



The R2 Resilience Program[®]

Standard Manual for Educational Settings



RRC - Evaluation
and Training Institute



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What is Resilience?*

Resilience is a dynamic process that describes how we interact with the world around us to become our best selves. When we think about resilience, we shift our focus away from the things that cause mental illness and behavioural problems. Instead, we focus on how students survive and thrive when they have the resources they need for success, even when they experience hardship and stress.

Most commonly, resilience is an individual's ability to overcome adversity and continue their normal development. The definition of resilience that we work with requires individuals to have the capacity to find resources that can improve their well-being while also emphasizing that families, communities, schools, and governments must provide these resources in ways that individuals value. This relational understanding of well-being embedded in a social-ecological framework is a different way to think about resilience.

We often look at how people change their thinking or behaviour to cope with stress and thus, focus on the individual and their abilities. We describe people who can change themselves as "rugged" because it looks like they are doing well all on their own. However, the idea of individual "ruggedness" does not properly explain why some people do well while others struggle when exposed to the same misfortune.

It is helpful to think about resilience as the process of doing better than expected when we are both rugged and resourced. People who have the right mindset, the right talents, and the right social, economic, and institutional supports for the situation show more resilience. These two aspects of resilience work together. For example, having lots of resources (e.g., good quality health care, safe housing, education, family supports, and a safe community) helps us feel more optimistic, motivates us to stay healthy, and improves our self-esteem. Likewise, people who have a strong sense of personal meaning, self-esteem, and optimism are more likely to see opportunities for success and seize them when they happen. They are also more likely to have larger social networks and be better at advocating for their needs. Being rugged and having resources means we have everything we need to cope during a difficult time.

* The R2 Resilience Program is the result of collaboration between Dr. Michael Ungar and staff and colleagues affiliated with the Resilience Research Centre.



The R2 Approach

There are two types of protective factors involved in resilience:

- The **Rugged Qualities** that reside within all of us
- The **Resources** that support us

Rugged protective factors are changeable internal qualities, such as our level of self-esteem, optimism, mindfulness, and our ability to set goals and think critically. Elementary students may better understand rugged qualities as “our traits” or “our talents” which can be used to help us fix a problem by ourselves or to help others. Resources can include experiences of control, meaningful relationships with others, access to services and supports, structure and routine, and a positive peer group.

These two aspects of resilience are the foundation of the R2 Program; they work together and are both needed to experience positive outcomes in the face of stress and adversity. This model of resilience avoids blaming people who do not succeed for problems they may not be able to change. It reminds us that personal qualities are only half the reason we do well. Without an environment rich in resources, individual “grit” or “ruggedness” can only take us so far, especially if one has experienced systematic barriers as a result of racism, poverty, a learning challenge, or other forms of oppression. To address these challenges, both strong personal qualities and supportive people and institutions, like safe school policies and adapted classrooms for young people with disabilities, are required.

How is R2 Different from Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)?

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, SEL is the process through which students acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions³. The outcomes of SEL align with many of the R2 Rugged Factors (setting goals, empathy) and Resources (supportive relationships, opportunities to make decisions). As such, SEL can be a useful tool for developing these factors. The main difference between SEL and R2 as an educational approach is that R2 promotes the development of personal and social resources beyond what SEL looks at. While SEL focuses on developing students’ social and emotional awareness and skills, R2 develops students’ capacity to use their personal and environmental resources to respond adaptively to challenges, stress, and adversity.





Case Study of a Rugged Resilience Factor: Empathy

A high school decided that it needed to help its students become more empathetic so as to benefit their resilience. All high school students spent a month engaging in service projects. They chose the organization they wanted to help, came up with ideas for how to be of service, and reached out to the organization to arrange their efforts. Their service project included activities such as making sandwiches for a local shelter, making care packages for a local clinic, making holiday videos for residents in care at the children's hospital etc.

Students were asked to think about who their project would help; how it would help them; what they understood about the situation; and whether they could really put themselves in the shoes of the people they were trying to help. The teachers emphasized that we all need help at different times and in different situations. Through this project students learned how to humanize those they helped rather than patronizing them.

Following the projects, many of the students expressed a desire to continue the relationship they had started with the people and organization they were helping. They realized how much of a difference they could make in others' lives through simple gestures. Through their service projects, students learned about empathy in an active way. They became more self-aware of themselves in relation to other people and better able to build supportive relationships. By learning to be empathetic to the struggles of others, these students were better able to handle the challenges in their own lives by knowing that it's okay to asking for help, leaning on their supportive relationships, and staying positive by doing positive things for others.





Case Study of a Resourced Resilience Factor – Opportunities to Fix One’s Mistakes

The opportunity to fix our mistakes is a resource for students’ resilience. A key part of having the opportunity to fix our mistakes is an environment that is mistake tolerant, in that it views mistakes as a learning opportunity, and focuses on students making amends for their mistake rather than punishing students for it.

A fifth-grade teacher asked her class how they could make their classroom more tolerant of mistakes. Her students responded with various suggestions, including “when I make a mistake, having a chance to make up for it”. The class then brainstormed ways that students could make amends for common mistakes or misbehaviours, such as interrupting the class, being mean, or breaking classroom supplies. The teacher then compiled these suggestions into a “Making Amends” binder which was kept in the classroom. When students misbehaved, they would get the binder and follow one of the suggestions to make amends. This could look like, if a student insulted another student, they had to apologize and ask that student how they could make it up to them by saying something nice about them or by writing an apology letter.

At first, the teacher would point out students’ misbehaviour and remind them about the binder, but she found that, over time, students started to notice their behaviour by themselves and resolve their own problems. Whereas previously, students would report playground incidents to the teacher after recess, now they would ask permission to have the Make Amends binder and go into the hall. Both kids involved in the incident would return happy, having resolved the issue on their own.

Student quickly shifted from focusing on negative behaviour to a positive action. The teacher recorded a decrease in students sent to the office, as students and teachers were both better able to handle minor disruptions in the classroom. Overall, the students developed skills of self-awareness, empathy, responsible decision-making, self-regulation, and constructive conflict resolution; all skills that will help them handle adversity later in their lives.



Is it Better to be Rugged or Resourced?

Rugged Individual



Problems



When problems are few, we can rely on ourselves to solve our own problems

When we have few problems, rugged individuals can usually overcome most of life's challenges by changing their thoughts, feelings and behaviors on their own.

Resourced individuals, however, have more tools to cope when they experience many problems in many different parts of their lives at the same time.

Resourced Individual



Problems



When problems are many and complex, we need lots of resources to cope effectively

When we think of resilience in terms of rugged and resourced qualities, we see that resilience is not an individual trait or single quality. It is instead the process of people finding the right resources and developing the right coping strategies to effectively deal with the challenges they face. The R2 Resilience Education Program is designed to train teachers and school staff to help students develop the many aspects of resilience that are needed to cope with the stressors in their lives.



Resilience Factors in this Manual

A detailed review of the literature has resulted in the identification of two dozen rugged qualities of individuals that show greater resilience and another two dozen resources which are known to be foundational in the lives of people who recover, adapt, or transform their surroundings and themselves after exposure to stress. From this list, 12 factors were selected to build a resilience program for students, based on a systematic review process and consultation with a K-12 school in Atlantic Canada. R2 partnered with the school and its teachers, students, and parents to identify what risk and protective factors were most salient for students.

Students share many risk factors associated with their age and the school environment, including bullying, the development of friendships, growing their knowledge of oneself, developing their morality and meaning system, making difficult decisions, and facing consequences for their actions. Some students also face risk factors in their home or community environment, such as poverty, family separation, abuse, and lack of safety, proper nutrition, or housing. The R2 Program is valuable for all students as it helps teachers and school staff create a nurturing environment and school culture that protects against the various risks young people encounter and promotes students' well-being.

Students today are facing increased stress that can result in more mental health challenges, like anxiety and depression. Teachers and school staff are positioned to help students tap into their own rugged qualities and to provide them with the resources that will help them cope with stress. When the factors that improve resilience are identified, they can be strengthened for all students, thereby making all young people more resilient when they encounter adversity. The R2 program helps teachers incorporate these resilience-promoting factors in their classrooms and curriculum. Additionally, the R2 program aims to instill these concepts and values into the school culture, so that the resilience factor goes beyond the lesson where it is taught and begins to shape the broader school environment. This happens as students incorporate the language of resilience into their vocabulary and students, teachers, and staff implement the resilience qualities through their actions and relationships.





Current Factors

To create the R2 Resilience Education Program we invited teachers, school staff, parents, and students themselves to tell us which risk and protective factors they felt were the most important for students. They did this by ranking resilience factors according to how important they felt each factor was. The method we used was used is called the Delphi process, and it resulted in six rugged and six resourced factors deemed to be the most important for young people.

Rugged Qualities:

- 1)  **Communication Skills** – the capacity to communicate well with those around us and tell them what we need. Good communication skills can help us to express ourselves and articulate problems before they escalate.
- 2)  **Critical Thinking** – the ability to analyse and evaluate an issue to make better judgements. Good critical thinking helps us evaluate the accuracy and truthfulness of information we receive so that we can make our own decisions.
- 3)  **Empathy** – interest in/ care for / understanding and appreciating the needs of others. Empathy is important for building social relationships, healthy family dynamics, and connections with society.
- 4)  **Motivation and Perseverance** – the ability to continue behaving in ways that are of benefit to us during difficult times. Motivation and perseverance mean getting back up after failing and continuing to try in the face of challenges.
- 5)  **Problem Solving** – the ability to consider many different potential solutions to a problem and choose the best one. Problem solving is a necessary component of conflict resolution and constructively coping with adversity.
- 6)  **Self-Esteem** – the feeling that we are showing others our best selves without inhibition. High self-esteem means we see ourselves as capable, worthy, and as a person of value, which benefits our well-being and many other resilience factors.



Resourced Qualities:

- 1)  **A Supportive Peer Group** – beginning and maintaining relationships with supportive peers. Peers offer companionships and a sense of connection, as well as social support during challenges.
- 2)  **Appropriate Use of Social Media** – beneficial contact with others through social media without feeling the pressure of social comparisons. Using social media to share information and express feelings can help build friendships and increase our psychological well-being.
- 3)  **Opportunities to Fix Mistakes** – having opportunities to correct and learn from one's mistakes. The process of acknowledging a mistake, reflecting on it, and attempting to fix it helps us to learn new abilities and skills.
- 4)  **Opportunities to Make Decisions for Oneself (appropriate to one's age and abilities)** – access to opportunities to make decisions that affect our lives. Making important decisions for ourselves gives us a sense of autonomy, control, involvement, and the chance to consider the impact of our actions.
- 5)  **Reasonable Consequences for One's Actions** – recognising the impact our actions have for us and others. Consequences help us make sense of the way the world works and teach us socially accepted behaviours and values, as well as personal responsibility.
- 6)  **Reasonable Expectations for Behaviour** – expectations that we behave in ways that are in our own best interest. High yet achievable expectations communicate a belief in our abilities and inspire us to take on challenges; while established norms of behaviour give us a degree of stability and prosociality, even during adversity.





