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| **Interview Report**  Topic: Whether the amount of time spent on Facebook affects the exam results of Sec 4 RI students.  Done by:  Musawwir (1)  Andrew Tan (2)  Giresh (3)  Choo Ze Yuan (4)  Darren Chua (5)  Teacher Mentor: Mrs. Joycelene Lim |

**Evaluation of Interview**

As part of our research to find out if Facebook affects the exam results of Secondary 4 RI students, we interviewed our school counsellor, Mr. Leo, as we believe that he has dealt with cases of addiction to Facebook and other social online networking sites.

Upon asking Mr. Leo about our topic, he answered that excessive usage of Facebook can result in addiction and thus lower the grades of students. However, he also mentioned that spending a small amount of time on recreation would be acceptable and would not affect exam results.

Although Mr. Leo has not come across a case where a student is addicted to Facebook alone, he has dealt with several cases where Facebook is one of the main causes of addiction. Also, addiction does not just affect exam results. It can also hurt relationships and cause the person to become more aggressive. One of the better ways to counter this is to try to spend more time with the person instead of letting him spend all his time on the computer so that he can gradually get rid of his addiction.

A preventive measure against addiction to Facebook, as our survey results have also shown, is to prioritise. Prioritising helps a student to understand what is more important and therefore what he should spend more time on, thus reducing the amount of time the student spends on Facebook and other social networking sites and preventing addiction. Mr. Leo also recommends spending not more than 2 hours a day on recreation during weekdays, but the amount can be increased on weekends especially if there is no homework to allow time for relaxation.

In general, many of our survey findings agree with our findings for the interview. Prioritising has come up as a preventive measure taken by students, and both show that there is no relationship between the amount of time spent on Facebook and examination results. Mr. Leo also thinks that students might be spending time on Facebook but studying at the same time, hence they use Facebook for longer periods of time but their grades do not suffer.

Finally, although our interview results show that there is no correlation between exam results and the amount of time spent on Facebook, addiction to Facebook is a real problem and can cause grades to suffer.

**Interview Transcript**

Date and Time of Interview: 1st July 2010, 1.45 p.m. (due to busy schedule during the holidays)

