

Online Chatting & Virtual Relationships

Lesson Plan 1

Title	Online chatting and virtual relationships
Age Group	12-14 years old
Time Frame	45-50 minutes
Learning Objective	To develop students' understanding of online safety by helping them recognise online threats, connect those to emotional, social, and cognitive risks, and apply protective strategies to ensure their well-being in digital environments.
Learning Outcomes	● Identify online dangers related to chatting and virtual contact (e.g. emotional manipulation) ● Explain how to protect themselves cognitively, socially, and emotionally. ● Demonstrate awareness of safe and emotionally balanced online behaviour.
Tools/Materials Needed	● pencil ● A4 blank paper ● Secret identity cards (prepared by teacher) ● Powerpoint presentation made by teacher (learning objectives, outcomes, instructions during the lesson etc) ● Computer & Projector ● Internet access ● Cybersecurity ABC Rules (on slide or print-out)
Detailed Instructions	Setting the Stage (5 minutes) Teacher asks: a) "Raise your hand if someone you didn't directly know (e.g friend of your friend friends) has ever messaged you online." b) "Why you wanted to chat with this person?" c) "What clues helped (or not), you decide to trust them?"

	This targets the lesson by acknowledging real online experiences and activating prior knowledge. Introduce lesson objectives and connect to cognitive, social, and emotional risks: - How does constant chatting affect your focus and memory? (Cognitive) - Why do people act differently online? (Social) - How does it feel when someone ghosts or unfriends you? (Emotional)
Detailed Instructions	Exploration / Inquiry (10-15 minutes) Each student receives a <u>secret identity card</u> (prepared by the teacher): - Person who is always online and often lonely; - Person who shares perfect photos but hides stress; - Person who uses a fake profile to seem older; - Person who uses chatting to feel popular. Students draw a profile/avatar of the character based only on the card explanations. Drawings are swapped anonymously across the room. Each student now guesses what kind of person is represented in the drawing: - Do they seem trustworthy? - Would you chat with them online? Why or why not? - "What do you think they're like emotionally?" Original creators of the secret identity cards are now revealed. The class discusses: - How accurate were your impressions? - What surprised you? - How often do we misjudge people online? - How does this affect emotional responses, trust, or decisions? Framework Alignment: - Cognitive: Shows the limits of interpreting incomplete information online - Social: Demonstrates misreading identity and intent - Emotional: Reveals how appearances influence trust, anxiety, or attachment The teacher should guide the discussion to help students understand that in online communication, it is not always possible to immediately verify whether the person on the other side of the network is who they claim to be.

Detailed Instructions

Main Task / Creation (15-20 minutes)

In a group of 4, students read a selection of Cybersecurity ABC rules (presented via slide or printed). On a new A4 sheet, they create a table with three columns:

- rules I already follow
- ... heard of but don't follow
- ... that are new to me

While filling in the table, students are asked to think:

- How does this rule protect your focus and attention?
- How does it protect your feelings?
- How does it help you avoid misunderstandings in chatting?

Teacher circulates and supports groups by asking guiding questions:

- Which rule would protect you from trusting the wrong person?
- Which rule helps when someone sends you unexpected messages or links?
- Which rule connects to your own experiences?

Framework Alignment:

- Cognitive: Recognizes habits that reduce distractions or overload
- Social: Promotes safe interactions and informed digital boundaries
- Emotional: Highlights rules that reduce anxiety or emotional dependence

Cybersecurity ABC Rules presented by teacher:

- Use different strong passwords for different environments.
- Update your passwords regularly and do not share them with others.
- Do not disclose your personal information or share it with strangers.
- Do not open unknown emails, links, or attachments. If a friend sends a link or attachment with an unusual communication style and/or text, always double-check what it is about.
- Do not accept friend requests from unknown users.
- Make sure the website where you need to enter personal data is protected by a secure encrypted connection: the address starts with https.
- Ensure that the web address you are on exactly matches the correct one (e.g., google.com vs g00gle.com).
- Do not share revealing pictures or videos of yourself with strangers or casual acquaintances.
- Prefer communication channels that use end-to-end encryption.
- It is safer to use mobile data than public WiFi networks.
- Review your social media profile settings and make sure that posts on your wall are visible only to your friend list members. Facebook users can select "Limit past posts" under Settings -> Privacy. After pressing "Limit," all previous posts become visible only to friends.
- Try to avoid using shared or public devices. If not possible, always log out from all visited and logged-in places.
- Keep your computer and mobile device software up to date.