How to Use the R2 Resilience Program[®] Manual

The R2 Resilience Program[®] manual contains a series of modules: one for each of the 12 resilience factors involved in the R2 Resilience Education Program. These modules are presented in two sections, one for the six rugged factors and one for the six resource factors. It is important, when trying to cultivate resilience, that both rugged and resourced factors are incorporated and emphasized. Rugged factors alone are not enough to protect an individual from adversity. Resources are needed to build rugged factors in the absence of stress and to provide necessary supports during times of adversity. For example, research has found that a supportive peer group can foster self-esteem and constructive emotional coping skills. At the same time, rugged factors are needed to access supportive resources; for example, communication skills are needed to effectively ask for help when facing an overwhelming challenge. The R2 Resilience Program[®] manual includes rugged and resourced factors selected specifically for a student population and it is intended that the two types of resilience factors be taught with an equal emphasis.

The 12 R2 Resilience Program[®] modules can be used in any order. Some factors may be more relevant to certain age groups. For example, critical thinking may be more salient for high school students than elementary school students. The order of the modules may also be rearranged to suit existing curriculum and school-specific education aims to better incorporate resilience factors into the school culture. While all 12 factors are important, it is not essential that all 12 modules are completed. For the program to work, however, we strongly recommend that students receive an equal number of modules focused on ruggedness and on resources.

The modules provided in the R2 Resilience Program[®] manual are for teachers to use; they contain extra instructions and information not always of interest to students. The lesson plans and activities included in each module are for student use, and they can be used exactly as described or modified to fit different classrooms. For example, activities may have to be broken up over multiple days for elementary school students. In many cases, we provide multiple activities and concepts within a lesson plan so that teachers can pick and choose the ones best suited to their class. Younger children may also need more time or assistance with activities and may need the evaluation measures read aloud to them in a conversation style. Additionally, exercises and lesson plans may be taken as starting points and used as inspiration to create new ones to suit specific populations of students. The teachers using the R2 Resilience Program[®] manual will be in the best position to decide which exercises are best suited to their classes and what additional exercises could be introduced.



Finally, it is important to understand that resilience takes time and is not a linear process. While the R2 Resilience Program® manual is intended to help teachers impart resilience factors to students, building resilience is a life-long pursuit. Students can be expected to begin to incorporate the language of resilience into their vocabulary and thinking, to identify the rugged resources they possess, how to grow them and when they are useful, and to acknowledge the resources in their lives and how to access them in meaningful ways.

How to Use the R2 Resilience Program® Modules

At the start of each R2 Resilience Program® module, you will find the key learning objectives for that resilience factor. Each module will contain a brief overview of the resilience factor, how to develop it, and how it relates to resilience. This will be followed by a scientific summary, which pulls together scientific support for the connection between the factor and resilience. The R2 Resilience Program® is an evidence-based approach, which means we created the modules based on the evidence and best practices available in the literature. This background information may be useful for teachers to understand the value and complexity of the subject. It may also be useful to students to understand why they are learning about this factor and could be included in lesson plans.

Also included in the R2 Resilience Program® modules is a standardized measure from the research literature, which can get students thinking about the resilience factor in a personal way. The measure also provides a baseline of that resilience factor, and you may choose to re-administer the measures at the end of the module to assess change in your students' level of that resilience factor. In some modules, we include a series of sensitizing questions that may be used as discussion starters, if the measure is not suited to that or your class.

We also provide case studies and lesson plans for a practical guide of how to implement these resilience factors in your classroom. The lesson plans include key concepts and activities for practicing the factor. The thinking behind each exercise and lesson plan are included so that you can extend or adapt it to your unique group of students.

Please Note:

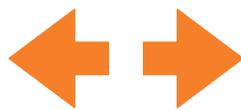
The following pages contain a sample of the contents of a resourced factor module from the R2 Standard Manual for Education Settings. The sample module begins with a brief summary of the science behind each learning module for all age levels. This is followed by a sample of the lesson plans tailored to elementary students. Other lesson plans are available for the same topic for high-school and middle-school students upon purchase of the R2 Standard Manual for Education Settings.

Please contact rrc@dal.ca or R2's client relations manager Alexis Wheeler at alexis.wheeler@dal.ca to learn more about the R2 Resilience Program® and how it can be implemented in your setting.



Learning Module: Opportunities to Make Decisions for Oneself

Facilitator Manual



Key Learning Objectives

- Understand how having age-appropriate opportunities to make decisions for oneself benefits one's sense of agency, control, confidence, and resilience
- Describe factors and activities that facilitate age-appropriate opportunities to make decisions for oneself
- Reflect on past decisions, and learn strategies to identify decision-making opportunities

What are Opportunities to Make Decisions for Oneself?

Opportunities to make decisions for oneself involves both a student's individual capabilities and their environment, which provides them with chances to exercise these individual traits. Intrinsic to our understanding of opportunities to make decisions for oneself is the idea that students possess the capacity for healthy development and positive decision making. Providing students opportunities to exercise control over their lives helps to further build these capabilities. This idea comes from a Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach, which suggests that positive youth development occurs when opportunities are made available and the people around youth support them to develop their own unique abilities. Individuals providing these opportunities can encourage the development of young people's personal agency, strengths, and competencies, while considering the risks and challenges they face.

The opportunities provided to someone to make decisions for themselves need to be age and ability appropriate. Opportunities that exist within these parameters give students the chance to exercise control over their lives and experience responsibility within a safe scope. For instance, it is inappropriate for students to decide whether or not they should attend school but allowing students to decide how and/or what they will learn about helps them feel more involved.

The factor, opportunities to make decisions for oneself, relates to many important competencies that increase students' resilience. These competencies include autonomy, agency, accountability, and an internal locus of control.

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Autonomy is the ability to act in accordance with one's own values rather than under the influence of others. The more age-appropriate opportunities students have to make their own decisions, the more they will be able to make decisions in accordance with their own values, morals, and motivations, rather than looking to others for guidance. This ability will benefit students as they grow and face more complex decisions. Autonomy helps us think for ourselves and form our own conclusions.

Agency is the ability to act in order to produce a particular effect. In other words, having a strong sense of agency means believing that one's actions will make a difference. Believing that their actions matter can help students to cope with stress, because they believe they can take action to change their situation.

The concept of a locus of control refers to the degree to which one believes that the things that happen in life are a result of actions. An internal locus of control refers to the belief that personal outcomes are the result of one's own efforts and actions. An external locus of control refers to the belief that outcomes are determined by external forces outside of one's control. These two concepts represent ends of a spectrum and most people fall somewhere in between. Similar to the concept of agency, the greater one's internal locus of control, the more one feels like they can cope adaptively with challenges and stress.

Accountability is the ability to take responsibility for one's actions. Having the opportunity to make decisions that affect their lives in perceivable ways helps students to see the effects of their decisions. Reflecting on these effects helps students understand the relationship between actions and consequences. When students are aware of the consequences of their decisions, they can take responsibility for them and make more positive ones.

To further illustrate the relationship between opportunities to make decisions for oneself and resilience, consider an extreme example of someone who was not allowed to make decisions. A child that lives a rigidly structured life where parents and other authority figures determine every major aspect of their life may struggle in later years when confronted with important decisions. Indecision and anxiety regarding decision-making can stem from one's lack of experience with earlier age-appropriate opportunities to engage and explore the impact of decisions that have some tangible or perceived impact on them.

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Schools, and specifically classrooms, are safe spaces for students to make decisions for themselves, experience the effects of their decisions, and reflect on that cause-and-effect process, thereby growing their autonomy, agency, internal locus of control, and accountability. This can be done by:

- Helping students to become aware of areas in their life where they have opportunities to make decisions.
- Teaching students how to make decisions that align with their values, morals, and motivations.
- Showing students the connections between their actions, decisions, and effort to increase their sense of agency and control.
- Supporting students as they work to reflect on the effect of their decisions and take responsibility for their decisions.
- Giving students opportunities in the classroom to make decisions to impact their learning experience.

Opportunities to Make Decisions and Resilience

Benard (1991) highlights that ‘opportunities to participate and contribute’ are an important way in which environments can enhance one’s resilience (as cited in Morrison & Allen, 2007). One way in which this process works is through the feeling of control. Gray (2011) explains that anxiety and depression correlate strongly with individuals’ sense of control or lack of control over their own lives. Additionally, depression has been linked to a sense of helplessness or lack of control. The more impact one believes they have over things that matter to them, the better their wellbeing will be. Prilleltensky and colleagues (2001) state that “opportunities to experience power and control in one’s life contribute to health and wellness” (p. 143). Control mediates the negative effects of stress by contributing to an individual’s ability to cope with or manage stress. In other words, when challenges come our way, they will have less of a negative impact on us if we believe that we have a greater ability to do something to address the challenge.

Perceived control is sometimes discussed in terms of a ‘locus of control’, which can be internal or external. An internal locus of control relates to the belief that personal outcomes are dependent on one’s own effort and actions, whereas an external locus of control relates to the belief that outcomes are determined by external forces (Rotter, 1966). Krongborg and colleagues (2017) found that students with a more internally focused locus of control had higher levels of reported resilience. The authors found that locus of control was related to resilience insofar as the internally

focused students displayed a greater sense of mastery, lower levels of emotional reactivity, and a higher sense of relatedness compared to the externally focused students. An internal locus of control has been linked to the notion of “learned hopefulness” where individuals learn and utilize skills that enable them to develop a sense of psychological empowerment and actively attempt to overcome adversity (Ungar, 2004). Learned hopefulness contrasts “learned helplessness,” which occurs when people believe they are powerless to control what happens to them and they become passive and limited in their coping abilities (Luthar, 1991).

Evidence indicates that a sense of personal control, empowerment, and self-determination are associated with positive mental health. Control can occur through active participation in important decisions, and in turn, decision-making fosters resilience by decreasing dependency, and by providing a sense of usefulness, and connectedness (Oliver et al., 2006). Helping students to achieve a greater sense of perceived control and a more internal locus of control can be achieved by creating appropriate opportunities for students to make decisions that will have some perceived substantial bearing in their lives. For instance, Brooks (2006) notes that schools are a viable setting to enhance resilience as they provide opportunities for students to participate in activities that have meaning and value, and that such participation helps students build a sense of competence.

