reputations of others... and vice versa!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Date of Lesson

- _____ Your children were asked to decide which of two fictional high school graduates they would offer an athletic scholarship to, based on what they learned about the candidates by reviewing their "digital reputations." Ask your children to tell you which applicant they decided **against** giving the scholarship to and why.
- _____ One of the most difficult concepts for students to grasp is how their actions can impact the digital reputation of others, and how the actions of others can impact their own digital reputations. Ask your children if there is anything **YOU** have ever posted online, or might post, that could contribute to **their** digital reputations and discuss.
- _____ Your digital reputation is something like a big billboard on the "Information Superhighway." It advertises you to the world! Talk to your children about the digital billboards they created in class, and ask what they hope their billboards will say about them (maybe they'll even show them to you).



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Some Favorite Lessons

- How a Computer Works
- Digital Reputation Lessons
- Citizenship Lessons
- All of the Information Literacy Lessons
- Web Search
- Cyberbullying/Hate Speech
- Copyright
- Plagiarism
- Detecting Misinformation
- Sexting
- Privacy Lessons



LEVEL 1: DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP



UNIT 1: BECOMING A DE-'TECH'-TIVE

- De-'Tech'-Tive Work*
- Investigating Today's Tech
- How Much Do You Know?

UNIT 2: CITIZENSHIP

- Five Principles of Citizenship
- How To Be a Good Citizen Online
- Designing a Positive Community

UNIT 3: YOUR DIGITAL REPUTATION

- Digital Background Check
- To Share or Not To Share?
- Your Digital Billboard

UNIT 4: ETHICAL THINKING

- Ethical Thinking in Digital Spaces
- Email Etiquette
- Texting, Visual Communication Etiquette
- Commenting Respectfully
- Creating a Code of Conduct

UNIT 5: CYBERBULLYING & DIGITAL DRAMA

- Hiding Behind a Screen
- Real People, Real Feelings
- What is Cyberbullying? Digital Drama?
- Be Upstanding
- What if You're The Target?

UNIT 6: IDENTITY AND PRIVACY

- Who Am I Online?
- You Are the Words You Use
- My Self, My Selfie
- You, In Six Words
- A-Okay or No Way

- Final Project

**The term "de-'tech'-tive" comes from "Digital Community, Digital Citizen" by Jason Ohler*

LEVEL 2: INFORMATION LITERACY



PREP LESSON

- Using Computers Responsibly

UNIT 1: LEARNING BALANCE

- Your Time, Part 1
- Your Time, Part 2

UNIT 2: ONLINE SAFETY

- Online Safety 101
- Common Online Threats

UNIT 3: SEARCHING THE WEB

- Elements of a Web Search
- How Does Search Work?
- Constructing a Search Query
- Anatomy of a Results Page
- Why Can't I Cut & Paste?

UNIT 4: YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Who's Watching?
- Privacy Policies: Who Reads Them?
- Understanding Terms of Use
- Algorithms are Awesome. Or Are They?
- Protecting Your Online Data
- What Makes a Password Great?
- What Would You Collect?

UNIT 5: COPYRIGHT | PUBLIC DOMAIN | FAIR USE

- What is Copyright?
- Why Copyright Matters
- What is Creative Commons?
- Public Domain & Fair Use
- Living in a Remix World

UNIT 6: HOW TO USE WIKIPEDIA

- Why Wikis Work
- Exploring Wikipedia
- Editing Wikipedia

- The Collaborative Final

LEVEL 3: MEDIA LITERACY FOR POSITIVE PARTICIPATION



UNIT 1: A PARTICIPATORY CULTURE

- Are You a Taker or or Maker?
- Are You a Multitasker?
- Your Brain on Tech

UNIT 2: CRITICAL THINKING

- Analyzing Online Info, Part 1
- Analyzing Online Info, Part 2

UNIT 3: MISINFORMATION

- What's News?
- Understanding "Fake" News
- Clickbait & Deepfakes
- Simon Says It's Fake

UNIT 4: STEREOTYPES, MEDIA REPRESENTATION

- Seeing Stereotypes
- Don't Label Me!
- The Ad Who Knows You

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

- Before There Was Photoshop
- Every Picture Tells a Story
- Don't Let That Photo Fool You
- When Facetune Goes Too Far
- Food Takes Center Stage

UNIT 6: SEXTING

- Let's Talk About Sexting
- Sexting: Just Say No

UNIT 7: DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

- The Power of Social Media
- Trolls, Lurkers, & Upstanders
- A.I. & Ethical Thinking
- Making Technology Accessible
- How Do You Participate Now?

EXTRA UNIT: RESEARCH SKILLS

- Filters and Operators
- Search Like a Pro
- How To Cite Right
- Let's Review! Copyright, Fair Use,

Can We Tell You More?

Contact us for your Free Demo or to try any of these lessons with your students.

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