



Case Study Report and reflections on Impact on Students

Class 2I, a.s. 2021-2022

Description

This is a final report which follows 4 lessons of one hour each – in presence- with a class of 28 students of a 2nd year high secondary level of an Italian Scientific lyceum located in the centre of Rome. The age of the students ranges between 14 to 15 years old. The overall topic of the lessons was: Benefits and Dangers of social media, in accordance with the Erasmus+ educational project which our Liceo A. Righi is part of.

The topic developed here included the areas of benefits of social media in the personal and educational.

The lessons plans have been produced by myself and then debated and consulted throughout Erasmus+ meetings which took place between January 2021 and September 2021.

The didactic plan focussed specifically on the benefits of social media and it was developed within the area of Citizenship Education and English, the entire module has been carried out in English language hence the evaluation incorporated the skills and competences of both the two disciplines.

Guidance

Aims:

General objectives and pertinent to the area of Citizenship:

- To solicit and enhance awareness on the advantages presented by social media as well on a positive use of them.
- To be able to present the topic in English language.
- To effectively use in a positive way social media for personal and educational purposes
- To proactively work in group hence to boost team work and team spirit
- To achieve a constructive critical thinking
- To enhance the ability of peer-valuation as well as to self-evaluate the work carried out
- To know how to sum up ideas in a concise and precise way
- To improve students' digital skills
- To recognize the teacher's feedback as defining learning goals



General objectives and pertinent to the area of English Language:

- To recognize the linguistic features used in creating a written review
- To be able to report and present autonomously and fluently in English
- To create an independent report on a given topic
- To judge students' own work and to assess their peers

Methods:

During lessons the topic has been presented using a proactive approach, placing the student in the foreground hence by letting students play a central role during the lesson. The area of social media immediately felt correspondent to the students' needs and reality so it has been natural to let students "take the controls" while carrying out activities such as debates or for the making of videos for tutorials.

The procedure of each lesson plan includes: preparation, presentation and practice.

The methods used: cooperative learning, brainstorming, role playing, debates and slides and visual presentations. As a second step to a brainstorming and with the aim of potentiating the arguments highlighted during this activity, students have been asked to carry out interviews to highlight the positions of their family members in relation to social media hence to better understand the benefits and dangers of social networks. The students have then focussed on the benefits of social media under the educational point of view and have created a video tutorial on the benefits of social media for English language learning.

Findings:

At the end of each activity students were asked to directly participate to the take part into the assessment process by answering questions such as: "What have you learnt today?" "What is your opinion on the activity we today have carried out?" "What in your opinion, you need to improve?"

At the end of the entire module, each student filled in a feedback form in Google Form. The final result has been very positive, both the topic and the activities carried out responded to the students' interests and the entire group felt more cohesive especially following the creation of the video.

Conclusions:

Following the restrictions experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemics, this module on social media has greatly improved team work and has enhanced the social aspect and the interrelations which our students have suffered during the online learning/teaching period.

First of all, the topic itself provided students with an immediate sense of control and confidence in relation to their competences, skills and the knowledge. Talking about social media corresponds to all students' needs and to their immediate surrounding, pupils felt "in command"



and that has increased their sense of confidence, which, as teenagers -and above all as teenagers in Covid time- is generally fragile.

The one-hour lesson was organised in various steps and following clear guidance, students then elaborated some tasks at home such as: a writing on the benefits of social media, the preparation of points of discussion for a class debate, the creation of a final video.

Context.

This case study was incorporated in the National/Regional area of Citizenship, a subject which is receiving greater and greater emphasis and importance in the school curricula.

Citizenship Education is a quite broad area which aims at employing the skills and competences achieved in each subject for concrete needs and purposes in the everyday life of students. In this context, the topic of social media is very appropriate and effective. For example, in my subject which is English, it is very useful to talk, read, write and listen to others speaking about social media and today's world. There is an enormous amount of material in textbooks, but especially in internet that, after being appropriately filtered and documented by us teachers and educators, can result of great use and can solicit important debates in class.

The weaknesses and needs identified:

It was often difficult to make students concentrate only on the positive aspect of social media, as the benefits being the area of our lesson plans. It was perceived by all teachers that students inevitably related to the negative outcomes of these technological and digital tools when talking about them. This implied a redesign of the plans: sometimes it was necessary to include the negative aspects or even to start from this point to then move on towards the benefits.

This was very evident during the debate: the group of students which had to support the positive outcomes of social media had much less points to present compared to those who had to focus on the negative aspects.

A second difficulty encountered was the constant need to re-address students to the specific area of activity in order to avoid a disperse use of arguments and the possibility of having a “messy” classroom activity. If on one hand, students offered great inputs when talking about their personal use of social media, on the other hand there was at times the need to gather their feedback in a more ordinarily way, this implied a constant “watch” and supervision of their interventions, especially during the brainstorming activity

Time is definitely a major flaw in the development of such a lesson plan: the module would need a more flexible timeline and also from the students' point of view, a great amount of their work was also conducted privately as well as in group out of the classroom and of the school time.

Finally, in the creation of video tutorials, all the students of this class have opted to present the topic only through slides with audio without filming their faces. As a final result, the tutorial is not as lively and engaging as it might have been with the vision of a person explaining the subject matter.



Implementation of the case-study

Procedure:

1st lesson (one hour)

Presentation of the topic through a brainstorming activity:

“How much you know about social media?”

Do social media play a positive or negative role in our societies? In which ways?”