Lesson Plan for Elementary School Students (Grade 1-6)

Start this lesson off by reading a ‘choose your own adventure’ book to give students the opportunity to make their own decisions and see its effects in a fictional setting. We recommend the book, *What Should Danny Do?* written by Adir Levy and Ganit Levy and illustrated by Mat Sadler. This book focuses on Danny and shows students how their choices can shape their day, and ultimately their life, into what they want it to be. There are nine different endings, so you can re-read the book with your students to see the different impacts of different choices. There are other versions of this book, including *What Should Danny Do?*, *School Day*, and *What Should Darla Do?*

If you can’t access these books, there are many other ‘choose your own adventure’ books.

- The Choose Your Own Adventure series is an expansive collection suitable for Grades 2 to 6
- The Dragonlark Collection are best for younger students (K to Grade 2)
- Give Yourself Goosebumps is for students who love scary stories, best for Grades 4 to 6

Continued...

- Pick Your Own Quest is a more updated series that includes topics from mythology to Minecraft; good for Grades 1 to 6
- You Say Which Way is a fantasy interactive series, best for Grades 3 to 6
- Choose Your Own Story includes adventures inspired by *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, and Minecraft; good for Grades 5 to 6
- You Choose: Survival is good for any students who prefer non-fiction; best for Grades 3 to 6
- You Choose: History is for history-loving students, Grades 3 to 6

After reading a 'choose your own adventure' book with your class, have a discussion about the choices students made. We have a set of questions specific to the book, *What Should Danny Do?*, and a more general set of questions that can be used no matter what book you read with your class.

What Should Danny Do? Discussion Questions:

Adapted from the Free Teacher Resources from: Elon Books. (2019). Teachers. What Should Danny Do? <https://www.whatshoulddannydo.com/teachers/>

- When Danny makes all the wrong choices in the book, he asks himself, "I wonder what I could have done to make my day better?" Can you help him find the answer? How did his choices shape his day and what can we learn from them?
- When Danny makes all the right choices in the book, how does his day change? Did he have anything to do with it?
- In some of the storylines, Danny's day doesn't start so great, but then gets better. Was he the one who made his day better, or was it someone else? We all make mistakes in life, but it is within our control to change the course of our day.

Danny's Decisions vs Your Decisions

- Compare how Danny needed to share the video game and/or his dog, Oreo, to sharing something that belongs to the class or the school. If you share nicely, are the other kids more likely or less likely to enjoy playing with you?
- Compare how Danny chose to think ahead and offer some of his ice cream to his brother to a time when a friend in school may have needed some help. If you try to understand how your friends feel and offer them help before they ask, is your friendship likely to grow (and are they more likely to reciprocate)?

General Discussion Questions:

- How did the choices you made shape the outcome? Are there any choices you could have made that would have resulted in a better ending?
- Was there a time when things were going badly and the choices you made turned things around? Has this ever happened in your real life (ask students for examples and give some of your own)?
- Do you feel like the choices you made had a big impact on the story? Do you feel that way about your own life?

The Power to Choose

The book, *What Should Danny Do?*, introduces students to the concept of the Power to Choose. This is the power to choose how our day, and ultimately, our lives, will turn out by choosing how we react. Even when bad things happen, we can choose how we respond to them and whether we make things better or worse.

For example:

- When you make a mistake, you can CHOOSE to dwell on it and feel bad or to learn from the mistake, apologize if necessary, and do better next time.
- When someone takes something that is yours, you can CHOOSE to get mad and yell at them or to calmly ask for it back.
- When someone is mean to you, you can CHOOSE to be mean or hit them or tell them that it hurt your feelings and ask them not to do it again.

Even if your class does not read the book, *What Should Danny Do?*, you can introduce students to the *Power to Choose* concept in relation to any choose your own adventure book.



Key Concepts

Concept #1: The Power to Choose

- The *Power to Choose* is a special power within us all. It allows us to feel in control of our lives and like we can make a difference to change things for the better. Many times, things happen to us which we cannot control, but we can always control our reactions to things that come our way.
- There are many ways we can use our *Power to Choose* to make our lives better, as well as the lives of those around us. Sometimes we know the right thing to do, but we CHOOSE to do the easier thing, or the lazy thing, or the selfish thing instead. Using our *Power to Choose* wisely is something we need to work on all the time, but the more we do, the easier it becomes.

Concept #2: Finding Opportunities to Make Our Own Choices

- We need opportunities to make decisions for ourselves in order to develop our independence. Finding opportunities to make our own decisions is another way of using our *Power to Choose*.
- We may have more opportunities to make our own choices than we think. Looking at the areas of our lives where we have the opportunity to make our own choices, can help us feel more independent and in control. We can also learn how to ask for more opportunities from our parents or teachers.

Concept #3: Reflecting on Decisions

- With great power comes great responsibility – our *Power to Choose* gives us the power to change our day, but we also have to think about how that power (our choices) affects other people.
- All of our decisions have effects or consequences. Looking at these effects can tell us if we made a good decision or not, and if we want to repeat those decisions.
- Reflecting on our decisions can help us take ownership of our actions so that we can own up to our mistakes and take credit for our good work.



Exercises:

➤ Learning to Decide for Myself

➤ Using My Power to Choose

➤ Learning Menu

➤ Choice Board – Tic-Tac-Toe



Learning to Decide for Myself

*Worksheet

Adapted from: Life Skills. (2020). *Making decisions: Learning to decide for myself*. Life Skills. <http://lifeskills.wordzila.com/making-decisions/>

Materials:

- Learning to Decide for Myself Worksheet

Intent:

This worksheet gives students the hypothetical chance to make all the decisions for themselves in a day. Once they have made their decisions, students reflect on whether it was a good choice or not. This worksheet gives students the chance to imagine what it would be like to decide everything in their day, which can help them see the opportunities they have to make decisions for themselves and the areas where it is actually better to have someone else make the decision for now. This activity can help students think about what areas of their life it makes sense for them to make their own decisions in, so that they can better appreciate and recognize new opportunities for autonomy.

This worksheet is suitable for students in Grades 2 to 6. Younger students may need help to record their answers.

- Hand out the worksheet and ask students to record the decision they would make first, and then come back to each question and reflect on whether it was a good choice or not.
- These two sections could be broken up with a class discussion, where students first make their decisions and share some of their answers with the class, and then go back and reflect on their choices.
- After completing the worksheet, come together as a class to talk about some of the good choices that students made and what some of the bad choices looked like.
 - Ask students how they decided whether it was a good choice or not.
 - Did they like making all the decisions for themselves?
 - How many of these decisions do they get to make for themselves in real life?
 - Are there any decisions they don't currently get to make for themselves that they would like to (and would make a good choice about)?
 - Are there any choices they are glad they don't make by themselves?

Worksheet on following page...

Learning to Decide for Myself Worksheet (Life Skills, 2020)

People make decisions every day. Some decisions are small, but some are big and very important. Sometimes you decide things for yourself and you get to choose what to do and what not to do. Sometimes, other people decide things for you and they tell you what to do.

Today, you have the power to choose! If you could make all the decisions for yourself in a day, what would you do? Read the following questions carefully and then record your answers. To answer each question, you will need to think and decide what to do all on your own. Once you have made your decision, think about if this is a good choice or not and circle yes or no.

1. What will you do after school today?

Is this a good choice? YES/NO

2. What will you have for dinner this evening?

Is this a good choice? YES/NO

3. Will you watch TV this evening?

Is this a good choice? YES/NO

4. Will you come to school tomorrow?

Is this a good choice? YES/NO

5. Will you brush your teeth tomorrow?

Is this a good choice? YES/NO

6. Who will you play with this afternoon?

Is this a good choice? YES/NO

7. Where will you sleep tonight?

Is this a good choice? YES/NO

8. Will you yell at your brother or sister today?

Is this a good choice? YES/NO

9. Will you do your homework today?

Is this a good choice? YES/NO

10. How will you come to school tomorrow?

Is this a good choice? YES/NO

🔗 Using My Power to Choose

*Worksheet

Adapted from the Free Teacher Resources from: Elon Books. (2019). Teachers. What Should Danny Do? <https://www.whatshoulddannyydo.com/teachers/>

Materials:

- *Power to Choose* Worksheet 1 & 2

Intent:

These worksheets ask students to think about a time when they used their *Power to Choose* wisely and a time when they did not. Students are given the option to draw and/or write about these experiences. Reflecting on time when they made good and bad decisions can help students begin to take more responsibility for their decisions and commit to making better decisions in the future. Framing this reflection in terms of students' *Power to Choose* can help them think more about the decisions they make as they come to see it as both a power and a responsibility.

- Hand out the worksheets and ask students to complete them independently (younger students may need assistance or they could draw a picture and then describe it to the class). The length of the writing should be grade and age appropriate.
- After students have completed the worksheets, come together as a class to discuss the responsibility that comes with their *Power to Choose* and how they have to use this power wisely and for good. Talk about how they can commit to using their *Power to Choose wisely* in the future.
- Optional: have students sign a pledge that they will use their *Power to Choose* wisely and for good for the rest of the school year. Hang up the pledge with students' signatures in the classroom and refer back to it throughout the year.

To access more activities and resources related to the book, *What Should Danny Do?*, follow this link to sign up for free teacher resources:

- <https://www.whatshoulddannyydo.com/teacher-signup/>

Continued on following page...

Strategies for Practice

Here are some suggestions on ways to incorporate more opportunities for students to make decisions for themselves in the classroom. You may already be doing many of these things. You can continue to do these suggestions, add some new ones, and highlight to students that they are being given opportunities to make decisions for themselves. Below are some general suggestions and a specific example of how to incorporate opportunities for students to choose how they learn.

- Invite students to choose their own book to read for a book review.
- During an in-class assignment or activity, ask students if they would like to work alone, in small groups, or as a class.
- Invite students to choose how they would like their desks to be arranged in the classroom (e.g. alone, in pairs, in groups of four, etc.).
- In collaboration with students, develop general classroom guidelines or principles to be followed by the class (e.g. raising hand before speaking, getting in line before walking to lunch, etc.). See the Reasonable Expectations for Behaviour Module for more ways to implement this suggestion.
- Invite students to be involved in planning a class field trip or the end of year class party.

