Being well-informed: tricks and tips about media

Description
This activity plans to engage participants in activities thought to promote self-reflection about the way they get informed and to promote a critical understanding about how media messages are produced and diffused, with a special focus on fake news.

Tag
• News
• Social Media

Skills
IDEOLOGY AND ETHICS
• To evaluate and reflect

Learning areas
• Language
• Learning Support Teacher
• Professional Competences
• Religion and Ethics
• Sciences
• Social Sciences
• Technologies

Card language
• English
• Spanish
• Italian
• Portuguese

Structure

Sessions	2
Duration	55' (Variable)
Number of participants	10-25
Age	• 14-16 • 17-18
Materials	• Pen, paper, pencils • Post-it notes • Bostik • Coloured paperboards • Different types of news • A print version of the IFLA infographic "How to spot fake news", available here: https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174 and Center for Media Literacy Five Key Questions (available here: http://www.medialit.org/sites/default/files/14A_CCKQposter.pdf • Computer (to show the documents in a Power Point)

Process

Key questions	• What are the differences and similarities between the news? • If the subject is the same, why are they different? • Could some of them be fake? • Can you distinguish different categories of fake news? Can you spot the motivations behind fake news? What tips can you keep in mind to prevent being fooled by fake news?

Development

The activity starts with a challenge allowing students to engage in the lesson's subject - the way they become informed and the factors they should bear in mind during that process.

The teacher asks the participants to observe four paperboards previously pinned up on the classroom walls. On one there are sentences to complete: 1) "The media and the information sources that I use to get news are…"; 2) "Today I read/listened to/watched news about the following subjects…"; 3) "What interests me the most in news is…"; 4) "It's important to be informed about what's going on in the world because…".

Then it's time for students to get some post-its, complete the sentences and post them on the paperboards. When all students have put their post-its on the posters, the teacher asks some questions in order to find some tendencies among the answers. He/she can start by asking questions such as: Have you already thought about the way you become informed? Looking at the final result, how do you evaluate the way you get news? The teacher can encourage debate: "Are the majority interested in news? Do the majority become informed spontaneously by what appears in their social media account? Or do they read newspapers (printed or online), listen to the news on the radio, etc.? What about the themes they are interested in, are there points in common?" (**15'**)

When the group has a "picture" of their media practices, the teacher introduces the theme (see "Description" above), by analysing the paperboard about the importance of being well-informed, adding reasons that were forgotten in the post-its written by the students.

Doing so, he/she explains that only if we have a critical eye about the news/messages (the way they are produced, why they are produced…) can we be well-informed.

News are a complex world today: we face a great amount of information, anyone can produce and easily share through social media, fake news…

To sharpen their critical thinking towards news, the teacher proposes four different exercises, with an analysis/reflection component and a creation moment. The participants should join in groups of 4 or 5 students, depending on the total number of participants. (**10'**)

EXERCISE/GROUP 1

Students are given three articles about the same news, each one written by a different journalist and published in different newspapers. They also receive a card with three questions they should answer about the articles: 1) What are the differences and similarities between them?, 2) If the subject is the same, why are they different?, 3) What do you learn with this exercise that could help you as a person who reads news? Regarding the production part, students should simulate the opening of a news service (in video) with three highlights and three reports. The three subjects are chosen from a list of news (like a journalistic "agenda" with at least 6 news items). Participants have to decide the order of the news chosen and the time given to each one, so they understand that what a viewer sees is also a choice made by the editors.

EXERCISE/GROUP 2

Students are given a set of articles and the table from the EAVI which identifies 10 types of misleading news (https://eavi.eu/beyond-fake-news-10-types-misleading-info/). The teacher asks students to fit each article with the corresponding type of fake news. Then, the group should write at least 5 tips to help people who read the news distinguish between real and fake news.

EXERCISE/GROUP 3

Students are given a set of articles. All of them are fake news and their mission is to find out the motivations behind each article (the articles chosen have motivations such as power, politics, economic, satire, bullying/revenge). Afterwards they will be asked to create a fake news in a site where they can easily make and spread fake news (such as http://www.cnoticias.net). They should then justify why the article is fake and write a kind of "manifesto" explaining how people could detect it was fake.

EXERCISE/GROUP 4

Students are faced with the following situation: "Imagine you have to do a school task about a hobby (YouTube, videogames, fan fiction, sports…), you should choose one you're interested in. Find 4 sources of information to base your work on, justify your choice and explain how you evaluate the reliability of a source of information."

For the production part, the group should write (or record a podcast or a video, as if they were youtubers for example, or design a poster) at least 5 tips about how to search and evaluate information sources. (**35'**)

DISCUSSION

Each group should choose a spokesperson, who will be responsible for summarizing the exercise done and the production part of it. (**55'**)

Evaluation	The evaluation is made simultaneously with the discussion. The teacher should correct, make comments, and foster thinking after each group presents their work. He/she can also present a Power Point presentation with key ideas of each exercise for the students to assess their accomplishments.
References for professors	• Media Education Guidance by S. Pereira et al., DGE, 2014 (https://goo.gl/KDDjpa) • Article: "Stanford Study finds most students vulnerable to fake news" (https://goo.gl/EtT7eN) • Video TED-Ed: "How to choose your news" (https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-to-choose-your-news-damon-brown) • Examples of fact-checking sites: https://www.snopes.com/ or http://www.politifact.com/ • Example of a fake site that can easily fool netizens: http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/links.html • Site of Common Sense Media: What's media literacy and why is it important?: https://goo.gl/N2HLv3 • A print version of the IFLA infographic "How to spot fake news": https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174 • Center for Media Literacy Five Key Questions: http://www.medialit.org/sites/default/files/14A_CCKQposter.pdf
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