



Conversations to build digital citizenship in your school

What should your focus be?

Digital citizenship shouldn't focus on consequences and what learners shouldn't do. Instead, it should focus on making responsible digital choices, thinking critically and building opportunities. As a result, learners will gain 21st-century skills, be able to take control of their own learning and apply those skills in life beyond school.

Additionally, digital citizenship development should give learners real-world practice. As citizens, they need to learn how to create a better digital community, which is why conversations are a great way to give learners the practice they need. When they reflect collaboratively on how they interact in the digital world, consume information and communicate, digital citizenship becomes more meaningful.



Who needs to think critically about digital citizenship?

Many schools teach learners a digital citizenship curriculum to help them make responsible choices and keep them safe online. However, learners are not the only ones who should consider the importance of digital citizenship.

Educators should also reflect on how they move through the digital world. They can model skills for their learners and ensure they give students positive guidance without punitive consequences. In the following sections, you'll find conversation starters for both learners and teachers to help build digital citizenship skills across your school.



How to start digital citizenship conversations with learners

Weaving conversations into instruction

Educators can use the prompts in the next section to start thought-provoking conversations with learners. These discussions focus on learners' relationships with technology and how it's connected to their identities inside and outside the classroom. Whether a teacher chooses a single prompt or several, here are some ways they can work them into instruction in any subject area.

1 Include an individual prompt as a warm-up activity and have the class discuss.

Post a conversation starter on the board in the classroom or on the screen during remote instruction. Learners will write for five to 10 minutes about their ideas and perspectives. This activity is a great way to begin a lesson about a digital citizenship topic, such as citing online sources, issues related to cyberbullying or online credibility.

2 Assign different prompts to breakout discussion groups.

If the instruction is in-person, learners will meet in groups of two to four. During remote learning, create virtual breakout rooms instead. Once students are in groups, they'll discuss a prompt the teacher has assigned or the class has chosen ahead of time. As each group discusses, they should add five key take-aways to a shared Google Doc. Afterward, the class will come together and discuss their take-aways.

3 Create a Gallery Walk with conversation starters.

Display the discussion prompts on posters around the room and ask learners to write ideas and responses on sticky notes to add to the posters. If students are learning virtually, the teacher will create shared Google Docs for each prompt. Afterward, the class will discuss it together.

4

Have the class build on conversations through an online discussion board.

Whether students are learning in person or remotely, they can have conversations on a discussion board online. The teacher will post a conversation starter and throughout the week, students will respond asynchronously and build on their responses.

5

Start conversations in the moment.

The teacher will work a prompt into in-the-moment learning as students use technology or mention relevant topics. For example, if the class is signing up for a website or online program, start a conversation about sharing private information. If a learner mentions a social media influencer, start discussing digital identities and reputations.

Assign a collaborative research project and blog post related to a prompt.

6

In small groups, learners will research a digital citizenship topic and share their own evidence-based ideas. Then each group will write a blog post about the topic to share with the community on a class website.

7

Join a class from another country for a virtual global discussion

Reach out to a school from another country to set up a conversation about digital citizenship. The teachers or classes will select one of the discussion starters beforehand, and learners will prepare ideas and follow-up questions in advance. If schools are in different time zones, classes will talk asynchronously on a discussion board.

Conversation starters for learners

The following discussion prompts align with the [ISTE Standards](#) focused on digital citizenship. We've grouped the prompts into ISTE standard categories so you can more easily embed them into instruction. We've also included some guiding questions to help scaffold the conversations and help them develop.

ISTE standard 1.2.a:

Students cultivate and manage their digital identity and reputation and are aware of the permanence of their actions in the digital world.

1. What values do your favorite social media influencers promote? Which values do they demonstrate?

Questions to guide the conversation and provide scaffolding:

- What is a social media influencer?
- What types of influencers are there?
- What are values? What are some of your own values?
- Who is one of your favorite social media influencers?
- Who is their audience?
- What values do they promote to their audience?
- Do they demonstrate those same values?
- Is it important for social media influencers to both promote and demonstrate the same values? Why or why not?



2. What would you do if you shared something that turned out to be misinformation? How do you think that could impact your credibility?

Questions to guide the conversation and provide scaffolding:

- Where do you share information digitally?
(examples: social media, texting, message boards)
- What kinds of information do you repost?
(examples: social media posts, articles, videos)
- What is misinformation?
- What is credibility?
- How do you know online information is factual?
- What steps can you take to evaluate sources?
- How would people view you online if you shared misinformation?



ISTE standard 1.2.b:

Students engage in positive, safe, legal and ethical behavior when using technology, including social interactions online or networked devices.

3. Is it easier to be mean to someone online or in-person? Why?



Questions to guide the conversation and provide scaffolding:

- Have you seen someone post a mean comment online about another person?
- Did they know the person?
- Would they have said the same thing if they were face-to-face with the person? Why or why not?
- How do you think it makes someone feel when they read a mean comment about themselves online?
- How does it make you feel when you see mean comments online about other people?
- Why do you think some people post mean comments online?
- What can you do if you see a mean comment?

4. What are some healthy habits regarding the use of technology?



Questions to guide the conversation and provide scaffolding:

- In what ways do you use technology?
- How often do you use technology?
- Do you ever find it difficult not to look at your phone?
- Do you have rules at home about using technology?
- What do you think about the school technology rules?
- Do you ever have trouble sleeping because of your use of technology?
- What is a healthy way to use technology?