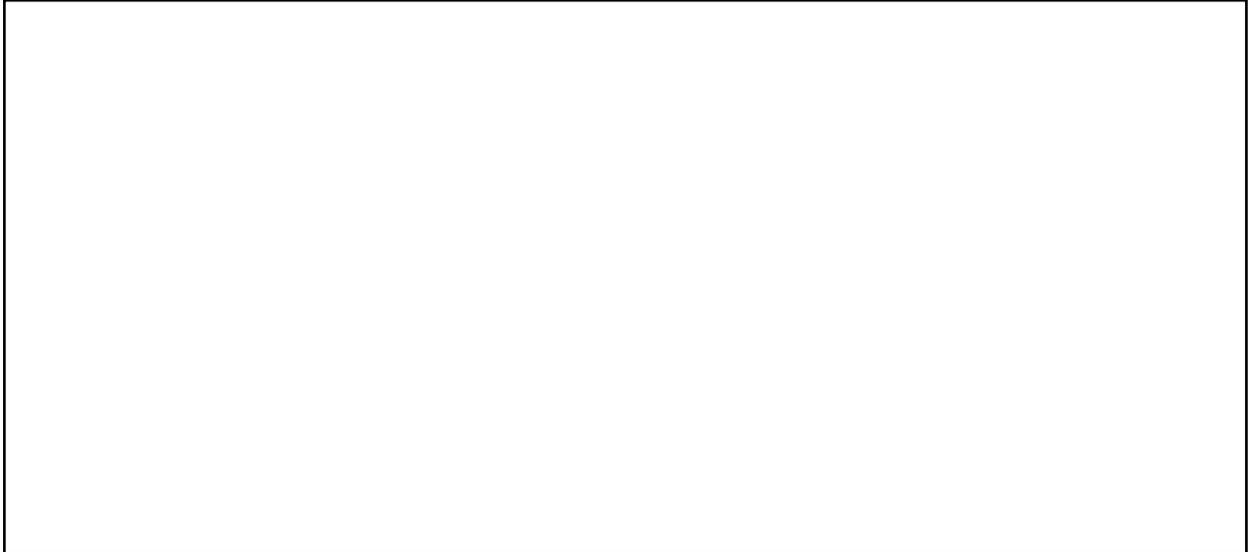
Learning Menus & Choice Boards

Learning menus are a fun way to give students the chance to decide between the different ways of learning. Learning menus outline a variety of educational tasks targeted toward a learning goal and students select the choices that most appeal to them. Learning menus are similar to, and often conflated with, choice boards. At their most basic, choice boards are graphic organizers comprised of a number of squares, which each present an activity that help students learn or practice a primary concept. Students choose which activities to complete. Both concepts come from Differentiated Learning/ Instruction, a framework for tailoring classroom instruction to meet individual students' needs.

Worksheets on following pages...

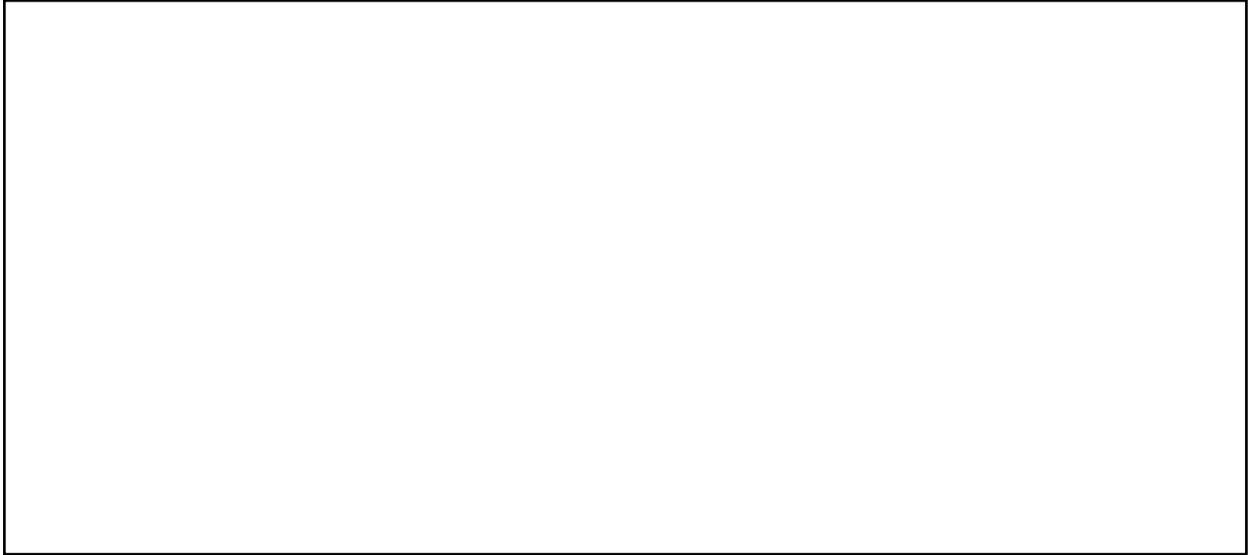
Power to Choose – for Good!

Draw and/ or write about a time when you used your Power to Choose for Good! This means you made a choice that was the right thing to do, so it helped you and other people.



Power to Choose - Misused

Draw and/ or write about a time when you didn't used your Power to Choose wisely. This means you made a choice that may have been the wrong or selfish thing to do, and it ended up hurting you or other people.



Learning Menu

*Worksheet

Materials:

- Learning Menu Template

Intent:

A Learning Menu allows students to pick from a predetermined set of activities that all target a learning goal. Students have to select a Main Dish and a Side Dish, as well as an optional Dessert. You can alter the Learning Menu so that students must complete all the “Main Dish” activities or select multiple Main and Side Dishes (complete more activities). This process allows students a degree of choice and makes it fun by associated the choices with ordering off a menu at a restaurant.

Worksheet on following page...

Learning Menu

Please look over this menu and decide what you would like to order. You must choose the specified number of main and side dishes, dessert is optional. Each dish must be completed by the due day.

Menu For: _____

Due: _____



Main Dishes (choose)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Side Dishes (choose)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Dessert (optional)

1. _____
2. _____

Choice Board – Tic-Tac-Toe

*Worksheet

Materials:

- Materials to create your own tic-tac-toe board

Intent:

This is a particular format of a choice board that adds an element of play to students' choices. For this activity, you must create a tic-tac-toe board that gives students different tasks they can do to achieve a learning objective. Students then choose which to complete in order to create a winning line on their card (horizontal, vertical, diagonal) that passes through the centre square. The centre square can be a free space or the activity you want all students to complete.

For example, to use this method for students' book report, you could make the centre tile reading the assigned book/ the book they choose. The surrounding squares could include different activities that get students to think about the themes and structure of the book. See our example for older students (Grades 4 to 6) below.

Tic-tac-toe board on following page...

<p>Write a short essay on the central theme of the book.</p>	<p>Draw a scene from the book that you feel is a key plot moment and write a short paragraph explaining why you chose that scene.</p>	<p>With one or two other people, re-enact what you feel is the most important scene in the book in front of the class.</p>
<p>Create a visual timeline (online or by hand) of the events of the book. Include important dates, character actions, conflicts and resolutions. Try and note how characters' actions affected the timeline.</p>	<p>Read the book.</p>	<p>Write a journal entry from the perspective of one of the characters as they reflect on the events of the book.</p>
<p>Film a short trailer for this book. Try and capture one of the main themes.</p>	<p>Write an alternative ending to the book and an accompanying paragraph explaining what character actions led to this ending and how it relates to the books' themes.</p>	<p>Create a soundtrack for this book with at least 10 songs and write a short paragraph explaining your choices and where the songs fit in the plot or how they fit the themes of the book.</p>

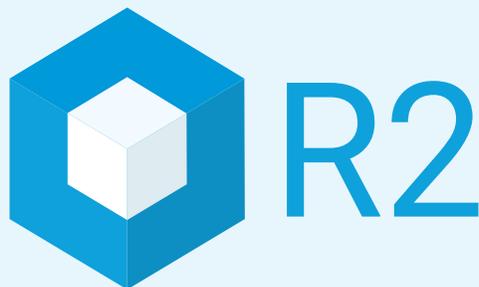
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Please Note:

The following pages contain a sample of the contents of a rugged factor module from the R2 Standard Manual for Education Settings. The sample module begins with a brief summary of the science behind each learning module for all age levels. This is followed by a sample of the lesson plans tailored to middle-school students. Other lesson plans are available for the same topic for high-school and elementary-school students upon purchase of the R2 Standard Manual for Education Settings.

Please contact rrc@dal.ca or R2's client relations manager Alexis Wheeler at alexis.wheeler@dal.ca to learn more about the R2 Resilience Program® and how it can be implemented in your setting.



SAMPLE RUGGED FACTOR

Learning Module: Motivation & Perseverance

Facilitator Manual



Key Learning Objectives

- Understand the relationship between motivation and perseverance
- Understand how motivation and perseverance contribute to resilience
- Know the different types of motivation
- Know the strategies to improve motivation and perseverance

Overview of the Module

Motivation is the drive to do something. Perseverance is the drive to continue doing something despite difficulty or discouragement. Having a strong motivation makes it easier to persevere in the face of challenges.

Motivation can be thought of as students' energy and drive to learn, work hard, and achieve their potential at school and beyond. Motivation plays a key role in students' interest in and enjoyment of school. Motivation affects students' academic performance by predicting how much time and effort they will put into their lessons and assignments. Furthermore, motivation affects students' well-being by helping them pursue what is important to them.

Perseverance is often linked to concepts like determination and grit. It is one's confidence in their ability to succeed when faced with a challenge, difficulty, or discouragement. For example, a student may decide to try out for the school's basketball team, despite being short and not having played basketball much previously. They might get told that they can't play basketball because of their height, but they are determined to try. So, they practice in their free time, try out for the team, and end up making it on. That student demonstrated perseverance. However, if they would have given up on their goal of joining the basketball team when people discouraged them instead of practicing, they would not have shown perseverance. The difference between persevering or not often comes down to one's motivation. If this student was greatly motivated to try out for the basketball team – whether they wanted to prove people wrong or because they loved the sport – that would make it easier for them to overcome other's discouragements and the challenges associated with getting better at a skill, like shooting hoops or dribbling. In this way, perseverance and motivation are intertwined.

