



NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment

Junior Cycle SPHE Classroom-Based Assessment: Report on Taking Action for SPHE Example of Student Work

August 2025

Junior Cycle SPHE: CBA

Example of Student Work

CBA Chosen: Report on Taking Action for SPHE

Title: How social media effects mental health

Learning outcomes:

SPHE Students should be able to:

- 1.1 explore the physical, social and emotional changes that happen during adolescence
- 2.1 consider the multifaceted nature of health and wellbeing, and evaluate what being healthy might look like for different adolescents.
- 2.7 assess the benefits and difficulties associated with their online world and discuss strategies for dealing with a range of scenarios that might arise.

Teaching and learning context

Before starting the CBA, the class discussed all the Strands and topics that they had engaged with throughout their SPHE journey. They looked at all the interconnections of the topics and how they weave through each other. This really helped the students in understanding how learning about wellbeing links across topics and promoted their choice of actions. Students decided if they wanted to work independently or in a group (of no more than 3)

They had time to discuss the strands/topics and they felt more interested in, would get more value out of and would like to research and also which topics needed more awareness. When they had decided, they started to research and compile information and sources. Together with the teacher they created a small booklet and timeline to keep themselves organised and to keep their information together. In carrying out the surveys, the students asked for permission from class teachers to give out the surveys to the students in their classes. It was easier to conduct paper surveys as all students don't have access to IT within school.

With the peer teaching, the students asked the relevant class teachers for permission to present to their class and organised a time that would suit. After the peer teaching, the class teacher gave the students feedback and commended them on their peer teaching.

How Social Media Effects Mental Health

A lot of people in my school use their phones 3-4 hours a day, according to my survey, it's important and I'm glad I've created this!

I'm going to try to use the information that I gathered in my own life, by limiting my screen time to 1 hour a day and going out.

WHY SOCIAL MEDIA CAN EFFECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Working for long periods impacts our mental health by disrupting eating, sleeping, and other daily activities. These issues are especially common in teens and young adults.

- Social media is a huge and will continue to grow and become more popular as the years go by. Spending a lot of time on social media can lead to being lonely, depressed, or feeling like you have to remember your relationship with social media.

WHAT MAKES SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTIVE?

- Social media platforms have targets of dopamine in the brain. This helps to keep us coming back over and over again.
- When the brain's dopamine receptors are overstimulated, it can lead to a state of compulsive behavior. Dopamine can also lead to the release of stress hormones, which can lead to depression, anxiety, and other health issues.

Social media is used every day in our lives, it's important we use it responsibly, take time away from our devices and prioritise our family and friends. This is my research on the topic!

CONCLUSION:

- After conducting our research, we found that social media has a negative impact on our mental health, especially in teenagers. It can disrupt our sleep and affect our ability to focus.
- Social media is a huge and will continue to grow and become more popular as the years go by. Spending a lot of time on social media can lead to being lonely, depressed, or feeling like you have to remember your relationship with social media.
- There are many ways to reduce our screen time, such as setting up boundaries, using a screen lock, and taking time away from your phone by going outside and meeting with friends.

REFLECTION:

- We have learned that social media is addictive because of the dopamine it releases in the brain. This helps to keep us coming back over and over again.
- When the brain's dopamine receptors are overstimulated, it can lead to a state of compulsive behavior. Dopamine can also lead to the release of stress hormones, which can lead to depression, anxiety, and other health issues.

Reconnect with friends and family, especially those who don't use devices. This will help you to get back in touch with the people who are important to you.

Reducing time on social media

Go outside. Spend time outdoors in nature. This will help you to reconnect with yourself and the world around you.



WHY YOU SHOULD LIMIT TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- Anxiety and loneliness can develop from social media. Constantly being online and comparing your life to others can lead to unrealistic expectations. Taking time off social media can help you to discover your hobbies and interests without being influenced by social media.
- Social media can reduce the number of in-person conversations we have and can negatively impact our social skills. When you text people, you are talking behind a screen, and it will not improve your ability to communicate in-person.
- Social media can distract us easily from tasks. The dopamine in our devices causes us to keep coming back from time to time and it distracts us from the task at hand. Staying away from devices can help to improve your focus in settings such as school and significantly improving your results.

