

Empowering learners through wellbeing and digital awareness

Dr Irenka Suto & Carmen Lim

8 December 2025



Presenters



Irenka Suto
Head of Secondary
Curriculum



Carmen Lim
Senior Researcher



Housekeeping

Health and safety

Fire safety

Washrooms









Agenda

- Research: understanding youth digital habits
- Research: understanding the links between youth wellbeing and digital use
- How can the Cambridge Wellbeing curriculum help? Some key features
- Managing emotions and building healthy habits in the digital world
- Responding confidently to digital challenges: online safely
- Plenary discussion



Understanding youth digital habits



We analysed time spent on several digital activities reported by learners in the latest PISA data



Accessing informational materials

Reading, listening or viewing informational materials to learn how to do something such as tutorial or podcast



Playing video games

Playing video games, using smartphone, a gaming console, an online platform or Apps



Browsing the Internet

Browsing the Internet for fun such as reading news, listening to music or watching videos.

Excludes social networks



Browsing social networks

Browsing social networks platform such as Instagram or Facebook



Sharing digital content

Communicating and sharing digital content on social networks or any communication platform



What percentage of 15-year-olds spend more than 3 hours on the following activity on a typical weekday?

- 1 Accessing informational materials
- 2 Playing video games
- 3 Browsing the Internet
- 4 Browsing social networks
- 5 Sharing digital content

Reflect based on your observations... ... and share your responses here:



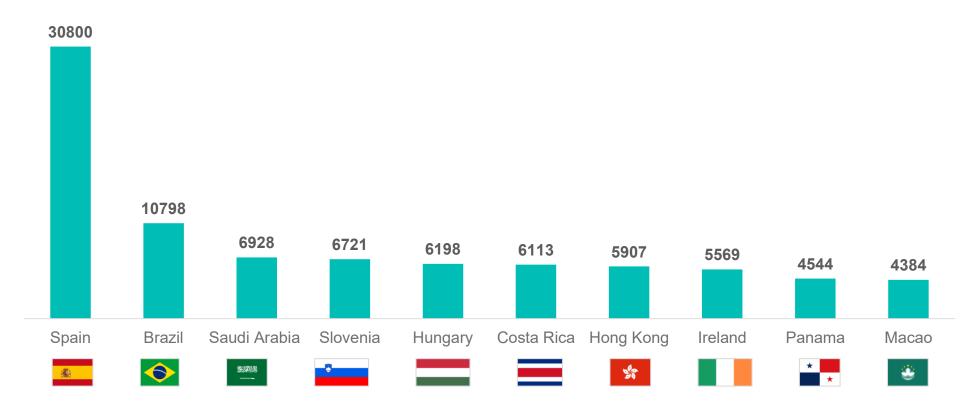
Alternatively,

Visit menti.com
Use code 3691 6033



The data we analysed from 10 countries globally

Number of respondents by country



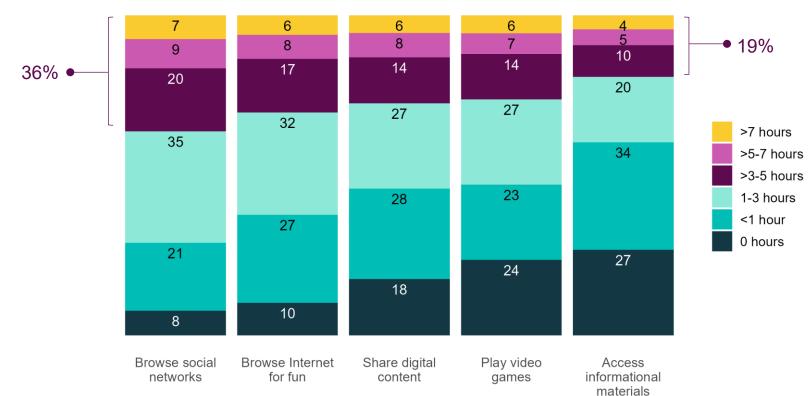
- Each country is equally weighted in all analyses.
- These countries are analysed as they administered both the ICT and the wellbeing PISA questionnaire.