Perseverance exists in the presence of challenges, similar to the concept of resilience. Resilience is defined as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, tragedy, threat, or significant stress. In this process, the ability to continue pursuing a goal despite failure, setback, or difficulty, is crucial. Greater motivation and perseverance can help students respond adaptively to common academic stressors and challenges, such as workload, the pressures of grading, and experiences of setbacks or failures. Highly motivated and perseverant individuals tend to see failures as learning opportunities that can help them improve in the future, and they don't let those experiences stop them from trying again. This mindset can extend beyond the school environment. Students who learn how to motivate themselves and persevere in school can apply those skills to future challenges in the workplace, their personal pursuits, and their social life.

Schools can nurture students' motivation and perseverance in many ways, including:

- Increasing students' awareness of their motivations so that they can understand how those motivations affect their accomplishments.
- Growing students' self-belief and confidence by having them experience how motivation and effort lead to success.
- Instilling a belief in effort over ability and a growth mindset in students so that they know that they can improve if they apply themselves to something.
- Showing students how they can work towards their larger dreams and goals by applying themselves now, thereby increasing their motivation for school-related tasks.
- Giving students role models of perseverance to emulate.
- Providing students with strategies to help them stay motivated.

Motivation, Perseverance, and Resilience

Educational resilience is a concept that covers students' success in school and in other areas of life despite environmental adversities. Waxman and colleagues (1997) found that a group of Latino middle school students who showed motivation also demonstrated greater educational resilience than their non-resilient classmates, despite coming from the same school environment and similar home environments. The students who were more motivated were also more satisfied and involved with their mathematics class, showing significantly better performance in that class than their less motivated peers. Additionally, this motivated group had higher academic aspirations and teachers described these students as more persistent (Waxman et al., 1997).

Martin and colleagues (2018) found that motivation related to several positive outcomes in 585 middle and high school students in Jamaica. These outcomes included: greater engagement; academic buoyancy, which refers to students' ability to handle academic setback and difficulty (and is similar to educational resilience); adaptability, or students' capacity to successfully respond to uncertainty and change; and achievement, an "objective" index of academic performance in mathematics, English, and science.

Ramakrishnan and Masten (2020) found that mastery motivation, the drive to control or master challenges, was associated with better school readiness in 85 young children, aged three to five, living in an emergency shelter. Despite the environmental risk of homelessness, children higher in motivation demonstrated better social and emotional functioning and emotion regulation, they also showed more prosocial behaviour. These skills that have been linked with greater academic achievement and educational resilience.

In a group of 615 secondary school students, aged 14 to 19, Trigueros and colleagues (2019) found that self-motivation predicted academic performance and participation in physical activity. Motivation was also associated with resilience. This study found that positive emotions predicted self-motivation towards physical education classes and resilience (Trigueros et al., 2019). The authors note that their findings support a greater body of evidence suggesting that motivation has a positive influence on the adoption of healthy lifestyle habits outside of school. The literature also shows that students who are highly self-motivated are more involved in classes and make better decisions, resulting in high academic performance (Trigueros et al., 2019). This study finds that motivation is associated with resilience when facing the minor adversities associated with physical education classes and physical activity in general. Achievement motivation has also been associated with resilience when adolescents are facing greater adversity, such as exposure to violence in their communities (Ramakrishnan & Masten, 2020; Solberg et al., 2007).

Motivation is a key component of students' resilience throughout their studies, as it has been linked to resilience (Mostafa & Lim, 2020), and shown to help prevent burnout and increase academic performance in university students (Trigueros et al., 2020).

Perseverance has often been conflated with the concept of grit – grit is defined as perseverance of effort and passion for long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007). Grit has been found to protect students from school burnout, a phenomenon of exhaustion and disengagement from schoolwork that is associated with school maladjustment and mental health problems (Tang et al., 2021; Teuber et al., 2020). Tang and colleagues (2021) looked at the association between grit and resilience in 1296 seventh grade students and 1166 eighth grade students from Finland. They

found that two aspects of grit – consistency of interest and perseverance of effort – contributed to students’ resilience to burn out and protected students from loneliness and depressive symptoms. Teuber and colleagues (2020) looked at 1527 Chinese high school students who were facing high academic pressure and found that the same two aspects of grit – consistency of interest and perseverance of effort – negatively related to exhaustion. They found that only perseverance of effort positively related to engagement with schoolwork. The authors concluded that grit protects students against burnout, which positively affects their mental health.

Lesson Plan for Middle School Students (Grades 7-9)

Before discussing the concepts of motivation and perseverance, we suggest starting the lesson off with an activity to get students thinking about their own ability to persevere. The Achievement activity is a way for students to understand how motivation and perseverance are necessary to achieve their goals.

Following the activity, ask your class how they would define motivation. We have provided a definition in the Key Concepts section below, but it is useful to get student input and agreement on a definition that will be used throughout the lesson. Then ask your class how they would define perseverance. Again, we provide a definition below but suggest coming to a consensus with your class on how to define perseverance.

We recommend also introducing how motivation and perseverance relate to resilience to give your students a practical reason for why they should learn about motivation and perseverance. Resilience refers to the capacity to spring back from a physical, emotional, financial, or social challenge and bounce forward. Being resilient indicates that the individual has the human ability to adapt in the face of tragedy, trauma, adversity, hardship, and ongoing significant life stressors. Motivation is different from resilience and is based on an inner urge rather than stimulated in response to adversity. However, motivation is related to resilience in that it requires a drive to be resilient. The characteristics of motivated individuals and those who are resilient are similar and can be developed over time. Perseverance and resilience are also closely related to our ability to learn from our failures. Perseverant and resilient people deal more productively with failure.



Key Concepts & Theory:

Concept #1: Motivation

- Motivation refers to the need, drive, or desire to act in a certain way to achieve a certain end. Motivation is the reason for doing something and the act of doing it. For example, why do you keep practicing your left-handed layups? You want to get better at basketball.
- Motivation has been shown to be an important factor for persevering during a difficult time.
- What motivates us can be highly person. Learning what motivates us can help us increase our motivation for the things we have to do and find more things that align with our motivations.

Concept #2: Perseverance

- Perseverance means never giving up. It is the quality of those who persevere—people who continue to do or try to achieve something despite difficulty or discouragement.
- The power of “yet” – nothing is impossible, it is just not easy for us yet. Our brains get stronger with practice and having a growth mindset means letting our brains stretch and grow when things are challenging.

Concept #3: Increasing Motivation

- We can boost our motivation through specific strategies and by thinking about our larger motivators.

Theory #1: Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) distinguishes three types of motivation based on the reason or goals that give rise to an action. This theory can help students identify what motivates them and how sustainable it is.

- **Intrinsic Motivation** – doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable (e.g., a student is motivated to do homework out of curiosity and interest).
 - Feelings of competence can increase intrinsic motivation for a task; this can be achieved through immediate, positive feedback and matching tasks to students’ abilities.

- Feelings of autonomy can also increase intrinsic motivation for a task, which can be produced through choice and the opportunity for self-direction.
- Intrinsic motivation has been found to correlate with interest, enjoyment, felt competence, and positive coping (Ryan & Deci, 2000).
- Komarraju and colleagues (2009) found that intrinsically motivated students are more likely to seek challenge and competition. They also found that learning environments, which encourage mastery promote intrinsic motivation, while those that emphasize performance can decrease student motivation.
- **Extrinsic motivation** – doing something because it leads to a separate outcome (e.g., a student is motivated to do homework in order to get a good grade).
 - Most of the things people do are extrinsically motivated, especially as we advance through school.
 - SDT splits extrinsic motivation into two ends of a continuum, which reflects feelings of control. On one end, a student does homework because they believe it is valuable for their future goals. This is still a separate outcome than the homework itself, but it sees the activity as valuable and involves a feeling of choice. This is what we will refer to as extrinsic motivation.
 - On the other end, a student might only do their homework to avoid getting in trouble from their parents or teacher. In this scenario, the student is merely complying with an external control. This is called amotivation.
 - While extrinsic motivation can get a bad rap, it is still a useful and commonplace type of motivation. Someone may only try an activity because of an extrinsic motivator (e.g., a reward or punishment), but find they really enjoy it, and continue with it due to intrinsic motivation.
 - Extrinsic motivation that is more autonomous (greater sense of control and choice) has been associated with greater engagement, better performance, higher quality learning, and greater psychological wellbeing than extrinsic motivation that is more externally regulated (Ryan & Deci, 2000).
 - Extrinsic motivation can also be increased through a sense of relatedness – when a behaviour is valued by significant others with whom one feels connected. This means that when students feel respected and cared for by teachers, they are more likely to accept classroom values.
- **Amotivation** - a lack of motivation to act and a low sense of personal control. Characterizes either inaction or acting but with the sense that one does not have control over their behaviour.

- Results from not valuing an activity, not feeling competent to do it, or not believing it will result in a desired outcome.
 - Komarraju and colleagues (2009) found that amotivated students are more likely to disengage from their schoolwork or drop out of school.
-

Exercises:

➤ **Achievement Activity**

➤ **My Motivations**

➤ **Barriers to Success**

➤ **Biography of a Perseverant Person**

➤ **Future Self**

➤ **Tips and Tricks to Increase Motivation**



Achievement Activity

*Class activity

Materials:

- Sticky notes
- A board, chart paper, or poster board

Intent:

This activity illustrates the connection between effort and accomplishment. Effort can then be linked to motivation and perseverance through a class discussion. The aim of the activity is to help students realize that the things they have accomplished took perseverance and motivation. This can inspire students to realize that they already possess perseverance and motivation, and it can show them that, in order to continue achieving great things, they need to build their perseverance and sustain their motivation.

- Give each student a sticky note and ask them to write one accomplishment that they are proud of.
- On the board or on a large piece of paper, make three columns entitled, “Not Much,” “A Little,” and “A Lot.”
- Ask students to think about the effort required to achieve their accomplishment and put their sticky note under the corresponding column.
- See where the majority of sticky notes end up.
- Have a class discussion on the relationship between effort and accomplishment, and where motivation and perseverance fit in. One of the key differences between people who succeed and those who don’t is not their ability, but their effort and motivation levels.
- Optional: ask the students who put their accomplishments under the “A Lot” of effort column if they faced any challenges reaching their accomplishment. How did they overcome them? What motivated them?
- Keep the board or paper up in the classroom throughout this lesson for students to reflect on their accomplishments, motivations, and perseverance.

My Motivations

*Class activity

Materials:

- Paper, Pencils
- Optional: collage supplies – magazines, scissors, glue

Intent:

This activity gets students thinking about what motivates them. Motivations can be unconscious. By identifying their motivations, students can become more aware of how they are affected by them. Additionally, by listing their motivations and creating a collage representation of them, students can remember what drives them when they encounter challenges. This reminder can benefit their perseverance. This activity also serves to introduce students to the Self-Determination Theory and think about whether their motivations are intrinsic or extrinsic. By identifying their intrinsic motivations, students can begin to think about how to connect those motivations to school-related activities to make them more rewarding.