	• Download apps for your phone only from official stores: Google Play Store, Apple App Store. • Install antivirus software on your computer and smartphone. • Regularly backup your files on both your computer and phone. Use cloud services or drives that are separate from your main system, preferably offline or on a different network. • Always enable two-factor authentication in your environments when possible.
Detailed Instructions	Sharing & Peer Feedback (5-10 minutes) Each group chooses one rule from the “new to me” column that surprised them the most. They present: - What the rule means? - Why they didn’t know about it? - How it could help avoid emotional or social risks in online chatting? Encourage peer comments: - Has anyone had a situation where this rule would have helped? - Can you see yourself using this rule now? Framework Alignment: - Encourages reflection on how rules protect social-emotional well-being - Fosters empathy and insight into different digital experiences Reflection & Closure (5-10 minutes) Each student will reflect and write down on a sticky note (post-it), while identifying an Online chatting and virtual relationships weakness and what they will pay more attention to in the future. Teacher separates the sticky notes in category of three: - Cognitive: Drawing task (incomplete info), cybersecurity rules (attention, distraction), reflection on digital habits; - Social: Misjudging avatars, rules about identity verification, group sharing of experiences; - Emotional: Drawing reveals emotional motives; reflection supports mood awareness, regulation, boundary-setting.
Link to DigRight App	Students can use the DigRight App to explore more safe chatting practices and test their decision-making in simulated online scenarios.
Inclusion/Adaptation Tips	• Group students strategically to support language or social needs; • provide visuals with each cybersecurity guidelines to support students with information processing challenges.

Assessment, Evaluation & Reflection	Formative assessment will be used throughout the lesson by observing student participation in discussions and group activities. Peer assessment will occur during group sharing, as students reflect on each other's ideas. Self-assessment takes place during the sticky note reflection at the end of the lesson. The teacher will assess students' understanding by evaluating how well they can identify risks, apply safety rules, and make connections to their own online behavior.
Observation Tools Observation Checklist will help the teacher monitor engagement, collaboration, and understanding: • Participates actively in discussion • Identifies at least one cognitive, social or emotional risk • Creates complete mind map and pros/cons table • Reflects on personal digital behavior	
Reflection Prompts for Students	Respond to the following self-assessment feedback.
Peer/Self-Assessment Templates	Name: _____ Date: _____ ✓ Tick what applies: ☐ I listened actively in my group ☐ I shared at least one idea or experience ☐ I can name at least one cognitive, social and emotional risk factor related with online chatting and virtual relationship
Teacher Notes	Watch for signs of students relating content to real struggles. Handle with sensitivity. Be ready to offer further help or refer concerns (e.g., anxiety or addiction signs). Reinforce positive digital behaviors and empathy in peer interactions. Teacher may consider for Cybersecurity ABC rules additional students co-creation rule, based on each group personal online experience.



Lesson Plan 2

Title	Balancing Online Chatting & Real-Life Connections
Age Group	12–14 years old
Time Frame	45–50 minutes
Learning Objective	Students will understand what online-chatting and virtual-relationship addiction is, recognise its cognitive, social, and emotional effects, and practise strategies for healthy digital habits. By analysing real-life scenarios and reflecting on their own screen use, learners will build critical thinking, collaboration, and self-regulation skills - and apply their knowledge to co-create and justify a shared digital well-being code.
Learning Outcomes	LO1: Identify at least three signs of unhealthy online-chatting behaviour. LO2: Explain two personal strategies for preventing excessive dependence on virtual relationships. LO3: Collaboratively design a class “digital well-being code” and justify its rules.
Tools/Materials Needed	• Projector or whiteboard • Printed scenario cards • Sticky notes & markers • “My Digital Relationship Map” worksheet (or A3 paper) • Timer or classroom clock • Optional: DigRight app for post-lesson follow-up
Detailed Instructions	Setting the Stage (5-10 minutes) Ask students: “How many messages did you send yesterday?” Raise hands for: • 0–20 • 21–50 • 51+



