Time Required: 45 minutes

Grade Level: 6th - 12th grades

Acceptable Social Networking?

Infusionomics Themes, Keystone Economic Principles, and Skills for the 21st Century Marketplace:

- •**THEME: CHOICES**
- •**Keystone Economic Principle**™ #1 - We All Make Choices
- •**Keystone Economic Principle**™ #3 - All Choices Have Consequences
- •**Skills:** 4. Integrity
- •**THEME: COSTS**
- •**Keystone Economic Principle**™
- •**Skills:** 16. Communication Skills; c. Modes of Communication (social networking)

** For additional standards and content references, please see the end of document.

Overview:
Students explore a scenario in which an angry student creates a false online identity in order to seek revenge. They explore ways to resolve the situation and develop a list of tips to help other teens avoid cyber-bullying situations.

Objectives:
- Analyze online behaviors and predict their consequences.
- Generate multiple solutions for dealing with a cyber-bullying situation.
- Create a list of tips to help teens avoid cyber-bullying situations.

Materials and Handouts:
Handout #1: Student Activity Sheet

Pre-Activity Discussion:
- Begin the class by asking students

- o *"What are the best features of social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook?"* Focus the discussion on how these sites can be positive forces in teens' lives when they use them to stay in touch with friends and express themselves safely.
- o *"What are some of the problems teens can encounter on social networking sites?"* (Answer will vary with your students' experiences. Students may point out that some teens reveal private identity information on their profiles, that other teens may be too provocative and attract unwanted attention, and that some teens may be using social networks to bully.)

Activity:
- Distribute Handout #1: Student Activity Sheet
  - o Have students read the scenario about Ian, Mike, and the social networking site.
  - o Students can work in individually, in pairs, or in small groups to answer the questions in the section labeled "What's the problem?" Look for responses that indicate students understand Ian's anger but may not agree that revenge was the best response, that students show empathy for Mike, and that they can predict that these types of situations can lead to serious results, including teen depression and even suicide.
  - o Tell students that this is a true story, although the names were changed. Invite them to share their own stories. **Ask:** "*Have you ever witnessed someone pretending to be what they are not online in order to harass or embarrass someone? What do you think is the problem with doing this?*"
- Have students read the "Think About It" section of their student sheet. Explain to students that cyber-bullying doesn't happen to all teens, but it happens often enough to talk about it.
  - o Discuss how online harassment may affect the learning environment of a school and is, therefore, a concern of the school. If it is taking place on school grounds, such as through the school's computer network or on students' cell phones, the school may be justified in taking action.
- Find Solutions:
  - o Have students divide up into pairs to discuss possible solutions before writing their answers.
  - o If students do not bring it up themselves, ask whether Ian should apologize to Mike.
  - o In this particular situation, the bystanders (those who witness or know about the cyber-bullying behaviors but are neither the bully nor the target) are Ian's friends. Discuss with students the responsibilities of bystanders to not encourage the bully, to support the target, and to seek the help of trusted adults when it appears that someone is being harmed.
- Take Action:
  - o Create a "Top Ten Tips List": - Have students work in small groups and then synthesize their ideas for the class Top Ten Tips list.

Writing Prompt or Class Discussion:
Here are some optional questions for writing prompts and/or class discussion.
- What are some of the costs and benefits of social networking?
- What can bystanders do when they are aware of unacceptable online behavior?
- What are some tips you can give teens about handling online bullying?

Additional Standards and Content References

Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics:

•Standard #2 : Decision Making; Benefit, Costs

Partnership for 21st Century Life Skills Concept:

•Learning and Innovation Skills > Creativity and Innovation > Solve Problems

•Information, Media and Technology Skills > Media Literacy > Analyze Media

National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship Education:

•Ready Skills; D. Communications and Interpersonal Skills; Ethics in Communication

Keystone Economic Principles™:

•For more information: http://infusionomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Keystone_Cheat.pdf

Scenario:

Ian made a plan to get back at Mike for telling some personal secrets about him. He created a fictional profile on a social networking site so he could carry on a fake online romance with Mike. The cyber romance went on for weeks. Mike was hooked by a person he thought was a student at a neighboring high school, a friend of his friends. Ian told all their friends about his trick on Mike. When asked why he did it, Ian said, "To teach him a lesson."

What's the Problem?

Was Ian justified in teaching Mike a lesson?

How do you think Mike felt when he found out his "relationship" was only a cruel trick?

What problems might result due to Ian's actions?

Think About it:

It's easy to try out new identities online, and many teens do it. Being online is all about expressing oneself with social networks, blogs, chat, messaging, and videos. But when self-expression is at the expense of another person, it's wrong. When does it cross the line from "just kidding" into cyber-bullying? If the cruelty or threats are intentional and repeated, you're already there.

Find Solutions:

What advice could you give Ian about self-control and respect?

What advice could you give Mike?

Consider if Ian had told some other friends what he was doing? What could these bystanders have done?

Take Action: Create a Top Ten Tips list

Sending menacing electronic messages, forwarding private conversations, spreading e-rumors, posting embarrassing photos – how can we all help each other avoid these situations? Develop a top ten tips list as a first step.