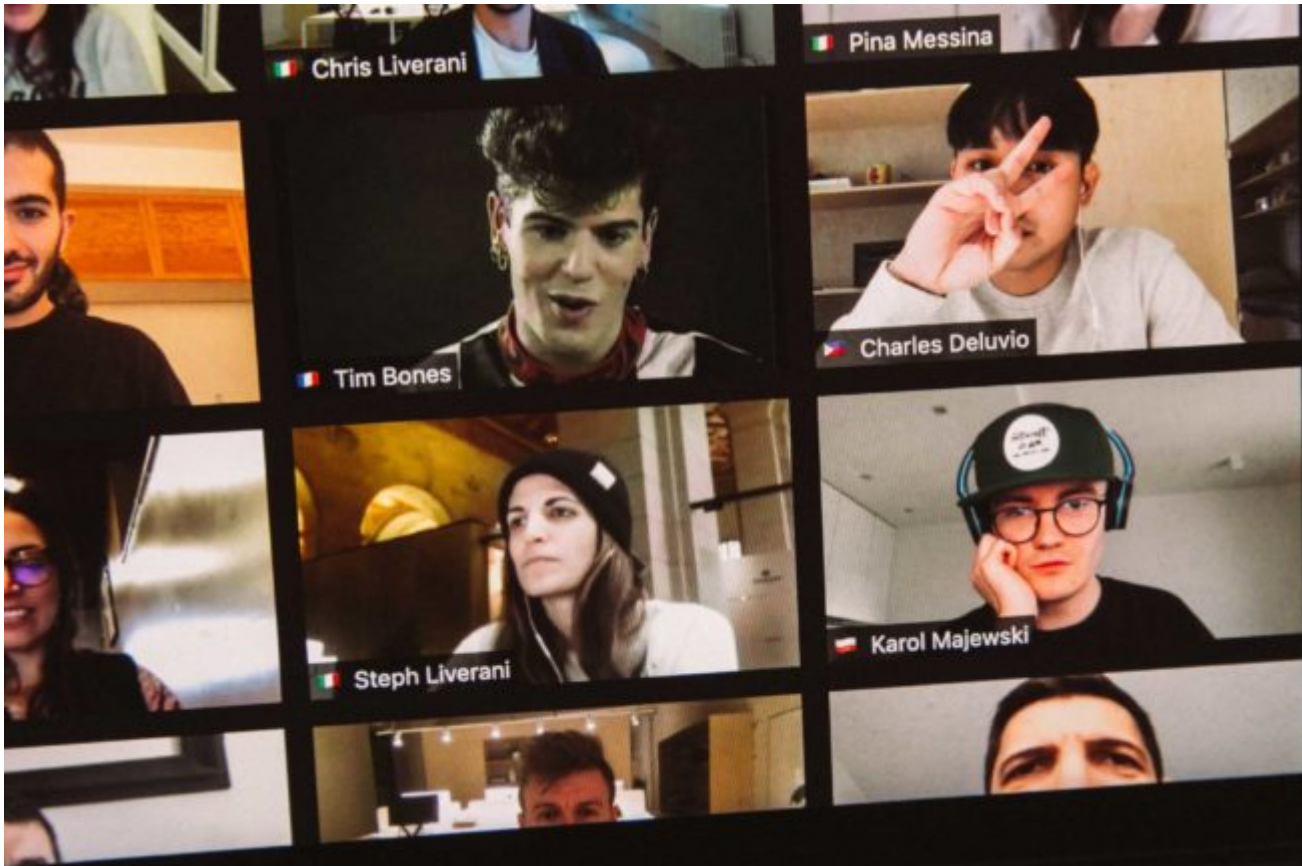


Gen Z's digital dilemma



Generation Z are a [digitally integrated, socially connected generation](#). While they connect largely through the digital realm, they are not digitally exclusive and still value the human connection.

The experience of COVID-19 showed that educational institutions are more than just learning environments, they are hubs of community. Positively, more than four in five students (83%) agree that educational institutions are effective at creating an inclusive educational community.

Navigating mental wellbeing is a key challenge for today's students

While students believe high pressure to do well in exams and assessments (72%) is the top challenge for today's students, navigating their own mental wellbeing (63%) is also a key challenge.

Other challenges that students are facing concern their social interactions and mental wellbeing. Almost three in five students see navigating loneliness and isolation (58%), the pressure to grow up faster (57%), supporting friends with their mental wellbeing (48%) and online bullying through social networks (43%) as extremely or very challenging for today's students.

This is similar to our 2020 Future of Education report which explored the key challenges for today's high school students from the perspective of parents and educators. Interestingly, students (43%) are less likely than parents (58%) and educators (77%) to see online bullying through social networks as extremely or very challenging for today's students. Students are, however, more likely to see juggling work with study as extremely/very challenging (57% cf. 46% parents, 50% educators).

High school students are feeling the pressure to perform, being more likely than higher education students to feel the pressure to do well in exams and assessments (75% cf. 69%), alongside supporting friends with their mental wellbeing (51% cf. 45%).

