



Cutting-edge theoretical fundamentals and pedagogical approaches on social media literacy and internet safety.

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Introduction

The "Cutting-edge Theoretical Fundamentals and Pedagogical Approaches on Social Media Literacy and Internet Safety" document has been developed as part of the IPAD Project to provide adult educators with a structured, evidence-based resource to support the safe and responsible use of digital platforms. Designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of adult educators working with families, this document serves as a foundation for teaching social media literacy (SML) and internet safety (IS). By equipping adult educators with robust theoretical and pedagogical tools, this document aims to foster a comprehensive understanding of digital behaviour, thereby enabling educators to guide adults and their families in navigating the online environment effectively and responsibly.

This document is a key component of the IPAD project's Online Platform of Open Educational Resources, complementing other educational elements such as the Online Digital Database and Blended Learning Course. Each unit within the document aligns with the overarching objectives of the IPAD curriculum, offering practical strategies and conceptual insights that can be applied across diverse educational settings. It provides adult educators with the foundational knowledge necessary to foster SML and IS within their communities, including techniques to prevent cyberbullying, protect privacy, and encourage ethical online behaviour.

Structured around six core units of the IPAD curriculum, each section of this document integrates theoretical fundamentals and pedagogical approaches that are grounded in current research and best practices. These components aim to build cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural competencies among learners, enabling adult educators to address the unique challenges of digital literacy in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. The pedagogical approaches recommended in this document, including interactive workshops, scenario-based learning, role-playing, and storytelling, have been chosen for their effectiveness in promoting reflective learning and fostering engagement. By adopting these methods, adult educators can create meaningful learning experiences that empower families and younger generations to participate safely and thoughtfully in digital spaces.

The Theoretical and Pedagogical Bases document is intended to serve as a vital resource for adult educators to enhance their instructional practices, support family engagement, and promote best practices in the realm of social media literacy and internet safety. Through this guide, IPAD seeks to establish a culture of responsible digital engagement and resilience, ultimately contributing to the development of informed, safe, and digitally empowered communities.



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Unit 1. Enhancing Social Media Literacy and critical thinking.

Introduction

The "Enhancing Social Media Literacy and Critical Thinking" unit is designed to empower adult educators with the skills and knowledge needed to foster critical digital literacy among learners. It focuses on equipping educators to identify credible information, recognise misinformation, and support safe and mindful social media usage within their communities. The unit covers four lessons:

1. Introduction to social media literacy and critical thinking
2. Navigating fake news, misinformation, and digital advertising
3. Appropriate digital content for minors
4. Fostering reflective handling of digital content

The main objectives of this unit are to:

- Develop social media literacy: Enable educators to understand and navigate social media with an emphasis on identifying credible sources, recognising biases, and understanding digital advertising tactics.
- Enhance critical thinking skills: Cultivate the ability to critically evaluate online information, identify misinformation and disinformation, and model these skills for learners.
- Promote digital safety for minors: Guide educators in recognising and managing content that is suitable and safe for minors, empowering them to support families in responsible digital engagement.
- Encourage reflective digital practices: Encourage educators to promote reflective habits around social media usage, fostering digital well-being and mindfulness.

Within the IPAD project, this unit supports the goal of professional development for adult educators by addressing a crucial area of digital literacy that is increasingly relevant in today's information landscape. By building skills in social media literacy and critical thinking, educators are better prepared to guide learners in developing a responsible, informed, and critical approach to digital content. This unit contributes to the overarching aim of the IPAD project by:

- Fostering lifelong learning: By equipping educators with adaptable digital literacy skills, this unit promotes lifelong learning and keeps educators up to date with essential competencies.
- Enhancing community impact: Educators who complete this unit can extend their impact to families and communities, fostering a broader culture of digital mindfulness and safety.
- Supporting resilience against misinformation: In a time of widespread digital misinformation, this unit empowers educators to build resilience in themselves and others, contributing to more informed and engaged communities.

This unit is a key component of the IPAD project’s mission to elevate adult education, providing educators with relevant, impactful skills that align with current digital and social needs.

