

Hashtags, Tweets and Fake News: Contemporary [Dis]Information

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Introduction for the teacher

This lesson scenario is intended for students aged 14 and above. The subject matter discussed allows for its use in interdisciplinary classes in such subjects as history, native language, social science and media education as well as in meetings with the class teacher.

The material has been divided into three parts: the lesson scenario, a set of source materials and a worksheet with exercises to be done during the class, in a group or individually. Particular elements of the scenario can be modified to suit the target audience.

Instructions

The script contains eight pieces of source material and a worksheet with exercises referring to some of the sources. They are intended particularly for group work using techniques to engage students, yet individual learners can perform the tasks on their own too. The suggested lesson structure can be modified, along with the use of the sources and exercises. Internet access would be useful during the lessons as well as allowing the students to use telecommunication devices with internet access (smartphones, tablets, etc.). This is necessary because of the educational methods used.

Operational goals

The student is able to:

- define the terms 'disinformation' and 'manipulation' as well as indicate contemporary methods of fake news creation,

- suggest, on the basis of the knowledge acquired in class and their own experience, definitions of 'fake news' and 'fake photo',
- recognise methods of manipulating historical facts, i.e. verify information available online,
- analyse source texts and photographs pointing out cause-and-effect links.

Teaching methods

- teaching discussion,
- group work,
- brainstorm,
- analysis of source material,
- Phillips 66 method¹,
- metaplan²,
- decision tree,
- mind maps,
- independent work with a set of exercises.

Teaching aids

- sets of exercises and source material available on the [Hi-Story Lessons](#) platform,
- board/flipcharts, marker pen/chalk,
- large paper sheets/Bristol board sheets,
- a computer with internet access and a projector/multimedia board,
- devices with internet access for students.

¹ A type of a brainstorm where six teams are created to work together for six minutes. Each team works separately on a topic selected trying to generate as many ideas as possible. The lists produced are extended during a joint debate after which the teams go back to their group sessions. The procedure may be repeated multiple times until a satisfactory list of ideas has been drafted. You can learn more about this method here:

<https://www.theedadvocate.org/edupedia/content/what-is-phillips-66-brainstorming/> or here <https://studylib.net/doc/5848394/phillips-66> [accessed 27 April 2021].

² One of the activation methods used during class; it involves poster making by the discussion/debate participants. The poster represents a graphic summary of the debate (based on Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaplan> [accessed 14 December 2020]).

Before the lesson

Ask the students to read the essay entitled '[Contemporary Disinformation](#)' or '[Deepfake](#)'. It is also worth recommending them to read the book by Tom Phillips *Truth: A Brief History of Total Bullsh*t*³ that makes a great introduction into the world of fake news, which – as it turns out – has not been invented in present times.

³Tom Phillips, *Truth: A Brief History of Total Bullsh*t* (London: Headline, 2020).