

10. TAPPING INTO YOUR CRITICAL MIND!


Using social media wisely thanks to my critical thinking skills



<p>Targeted competency(ies) (ÉKIP, WHO)</p>	<p>CRITICAL THINKING</p>
<p>Cross-curricular competencies (QEP)</p>	<p>EXERCISING THEIR CRITICAL JUDGMENT USING INFORMATION USING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES ACHIEVING THEIR POTENTIAL</p>
<p>General workshop objectives</p>	<p>AT THE END OF THE WORKSHOP, THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and analyze issues surrounding social media use • understand their responsibility in terms of following Internet codes of conduct and the consequences of not doing so on themselves and others • use reflective tools that help them ask the right questions • practise critical thinking when it comes to social media

Total duration

60-MINUTE version, follow all steps

40-MINUTE version, DO NOT do the activities marked with the  icon

Materials and preparation

Materials required

- *Stopwatch*

A. Think about it... wireless or filterless? (10-15 minutes)

TIP FOR FACILITATORS

We encourage you to use the term “social media,” which is more accurate than “social networks,” since it encompasses more of the platforms that young people use to communicate with each other. Social media refers to all online platforms that people use to interact with others, share content, or join virtual communities (e.g., online gaming sites where people interact using an avatar as a virtual representation of themselves)

(Dewing, 2013).

DIGGING DEEPER

Social media and depression

Social media use has been associated with an increased risk of depression in adolescents. Among girls in particular, posting selfies on social media has been associated with increased anxiety, decreased self-confidence, and greater body dissatisfaction.

(Mills *et al.*, 2018; Moreno *et al.*, 2011)

1. Start by saying: “Adolescents are more social-media savvy than any other age group.” Now ask the students to share their knowledge with you. To fuel the discussion, you can ask the following questions:
 - Which social media platforms do you use?
 - What do you do on these social media platforms?
 - How many hours a day do you spend on social media?
 - Do you ever use your social media accounts on “autopilot,” without realizing how much time you’re spending online?
 - What are the advantages of using social media?
2. Then, have the students take the *True or False?* quiz to test their knowledge of social media (for the 40-minute version, you can ask only half of the questions).

After each explanation, get the students thinking by asking if anyone can relate (without necessarily answering).

TRUE OR FALSE?

- **Spending time on social media has no health consequences.**
- **FALSE.** Spending a lot of time on social media can have negative effects on **sleep** and can also cause **stress**. Using electronic devices (smartphones, tablets, computers, etc.) before bed is associated with *a shorter sleep duration during the school year* and negative effects on daytime functioning (**drowsiness in class, difficulty getting up in the morning**, etc.) and **mood** (increased sadness) (Royant-Parola, Londe, Tréhout and Hartley, 2018). **A negative post can affect my mood.**

TRUE. For example, when researchers looked at people whose mood is generally negatively affected by the rain, they found that these people are likely to be negatively affected (e.g., **sullen or depressed mood**) by seeing a social media post calling for rain, even if it doesn’t typically rain where they are (Coviello *et al.*, 2014).

- **Unlike real bullying, cyberbullying doesn’t have any serious consequences for the victims.**

FALSE. Cyberbullying has **the same harmful (or even devastating)** consequences as bullying. Cyberbullying also comes with its own specific consequences, such as **breach of trust, invasion of privacy**, and a **feeling of helplessness** at the hands of the bully, who is sometimes anonymous. What’s more, it’s **often impossible to delete all traces of cyberbullying** (Gouvernement du Québec, 2021).

- **Social media can help us get through hard times in our lives.**

TRUE. Some young people report that, despite the downsides, social media also creates a sense of “**connection with others**” that is good for them (Ellison *et al.*, 2007, 2011). However, the emotional benefits apply more to people with a large number of social media connections (a lot of friends or followers) (Kim and Lee, 2011; Manago *et al.*, 2012).

- **Our personal information isn’t safe on social media.**

TRUE. There are many risks to our personal information on social media: **identity theft, hacking, lack of control over our privacy.** The more information you put online, the more likely you are to fall victim to identity theft (Cosoi, 2011; Senthil, Saravanakumar and Deepa, 2016).