Follow-up: after a broader presentation of the topic, each student was asked to reflect upon the questions below and then to report in small groups of 4 students

“What place do social media occupy in your personal experience? In your point of view, do you consider them more positively or negatively? Why?”

Then each group presents their findings

As additional Prompt: the questionnaire (Questionnaire 1- see attachment)

Following an ample discussion of the students’ points of views and findings of the questionnaire, the teacher invites the pupils to reflect upon this question:

“What do you think is your parents or, generally speaking, adults’ position in relation to social media?”

Do you think parents would have a similar position on this topic as their children?”

Following a brief exchange of opinions, the students are shown a questionnaire that they would need to carry out with one or both their parents or an adult they know and then to report their findings in next lesson.

Homework task: *What role do social media cover in your life? Carry out an interview (sample of questionnaire in the attachment -Questionnaire 2) with one or two members of your family or adult friends and prepare a presentation of your findings”*

2nd lesson (one hour)

Self-reflection: the teacher asks students to reflect upon what has been done so far:

“What have you learnt during our activities on the topic of social media? What areas need further improvement in your opinion?”

Homework follow-up Students present their findings in class and they are solicited to reflect upon the findings of their interviews.



This activity provided a further revision and potentiation on speaking and listening competences in English, namely: developing and presenting points of view as well as personal positions, turn taking, agreeing and disagreeing.

Introducing the next lesson topic:

“Let’s see together how social media have impacted positively our lives”

Reading task: reading of the article on the benefits of social media (Attached- article) . After the reading, students are asked to provide their personal opinion on the article.

Then students are asked to summarize the article main points in the format of a mind map which will be then developed into proper writing as a homework task.

Homework task: *complete the reading of the article and carry out a writing with a summary of the article’s content and your personal opinions*

3rd lesson (one hour)

Correction of the homework task and discussion on the article’s content.

The correction of the writings provided a further revision and potentiation on writing competences in English, namely: how to write an article review, paragraphing and the correct use of linking words and connectors and on how to develop personal points of view.

Introducing a new activity, teacher asks:

“How are social media a benefit for personal and education fields”

“How do you consider the use of social media in your concrete personal and educational experiences?”

“Do you ever use social media and tutorials for your homework or learning needs? Are they an effective tool for these purposes?”

“How do you employ social media for language learning?”

Class discussion

Following a class discussion on the various questions, students are invited to work in groups of 4 to prepare and present, as final product, a video tutorial of a particular aspect of English language learning (grammar, spelling, communicative functions..) to be handed in in about two weeks.

During the lesson the teacher and students work together in organizing the making of the video: deciding the roles that each students needs to cover, the length and the points to highlight and those to leave out, the process of editing and subtitling and so on.

Then students work in groups and jot down ideas of their work plan and are invited to focus on the linguistic competences and possible mistakes both in the scripts as well while speaking on video. This phase of feedback is carried out through peer and self-correction and ultimately with the teacher



4th lesson (one hour)

Presentation of the final product- the video tutorial

This presentation has also involved a small audience of other 10 students from other classrooms

Evaluation and feedback, students are solicited to reflect upon what has been done so far:

Teacher asks:

“What is your overall feedback on this activity?”

What have you learnt from this experience? What areas need further improvement?”

Students are asked to fill in the Final Student’s Assessment and Feedback forms in form of Google Form.

The Google Form has also been prepared by students in groups as a homework task, this way students were given the opportunity to concretely employ their soft skill and know-how strategies.

Methods of your case-study.

What did you attempt to find out about the effectiveness and impact of modules implemented in your case-study student groups?

What material and methods have been employed? Questionnaires (see attached) Article (see attached) Class discussions.

How many did you talk to, and how representative did you think they were? I think that my role was predominant in the organisation of the tasks and in creating an efficient and productive classroom and learning environment.

Findings from your case-study.

The overall impact, also illustrated in the feedback forms, has been overall very positive. The students showed immediate engagement in the classroom activities and have been very involved and cooperative in the task of video making. When asked: how did you benefit from these activities? The most common answer was I learnt new things while enjoying myself together with my classmates.

Overall feedback and conclusions.

The experience of teaching this module in such a class of teenage students has been very rewarding and effective, from a didactic point of view.

The class developed and the activities help foster a stronger team spirit and more positive inter-relationships among students.

Having said this, it is quite important to point out though that all students here involved possess a good background knowledge of English as L2, as well a “already in place” good relationship in the class.



I think these two aspects were determining and pivotal in the realization of this module.
The cooperation of the students' families has also been a great asset.

Regarding the topics carried out, some topics were more engaging than other. For example: the reading of the article has developed important reflections and students felt it was very interesting to talk about this topic.

Working in groups to create the video tutorials has been a very engaging activity and it has been a useful tool to recap and potentiate all the points discussed during the previous lessons. As an activity, it has involved all students and has provided them with a constructive opportunity to spend time together while working on a common project and goal.



Case Study Report and reflections on Impact on Students

Class 4I, a.s. 2021-2022

Description

This is a final report which follows 6 lessons of one hour each – in presence- with a class of 23 students belonging to a 4th year high secondary level of an Italian Scientific lyceum located in the centre of Rome. The age of the students ranges between 16 to 17 years old. The overall topic of the lessons was: Benefits and Dangers of social media, in accordance with the Erasmus+ educational project which our Liceo A. Righi is part of.

The topic developed here included the areas of benefits of social media in the personal, educational and professional fields.

The lessons plans have been produced by myself and then debated and consulted throughout our Erasmus+ meetings which took place between January 2021 and September 2021.