- Introduce students to the three types of motivation: intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation. Give examples of each type:
 - Intrinsic Motivation: someone does something for an internal reason, like enjoyment, satisfaction, and/or fulfillment. For example, a student reads the assigned novel in English class because they enjoy reading or a student volunteers at a long-term care home because they find it fulfilling to help others.
 - Choosing activities that interest you and you are passionate about is one of the best ways to better motivate yourself. Try to find the things that make you feel happy and fulfilled. Also, try and find ways to align the things you have to do (e.g., schoolwork) with your intrinsic motivations.
 - Extrinsic Motivation: someone does something for an external reason, like praise, money, and/or to avoid punishment. For example, a student works hard on their English essay because they are afraid to fail or a student volunteers at an animal shelter for extra credit.
 - Extrinsic motivation isn't bad, it's just not as sustaining or rewarding as intrinsic motivation.

Continued on following page...

- Amotivation: someone either doesn't do something or only does it because they feel forced. For example, a student only comes to school because it is enforced by their parents, school authorities, and government.
- Ask students to write down the things that motivate them to achieve their goals. Some common responses might be: passion, visible improvement, seeing new ideas come to life, learning new things, money, grades, or fear of failure.
- Optional: have students create a collage representing their motivations. They can cut out or draw pictures that represent the things that motivate them. The finished collage can act as a reminder to students of what motivates them. They can look at it when they feel unmotivated or defeated by a challenging task. You may choose to hang the collages in the classroom or have students take them home.
- Once students have written down a few motivations, ask students to make a note of whether each motivation is *intrinsic* or *extrinsic*. You could discuss this as a class as well.
- If students write things that do not motivate them (e.g., "not school"), these could be considered an area of amotivation.

Barriers to Success

Adapted from Michael Petrasek and colleagues' compendium, *Activities to Enhance Student Motivation and Engagement*, for Project AWARE Ohio

*Class discussion

Intent:

This activity helps students understand some of the reasons people might give up. By identifying barriers to effort, students won't be surprised or discouraged when they encounter challenges, they will recognize that these barriers exist for everyone and know what to do. This activity aims to identify common emotional, cognitive, and social barriers and how to overcome them. Talking about these barriers as a class can also help students feel supported and help them combat any stigma they may encounter.

- Start a class discussion around barriers and challenges to effort. This can be done in multiple ways:
 - You could share a time when you were discouraged. Try and be specific about what you were thinking and feeling, and how you handled the situation.
 - Invite another adult into the class to talk about a time when they were discouraged.
 - Discuss a character from a movie or book that experienced adversity or challenges, and how they overcame these barriers. Depending on the character selected, this approach could tie in with other mandatory curriculum, such as English, Art and Culture, or History.
 - Discuss the different factors that contribute to discouragement:
 - Emotional Discouragement: sadness, anxiety, fear of failure, fear of success, low self-esteem, etc.
 - Cognitive Discouragement: thinking things like, "I can't", "I'm not capable", "I don't care", "nobody cares", "it's stupid", etc.
 - Social Discouragement: thinking things like, "no one else is trying", "others might laugh", "people are watching", etc.

Continued on following page...

- Discuss how the factors of discouragement exist for everyone but they can be addressed and overcome. One of the best ways to overcome these factors is to recognize them for what they are, rather than thinking you are struggling for no reason.
 - Emotional Discouragement: try sharing your emotions with someone you trust; they can provide you with the support to overcome your fear.
 - Cognitive Discouragement: recognize that these are negative thoughts and question whether there is any truth to them. It is important to realize that you can challenge these thoughts and prove them wrong.
 - Social Discouragement: can be tackled by a combination of the previous two strategies – talk about your effort with someone else and maybe you’ll discover that they are also struggling; recognize that your fear of others laughing at you might not be grounded in truth, or maybe it doesn’t matter if they laugh.
 - Add your own strategies based on your experiences.

Biography of a Perseverant Person

*Student project

Intent:

This activity gets students thinking about what motivates them. Motivations can be unconscious. By identifying their motivations, students can become more aware of how they are affected by them. Additionally, by listing their motivations and creating a collage representation of them, students can remember what drives them when they encounter challenges. This reminder can benefit their perseverance. This activity also serves to introduce students to the Self-Determination Theory and think about whether their motivations are intrinsic or extrinsic. By identifying their intrinsic motivations, students can begin to think about how to connect those motivations to school-related activities to make them more rewarding.

- Tell students that they are going to create a biography of a perseverant person. Explain the parameters of the assignment (who they can choose), what they need to find out (what challenges they faced, how they overcame them, what motivated them), how they will compile this information (essay, presentation), and how long they have to work on this project (the longer the timeframe, the more in-depth students would be expected to get).
- Variation: another way to do this activity is to ask students to choose a perseverant person that they know and can interview. Have students conduct an interview with this person, writing out their questions ahead of time and recording the interview (video, voice recording, or taking notes, depending on what the interviewee consents to). Afterwards, students could write an essay or present what they learned in front of the class.

Future Self

Adapted from Michael Petrasek and colleagues' compendium, *Activities to Enhance Student Motivation and Engagement*, for Project AWARE Ohio and Daphna Oyserman and Mesmin Destin's (2010) Identity-Based Motivation (IBM) Framework.

*Student project

Materials:

- Pencil and paper or access to a computer

Intent:

Oyserman and Destin's (2010) Identity-Based Motivation framework claims that students' perceptions about whether activities are in line with their identity affect their engagement and motivation to complete them, even when faced with difficulties. For example, if a student imagines themselves as being a doctor one day and they know that the identity of a doctor includes being smart or good at school, they will be more likely to put effort into their schoolwork, even if it is difficult. Their future identity is a motivating factor in this scenario because, through that identity, they see their effort as meaningful. These framework notes that gender, race-ethnicity, and social class identities are relevant here. Depending on the social identities of your students, it may be a good idea to talk about some common identity myths, like girls are better at school than boys.

This activity aims to connect students' present sense of self to a future-self so they connect their current actions to their futures. Students' future-selves can be connected to their effort at school and other areas of their lives, thereby increasing their motivation for school-focused and prosocial behaviours. Oyserman and Destin's (2010) research suggests that when students imagine their future-selves and identify ways to become that person, they experience a greater sense of purpose and better behavioural and academic outcomes. This activity helps students reflect on who they want to be and gives them a pathway to become that person.

Continued on following page...

This activity can be done in a simplified or extended manner.

Simplified version:

- Ask your students to reflect on who they want to be in 20 years.
- Give students a short period of time (5-10 minutes) to write down their thoughts about who they will be (career, lifestyle, location, attitude toward the world, etc.).
- Have a brief discussion with students allowing them to share some details about their future lives.
- Ask students to write another paragraph describing some of the important choices and actions they made to reach that future self (10-15 minutes).
- As a class, discuss some of the students' choices and actions. If students struggled to come up with ideas, ask others to give suggestions. Ask your students what role school or education played in their imagined future. What skills or knowledge did they need to reach that future point?

Extended version:

- Over the course of one or more classes, students will reflect on their future selves and develop a plan to become those people.
- Ask students to imagine their future self and think about what kind of person they would like to be. This can be done by asking students to write a page or more. It can also include asking students to identify people who represent their future self or an aspect of who they want to be. Students can write about these people, or they can find pictures that represent their future selves visually, either on a computer or through magazines.
- Ask students to create a timeline for developing their future selves, including any potential obstacles and challenges. Obstacles refer to things that may discourage them from becoming their future self (look to the emotional, cognitive, and social factors in the Barriers to Success activity). Challenges refer to things they will have to complete in order to become their future self (e.g., medical school, becoming a better athlete, learning how to fly a plane). The timeline does not have to be specific. This task can be done by writing out a list or creating a timeline visually.
- Next, have students brainstorm goals and specific strategies for becoming the future selves they imagined, including ways of overcoming the identified obstacles and challenges. This can be done as a class, if students are struggling to come up with ideas on their own. These goals and strategies should be written down so that students may refer to them later.

🔗 Tips and Tricks to Increase Motivation

*Class discussion | Optional: class craft activity

Materials:

- Motivation Tips Poster
- Optional: poster paper, markers

Intent:

This activity gives students specific strategies to get or stay motivated. These are concrete behaviours students can start using to help them in and out of school.

This activity can be done in two ways. You can discuss the tips with your students and give them a copy of the Motivation Tips Poster, or students can create their own poster by writing out the tips they feel will be most useful for them and decorating them. This version allows students more creativity and freedom to tailor the activity to their interests, but it may also take more class time and supplies.

Activity on following page....

Tips and Tricks to Improve Your Motivation

Have a routine and stick to it!

- ✓ This can be a morning routine that helps get you out of bed and feeling awake or a routine for doing homework after school.
- ✓ A routine makes starting an activity automatic and saves your effort for when things get difficult or challenging.

The Goldilocks Rule

- ✓ The Goldilocks Rule states that we experience peak motivation when working on something that is right on the edge of our current abilities.
- ✓ Not so easy that you get bored and not so hard that it feels impossible.
- ✓ Challenge yourself within the optimal zone of difficulty.

Set clear goals

- ✓ Use the SMART goals method to create: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound goals.
- ✓ Be specific: e.g., instead of “I want to get better grades” try “I want to get at least an 85% on my next math test” and even better, try “I want to study for 30 minutes every night the week before my test.”
- ✓ Write your goals down and check them off when they’re done (instant sense of accomplishment).

Make time

- ✓ Plan out your day so you can be sure you actually have time to work on the thing you’re trying to accomplish.

Take breaks and pace yourself

- ✓ Break up your work into smaller sections (30-60 minutes) and take short breaks in between. Don’t forget to set a time limit for your breaks too!



Help yourself focus

- ✓ Eliminate things that are distracting (your phone, the TV, etc.).
- ✓ This includes location – try and work somewhere you can focus and there are few distractions (like noisy siblings or tempting video games).

Take care of yourself

- ✓ Get enough sleep, eat well, remember to stretch and it will be a lot easier to focus on the task at hand.

Reward yourself, you deserve it!

- ✓ A special snack or fun activity can be a motivating light at the end of the tunnel.

Einstein's Law: An object in motion, stays in motion

- ✓ The hardest part is getting started. Once you've begun an action, it's much easier to keep doing it. Remind yourself that you just have to take the first step and it will get easier.