	Then ask: “Why do we message so much?” Write answers on the board: habit, fun, boredom, FOMO, dopamine kick etc. Now read this short story aloud: “It’s 11:30 PM. Tom is still chatting in a group chat. He knows there’s a test tomorrow but wants to keep the streak. The next day, he’s tired, forgets homework, and feels anxious. It keeps happening.” Ask: • What is Tom feeling? • Why is stopping hard? Wrap up: “Today we’ll explore when chatting helps and when it hurts and how to stay in control.”
Detailed Instructions	Exploration / Inquiry (5-10 minutes) In pairs, students receive scenario cards (e.g., “Stays online until 2 a.m. to talk with gaming friends abroad“, “Feels anxious when no one replies in the group chat within minutes.“, “Deletes messages to hide online conversations from parents or friends.“). They discuss: Why might this character behave like this? Is it emotional, design-related or environmental? Each pair writes their reasoning on sticky notes and posts them under three categories on the board: • Psychological factors (e.g., loneliness) • Platform design (e.g., streaks, notifications) • Environmental factors (e.g., no parental limits) Class discusses the most common causes and connects to real-life experiences. Main Task / Creation (20-25 minutes) Students work in groups of 4 to complete a Digital Relationship Map for a fictional teen, “Alex.” They identify: • Who Alex chats with daily (friends, influencers, strangers). • How much time is spent with each.

	• Whether each tie is supportive, neutral or risky. • Three realistic rules to restore healthy balance. They transfer their map to A3 paper or poster, using colours, labels or icons. Teacher circulates and prompts with questions like: • “Which connections are meaningful?” • “What would help Alex feel better offline?” This task supports constructivist learning: students build meaning together, apply theory to practical choices, and engage in self-directed problem-solving.
Detailed Instructions	Sharing & Peer Feedback (5-10 minutes) Each group does a 90-second gallery walk where they present their map. Peers provide feedback using two sticky notes: • Glow: “One thing we liked...” • Grow: “One thing to consider...” Feedback prompts: • “Your map clearly shows...” • “Have you thought about including...” Encourage respectful language and evidence-based comments. Reflection & Closure (5-10 minutes) Students fill out a “3-2-1 Exit Ticket”: • 3 things they learned • 2 strategies they’ll try this week • 1 question they still have Teacher collects these for formative insights. Optional reflective prompt: “What will be the hardest rule for you to follow, and why?” This encourages students to anticipate challenges, build metacognitive awareness, and think about how they might overcome obstacles.

	Wrap up with a brief guided pause: students put phones face down, close eyes, take a breath, and imagine an offline moment that makes them feel good. Affirm: “You’re in charge of your digital life and your well-being.”
Link to DigRight App	Students can use the DigRight app’s “Social Media & Online Chatting” module as a preparatory activity before the actual lesson. The teacher can share the app link through the internal Student Information System or during the previous lesson.
Inclusion/Adaptation Tips	• Use large-font or voice-recorded cards for EAL and SEN learners • Pair less confident students with strong communicators • Provide printed and digital worksheets • Use timers for attention support • Accept visuals or emojis in place of words where needed • Include culturally diverse examples in discussion
Assessment, Evaluation & Reflection	Teacher observes group work, noting participation and idea development. Peer feedback from gallery walk. Exit tickets provide individual understanding and intent to change behaviour. Misconceptions noted for follow-up lessons.

Observation Tools

Observation Checklist:

- Students engage and listen actively
- Critical reasoning appears in group talk
- Students identify healthy vs. risky online habits

Gallery Walk Formative Rubric:

- Clear explanation of map
- Thoughtful classification of relationships
- Realistic and student-relevant rules

- Collaboration and creativity

Exit Ticket Rubric (max 5 pts if you need to put the points and cannot give more learning supportive assessment):

- 3 accurate learnings (2 pts)
- 2 actionable strategies (2 pts)
- 1 thoughtful question (1 pt)

Reflection Prompts for Students

- What surprised you about your online relationships?
- What will be hardest to change and how can we help?
- Who supports your balance online and offline?

Peer/Self-Assessment Templates

Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comment
Our map shows risky vs. supportive ties				
We proposed realistic rules				
I contributed to the task				
Everyone contributed to the task				

Teacher Notes

Watch for students who downplay high screen use or show distress discussing online pressure. Gently redirect, avoid judgment. Model healthy boundaries yourself by not checking your phone during class. Have referral info ready in case emotional issues arise. Encourage discussion with school counsellor for follow-up if needed.