The didactic plan focussed specifically on the benefits of social media and it was developed within the area of Citizenship Education and English, the entire module has been carried out in English language hence the evaluation incorporated the skills and competences of both the two disciplines.

Guidance

Aims:

General objectives and pertinent to the area of Citizenship:

- To solicit and enhance awareness on the advantages presented by social media as well on a positive use of them.
- To be able to present the topic in English language.
- To effectively use in a positive way social media for personal and educational purposes
- To proactively work in group hence to boost team work and team spirit
- To achieve a constructive critical thinking
- To enhance the ability of peer-valuation as well as to self-evaluate the work carried out
- To know how to sum up ideas in a concise and precise way
- To improve students' digital skills
- To recognize the teacher's feedback as defining learning goals



General objectives and pertinent to the area of English Language:

- To recognize the linguistic features used in creating a written review
- To be able to report and present autonomously and fluently in English
- To create an independent report on a given topic
- To judge their own work and to assess their peers

Methods:

During lessons the topic has been presented using a proactive approach, placing the student in the foreground hence by letting students play a central role during the lesson. The area of social media immediately felt correspondent to the students' needs and reality so it has been natural to let students "take the controls" while carrying out activities such as debates or for the making of videos.

The procedure of each lesson plan include: preparation, presentation and practice.

The methods used: cooperative learning, brainstorming, role playing, debates and slides and visual presentations. As a second step to a brainstorming and with the aim of potentiating the arguments highlighted during this activity, students have been presented an article to read and reflect upon and to then develop a writing in form of article review (about 280-300 words) on the topic.

Findings:

At the end of each activity students were asked to directly participate to the take part into the assessment process by answering questions such as: "What have you learnt today?" "What is your opinion on the activity we today have carried out?" "What in your opinion, you need to improve?"

At the end of the entire module, each student filled in a feedback form in Google Form

The final result has been very positive, both the topic and the activities carried out responded to the students' interests and the entire group felt more cohesive especially following the creation of the video.

Conclusions:

Following the restrictions experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemics, this module on social media has greatly improved team work and has enhanced the social aspect and the interrelations which our students have suffered during the online learning/teaching period.

First of all, the topic itself provided students with an immediate sense of control and confidence in relation to their competences, skills and the knowledge. Talking about social media corresponds to all students' needs and to their immediate surrounding, pupils felt "in command"



and that has increased their sense of confidence, which, as teenagers -and above all as teenagers in Covid time- is generally fragile.

The one-hour lesson was organised in various steps and following clear guidance, students then elaborated some tasks at home such as: a writing on the benefits of social media, the preparation of points of discussion for a class debate, the creation of a final video.

The video has been the most complete and involving activity and all students cooperated in various aspects such as: preparation of a script, performing the script, editing and subtitling, video shooting.

Context.

This case study was incorporated in the National/Regional area of Citizenship, a subject which is receiving greater and greater emphasis and importance in the school curricula.

Citizenship Education is a quite broad area which aims at employing the skills and competences achieved in each subject for concrete needs and purposes in the everyday life of students. In this context, the topic of social media is very appropriate and effective. For example, in my subject which is English, it is very useful to talk, read, write and listen to others speaking about social media and today's world. There is an enormous amount of material in textbooks, but especially in internet that, after being appropriately filtered and documented by us teachers and educators, can result of great use and can solicit important debates in class.

The weaknesses and needs identified:

It was often difficult to make students concentrate only on the positive aspect of social media, as the benefits being the area of our lesson plans. It was perceived by all teachers that students inevitably related to the negative outcomes of these technological and digital tools when talking about them. This implied a redesign of the plans: sometimes it was necessary to include the negative aspects or even to start from this point to then move on towards the benefits.

This was very evident during the debate: the group of students which had to support the positive outcomes of social media had much less points to present compared to those who had to focus on the negative aspects.

A second difficulty encountered was the constant need to re-address students to the specific area of activity in order to avoid a disperse use of arguments and the possibility of having a "messy" classroom activity. If on one hand, students offered great inputs when talking about their personal use of social media, on the other hand there was at times the need to gather their feedback in a more ordinarily way, this implied a constant "watch" and supervision of their interventions, especially during the brainstorming activity

Time is definitely a major flaw in the development of such a lesson plan: the module would need a more flexible timeline and also from the students' point of view, a great amount of their work was also conducted privately as well as in group out of the classroom and of the school time.



Implementation of the case-study

Procedure:

1st lesson (one hour)

Presentation of the topic through a brainstorming activity:

“How much you know about social media?”

Do social media play a positive or negative role in our societies? In which ways?”

Follow-up: after a broader presentation of the topic, each student was asked to reflect upon the questions below and then to report in small groups of 4 students

“What place do social media occupy in your personal experience? In your point of view, do you consider them more positively or negatively? Why?”

Then each group presents their findings

As additional Prompt: the questionnaire (questionnaire 1- see attachment)

Then the lesson moved on in focusing on one aspect: online activism

Activity: reading and discussing an article (see attachment)

Homework task: complete the reading of the article and carry out a writing with a summary of the article’s content and personal opinions

2nd lesson (one hour)

Correction of the homework task and discussion on the article’s content.

The correction of the writings provided a further revision and potentiation on writing competences in English, namely: how to write an article review, paragraphing and the correct use of linking words and connectors and on how to develop personal points of view.

Introducing the next lesson topic: *“How are social media a benefit for personal and education fields”* Class discussion”

Homework: *What role do social media cover in your life? Carry out an interview (sample of questionnaire in the attachment -Questionnaire 2) with one or two members of your family or friends and prepare a presentation of your findings”*



3rd lesson (one hour)

Homework follow-up Students present their findings in class and they are solicited to reflect upon the findings of their interviews.

