University of New Hampshire

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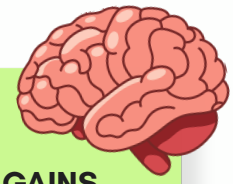
AN OUTCOME EVALUATION OF COMMON SENSE MEDIA'S DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP CURRICULUM

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Summary

Schools are increasingly using digital citizenship education to provide students with protective information and skills. Yet, despite widespread adoption, there is limited rigorous evidence on whether such programs achieve their intended outcomes. The Common Sense Media Digital Citizenship Curriculum offers free, developmentally targeted lessons for grades K-12 on topics like media literacy, online safety, and online civility. This independent quasi-experimental evaluation provides data on 3,908 students in grades 6-8, providing encouraging evidence that the curriculum can improve digital citizenship knowledge, attitudes, and online behaviors.

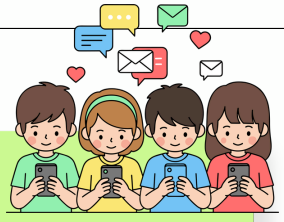
Key Findings:



01

KNOWLEDGE GAINS

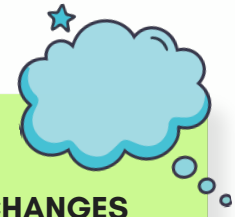
Students in implementation schools demonstrated statistically significant improvements in digital citizenship knowledge (e.g., media balance, privacy, online safety, and media literacy) across all grades, while similar gains were not observed in control schools.



02

BEHAVIOR CHANGES

Among 7th and 8th graders, students in implementation schools were significantly more likely to adopt protective online behaviors. These findings suggest that the curriculum may help students translate digital citizenship knowledge into safer online behaviors.



03

ATTITUDE CHANGES

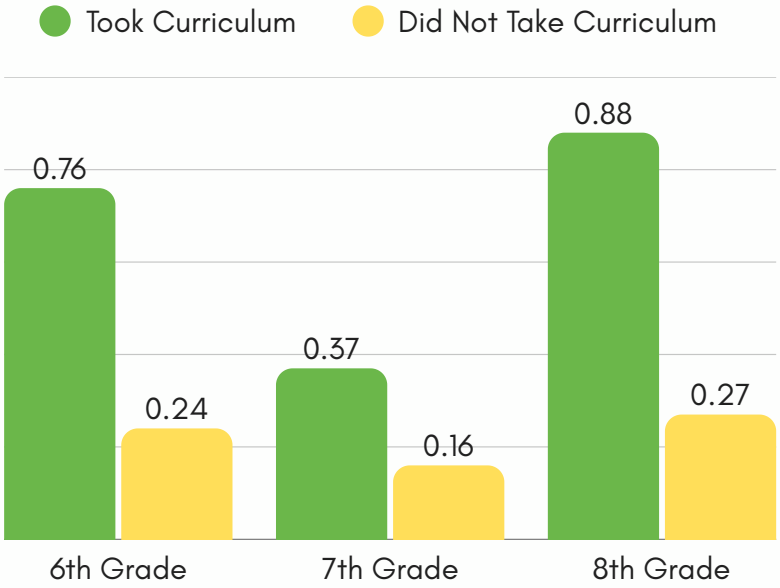
Changes in attitudes toward online engagement and literacy were most notable for 8th graders in schools who used Common Sense, with significant gains by these students in attitudes toward media balance, awareness of tech influence, news/media literacy, and more.

Recommendations



- **Targeting program content by grade is key** to ensuring material meets students' developmental needs. Tech engagement and attitudes were significantly different across grades.
- **Consider gender differences in digital experiences.** Findings suggest that some students, particularly boys, may benefit from content that better reflects their online activities and experiences.
- **Promote balanced technology use.** Students reporting moderate technology use demonstrated stronger digital engagement and literacy skills than those reporting either low or high use. These findings suggest that education emphasizing healthy technology habits may be more useful than messages focused simply on reducing screen time.

Improvements in Digital Citizenship Knowledge by Grade*



* Bars show estimated improvements in knowledge scores accounting for other influencing factors

Link to full report: https://ccrcsurveys.org/csdc-report