

Workshop 14

Do you trust the information you find online?

Workshop Overview

***The term *Bullshit* is used in this workshop, however, you may wish to replace it with an alternative word.**

In this workshop students will learn the difference between information and knowledge. They will understand why good quality information is so important and how easily we can be misinformed

by unreliable sources. Students will gain an understanding of the different types of information as well as improving their own communication skills to avoid being deceived by misleading information.

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- » Make sense of the difference between information and knowledge and between facts and opinions
- » Understand that the better the quality of the information they consume, the better able they will be to make sense of the world around them
- » Understand the different types of information and how they can affect the communication process
- » Improve their communication skills in order to avoid being deceived by false/misleading information and express themselves in a more effective and responsible manner
- » Understand the use of information in the context of bullying and online safety

Core topics

- » Communication
- » Information
- » Knowledge

Resources

- » PowerPoint Presentation
- » Activity Sheets

Methodology

- » Presentation
- » Analysis
- » Classroom Discussion
- » Activity Sheets

SPHE components

See FUSE and the SPHE Curriculum for further details



Workshop 14

Delivery of the workshop - PowerPoint Presentation

Students are divided into groups of 3 or 4. Each group will choose a team name and a team lead, who will be responsible for liaising with the teacher and members of other groups during practical activities. They will be provided with a white sheet and pens.

2 What have we learned so far?

The teacher should recap on the learning outcomes from the previous workshop and then proceed.

3 Discussion

Activity 14.1

Students will be asked to discuss in their groups the main differences between information and knowledge and between fact and opinion. The idea here is to prompt students to think about the difference between the information they encounter in their everyday lives, especially digital information, and the actual interpretation, understanding and use of that information, which could be described as knowledge. They will come up with some ideas and write them down on the sheet. The teacher then asks the groups to read out some of these ideas and put them up on a white board.

4 Information vs Knowledge(I) Does this symbol have any meaning?

The teacher will ask students if what they see on the screen is information. S/he will then ask if the symbols have any meaning, if they mean something.



5 Information vs Knowledge (I)

The teacher will then disclose the meaning (TOILET IN JAPANESE), and then explain that it is information because it has a meaning, which is toilet, even though students didn't know what it means. A word in Japanese is information, but if you don't speak the language you will not be able to understand it.

So, from a communication point of view, information is anything that has meaning. However, in order to turn this information into knowledge, it is necessary to understand this information – know what it means.

6 Information vs Knowledge (II)

Is this information? If so, why?

The teacher will ask students if what they see on the screen is information. Everyone will probably say yes, and the teacher will ask why that is information. The teacher should expect them to say that it is because it has meaning. The teacher will then ask whether they think that is also knowledge, and students will probably say yes, as everyone knows that the sign means ladies/gents toilet.

7 - 10 Information and Context

This is also an activity-based slide **Activity 14.2 (a)**.

Activity 14.2 (a)

What do you see in the pictures?

SKULL WITH CROSSED BONES

The teacher will ask students if they know what the picture on the screen is. The right answer is SKULL WITH CROSSED BONES. Some students will say “death”, “danger”, and then the teacher will say that the question that is being asked is “what it is” and not “What it means”. Finally, the teacher will then ask what it means. Answers may include, for instance, death, pirate, danger etc.

A BOTTLE WITH THE SKULL

The teacher will then reveal the second picture – a bottle with the skull – and ask students what that means. They will say that it means the bottle contains something dangerous, maybe a poison or something like that.

RED CIRCLE

The teacher will then reveal the third picture – red circle – and ask students what they see on the screen.

Answers may include, for instance, red circle, red dot etc. The teacher will then ask what it means. Answers may include, Japanese flag, record button etc.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

The teacher will then reveal the fourth picture – traffic lights – and ask students what that means. They will say that the red dot means STOP.

11 Information and Context

The teacher will then explain that information also depends on the context in which it is used. Even though students knew what a skull with crossed bones and a red dot represents, the true meaning was revealed when the information was put into a specific context. So the INTERPRETATION of information is also dependent on the context, as meanings can vary according to different contexts.

12 Concluding Information and Context

This slide concludes the first part. Teachers can use some of the notes on the white board to engage students in the wrap up.

