

RENEWS

Bringing fresh eyes
to media literacy

MEDIA LITERACY HANDBOOK



Cofinancé par le
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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

In general terms, **Media and Information Literacy (MIL) encourages knowledge and understanding of media and information to improve public debate and social participation.** It emphasises the ability to understand the purposes of media, evaluate how media work to achieve these purposes, and make rational use of media to express oneself.

The broad objective of Media Literacy Education (MLE) is to empower students to exercise their citizenship in an information and communication society, to train active, enlightened and responsible digital citizens. This field allows young people:

- **To understand media**, social networks and information in all their dimensions: economic, societal, technical, ethical.
- **To develop skills** in research, selection and interpretation of information, as well as the evaluation of sources and contents.
- **To assess the influence of media** and information on thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.
- **To demonstrate a civic practice of the media and develop a digital citizenship** so that young people can take ownership of the media (both off and online) to create a space for individual and collective affirmation, but also for reflection, debate and participation.

To fully grasp the global impact of MIL, it must be stressed that a society that knows how to handle media and information and encourages the development of free, independent, and pluralistic media is more likely to encourage meaningful public participation.

The importance of MLE is crucial as our information societies enabled the massive dissemination of information of all kinds (print, broadcast and digital content), made possible by technologies and the Internet. In this context, MLE promotes not only increased vigilance on the part of the media, but also an education on media, information and digital citizenship, that can truly develop the intellectual autonomy of the population. The following booklet originated in a particular context as the COVID-19 health crisis brought into light different phenomena regarding media consumption.

HOW IS MEDIA CONSUMPTION AFFECTED BY MAJOR CRISES, E.G. COVID-19?

According to an American study (Brooke Liu, Lucinda Austin, Yan Jin, 2010), during a period of crisis (political, environmental, etc.), the general trend is to favour traditional media for information, even though social networks are playing an increasingly important role in information sharing. In general, this study confirms the existence of a trend towards more frequent access to information during times of crisis.

The health crisis related to COVID-19 exacerbated pre-existing behaviours regarding access to information. In general, media consumers had more frequent access to information during this period. Television and websites consolidated their place as primary sources of information.

Two phenomena could be observed during the period of the health crisis:

1 The widespread distrust of traditional media (television, radio, print media) among the population has slightly decreased.

This reversal of trend is partly related to the greater presence of traditional media (especially television) in people's daily experience, but also to the need for media consumers to find comprehensive answers about the COVID 19. According to the Edelman survey (May, 2020), media consumers have become more sensitive to the danger of circulating false information. In France, as shown in a study conducted by the Viavoice Institute, there was overexposure to information, which was perceived as a source of generalized anxiety. At the same time, most of the people interviewed for this study said that the work of journalists is useful and indispensable (source: Franceinfo).

2 Very wide diffusion of the internet and social networks as sources of access to information.

In spite of the more favourable trend towards traditional media, the period of health crisis was also characterised by an increase in the use of internet and social networks as a means to access information (source: La Revue des médias).

Faced with this situation, Media and Information Literacy (MIL) offers both avenues for reflection and practical tools to become well informed.

This responds both to a necessity (the circulation of false and incorrect information), and to a need felt by an increasingly large part of the population for quality information.

In addition, hyper connection and information overload are challenges that Media Literacy is addressing.

The increased rate of information flow and the immediacy of information can make it more difficult to discern between good and bad information, as well as to prevent information processing time and reflection.

WHO IS THIS RESOURCE FOR AND WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?

This booklet is aimed at trainers, teachers, librarians and socio-educational practitioners so that they can find both contextual elements and avenues for reflection on Media Literacy Education. The booklet contains angles for reflection, proposals for practical exercises and evaluations.

Beneficiaries will be able to use it to prepare pedagogical sequences or workshops for young people. This booklet does not aim to be exhaustive, but its main objective is to provide a pedagogical support to enable beneficiaries to quickly prepare socio-educational workshops in Media Literacy Education.

Trainers will also need to dialogue with young people and try to co-construct their socio-educational action based on young people's media and digital practices. It is through back and forth between theory and practice in the field that actions can be effective.

Ultimately, young people and students are the final beneficiaries of this handbook.

RESOURCE ROADMAP

Healthy Media Diet

This section - which can be used as a handout for students - offers 10 tips for students to take control of their media and information practices.

Key Topic 1

Media Environment

This chapter aims to help students understand key points on the media environment.

Key Topic 2

Media Bias

This chapter aims to help students identify the different forms of biased writing in the media and online.

Key Topic 3

Filter Bubbles/ Echo Chambers

This chapter explores the notions of filter bubbles and echo chambers and the way they shape our experiences both on and offline.

Key Topic 4

Disinformation/ Misinformation/ Conspiracy

This chapter introduces students to key notions of media literacy education such as disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories.

Key Topic 5

Hate Speech

This chapter discusses hate speech and online abuse. It aims at empowering students to identify and respond to hate speech online in a constructive way to develop their digital citizenship.

Create an online magazine

This section functions as a guide to help both teachers and students to create a web magazine to develop essential skills in media literacy.

Pedagogical worksheet on France

This section provides guidance, tips and resources for French teachers specifically to organise a media literacy workshop for their students.



TOP TIPS FOR DELIVERING MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

From our collective experience delivering media literacy education to young people across the world, we have learnt many valuable lessons on how to make this learning as engaging and impactful as possible. Below you can find a collection of our most important takeaways from teaching this subject, which should help you to deliver the best possible lessons for your students.

1 **Ensure that media literacy can be embedded into your school timetable, and links to wider learning outcomes across the curriculum.**

Given how busy schools are, it is important that media literacy is not perceived as an additional burden. Take language from the national curriculum and show how media literacy supports those goals. You should also produce a well-researched plan that explains how your programme can fit into their existing schemes of work, for example via Citizenship classes, as module additions in other relevant subjects (e.g. history; media studies; ICT) or as an extracurricular offer throughout the year.

2 **Lessons should balance discussion-based learning with practical activities.**

This will allow students to absorb vital information, formulate their own opi-

nions and work through 'grey areas' with their peers. It also ensures that media literacy is anchored in something tangible and relevant to their everyday lives, rather than an abstract set of terms.

3 **When discussing key topics, use examples that will resonate with your students.**

For example, when referencing a biased publication, or a platform where they might find echo chambers, be sure to relate these to young people's real-life experiences; this should encourage them even more to take part in activities and discussions.

4 **Balance the negatives with the positives.**

Yes the online world can be a scary place where lots of bad behaviour can be found. But it can also be a positive environment, where all users can learn, explore, share, and connect with each other. While young people

need to understand the risks associated with online use, we also want them to feel empowered as digital users. You must therefore strike a balance: avoid suggesting that problematic behaviour is everywhere, or that they should be sceptical of everything they encounter online – this could breed news avoidance or a trend towards conspiracy theories.

5 **Encourage students to demonstrate effective media literacy on and offline.**

Good media literacy education doesn't just impart knowledge by teaching young people about a range of online harms or phenomena. As well as doing this, it encourages and inspires young people to demonstrate a set of positive behaviours and attitudes when engaging with media in its various forms. Ask them in follow-up lessons: have you identified disinformation online yet, and how did you respond? Have you stood up for a friend online, and called out abuse and harassment? Be sure to celebrate these examples of good digital citizenship, so students recognise the value in their good deeds.

HEALTHY MEDIA DIET

Today there are many more means to access information than in the past, due in particular to the introduction of the Internet.

However, this openness is not without paradoxes. There is a risk that Internet users will become locked into a social and political self and that the debate will be polarised on irreconcilable positions.

Faced with the risk of isolation and information overload, Media Literacy Education suggests that we take control of our media and information practices in 10 points:

- 1 PAUSE AND REFLECT**
In a context of rapid and abundant flow of information, take your time to check and reread the information.
- 2 CHECK SOURCES**
Who is the author? Which media published the information? Is it known for being trustworthy?
- 3 CHECK PUBLICATION DATE**
When was the information published? Is it still relevant?
- 4 DISTINGUISH FACTS FROM OPINION**
In some cases, the news article precise if it is opinion based.
- 5 DIVERSIFY SOURCES**
Use several sources to get a more complete picture.
- 6 SHARE AN ARTICLE THAT YOU FULLY READ**
Title doesn't always tell the whole story and can be very misleading.
- 7 SEARCH**
Don't just wait for information. Go to the information.
- 8 QUESTION YOURSELF**
If you always agree with what you read... It may be time to confront other opinions and sources.
- 9 REPORT DISINFORMATION/HATE SPEECH ONLINE**
Don't let yourself be dragged down by a polemic generated by a hate message or false information circulating on social networks. On the contrary, be proactive and promote positive content! You will lift others peers up and improve your online community.
- 10 PARTICIPATE**
Create a blog, a vlog or a magazine. Get involved in a constructive and creative way on social networks.

Key Topics 1.

THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT



LESSON'S OBJECTIVES

- ✓ The student knows what information and media are.
- ✓ The student can name his/her country's main media outlets.
- ✓ The student understands the difference between traditional and new media.
- ✓ The student understands the role of media and journalists in a democratic society.
- ✓ The student understands the Impact of social media on our relationship with Information.



INTRODUCTION

Information is vital to our everyday life and our societies. Without good and clear information, we would face many dangers. The media holds a responsibility in sharing and giving information. As the media environment has been in constant change for several decades and the world is getting more and more complex, this responsibility has increased.

During election time for example, media are the main source for disseminating the proposals, debates and political programs of representatives and political leaders. Thus, media actors are the guarantors of the smooth running of our democracies. In order to ensure this major and democratic role, the media and journalists are protected by freedom of press laws.

The massive dissemination of information of all kinds, made possible by technologies and the Internet, requires not only increased vigilance on the part of the media, but also an education on media, information and digital citizenship, that can truly develop the intellectual autonomy of the population.

This chapter aims to help students understand key points on the media environment: its history; the shift from traditional media to social media as means to access information and the role of the journalist. This section includes an activity for students to discover their country's media landscape and evaluations to test their knowledge.

KEY DEFINITION

Media are, above all, physical support for the mass spread of information, including print, radio, the internet, and television.