Description of the theoretical fundamental or the pedagogical approach

Theoretical framework

This unit is grounded in the Critical Media Literacy (CML) framework, combined with Constructivist Learning Theory and Social Cognitive Theory:

- **Critical Media Literacy (CML):** CML emphasizes empowering individuals to critically analyse and evaluate media content, recognizing the power dynamics and biases inherent in media structures. This framework encourages learners to deconstruct and question the motives, credibility, and potential impacts of media messages.
- **Constructivist learning theory:** Rooted in the work of Piaget and Vygotsky, constructivism posits that learning is an active, collaborative process where learners build knowledge through experiences and interactions. Constructivist approaches in this unit encourage adult learners to actively engage, reflect, and construct knowledge about social media content and digital literacy.
- **Social cognitive theory:** Developed by Albert Bandura, this theory highlights the role of observation, imitation, and modelling in learning. It focuses on self-efficacy and behavioural reinforcement. This theory supports the idea that by observing effective strategies for media literacy, learners are more likely to adopt and replicate those strategies.

Key concepts

1. **Social media literacy:** The ability to navigate, analyse, and critically engage with social media content. This includes understanding the mechanics of social media platforms, recognizing digital marketing tactics, and identifying misinformation.
2. **Critical thinking:** The process of evaluating information objectively to form a judgment. In the context of social media, it involves assessing the credibility, bias, and intent of digital content.
3. **Misinformation and disinformation:** Misinformation refers to false or inaccurate information spread without malicious intent, while disinformation is intentionally misleading information. Understanding these distinctions is essential for media literacy.
4. **Digital well-being:** This concept encompasses healthy engagement with digital devices and media, balancing consumption, and fostering self-awareness around digital habits.
5. **Reflective practice:** The habit of reflecting on one's own thoughts, actions, and experiences in relation to media consumption to promote mindfulness and critical awareness.

Methodology

This unit employs a variety of pedagogical approaches and methods, designed in alignment with the theoretical framework to promote deep, reflective, and practical learning. Case-based learning is

implemented using real-world case studies that highlight issues such as misinformation and digital advertising tactics. Learners engage in analysing and discussing these cases, applying critical thinking skills to assess credibility and potential impacts.

Collaborative learning is fostered through group discussions, role-playing activities, and peer teaching. These methods create a social learning environment where participants share experiences and perspectives, co-constructing knowledge in accordance with constructivist principles. Reflective practice is also encouraged by having learners maintain reflection journals, allowing them to document their evolving understanding of digital literacy and engage in critical self-assessment, which is essential for developing digital mindfulness.

Interactive infographics and visual aids are used to summarise key points and serve as effective visual learning tools. Learners actively engage with the material through interactive walkthroughs of these visuals, enhancing both retention and comprehension. Additionally, hands-on exercises, such as real-time fact-checking and social media content audits, provide practical applications. These activities enable learners to practice verifying sources, identifying biases, and recognising safe digital practices for minors, ensuring the unit remains both impactful and relevant.

Benefits

The theoretical and pedagogical approaches outlined provide significant benefits for adult learners and their educators. They promote empowerment through critical thinking by integrating critical media literacy and reflective practices. This approach enables educators to engage deeply with content and support others in fostering responsible media consumption within their communities.

These methods also enhance engagement and retention by employing constructivist and social cognitive strategies that encourage active learning. Activities such as group discussions and practical exercises help learners internalize concepts and skills, leading to a more profound and lasting understanding.

Additionally, they contribute to self-efficacy and practical skill development. By incorporating social cognitive elements like observing and practicing fact-checking techniques, learners build confidence in their ability to critically analyse and navigate media content effectively.

Challenges

Implementing these approaches comes with certain challenges that require careful consideration. Resistance to change is a common obstacle, as some adult learners may initially hesitate to question their beliefs or alter familiar media habits. This can be addressed by creating a supportive environment that values diverse perspectives and encourages learners to view these differences as opportunities for growth. Another challenge arises from varying levels of digital literacy among learners. Not all participants may be equally familiar with social media platforms or critical thinking techniques. Trainers can tackle this by providing clear, step-by-step demonstrations, supplementary resources for beginners, and group activities tailored to different skill levels. Time constraints also pose a difficulty, as engaging

thoroughly with case studies and reflective practices often requires significant time investment. To overcome this, trainers can prioritize key activities or break lessons into smaller, more manageable segments, ensuring that each session focuses on the most critical concepts.