- **Everything we see on social media is true.**

FALSE. These days, information can be found in the blink of an eye, but it’s just as easy to spread **false information** yourself. The information we find on social media may not be accurate (Colliander, 2019).

3. Wrap up by telling the students that the exercise they just did helped them reflect on their own experiences with social media, as well as give them information, test their knowledge, and challenge their thinking to help them distinguish between facts and opinions. They now have a more informed opinion of social media.
- 4.

B. Video: Sacha and social media – Part 1

C. Don’t believe everything you read! (5 minutes)

1. Recap the video. Tell the class that Sacha seems to have gotten himself into a very touchy situation on social media. Continue by pointing out something that caught your attention... when Sacha mentioned “critical thinking.”
2. Ask the class what “critical thinking” means? Take a few answers, then wrap up by explaining that basically, critical thinking means not believing everything you see or read on social media.
3. To get the students thinking, show the figure in the PowerPoint presentation (Éducol, 2018; Sotir, 2014) that defines critical thinking and its components.

DIGGING DEEPER

Sexting

There is evidence that sexting is a gateway to sextortion and cyberbullying, and risky behaviours such as drug, alcohol and tobacco use, not to mention unprotected and non-consensual sex.

(Cruz Gomez and Soriano Ayala, 2014)

DIGGING DEEPER

Social media engagements

Positive social media engagements (e.g., liking a post or getting a “like” or a positive comment) have no effect on feelings of isolation; however, negative engagements (e.g., getting a negative comment or being “blocked” by a friend) are associated with a 13% increase in the likelihood of experiencing feelings of isolation.

(Primack *et al.*, 2019)

Critical thinking Practices and attitudes that get us thinking about the world around us.	
Attitudes Ways of being, personality traits, personal characteristics	Practices Concrete actions, important things to do, put into practice
Being curious Wanting to find out more about different subjects Being a good listener Agreeing to disagree with others and taking an interest in their opinions and knowledge Being independent Forming your own opinion based on the information you have Being discerning Making sure the information you have is reliable Being humble Allowing yourself to be wrong and change your mind	Looking up information on the subject Asking yourself questions and evaluating the information you find Coming up with arguments by distinguishing between facts and opinions Comparing your ideas and arguments to those of others Evaluating new information and taking a position

- Point out that these attitudes and practices are in fact strategies for gradually applying their critical thinking skills in their daily lives.

D. Devil's advocate (20-30 minutes)

TIP FOR FACILITATORS

Preparing for the debate

De Vecchi recommends some criteria for a successful debate. For a debate to be successful, he suggests that students be able to:

- Understand the problem presented
- Decide on their position/view of the issue
- Come up with arguments
- Summarize the arguments
- Illustrate the arguments with examples
- Consider the opposing viewpoint
- Prepare their conclusion

(De Vecchi, 2017, p. 158)

Here are some helpful tips in your role as debate moderator



- During a debate, it can sometimes be difficult to manage turn-taking by the participants. As needed, don't hesitate to clarify or repeat the rules or to correct certain behaviours you find inappropriate.
- You can act as the time keeper (e.g., by reminding participants that there are three minutes left or by saying that you'll take two more answers).
- If the students stray too far off topic, feel free to steer the debate back on track by repeating the question.
- Even if you have an opinion you'd like to share with the students, it's best to let them debate among themselves and let their discussions take any potentially interesting turns. This doesn't mean you can't guide the students toward a particular aspect of the debate or encourage them to explore it further.
- If the debate becomes heated and emotional, you can use mindfulness to get students to focus on specific aspects, for example, by asking them questions or by telling them to take a few deep breaths or settle down. (For example, notice the emotions that come up when you talk about a particular subject. Notice your breathing. Is it deep, fast, slow? What is it telling you about your state of mind?)

- Explain the next activity: The students will debate an issue related to social media. The purpose of the debate is to get them thinking about the issue and to argue their points. The goal is not to be right, but rather to agree or disagree with the statement and to adjust their position, as needed.


2. Add that the debate is also an opportunity for them to apply their critical thinking strategies (in reference to the figure on attitudes and practices seen earlier, and in the PowerPoint presentation).
3. Organize the classroom in a way that's conducive to discussion (move the desks around, divide the room in half, place the desks in a circle, etc.).
4. Ask the following question and give the students a few minutes to decide on their positions:




Is social media more helpful or harmful to personal relationships?