Information, in the context of critical media literacy, is a conveyed fact that comes from sources that have been identified, verified, and corroborated. This may also include contextualisation that explains or interprets the fact through a social, cultural, and political lens. Furthermore, information must fulfil three criteria:

Of public interest

To be considered information in the media and social sense of the word, a fact must be of public interest. For example, one arbitrary citizen's presence at a football match does not constitute information that is likely to be of interest to all the other citizens.

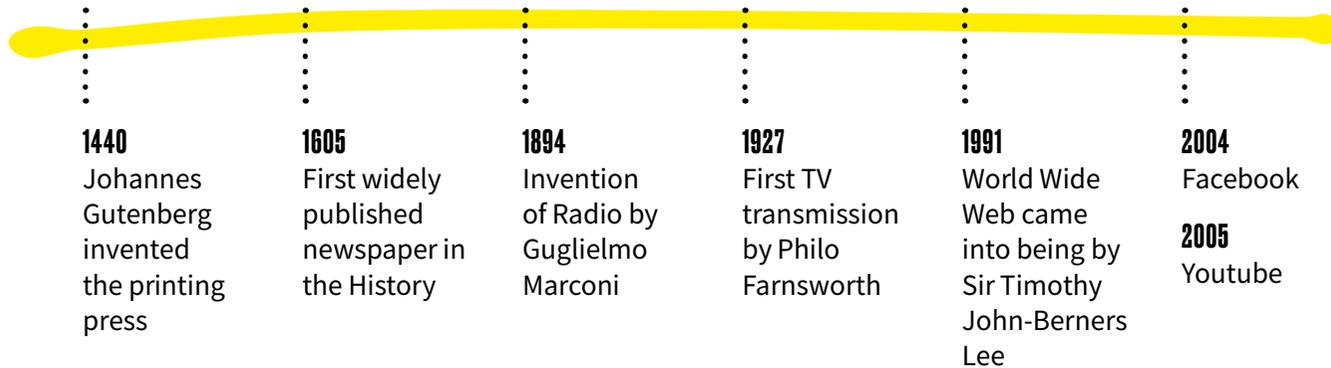
Factual

Information must involve fact; it must be factual. Following on our example, this means that the score of the match or a player's being injured on the field are information in their own right because they comprise observable facts, actions, and results. Conversely, rumours of a player being transferred to another club or any potential tension there might be within the team are not information in and of themselves.

Verified and verifiable

To confirm its status as information, a fact must be verified and verifiable. In other words, we must pay heed to the idea of checking the facts.

MEDIA HISTORY



After the Second World War, there was a densification of information and a multiplication of media supports; homes were equipped with television, radio channels multiplied and many newspapers and magazines were created. **The term «traditional media» refers in particular to all the mass media that characterised the 20th century (television, radio, written press).**

As a result, the information available to citizens has become more considerable and varied than it was before, reinforcing the democratic power of media. As a true democratic counter-power, the media became indispensable to the daily life of citizens.

Yet, as this supply of information multiplies and diversifies, our own relationship to information has changed, particularly since the emergence of the Internet in the early 1990s.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Today, the traditional media are competing with "new media" linked to the arrival and democratisation of the use of the Internet. Among the "new media", it is above all social media of publication (e.g. blogs) and social networks that have changed the media landscape (with the spread of Facebook from 2005 and Twitter from 2006).

Social networks have changed people's relationship with the media. **Favouring interaction, social networks have highlighted a weak point in traditional media, namely the passivity of the viewer in front of the screen.** This active role of the citizen is embodied by the possibility for anyone to comment / post / broadcast / very easily import information on many online media. This has led to many changes, such as the equivalence of expert and citizen opinions on all societal topics, a much faster and more diverse sharing of Information and opinions, and the circulation of false Information, hate speech and conspiracy theories.

Does the possibility of posting or writing on a social network make every Internet user a potential journalist?

JOURNALISM

The journalist, who is a professional, is bound to respect his deontology (ethics, methods and objectivity) and has a duty to process information. He is not a simple vector of information, because his role is to carry out in-depth work, and to be able to give keys to reading in order to understand society.

There are **three** possible ways of transmitting information, and across these styles, the degree of neutrality varies. **Straight news:** Journalists present and recount the facts in detail. By simply presenting a fact, journalists usually aim at neutrality. **Explained information:** The journalist analyses the facts, breaking down information and infor-

ming readers of the 'how' and 'why'. **Commented information:** In this type of writing, journalists have more freedom to interpret and decipher the facts by using humour, giving their opinion or judgment. Opinion are unlikely to be neutral.

The very profession of the journalist has been impacted by the arrival of social networks. Journalists no longer have a monopoly on information. **Sometimes this can lead to an increase in false or incomplete information or information taken out of context. In other cases, it can produce remarkable examples of "citizen journalism", capable of analysing and critically looking at aspects of**

society that are not taken into account by mainstream journalists.

Social networks can, at times, also be sources for journalists, as in the case of statements by politicians, who are increasingly inclined to use their social networks as a means of disseminating their statements.

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND CALLS TO ACTION

Neutrality and objectivity are ideals and objectives, there are almost impossible to achieve even for a good journalist. But if you want to read news as close as possible to objectivity, you must look at the factual news and put aside the comments and opinions. Moreover, the best way to get an overall view of a topic is to diversify your sources and point of views across the media landscape.

In the age of social networks, it is therefore important to ask ourselves the question about the veracity of the information circulating on the web. **Who writes? What is the credibility of the author? What is his or her objective? Finally, how can we discern the true from the false?**

Giving your opinion on a specific topic on your social media does not make you a journalist. Yet, it is important to encourage students and citizens to take part in the process of information flow (e.g. the opportunity to create a citizen media/blog). In this way It is possible to strengthen the democratic Impact of digital media.

The way we are dealing with this huge amount of information is really new for humankind, there is a need for youth and citizens to sometimes hold their judgment and to take time to think before believing something. **In short, use your critical thinking.**

ACTIVITY

WORD CLOUD: DISCOVERING THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

DURATION

0.5 hours

EQUIPMENT

Whiteboard, pens or markers



ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

In this word cloud activity, the word 'media' is written on the board. Students are asked to work as a group to reveal what they know about the world of media and combine their knowledge.

The activity is also a chance to present the major players of the specific country's media in a clear and organised fashion while pointing out how they differ.

This activity is also a chance for instructors to take note of the media habits of the target audience (What kind of media do they use? Where do they get their news?) and tailor the workshop to their habits and preferences. Students should be encouraged to provide details or support for their responses and to give their opinions to further discussion on certain topics.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write the word 'media' on a visual aid and jot down the names of media outlets or types (television, radio, written press, social media) that participants come up with.
2. Categorise the media outlets participants suggest by their type.
3. Identify which media are public and private.
4. Separate traditional media from social media. Most participants will be frequent users of social media (Instagram/Snapchat/Facebook) either to deliberately look for news or just to pass the time. For this reason, the question of social media's place in the media landscape will either be brought up spontaneously by participants or by the instructor. This is a good time to introduce themes of democratisation of information on the internet and the potential for manipulation brought about by social networks. In addition, students should be reminded that social networks do not have any editors or journalists; instead of the professionals, we are the ones producing and spreading information. Caution is therefore to be encouraged since anyone and everyone can have their voice heard on social media.

Once you have finished your lesson, there are a few questions you could ask your ¹²class to ensure they have understood these concepts, and to show that they are ready to move onto the next topic. These can include two types of evaluations, a test and/or an open debate.

TEST

Q1: When did the internet and new media emerge?

- A** - The 1970s
- B** - The 1980s
- C** - The 1990s
- D** - The 2000s

Q2: In democratic societies, the media are:

- A** - A propaganda tool to manipulate the masses
- B** - A check on power
- C** - A way of broadening the discussion of ideas within a population.
- D** - A way of communicating political manifestos during elections.

Q3: What distinguishes citizen media from traditional media?

- A** - The topics they cover.
- B** - The presence of professional journalists.
- C** - The manner of spreading the information.
- D** - The use of humour.

Q4: Which criterion or criteria should you use to define information/news in the journalistic sense?

- A** - The event must have happened less than one week ago.
- B** - The event must be reported by at least 4 media outlets.
- C** - The reported event must be verified and verifiable.
- D** - The reported event does not necessarily have to be of public interest

Q5: The freedom of expression allows journalists to:

- A** - Express what they think freely.
- B** - Investigate political leaders.
- C** - Share information on social media.
- D** - Publish content that encourages discrimination of a group on the basis of their religion.

Q6: The ethical rules journalists must follow include:

- A** - The right to alter documents or distort images to convey a message.
- B** - The duty to demonstrate critical thinking, precision, and integrity.
- C** - The right to work for a public service, institution, or private enterprise.
- D** - The right to rectify any information they have shared that proves to be inaccurate.

DEBATE

Are social networks media?
What are the differences with traditional media?

Does the possibility of posting or writing on a social network make every Internet user a potential journalist? Why?

Which types of media do you trust the most with delivering neutral information? Why?

ANSWER KEY

Q1: B | **Q2:** B, C, D | **Q3:** A, B, C | **Q4:** C | **Q5:** A, B, C | **Q6:** B, D

Key Topics 2.

MEDIA BIAS

LESSON'S OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students can explain what is meant by 'bias'
- ✓ Students can spot and analyse different styles of biased writing
- ✓ Student can comprehend the basic effects of media bias on society
- ✓ Student can explain the benefits of getting information from different sources as well as the risks of not being able to



INTRODUCTION

It can be argued that, to some extent, all media has varying degrees of bias within it. Everybody has their own set of prejudices (whether conscious or unconscious) and makes assumptions about others. As seen in the previous chapter, there are a range of ways information can be presented to us today, whether from online media (blogs and vlogs, articles, social media posts), printed media (magazines and newspapers) or other forms of traditional media (TV and radio), and all of these are likely to reflect somebody's bias, whether the journalist, TV or radio producer, or magazine editor.