Hold yourself accountable

- ✓ Tell other people what you plan to accomplish as a way of holding yourself accountable for doing it.

Why are you doing this again?

- ✓ Think about what's motivating you to do this.

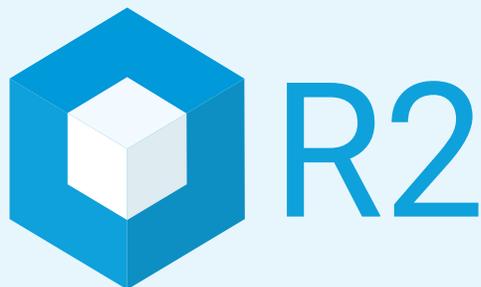
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Please Note:

The following pages contain a sample of the contents of a resourced factor module from the R2 Standard Manual for Education Settings. The sample module begins with a brief summary of the science behind each learning module for all age levels. This is followed by a sample of the lesson plans tailored to high-school students. Other lesson plans are available for the same topic for middle-school and elementary-school students upon purchase of the R2 Standard Manual for Education Settings.

Please contact rrc@dal.ca or R2's client relations manager Alexis Wheeler at alexis.wheeler@dal.ca to learn more about the R2 Resilience Program® and how it can be implemented in your setting.



Learning Module: Appropriate Use of Social Media

Facilitator Manual



Key Learning Objectives

- Develop a good understanding of what social media is
- Acquire knowledge of the risks and benefits associated with social media use
- Analyze strategies to use social media responsibly
- Practice strategies to use social media responsibly

Overview of the Module

Social media is a term used to collectively define a variety of electronic communication tools and platforms through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Specifically, social media encompasses a group of internet-based applications that were developed on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The development of Web 2.0 refers to the societal shift from content published by individuals to user-generated content. Examples of social media include Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and TikTok. These companies operate using different tools and technologies that include collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, folksonomies or tagging, virtual games, and social worlds (Khan, 2013).

Social media has become an integral part of modern society, especially for younger generations. Children and teenagers use social media to communicate with peers and adults, obtain information, and stay connected. Children usually use social media to fuel their creativity, have fun, and strengthen their relationships with peers (The Lancet, 2018). As children get older, they also often use social media to educate themselves by accessing information and receiving updates on news and trends. Social media has the potential to aid communication and connections among young users who share similar interests, backgrounds or real-life relations (Khan et al., 2014). Yet, the benefits of using social media for children and teenagers do not come without risks. In fact, many studies found that social media can be considerably addictive and can negatively affect academic engagement and performance (Ipsos, 2013; Qualman, 2012; Womack, 2020). Long hours of social media use put children and teenagers at high risk of experiencing cyberbullying and engaging with inappropriate and upsetting content, such as mean, aggressive, violent or sexual comments or images along with targeted advertising (Raising Children Network Australia, 2020). Additionally, by using social media irresponsibly,

young users are at risk of uploading inappropriate content, including embarrassing or provocative photos or videos of themselves or others, sharing personal information with strangers, for example, phone numbers, date of birth or location, and incurring in data breaches, like having their data sold to other organizations.

The nature of social media has raised serious concerns about loss of information privacy and privacy risk, which can increase users' vulnerability. Social media users are at risk of potentially losing control over personal information, such as when this information is used without their knowledge or permission (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003). These risks include identity fraud, and third-party access to personal data as well as phishing, information leakage and stalking (Acquisti & Gross, 2006).

Irresponsible use of social media is associated with serious risks for young users' health and well-being (Boers et al., 2019; Go et al., 2011; Rauch et al., 2014). Spending long hours on social media can increase social comparison with unrealistic and unattainable standards and cause frustration, depression, anxiety and feelings of incompetence and inadequacy.

Despite its serious risks, engagement via social media is important and the sense of community that we experience when we use these platforms can enhance our well-being and make us more resilient. In educational settings, students' responsible use of social media can be promoted by:

- Teaching students what social media is and carefully examining with them the many serious risks associated with their use to raise awareness about the dangers of online interactions.
- Teaching students strategies to use social media responsibly that they can implement in their daily life as well as strategies they can use to deal with dangerous online situations once they occur, such as cyberbullying and grooming.
- Supporting students' social skills and self-esteem to help them feel more comfortable in real-life social settings.



Social Media and Resilience

There are many benefits to children and teenagers of using social media responsibly, which ultimately promote their well-being and resilience (Raising Children Network Australia, 2020). Exploring and experimenting on social media can help young users raise their digital media literacy by building knowledge and skills to enjoy online activities and avoid online risks. Young people can use social media to learn collaboratively by sharing educational content, either informally or in formal school settings, and practice and improve their creativity by creating original profile pages, photos, videos, blogs, etc.. Additionally, connecting with extended family and friends, especially those who live far away geographically, and taking part in local and global online communities can provide young users with a sense of connection and belonging that has a positive effect on their mental health and well-being.

Many studies have found that recreational use of social media can improve mental health and well-being (Jin & Park, 2013). Chen and Li (2017) found that using social media can increase bonding among users and enhance their well-being by providing a platform where they can disclose and share their personal information and feelings; a feature that is especially beneficial for shy users. In fact, research shows that disclosure is vital in building successful relationships as it contributes to the development of trust and meaningful connections among peers (Berg & Derlaga, 2013; Joinson, 2001).

In adolescence, when peers become an essential source of social and emotional support, social media can facilitate communication between peers and help build friendships (Khan et al., 2014; Sarriera et al., 2012). For instance, Best et al. (2014) investigated the impact that online help-seeking behaviour of adolescent boys had on their well-being and found that those who talked to friends about their personal problems on social media had significant higher levels of well-being, compared to those who did not disclose their mental health struggles to other online users. Hardy and Castonguay (2018) also found a positive relationship between the number of social media platforms used by teenagers and their well-being. Similarly, Valkenburg et al. (2006) found that receiving positive feedback on social media enhances adolescents' self-esteem. Positive feedback also promotes self-efficacy and goal setting (Bandura, 1977); however, the opposite effect is observed when negative feedback is received.

In educational settings, social media platforms can be used by teachers to engage students throughout their studies (Tower et al., 2014). Social media can encourage and facilitate peer learning and promote self-efficacy by providing ongoing learning opportunities. Students are open to using social media technology to support classroom work, and those who use such platforms experience an

enhanced understanding of the course content and report feeling better prepared for examinations (Roblyer et al., 2010). Social media sites provide students with the freedom to direct and control their learning independently and increase social contact among peers (Bowers-Campbell, 2008). Peer-mediated online learning is accomplished through cooperation, communication and giving and receiving feedback, and has the advantage of extending beyond the classroom (Havnes, 2008; Keppel et al., 2006).

Throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, social media and online platforms were used by schools to deliver courses and engage with students. Teachers used online messaging and video platforms to deliver daily lectures and meet with students. A study in Israel demonstrated that social media can be used by teachers to provide emotional support to students during times of war (Rosenberg et al., 2018). Students described the connections with their teachers on social media platforms as caring, reassuring, and emotionally involved. Students also detailed that these connections heighten their sense of belonging. Furthermore, students reported that social media communications promoted feelings of security and helped to distract them from the adversity they were experiencing. Online contact with teachers provided students with emotional support and helped them monitor their distress and maintain civilized norms of discourse. Ultimately, these online connections contributed to students' resilience.

Lesson Plan for High School Students (Grades 10-12)

Cyberbullying, catfishing, grooming, identity theft, and invasion of privacy as well as poor mental health and well-being are just some of the many serious risks that teenagers may experience when using social media and navigating the internet. It's important for them to understand the major risks and benefits of using social media and to learn practical strategies they can implement in their daily life to use social media and the internet responsibly. The information and activities included in this lesson plan are designed to do precisely that.

It is a good idea to begin by introducing the concept of social media and discussing it with your class. Class discussions are a great way to involve students in the process of defining a common understanding of social media. This could involve asking students to start an open conversation about what social media is (e.g., what internet-based applications are social media platforms?), why they use social media, and what they think the risks and benefits of using social media are. In this discussion, students could also be asked if they use social media responsibly and if they can think of some strategies that they could implement in their daily life to use social media more responsibly. While asking students for their input, it is also helpful to have pre-prepared lists to support their creative efforts.

- One definition of social media is a set of internet-based or electronic applications/tools/platforms that users use to communicate with each other, share content and personal details about their lives, gather information, etc.
- Ideas about the risks of social media for teenagers include being exposed to inappropriate or upsetting content, such as mean, aggressive, violent or sexual comments or images; uploading inappropriate content, such as embarrassing or provocative photos or videos of themselves or others; sharing personal information with strangers, for example, phone numbers, date of birth or location; grooming; cyberbullying; social media and internet addiction; invasion of privacy and identity theft; and poor mental health and well-being.
- Ideas about the benefits of social media include enhanced digital media literacy and creativity; collaborative learning; development of meaningful relationships with peers, family members and adults outside the family; support in distance learning; and improved mental health and well-being.
- Ideas about strategies that students can implement in their daily life to use social media responsibly include not using social media until they are mature enough to understand the risks associated with it; using the privacy settings of their social media accounts; always being nice, respectful and empathetic towards everyone on social media, even the people they don't know; thinking carefully about the potential short- and long-term consequences of posting certain content; being aware of the dangers of being exposed to such a large audience; and avoiding intimate relationships with people they don't know.

It is important to give students a reason for why class time is being spent on this topic. When students understand why they're learning something, they're more motivated to engage with the topic and apply what they're learning in their everyday life. Asking students why they think social media is important and what are the risks and benefits of using social media is a good way to get them thinking about the value of this lesson. It can also be helpful to give students a concrete goal to work towards. For example, being able to use social media responsibly allows students to widen their social networks, develop relationships with likeminded teenagers and stay connected with real-life friends outside school hours, without experiencing the risks associated with using social media irresponsibly, such as experiencing cyberbullying, catfishing, grooming, identity theft, invasion of privacy, or poor mental health and well-being.

Key Concepts & Theory:

For high school students, we recommend focusing on the major risks of using social media during adolescence. Additionally, the lessons should address strategies that students can use in their daily life to use social media and the internet responsibly. Depending on how much time you wish to dedicate to this resilience factor, you can choose to focus on one or more of these topics. You may also choose to explore one topic in greater depth or focus on topics we have not listed here.

