

CONTENT FOR DEVELOPING DIGITAL COMPETENCY

Elementary

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Coordination and content

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Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technology over the past few decades has profoundly transformed society, leading to diversified use and a proliferation of communication methods. Widespread access to connected devices, the ubiquity of online platforms and the increasing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) are transforming the way students obtain information, communicate, collaborate and develop their competencies.

At the same time, the labour market is undergoing a major transformation. Automation, robotization, data analysis and the integration of AI are influencing almost every sector. Schools must therefore prepare students to succeed in an environment where technology plays a central role.

In this context, the school's role becomes crucial. Although young people use a variety of digital tools on a daily basis, their familiarity with the tools does not necessarily guarantee digital competency development. Personal use of digital technology—often for entertainment and social interaction—is not enough to ensure a critical, ethical and responsible understanding of digital environments. Current challenges, such as assessing the credibility of information, protecting personal information, managing digital identity and engaging in ethical and responsible behaviour online, require awareness of and education about digital content.

However, the integration of digital technology in education remains uneven. Efforts have often focused on acquiring equipment or using tools, rather than on developing students' digital competency. It is important to have a clear and consistent framework to guide initiatives throughout the school system.

In its [report tabled in May 2025](#), the Select Committee on the Impacts of Screens and Social Media on Young People's Health and Development made the following recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the Gouvernement du Québec harmonize and update the Québec Education Program (QEP), the Digital Competency Framework and the Policy on the Evaluation of Learning to establish a coherent framework for the use of digital technology in schools and to chart a clear path forward for all stakeholders in the school community. In addition, the Committee recommends evaluating whether it would be appropriate to introduce digital competency as mandatory content, pending its full integration into the suitable QEP programs.¹

Thus, the growing importance of digital competency stems from a convergence of social, economic, technological and educational factors. Today, developing this competency in elementary school students means enabling them to understand their environment, exercise their citizenship in an informed manner, participate in a constantly evolving society, and adequately prepare for the realities of the job market.

¹ Assemblée Nationale du Québec, *Select Committee on the Impacts of Screens and Social Media on Young People's Health and Development: Report* (Québec: Assemblée Nationale du Québec, 2025), 41.

Content for developing digital competency

The content for developing digital competency, hereinafter referred to as “the content,” is intended to support all elementary school students so that they acquire the knowledge and know-how necessary to develop their digital competency.