13 Information Literacy (I)

Teacher will tell students that there are many different types of information. Three such types are displayed on the screen:

- » Controversial Information
- » False information
- » Bullshit information (careless information)

The teacher will ask students to discuss in their groups and come up with definitions for these three types of information. The teacher asks the groups to read out some of their ideas and put them up on a white board. Usually, students know how to explain what controversial and false information is, but they struggle to guess what bullshit information is – the term bullshit information can be replaced by **careless information** if the teacher finds it more appropriate.

14 Information Literacy (II)

After some discussion in the previous slide, the teacher will move to SLIDE 8.

- » **Controversial Information:** information that is debatable, that is subject to dispute and disagreement.
- » **False information:** information that is not based on facts or evidence; it is simply not true.
- » **Bullshit information:** information that is used without proper care or consideration. The bullshitter doesn't care if what they say is true or false, if it is accurate or inaccurate; the important thing for the bullshitter is to participate in the conversation and, in some cases, persuade the listener.

15 Information Literacy (III)

The teacher will ask students if they are bullshitters?

The first reaction is usually to say no, but at this point it is important that the teacher explains that everyone is or has been a bullshitter at some point.

People tend to talk about things that they don't understand all the time. In some cases, people do that for bad reasons, for example when they want to achieve some goal or persuade someone to do what they want. However, most of the time they don't do it for bad reasons or to cause harm to anyone; they do so for many different reasons such as: they want to take part in a conversation; they want to feel part of a group; they do not want others to think they are stupid; they want to be funny or become popular etc. Here the teacher can use some examples from everyday life to make the conversation more engaging, maybe using some stories that took place in the school.

The important point here is to explain to students that in some situations, even if we don't want to cause any harm to anyone, that if we engage in bullshit conversations without being careful with the quality of the information we use, we may cause harm to people, communities and organizations. If we spread a story with inaccurate, misleading or even false information (even without intention), this can have very serious consequences.

Note for the following slides:

In the context of bullying and cyberbullying, using information in an insensitive or careless manner can start a process that may lead to someone being the subject of bullying.

16 Information Literacy (IV)

This is an activity-based slide (**Activity 14.2 (b)**).

Activity 14.2 (b)

On the screen there are 3 pictures of random situations involving young people at school. Each group will choose a picture and write down responses to the following questions:

- » What do you see in the picture?
- » What are the possible meanings associated with what you are seeing?
- » How would you text what you are seeing to someone else? (3 options)

Some possible answers from students:

PICTURE 1 - A boy talking to a girl very closely. This can suggest that he is hitting on her. It can also suggest that he is telling her a secret. Or that he is getting closer to check something on her face.

PICTURE 2 - A boy giving money to another boy - the one receiving it is turning his head and looking over his own shoulder. This can suggest that they are doing something wrong because of the way the boy is moving his head, as if he is checking if somebody is watching. It can also suggest that somebody called him and then he just turned his head/or the first boy asked him where is the ATM and he was looking in its direction to tell him.

PICTURE 3 - Two girls are laughing in the background and a third girl is looking down in the foreground. This can suggest that the two girls are gossiping or making fun of the third girl. It can also be that they are talking about something else, and the third girl is just looking down because she is reading something on her phone.

After students complete this activity, the teacher will ask each group to read out the responses and compare them. The idea here is to get students to reflect on the difference between what they see (information) and the interpretation and understanding of what they see (knowledge), and then check how they would react to it. Because the image allows for more than one interpretation, the teacher will then ask if any of the interpretations can cause harm to the people involved, which could lead to this person being bullied depending on the kind of message they send through their phones.

The teacher then facilitates a discussion about the best practices involved in the use of information.

17 Information Literacy (V)

The teacher will show the 3 safeguards against bullshit information.

It is important to check the facts, rely on more than one source for obtaining information, and challenge one's own convictions, opinions and beliefs. The teacher will explain that this is valid for both offline and online information. The more we care about the quality of information we consume and the way we interpret it, the more we can avoid misleading messages that can cause harm to people.

18 Things to consider

This slide acts as a recap of the workshop and provides the students with a consolidated overview of all the learnings to-date.

19 Reflection activity

The importance of this workshop is to instill the idea of reliable information that students may come across. Students need to consider what they have learned during the workshop.