

Council of Europe - Democratic Culture in Action – Democratic Competences in Digital Era

Competencies for Democratic Culture and Digital Citizenship Curriculum

Training for High School Teachers

Objectives:

- Acquaintance, understanding and critical assessment of the Competences for Democratic Culture Model elaborated by the Council of Europe
- Clarification of Digital Citizenship idea and elaboration of the foundations of Digital Citizenship Curriculum

Agenda:

1. Presentation of the competences for democratic culture (CDC) model and of the general principles of its construction and the stages of its elaboration.
 - 1.1. Exploration of the model – work in small groups over each group of competencies. Presentation of each group - how the educational process should be changed in order key competencies to be developed?
2. Digital Citizenship and Digital Citizenship Education
 - 2.1. The citizenship concept in different political cultures – presentation and discussion.
 - 2.2. Is digital citizenship a reality and getting agreement on its major characteristics – Work in four small groups – The digital citizen: Presentation of nine elements of Digital Citizenship; Civic Technologies and Digital Citizenship participation; The Social Media - a Digital Citizenship environment.
3. Communicating in digital world – exploration and comparison of the main characteristics of communication in „real life“ and in digital world.
4. The CDC model and Digital Competence model - is necessary a development of Digital Citizenship Competences model – work in small groups and a discussion in the big group.
5. Presentation and a discussion over the elements of a Digital Citizenship Program. How it is possible such a Program to be realized in high school under the regulations of new Law of education.

Materials:

The Digital Citizen

The digital citizen is a citizen using the information technologies in order to be engaged in social life, in politics and in government. The digital citizens do use internet regularly and effectively.

Lack of access to digital citizenship poses a serious challenge because more and more civic participation procedures are accessible only online. Non-digital citizens are losing chances and become more and more isolated.

The young people do develop civic identity age of 15-22 – they are developing civic literacy, civic skills and affiliation and all these processes influence their political engagement and their social engagement as adults.

Key elements of Digital Citizenship

Digital access – digital divide, defined by social-economic status

Digital literacy is the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share, and create content using information technologies and the Internet

Digital rights and responsibilities - basic human rights in the net, Rights of the child – does this

makes difference - violence, safety, privacy,

Digital laws regulating the net

Digital communication diversity of digital environments, structure of communication, elements of communication, I and You messages, Listening and Feedback, Principles of Effective Communication, Barriers in Communication

Identity in the Net Who am I – identity in “real life” and identity in the net – exploring my digital

identity – multiple identity, identity fragmentation, fake identity, temporary character. Mapping digital

identity – self-expression, what do I share in the net, interests, Beliefs and opinions. Status.

Purchasing, Avatars, Audience, Knowledge, Certification of my identity.

Civic technologies Open and transparent government: access to data and transparency ;

voting; using data; citizen’s feedback –connecting with citizens’ representatives; taking decisions in public. **Activities in community:** sharing information; fundraising; neighborhood forums; digital

community organizing

Civic participation in the Net - the essence of E-democracy; What is to be an active digital participation; different forms of civic participation; How to start public campaigns.

Digital etiquette – different for different environments

Digital trade – pluses and negatives of online purchasing; digital trade and responsible consumption

Digital health – socially responsible health behavior (stress in the net, physical and psychological health in the net)

Digital Ethics - copyrights, piracy, privacy, doing good and doing wrong

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM

1. Digital life – what is the place of digital media in our life?
2. Download it – what will be the consequences of oversharing in the net?
3. How I could make responsible choices when I do use content developed by the others?
4. What does mean to be visible online – what should change if my photos will be posted?
5. How to face cyberbullying?
6. My online code of action – what does mean to act the right way online?
7. Who am I online – is there a difference how do I present myself in real life and online?
8. Let's build online community – are the sites of any use when building online communities?
9. Overexposed online – what are the risks and the responsibilities while sharing our relationships online?
10. Online relationships at risk – how could an online connection be defined as a risky one?
11. Copy rights and respect?
12. How cyberbullying does influence the participants?
13. What is all that buzz about personal life in Internet – how different sites do gather personal information about us and how we could oppose it?
14. Becoming a star in the Net- what does this mean?
15. How the information you do post into the Net influences you future life?
16. Today this is something personal. Tomorrow it's accessible to everyone – how do I respect the personal life of the others online?
17. Does it matter who gathers information about you – what about the information gathering companies?
18. How to face the hate language – I it possible to form a community culture where hate language is inadmissible?
19. To retouch the reality - what are the creative and ethical aspects of digital photo manipulation?
20. Collective intelligence – what are the benefits and inconveniences while working together to create online information?