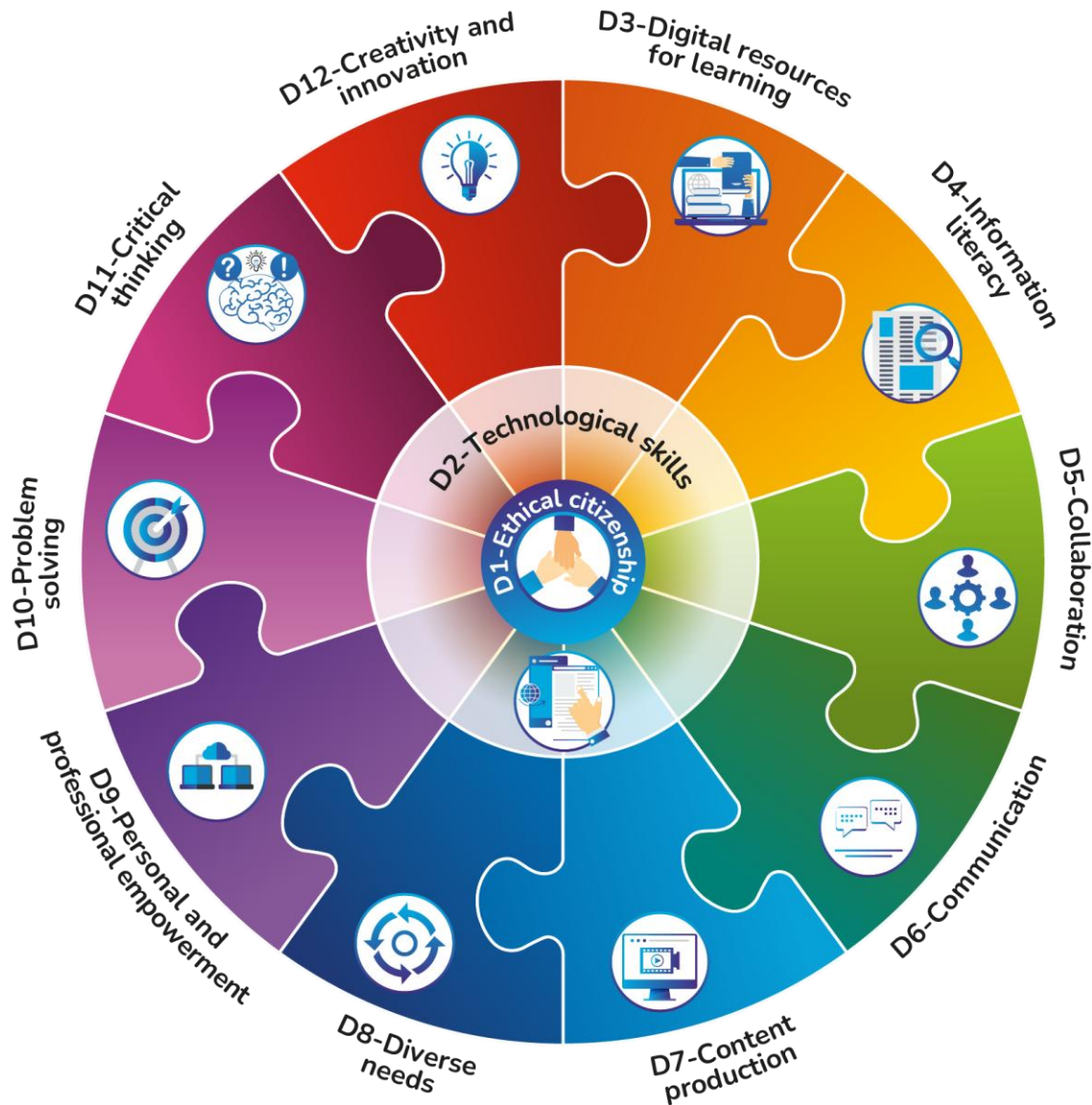
This content is based on the [Digital Competency Framework](#), launched in 2019 and updated in 2026. This framework addresses the development of digital competency, which is defined as an integrated set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable confident, critical, creative, responsible and sustainable use of digital technology. Such use is grounded in respect for ethics, safety, individual and collective well-being, the environment and inclusion, with the aim of enabling students to learn, work and participate fully in society. Guided by the 12 dimensions outlined in the framework, students—whether beginners or not—can develop their autonomy by leveraging digital technology in educational or professional settings, as well as in everyday life.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is considered an intrinsic component of digital competency rather than as a separate field. It is mobilized and incorporated into several dimensions of the *Digital Competency Framework*, particularly those related to critical thinking, problem solving, content creation and ethics. Thus, the development of digital competency includes the ability to understand the basic principles of AI, to critically evaluate its use and limitations, and to use it responsibly and ethically. This approach promotes the coherent integration of AI into learning, in keeping with the other dimensions of digital competency. To learn more about guidelines for its use in an educational setting, please refer to the [Pedagogical, Ethical and Legal Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence: Guide for Teachers](#).

While understanding and reflecting on digital technology remains essential, it is equally important to use it appropriately and responsibly when relevant. This proficiency should also enable individuals to select the appropriate tools and use them thoughtfully: for example, opting for screen-free activities when appropriate, or turning to digital technology when it makes a significant contribution to teaching, learning, or individual and collective well-being. By adopting this approach, individuals will be able to embrace innovation with discernment.

Implementation of the content for developing digital competency in elementary school is optional for the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years. It will become compulsory starting in the 2028-2029 school year.

Figure 1: Visual representation of digital competency



The content can be integrated through structured educational activities or any other educational strategy that school staff deem appropriate for the context. This will enable all elementary school students to acquire the knowledge necessary to develop their digital competency.