Nearly 4 in 10 browse social networks for 3+ hours daily, while 1 in 5 exceed 5 hours

Daily time spent by activity (weekday)

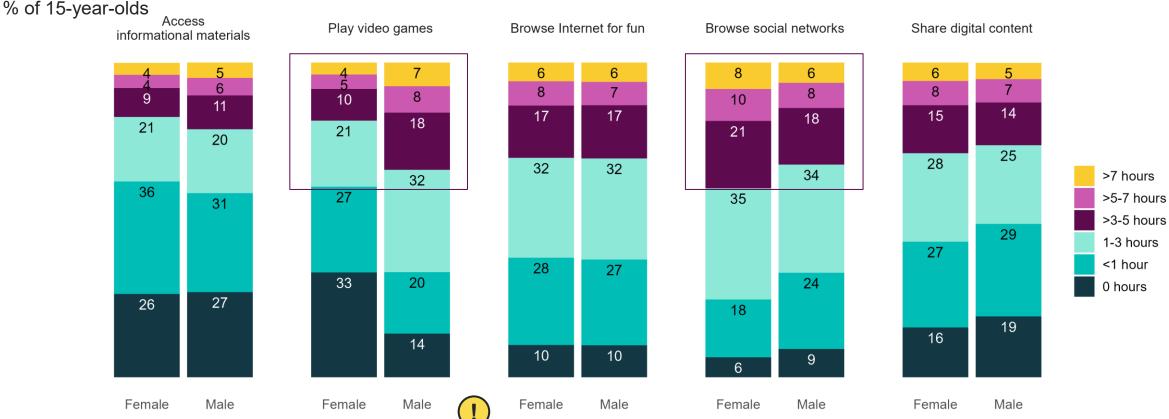
% of 15-year-olds





Boys spend more time gaming, while girls spend more time browsing social networks

Daily time spent by activity and gender (weekday)



An even larger difference is observed for weekend usage



Understanding links between youth wellbeing and digital use



We examined multiple measures of youth wellbeing reported by learners in the PISA data



Life satisfaction

Reported satisfactions across various life areas such as health, school life, relationships.



Body image perception

Ratings on statements relating to their body image, such as 'I like my body.'



General wellbeing

Reported status of wellbeing a day before the survey, indicated by statements like 'Did you ... laugh a lot yesterday?'



Sense of belonging at school

Ratings on statements such as 'I make friends easily at school.'



Psychosomatic symptoms

Reported frequency of symptoms, such as sleeping difficulty, headache, and anxiety, in the past six months.



Discuss in pair... Which wellbeing measures are negatively related to your selected digital activity?

Higher time spent on... ... is to the following wellbeing measure.

1 Accessing informational materials

A Life satisfaction



- Browsing social networks

 D Sense of belonging at school
- Sharing digital content

 | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital content | Baring digital cont



Enter your responses as, for example, '5C' to represent 'sharing digital content and 'general wellbeing'.



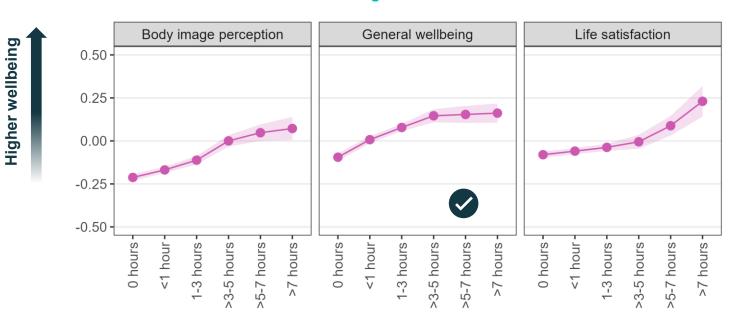


Time spent on informational materials is positively associated with several aspects of wellbeing

Average wellbeing score by time spent

Mean (OECD average = 0) and 95% confidence interval

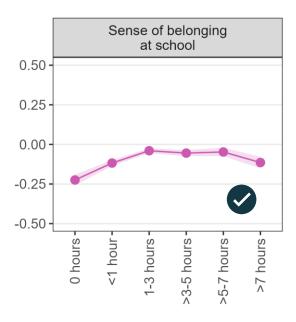
Accessing informational materials



Daily hours spent on weekdays

Positive links exist even after controlling for student characteristics, such as the number of close friends and family backgrounds.