Lesson Plan 3

Title	Online chatting and virtual relationships
Age Group	14-16 years old
Time Frame	45–50 minutes
Learning Objective	Students will explore the cognitive, social, and emotional impacts of online chatting and virtual relationships, identify warning signs of unhealthy digital use, and develop strategies for safer, balanced, and emotionally healthy communication online.
Learning Outcomes	• Analyse pros and cons of online chatting and virtual relationships (cognitive, social, emotional). • Reflect on personal digital habits and formulate one personal action point for healthier online interaction.
Tools/Materials Needed	• Pencil • Blank A4 paper • Self-assessment template (A8 format) • PowerPoint presentation made by teacher (learning objectives, outcomes, instructions during the lesson etc.) • Computer & projector • Internet access
Detailed Instructions	Setting the Stage (10 minutes) Start with a video on topic: “Who is behind the screen?” . For example: <i>Who You're Talking to Online?” (Common Sense Education, 2019)</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dil8Lj0_TGQ Students create a mind map on A4 paper, placing keywords that reflect cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of the video. The teacher will introduce lesson objectives and link them directly to key ideas from the theoretical framework, e.g., “Why do some people feel anxious if they don’t get a message back?”

	Exploration / Inquiry (10 minutes) Students form groups of four and discuss: • What points from the video and their mind maps others may have missed. • Can they identify addiction warning signs or social withdrawal cues mentioned in the framework? • What advice would you give to this person? • What are the possible consequences of this behaviour? Students update their mind maps based on group input.
Detailed Instructions	Main Task / Creation (15 minutes) Students rewatch the video to verify or adjust their ideas. On the back of their A4, create a "Pros and Cons of Online Chatting" table, with three columns: - Cognitive (focus, learning) - Social (relationships, communication) - Emotional (mood, self-worth) Students must connect each item with real-life examples or warning signs (e.g., sleep loss, secrecy, preoccupation). Sharing & Peer Feedback (5-10 minutes) Each group shares their most surprising insight. Discussion is framed around the question: "What kind of online behavior might lead to emotional or social risks, and how can we notice and prevent it?". "What preventive strategy could strengthen this idea?" Encourage students to challenge ideas respectfully and build on each other's observations. Reflection & Closure (5-10 minutes) Each student writes a personal weakness or concern (based on what they learned) on a sticky note, e.g., "I use my phone before bed, which makes it hard to sleep." Each presents their note orally, describing what they will change and why (self-regulation strategy). Teacher summarises with key points based on the theoretical framework of the current topic.

Link to DigRight App	Students can use the DigRight App at home to: - Simulate safe vs. unsafe chatting choices; - Practice applying prevention strategies; - Reflect on self-regulation and emotional responses.
Inclusion/Adaptation Tips	• Group students strategically to support language or social needs; • Provide visuals with each cybersecurity guidelines to support students with information processing challenges.
Assessment, Evaluation & Reflection	Formative assessment will be used throughout the lesson by observing student participation in discussions and group activities. Peer assessment will occur during group sharing, as students reflect on each other's ideas. Self-assessment takes place during the sticky note reflection at the end of the lesson. The teacher will assess students' understanding by evaluating how well they can identify risks, apply safety rules, and make connections to their own online behavior.
Observation Tools Observation Checklist will help the teacher monitor engagement, collaboration, and understanding: • Participates actively in discussion • Identifies at least one cognitive, social or emotional risk • Creates complete mind map and pros/cons table • Reflects on personal digital behavior	
Reflection Prompts for Students	Respond to the following self-assessment feedback
Peer/Self-Assessment Templates	Name: _____ Date: _____ ✓ Tick what applies: ☐ I listened actively in my group ☐ I shared at least one idea or experience ☐ I can name at least one cognitive, social and emotional risk factor related to online chatting and virtual relationship.

Teacher Notes

Watch for signs of students relating content to real struggles. Handle with sensitivity. Be ready to offer further help or refer concerns (e.g., anxiety or addiction signs). Reinforce positive digital behaviors and empathy in peer interactions.



