TITLE
Researching online social behaviour

VISION (ASPIRATION AND AIMS)
- to support students to recognise and manage complex social phenomena, such as making new online friends, online bullying, and creating an online identity
- to create connections between out-of-school and in-school experiences of technologies
- to develop students' 21st century skills, research skills and emotional intelligence

BACKGROUND MOTIVATION STATEMENT
Teachers are becoming more aware of the opportunity to use social media to support learning because of its impact outside the classroom. There is concern as well as excitement about these online opportunities, creating a need for teachers to reflect on these social media experiences with their students.

NARRATIVE
My students and I are reflecting on our online social media experience. We recently viewed a blog as part of our learning and have been drawn to user comments and their appropriateness. I want to use these sorts of online forums in my teaching so I feel it important to address this. We decide that together we will research online social behaviour.

I undertake an activity that supports my students to identify online behaviours they encounter by using anonymous response devices or other anonymous means so that all students can share their experiences, including those which may not have been positive. We then explore whether there are categories of online behaviours (eg acceptable, helpful, appropriate, un-acceptable, unhelpful etc).

I want students to explore other people's opinions about and experiences of certain online behaviours that interest them (eg making new friends, creating an online identity, online bullying, online pranks) through developing a research project that uses digital media as a tool.

I support students to devise a research question and present students with a range of tools that they can use to gather data for their research. Students suggest ways they can use these tools and identify others they know of. They undertake their research in collaborative groups or individually.

The students are supported to make sense of their data and present their findings in a format of their choice (eg video, podcast, poster, presentation) in the context of a class research conference to which an audience of our choice is invited, such as parents, other classes, teachers and members of the local community.

We use their findings to create guidance for our own online interactions. We then share these online and invite constructive comments.

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TREND/S

Keeping up with informal learning

Students live in worlds filled with engaging technology and opportunities to pursue personal interests and motivations. Once they enter schools they have to leave behind such interests and motivations. This creates a divide between the way "schools teach" and the way "students learn" in informal learning environments. Teachers are nowadays facing a challenge trying to bridge this gap.

21st century skills in practice

Teachers are increasingly expected to incorporate the so called 21st skills in daily teaching. These include media and ICT literacy, communication, problem solving and collaboration.

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KEY CONCEPTS

Emotional intelligence, online social behaviour including for example bullying, connections informal-formal learning, digital literacy, students as researchers, e-safety

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ENVIRONMENT
- the classroom
- online spaces such as social networks
- an atmosphere that is supportive as will be potentially discussing emotional topics

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PEOPLE & ROLES
- students as researchers
- parents, siblings and peers as possible research participants
- teachers supporting research process and ensuring students are equipped with relevant skills
- audience for presentation – members of local community (eg local police, local media, local religious leader)

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INTERACTIONS (INCL. PEDAGOGIES)
- students working individually or in groups to undertake research
- teachers supporting students to deal with issues raised
- research shared with the wider community

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ACTIVITIES
- activities to develop research skills
- research activities (eg questionnaires, interviews)
- communicating outputs
- activities that develop understanding of sensitive issues

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RESOURCES (INCL. TECHNOLOGIES)
- netbooks/laptops
- search engines (eg Google)
- online survey tools (eg Survey Monkey)
- learner response systems
- resources for students to use to present their research
- shared online space for the school

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