Self-reflection: the teacher asks students to reflect upon what has been done so far:

“What have you learnt from this activity? What areas need further improvement in your opinion?”

Introducing a new activity: Video making.

Teacher asks: *“How do you concretely see the effective use of social media in your personal, educational and possibly professional fields?”* Students are invited to prepare and present as final product a video which shows the actual use of medias as well as a way to recap all the aspects analysed, surveyed and discussed in class (eg: the benefits for personal use, for learning and educational purposes as well as for small businesses)

During the lesson the teacher and students work together in organizing the making of the video: deciding the roles that each students needs to cover, the length and the points to highlight and those to leave out, the process of editing and subtitling and so on..

4th lesson (one hour)

Students present the first draft of their work, class discussion on both the positive aspects as well as the areas of improvement

Students are invited to focus on the linguistic competences and possible mistakes both in the scripts as well while speaking on video. This phase of feedback is carried out through peer and self-correction and ultimately with the teacher

5th lesson (one hour)

Presentation of the final product- the video

This presentation has also involved a small audience of other 10 students from other classrooms

Evaluation and feedback, students are solicited to reflect upon what has been done so far:

Teacher asks: *“What is your feedback on this activity? What have you learnt from this experience? What areas need further improvement?”*

Homework: prepare your points in support or against this statement:

“Traditional teaching is going to be soon replaced by online tutorials thanks to social media students can experience more effective teaching methods”

The class will be divided into two main groups: one in favour and one against the statement to present in a class debate

6th lesson (one hour)

Class debate and exchanging opinions and feedback



Students were asked to fill in the Final Student's Assessment and Feedback forms in form of Google Form.

The Google Form has also been prepared by students in groups as a homework task, this way students were given the opportunity to concretely employ their soft skill and know-how strategies.

Methods of your case-study.

What did you attempt to find out about the effectiveness and impact of modules implemented in your case-study student groups?

What material and methods have been employed? Questionnaires (see attached) Article (see attached) Class discussions.

How many did you talk to, and how representative did you think they were? I think that my role was predominant in the organisation of the tasks and in creating an efficient and productive classroom and learning environment.

Findings from your case-study.

The overall impact, also illustrated in the feedback forms, has been overall very positive. The students showed immediate engagement in the classroom activities and have been very involved and cooperative in the task of video making. When asked: how did you benefit from these activities? The most common answer was I learnt new things while enjoying myself together with my classmates.

Overall feedback and conclusions.

The experience of teaching this module in such a class of teenage students has been very rewarding and effective, from a didactic point of view.

The class developed and the activities help foster a stronger team spirit and more positive inter-relationships among students.

Having said this, it is quite important to point out though that all students here involved possess a good background knowledge of English as L2, as well a "already in place" good relationship in the class.

I think these two aspects were determining and pivotal in the realization of this module.

The cooperation of the students' families has also been a great asset.

Regarding the topics carried out, some topics were more engaging than other. For example: the reading of the article on online activism has developed important reflections and students felt it was very interesting to talk about this topic.

The video making has been a very powerful and effective tool to recap and potentiate all the points discussed during the previous lessons. As an activity, it has involved all students and has provided them with a constructive opportunity to spend time together while working on a common project and goal.





Template for Case Study on Curriculum Impact

The objectives of the project were to discover the potential of the social network medium, starting from its history, development, scenario and possible future implications. Although adolescents believe they have a deep knowledge of social networks, an analysis of them made it possible to explore a universe that was in part already known but in part needed guidelines to penetrate the grey areas.

The objectives were therefore

- To define the potential benefits of using social media, focusing on the resources offered by digital platforms in areas such as personal and educational.

the personal and educational spheres. More specifically, for transversal competences the objectives are:

- to strengthen group spirit and teamwork
- to develop critical thinking and soft skills
- to raise awareness in the use of social media.

Since there are no traditional lessons, no books to study, no exercises to do, no notes to take, the teaching method has been completely remodelled and reshaped, involving a great deal of interaction with the students from the beginning to the end.

Innovative methods such as debate and public speaking were introduced, because it was necessary for each segment of the educational activity to be resonated by the class as a whole and by each individual pupil within the class group itself.

The module was proposed to classes 1A and 1F of the school year 2021-2022 of the Liceo Scientifico Statale Augusto Righi, taking advantage, after the Christmas holidays, of the hours of civic education for which I had planned to deal with the macro sector of digital citizenship.

The adolescents, all around 14 years old, defined as Generation Z due to the fact that they are familiar with a videoconferencing platform such as Zoom meeting, found themselves working with the social media tool, which they handle on a daily basis, but at the same time re-evaluating it and looking at it with a careful, critical and scientific eye.

The case study was therefore an introduction to the broader theme of the benefits of social media and revolved around understanding the universe of social media itself.



The activities presented were aimed at examining such a vast and often confusing topic as social media from multiple perspectives in order to achieve a broader understanding and awareness.

There were five main steps:

1. Introduction to clarify the objectives;
2. Stimulating critical thinking on the topic through a brainstorming activity;
3. Working with the relevant topics in depth in small groups of students;
4. Practical information;
5. Conclusion.

It was noted that the schoolchildren were convinced that the world of social networks lacked the complexity, variety and articulation that emerged in the course of the lessons. For the majority of students, social media, apart from being reduced to two examples in particular (Tik Tok and Twitch), was simply a way of passing the time and distracting themselves from their studies or other commitments.