Within these forms of media, the bias presents itself in different ways, and the type of output typically reflects the extent to which it reflects this bias. **For example, while some forms of media attempt to be as neutral as possible, seek to report solely on the facts and ensure different voices and sources are heard, others actively seek to convey a strong opinion on a topic.** When this happens, the writer may blur the line between fact and opinion, making a strong case for why their point of view is correct, while at the same time avoiding a sense of balance to their argument. Some publications prioritise this type of opinion-based media above presenting facts, whether because they have a heavily biased owner or editor, or because they recognise that often heavily sensationalist, partisan media attracts more readers or viewers! When information is presented in this way, primary sources and quotes from relevant parties often fade away, and are replaced by the journalist or producer's opinions.

In the advent of social media, this type of heavily biased content has become even more prominent, as platforms recognise that it receives more engagement from users than some of the less controversial, fact-based posts. As such, readers must then be able to distinguish facts from opinions, and understand when something is biased, so they can form their own opinions on an issue, rather than allow someone else to shape their perspective.



KEY CONCEPT

Definition: Bias occurs when someone shows a disproportionate favouritism or prejudice towards a particular topic, person, or perspective, instead of being fair and balanced. Bias can be found throughout the media - whether in writing, radio, or TV - and is often used to drive people towards a certain point of view. In doing so, biased content may often appeal to the audience's emotions, rather than encouraging them to think for themselves.

Media bias is not a new phenomenon; for as long as there has been mass media, those with an influence over its outputs have been able to project their opinions and beliefs to the wider public. As mentioned, we can find examples of bias across the media landscape: from newspapers to gossip columns, YouTube videos to online vlogs and blogs, or our friends and families posts on popular social media platforms. The mixing of fact and opinion can have a significant impact on public discussion, especially if people are not aware of the fact they are reading or viewing biased content.

For example, a lack of awareness of bias in the media can lead people to assume that the viewpoint of one or only a few sources of information is factual, and is therefore the only perspective they need to listen to when forming their own opinions on an issue. This can lead people to misunderstand complex matters,

or totally neglect to appreciate opposing viewpoints. By out-sourcing our opinions to others, we may also be abandoning our own critical thinking skills. This can be particularly problematic if the people we are allowing to shape our own opinions have divisive, harmful views towards individuals or groups in society that they perceive to be different to themselves.

Biased media content often relies on sensationalist and emotive language to grab the audience's attention and then convince them of their opinion by eliciting an emotional response from them. This has become even more evident in the age of social media, where competition for users' attention is prevalent. Those publishing content on social media are aware that this content must provoke a reaction (whether a 'like', comment, or share) in order to get even more exposure, and thus are incentivised to produce content that is as dramatic and attention-grabbing as possible. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the more we engage with this content, the more we are served it, which can situate users in a bubble of filtered information that may be heavily biased.

Many different types of biased writing exist, including:

- **Positive** (favoritism and exaggerated praise for the subject being written about) and negative (negativity and attacks towards the subject matter and exaggerated negative statements about it) biases;
- **Political bias:** Many publications lean towards left or right-wing politics. It influences the way reporting is done and may favour a certain political party, representative or viewpoint that is aligned with a particular brand of politics;
- **Bias by omission:** Topics covered by a media outlet vary, choosing not to report certain stories or information supporting different viewpoints or ideas is a choice that can influence the reader;
- **Bias by selection of sources:** A writer might use more sources that support their views than others;
- **Statements presented as facts:** Used to convince an audience by leaving very little space for analysis and reflection to the argument: "The latest controversy is evidence that she has not changed her ways";
- **Emotionally manipulative language/sensationalism:** Topics can be presented in a shocking, outrageous manner, in order to create a lasting and emotive impression. This can distract us from thinking critically about the story and can be used for both good (convince people to sign up to charities) or bad (stir up anger towards specific groups, institutions or individuals).



KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR STUDENTS

It's essential that we are aware of bias in the media we consume, so that we don't blindly accept people's opinions as fact; otherwise, not only do we forfeit our ability to think critically for ourselves, and make up our own minds about a topic, but we may adopt problematic perspectives that we do not truly believe in. Young people may be particularly susceptible to biased content, if they have had fewer opportunities to hone their critical thinking skills. As such, here are some top tips you can share with your students to help them identify bias in the media.



Question how balanced or biased the information is.

Ask yourself, does it take a range of views into account or are the sources all one-sided?

Guard against outrage and sensationalism.

Biased media content will often target our emotions in order to convince us of the point the publisher wants to make. Make sure you reflect on the language being used in the content you view or read: is it trying to shock or outrage you, and why is whoever is presenting the information trying to target your emotions in this way. What do they want you to think or feel, as do you actually agree with this perspective.

Exercise "friction" online!

Closely related to the previous takeaway, we should all make an effort to slow down when we use the internet. When we use social media, we are presented with seemingly endless content and information, all of which is vying for our attention, encouraging us to react to it in some way. As mentioned, this content often targets our emotions, but a response based on raw emotion is not the most useful of ways to react to something. As such, slowing down enables us to process what we are seeing, and consider how we really feel about it before reacting to it in some way.

Become independent researchers.

The internet has opened up endless sources of information for us to explore and learn from, so why just accept what you see on your newsfeed as fact! Remembering that the information we are presented with online is not always the most accurate information required to develop a well-informed opinion on a topic. So instead, try reading widely about the topic, sourcing your own information, and ultimately making up your own mind about it.

ACTIVITY

IDENTIFY THE BIAS!

DURATION

30 minutes

EQUIPMENT

Computer with Microsoft PPT, interactive whiteboard or overhead projector, printed examples of biased writing for each group.



ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

This activity is designed to emulate biased content we see online. It aims to allow students to analyse and recognize different types of biases through language and style and to take in and reflect on the reactions they may have whilst reading them. By the end of the activity, students should be able to recognize -in a basic manner- different types of biases, to differentiate facts and opinions, and to understand the differences between dis/misinformation and biased writing.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTION

1. Separate the whole class into smaller groups (3 to 4 students each)
2. Give each group an example of biased writing (examples in the 'Activity Guidance' section, or you can use your own).
3. During 10-15 minutes, students analyse the content they've been given: you can help them by asking them some key questions:
 - Is this biased writing? To what extent?
 - What does the author want you to think?
 - What are the signs that it is biased writing?
4. Display the different types of biases that are found in the 'Explanation' section of this chapter on the PPT slide. Ask your students in which categories the example they've been given falls. (10 minutes)
5. During this exercise, to ask them questions such as:
 - Which types of bias are present here?
 - How do you know? What are the signs of this type of bias?
 - Which headline/extract interests you the most?
 - Which one would you share on your social media and why?
6. Finish by leading a discussion on the different consequences of biased writing. Try to introduce the links between sensationalism or emotionally manipulative language and higher rates of engagement online.
7. Finally, you can open up the debate with open questions:
 - Can you convince someone without using biased content?
 - Is bias always dangerous?

ACTIVITY GUIDANCE

When you choose the biased extracts or headlines to distribute to the class, try and pick a subject that won't involve your students' biases. Try to pick neutral topics with different viewpoints on them. You can of course create your own if you feel inspired.

- ▶ See pedagogical worksheet for examples specific to your country

When you discuss the different types of biases and the concept of biased writing, use the definitions and explanations provided earlier in the chapter to steer the debate. Focus on potential harms as well as benefits that surround the key concepts.

You should remind your student that biases are always present, and that they can be useful to get opinions and points of views on a wide variety of topics. They however need to be analysed with regards to facts and figures as well as other opinions on a given subject matter. You can also present your students with different takes on a political topic (using left and right leaning media to highlight biases and different ways to approach a subject. Likewise, encourage them, if at all possible to always try and see both sides of a topic or a debate in order to forge their own opinion.

EVALUATION

Once you have finished your lesson, there are a few questions you could ask your students to ensure they have understood these concepts, and to show that they are ready to move onto the next topic. These can include two types of evaluations, a test and/or an open debate.

Q1: To differentiate facts from opinions, you can:

- A** - Report/flag posts you don't like
- B** - Make use of friction and reflect on the content, its origin and its sources
- C** - Presume it is factual because you like the writer
- D** - Focus on the headline

Q2: Biased content can lead to:

- A** - Greater awareness of different sides of a story
- B** - An understanding of all the facts behind a story
- C** - Hate speech
- D** - Filter Bubbles



TEST

Q3: Where can you find biased content?

- A** - In all types of media
- B** - On social media only
- C** - On TV only
- D** - In newspaper only

Q4: Why would someone use sensationalist or emotive language?

- A** - As a figure of speech
- B** - To grab the audience's attention and convince them of their opinion
- C** - Because it is the best way to communicate online
- D** - Because social media asks them to

Q5: Bias by selection of sources occurs when:

- A** - The writer selects sources from different opinions
- B** - The writer writes an article about water sources
- C** - The writer focuses on specific sources to support his views
- D** - The writers doesn't use any sources

Q6: Not being aware of biases in media can cause:

- A** - You to naturally develop your critical-thinking skills
- B** - You to follow blindly people's opinion and mistake them for facts
- C** - You to follow blindly people's opinion and mistake them for facts
- D** - You to access a wide variety of viewpoints online

Answer key

Q1: B | Q2: D | Q3: A | Q4: B | Q5: C | Q6: B

DEBATE

What is the difference between a fact and an opinion?

Does the writer of this headline/text try to present it as a fact or an opinion?

Where have you seen bias in the media before?