Lesson Plan 4

Title	Online Chatting: Risks and Virtual Connections
Age Group	14-16 years old
Time Frame	45–50 minutes
Learning Objective	Students will explore how chatting with people they have never met in person can be both appealing and risky. They will learn to recognize red flags in online conversations, develop empathy for those drawn to digital friendships, and practice safe habits when engaging in platforms such as Discord, Roblox, or Fortnite.
Learning Outcomes	● Recognize dangers associated with anonymous or virtual-only relationships ● Identify safe vs. unsafe online communication behaviors ● Practice strategies for safer digital communication
Tools/Materials Needed	● Pencils or pens ● A4 paper ● Printed safety checklist (A8 size) ● PowerPoint or visuals for key points ● Computer and projector ● Internet access (for video clip)
Detailed Instructions	Setting the Stage (5-10 minutes) Ask students: "Have you ever chatted with someone you didn't know in real life? On which apps or platforms?" Mention familiar tools like Roblox, Fortnite voice chat, Discord, Instagram DMs, and other gaming servers. Then play the video "Teen Voices: Who You're Talking to Online" (Common Sense Education). If the original video is unavailable, you can search for similar educational video materials using the following keywords: online friendship safety for teens; chatting safely online middle school; digital citizenship online friends video; red flag feeling online safety; who are you talking to online teens; online strangers internet safety teens; Common Sense Education chatting safely online. These keywords should help finding videos about safe online communication, online friendships, talking to strangers online, privacy, and recognizing warning signs in digital conversations.



	Afterward, students draw or write a quick timeline of how a typical chat with a stranger might begin and evolve. Brief class discussion: "How can a friendly chat on Discord or Roblox turn risky over time?" Share objectives: Today's session explores why these chats feel exciting, when they might cross a line, and how to protect yourself online. Exploration / Inquiry (5-10 minutes) Students form pairs or trios and discuss prompts: What kind of things do strangers say to build trust? Why do some people share personal details with someone online they've never met? What red flags should raise suspicion? Encourage them to think about manipulative behaviors like gift offers, quick emotional closeness, or secrecy. Ask each group to identify and write down 3 warning signs and then share them. The teacher records these on the board and links them to real-life platforms like Snapchat or Discord.
Detailed Instructions	Main Task / Creation (20-25 minutes) Distribute A4 paper. Students divide the page into two sections: LEFT: "Why People Chat with Strangers Online" (e.g., shared hobbies in Roblox, looking for teammates in Fortnite, boredom, loneliness) RIGHT: "What Can Go Wrong?" (e.g., fake identity, emotional manipulation, grooming, scams) Next, hand out the A8 safety checklist with self-check prompts like: • Do I really know who I'm talking to? • Have they asked to keep things secret or avoid others seeing our chat? • Do they get upset if I don't reply quickly? • Are they trying to move the conversation to another platform? • Have they sent messages that feel flirty, personal, or make me uncomfortable? • Did they offer to send me gifts, game tokens, or exclusive access to something? • Have they asked for photos, videos, or personal details? • Are they older or unwilling to show their real identity? • Do I feel nervous or pressured when talking to them? • Do I really know who I'm talking to? • Have they asked to keep things secret or avoid others seeing our chat? Optional Sentence Starters for Safety Tips: • "If someone I don't know asks me to chat in private, I should..." • "Before trusting someone online, I need to..." • "One way to stay safer when chatting in Roblox or Discord is..." • "If a conversation starts to feel weird or pushy, I will..."

	• "I can protect myself by..." Students circle one item that worries them or sounds familiar. On the back, they write a short piece of advice they would give a younger cousin, friend, or sibling who chats with strangers on gaming or social apps. Sharing & Peer Feedback (5-10 minutes) Ask each group to share one reason why someone might start chatting with a stranger and one risk that surprised or worried them. Use the board to gather their input and encourage a whole-class discussion. Ask: "Can you enjoy online chatting and still stay safe?" Suggest techniques like turning off DMs, using nicknames, reporting suspicious behavior, and speaking to a trusted adult. Encourage students to give respectful feedback if peers share ideas.
Detailed Instructions	Reflection & Closure (5-10 minutes) Students complete a reflection slip: • One thing I learned today • One habit or rule I want to use online • One sign I'll watch out for when chatting with someone new Close with a reminder: chatting online can be fun, but it should never make you feel scared, secretive, or controlled.
Link to DigRight App	Students can use the DigRight app's "Social Media & Online Chatting" module as a preparatory activity before the actual lesson. The teacher can share the app link through the internal Student Information System or during the previous lesson.
Inclusion/Adaptation Tips	Let students choose whether to write or draw their responses. Offer sentence starters for safety tips. Use visual cards to explain red flags. Provide opt-out options for students who may have had difficult experiences and prefer not to share. Examples of red flags for online chatting include: • Asking you to keep the conversation secret from friends or family • Wanting to move to a private chat room quickly (e.g., off-platform like WhatsApp, Telegram) • Getting angry or upset if you don't respond fast enough • Sending flirty, overly personal, or inappropriate messages • Asking for photos, videos, your real name, location, or contact info