In fact, the purpose of this content is to help organize and guide efforts to develop digital competency. As such, it is possible that some of this content is already being taught in schools.

The development of digital competency is an integral part of our lives. This content is designed to build digital competency so that all students in Québec acquire a minimum level of proficiency by the end of elementary school.

General information about the content

There are seven content areas for elementary school:

1. Understanding the effects of using digital technology
2. Understanding digital identity
3. Understanding one's digital environment
4. Getting organized with digital technology
5. Learning to collaborate using digital technology
6. Communicating using digital technology
7. Using available digital resources

Each content area is detailed in an information sheet² that provides the essentials needed to incorporate the content into lesson planning. Each sheet includes the following:

- how this content helps develop digital competency
- elements for development
- examples of student applications
- examples of questions to consider before introducing the elements to students

The information sheets contain all the content to be covered with elementary school students. The decision not to organize the content by cycle is intended to give schools the flexibility to adapt the distribution of content according to their instructional plans, ongoing initiatives and specific circumstances.

² See Appendix 1

Implementation of the content for developing digital competency

Responsibilities related to implementation of the content for developing digital competency

While the school must ensure that compulsory content is offered to students, it is the responsibility of school service centres and school boards to offer the necessary support to their educational institutions to facilitate the implementation of compulsory content with students, in accordance with the *Education Act* (s. 461).

The following actions, undertaken by the person in charge at the school service centre or school board, can help ensure that this content is effectively implemented:

- Inform and train the staff involved in the compulsory content (administrators, non-teaching professionals and teachers).
- Identify opportunities for collaboration between stakeholders and clarify the roles of everyone involved to promote an effective implementation process.
- Establish a timeline for implementing compulsory content and contribute to problem solving in the event of obstacles.
- Advise the school team in choosing the actions and means to be adopted to offer the compulsory content to students.
- Determine support and follow-up mechanisms.
- Monitor the implementation of the content in educational institutions, including planning and the development of learning situations that contribute to digital competency. It is recommended that the different cycles carry out the planning together.
- Support school staff in choosing and developing strategies or instructional materials for the compulsory content.

The content is also compulsory for private educational institutions, as stipulated in section 32 of the *Act respecting private education*. These institutions must therefore determine the means to ensure that the content is implemented.

Integrating the content into lesson planning

1. Take stock of what is already in place

In elementary school, the Québec Education Program (QEP) aims to foster students' holistic development by integrating subject-specific programs with cross-curricular elements that ensure their coherence. These include the broad areas of learning (BAL): Health and Well-Being, Personal and Career Planning, Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities, Media Literacy, Citizenship and Community Life. They promote an integrated educational approach that encourages students to interpret a variety of situations, understand the issues at stake and consider appropriate courses of action.

In this context, the BALs serve as key levers for the development of digital competency, as defined in the *Digital Competency Framework*. Their cross-curricular nature fosters the integration of digital technology into a variety of learning situations, including the critical analysis of media sources, the responsible and safe use of technology, an understanding of the social and environmental issues related to digital technology, as well as communication, collaboration and content creation using digital tools.

In addition, digital competency is addressed more explicitly in the updated elementary Français, langue d'enseignement, program (which will be compulsory in 2027-2028), as well as in the Culture and Citizenship in Québec (CCQ) program. These programs include, among other things, learning situations in which students search for, select and organize information using digital tools; produce and share texts or multimodal content; and exercise critical judgment regarding media messages and issues related to the safe, ethical and responsible use of digital technology. These situations contribute both to the development of subject-specific competencies within these programs and to the development of several dimensions of digital competency.

Similarly, elementary programs in other subject areas such as social sciences, mathematics, science and technology, or arts education also provide opportunities to develop digital competency, either explicitly or implicitly, through a variety of learning situations.

Furthermore, digital technology is expected to be incorporated more explicitly into future updates to the various elementary programs to reflect evolving pedagogical practices and students' digital experiences.

As such, certain content related to digital competency can be addressed within learning sequences already implemented in the classroom, in line with the QEP and in accordance with the students' stage of development. The challenge, then, is to identify this content, explain it and ensure a coherent progression, with the aim of supporting the development of digital competency throughout elementary school.