Concept #1 – The Risks of Social Media

- There are many risks associated with using social media irresponsibly, especially for teenagers. Some risks include falling victim of cyberbullying, catfishing or grooming; becoming addicted to social media and starting to neglect real-life connections in favour of virtual ones, which may lead to poor social skill development; poor academic engagement and performance; exposure to potentially inappropriate and upsetting content; sharing inappropriate content or personal information with strangers; loss of information privacy and privacy risk; and increase social comparison with unrealistic and unattainable standards, which may cause frustration, depression, anxiety, and feelings of incompetence and inadequacy that negatively impact teenagers' mental health and well-being.
- Discussing these risks with high school students is important to help them develop a good understanding of the dangers they may experience if they use social media irresponsibly and to help them learn strategies that they can implement in their daily life to use social media and the internet more appropriately.

Concept #2 – Strategies to Use Social Media Responsibly

- In this lesson, students learn strategies they can use in their daily life to use social media responsibly. These strategies focus on using social media in balanced ways that promote mental health and well-being; protecting one's privacy, security and identity; developing meaningful relationships through safe communication; and raising awareness about cyberbullying to avoid performing it or becoming a victim of it.

Exercises:

 **Online Consequences**

 **Body Image and The Media**

Online Consequences

***Class activity with students divided in small groups of 2-4 & Homework**

Adapted from *4-H responsible Social Media Activity: Online Consequences* by Christine Heverly (2017).

Materials:

- Different news articles about recent consequences youth have faced due to information shared online. View the news article list at the end of this activity for samples
- Blank or scrap paper, pens or pencils (one per student)
- Flipchart or other large paper

Intent:

In this activity, students will explore the various consequences youth have faced because of information they shared online. They will explore the concept of how a quick “like” of something or a tweet, status update, snap, or other action could have negative consequences. This activity will help students to understand the possible risks of sharing information online and think critically about what they choose to post and share online.

Preparation Instructions:

- Print off news articles of your choice for every group of 2-4 students. Provide a copy for each person in the group.
- Create a table on flipchart paper titled “Article Summaries.” The top row should include the following column headings: “Article,” “Platform,” “What Was Shared?” “Consequences,” “Short-Term Consequences” and “Long-Term Consequences.” (See example below).

Article	Platform	What was shared	Consequences	Short-Term Consequences	Long-Term Consequences

Activity procedure:

- Read aloud or paraphrase the following: *“How many of you have snapped a photo to someone, liked someone’s online content, shared a photo online or created a YouTube Video? Now, I am going to ask each of you to raise your hand in answer to the following questions:”*
 - Has anyone experienced a negative consequence from posting something online?
 - Does anyone know someone that has experienced a negative consequence from something they have posted online?
 - Has anyone regretted something they have posted online?
 - Does anyone know someone that has regretted something they have posted online?
- Continue by reading aloud or paraphrasing the following: *“Let us take a moment to look around the room. As you can see, most of us have experienced or know someone who has experienced a negative outcome due to something that was shared on a social media platform.”*
- At this point, ask the students to break into groups of 2-4. Provide each group with a news article that you have printed off. Each group should have a different article. Explain to each group that their task is to read the article. They should be ready to give a summary of the article and answer the following questions:
 - What social media platform did the individual(s) in the article use (e.g., Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or YouTube)?
 - What did the individual(s) share online?
 - What consequences occurred?
- Give the groups 10-15 minutes to read the news article. Walk around and help groups that may be experiencing problems with the article.
- When the groups are finished reading the articles, have each group summarize their article to the class by answering the three questions above. While groups are sharing, start filling out the table you prepared on flipchart paper. After each small group presents, get feedback from the entire group on whether they feel the consequences were short or long term. Then ask what some additional short- or long-term consequences might be beyond what is listed in the article (for instance, obtaining a criminal record, finding it harder to get a job, breaking trust with parents, shattering friendships, etc.).

Continued...

- Pass out pens or pencils and paper to each participant. Now, take a minute to have everyone individually reflect on the last five things they have shared online, liked or overall engaged with on a social media platform, including any snaps that were sent. Ask participants to list the five things on their papers. Let them know that the papers will not be collected and that they do not need to share unless they want to.
- Read aloud or paraphrase the following: *“Looking at each of those five items, decide if they support or harm the positive image you want others to have of you. Next to each one, write “yes” if the item supports a positive image of you and “no” if it does not support a positive image of you... Are there possible short-term or long-term consequences that could come from you sharing or posting this?... List those next to each of the five items listed. Knowing what you know now, would you still post or share this information?”*
- Give everyone a couple of minutes to reflect and then ask if anyone wants to share.
- Read aloud or paraphrase the following: *“Social media has become such an integral part of our lives that we need to think about the information we share online and how we engage in the online content of others. Everyone enjoys sharing information through social media, so it is important to understand the impact of what people choose to share. The consequences could be short term or even long term. Others can use the information you share on social media to make assumptions about you that could have negative consequences.”*
- Guide participants through discussion and process questions to wrap up the activity.

Homework assignment:

- Ask each student to find a news article about a young person who has faced some consequences because of information they shared online. Each student should read the news article and write a short essay (500-800 words) that summarizes the article by answering the three questions that were asked during the class activity. In the essay, students should also discuss whether the consequences faced by the young person were short or long term, and whether they can think of additional short- or long-term consequences of the described events beyond what was detailed in the article (for instance, obtaining a criminal record, finding it harder to get a job, breaking trust with parents, shattering friendships, etc.).

Continued...

Samples of news articles:

- Bahrapour, T. (2017, January 16). *Maryland School District Worker Fired After Correcting Student's Spelling in a Tweet*. Washington Post. (<http://wapo.st/2jqA80W>).
- Berman, D. (2017, June 21). *Police Seek Charges for Teens Accused of Filming, Mocking Drowning Man*. USA Today. (<https://usat.ly/2tnXIUI>).
- Brown, K (2017, May, 5). *Middle School Student Suspended for 'Liking' Photo of Gun on Instagram*. Fox19 Now. (<http://bit.ly/2pQaFA2>).
- DiVeronica, J. (2014, September 11). *One Bad Tweet Can Be Costly to a Student Athlete*. Democrat & Chronicle. (<http://on.rocne.ws/1uyXa3N>).
- ESPN News Services. (2012, January, 20). *Recruit Yuri Wright Expelled for Tweets*. ESPN.com. <http://es.pn/2k9p0VQ>
- Griffin, D. (2017, January, 4) *Monroe Student Suspended After Social Media Post; Father Says School Went Too Far*. WLWT5. <http://bit.ly/2BTc1PO>
- Natanson, H. (2017, June, 5). *Harvard Rescinds Acceptance for at Least Ten Students for Obscene Memes* The Harvard Crimson. (<http://bit.ly/2qVJr9W>).
- Phillips, M & Woody P. (2017, August, 6). *Inappropriate' Social Media Post Disqualifies Atlee Softball Team From Championship Game*. Richmond Times Dispatch. (<http://bit.ly/2veLh9S>).
- Seelye, K. Q. & Bidgood, J. (2016, June 16). *Guilty Verdict for Young Women Who Urged Friend to Kill Himself*. New York Times. (<http://nyti.ms/2tat2k6>).

Body Image and The Media

***Class activity with students divided in small groups**

Adapted from Building Self-esteem in Middle School by Sandra Blair (2021).

Materials:

- Video: *Dove | Reverse Selfie | Have #TheSelfieTalk* (1:00 min) from the Dove US YouTube channel (<https://youtu.be/z2T-Rh838GA>) – if you are unable to access this video, it could be replaced with a discussion about how students’ body image is affected by social media use and exposure
- Popular magazines
- Glue
- Scissors
- Poster board, two pieces per small group
- Family pictures
- Journal notebooks or writing paper
- Pencils
- Optional: web and printer access

Intent:

Social media is a big part of young people’s lives. The recommended video shows how retouching apps and the pressure to post ‘the perfect selfie’ are hurting teenagers’ self-esteem and confidence. In this activity, students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on personal health and body image. Students will analyze how their culture and the use and exposure of different media influence their body image, self-assess how they feel about their own body image and how this affects their self-esteem, and describe and share how they can help others think about their bodies in positive ways. Discussing body image may be embarrassing or uncomfortable for some students. Be sensitive when addressing this topic.

- **Set Up:** Before teaching the lesson, ask students to bring in a few photos of their families and friends. Tell students that they will be making a collage with the photos, so they should bring extra copies that do not need to be returned.

Continued...

- Ask students if they ever compare themselves to other kids at school or famous people, such as actors, models, etc., and ask them to answer the following questions in their journals: a) Have you ever made yourself feel bad by comparing yourself with others?, b) Is it good to compare yourself with others? Why not?, c) What can happen when you compare yourself with others?, d) Can we be too critical of our appearance or body image? What happens when we do that? Provide examples., e) Can self-criticism sometimes be good for us? How? Provide examples., and f) How do we know when we've crossed the line and are being too hard on ourselves?
- Break students into small groups of 2-4 and ask them to discuss their answers as well as what real people look like. As students are discussing, distribute magazines, glue, scissors, and one piece of poster board to each group. Ask students to go through the magazines and cut out pictures of teenagers and celebrities. Each group should create a collage with the images by gluing them to the poster board. Optional: You can also have students search for images on the web and print them out for this collage.
- Ask students to take out their family and friends' photos. Tell the groups that now they will create a separate collage of real people. Distribute a second piece of poster board to each group and have them glue their photos in a collage.
- As a class, ask students to compare the two sets of collages and discuss what they see. Emphasize how the media influences the way we view people and their bodies, both by pressuring celebrities to be thin and beautiful and by photoshopping and airbrushing photos to create specific (and often unattainable) appearances. Ask students what they can do to change the way they feel about how a real teen should look.
- Tell students that their bodies are likely to change a lot over the next few years. Sometimes they won't feel very comfortable about the changes. Comparing themselves with others is natural, but they should remember that body image is how we choose to see our own bodies.
- Ask students to make a list of at least five things they like about their bodies. Then have students write a paragraph about how they feel about their list. Have them brainstorm two ways they will remind themselves of their list whenever they are feeling unsure about their body.

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Contact Information

For more information about R2 or to discover how you can bring the program to your organization, business or educational setting, please contact us.

Contacts

Lead Developer:

Michael Ungar, Ph.D.

Canada Research Chair in Child, Family and Community Resilience

michael.ungar@dal.ca

Ph: (902) 229-0434 (Cell)

<https://resilienceresearch.org/r2/> | www.michaelungar.com

@MichaelUngarPhD

Contracts and logistical support:

Paula Mullen

Planner, RRC-Evaluation and Training Institute

pmullenevents@gmail.com

Alexis Wheeler

R2 Client Relations and Business Development Manager

alexis.wheeler@dal.ca