Browsing social networks



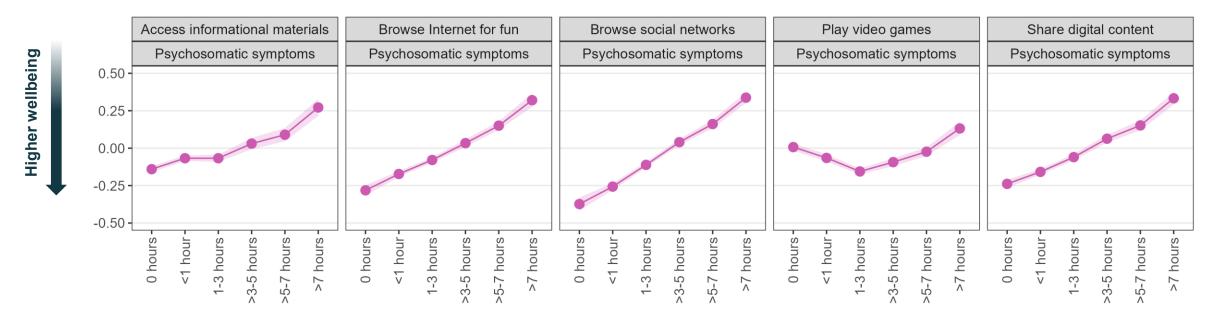
Daily hours spent on weekdays



Time spent digitally is linked to more episodes of psychosomatic symptoms across all activities

Average wellbeing score by time spent

Mean (OECD average = 0) and 95% confidence interval



Daily hours spent on weekends



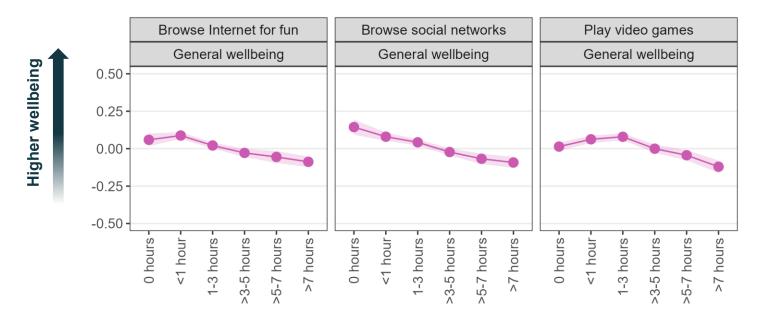
All negative links shown here exist even after controlling for student characteristics, such as the number of close friends and family backgrounds.



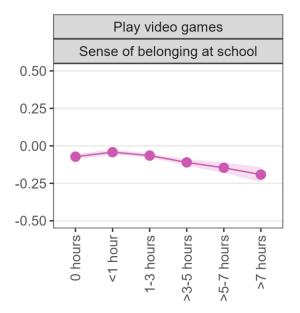
Some negative links are also found in gaming, browsing the Internet and browsing social networks

Average wellbeing score by time spent

Mean (OECD average = 0) and 95% confidence interval



Daily hours spent on weekends



Daily hours spent on weekdays



All negative links shown here exist even after controlling for student characteristics, such as the number of close friends and family backgrounds.



Discuss in pair... Which relationships between digital use and wellbeing differ most between girls and boys?

For example, positive for boys but not for girls, or vice versa.