Important Topics of a Digital Citizenship Curriculum

Online Safety

This is probably the most important topic to cover when teaching digital citizenship lessons. The Internet is great for making new connections and befriending people all over the world, but it also opens up students to contact with online predators. Students should be taught the kind of warning signs to look for when it comes to interacting with strangers online, and the kind of information they should never give out.

Understanding Digital Footprints

School-ages students see the world as being contained to the people they see every day. Even if they understand, in a general sense, that the Internet is public, it might seem impossible that anyone outside of their immediate circle would care to find out anything about them

As educators, you know better. Students need to understand how their digital footprints will follow them in life and how important it is to start caring about what those footprints look like early. Examples of how past online behavior influences people's job prospects or verdicts in court can help students better grasp just how big of a deal digital footprints are.

Financial Responsibility Online

Digital credit card theft happens all the time. Anyone entering financial information online can be at risk of having that information stolen. With many of the biggest corporations in the world dealing with wide-scale hacks, consumers are limited in what they can do to protect their financial information online. However, there are a number of best practices students should learn in order to be better digital citizens.

You can teach students how to recognize and avoid some of the most common Internet scams, how to recognize secure sites online, and what information is not safe to share online, especially while using non secure channels like email.

Acting with Respect Online

Cyber bullying has hurt many people and even caused many children to take their own lives. Students need to understand that their actions, even those taken online and behind multiple computer screens, can and do have enormous consequences.

The emotional results of behaving disrespectfully online are arguably the most important thing to stress here, but there can be professional and legal consequences for bad online behavior as well. If you say hurtful things on social media that future potential employers (or friends, for that matter) can see, it will have long-term effects on what people think about you and may impact the opportunities you have.

Information Literacy

The Internet is the go-to place for most research that students do today and they need to learn how to use in the most beneficial way. The ability to find good information online is a skill in and of itself, as is being able to recognize which sources aren't reliable.

The web is filled with information that can be useful to anyone wanting to learn about just about anything. But they have to learn how to get around the stuff that's counterproductive or outright inaccurate in order to enjoy that benefit.

Legal Restrictions Online

Your students probably already have some familiarity with concepts like illegal downloading and plagiarism, but may underestimate the potential consequences of these actions. You can discuss with them both the morality of taking actions online that break laws, as well as the risks they take if they do so.

Netiquette by Virginia Shea

Remember the human

Remember that behind every screen is a human being with independent thoughts and feelings. It is easy to misunderstand or be rude to others when you are not interacting with them in person. Before clicking send or post, ask yourself: *Would you say it to the person's face?*

Adhere to the same standards of behavior as in "real life"

This rule is a reminder that the ethical standards and laws that govern our society extend to cyberspace as well. This includes harrasment and bullying, copyright regulations, and privacy.

Know where you are in cyberspace

Different environments require different behaviour. The way we interact with our friends, for example, may not be acceptable in a school or work situation. This principle extends to online environments as well. Comments that are acceptable on Facebook, for instance, may be considered inappropriate on a professional networking site such as LinkedIn.

Respect other people's time and bandwidth

In this rule, "bandwidth" is synonymous with "time." When you send an email or post on a discussion board, keep your comments brief and relevant to the environment or situation.

Make yourself look good online

There are many positive aspects about the Internet, including the ability to remain anonymous. This rule is a reminder not to allow this aspect of the Internet influence how you communicate. Pay attention to your grammar, spelling and word choices as well as the overall content and truthfulness of your writing, as this is what others are using to judge you.

Share expert knowledge

The Internet is a great platform for sharing good information. However, it can also be used to spread misinformation and distortions. If you hold a lot of knowledge about a certain topic or subject, don't be afraid to share it online in a manner that is helpful and accurate.

Help keep flame wars under control

"Flaming" refers to verbal disagreements that occur between users in contexts such as message boards. They are often a result of strongly held opinions and emotions. As in rule 4, do not monopolize online discussion with long or offensive commentary.

Respect other people's privacy

The Internet is an open forum. Remember not to share information about others that could get them -- or yourself -- into trouble, both personally and professionally.

Don't abuse your power

This rule is intended for those who carry more power on the Internet as experts, designers, system administrators or even hackers. Power should always be used responsibly and not to harm or take advantage of those who are less powerful or knowledgeable.

Be forgiving of other people's mistakes

Give other users the benefit of the doubt and consider that they may come from a different background or have less experience on the Internet. Do not be rude when you encounter someone's mistake -- always respond with courtesy and respect.

Netiquette Tips For Online Discussions

Use proper language.