The lessons allowed a journey into a place only apparently known and familiar, which instead brought to light many more hidden corners and shady areas than imagined.

The methodologies were those of the latest generation (public speaking and debate, surfing the web, creating digital questionnaires, products written first on paper then on drives shared on the Internet).

Parents had been informed in advance during the November class councils, and participation was compulsory since it took place during school hours.

Little material was distributed; the work was set up on a continuous construction and research without providing too much pre-packaged stuff and without revealing anything: a kind of learning by discovery.

The effectiveness and impact of the modules in terms of their incorporation into the curriculum was positive: each module dedicated to researching and building on the beneficial value of social media was a necessary step towards the final product and objective, so the modules blended well with the rest of the curriculum elements. No student, and no teacher in the class council, made any complaints: the teachers' subjects and teaching hours were not affected. The first to carry out the Erasmus plus project on the benefits of social media in parallel were the teachers of motor sciences (and all three of us were guided by the school contact person).



The students' products, all in digital format, met with the approval of the parents or teachers to whom they were shown, a sign that the primary objective, to learn about the benefits of social media, has been profitably internalised by the learners, who have experimented with digital tools, expressible in social media, to describe the benefits of social media. It is an incorporation that could work very well in the long term, since with the recent experiences of distance learning and integrated digital teaching, teachers and students have found themselves interacting with new tools, including social media, so it is not out of the question that portions of subjects from the most varied subjects could also be conveyed through a channel favoured by the new generations such as social media.

The results attached (written works as a sort of tabloid or essay, results of the writing competition, products of the brainstorming, autonomous creation of tag clouds) denote the active involvement of the whole class group, and the attention that the topic has stimulated in young people. As students, they carried out personal research work, internalisation, metabolisation; they therefore ventured into new ways of teaching and tasks, on an unconventional subject and with an innovative topic.

It can therefore be said that the project experiment was successful, that it can be integrated in some way with the compulsory curriculum of the Italian school system by exploiting, for example, the hours of civic education, a transversal subject that all teachers are required to carry out within the class council, with a number of compulsory hours by the end of the school year.

There do not seem to be any significant suggestions for curriculum incorporation; a teacher can best manage his or her time at school by devoting appropriate space to the project on the benefits of social media.

Impact Report Template

This is the first time I have been involved in an Erasmus plus project and the first time I have touched on a topical, different, everyday issue, which cuts across many subjects and is certainly important in schools today and in the future.

The benefits of social media are in fact a topic that has allowed us to reflect carefully on a medium, social media, whose potential is only apparently known and whose merits and flaws are only superficially known.



As often happens, it was more immediate, more intuitive, easier to grasp the negative value of social media; the effects of a negative use of social media are under everyone's eyes, the news of cyberbullying and spread of false news are a constant and even young boys of 14 years old who were involved in the project were quite ready to review the critical aspects of social media, although very loved and very appreciated by themselves.

In Italy, there is a growing attention towards social media; they can be a double-edged sword, so raising awareness towards their considered, critical and responsible use is a commitment carried out by many press bodies, cultural associations, advertising campaigns. I immediately thought that the topic proposed by the Erasmus Plus project was up-to-date and allowed for a variety of views. I immediately thought that the topic proposed by the Erasmus plus project was up-to-date and allowed for a variety of views. Certainly the advantage of the project was that it brought to school, and therefore treated as part of the curriculum, a subject for discussion that perhaps does not reach 14-year-olds, or not everyone. On the other hand, talking about it in the morning during school hours and working on it in the afternoon made it possible to somehow institutionalise an important issue that teenagers cannot fail to reflect on.

The Erasmus plus project was included in the Civic Education classes which began in the two first years of secondary school on 10 January, after the Christmas holidays. At school, about 10 hours were dedicated to each of the two classes involved (1A and 1F of the Liceo Scientifico Augusto Righi). Parents were informed as early as November, and participation was compulsory since everything took place during school hours. The school months involved were January, February and March. The project was mainly based on an interactive methodology: by renouncing the classic frontal lesson, the project was characterised as a discovery, as a journey without anything pre-packaged. The choice was made to start with what is wrong, i.e. to go through the negatives of social media, such as the swarming of hate speech and the proliferation of fake news. By starting to talk not about the neutral function of social networks, but about their greatest risks, their most obvious faults, we immediately immersed ourselves in a reality with the primary aim of countering it.

Step by step, the students were able to see for themselves the critical issues arising from a reckless use of social media, such as easy offence, the illusion of hiding behind apparent anonymity, the taste for offending, denigrating and mocking without weighing



the words and weighing the consequences of what is posted or published on social networks.

In addition, tangible evidence was provided to show how social networks can become a vehicle not only for hateful words but also for false, unreliable and specious news, which finds fertile ground where information that has no basis in authenticity is shared without checking the content, source and consistency with space-time data.

The students worked both synchronously in class and asynchronously at home. At times, they completed work started at school (tabloid/pamphlet and writing competition) and brought it back to digital format; at other times, they engaged in tasks of a digital, creative and innovative nature, such as brainstorming, producing spots, creating tag clouds.

The expected results appeared satisfactory. The evaluation consisted of observing active participation in the classroom, noting the punctuality of task delivery and measuring the quality of the final products. The final debriefing then brought to light what and how much input each student had received from the project. The evaluation tools were therefore observations, interviews, interventions and the digital work of the pupils. All of this was particularly new and not comparable with the normal school curriculum, which is made up of much more traditional testing and evaluation tools.