1 Accessing informational materials

A Life satisfaction

2 Playing video games

Body image perception

3 Browsing the Internet

General wellbeing

4 Browsing social networks

Sense of belonging at school

5 Sharing digital content

Psychosomatic symptoms



Enter your responses as, for example, '5C' to represent 'sharing digital content and 'general wellbeing'.

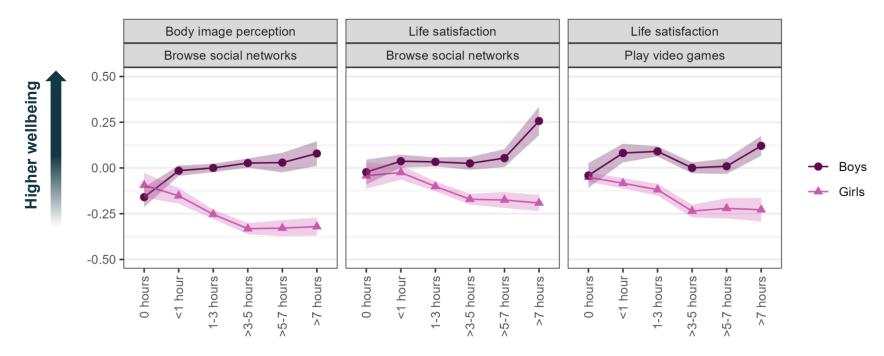




Girls' body image & life satisfaction are negatively linked to gaming & social networks, but not so for boys

Average wellbeing score by time spent

Mean (OECD average = 0) and 95% confidence interval



Daily hours spent on weekdays



Several key considerations for supporting diverse youth wellbeing needs in a digital world



Youth wellbeing may be affected in different ways, depending on the purpose of digital use.

2

Not all aspects of wellbeing are equally impacted by the same type of digital use.

3

Girls and boys may experience the impact of digital use on their wellbeing differently.

Implications:

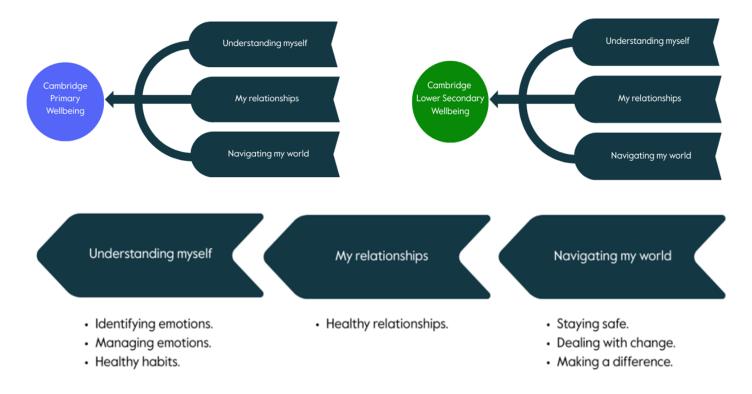
It's essential that learners develop the ability to understand what contributes to their wellbeing and what doesn't. Learners need to be aware of which areas of their wellbeing may need attention and feel empowered to take steps to manage and improve them.

Both girls and boys should be supported in developing the skills to reflect on, understand, and manage their wellbeing in ways that are relevant to their own unique experiences.