HOW MANY PEOPLE USE SOCIAL MEDIA IN IRELAND:

- 9 out of every 10 teenagers have a social media account. One third of 9-16 year olds have more than one profile. There are many underage users on social media: One fifth of 9-10 year olds, 42% of 11 year olds and 61% of 12 year olds use social media, in violation of the terms of service for these platforms.
- The research shows underage social media use is linked with greater symptoms of depression, eating disorders, ADHD, and disruptive behaviors.

My Survey

We surveyed 3 classes with 62 people altogether.

Do you think social media effects your mental health?
Yes= 53% No= 47%

How many hours do you spend on your phone each day?
1-2= 13% 3-4= 53%
5-6= 26% 7+= 8%

Do you use your phone while having dinner?
Yes= 13% No= 62%
Sometimes= 25%

Do you agree with the phone ban in school?
Yes= 7% No= 93%

What age were you when you first got your phone?
7= 9% 8= 7% 9= 9% 10= 12%
11= 14% 12= 33% 13= 14% 14= 2%

Reflecting

Personal Reflection:

- From this cba, I learned how social media can effect our life and the science behind it, and how to reduce screentime.
- I was surprised that from our survey, that just under half the students didn't think social media effected them.
- I found it challenging to stand up in front of the class and talk but I was more comfortable with my group and my friends.
- I can apply what I learned to my life. I can use the tips provided to reduce screentime and I can also inform my friends and family of the dangers of social media.

Impactful Project:

- I chose to present to first years as it is important for them to be aware of the effects of social media at a young age, because according to our survey, most students get a phone around the ages you start secondary school.
- I chose peer teaching because the students could engage with us in the class, listen, read, look at pictures and ask questions.
- We use phones everyday, and it is very relevant to our lives, and we might be unaware of how much time we spend online every day.
- I believe this was effective because the class was listening and asking questions.

Use of Relevant, Reliable, Appropriate Information:

- I researched the effect that social media has on your mental health.
- The information I gathered was- what makes social media addictive, what is dopamine, underage users, how social media negatively impacts our lives, how to reduce time on social media, and a survey showing relevant information from our school.
- I chose to present a powerpoint to first years. This was effective because the students can be more engaged and ask questions because we are there. There is a variety of talking, and they can be interested by looking at the pictures on the powerpoint. Therefore, it suits learners who are interested in looking, reading or listening. We also sent around a poster for the students to pass around incase they missed something. I chose this over a noticeboard because students might just pass by the noticeboard without reading it.
- The facts were correct because we gathered information from students in our school, and we used websites from medical schools, research centres and other colleges. These websites contained articles from verified doctors. We chose the information that was relevant to our project and easy for first years to understand, and factual.
- We decided to include the information that we chose because we felt that this is what we could apply to all our own lives, particularly first years. The information we gathered was simple to understand after we re-wrote it, and then the first years could understand it better because they most likely have experienced social media negatively in some way before.
- I think my action is important because we use our phones in our everyday lives, and it's important to be aware of the effects of social media.


How Social Media Effects Men Health

A lot of people in my school use their phones 3-4 hours a day, according to my survey. It's important they limit their screen time.

WHY SOCIAL MEDIA CAN EFFECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH:


Social media can negatively impact our overall well-being by triggering anxiety, depression, isolation and FOMO (Fear of missing out). These issues are especially common in teens and young adults.

Social media is here to stay and will continue to evolve and become more pervasive in our lives. If you're spending a lot of time on social media and feeling sad, frustrated, or lonely, it may be time to reevaluate your relationship with social media.



WHAT MAKES SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTIVE:

- Social media platforms drive surges of dopamine in the brain to keep teenagers coming back over and over again.
- What is the role of dopamine? Dopamine acts on areas of the brain to give you feelings of pleasure, motivation and movement. Dopamine also has a role to play in controlling memory, mood, sleep, learning, concentration, movement and other body functions.



Social media is used every day in our lives, it's important we use it responsibly, take time away from our devices and prioritise our family and friends. This is my research on the topic!