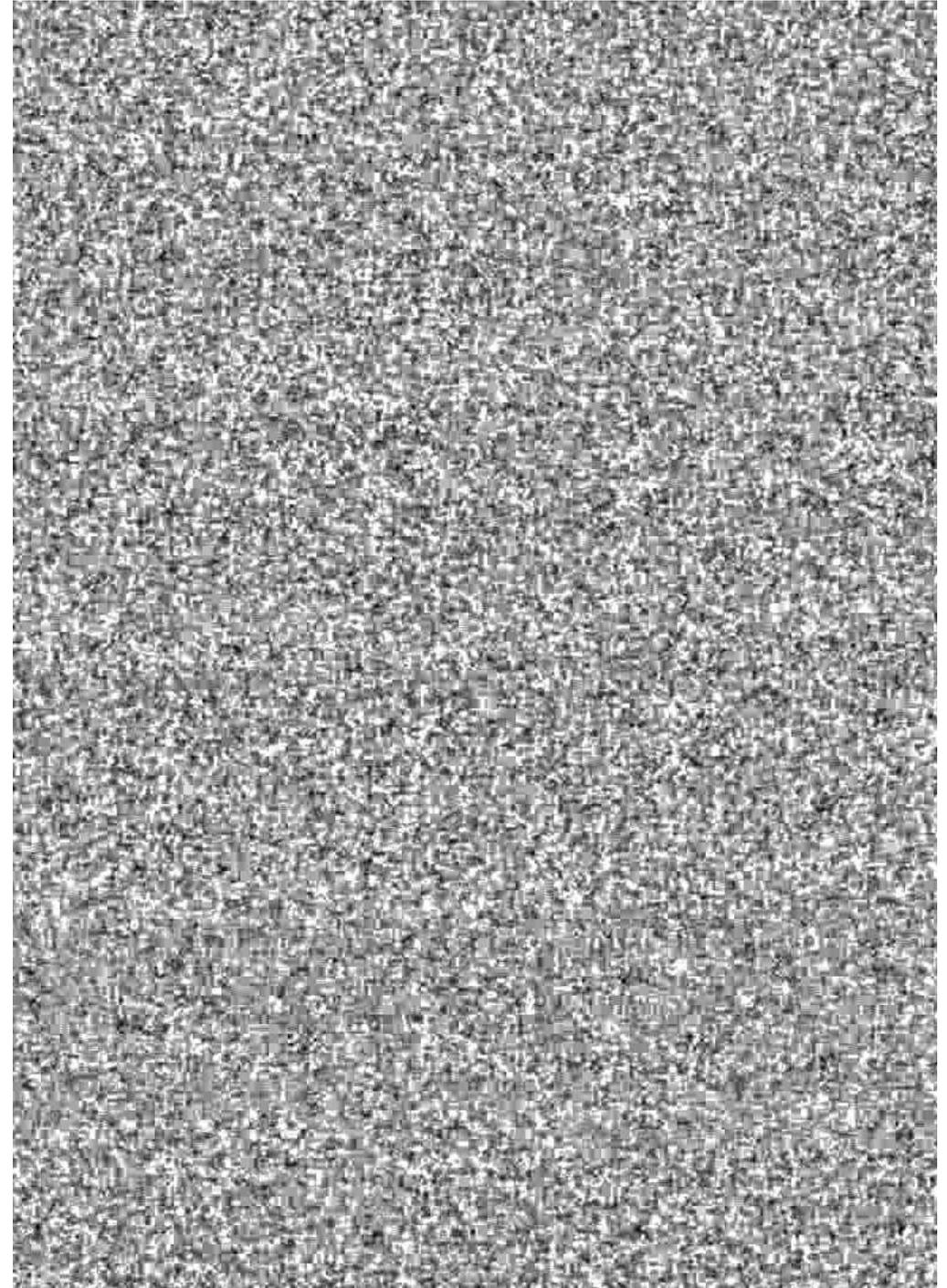
Are there different types of biases?

What impact can bias have on people?

Is biased writing always bad? What purpose can it serve?

As a reader, how could you use the information in a given article, and what might you need to get a fuller picture?

What makes these stories more likely to be shared online (via social media or private groups)?



Key Topics 3.

FILTER BUBBLES/ ECHO CHAMBERS

LESSON'S OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students can define what a filter bubble is and explain its impact on individuals/society.
- ✓ Students can define what an echo chamber is, and describe examples of their own echo chambers.
- ✓ Students can explain the impact echo chambers can have on individuals/society.
- ✓ Students can articulate the positive benefits and negative consequences of both filter bubbles and echo chambers.
- ✓ Students can explain the benefits of getting information from diverse sources.



INTRODUCTION

When we spend time online, whether using search engines to explore the web, or interacting with other users via social media platforms, the content we are presented with is often not randomly selected. Instead, each individual's online experience can be personalised to present them with similar content to that which they have previously searched for or viewed. This happens because the major search engine, social media, or entertainment services we use - provided by the likes of Facebook, Google, Twitter, and YouTube - use algorithms to curate our searches or newsfeeds. These algorithms select what we see based on data that we voluntarily give to platforms when we visit either them or websites where they serve adverts (think about all the times you've clicked "Accept Cookies" when browsing a website!). This enables these platforms to build up a picture of our interests, beliefs, behaviours, and past-times.

The more we browse, interact, and share online, the more data about us is collected. In turn, this means the more tailored to our personalities this content is. We feed - through our likes, shares, comments, views - what we see! Indeed, you could go as far as to say that what we see online, especially on social media, is a reflection of who we are.

This obviously comes with perks: when our online experiences are curated to reflect our personalities, we interact with like-minded people, we see content in our fields of interest, we see ads and opportunities that match our needs and desires.

But it has its downsides too: algorithms may limit the diversity of content and information that we see online, and as such our understanding of the world may become skewed, or at the very least more narrow. When this happens, we experience what are known as the 'filter bubble' and 'echo chamber' effects.

In this chapter, we will explore how filter bubbles and echo chambers can shape our experience, both on and offline. We will present both positive benefits and negative consequences of these phenomena, and propose ways in which young people can 'burst' their own bubbles.

FILTER BUBBLES

Definition:

Filter bubbles occur when users are suggested content based on previous internet search history and interactions. Over time they can isolate users from any viewpoints or interests different from their own. Long-term, this can limit people's understanding of complex topics or events and reduce empathy and dialogue between different groups.

Explanation:

As discussed in the handbook introduction, young people are spending increasing amounts of time on the internet, in particular using social media platforms to explore, learn, share, and create. **As a result of filter bubbles, it's possible, even likely, that how they spend time online shapes, in some part, who they become, just as much as they shape what they see.** For example, a young person with a mild interest in a particular video game may find themselves watching videos of this game on, for example, YouTube or Twitch. As they are served more and more video content related to this game, and games that are similar to it, they may find themselves becoming increasingly interested in the gaming world, and thus, their interests and behaviours have been slightly modified by their internet usage.

This is not necessarily a bad thing, of course! There are clear upsides to personalisation, not least that it deepens our interest in specific topics, and makes social media seem designed for our needs, including content that is most resonant with our day-to-day experiences and that has been consumed by like-minded people. But it also highlights why it is increasingly important that people, especially younger ones, are aware of filter bubbles. **If internet users are unaware that what they see online is filtered and shaped by algorithms, they may end up with a narrow understanding of the world around them, where people have vastly different views and beliefs.** This could have profound consequences, whether by stifling their curiosity to understand different forms of art, entertainment and culture, or limiting the diversity of news and information sources they read.

Moreover, filter bubbles may lead people to develop a one-sided or overly simplified understanding of issues and events, in a way which does not reflect on-the-ground reality. As the content that we are served is based on our own set of interests, beliefs and biases, it is possible that we will have their own viewpoints on a particular topic or issue continuously reinforced, thereby reducing the likelihood of us acknowledging or appreciating other perspectives. When this happens, we may experience the 'echo chamber' effect, which we will examine shortly. It is of course true that people also self-select the traditional or print media that they consume offline too, and this is extremely influential on their worldviews. Given the constant feedback-loop that takes place online, however, whereby users are constantly providing algorithms with more data about themselves, the level of personalisation happening via social media can be all the more pronounced.

FILTER BUBBLES

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR STUDENTS

We may not always want to ‘burst’ our filter bubbles; after all, who doesn’t enjoy the convenience of being presented with content precisely tailored to our personalities! At the same time, however, it can be useful to occasionally de-personalise our web-experiences and see what life looks like from a different perspective. Here are some top tips you can share with your students to help them broaden their horizons when they use the internet:

Remind yourself that what you see online is not random.

Algorithms are constantly providing us with what they think we want to see, based on our previous habits. Understanding that there is a process of selection can help us avoid thinking that what we see is necessarily a panoramic, comprehensive view of the wider world.

Clear your ‘Cookies’ from time to time.

Cookies are the files that store your data every time you visit a website (and when you ‘Accept Cookies’). With permission, these Cookies can then be shared with other sites to help them recommend content or adverts that you are likely to engage with, based on your previous search or watch history. Students could delete their Cookies from time to time, to see the effects of a less personalised web.

Delete your browser history occasionally.

Depending on which search engine you use, the search results you see may be selected based, in part, on your browser history. This means you are likely to be served the same websites you have previously browsed, further distancing you from new perspectives and sources of information. Alternatively you could try using an anonymous browser, such as DuckDuckGo.com - this protects users’ privacy and does not personalise search results.

Be curious!

If you don’t want to follow the above steps, and are happy with the personalisation you experience online, that’s ok too! Just knowing that the information you read may be being filtered can be enough to help you consider that there are different viewpoints on a topic than your own. Instead of changing your search settings, you can adopt a curious mindset. Take advantage of the seemingly unlimited opportunities the internet provides you with, to actively seek out information, opinions and perspectives online that differ from your own. In doing so, you are challenging yourself to understand different sides to a topic before making your own mind up about it.

ECHO CHAMBERS

Definition:

Echo chambers are social spaces in which ideas, opinions and beliefs are reinforced by repetition within a closed group.

Explanation:

Echo chambers can be a comfortable place! Speaking to people who share similar interests or viewpoints to ourselves can make us feel like our perspectives are valid and relevant. If you only speak to people who share your opinions, however, you may stop recognising that these are opinions, and begin to see them as fact. In other words, the continuous reiteration of our own opinions by other people in our echo chambers, without making the time or space to appreciate opposing viewpoints, can ultimately lead to us to believe these opinions to be objectively true.

Echo chambers can be found both on and offline. Where we find ourselves in an online echo chamber, this may be the consequence of the filter bubble effect. For example, **if we are constantly fed information and content from the same sources by algorithms, and find ourselves predominately interacting with people with the same viewpoints in the comments sections of these posts, we are likely experiencing the echo chamber effect.**

Most people have first-hand experiences of echo chambers: given that we gravitate towards people that we share interests with, it's typical that we find ourselves within these social spaces, whether we realise it or not. Whether in a WhatsApp group with our closest friends, a comments section on the social media profile of one of our favourite celebrities, or even just sitting around the dinner table with our family! If we're not aware that these are echo chambers, then we may presume the opinions being shared are reflective of the wider population's perspective on an issue too. This can be problematic: **if our opinions become increasingly entrenched we may lose the ability to relate to others who feel differently about a given topic. In turn, we may find it difficult to empathise with, or even simply listen to people who hold opposing opinions. When this happens, it's possible that divisions open up between individuals or groups in society, and people may start to adopt an 'us and them' mentality.**

ECHO CHAMBERS

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR STUDENTS

An important component of being an empathetic citizen, both on and offline, is to understand and appreciate the experiences of other people, including those with different interests and perspectives to our own. This is often easier said than done: people lead busy lives and understandably are most concerned with themselves and those closest to them. But there are some simple steps you can discuss with your students, to help them break out of our echo chambers and improve their ability to relate to others who share different worldviews.