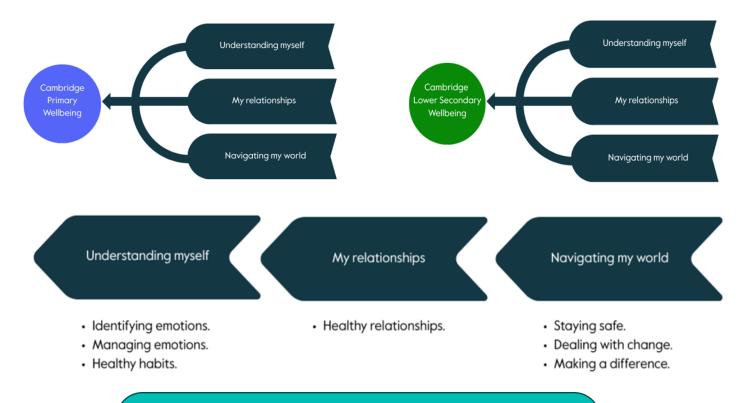


How can the Cambridge Wellbeing Curriculum help? Some key features





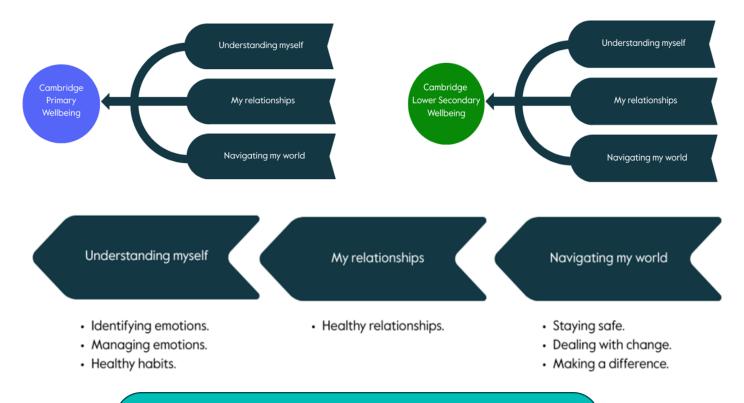




For each sub-strand, there is a set of learning objectives for:

- Stages 1 to 3
- Stages 4 to 6
- Stages 7 to 9





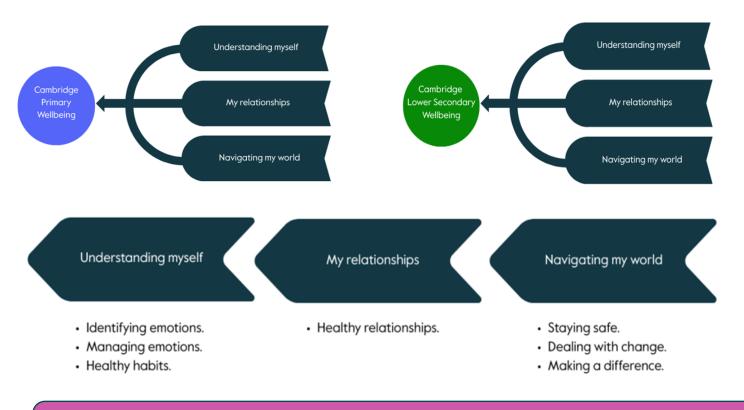
Can be:

- taught as a standalone subject
- integrated into existing curricula
- both.

For each sub-strand, there is a set of learning objectives for:

- Stages 1 to 3
- Stages 4 to 6
- Stages 7 to 9





Can be:

- taught as a standalone subject
- integrated into existing curricula
- both.

PISA research



Within any classroom, there will be lots of individual differences in 'what works' in a digital context.