ISTE standard 1.2.c:

Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.

5. Have you seen someone online share a video, song or image that they didn't create?

Questions to guide the conversation and provide scaffolding:

- Give a recent example of someone sharing someone else's video, song or image online.
- Did the person give the creator credit?
- Should they give credit to the creator? Why or why not?
- What ways can you properly give credit on social media?
- What if you're sharing a video, song or image in a school project? Should you give the creator credit?

**ISTE standard 1.2.d:**

Students manage their personal data to maintain digital privacy and security and are aware of data-collection technology used to track their navigation online.

6. Is there a difference between personal and private information? What type of information is safe to share on the internet?

Questions to guide the conversation and provide scaffolding:

- What is personal information? Is it safe to share with a stranger?
- Give an example of personal information.
- What is private information? Is it safe to share with a stranger?
- In what situations would you share private information?
- What kinds of details could an identity thief use to steal an identity?
- What should you do if you're unsure about sharing information online?



7. Are there any circumstances in which you should share your password for a social media account with another kid? What about your phone, tablet or computer?



Questions to guide the conversation and provide scaffolding:

- Has a friend ever asked you for your social media password? What about a password to one of your devices?
- How did that make you feel?
- Should you ever share a password? Why or why not?
- If a kid asks you for your password, what kind of response could you give?

How to start digital citizenship conversations with teachers

Guiding teacher conversations

Use the following discussion prompts to have important conversations with the educators in your school during professional development time, grade level/department meetings or asynchronously on a discussion board throughout the semester. These conversation starters allow teachers to think about their relationship with technology and how they apply it to their interactions with learners.

Facilitators can use the prompts and guiding questions to help the conversations develop. Give teachers a choice about which conversations they'd like to have or ask for their input about other conversation starters that would apply well to their teaching practice. Also, allowing teachers to reflect in writing at the end gives them a chance to think about the relevance of these issues to their profession.

Conversation starters for teachers

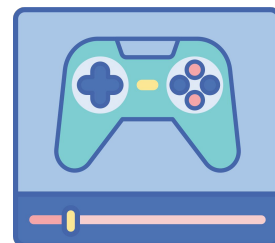
1. How would you define a proactive approach to digital citizenship education?



Additional guiding questions:

- Are you spending more time teaching learners what to do or what not to do online?
- How do you empower your students to become digital learners?
- How do you guide your learners to make responsible choices online?
- What do you want learners to be able to do as digital citizens when they're not with you?

2. Has a student ever concerned you with a site they were visiting during class time?



Additional guiding questions:

- Why was the student visiting the site? What was happening prior?
- What steps can you take to get a student back on task? Discuss the pros and cons.
- How can you help a student make a better choice next time?

3. What is digital equity? Do you think it exists in your school?



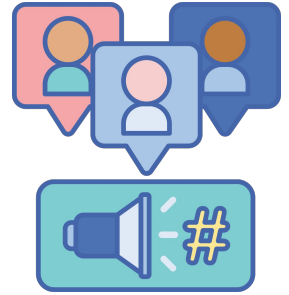
Additional guiding questions:

- Why should we talk about digital equity?
- How does it impact your instruction?
- How does it impact learning?
- What steps can your school take to improve?

4. Have you noticed a shift in attitude surrounding technology and social media in your school?

Additional guiding questions:

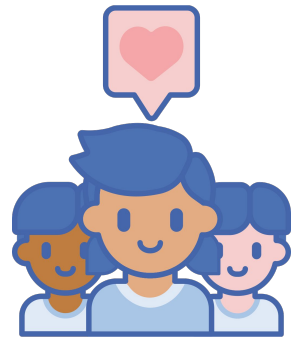
- When you began teaching, what kind of technology did you use? What kind of technology did other teachers use?
- How have you seen the use of technology change throughout your teaching career?
- What are your school expectations for the use of technology?
- What is your school's attitude toward social media? Is this different from previous years?
- What are your feelings toward students' use of social media?



5. How can we leverage technology to bring greater humanity to the workplace?

Additional guiding questions:

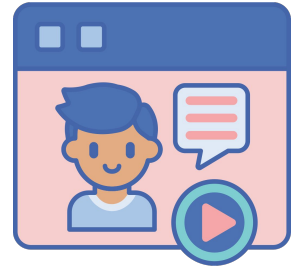
- What does this question mean to you?
- Do you agree that technology can connect to humanity?
- What kind of technology can people leverage in different occupations?
- How can we as educators leverage technology to bring greater humanity into our school environment?
- How can our learners do this in the classroom? How can they do this across the school community?



6. Describe your digital footprint.

Additional guiding questions:

- Do you have social media accounts? Are your profiles public or private?
- What information do you share on social media? What other details do you share online?
- Do you reshare articles or social media posts? How do they impact your digital footprint?
- Do you ever review how many apps you've downloaded on your phone or devices?
- If someone Googles you, what will they find?
- How does your browsing or online shopping history affect your digital footprint?



7. How have you modeled responsible digital citizenship?

Additional guiding questions:

- What are your values and beliefs about digital citizenship?
- What does responsible digital citizenship look like outside the classroom? Give an example from your personal life.
- What does it look like inside the classroom? Give an example from working directly with learners.
- How can you model responsible digital citizenship this week? How can you model it next month? How can you model it next year?



The Hāpara Instructional Suite provides tools that help teachers easily build a culture of digital citizenship.

[Schedule a demo to learn more!](#)