	• Offering virtual gifts (like game skins, tokens) in exchange for attention or favors • Refusing to show their face or tell you who they really are • Saying things that make you feel guilty, anxious, or uncomfortable These red flags help students recognize grooming tactics or manipulative behavior and protect their emotional and digital safety.
Assessment, Evaluation & Reflection	Use teacher observation to monitor participation and note students' ability to recognize risk. Collect their two-column charts and checklist responses. Look for evidence of personal reflection, accurate identification of red flags, and the ability to suggest realistic and safe online strategies.

Observation Tools

Observation Checklist:

- Shares personal thoughts or experience related to online chatting
- Recognizes warning signs or risky behavior
- Reflects on peer input or advice
- Proposes a realistic safety strategy
- Recognizes when an online conversation becomes emotionally overwhelming
- Describes one personal strategy to maintain digital balance or prevent compulsive use

Safety Checklist (A8 format):

Name: _____

Date: _____

Tick all that apply:

- I know how to protect my info on Discord or Roblox
- I've been asked to chat privately by someone I don't know
- I use privacy settings or mute/block options online
- I want to be more aware of red flags
- I can explain one thing that makes chatting with strangers risky
- I notice when chatting starts to feel emotionally exhausting
- I have one idea to help myself stay in control online

Reflection Prompts for Students	Why do people open up to strangers online? What would I say to a friend who feels pressured in a chat? What is one action I can take today to feel more in control online?
Peer/Self-Assessment Templates	See checklist Observation Checklist
Teacher Notes	Use common platforms (Roblox, Discord, Fortnite) to keep examples relevant. Stay calm and nonjudgmental when discussing manipulation, grooming, or pressure. Be available for students who need to share privately or feel anxious. Emphasize safety without shame.



Lesson Plan 5

Title	Digital Addiction: Online Chatting & Virtual Relationships - Hooked by design
Age Group	16-18 years old
Time Frame	45–50 minutes
Learning Objective	Students will critically explore the risks and psychological patterns behind compulsive online chatting and virtual relationships. They will examine how interface design - including notifications, read receipts, and typing indicators - intentionally drives compulsive use and addictive behaviors. Students will reflect on their own digital habits and develop healthier communication boundaries.
Learning Outcomes	• Recognize psychological and emotional signs of digital addiction in virtual communication • Recognize the risks and benefits of online-only relationships • Understand how platform features contribute to compulsive behavior and explore strategies for healthier online interaction
Tools/Materials Needed	• Pencils/pens • Blank A4 paper • Self-assessment checklist (A8 format) • PowerPoint presentation (lesson visuals and prompts) • Computer and projector • Internet access
Detailed Instructions	Setting the Stage (5-10 minutes) Ask students how much time they spend messaging or chatting each day. Encourage them to check their screen time data if possible. Show the short video "Teen Voices: Who You're Talking to Online" (Common Sense Education). Students create a personal mind map of words/phrases related to online chatting and its emotional impact. Introduce the concept of persuasive interface design: explain how read receipts, typing dots, notifications, and message streaks keep users online. Share the lesson objectives and co-define goals with students.



	What is Persuasive Interface Design? Persuasive interface design refers to the way apps are intentionally built to keep you using them. These features are not random - they're carefully designed to grab your attention and encourage you to stay online longer. Common Examples in Messaging Apps: • Typing indicators (the bouncing dots): make you wait and stay focused on the screen • Read receipts: create pressure to reply quickly or feel anxious when someone doesn't • Notifications: trigger you to check your phone instantly, even if it's not important • Message streaks: reward you for using the app daily, making it harder to stop These tools use emotional and psychological triggers (like curiosity, fear of missing out, or the need for approval) to influence your behavior — often without you realizing it. See also: The Magic of Persuasive Design If the original video is unavailable, you can search for similar educational video materials using the following keywords: persuasive design; persuasive technology; The Magic of Persuasive Design; how apps keep users engaged; attention economy; technology designed to capture attention; social media persuasive design; app design tricks; infinite scroll; notifications and user behaviour; addictive app design; dark patterns in apps; ethical technology design. These keywords should help you find videos about how apps, games, websites, and social media platforms are intentionally designed to capture attention, influence behaviour, encourage repeated use, and keep users engaged. “To strengthen student agency, you could co-create examples with students: ask, ‘Which app features keep you hooked?’ and build a shared list. This validates lived experiences.”
Detailed Instructions	Exploration / Inquiry (5-10 minutes) In small groups, students compare mind maps. Ask: “Which features of messaging apps make it hard to stop checking?” and “What emotions do those features trigger?” Prompt them to explore the connection between app design and emotional responses like anxiety or FOMO. Encourage students to reflect on any patterns in their own habits and update their mind maps with new insights from the discussion.

