

Social Media: Life Requirement for Middle Schoolers

By: Chang-May Tan

California School for the Deaf, Fremont

Eighth Grade

December 11, 2018

Social Media: Life Requirement for Middle Schoolers

Why do middle school students tend to love, use, and obsess over social media? Is it actually healthy, and beneficial? Is it a good idea? Personally, I would say yes! There are so many different ways you can learn through social media as you use it. It's a remarkable way of communicating, and technological advancements have only made this more so! Many of us middle schoolers use social media mainly for communicating with friends, family, or our larger communities. Other reasons we find ourselves on social media platforms are for entertainment and passing time when boredom strikes.

Social media helps us maintain our personal ties with friends who live really far away or those we've only met online. Communication with family (in town or far away) also takes place on social media. Through social media, we can learn from other people who have similar interests (like discussing summer camps). It's like magic - just send a snapchat and you've reached out to someone in under a second. It's a very effective way to keep in touch with people! Aside from personal messages, social media gives us opportunities view stories or posts and keep up to date with each other! 42% of people that use social media agree with this idea of using social media for communication (wersm.com article). However, I know what you're thinking. What if a pedophile or a bad person targets a victim through social media? What if a middle schooler accidentally gets kidnapped or gets involved in doing drugs or the black market? The solution isn't banning social media. Parents and teachers need to show students how to be safe and then trust middle schoolers' judgment to remember that it's not always a safe place and act accordingly. There are some kids who aren't careful on social media platforms or aren't

transparent with adults. I understand if students who aren't mature enough to use social media appropriately are restricted by the adults in their lives; but I don't think this is true of most of us.

Do you ever have moments when you feel like there's nothing to do? Well, talking with friends, viewing different posts and stories, and playing games are a great way to pass time. All of these things take place in social media and they are great solutions for defeating boredom. These are a big reason why we're "hooked" on social media. I have to be honest: when I use social media to talk with my friends, we sometimes accidentally talk for hours and hours, forgetting the time. An otherwise boring day passes in a blink! Social media is also a great way to communicate while gaming. You can game, message, and discuss different strategies efficiently. According to reachout.com, teenagers like to use social media to chat, keep up to date with the current news, and to have something to do. Some people enjoy viewing memes or funny videos during their downtime. On a day where they feel off and sadness hits them, these videos and memes might cheer them up. I think it's obvious how much social media is positively adding to our lives through these avenues.

I know some people think we spend hours and hours just talking and viewing stuff that's probably not important on social media. Sometimes this might be true, but there are a lot of things that are educational on social media platforms. For example, I enjoy following the latest updates on the women's movement, learning new math tricks, watching videos of science experiments, finding out about important people who have passed away, and keeping up with different trending news articles. How do you think the walkout for the shooting at Parkland, Florida got so big? It was posted all over social media, so more people quickly became aware

and got involved.

To be frank, sometimes I learn more while surfing on social media than I do in school. I learn all kinds of life hacks and news articles that are essential to survive in the real world. Often schools don't bother teaching these. Some celebrities or experts use social media to share their story or experiences to improve and help others, including me. Most of us usually follow people who we admire and their lives can definitely teach, impact and shape us. Social media gives us a lot of freedom and a sense of independence to learn and do different things on our own!

I admit, there is some content on social media platforms that isn't healthy, accurate, or age appropriate for us to view, but mature middle schoolers know the difference between what's right and wrong. Those of us who aren't should be educated by our parents, teachers, and community members on how to properly filter our usage of social media.

All of these strongly point to the benefits of allowing middle schoolers to use social media. On social media, we grow as communicators, we fill our time with fun and engaging activities, and we have access to a wealth of information that can help us in life. Social media actually helps us thrive and be more independent. I hope you will carefully consider all the reasons middle schoolers should be allowed on social media and factor these in as you decide whether the middle schoolers in your life should be allowed on these platforms.

Sources:

<https://parents.au.reachout.com/skills-to-build/wellbeing/social-media-and-teenagers> (accessed December 7, 2018)

<https://wersm.com/the-10-top-reasons-why-we-use-social-networks/> (accessed December 7, 2018)