Practical application

An example of a classroom activity involves using a case study on misinformation. Learners are divided into groups and assigned a recent example of misinformation, such as viral health myths. Each group analyses the source, identifies potential biases, and suggests responsible alternatives for conveying the information. This activity emphasizes critical media literacy while fostering collaboration. For a family-focused workshop, learners can design a practical session titled "Recognising Misinformation." Using provided infographics as teaching aids, they can share strategies such as fact-checking techniques and setting up privacy controls for minors. This activity equips participants to engage families in navigating digital content responsibly.

To encourage reflective practice, learners can undertake a self-assessment of their social media habits. By reflecting on how certain content influences their emotions and evaluating whether it aligns with their personal values, they develop a mindful approach to digital consumption, setting an example for others to follow.

Conclusions and recommendations

Summary

This unit, "Enhancing Social Media Literacy and Critical Thinking," equips adult educators with the tools to cultivate critical media literacy among learners. It is built on a theoretical framework that integrates Critical Media Literacy, Constructivist Learning Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory. These frameworks promote a reflective and critical approach to media, emphasizing active participation, self-awareness, and collaborative learning experiences.

Educators are introduced to core concepts, enabling them to critically evaluate social media literacy, identify misinformation and disinformation, understand digital well-being, and promote reflective media consumption. Practical pedagogical methods, including case-based learning, collaborative discussions, reflective journaling, and hands-on digital exercises, are employed to ensure the material is engaging and applicable. This approach empowers educators to help learners build confidence, analyse media critically, and develop essential critical thinking skills.

Recommendations

Here are practical strategies adult educators can use to effectively teach social media literacy and internet safety:

1. Encourage reflective practice: Have learners maintain a reflection journal where they note how social media content impacts them and what they observe about their digital habits. Review these journals periodically to discuss growth and insights.
2. Use real-world case studies: Integrate current and relevant case studies related to misinformation or digital advertising. Facilitate group discussions to explore the credibility, intent, and impact of each case. This approach makes abstract concepts more tangible.
3. Practice fact-checking skills: Lead hands-on exercises in which learners practice fact-checking. Show them how to verify sources, use reverse image searches, and identify credible news outlets. These skills are practical and directly applicable to real-world situations.
4. Incorporate role-play scenarios: Use role-play to simulate common social media scenarios, such as handling misinformation or engaging with clickbait. This experiential learning approach helps build confidence and critical awareness.
5. Provide resources for continued learning: Share trusted fact-checking sites, educational videos, and infographics on topics like internet safety and responsible content sharing. Encourage learners to explore these resources and share what they find useful.
6. Model mindful social media use: Educate learners on setting personal boundaries and privacy controls, especially when it comes to content for minors. Demonstrate practical ways to manage time online and avoid overconsumption.

Future considerations

To remain effective and relevant, educators should focus on staying informed about the constantly evolving landscape of social media. As platforms change, new methods of misinformation and digital manipulation emerge, making it essential for educators to continually update their knowledge on tools and trends, particularly those affecting information dissemination and privacy.

Future efforts can also explore the realm of digital ethics. Topics such as respecting privacy, responsibly sharing content, and understanding algorithmic biases are crucial as learners become more aware of the subtle influences shaping their digital experiences. Incorporating these discussions into educational settings enhances critical awareness and ethical practices.

Additionally, expanding community engagement is key. Educators can empower learners to share their insights within their communities through workshops, family discussions, or creating online content. By fostering a network of informed individuals, the reach and impact of social media literacy can be significantly amplified, creating a ripple effect of awareness and responsibility.



Unit 2. Establishing cybersecurity fundamentals and internet safety measures.

Introduction

Unit 2, "Establishing cybersecurity fundamentals and internet safety measures," is designed to equip adult educators working with families with the knowledge and skills they need to stay safe online. This unit focuses on helping young users navigate the digital world securely, particularly on popular social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. By understanding the basics of cybersecurity and practicing responsible online behaviour, children and young people can protect their personal information, recognise online threats, and enjoy a safer, more positive experience on the internet.

Description of the theoretical fundamental or the pedagogical approach

Theoretical framework

This unit is based on the idea that young people learn best when they can relate new information to their everyday experiences. The content is designed to be engaging and directly relevant to the online activities that young people enjoy. By using examples from popular platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, the unit helps young learners understand important cybersecurity concepts in a way that feels familiar and accessible. The approach also encourages interactive and hands-on learning, so young people can immediately apply what they've learned to their online activities.

