Who Are You on Social Media?

15 minutes	**What You'll Need:** Video • Student Handout

> **CASEL FOCUS:** *Self-Awareness*

Learning Objectives
- Describe how their curated self may or may not represent their real self.
- Analyze the benefits and drawbacks of representing different parts of their real self online.

Activity Steps

1. **Ask**: *Is the you that people see online the real you? Why, or why not?*

   Have students share with a partner, and then invite them to share with the class. Ask students to reflect on the idea of a real self. Questions to consider include:
   - Is there a part of who you are that doesn't ever change, like your personality or your family role?
   - Are there parts of you that can change due to circumstances, like who's around you?

2. **Say**: *Both online and in real life, we show different sides of ourselves at different times. Being online and using social media gives us the opportunity to* **curate** *what we share with people.* **Curate** *means selecting, organizing, and looking after a collection of photos, writings, or other artifacts. We do this online when we choose what photos, videos, posts, and details we choose to make public or share with specific groups of people. These decisions can be different for everyone.*

3. **Say**: *Today we're going to explore the benefits and drawbacks of curating different parts of our real selves online. To begin, we're going to watch a short video where teens share their different perspectives on curation. As you watch the video, think about:*
   - *Which perspectives stood out to you in the video?*
   - *Which did you agree or disagree with? Why?*

   Optional: Distribute the Student Handout and have students complete Question 1 as they watch the video.

4. **Show** the video Teen Voices: Who Are You on Social Media? (5:13 minutes).

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5. **Lead** a class discussion exploring the discussion questions below.

   Optional: Have students complete Questions 2 to 4 on the **Student Handout** independently before having a group discussion.

Discussion Questions

Ask: *What are some of the benefits and drawbacks of curating your online presence?*

Answers will vary. Encourage students to think about:

- Opportunities for self-expression and to showcase interests, talents, etc.
- Focus on only the happiest moments from people's lives
- Seeing unrealistic beauty standards from photo editing and filters
- Overthinking about posting could cause anxiety or stress
- Pressure to get likes or comments or portray a version of themselves they think others would like

Say: *There are many ways to think about your real self and your curated self, and how the two may or may not be related. It's important to recognize that being online presents opportunities to express yourself and to see others' self-expression.*

Ask: *How does what your friends and online influencers post shape how you present yourself online?*

Answers will vary. Sample responses:

- want to participate in a trend that others they follow on social media are doing
- Share posts of travel, art, or other interests to connect with others
- They may also feel pressure to:
    - Present themselves a certain way because of images they see of others online.
    - Share many posts throughout the day to keep up with their friends' posting habits.
    - Share attention-grabbing posts to get likes or followers.

Say: *Because it's possible to present yourself in different ways online and offline, it's important to think about how you can use social media in a way that makes you feel empowered or in control of who you are.*

Ask: *What are some strategies for curating an online presence that feels most authentic to you?*

Answers will vary. Encourage students to:

- Consider how what you choose to post reflects your own interests, values and goals.
- weigh different people's values and priorities as well as your own when posting.
- Pay attention to red flag feelings, or feeling anxious or worried about what you're posting, and make changes to support your well-being.

Send home the family conversation starter for this activity, available in **English** and **Spanish**.

To go deeper on this topic, check out the full lesson: Curated Lives.

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