

Communication Curriculum

Lesson 2

Networking

Lesson Overview:

Students will continue the Communication Curriculum by completing the following steps: 1) screening the Networking video and considering the definition and value of networking 2) identifying people who are already in their network 3) brainstorming ideas for do-able networking action items and 4) trying one networking action/strategy.

This curriculum is part of STEM U
Sponsored by



Communication

Lesson 2 – Networking

Lesson Overview

During this lesson, you will guide students to consider why cultivating a professional network is important and how they can get started early. Students will create a list or chart of their current network by considering all of the people that they know. You will then ask students to commit to taking one step to network over the next week. The lesson will culminate as students come back together in one week to share and reflect upon their networking experience.

Time Frame:

1½-2 hours, including time for students to complete independent work and 15 minutes of reflection time about a week after the initial lesson

Core Concepts:

- Networking is the cultivation of productive professional relationships
- It can be valuable and simple to begin building your network even as a student

Lesson Objectives:

In this lesson students will:

- Explore the value of networking.
- Determine who is already in their network.
- Brainstorm a list of networking actions or strategies that can be carried out in the short term (within one week)
- Try out a networking action or strategy and reflect upon the experience

Materials Needed:

- [Lesson 2 Video: Networking](#)
- Scrap paper or notebooks

Step 1: Introduce the Lesson

Explain to students that in this lesson they will explore the skill of networking – what it is, why it is important, who is in their network already, and how they can continue to cultivate these relationships.

Step 2: Activate Prior Knowledge

(5-10 minutes)

Ask students if anyone knows the meaning of the word *networking*. Invite students to jot down a definition for the word on a scrap of paper or in a notebook. Circulate as students write and choose a few good definitions to write on the board and discuss as a class. If no one has written an accurate definition, write down this definitely on the board: Networking – the cultivation of productive professional relationships. Discuss the new term as a class.

Step 3: Present the Networking video

(15 minutes)

Facilitate a discussion after viewing the video. You may wish to solicit questions and comments from the students first. You can use these suggested discussion points to deepen the conversation and student thinking:

- What does the statement, “It’s not what you know; it’s who you know” mean?
- Given your career interests, how might networking be helpful? Why might you want to get started now, rather than waiting until later?
- What are some things that you are already doing that might be considered networking?

Step 4: Students identify their current network

(30-60 minutes)

Remind students that to get started growing their network, it can be useful to think about who they already know.

Ask students to jot down a list of people that they know. They should list as many people as they can. Encourage students to organize their list. They may want to create a chart that shows the connections between themselves and the people in their network. You can suggest the following categories to get started:

- family members
- friends and neighbors that they know well
- school and academic connections such as teachers
- extracurricular connections such as sports coaches, mentors, musical instrument teachers or leaders, etc.

Let students know that a diverse network can be an asset. They should not limit themselves to just people in STEM fields.

Set aside a few minutes to meet with each student to review their network chart or list. Use these points to help guide your discussion:

- Has the student identified a wide variety of connections? Are they missing any key individuals or categories of people?
- Do *you* know someone with whom the student should really connect?
- What would be a good strategy for this student to build or maintain their network?

Step 5: Think-Pair-Share: How to grow student networks

(15 minutes today & 15 minutes in about a week)

Remind students that maintaining positive professional relationships is more than just identifying people who they know. In order to benefit from their network, they will need to cultivate these relationships and make strategic efforts to connect with new people, as well.

Ask students to think silently about their response to the following prompt:

What is one thing I can do this week that will help strengthen my network? How will it help?

Give students about 60 seconds to think about the prompt, and then have them discuss their responses in pairs.

After 2 to 3 minutes of sharing, ask for a few pairs to volunteer to share out their conversation with the rest of the class. Begin a list on the board of “Networking Action Items” that students suggest. Encourage others to add to and refine the list in a full class discussion.

Once a full list has been created on the board, ask students to choose one item on the list to complete within the week. It can be as simple or as complex as they would like. Then, ask students to turn to their partner – their “accountabili-buddy” – and share the action that they will take to cultivate their network.

After one week, set aside about 15 minutes for accountabili-buddies to get back together and share their networking experience.

Convene the whole class and invite several pairs to share their responses. Encourage a class discussion. Discussion prompts for this reflection might include:

- What seemed to work and what didn't work when you tried to network?
- What networking strategy might you try next? Why?
- What questions or concerns do you still have?

Remind students that – as with everything – practice makes perfect... or at least it will help them to feel more comfortable with the networking.

RESOURCES

Share these resources to help students become more familiar and comfortable with networking strategies.

- [6 Ways to Network While You're In College](#)
- [What College Students Need to Know about Networking](#)
- [5 Things every college student should know about networking](#)
- [Here's the exact email to send a new connection without seeming annoying or needy](#)
- [A Networking Trick You'll Like Even if You Hate Networking](#)

LinkedIn Resources:

- [The New High School Essentials: LinkedIn, a Resumé, and a Digital Portfolio](#)
- [LinkedIn: The New Social Media Hotspot for High School](#)
- [LinkedIn for Teens Applying to College](#)
- [LinkedIn Profile Checklist – High School](#)
- [LinkedIn User Agreement](#) (*Check section 2.1 for up to date age limits*)