Embrace diversity and reject stereotypes.

One of the worst effects of interacting with others in an echo chamber can be if we slip into lazy assumptions and stereotypes about others, based on perceived differences with them, but without any real understanding of who they are and what they think. By seeking diversity in our interests and interactions, we can learn more about the world, and recognise that there is more that connects us to other people than divides us.

Follow people on social media who hold different perspectives to your own.

This helps you to break out of your echo chamber and burst your filter bubble at the same time! Following those with different interests and beliefs to your own is likely to deepen your understanding on an issue, helping you to see different sides of the same story. You may not change your perspective on an issue, but you will at least understand where others are

coming from, and this can help you communicate your viewpoint in a more accessible way to others.

Check your confirmation bias!

Confirmation bias leads us to seek out and agree with information that supports our preexisting views. This is exactly what happens in an echo chamber. Again, this is not always a bad thing, and can facilitate a sense of community based around a common interest. At the same time, when interacting with others, reading or watching content, we should pause to think: do I only agree with this, or am I only enjoying this, because it supports what I already believe? To truly demonstrate critical thinking, we must be able to question why we agree with something.

ACTIVITY

SAME STORY, DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

DURATION

30-45 minutes

EQUIPMENT

Computer with Microsoft PPT, interactive whiteboard or overhead projector, printed activity headlines for each group.



ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

This activity is designed to simulate both the filter bubble and echo chamber effects, by demonstrating to students the consequences of only receiving information from sources that convey the same perspective. At the end of the activity, students should recognise the benefits of consuming information from a variety of sources, including how doing so can enable us to appreciate the many sides of the same story, before deciding our own opinion about it.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Separate the whole class into three smaller groups. Provide each group with a set of unique headlines about the same topical issue. There should be no more than 5 headlines in a set, and each set should have a different perspective on the topic being discussed: a **positive bias**, **negative bias**, and **neutral** perspective.
2. In their groups, students should read their headlines and try to establish what happened in this story. They should try to extract as much information from the headline as possible, before reaching their conclusions on what happened.
3. If students are struggling to work out what happened, the teacher can provide prompt questions to support them.
4. After 5-10 minutes, each group should nominate a member to present their news story to the whole class. These three students - one from each group - should then take it in turns to discuss their news story. Start with the **positive group** and end with the **neutral group**. They should comment on:
 - a) Who is involved in this story?
 - b) What happened to them?
 - c) Is anyone to blame for this issue or event?
 - d) How does the group feel about this story and its subjects?
5. Once all the groups have presented their headlines, you can reveal that the first two groups were given biased content, and then discuss in what ways these headlines were biased.
6. If you haven't done so before the activity, introduce the class to the concept of the filter bubble, whereby information is filtered to us, whether online by algorithms, or offline when we choose a limited number of sources to get our information from.
7. Ask the class to consider: what might happen when we only receive our information from a limited number of sources, and when wider information

that does not reflect our biases gets filtered out?

8. Discuss the concept of ‘echo chambers’, and ask why it might be beneficial to read diverse sources of information, or speak to people with different opinions, beliefs or interests to your own. Ask students to consider where they might have encountered echo chambers and filter bubbles in their own lives.

9. Finally, ask students to work in pairs or small groups to produce a short list of ways in which they can ‘burst’ their filter bubbles and step out of their echo chambers. You can use the Key Takeaways lists from section 2 in this chapter to support your students, providing them with some ideas to get started. Once they have had 10 minutes to discuss, collect feedback from each of the pairs or groups, before revealing the Key Takeaways slide.

ACTIVITY GUIDANCE

When choosing the headlines to provide students with, you should choose a topic that they are unlikely to already have strong opinions about, otherwise they may bring their own set of biases into the activity. If you are struggling to find a good news story with diverse headlines that report on it, you can always create your own ones.

An example set of headlines could be about the youth climate strikes that took place around the world in 2019. These could include:

Positive Headlines:

- Courageous kids stand up for their futures, doing the right thing for their planet.
- What superstars: children around the world bravely walk out of their classrooms to protest the destruction of the planet.
- Planet protectors! Young people showing adults how to do it, striking for the safety of their future.

Negative headlines :

- Selfish children ruin the school day for others by abandoning their lessons to attend unhelpful protests.
- Lazy kids use climate change protests as an excuse to skip school for the day.
- Parental panic! Selfish students scare their parents by running away from school to protest and not telling anyone.

Neutral headlines :

- Youth climate strikes take place across the world on July 14th.
- Over one million children globally attend protests over climate change.
- Kids all over the world become climate activists for the day!

When discussing the filter bubble and echo chamber effects, use the definitions and explanations provided earlier in the chapter to steer the conversations, especially with regard to considering the potential benefits and negative consequences of these phenomena.

At the end of the activity (Step 9), you could mention that students are likely presented with the filter bubble effect every time they go on a platform such as YouTube or TikTok, among others. These platforms use algorithms to recommend videos to users based on their previous ‘watch history’. To demonstrate this, you could encourage students to look at their recommended videos on their YouTube homepage when logged in. Students could then compare those recommended videos with those that they are presented with when logged out. This demonstrates the filter bubble in action!

Once you have finished your lesson, there are a few questions you could ask your ²⁰²⁰ ~~class~~ ^{to ensure they have understood these concepts, and to show that they are ready to move onto the next topic.} These can include two types of evaluations, a test and/or an open debate.

TEST

Q1: What is the main risk associated with filter bubbles?

- A** - They might stop you from communicating with your friends
- B** - They might cause issues on your computer
- C** - They might isolate you from viewpoints or interests different from your own.
- D** - They might force you to buy things

Q2: Where can you find filter bubbles?

- A** - On your social media.
- B** - In your bath.
- C** - On your TV.
- D** - In a book.

Q3: How can you “pierce” the bubble?

- A** - By changing your name on your social media.
- B** - By being curious online and not only looking at what you see on your newsfeed.
- C** - With a needle.
- D** - By clicking on the suggested links you see online.

Q4: Echo chambers are:

- A** - Specific places on social media where you can discuss only one specific topic.
- B** - Physical rooms where you can hear echoes of conversations.
- C** - Online rooms where you can scream and hear your voice back.
- D** - Social spaces which repeat ideas and opinions in a closed group.

Q5: What might happen if we only get our information from sources that all have the same opinion on a topic?

- A** - You are sure of the sources and quality of the information
- B** - You might become immune to wrong opinions
- C** - You might fall into filter bubbles and echo chambers
- D** - You benefit from better quality and personalised service

Answer key

Q1: C | Q2: A | Q3: B | Q4: D | Q5: A

DEBATE

What might happen if we only get our information from sources that all have the same opinion on a topic?

What might happen if we only look at content that is targeted towards us on social media? What skills might we be limiting?

Where have you experienced the filter bubble effect online?

What echo chambers are you a part of?

What positives might come from being directed towards people with similar interests to you online?

What negative consequences may there be to only speaking to people with the same or similar opinions to you?

What actions can we take to help others step out of their echo chambers?

Key Topics 4.

DISINFORMATION AND MISINFORMATION

LESSON'S OBJECTIVES

- ✓ The student knows how to distinguish between the concepts of disinformation and misinformation.
- ✓ The student becomes aware of the danger of false information in our democratic societies.
- ✓ The student knows how to identify a conspiracy theory and understand its mechanisms.
- ✓ The student knows how to question the origin of a conspiracy theory and can propose a counter discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Quality information is a prerogative for the proper functioning of a democratic society. Without good information, citizens cannot know and actively participate in the life of society.

For this reason, false information is a danger. False information, incorrect or tendentious information promotes the tension of the debate and reinforces prejudices, intellectual confinement and information bubbles.

This chapter introduces students to key notions of media literacy education: disinformation, misinformation, clickbait and conspiracy theories. It includes an activity for students to unpack and create a conspiracy theory as well as evaluations to test their knowledge.

Disinformation

When people talk about ‘false information’ or disinformation, they are referring to information that has been **fabricated, falsified, or distorted** and purposefully spread by individuals, activists, or political officials with the intent of manipulating the public and converting them to their ideas.

Spreading false information can be detrimental to a society, as when the aim is to target or accuse a minority group in order to **stoke fear and incite hatred** toward that group. This is also the case when false information is used to create a feeling of insecurity in pursuit of electoral ambitions; manipulating information turns out to be an extremely effective tool.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Misinformation

Misinformation refers to the tendency to inadvertently share false information. This is very common when the information and its source are not questioned. This tendency is at the root of most misinformation circulating on the internet.

In recent years, the issue of the migration crisis in Europe has often been accompanied by several cases of disinformation and misinformation, the former often fuelling the latter.

Several false information aimed at discrediting migrants or stirring up hatred towards them have circulated via social networks, blogs and websites. Moreover, false information has sometimes been taken up by politicians, with the aim of exploiting these subjects for electoral purposes. A recurrent example of false information is the alleged privileged treatment of migrants in European countries. The aim is to create a scapegoat and to take advantage of a part of the population’s sense of disappointment. This information is often faked or fabricated and then shared on the web. It is from the moment that an uninformed person reads this false information and shares it on his or her network, that we go from disinformation to misinformation.

Moreover, With the recent technological advances, it has become increasingly difficult to tell which images have been doctored or manipulated. **This is the case with Deep Fake videos techniques.** This manipulation technique uses artificial intelligence software to replace a person’s face in a video. Therefore, it requires even greater caution and more verification of sources.”