5. Tell the students to break up into two groups: those who are **FOR** and those who are **AGAINST**.
 - If the groups are really unbalanced, ask for volunteers to defend the opposite position, or form a third group for undecided students.
6. Open up the debate with a 10-minute discussion period between the FOR and AGAINST groups (five minutes for schools with 40 minutes). Act as the debate moderator, inviting both sides to take turns expressing their opinions.
7. At the end of the discussion period, ask the students to stop talking and stay silent. Without any explanation, show the video *Are You Living an Insta Lie?*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EFHbruKEmw> (Time: 3 min. 12 sec.).
8. After the video, remind the students about the central debate question: *Is social media more helpful or harmful to personal relationships?* Still without saying anything, ask them to take a few seconds to consider their personal position on the central question and to revise it, if needed (FOR, AGAINST, UNDECIDED).
9.  Without wasting any time, ask them to change groups (or sides of the classroom) if they've changed their opinion along the way.
10.  Resume the debate with a second 10-minute discussion period; ask questions related to the central question to get the students thinking differently and about other issues surrounding social media.
 - Does being popular on social media make you feel good about yourself? If so, is this feeling real? Can it last?
 - Does your number of followers or likes reflect how popular you are in real life?
 - Do the photos posted by influencers reflect their everyday lives? What's lurking behind these photos (money, editing, a photographer, sponsors, etc.)?
 - What behaviours do you adopt when surfing your social media accounts?

 - Do you share or post things on "autopilot," without thinking too much, or do you hesitate before doing so?
 - What emotions do you feel when you post a selfie or a personal message? (expectation, shyness, happiness, confidence, frustration, jealousy, etc.).



11.  At the very end of the debate, ask the students to take a firm position on the central question. Ask them one last time to change groups (or sides of the classroom) if they've changed their opinion since the halfway point of the debate. Encourage them to notice the changes of opinion and shifts that took place during the exercise.

12. End by asking the students about the following points; try to establish links between their answers and the components of critical thinking (see the table in the PowerPoint presentation):

- What are your takeaways from the debate we just had?
- Did you find it easy to state your opinion? Change your mind? Disagree with the others?
- How did you feel when you had to state your opinion in front of the others? And when you had to listen to other people's opinions? (For example: the urge to interrupt or give your opinion, particular emotions, sensations, etc.)
- Why is it important to develop your critical thinking on a daily basis?

For the students who changed their mind during the debate:


- What caused you to change your opinion?
- Did you find it difficult to change your mind?

For the students who didn't change their mind during the debate:

- Why did you stick to your original opinion?
- Is it hard to get you to change your mind?

E. Once the dust settles (5 minutes)

1. Explain that social media can be a valuable source of information and opportunities, and that practising mindfulness can help the students to get the most out of it. Encourage the students to explore the following principles (Escobar-Viera *et al.*, 2018; Frison and Eggermont, 2015; Tandoc, Ferrucci and Duffy, 2015):

 Remember that you have an influence over your virtual environment. When you log on to social media, take a minute to breathe and settle down. Ask yourself questions. As you're scrolling through your news feed, stop and think. What are your intentions? What are you here for? How do you feel? When you log off, notice what's going on inside you. How does social media make you feel and behave? Choose the pages you like and the people you follow very carefully. Figure out what they bring you. Knowing some of the consequences of social media that were discussed today, try to nurture real relationships and expose yourself to positive situations through social media.

Take breaks. Experiment with disconnecting for a few hours or even a few days, if you want to. Notice how you feel and what you do with the time you normally spend on social media. Remember: The idea isn't to judge yourself, but to become aware of your behaviour.

F. Video: Sacha and social media – Part 2 and REMINDER: HORS-PISTE challenge (5 minutes)

This week, encourage the students to find ways to use social media wisely and to exercise their critical thinking. Suggest that they identify two strategies from the PowerPoint presentation that they can implement in their daily lives. Suggest that they talk to their peers and find ways to help each other exercise their judgment. Ultimately, this can help them to change and improve their social media habits