Members present at Interview: Andrew, Darren

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| Darren: | Do you think that the amount of time spent on Facebook actually does affect our exam results? |
| Mr. Leo: | Yes, I think so. It all depends on how much time this person actually spends on Facebook, and whether it has come to a point where it is at the expense of his studies, his academics. So, Facebook is a social networking platform, it provides… it’s a place that can meet social needs, and social needs is one of the needs that is pretty important to a person, and therefore it can be potentially addictive. The usage of Facebook can be addictive, and of course if someone is addicted to it it could affect many areas of his life including his studies but at the same time, even if you’re not addicted to it, the amount of time spent on it can still affect you. Your usage of Facebook can be excessive even if it’s not addictive and it can be problematic as well. We only have 24 hours a day, so sometimes how you spend your time, you’ve got to prioritise. So if you spend that amount of time on Facebook, something is… you’re giving something up. |
| Darren: | So have you come across any of such cases of addiction to Facebook? |
| Mr. Leo: | Maybe Facebook is quite new, for the last few years I’ve seen more cases of gaming and general usage of computer and Internet. They don’t often come to me and say particularly Facebook. Facebook is cited as one of the activities, in general, but they will say, “Yes, this boy spends a lot of time on the computer, including Facebook, MSN, Facebook games and gaming” and whatsoever or just using the computer to listen to music, or surf the web, but I haven’t had one boy that comes and says, “Sir, I’m addicted to Facebook and Facebook alone.” So, no, not that yet but Facebook as one of the things on the Internet that they are drawn to. |
| Darren: | So what are the effects if you are addicted to the computer, since you’ve seen some cases, so what are the effects of this addiction? |
| Mr. Leo: | Well, your academics would be affected, lots of people who are excessive in computer usage, usually their results drop. Relationships between friends and family members can deteriorate, because this boy would rather spend time on the computer than to socialize with family members and friends, and in that process he may lie, so all these affect the interpersonal relationships that he has with other people. What else… I could think of much more last time... Aggression, ‘cause you asked me about addiction to internet, and if this boy is addicted to games, like… actually, well if he is addicted to the internet, any action to stop him from using the Internet could result in feelings of frustration in him, and possibly will result in aggression. I have many parents who have come to me and said, “My boy has never been violent before, but the moment I stop him from gaming or switch off the computer, he pushes me away.” And there’s aggression, there’s bodily contact. So these symptoms are very, very common in a person who’s addicted to the Internet. These are the current ones that I can think of but there are more. |
| Darren: | So is there any way to curb or prevent this kind of addiction to the computer or the Internet? |
| Mr. Leo: | Preventive measures include having a resistance, having a lifestyle which is fulfilling, meaningful, purposeful, and in that you become resistant to the need of experiencing a mood change. Because why are people addicted to the Internet is because things like gaming, or even usage of certain things on the Internet, it has an ability… it is fun, and being fun, it has the ability to produce a mood change. So that is the thing that keeps people going back for more. But you ask yourself then, who are those people who need that mood change more than other people. It is those people whose moods are always at a low point. So when you are feeling down, you don’t have friends to talk to, you don’t know what to do about it, computer, or gaming or Facebook could be a channel for you to seek and when you do it you felt good about it, you felt better in your feelings. So people who have a lower mood are more predisposed than others who are constantly finding life exciting, fulfilling, purposeful – these are the people that will be resistant towards addiction to the Internet, but those people with a lower mood, those are the people who are more susceptible. If you ask me how to do preventive work, to not have people people be addicted I would say it’s a huge dynamics that involves around family members, friends, and the person’s personality itself, to build a lifestyle that is engaging to the person so that he feels fulfilled or meaningful or purposeful in life. In that sense, games or internet will not be able to draw him that strongly. Make sense? |
| Darren: | Yes. So what do suggest we do if let’s say we have this friend who is addicted to the computer or Internet and we want to spend more time with him instead of letting him spend his time on the computer? |
| Mr. Leo: | That’s a good idea, to spend more time with him, a close friendship that goes beyond talking about, you know, “What did you score for your Maths?”, that goes beyond just asking each other about homework but talk about even vulnerable stuff like your problems or what you like or what you dislike, or what you think you are not good in. We don’t always have to share our successes, because when we share our vulnerabilities, that creates connection, a deeper connection; that create closeness and a feeling of belonging, a feeling of acceptance. And these are strong feelings that can counter against the need to produce a mood change. A lot of people, they go into, say, games like MapleStory because of a strong need to connect socially, that’s why they go to the game. If in real life they have connected socially, there isn’t the need, so what you are doing is great, you’re spending time with your friend, connecting with him as friends, that’s a very good start. |
| Darren: | Oh, our survey shows that actually there is no relation between the amount of time spent on Facebook and exam results, as in GPA. So why do you think this is so? |
| Mr. Leo: | It could be because over here the usage of Facebook might be controlled, meaning after all Raffles students are rather busy, so even if you spend time on Facebook, you could be multitasking, you are still spending time on your studies. It could be that these students, they don’t know the full impact of Facebook on them, or maybe, really, Facebook has no impact on them. You can use Facebook in a proper manner. I’m not saying that nobody should use the Internet, nobody should play games. There is a function that games, Internet and Facebook serves, and that is recreation. We all need to recreate. As long as we keep to good limits of recreation, we don’t go overboard, we don’t go excessive, I think it is fine, and I think in this school, I have less cases of addiction to computer than in other places. Maybe your survey results really show that the students here are pretty diligent, and not as easily affected by the usage of computers. |
| Darren: | So what would you say is be the recommended limit if you want to avoid affecting your studies, like the maximum of time you should spend per week? |
| Mr. Leo: | It’s sometimes quite hard to put a time, because addiction is based on priorities. For example, if you have an exam tomorrow, then the question is can you don’t play today. And if you say yes, I can don’t play today; it means that you are able to meet your priorities, which is [sic] academics. So therefore even if on weekends you may spend half the day playing, I wouldn’t say you are addicted just because of that, maybe 6 hours that you spent during weekends on games, because you are still in control of your actions in regards to your priorities, you are able to prioritise, so you’re not addicted. However, if you are asking me on my personal opinion on the number of hours, which I think I would recommend for students to spend on the computer, I would say if it’s for recreation purposes, not beyond 2 hours on weekdays. If there’s going to be school on the next day, I don’t think that you’ll need to recreate for more than 2 hours. 2 hours of recreation is good enough. You don’t even need to go to 2 hours. Anything above 2 hours, I wouldn’t recommend it, if not then this recreation slowly becomes more and more, you become more and more dependent on this form of recreation that eventually you may even be addicted to it. Weekends, I’m OK with more time spent, I feel it’s OK during weekends; people just want to relax a bit. And if there are [sic] no homework, then it’s alright, as long as you don’t spend the whole day, from the time you wake up to the time you sleep, you are playing whole day, that is not recommended. If you want to spend one morning, one afternoon that is still OK, or one night enjoying I think that’s alright. Just a minute. |
|  | [0 min 15 sec pause] |
| Darren: | So if we prioritise do you think that we can avoid the effects of addiction? Because we asked and a number of students said that they prioritise and so their usage of Facebook won’t actually affect their results. Do you think this is true? |
| Mr. Leo: | It’s a good sign that they are prioritising, and sometimes it’s hard to gage for every individual because every individual has a different capacity. Some, they are really quicker such that they don’t need that much time revising or working on their work. Some people take one hour doing a compo, some take 3 hours. Some take 1 day to finish a project, some take 3 weeks. So, I think it’s good that the students here, they think they are prioritising and they’re not addicted. What I can advise then is that as long as you’re not spending, I guess, 80 percent of your time and Internet is not your only recreation source or your only friend. In fact the lesser percentage of time you spend on the Internet for recreation purposes, and then you have a variety of interests, the better it is, so that you can spend maybe 20% on your time on the Internet, another 10% on sports, another 5% on TV, if that’s a source of recreation, another 10% on Rubik’s cube, you know, whatever, then another 20 to 30% on reading books, on developing web skills, so all these, the more diversified and more varied your interests are, the better it is. |
| Darren: | OK. |
| Mr. Leo: | So that is all? |
| Darren: | Yes. Thank you! |

End of transcript