Finally, the analysis of the practices of Internet users also showed an increasingly marked attraction towards poor quality information, which is often spectacular, shocking and divisive. This is the case with clickbaits, eye-catching but misleading headlines, designed to get people to click on links. Clickbait is not necessarily a vector of false information, but in almost all cases, it announces sensational, sometimes shocking content capable of awakening the internet user's curiosity.

The danger behind these sensationalist articles, without precise and reliable sources, is very great when it comes, for example, to health-related issues. In some cases, these articles may even go so far as to suggest cures for cancer through the use of tropical fruits, potentially endangering people's lives.

Some clickbaits catch the attention of the uninformed browser with eye-catching but often wrong titles. The danger behind these sensationalist articles, without precise and reliable sources, is very great when it comes, for example, to health-related issues. In some cases, these articles may even go so far as to suggest cures for cancer through the use of tropical fruits, potentially endangering people's lives.

Whether for political reasons or economic interests related to website traffic, click throughs or ad views, such misinformation generates profit. Indeed, the Internet is an open space. It is also a resource for data grabbers and profiteers who exploit the sensitivity, and sometimes the credulity, of Internet users.

FROM FALSE INFORMATION TO CONSPIRACY THEORIES

The media and false information do play a crucial role in the extent of the phenomenon. Firstly, wariness or even distrust of the media increases conspiracy theories' credibility and popularity, all the more so in countries where the media are seen as corrupt or under the thumb of the political system. Secondly, false information uses the same mechanisms as conspiracy theories, such as leveraging fear and manipulating facts, and are often about the same topics.

Conspiracy theories:

While they are not actually a new phenomenon, conspiracy theories have been very popular in recent years, particularly because of how they spread on social media and on the internet more broadly.

A narrative that aims to demonstrate or reveal the existence of a small group of powerful people who secretly plan illegal or harmful acts to change the course of events or who are trying to take over the world.

Conspiracism is the tendency to incorrectly present events or phenomena as being the result of an organised conspiracy. It is a way of thinking or attitude that denies generally accepted explanations of facts and replaces them with a conspiracy whose shadowy aim is unknown.

The consequences of conspiracism:

- 1. Makes people believe in unproven theories**
- 2. Locks people up into a logic of distrust and misconception, which limits the discussion of ideas**
- 3. Makes it more difficult to keep the powerful in check and reveals real political malfeasance or possible conflicts of interest.**
- 4. Generates hate speech because it accentuates simplistic representations and plays on prejudices to create consensus around a fantasised enemy.**

The media and false information do play a crucial role in the extent of the phenomenon. Firstly, wariness or even distrust of the media increases conspiracy theories' credibility and popularity, all the more so in countries where the media are seen as corrupt or under the thumb of the political system. Secondly, false information uses the same mechanisms as conspiracy theories, such as leveraging fear and manipulating facts, and are often about the same topics.

Example of a well-known conspiracy theory

Illuminati theory - According to this theory, the world would be led by an enlightened elite formed by the most powerful people in the global political and economic world. These elites would act as a secret organisation to keep the people out. Any incongruity in reality (a war, an economic crisis, a terrorist attack, etc.) is therefore explained as the result of a plan established in secret by the powerful of the earth.

This theory, like other conspiracy theories, aims to respond to a need to understand reality, and finds fertile ground in the widespread feeling of dissatisfaction with reality.

Conspiracy theories are therefore very effective because they offer a simple and radical answer to sometimes very complex questions. They are nourished and nurtured by distrust of the elites and, at times, they validate certain populist theories.

However, these theories do not contribute to reflection and thus to changing the status quo. They confirm the fears of people who believe in these theories. They

promote the emergence of a sense of persecution among the adherents of these theories and point to absolute, sometimes dehumanised, enemies.

In many cases the enemy designated by the conspiracy theories is someone who is perceived to belong to a perceived 'ethnic minority'. Minorities are sometimes seen as groups acting in secret to dominate the majority of the people. As a scapegoat, these theories can play an important role in some processes of political or religious radicalisation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Expand your views and diversify your sources

Teachers can encourage students to use several sources to get a more complete picture on a topic to avoid misinformation. These sources should represent different views across the political spectrum. Moreover, questions such as “Who is the author?” “Which media published the information? Is it known for being trustworthy?” can help students identify whether a news article is reliable.

Fact checking is a response to the proliferation of false information.

Fact checking is the action of verifying facts (sources, author, date of publication, relevance of the information, etc.). Media organisations are increasingly inclined to set up fact-finding and fact-checking units, which are an important resource for those seeking information. Websites such as <https://onebravething.eu/share-wisely/> provides a fact-checking tool that teachers and students can easily use.

Think critically

Because information is essential to our lives and at the heart of our decision-making as well as our relationships with others, it is vital that we preserve its reliability and transparency to avoid potential manipulation as much as possible. Beyond being mindful of information quality, thinking critically about the content you read or receive helps limit your risk of manipulation or external influence and form a more balanced view.

Report disinformation online

Encourage students to not let themselves be dragged down by a polemic generated by false information circulating on social networks. On the contrary, be proactive and promote positive content! You will lift others peers up and improve your online community.

ACTIVITY

ANALYSING A CONSPIRACY VIDEO AND CREATING A CONSPIRACY THEORY

DURATION

4 hours

EQUIPMENT

Overhead projector, personal computers

- **Part 1: Analysing and identifying the mechanisms of conspiracy**
- **Part 2: Create a theory a conspiracy theory from the mechanisms identified in the video**



ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

Part 1

In this part 1 of the activity, we get to the heart of the mechanisms of conspiracy theories. In this activity, young people work together. The group watches a conspiracy video chosen by the teacher beforehand. Once the video has been viewed, the young people, under supervision, analyse the images, text, music, objectives and impact of the video.

This activity is necessary for the smooth running of the second one.

Part 2

The aim of this part 2 of the activity is to create a conspiracy theory based on the mechanisms identified in part 1 of the activity.

Students are divided into groups of 4 and once the groups have been formed, students choose broad themes (environment, geopolitical crises, elections, etc).

Once the theme has been chosen, students have to think about the structure of their conspiracy. To do this, they will think about designating a person in charge of the plot (e.g. a politician) and an objective of the plot. After this stage, the young people try to make their plot credible by looking for true or truthful facts, information taken out of context, information that has been falsified or completely invented.

A reading of the texts will close the activity and give the opportunity for a last moment of exchange.

Once you have finished your lesson, there are a few questions you could ask yourself to ensure they have understood these concepts, and to show that they are ready to move onto the next topic. These can include two types of evaluations, a test and/or an open debate.

TEST

Q1: 'Thinking critically' means:

A - Criticising journalists who do not respect the profession's ethical rules.

B - Not believing information shared by traditional media.

C - Not believing information shared on social media.

D - Being able to think autonomously, rationally, and with awareness about information while bearing the author's intentions in mind.

Q2: To check a source, it is enough to:

A - Ensure that it does not come from social media.

B - Know who the piece's author is and have trust in them.

C - Find out where the piece originated, check whether the source is a person or entity with expertise on the topic, then corroborate.

D - Confirm that it is spread on traditional media.

Q3: The concept of false information or 'fake news' describes information that:

A - Is contrary to popular belief and problematic for public debate.

B - Is fabricated, doctored, or distorted then purposefully spread by individuals in order to manipulate the public.

C - Cannot be verified even if it is true.

D - Is spread very quickly by internet users.

Q4: In order to avoid disinformation traps, you need to:

A - Allow all sorts of information to circulate and let young people sharpen their critical thinking skills.

B - Hold social media and 'tech giants' accountable.

C - Limit online freedom of expression and the work of journalists.

D - Prepare the public to deal with the rise in fake news by offering media literacy training.

Q5: Which of the following does not define a conspiracy theory?

A - A narrative that claims there are groups of people working in the shadows.

B - Theoretical discourse that seems consistent and 'logical'.

C - A historical and scientific method based on verifiable information.

D - A structured body of manipulated hypotheses and arguments.

Q6: How can we effectively fight conspiracy theories?

A - By regulating and limiting hateful content and fake news.

B - By banning social networks.

C - By mocking conspiracy theorists.

D - By developing the public's critical thinking skills.

ANSWER KEY

Q1: D | Q2: C | Q3: B | Q4: B, D |
Q5: C | Q6: A, D

DEBATE

Why are conspiracy theories spreading so fast? Why do many people believe them?

How does disinformation influence our thoughts and behaviours? How can we change that?

Does the internet make us freer?

Key Topics 5.

HATE SPEECH AND ONLINE ABUSE

LESSON'S OBJECTIVES

- ✓ The student must be able to distinguish between rights and duties on the Internet.
- ✓ The student should be able to identify and deconstruct hate and racist messages on the web.
- ✓ The student must be able to respond to hate messages and conspiracy theories in a constructive way.
- ✓ The student should be able to use social networks consciously and creatively.



INTRODUCTION

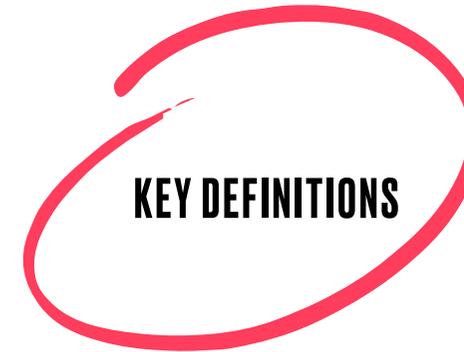
Today's media landscape is much richer than that of previous generations. The openness to the world made possible by the Internet, as well as the multiplication of information formats, makes it possible, in theory, to make exchanges between people easier.

However, the increase in the circulation of ideas and opinions has been accompanied by contradictory phenomena. Indeed, even if behaviour on the web is not completely disconnected from the trends in action in society, we can still observe the resurgence of several factors:

- The increasing presence of discriminatory discourses;
- A trend towards collective aggression towards those who express opinions that a large number of people do not share... a trend that sometimes leads to real harassment;
- In general, a tendency towards conformism linked to several factors: lack of depth of analysis circulating on the Internet (but sometimes also in some traditional media), speed of information circulation, impact of rumours on the Internet, anonymity of Internet users;

As a place of openness, the internet has sometimes become a place where amalgamation and defamation can be asserted. All these elements force us to reflect on the limits of freedom of expression in the Internet age. What are the good practices that allow the web to be used as a tool for the emancipation of individuals in networks?