Key concepts

1. **Keeping your information private:** Understanding why it's important to keep personal details, like your location, school, and birthday, private when using social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok.
2. **Recognising online dangers:** Learning how to spot common online threats such as phishing scams, fake accounts, and inappropriate content on platforms like YouTube and Snapchat.
3. **Creating strong passwords:** Knowing how to make and remember strong passwords that protect your accounts from being hacked.
4. **Being a responsible digital citizen:** Understanding the impact of what you share online and how to interact with others respectfully on social media, including not sharing hurtful comments or engaging in cyberbullying.

Methodology

This unit uses a combination of interactive lessons and practical activities that are fun and relatable for young people. The lessons are delivered through stories, games, and quizzes that focus on real-life scenarios young people might face on social media. For example, a lesson might include a story about a character who shares too much personal information on Instagram and learns the hard way why that's a bad idea. After the lessons, young people can participate in activities like creating their own secure passwords or practicing how to report a suspicious message on TikTok. These activities help reinforce the lessons and make the information stick.

Benefits

The approach used in this unit ensures that young people not only understand the basics of cybersecurity but also feel confident in applying these skills in their daily online activities. By focusing on platforms, they use regularly, the lessons are immediately relevant and engaging. The interactive nature of the content also makes learning fun and encourages young people to take an active role in keeping themselves safe online.

Challenges

One challenge might be that some young people are more familiar with these concepts than others, which could lead to varying levels of engagement. To address this, the unit includes a variety of activities that cater to different skill levels, ensuring that everyone can participate and learn at their own pace. Another potential challenge is that young people might not always recognize the risks associated with their online behaviour. The unit tackles this by using relatable examples and encouraging open discussions about the consequences of unsafe online practices.

Practical application

Young people can apply the knowledge and skills from this unit in their everyday online activities. For example, they can use what they've learned to create stronger passwords for their social media accounts, think twice before sharing personal details online, and know how to report inappropriate content or cyberbullying. By practicing these skills regularly, young people can become more aware of their online behaviour and take proactive steps to protect themselves and their friends from potential online threats.

Conclusions and recommendations

Summary

Unit 2 provides a practical and engaging introduction to cybersecurity fundamentals and internet safety for young people. By focusing on popular social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, the unit makes cybersecurity concepts accessible and relevant. Through interactive lessons and

activities, young people learn how to protect their personal information, recognize online threats, and behave responsibly online.

Recommendations

It is recommended that young people:

1. Regularly review and update their privacy settings on social media platforms to keep their personal information safe.
2. Be cautious about the information they share online, especially on public profiles.
3. Use strong, unique passwords for each of their online accounts to prevent hacking.
4. Report any suspicious or harmful behaviour they encounter online to a trusted adult or through the platform's reporting tools.

Future considerations

As new social media platforms and online trends emerge, it's important for young people to stay informed about the latest cybersecurity practices. This unit lays the foundation, but ongoing education and awareness are crucial for staying safe in the ever-changing digital landscape. Young people should be encouraged to continue learning about new online risks and to keep their online behaviour responsible and safe as they grow and explore more of the digital world.



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Unit 3. Understanding the online environment.

Introduction

Unit 3, “Understanding the online environment”, aims to equip adult educators with an overview of the online landscape frequented by children and young people. It explores the most popular social media platforms used by minors, delving into their features, potential risks, and the benefits they may provide for young users. The unit aims to equip educators with a comprehensive understanding of how children and adolescents engage with the internet, what attracts them online, the kind of content they can access online, how they perceive the world, and the types of interactions they engage in online.

Description of the theoretical fundamental or the pedagogical approach

Theoretical framework

The unit is grounded in **constructivist learning theory** as presented by Jean Piaget, as well as drawing significantly from both the **experiential learning** and **sociocultural learning** theories. In essence, the theory provided in this unit should be individually experienced by the learner, analysed and reflected on, and preferably discussed thereafter with interested peers and/or stakeholders to ensure maximum engagement.