It was the novelty of the course that made it a strong point; the pupils tackled a topic at school that seemed unschool-like to them, which motivated them even more. They had fun going over and exploring the insidious aspects of social networks and then working by contrast, trying to diametrically overturn online hatred and the dissemination of untrue data.

It can be said that pupil participation was satisfactory, motivation palpable and interaction good. Instead of letting the topics slide, the pupils took over the topic and manipulated it to create something new and unexpected.

The fact that the pupils were made protagonists is the most relevant factor in both the local and national context. The methods that worked best are the combination of the frontal part of the lessons with the development of autonomous products using new technologies and tools that have never been explored before. The type of content that led to the most involvement was the detailed and meticulous case studies in which the potential risk of social media was seen, in order to turn them into beneficial tools. Basically anything can be incorporated into the curriculum; civic education is a great



excuse to talk about social media in school and school education can only benefit from introducing the module into the curriculum. In the near future, more so than in the present, social media itself will enter into education, not as an object of study but as a tool of study, so it is appropriate and beneficial that it is known and explored and its effectiveness fully evaluated.

Template for Case Study on Impact on Students

It was very important and a great training opportunity for me as a teacher and for the students as learners to work on the benefits of social networks. This tool is in fact often associated only with pure entertainment, a moment of leisure, a superficial or even unhealthy way of gathering together. Especially in times of closure and lockdown, one hears about the closure of young people within themselves, the lack of sociability and aggregation, the holing up in their rooms and finding their only entertainment in their smartphones, resulting in an exaggerated use of social networks. Apart from the pathological development of the phenomenon known as hikikomori, whereby a young person's only outlet is in electronic tools and Internet surfing, our young people too, who since March 2020 have faced the pandemic, with all its material and moral consequences, have undoubtedly gone through a difficult, unimaginable period for which they were not prepared.

Social media, precisely because they are social, because they are intended to create or maintain relationships and social relations, which for a long time were not feasible, have become even more important at this historical juncture.

Always under attack for a number of reasons, social media needed a reassessment, and to do so we started from their worst evils. The most critical aspects have been addressed, those for which social networks have been and are rightly demonised.

The Net is an open 'sea', offering infinite opportunities, but with regard to which it is necessary to develop specific basic knowledge and some critical tools that are indispensable for understanding its dynamics and navigating safely even among phenomena such as hate speech or the spread of hoaxes.

The first of these is the proliferation of hatred; the phenomenon, commonly known as hate speech, is atavistic and almost as old as the social networks themselves. In fact, the phenomenon has been explored in depth, on the assumption that in order to reap the benefits of social networks, it was necessary to understand and assess the



damage, in order to analyse the roots and understand the phenomenology. At that point the negative effect, understood, probed and metabolised, was completely overturned during the project, and an attempt was made to follow a path leading to the construction of expressions that went in the diametrically opposite direction. The project was completely overturned, and an attempt was made to follow a path leading to the construction of expressions that would go in the diametrically opposite direction. In fact, it was seen that, statistically speaking, words of hatred on social networks are numerically greater than words of support, that it is much easier to find insults, insults and derision than encouragement and human warmth, and that it is almost taken for granted that there are so-called keyboard lions ready to rage even on tragic or mortifying aspects.

Social networks amplify words, make them viral. Even if apparently erasable, words sometimes spread through the web like persistent, malignant spores, impossible to eliminate once and for all. Like Hercules' Hydra: when you cut off one head, two more are created, and when you delete a post from one social profile, it appears on two others.

The good news is that this also applies to good words.

The first step was to try to figure out how to make beautiful words proliferate, those that make the world a better and more welcoming place, by downplaying violent and angry words.

The students then discovered the Parole O_stili association, a non-profit association set up in Trieste in August 2016, which aims to empower and educate Net users to choose non-hostile forms of communication. It promotes the values expressed in the "Manifesto of non-hostile communication", organises awareness-raising and training initiatives. It addresses all citizens aware that "virtual is real", and that hostility on the Net has concrete, serious and permanent consequences in people's lives (paroleostili.it).

Reading the Parole O_stili manifesto made it possible to learn about ten principles of style to reduce and curb negative language online: a commitment of shared responsibility to create a respectful and civilised network that represents us and makes us feel safe.

In class, we were able to consider, in the form of slogans, some constructive principles that could transform hate into love. For example:



- 'one is what one communicates' (the words I choose tell about the person I am);
- "words give shape to thought" (I take the time to express what I think as best I can);
- "before speaking, one must listen" (no one is always right, not even me, so it is necessary to listen with honesty and openness. Online there are those who copy and paste the same message a thousand times and exclude the interlocutor from the discussion. There are also those who continually tag you to resonate their message. If someone is unfairly involving you in something you do not agree with, it is right to say so, to warn them and, in the most serious cases, to ban them);
- 'words are a bridge' (I choose words to understand, to make myself understood, to bring others closer. One can build bridges to help someone in difficulty, show interest in what the other person is saying, not make him feel lonely, ask someone for help);
- "words - and images - have consequences" (I know that every word I say can have small or big consequences);
- "ideas can be discussed, people must be respected" (I do not turn someone who holds opinions I do not share into an enemy to be annihilated);
- "insults are not arguments" (I do not accept insults and aggression, not even in favour of my thesis. Often those who resort to insults and swearing do so because they are unable to find other words. Every extra word you learn creates a new thinking space in your brain, enriches its capacity and increases your power of relationship);
- "silence also communicates" (when the best choice is to keep silent, I keep silent because being silent is a communicative act, it says a lot about the person who does it and about his choices with respect to any subject);

The reflection continued on how to assert one's reasons.