This chapter aims at discussing hate speech and online abuse and empowers students to identify and respond to hate speech online in a constructive way to develop their digital citizenship. The activity in this chapter will help students to identify healthy online practices. This chapter also includes evaluations to test students' knowledge.



KEY DEFINITIONS

Hate speech

When we talk about hate speech, we are referring to **expressions of hatred** that may take the form of a phrase, text, sound, or image that expresses **rejection of others**, is hurtful and thus encourages feelings of hatred. When such an expression of hatred is made public, it can also incite witnesses of it to prove their hatred for one or the other – to choose their side – and sometimes to express that hatred again with similar or higher levels of violence as a result of pressure from the group. This what is known as **inciting hatred**.

When combined with a lack of critical thinking, this type of content, based on **stereotypes** and **misconceptions**, leads to divisive and violent speech by turning one group into a scapegoat bearing all responsibility and guilt, which then leads to overgeneralisations and a feeling of paranoia.

Moderation

Moderation means **deleting, penalising, or even punishing creators of hateful content to prevent its spread**. This type of content may include a violent comment on a post, sharing an article, video, photo, or infographic that stigmatises a particular group of people, or a private email or instant message exchange.

Digital citizenship

refers to the way in which internet users **behave and interact** online. Essentially, it is the behaviour we adopt in our online interactions with other users when dealing with sensitive topics of a social or political nature. The rights and obligations we have in real life are the same online. Our behaviour and interactions also define how others perceive us on the internet. At the same time, the way we connect online is not just limited to how we act or what we post, it is also defined by **how we protect our privacy** in terms of passwords, location, and internet history.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

The importance of these issues is also because the new generations were born in a world where the internet has a very important place in the way they structure their thinking and practice as citizens.

This is why a broad reflection on the digital practices of young people is a central issue. All efforts must therefore be concentrated in the formation of a critical mind also on the Internet. The ultimate objective of this training is to ensure that young people take ownership of the web in order to make it a terrain for individual and collective affirmation, but also for reflection, debate and participation.

Digital citizenship allows the full exercise of individual freedoms. Freedom is not limited simply to the action of sharing, but has as its objective the full development and construction of individuals in society. The aim of this training is to make young people understand that knowledge and conscious use of the Internet is a central factor in asserting oneself as an individual and not as an anonymous user.

Moreover, the internet is also a space to be conquered. For this reason, the ground must not be given over to manipulators and profiteers of all kinds. Occupying virtual space consciously, constructively and creatively is therefore a fundamental objective in the full exercise of digital citizenship.

This means that digital citizenship also asks us to have a critical view of the internet and how we use it, especially when it comes to the personal information we share, sometimes without knowing it.

It is therefore useful to remember as much as possible that our virtual behaviours has a real impact on people and that online harassment, for example, can lead to real-life tragedy.

On the other hand, the internet nowadays also represents a real instrument for the people. It makes it possible for citizens to be more informed and democracy more participative, as well as making access to information much more fluid. It is a tool that enables the discussion of ideas, communication, and can be used to speak out against dangers and risks to society, as is the case of 'whistleblowers' who use the internet to denounce corruption or attacks on liberties (see the film/documentary Citizen Four on Edward Snowden).

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND CALLS TO ACTION

Read and listen to other points of view than your own

This will help students avoid assumptions and stereotypes about other groups and understand where the other group's opinion comes from.

Avoid responding to polemics

Rather, students should be encouraged to pause and reflect before liking/commenting/sharing on their social media.

Report hate speech online

Instead of responding, you can report posts on social media which contain hate speech.

Participate

Get organised on the web and create a blog, a site, a vlog, a YouTube channel, etc. The ultimate objective of this training is to ensure that young people take ownership of the web in order to make it a terrain for individual and collective affirmation, but also for reflection, debate and participation.

Know your rights (...and duties)

Know the laws that protect and regulate freedom of the press and freedom of expression in your country

ACTIVITY

TABLE OF GOOD ONLINE PRACTICES

DURATION

30 minutes

EQUIPMENT

**A computer, PowerPoint,
wallpaper or white wall, video
projector or optional board
(if no computer or board):
Printed documents**



ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

The exercise consists of a table to be filled in by the participants, and a list of several possible behaviours on the internet. Participants will be asked to classify these practices/behaviours into what they think are good or bad practices.

In addition, dialogue and argumentation are essential for this activity: they are therefore asked to justify their choice.

1. To ask about certain practices that can be adopted online
2. Encouraging positive and respectful digital citizenship
3. Knowing how to dialogue and argue your point of view

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide students into two or three groups and present the table of good practices on the board or with the help of a video projector (or on paper)
2. Submit one by one these few examples of proposals to be ranked by the participants:
 - Reporting a hateful or violent comment under a publication
 - Accept anyone in your friend list
 - Blocking a user on a social network
 - Debating with an insulting person in a video commentary
 - Give your address or personal information
 - Post a photo of your friends without asking them
 - Use the same password for all social networks
3. Each answer will have to be argued by the groups and open a mini-debate based on the following reflections: Freedom of expression, moderation of hateful content, conspiracy, defamation, etc.

Once you have finished your lesson, there are a few questions you could ask yourself to ensure they have understood these concepts, and to show that they are ready to move onto the next topic. These can include two types of evaluations, a test and/or an open debate.

TEST

Q1: Hate speech can be aggravated by:

- A** - Fake news.
- B** - Prejudices and stereotypes.
- C** - Education.
- D** - Fear and the rejection of the 'other'.

Q2: What is digital citizenship?

- A** - Having the nationality of a virtual country.
- B** - The way internet users behave and interact online.
- C** - Demonstrating good will and keeping good internet habits.
- D** - An online identity card.

Q3: Faced with a hate message on social networks, you must

- A** - React by insulting
- B** - Insist until the person who published the post realises that he or she is at fault.
- C** - Ignore the message.
- D** - Try to deconstruct the message and/or report the post if the comments are racist, hateful, homophobic, etc.

Q4: Who can decide to remove a hate message from Facebook? :

- A** - Users by vote
- B** - The Facebook platform
- C** - The State
- D** - It is not possible to remove a hate message from the social network.

Q5: Freedom of expression allows

- A** - To say anything, even insult and disseminate messages of hatred
- B** - To share opinions, but not about individuals
- C** - To be able to say anything, even about individuals, as long as you do not defame, insult or slander them.
- D** - To share any kind of information

ANSWER KEY

Q1: A, B, D | **Q2:** B, C | **Q3:** D | **Q4:** D | **Q5:** C

DEBATE

Who decides the limits of freedom of expression?

What is an opinion?
Can an opinion be free of verified facts?

What does it mean to be a digital citizen?

CREATING AN ONLINE MAGAZINE

 Creating an online magazine make it possible to educate students to the media through a simulation exercise. They will be able to understand journalism and its issues related to media literacy (fact checking; diversify sources). **The goal of these educational actions is to empower young people by assigning them a specific role within the magazine.** In this way, young people are brought to concretely measure themselves on the issues of freedom of opinion and expression and debate on fundamental themes.

 Creating a magazine helps students gain basic knowledge while developing skills (critical thinking, teamwork) and building character (encouraging curiosity, perseverance). The young people will also acquire research and writing skills and will be able to test their critical thinking skills in an exercise that is both collective and individual.

 Creating an online magazine can be a one-time activity. Teachers can also encourage students to create a school newspaper that would be sustainable throughout the year.

The following steps provides guidance for teachers to organise a small workshop for students to create their own web magazine.

GETTING STARTED

The first task is to put together a team of very motivated students that will bring the project to life and see it through.

This will be the editorial 'core' who will be in charge of

- Writing articles
- Taking/finding photos and videos for the magazine
- Finding interview subjects, interviewing them, and writing up the interviews
- Publishing the magazine on social media

The most effective way to do this is to organise regular meetings of the editorial board so that everyone knows their role in producing the magazine based on their preferences and abilities. During the editorial board's first meeting, you can assign different roles to the students such as chief editor, editors, writers, designers in charge of the layout)

COMING UP WITH A FORMAT AND IDENTITY

- **What is the aim of the magazine?** Allow as many young people as possible to express themselves; Encourage their own discussions on a particular topic.
- **Set your target audience:** Students in a school? Members of a club? An entire community?
- **Set an editorial line:** Your editorial line determines the tone used, the intended target, as well as dictate the choice of themes and subjects. We suggest that students write on the major themes of living together, the fight against hate speech online and spread of fake news.
- **Choose a title for your magazine**

CHOOSING CONTENT: TOPIC, ANGLE, PURPOSE

When hosting the editorial board meeting, the following questions should guide students into choosing the content they want to include in the magazine.

1. What do I want to write about? (Topic)

2. What is new or has changed recently about this topic? (Angle): Completely new topics are rare. On just about every issue, someone has said something about it already. That's fine. You do not need to discover a completely new topic for your article. Instead, you need to come up with a new angle on a topic. Your angle is your unique perspective or view on the issue.

3. What exactly is the message I want to convey in the article? (Purpose)

4. Who will read this document and what do they expect? (Readers)

PUBLISHING THE MAGAZINE

Once the magazine is ready, you can publish it online or in print depending on your preferences, aims, and target audience. Calaméo is a great tool to publish a pdf into a web magazine.

TOOLS :

CANVA

Canva is a free graphic design platform that allows you to edit photos without extensive photo editing knowledge or experience. It allows you to easily create magazines, invitations, business cards, flyers, lesson plans, Zoom backgrounds, and more using professionally designed templates.

The platform tool help you to do the following:

- Choose the right magazine template for your content
- Add, modify, edit, and delete text and pages (you can choose from a diversity of fonts and colours)
- Choose formatting options
- Add photos, sounds, videos, and links to other websites
- Download your design as a PDF and publish it on Calaméo.

WORDPRESS/WIX

Both these tools are free to use. Although they are less easy to use than Canva, WordPress and Wix are great tools if students want to create an online magazine throughout the year rather than in one-time activity. Teachers can also use these tools if they want their students to learn how to make their own website – a much needed skill in the 21st century.

