

# Digital citizenship under lockdown: promoting healthy use of technology for adolescents growing-up in Perú during COVID-19



## Introduction

- **Transitions** is a researcher-practitioner collaboration between UC Berkeley's Adolescent Research Collaborative, Innova Schools, and Common Sense Education.
- We have been working together since 2018 to promote digital citizenship in children and adolescents growing up in Latin America (Perú and México) through a school curriculum that is culturally appropriate and that builds on principles from developmental science.
- The current COVID-19 crisis forced us to pivot quickly and redesign our curricula to promote Wellbeing during a crisis, highlighting the role technology plays while under lockdown.

## 2 Design Wellbeing During Lockdown curriculum

### Population

- Innova Schools, Perú
- n = 20,000
- Low- and middle-income urban youth, 4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade

### Perú

- Hard hit by COVID-19
- Very stringent lockdown enforced by the army
- Deteriorating economy.
- Students in remote instruction for the full school year



### Curricula

#### Topics:

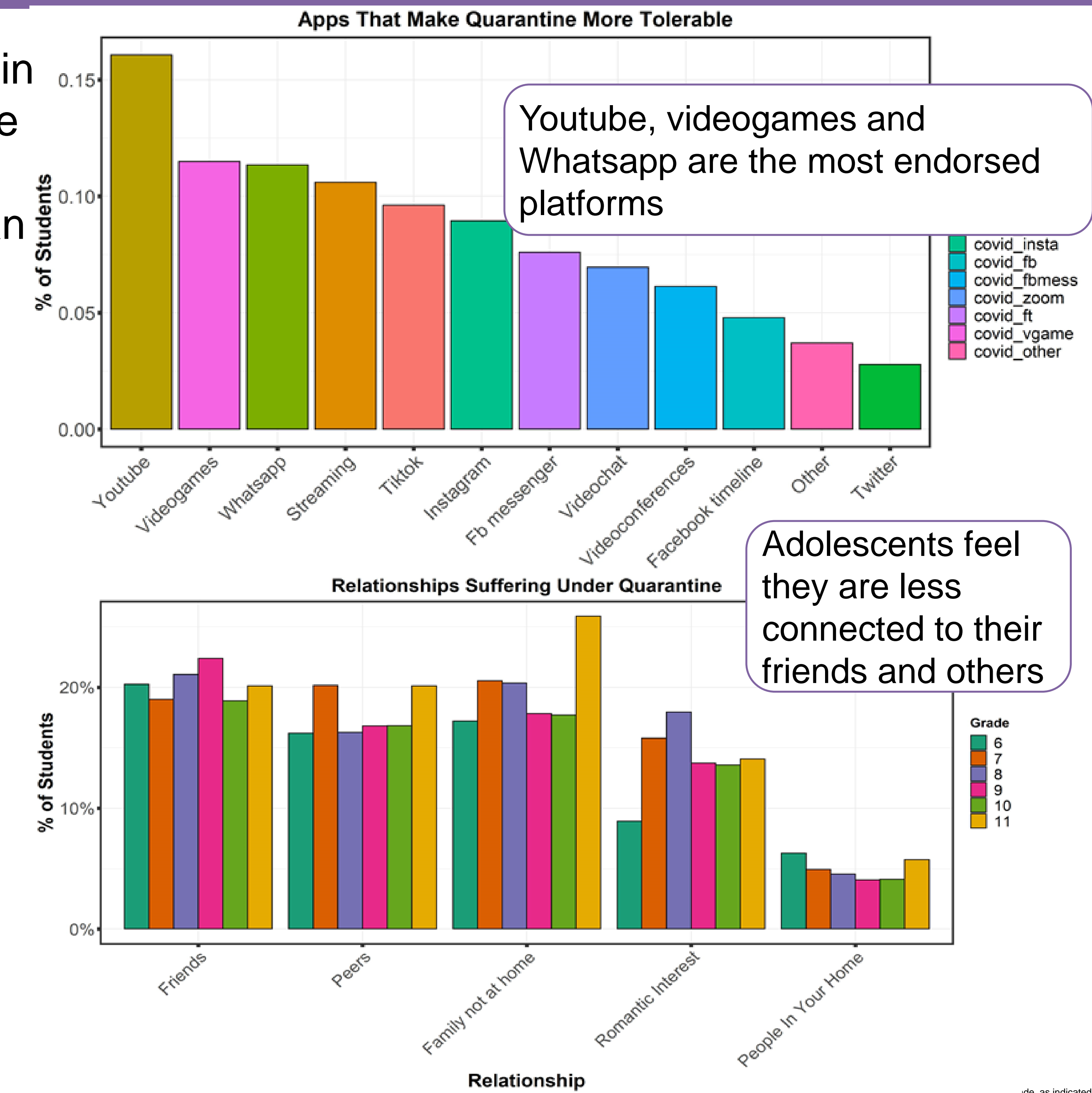
1. Managing uncertainty
2. Emotions
3. Relationships
4. Healthy habits
5. Sleep
6. Healthy technology use

#### Materials:

- Worksheets, questionnaires, videos, activities, group debriefing sessions
- 3 ongoing activities: diary (intrapersonal), chain of help (interpersonal), and quarantine chronicles (whole classroom)

## 1 Describe Technology has become a lifeline for remote instruction and connection during the pandemic

- We surveyed **10,000 students** between ages 11 and 17 in low- and middle-income urban settings across Perú in the early stages of the pandemic (**April – May, 2020**)
- Our sample is more connected than the average Peruvian household
- **Lockdown** meant more time online for social connection and entertainment
- **Laptops** were used for schoolwork, and **smartphones** were used for leisure
- Adolescents communicate through **multiple platforms**:
  - Older students use more social media
  - Younger students (especially boys) are connecting through videogames
- **Increased screen time** meant more **positive and negative** online experiences, particularly for older students
  - Positive online experiences alleviate loneliness
- Students with higher rates of depression and anxiety are more likely to exhibit **problematic media use**



## 3 Implement Delivering the curriculum

### Curriculum Development

The research teams in the US and Peru worked with school staff to translate and adapt materials tailored to the developmental period of adolescence and students' sociocultural contexts.

### Teacher Training

We trained teachers, who then implemented materials during the remote Advisory period using online communication tools including videocalls and asynchronous work.

### Family Engagement

We helped parents reframe the prevailing (negative) beliefs about technology use during adolescence, highlighting the importance of online social connection and balanced use.

## 4 Summarize Findings

- Students most distressed at the beginning of the pandemic
  - Disruption of school routines and increased school work
  - Disconnection from friends → Adolescents miss school and their friends **a lot**.
- Adolescents perceive more time with families as a positive outcome of lockdown.
- Adolescents are using multiple platforms to cope with lockdown.
- Age related differences in social media and platform use align with important social-cognitive development in this period.
- Shifting parental perceptions of social media risk and opportunities – openness to consider the benefits of social media