When you are confronted with someone who supports something that is unacceptable to you, you have several possibilities:

1. You can only agree with certain parts of their speech, which will help you to explain your ideas and come to different conclusions, according to your point of view;
2. You can ask for reasons or evidence for what is being said and thus question the statements that do not convince you. In this case you have to counter with valid arguments (positive and enriching dynamic);
3. You can reject the statement itself, without counter-arguing and attacking: the relationship comes to a halt.



At this point we moved on to consider very carefully the fact that sharing is a responsibility, so a new vademecum was introduced, hinging on the principle that I only share texts and images after I have read, assessed and understood them.

Always cite the source is a must.

So-called fake news is real false information that is created on purpose and used as a strategic tool to increase one's own prestige or to attract negative attention towards others.

Fake news is like a small snowball that slides down the side of a mountain and, as it rolls, becomes an avalanche.

Thanks to the Fondazione Mondo Digitale, the anti-fake news decalogue was read and commented on.

1. Don't trust the headlines: fake news often has high-sounding headlines written in capital letters and with extensive use of exclamation marks. If the claims in a headline seem exaggerated to you, they are probably false.
2. Look closely at the URL: a fake URL or one that is very similar to a reputable source may indicate that the news is fake. Many fake news sites pretend to be authentic sites by making minor changes to the URLs of these sites. You can access the site to compare the URL with that of the trusted form.
3. Research the source: make sure the news is written by a source you trust and that has a reputation for being reliable. If the news comes from an organisation you are not familiar with, check the 'About' section of their page to find out more.
4. Pay attention to formatting: on many fake news sites, the layout is odd or the text contains typos. If you see that it has these characteristics, read the news with caution.
5. Pay attention to photos: fake news often contains retouched images and videos. Sometimes the pictures may be genuine, but taken out of context. You can research the image or photo to check its origin.
6. Check dates: the dates of events in fake news stories may be wrong and their chronology may not make sense.
7. Check testimonials: check the author's sources to ensure they are reliable. Lack of evidence or reference to unnamed experts may indicate that the news is false.
8. Check whether other sources have reported the same news: if the same events are not reported by any other source, the news may be false. If the news is proposed by sources you consider reliable, it is more likely to be true.



9. The news may be a joke: it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish fake news from satirical news or news written for fun. Check whether the source is known for its parodies and whether the details and tone of the news reveal its humorous purpose.

10. Some news is intentionally false: use your critical faculties when reading online news and only share it if you have no doubts about its veracity.

Following reading and commenting on some famous fake news, the pupils were provocatively asked to invent their own three convincing hoaxes that they shared, and laughed and smiled about.

Still in the wake of the provocation, by way of brainstorming, they first wrote three words of hate and then three words of affection that they would hypothetically address on social networks.

The collective reading of the final products made them have fun and jokes, but the words to avoid and those to praise remained firmly in their minds.

The project was an opportunity for the pupils to learn and become familiar with digital tools such as mentimeter for brainstorming, wordcloud for creating word clouds, canva for impressive text and graphic flyers.

The topic of the benefits of social networks, set up as a contrast to hate speech and fake news, as a reversal of these bad practices, was a good idea supported by valid ideas and interactive methodologies and digital supports that found favour and involvement in the classes.

<https://padlet.com/profandreamegna/zalkp85rogi20jk3>

<https://padlet.com/profandreamegna/fcxb1bqhxw5nq5mt>



Impact Report Template

Project: Benefits of Social Media

Description

The project aims to identify the positive effects of social media on citizenship, especially on young people who, for reasons of age, have not been able to know any other reality than the one where there are "social".

Aims

The objective of the project was to help students to a conscious use of social media to increase their knowledge, facilitate their relationships, guide them in solving everyday problems, both cultural and practical. The project also aimed to provide the tools for students to develop and foster their critical thinking, defend themselves from misinformation, and recognize fake news through source identification.

Methods and findings

To achieve the objectives listed above, the first methodological step was the frontal lesson with an introductory character of the main topics that we would have dealt with. This was followed by participatory frontal lessons, with research activities of the different social media, in which we analyzed texts, including some publications already produced by the publishing market, newspaper articles, in-depth analysis, press reviews, present on national and international newspapers, on social. The brainstorming and debate, have complemented the activity of analysis of materials and data and the production of insights guided and autonomous. Group work. As tools were used Google Forms to create questionnaires and Power Point to create presentations, Squarespace to create a website.

Context

Italy provides for the complete freedom of information and therefore also of social (of course within the criminal and civil code). In this context, given the increasing invasiveness of social networks in our country, as in many other countries, it has been considered the possibility of curbing the power of penetration of social networks, especially with respect to the less protected, i.e. minors, but the legislative debate is still ongoing and has not produced results. The Italian School has introduced the compulsory teaching of Civic Education as a transversal subject to all disciplines. Among the topics, which are expected to be addressed in this area, there is also "Digital Citizenship", that is, the ability of an individual



to consciously use virtual means of communication. In Italy, however, continue to persist inequalities that are reflected in different cultural contexts and therefore in the difficulty in some social groups to exercise control and guidance in the use of social media by young people. Our project proposal is perfectly compatible with the cultural context of the Liceo Righi.