2. Verify whether the content can be integrated into planning

As part of the development of digital competency at the elementary level, it is important to determine whether the targeted content can be integrated into existing planning. It is possible that a topic related to digital competency is already being covered with students, without, however, explicitly addressing the targeted content or a specific dimension of the competency.

In some cases, a simple adjustment to an already planned learning situation—such as adding a question for reflection, a discussion or a brief period of observation—can help align an existing activity with the targeted content, without the need to plan a new one. This optimizes the learning situation, broadening its scope so as to support the development of digital competency more intentionally. The CCQ content already included in the planning can provide excellent opportunities to intentionally integrate a more specific aspect of digital competency. For example, a learning situation focused on analyzing a social or civic issue can be enriched by having students examine the reliability of digital sources, exercise critical judgment regarding media messages, or reflect on responsible behaviours to adopt in digital environments. This integration helps reinforce the learning objectives outlined in the CCQ program while supporting the targeted development of some of the dimensions of digital competency.

However, teaching digital competency content should not be limited to a single intervention. Content can be reused and enhanced from one school year to the next, in various school contexts, to ensure consistent and continuous progress in digital competency development throughout elementary school.

3. Choose a learning situation that provides a way to address the content

It is also possible that some digital competency content may not yet be included in the planning. In this case, the teacher can choose a targeted activity that allows for the intentional development of one or more dimensions of digital competency, based on the students' needs and the classroom context.

A wide range of learning activities are available to support the development of digital competency at the elementary level, whether through interdisciplinary projects or meaningful learning situations. Tools and resources are also available to help teachers select and adapt activities that promote the thoughtful, responsible and effective use of digital technology. Using these resources makes it possible to select activities that align with the targeted content while supporting a consistent progression of digital competency throughout elementary school.

4. Develop a learning situation that allows students to engage with the content

It is possible that some existing learning situations do not fully address the digital competency content that the teacher wishes to cover with their students. In that case, the teacher can design a new activity based on the observed needs and the context of their classroom.

To do this, it is recommended that teachers build on the model of a learning situation already in use in the classroom, intentionally incorporating one or more dimensions of digital competency. The learning situation can be designed in an interdisciplinary manner and form part of a learning sequence that enables students to leverage digital technology.

This type of learning activity provides an opportunity to explicitly plan for the development of digital competency, collect learning data as the activity unfolds and promote continuous progress throughout elementary school.

Supporting the implementation of digital competency content

Resources to support digital competency development

A number of resources are available to support schools in developing students' digital competency. The [*Digital Competency Framework*](#) serves as an essential guide: it helps clarify the scope of digital competency, its cross-curricular nature, and its 12 dimensions, while guiding the integration of digital technology into pedagogical practices.

Additional resources and tools for developing digital competency are available at Quebec.ca (in French only).

Plan ways to teach the content and to ensure progressive development of the targeted competency

As digital competency is cross-curricular and supports the development of all subject-specific and cross-curricular competencies outlined in the QEP, it is acquired progressively throughout a student's educational journey. It is therefore essential for teachers to ensure its ongoing development through various learning situations, without necessarily resorting to formal assessment.

To achieve this, simple mechanisms can be put in place to confirm that the content has been presented and that students are making progress in the targeted competency. Observations and discussions integrated into daily learning situations across various subjects make it possible to track students' progress and ensure that by the end of elementary school, they will have developed their digital competency in a comprehensive manner. Specifically, teachers can ask spontaneous questions, observe students as they complete a task, or provide feedback during or after a digital activity.

For example, in a learning situation where students are asked to create a simple digital presentation, certain elements can be observed, including their choice of tool, the integration of text and images, and their adherence to guidelines for the safe and responsible use of digital technology. A brief discussion with the student then allows the teacher to gather information about the student's understanding and strategies.

This information helps teachers pinpoint sources of errors or difficulties in understanding and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. In light of the feedback they receive, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and become aware of their progress in developing their digital competency.