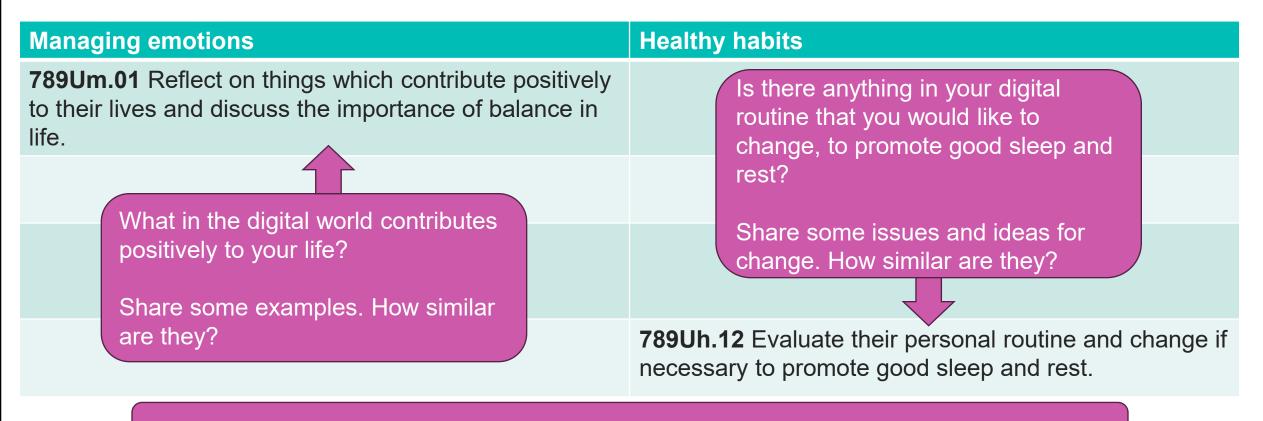


Examples of learning objectives from the **Understanding myself** strand that can be explored in a digital context

Managing emotions sub-strand	Healthy habits sub-strand
789Um.01 Reflect on things which contribute positively to their lives and discuss the importance of balance in life.	789Uh.07 Understand the connection between inactive lifestyles and poor health.
789Um.02 Evaluate the impact their words and behaviour can have on their own and others' wellbeing.	789Uh.10 Explore the effects of poor quality or limited rest on the brain.
789Um.03 Identify their own emotional self-care needs and judiciously choose relevant strategies to support them.	789Uh.11 Explore the effects of poor quality or limited sleep on the brain.
789Um.06 Explore the ways in which media can influence body image.	789Uh.12 Evaluate their personal routine and change if necessary to promote good sleep and rest.



Discuss in pairs...



When listening to your discussion partner, think about how you can show empathy.



Feedback from pair discussions

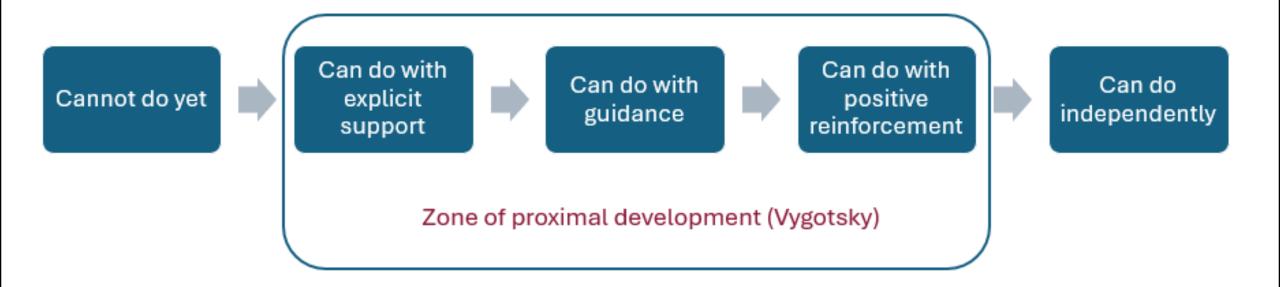
Did you come up with identical positive examples and issues?

Did you come up with identical ideas for change?

What did empathy look and sound like during your discussion? How might this differ with online communication?



Progression and differentiation





Over to you: review our lesson plan on online safety

Navigating my world: Staying safe **789Ns.04** Recognise the importance of permissions online and the risks associated with sharing images and information with others.

- Which parts would work well with your learners?
- How would you adapt the lesson plan (or particular activities within it) for more or less able learners?
- What additional activities can you think of for this learning objective?
- Could any of the content be integrated into teaching in other subjects?





Plenary

- 1. What are your thoughts on the lesson plan, and your ideas for adapting and extending it?
- 2. More generally, what are you looking forward to doing as a result of today's session?





For more...

For Professional Development for the Cambridge Wellbeing Curriculum see:

https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/professional-development/

For our wellbeing research using PISA 2022 data, visit:

https://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/Image s/745135-youth-wellbeing-digital-use-and-digitalliteracy-evidence-from-pisa-2022.pdf







Get in touch!

irenka.suto@cambridge.org hui.lim@cambridge.org