Reconnect with friends and family, especially those, who don't use devices. This will help you to get back in touch with the people who are important to you.

Reducing time on social media

Go outside. Spend time outdoors in nature. This will help you to reconnect with yourself and the world around you.



WHY YOU SHOULD LIMIT TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- Anxiety and loneliness can develop from social media. Constantly being online and comparing your life to others can lead to unrealistic expectations. Taking time off social media can help you to discover your hobbies and interests without being influenced by social media.
- Social media can reduce the number of in-person conversations we have and can negatively impact our social skills. When you text people, you are talking behind a screen, and it will not improve your ability to communicate in-person.
- Social media can distract us easily from tasks. The dopamine in our devices causes us to keep coming back from time to time and it distracts us from the task at hand. Staying away from devices can help to improve your focus in settings such as school and significantly improving your results.

Reflect

Personal Reflection:

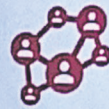
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Social Media's Mental Health

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used every day in important we use it we take time away from and prioritise our friends. This is my theme topic!

CONCLUSION:



- After conducting our research, we found out that social media has a negative impact on our mental health- especially in teenagers. It can sometimes cause depression and anxiety in all age groups.
- Social media creates dopamine, making us satisfied when online and gives us the feeling of needing to constantly come back to social media.
- 91% of people over 16 have used social media in the last 6 months in Ireland. This shows that more than 9 out of 10 people have used social media recently.
- There are many ways to reduce our screen time, such as turning off notifications, setting a screen time and taking time away from your phone by going outside and meeting with friends.

REFLECTION:



We have learned that social media is becoming a problem in our country and we can contribute to the problem by researching and learning about the negative impacts of social media.



We were surprised to see that 91% of people over 16 had used social media in the last 6 months, this was much higher than we expected.



The ways to reduce time on social media are simple and we think everyone could do it if they used their best to.



Overall, the results are not what we expected and we were surprised by the high numbers of social media used. As well as that, we learned a lot about the science behind social media.



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Use of

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- The facts were correct and we used websites contained relevant to our presentation
- We decided to include what we could do we gathered was years could use media negatively
- I think my actions are important to

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SURVEY:

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Touch on the topic:

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- I think my action is important because we use our phones in our everyday lives, and it's important to be aware of the effects of social media.

Features of Quality

Exceptional

The report displays exceptional research with excellent selection and use of relevant, reliable and appropriate information

It shows excellent awareness of audience and consideration of ways to make the project impactful in raising awareness about a health/wellbeing topic or issue of concern

There is evidence of insightful personal reflection on the learning and capacity to reflect on what this means for the student.

Above expectations

The report displays very good research and a capacity to select and use relevant, reliable and appropriate information

It shows a clear awareness of audience and consideration of ways to make the project impactful in raising awareness about a health/wellbeing topic or issue of concern.

There is good evidence of personal reflection on the learning and what it means for the student.

In line with expectations

The report displays good, albeit limited, use of research. Consideration of what research is most relevant, trustworthy and appropriate for the purpose of the project was somewhat less in evidence.

The project shows some awareness of audience although consideration of how to create impact is limited

There is some evidence of personal reflection on the learning. However, reflection on what this means for the student is not in evidence.

Yet to meet expectations

The report shows limited research and appraisal of information skills

The project lacks awareness of audience and consideration of what makes an awareness activity impactful

There is little or no evidence of personal reflection on the learning or what it means for the student.

Teacher annotations

This report displays very good research, drawing on a variety of sources that provide appropriate information and strong evidence for the focus of action. It would be helpful to list the websites used. Generating their own data by conducting a student survey adds greatly to the research and provides a very good hook for engaging their target audience – first years. In addition to being able to explain why the chosen action is of importance there is also clear consideration of how best to engage their audience. To create greatest impact the group decided to peer teach using a range of props including PPT presentation and a poster. Reference to ‘making it easy to understand’ and getting students to ask questions shows clear awareness of audience. It is good to see some reflection on what they learned and how they could apply it. To improve this report the personal reflection could be fleshed out further. Some screen shots or photos of the peer-teaching tools (poster and PPTs) would be helpful to illustrate impactfulness.

Overall judgement:  **Above expectations**