Apply what has been learned across different subjects and learning situations

Reinvesting the learning related to the development of digital competency plays a vital role in consolidating the knowledge and skills acquired and is part of a process of continuous development. Since digital competency is cross-curricular by nature, the content covered can be applied across various subjects and learning activities.

It is also important to work together to plan the delivery of digital competency content. An organized, cycle-based approach that takes into account existing initiatives and the specific context of each school helps ensure the consistent progression and comprehensive development of digital competency throughout elementary school.

Finally, students can also apply what they have learned in their daily classroom activities, at various times and in a variety of instructional contexts. Conversations and discussions can provide students with numerous opportunities to practise, reflect on their use of digital technology and continuously strengthen their competencies.

Conclusion

The content for developing digital competency aims to prepare students to use digital tools and resources in a thoughtful, safe and responsible manner. It enables them to acquire a solid foundation that will serve them well both as they transition to secondary school and in their personal and professional lives.

This content serves as a means of organizing and harmonizing the initiatives carried out in schools to ensure a coherent progression in digital learning, which is essential in many respects. It acts as a powerful tool for strengthening existing practices, supporting progressions of learning (POL) and bolstering the Commitment-to-Success plans (CTSP) of school service centres and school boards.

By building on the initiatives already in place in schools, this content helps take students' digital competency to the next level. As such, it plays an important role in their overall development and in each student's educational success as they prepare for the transition to secondary school.

Appendix 1: Detailed presentation of the content information sheets

Sheet 1 – Elementary

Content to convey to students

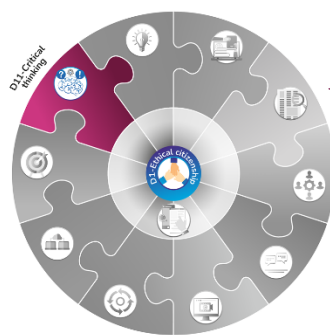
UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF USING TECHNOLOGY



HOW THIS CONTENT HELPS DEVELOP DIGITAL COMPETENCY

Explanation of the **connection** between the content to be conveyed and the development of students' digital competency

Students become aware of the social and environmental impacts of using digital technology, as well as the various factors that influence their digital habits. They learn to recognize the influences that shape their digital behaviour, such as notifications, suggested content, their social circle and digital platforms. The goal is to support the development of thoughtful, responsible and sustainable digital practices, and to help students better understand both the benefits and limitations of digital technology in their daily lives. This content contributes in particular to developing the dimensions *Exercising ethical citizenship in the digital age* (D1) and *Developing critical thinking with regard to the use of digital technology* (D11).



Digital competency dimensions targeted by this content

ELEMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT

Elements for development of this content

Knowledge

Skills

Recognize the social impacts of digital technology



Students come to understand that:

- digital practices have an impact on social relationships and well-being
- online behaviours can have positive or negative effects on themselves and others
- rules of respect and principles of responsibility also apply in digital environments



Students develop their ability to:

- recognize situations in which the use of digital technology has a social impact
- explain the social effects associated with digital practices
- adopt respectful and responsible behaviours in digital contexts
- reflect on the consequences their actions have for others



EXAMPLES OF STUDENT APPLICATIONS

- Compare examples of digital practices to identify which ones have beneficial effects on themselves and others.
- Identify appropriate behaviours to adopt in different contexts, such as at school, at home or while playing online games.
- Determine whether or not various digital practices benefit their learning and their interactions with others in a school setting.
- Identify a resource to consult if they encounter difficulties in a digital context.
- Examine and discuss an image produced by generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) provided by their teacher. Ask themselves, for example: Is this real? How might this image influence other people?



EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE INTRODUCING THIS ELEMENT

- Do students know that their digital choices can affect themselves and others?
- Are they aware of the resources they can turn to for support when a digital situation affects their relationships or well-being?
- Do they have access to a school policy on digital use?
- Can they get involved in developing a classroom policy on digital use?

Examples of how this content **can be applied** in concrete situations in a school setting

Examples of questions to guide lesson planning so that activities build on students' existing knowledge