TOP FIVE CHALLENGES FOR TODAY'S STUDENTS

Extremely/very challenging

1



72%

High pressure to do well in exams and assessments

2



63%

Navigating their own mental wellbeing

3



62%

Preparing for unknown careers

4



58%

Navigating loneliness and social isolation

5



57%

Juggling work with study

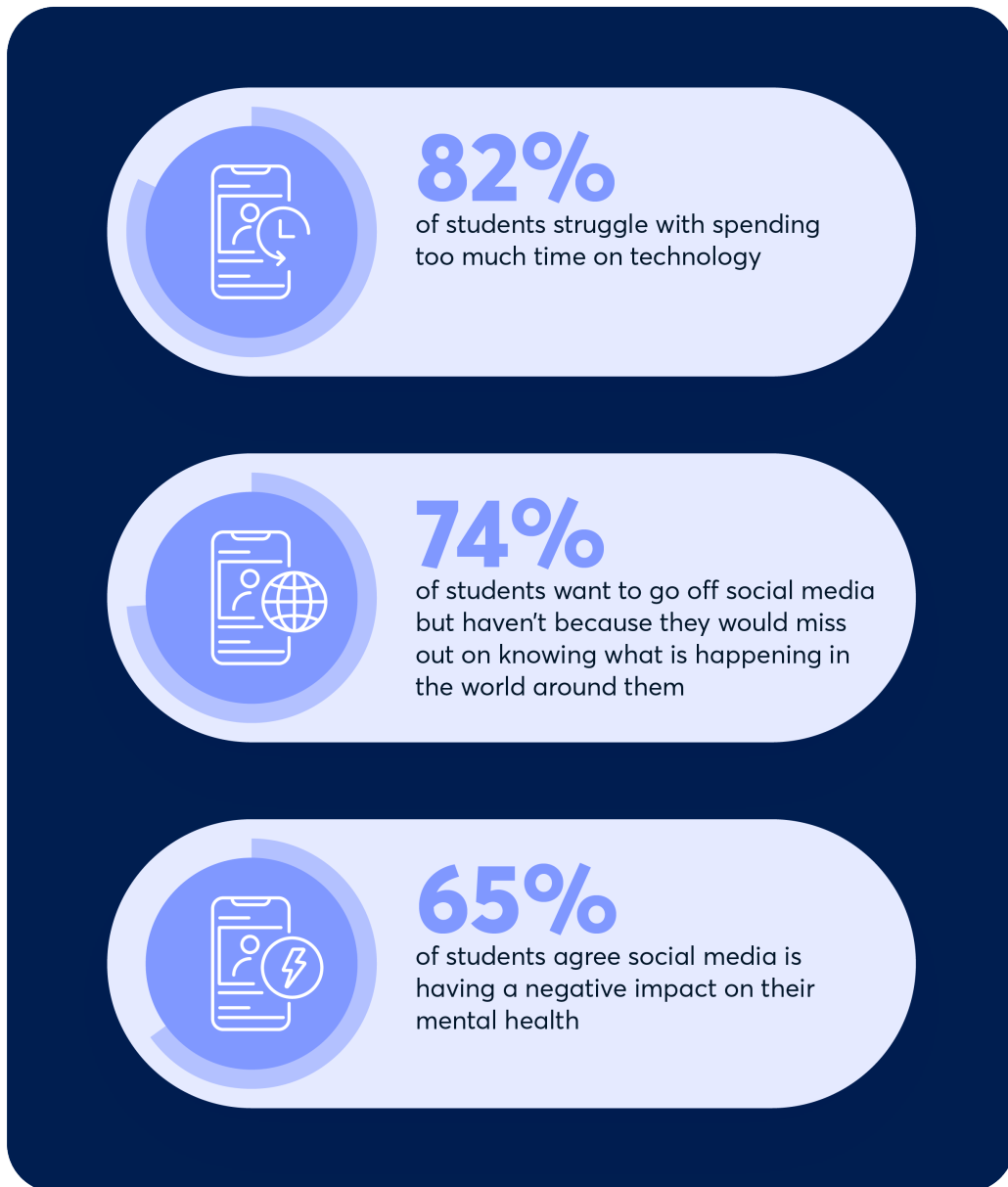
The screen dilemma

A key challenge for educational institutions in supporting student wellbeing is managing

technology and devices. With 74% of Gen Z's time outside of school and work spent online, the challenge for educational institutions is significant.

While students are aware of this challenge, more than four in five (82%) agree they spend too much time on screens and technology, even though 65% say social media has a negative impact on their mental health.

Part of the challenge is the connection to others and awareness of events that is facilitated through social media and the digital realm. In fact, three in four students (74%) want to go off social media but haven't because they would miss out on knowing what was happening in the world around them. While the digital world and social media, is one that older generations have come to know and integrate into their lives, this is the only world that many of today's students have known. Their relational world and sense of connection has been built through the online medium more than any generation before.



Navigating the digital realm for a digitally integrated and socially connected generation is a difficult one. As educators, leaders and parents there is an opportunity to come alongside and help this generation align with their value of human connection to make choices that

can facilitate the in person human connection and build an offline community as well as an online one.

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