PEDAGOGICAL WORKSHEET: FRANCE

MEDIA LITERACY IN THE FRENCH CONTEXT

As far as France is concerned, issues related to Media Literacy Education (MLE) have a very important place. Since the January 2015 terrorist attacks on French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, several cultural and educational policies have been adopted by the authorities and social-cultural actors to promote critical thinking and education in the media field.

Since 2006, the main challenges of the MLE have been included in the common base of knowledge that all students are expected to master by the end of middle school.

The Minister of National Education has been promoting the teaching of media literacy basic principles by school teachers (in particular French, History and Geography teachers). However, media literacy isn't a standalone subject in the pedagogical programs of the Minister of National Education.

However, the media literacy and the subject of social media good practices are not always a core issue for the teachers. Teachers don't always have the time and the means to teach media literacy at school. Sometimes they are not trained in media literacy. Therefore, the associations that promote media literacy have an important role in filling the gap left by teachers.

THE MAIN THEMES ADDRESSED

In France, media literacy content concerns both subjects directly related to the media and broader societal issues. At the same time, MLE proposes to discover the media landscape, to learn about the information circuit and the role of the press and journalists in society, but also to reflect on issues such as racism, intolerance and prejudice.

It also addresses the issue of new media and the Internet with an objective approach aiming at both warning against the risks of over-information and misinformation, and promoting good practices in the use of social networks and the Internet.

RECURRENT PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSALS

Generally speaking, the central themes of MLE in France are:

- The role of media (traditional and new) in the public space
- The media landscape and the concentration of the press;
- The media coverage of hate, racist, sexist, etc. messages;
- Manipulation, propaganda and recruitment;

An important place is assigned to the question of conspiracy theories as it is considered to be particularly advanced and pernicious forms of disinformation. Conspiracy theories threaten the objective and constructive analysis of reality, by locking individuals (and in particular young people) within bubbles and consolidating their initial postulates and prejudices. MLE does not aim to condemn conspiracy theories, which would be at odds with its main mission (the promotion of freedom of expression). Rather, it proposes to understand the mechanisms that are at the basis of conspiracy theories and offers young people another angle of reading based on research and open-mindedness.

Consequently, the aim of socio-educational actions in the field of MLE in France is also to prevent the indoctrination of young people, who are particularly exposed to the circulation of hate messages on the Internet.

The pedagogical activities carried out by most of MLE actors in France include role-playing via radio/video or print media workshops. It is through role-playing that the concepts of information, disinformation, freedom of the press and expression are really grasped by young people.

At the same time, the most important concepts can be addressed through activities that can be easily carried out in the framework of socio-educational actions. Here are three examples:

True or False

The supervisor proposes, via a quiz, information (circulating on social networks and the Internet). The young people have to decide whether it is true or false and explain why. This exercise addresses the issue of reliability and verification of sources, but also to deconstruct the elements of language often used by the authors of false information.

Bias writing (Fact vs Opinion)

This activity is related to the above chapter on Media Bias. Separate the whole class into three smaller groups. Provide each group with a set of unique headlines about the same topical issue. There should be no more than 5 headlines in a set, and each set should have a different perspective on the topic being discussed: a positive bias, negative bias, and neutral perspective. **(see more activity instructions in the chapter above on Bias Writing).** French teachers can use the following examples to prepare the activity:

- **NEUTRAL** “La présence d’un loup confirmée dans l’Oise après l’attaque d’une brebis” (BFMTV.com)
“Un dispositif renforcé de suivi de l’animal va être lancé dans l’Oise. Car l’attaque de Blicourt pourrait ne pas être un cas isolé. D’après Le Parisien, une autre brebis a été retrouvée morte dans le même secteur, mercredi 25 novembre, avec des blessures similaires. L’OFB n’exclut pas qu’il s’agisse du même spécimen repéré dans le département voisin de la Seine-Maritime, en juillet dernier.”
- **Negative and sensationalism:** “Une nouvelle attaque de loups à Signes” (Var-Matin) “Vendredi matin, le berger de Signes, Yves Salomé, a été stupéfait de trouver dans l’enclos, où était parquée une partie de son troupeau, trois brebis et cinq agneaux morts. De certaines bêtes, il ne restait plus qu’une partie de la carcasse.”
- **Omission:** “Prolifération” - Des drones pour faire fuir les loups (L’Eveil de la Haute-Loire) “Pour la Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, les loups ne seraient pas en voie de disparition mais au contraire en surpopulation. Entre « les dégâts occasionnés chez les

éleveurs, l'équilibre de la biodiversité et les dépenses occasionnées », le président Laurent Wauquiez souhaiterait agir à l'aide de drones.”

- **Omission and manipulative language** “Isère. A Corrençon-en-Vercors, les loups ne sont pas confinés” (Le Dauphiné Libéré) “Lorsqu’il passe le vendredi 13 novembre vers 7 heures jeter un coup d’œil à ses deux chiens de chasse dans leur enclos situé à quelques mètres de la ferme de son grand-père à l’entrée de Corrençon, Clément Perrin a la surprise de découvrir les restes d’un jeune faon dévoré par les loups

- **Negative Bias:** “Défendre le loup, ce n’est pas attaquer les éleveurs” (rtl.fr) “Autrefois disparu, le loup est de retour sur les verts pâturages de l’Hexagone. Protégée, l’espèce n’en reste pas moins une menace permanente pour les éleveurs et leurs bêtes. Le loup fait d’ailleurs l’objet d’un quota d’abattage que certains veulent relever.”

- **Positive bias and sensationalism** “Loup y es-tu?” (Université de Montpellier) “D’où l’importance écologique des loups, ours, pumas, lynx gloutons et autres grands carnivores. « Si on favorise un monde sans prédateurs, on supprime quelque chose qui a joué un rôle essentiel dans la construction de la vie telle qu’on la connaît ». Une seule espèce vous manque, et tout est bouleversé.”

- **Statement presented as a fact:** “Loup en Normandie : les hypothèses d’un expert sur la présence de l’animal pris en photo” (France Bleu) “Tous les spécialistes de la faune sauvage s’accordent : l’animal photographié le 8 avril 2020 à Londinières, au nord de Neufchâtel-en-Bray, semble bien être un loup.”

- **Positive bias and bias by selection of sources** (positive and from the same website along the article). “Retour des loups : pourquoi il est temps d’en finir... avec leur abattage ! ” (Mrmondialisation.org)

My digital reputation

This activity is very fast. Students have to search for their name on google and evaluate what can be known about them (personal data, sensitive data, etc.). This activity is followed by a moment of exchange: young people can debate about digital practices, concepts of privacy, harassment, freedom of expression, etc. The objective of this activity is to encourage students to question their digital identity and to enter into a process of construction and control of their digital identity, but also to take responsibility for their digital practices in a broad sense.

EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK

The main actions implemented in the field of IME are critical media literacy workshops and positive campaigns on social networks.

The critical media literacy workshops can vary according to the training and pedagogical offer of the different actors involved in the field. These workshops can use video, written press or radio. These supports are often used to put young people in situations and to make them responsible for the use of journalistic language. These actions allow young people to discover the media by hosting a TV or radio program, and to debate about broader societal issues (racism, discrimination, democracy, ecology, etc.).

For example, the “Fake News Factory” workshops, proposed by the ARTEMIS association, aim at, through a simulation of the participants, the use of the radio tool and speech, to strengthen the intellectual autonomy and critical spirit of young people, to deconstruct hate speech or conspiracy theories, and to encourage citizen participation, especially online. During the workshop, young people are led to create false conspiracy theories. A group of journa-

lists chosen from among the youth deconstruct the false theories. The debate between young journalists and conspiracy theories is introduced by a young radio presenter.

The ARTEMIS association has also set up a positive campaign on social networks to combat racist and homophobic prejudices. Within the framework of the European project Game Changers, ARTEMIS Association has launched the Campaign 'the continuous fight' launched on Instagram. From October 2019 to March 2020, 4 young people of 16 years old from Ile-de-France, led a campaign on Instagram to fight against racist and hate speech against the LGBTQ+ community. Young ambassadors engaged their communities on social networks by producing positive and inclusive discourse on sensitive, usually divisive issues.

The approach of these actions aims at valuing the ideas of young people. Their words can sometimes be sharp, but it is through active listening and dialogue that young people are able to express their thoughts and open up to dialogue. In general, these actions aim at empowering young people to speak out.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CLEMI

The liaison center for education and information media is in charge of MLE in the entire French education system. CLEMI provides pedagogical resources and accompanies students who create school media.

ISD

Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) is a think tank that works with leaders from the public and private sectors as well as the media and academia to develop multilateral responses to the major security and socio-economic challenges of our time and improve Europe's ability to act effectively on the global stage. It offers research in the field of hate and radical discourse.

MEDIA ANIMATION

Belgian association in the field of EMI. They propose resources and educational actions on their website <https://media-animation.be/>. The same association has created pedagogical resources and exercises devoted exclusively to the question of conspiracy theories:

theoriesducomplot.be/#INTRO

CREM

Centre des ressources en éducation aux médias (Francophone Canada)

www.reseau-crem.lacsq.org/qui.htm

ReNEWS

Bringing fresh eyes
to media literacy

ASSFAM-GROUPE SOS Solidarités develops educational projects to promote dialogue between cultures, to fight against prejudice and to enhance the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the principle of secularism.

Through workshops on critical media education for both professionals in the socio-educational field and young people, ASSFAM-GROUPE SOS Solidarités' trainers offer programs that help protect young minds from disinformation, conspiracy theories and online hate speech. ASSFAM-Groupe SOS Solidarités has supported original socio-educational projects, promoting cultural diversity and common values through cultural (theatrical performances) and creative events (Créathon, Hackathon).



Founded in 2006, ISD is a medium sized leading global 'think and do' tank, dedicated to understanding and innovating real-world responses to the rising tide of polarisation, hate and extremism of all forms. The organisation combines anthropological research, expertise in international extremist movements and an advanced digital analysis capability that tracks hate, disinformation and extremism online, with policy advisory support and training to governments and cities around the world.

ISD promotes fundamental values, builds resilience and combats hate and extremism through inclusive educational and digital citizenship programmes such as "Be Internet Citizens" (in partnership with Google and YouTube) and "Young Digital Leaders" (ISD's European digital citizenship/media literacy educational program).



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