Introduction and Overview to the Teachers’ Guide to “Disconnected”

There is no single best way to teach the “Disconnected.” What we offer you here are multiple strategies for engaging your students with an already very engaging documentary film.

The “fit” of this film into your course is a question that only you can answer. Our role has been to provide strategies for teachers with multiple needs and purposes. Some lessons will be most useful to those teachers who want to show the film, have a discussion of it and move on. Others provide suggestions for those teachers who want to explore the broader and deeper implications of computer use in a highly technological society.

A word on audience: We have field-tested this film with both juniors and seniors in high school and juniors and seniors in college. All students in this age-range of 16 to 22 are highly engaged and energized by “Disconnected.” At a visceral level, they recognize their over-dependence on computers and ask immediately: Could I do it? Could I turn off my computer for three weeks?

We urge you to stimulate intergenerational conversation among your students and faculty, parents and community elders about the new media so elaborately revealed in “Disconnected.” Ongoing community conversation may be our best resource for understanding how the new media is shaping our lives. And the lives of those of the young, who know or at least think they know so much more about it than their elders.

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