Impact on Curriculum Level and on students

The work module has been incorporated by me within the activities of Civic Education (I am a teacher of Motor Sciences and Sports), in curricular and extra curricular hours for a total of ten lessons per class involved. Participation was made compulsory and was presented to the students as an opportunity to be part of a large European project that saw them as protagonists in addressing and bringing solutions to an issue debated among young people around the world. The parents of the classes involved were informed of the participation and how it would be carried out during the Class Councils.

The students were provided with educational materials (brochures, newspaper articles, reports and legislative information in Italy and abroad), link useful to understand how today's social are part of the lives of all of us. For example, national and international newspapers have all landed and are widely followed on social networks.

The students were involved in class groups and, in operations, divided into working groups, and they joined in with great participation.

Given the premise, I decided to start asking for the collaboration of my class groups of the three years of high school (3F, 4B, 5B, 5F) involving a large number of students. Of course, I took into consideration that the age group of these students is the one that uses social networks the most. From the first lessons, students have shown to be not only users but also interpreters and inspirers of the continuous transformation of social networks.

So the project has taken on the objective of becoming a "format in progress", that is, a replicable path by those who want to resume our experience with the possibility of making updates and changes adapting them to the continuous changes of social. After reading in class a booklet published as an insert of Corriere della Sera entitled: "Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and..... Do you really think you know them?" the need emerged to create with google form a multiple-choice questionnaire to be submitted to the attention of the boys of the two-year period that we assume they still have little ability to distinguish the good and the bad of social. In the questionnaire we formulated questions about the history of 17 years of social networks, how to tell their stories on social networks, how to build a community, how to defend themselves from trolls and haters, how many influencers are in Italy, knowledge of keywords, security to protect their data or how social is changing the world of publishing....



Despite the fact that the results of our sample were limited to a few classes at the time, it was immediately clear that young people, with a few exceptions, know about "social" only the applications of first instance, those that we could define elementary and daily use. Therefore, the students of the two fifth-grade classes created, through group work, some PowerPoints, news reports, short podcasts related to suggestions for navigating among sites unknown to most but of great value and interest (listen to the audio attached in the Dropbox folders) with the aim of filling the gaps that emerged and highlighting the positive aspects of "social".

The next step, has raised the bar of commitment, considering that the boys have always responded in a very proactive way. We moved from the fruition, to the creative action, with the request to create, with the social they use the most, that is Instagram, the real original proposals of "Instagram profiles" that had a double value: to be a guide to knowledge and support the solution of practical problems encountered by children of their age group.

From "PA's Data finder" page, a Public Administration's social network, to help you get real-time updates on what's going on <https://www.instagram.com/pa.datafinder/> ; to "<https://www.instagram.com/uniopen2022/> ", an updates on University admission tests, open days and more <https://www.instagram.com/uniopen2022/> ; to all the other profiles whose links are present in the dropbox folder (<https://www.dropbox.com/home/SOCIAL%20MEDIA%20BENEFITS%20-%20ERASMUS%20PLUS%20-%20RIGHI%20a.s.%2021-22/ANNA>).

The next step was a uniquely student initiative. A group of students from class 5F, with excellent computer skills wanted to create a site that could be the final expression of this path, which from September to April has seen the involvement of about 80/90 students and with the activity of dissemination may involve the classes of the future two years, why not, with a presentation of the project (dissemination phase) during the stay in Ventotene (the island that has seen the birth of dreams for a united Europe) in the first weeks of school in September.

The site (<https://thebenefitsofsocialmedia.squarespace.com/>), called "**News and Social Media, How to take the most out of social media**" was created with the aim of being a real compass, essential to lead us, within the ocean "Social", in friendly and constructive waters. A compass, at the same time to shelter us from insidious tides and false mirages that often find space in the open sea of "social". It also performs a useful task of "scout" to guide us in the positive solutions that "social" can make available to us.

Measurement and Evaluation

The impact of the project was measured through systematic observation at the beginning, middle and end of the project. The observation shows that the qualitative and quantitative



participation in the project was high. Since they started from pointing out and identifying the positive elements of social, it was possible to produce original positive elements of social with the active contribution of students. The evaluation of the active participation in the project, the originality of the ideas that led to the works produced, the critical thinking during the debates, the ability to move from the positive use of social to the creative action and design, will be evaluated in Civic Education.

Administration of a student satisfaction questionnaire or interview.

Overall Findings

(<https://www.dropbox.com/home/SOCIAL%20MEDIA%20BENEFITS%20-%20ERASMUS%20PLUS%20-%20RIGHI%20a.s.%2021-22/ANNA>).

Present visually the data obtained if applicable. Here please mention any good examples of positive impact, testimonials, anecdotal evidence, good practices etc..

Suggestions

The suggestion is that other young people can implement with new ideas and new insights the work base already created and made available by the students. Teamwork, creativity and awareness are fundamental elements for the change that will take them from being users to being active protagonists of their own future.

Conclusions

Undoubtedly the "social" have shortened, up to cancel, the distances as no other means has been able to and will ever do. Humanity today can communicate in real time. On this wire, which no longer knows distance, all knowledge can travel. Like the air we breathe, it must be free. Every intervention can be toxic. In fact, even the air can become an impetuous wind capable of uprooting virtuous roots or dragging in debris and harmful waste.

It is the task of young people, the children of this new world, to take advantage of and develop the enormous positive effects available to them today. Provided that their intelligence helps them to protect themselves from the devious negative effects that can be hidden in "social".

It is the duel between good and evil that is repeated at any speed. Works, such as those designed and created by our students, can help us recognize the right side to be on.

Rome, 05/05/2022

The teacher
Prof. ssa Anna Cipolletta