Typos, spelling errors, and mixed up sentences reflect on you; correct spelling and grammatical construction are a must, so keep in mind to read through your posts before you submit them. Moreover, try to avoid slang words as much as possible, as this is also an online education environment and slang is considered neither academic, nor professional. Finally, never type in all caps; writing in all capital letters is regarded as shouting, and this, apart from being annoying, it could be considered rude.

Be precise.

Being misunderstood is quite common in online interactions; escape the miscommunication trap by double checking that what appears perfectly clear to you is not confusing your readers. The best way to test your messages for clarity is to read them aloud before you send them; this way, you will be able to see if they make sense.

Avoid emoticons and "texting" writing.

Using emoticons and writing in "texting" language, that is by using abbreviations, might be considered too casual or even childish; refrain from them as much as possible. Online discussions require professional writing; smiley faces or linguistic shortcuts are more appropriate for chatting with your friends or instant messaging.

Be explanatory. Justify your opinion.

Points can be easily missed if hidden in a flood of text; when making a thorough comment, be as brief as possible. If you have several points you want to develop, prefer to post them individually in more than one focused messages, rather than in a long, overly wordy paragraph. However, avoid posting messages that contain only a few words and generic statements, such as "I agree with you". Keep in mind that you need to contribute to the online discussion, so remember to always justify your points of view.

Read all comments before hitting "submit".

What you need to remember when participating in an online discussion is that once you send your comment, there is no way to take it back. This is why you should always think about the content of your message before contributing it. Before replying to a question, read carefully all comments that your peers have already posted, no matter how many they are. If you don't, it is very likely that you will end up repeating things others have already said, and this, apart from contributing nothing new to the online discussion, will seem like you ignore your virtual classmates. Once you have ensured that your comment will indeed add a new element to the online discussion, try to explain yourself as clearly as you can. If your post is still misconstrued, correct the misunderstanding right away.

Tone down your language.

Because written language lacks the support of facial or voice communication clues, it can be easily misinterpreted. A great way to deal with this is to tone down your language; avoid the use of strong words and, again, read aloud everything you want to post before you send it. Moreover, try to avoid humor and sarcasm completely, as they can both easily create misunderstandings and tension.

Recognize and respect diversity.

One of the great beauties of eLearning courses is that you can meet people from all parts of the world, as internet is a global medium. This means that while participating in an online discussion you and your virtual classmates may use the same language to communicate with each other, but the truth

is that cultural backgrounds, linguistic terminology, and abilities to express oneself in written language may vary significantly in an online learning environment. If your virtual classroom is a typical one, it will be ethnically rich and multicultural. This is why it is important to respect diversity and opinions different from yours, no matter where they come from. It is ok to disagree with a point of view, but it is definitely inappropriate to disrespect and be offensive towards others. Being open to different points of view is a sign of intelligence; furthermore, paying attention to alternative viewpoints is one of the greatest ways to learn. Needless to say, profanity, and racist, sexist, ageist, and religious comments are unacceptable, no matter how innocent or “funny” may sound to you. On the other hand, if you are the victim of an insulting remark, try to maintain your calm and resist returning the offense. Rather, report the issue directly to your eLearning course instructor.

Control your temper.

In addition to the previous tip, you may be respectful, but others may be not. When being personally attacked on the web, it is easy to get angry. But you won't win any argument if you lose your temper; tantrums lead nowhere. Instead, take a deep breath and count to ten; if needed, get away from your computer and go for a walk around the block before you reply. This way you will ensure that, while being calmer, you can argue the point instead of attacking the person who made it. More often than not, a bit of thinking and a bit of time result in more rational and coherent responses.

Take your posts seriously.

Participating is the number one rule for online discussions, but posting for the sake of posting wastes other people's time. Always remember to add something new to the conversation and not repeat something that someone else has already said. Most importantly, stay on topic. Irrelevant tangents confuse your peers and make you seem that you don't know what you are talking about; make sure that every comment you post stays within the scope of the online course material. If you are looking for simple **social interaction** with your virtual classmates, check if there is an off-topic discussion area in the online forum.

Be credible.

Finally, be careful not to mislead people when replying to a question. If you are not a 100% sure of your answer, say so. And if you are using the intellectual property of others, e.g. websites, books, blogs, journal articles etc, to support your argument, always cite your sources. Assigning proper credits when referencing other sources is a sign of being a respectful, responsible, and trustworthy online discussion participant.

All in all, never say online what you wouldn't say in real life and to another person's face. Keep these netiquette tips for **online discussions** in mind, and you will be able to expand your knowledge base and share insights and perspectives with your virtual classmates, enhancing your eLearning experience.