	Main Task / Creation (20-25 minutes) Students turn over their paper and create a two-column table: "How Online Chatting Helps vs. Harms." They must list at least 5 pros and 5 cons. Under the cons column, students must highlight any item linked directly to interface design (e.g., "I feel pressure because of read receipts"). Encourage students to include social-level examples such as: Pro: "I've built strong friendships with people who understand me emotionally." or "It helps me stay connected with long-distance friends or family." Con: "I sometimes feel closer to people online than my real-life friends, which makes offline relationships harder." or "It's easy to confuse constant chatting with genuine emotional closeness." Then, students write a short reflection about one app feature that influences their behavior. Distribute the A8 self-assessment checklist, which includes design-related prompts like: "I feel anxious when someone leaves me on 'read'" or "I check my phone as soon as I see a notification." Invite students to star the one that feels most relevant and write one idea for a healthier habit.
Detailed Instructions	Sharing & Peer Feedback (5-10 minutes) Each group shares one surprising finding or design feature that most influenced them. Discuss: "What design elements seem most addictive?" and "What would healthier app design look like?" Foster a short class dialogue where students compare their reflections and explore whether awareness helps change behavior. Reflection & Closure (5-10 minutes) Students complete a 3-2-1 exit ticket: 3 things I learned about addictive app features 2 digital habits I want to rethink 1 change I'll try this week Invite a few volunteers to share their ideas. End by projecting this quote: "Just because an app wants your attention doesn't mean it deserves it." Prompt students to reflect on who benefits when we compulsively check our phones.

Link to DigRight App	Use the DigRight App's "Online Chatting" module to explore real-life decision-making influenced by app design. Students can test how they would respond in emotionally and cognitively persuasive scenarios.
Inclusion/Adaptation Tips	Offer oral alternatives to written responses. Pair students strategically to support language or social-emotional needs. Allow opt-out options for students who may feel vulnerable discussing personal behaviors.
Assessment, Evaluation & Reflection	Assessment Methods Formative assessment through teacher observation during discussions and group work. Peer sharing allows for interpersonal feedback. The A8 checklist and reflection prompt personal evaluation. Assessment emphasizes students' ability to identify persuasive design, connect it to emotional impact, and reflect on their own usage patterns.

Observation Tools (checklists, rubrics)

Tools/Examples

- Engages in group analysis of app features
- Identifies at least one persuasive design element
- Connects app design to personal behavior
- Contributes a reflective insight or strategy

Self-Assessment Checklist (A8 format):

Name: _____

Date: _____

Tick all that apply:

- I feel anxious when someone leaves me on "read"
- I check my phone as soon as I see a notification
- I keep messaging even when I'm tired or should be asleep
- I feel left out if I don't reply quickly
- I get distracted by messaging even during class or study time

- I understand how some app features are designed to keep me hooked
- I want to take one step to manage my online chatting habits better

Reflection Prompts for Students

- What's one interface feature that affects my behavior most?
- What can I do to reduce its impact?
- How does awareness help me take control of my digital habits?

Peer/Self-Assessment Templates

See checklist in Observation Tools.

Teacher Notes

Watch for students who express discomfort or frustration with compulsive messaging habits. Be prepared to explain persuasive design simply and neutrally. Normalize these behaviors as common and changeable. Reinforce that students are not the problem - design is. Keep a supportive and reflective tone throughout the session.

Disclaimer

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Information

Project	DigRight - The Correct Use of Technology to Prevent Digital Addictions
Project N°	2024-1-PL01-KA220-SCH-000251896

Consortium



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