Additionally, as this Unit discusses the online environment of minors, a large emphasis has been placed on empathy as a central pillar of the learning experience throughout. Empathy is “a complex cognitive-affective skill that allows us to ‘know’ (resonate, feel, sense, cognitively grasp) another person’s experience” (Jordan 2010, 103). As adult educators, it can be easy to speak to digital natives from a perceived position of superior understanding, but we feel it is vital to converse and engage with, rather than lecture, young people on this topic. Having been raised in this new digital age, their insights can prove vital for anyone hoping to develop a comprehensive appreciation of the current state of play. After all, “Listening is now rightfully considered to be the foundation of... communication ability” (Rost & Wilson, 2013). These values underpin much of the theoretical framework applied in designing this unit.

Key concepts

1. **Constructivism:** Rooted in Piaget's theory “that people produce knowledge and form meaning based upon their experiences” (TeAchnology, 2023), constructivism attributes the construction of knowledge to the individual’s interpretation of experiences in two ways; either by accommodating new information within existing knowledge or assimilating new information. “Piaget’s theory covered learning theories, teaching methods, and education reform” (TeAchnology, 2023).
2. **Experiential learning:** The concept of experiential learning shares a strong resemblance to constructivist theory but varies somewhat in its approach. While constructivism is concerned with the primary involvement of the learner themselves in the learning experience, experiential learning attributes the construction of knowledge to a continuous process of evolution. The learner creates

and stores new information as in the previous theory, but they do so as a consequence of a series of inquiries and reflections, subsequent analyses, and eventual synthesis.

3. **Sociocultural learning:** Like the previous two theories, the concept of sociocultural learning places people at the centre of the learning process. Where it departs from constructivism and experiential learning, however, is in the belief that "human learning is predominantly a social process and that people's cognitive functions depend upon their interactions with others around them, particularly those who are "more skilled" than themselves" (Structural Learning, 2023). In this sense, the human dimension in knowledge construction remains, but its scope broadens to involve others in a more pronounced educator capacity.
4. **Reflection:** A key process in experiential learning which encourages learners to enhance their knowledge by critically analysing their experiences.

Methodology

This learning unit, like its peers, will comprise a hybridised approach to learning. First, users will engage with the theory material provided via the individual learning units on the IPAD Online Platform. Upon completion of each, a short assessment will follow, allowing learners to map their growing knowledge and brush up on any outstanding uncertainties or more challenging aspects.

Next, IPAD's Practical Activities will supplement the accrued learning with face-to-face interaction and a more conventional educational experience. Learners will be instructed in the best practices and key information they need to understand to implement physical, in-situ lessons with their stakeholders in an engaging, enjoyable, and educational way.

Benefits

The initial online phase of learning has huge benefits for learners, who are empowered to access course materials whenever and wherever they are most comfortable. Additionally, there is no fixed time limit on accessing these resources, and learning can take place over any desired length of time. In terms of the specific benefits of this unit's theoretical and pedagogical approaches, there are a number of potential benefits. For their part, the IPAD Practical Activities will benefit learners in a more conventional pedagogical sense. Physical participation, as well as the opportunity to engage with others, will enhance the sociocultural learning element of the unit.

In terms of the benefits provided by the theoretical framework of the unit itself, there are a number of examples. For one, there is the empathetic approach taken to discussing the topics at issues with key stakeholders. This foundation establishes active listening as a cornerstone of the educator-learner dynamic, enhancing the positive relationship-building capacities of learners. The initial lessons provided via the Online Platform, with constructivist learning theory at their core, encourage independent learning and analysis skills. The Practical Activities, meanwhile, contribute to the development of social skills and relationship-building with likeminded peers.

Challenges

As with any learning material, the IPAD course content faces some challenges. For one, “adult learners” is a deceptively broad stakeholder group and will naturally comprise a huge variety of individuals with differing experiences and prior knowledge. As such, creating a one-size-fits-all learning experience that meets expectations has demanded some careful consideration.

In terms of the more practical challenges presented, stakeholder resources (both in the sense of physical equipment and time, etc.) pose a potential difficulty. As the Online Platform is a fundamental component of the learning process, it is necessary for learners to have access to it, requiring a device with internet access and Wi-Fi. As with all extra-curricular learning content, the course may also be demanding for those with busy schedules, young families, etc. We have tried to remain conscious of these facts at all times when preparing the learning material.

Practical application

The theoretical and pedagogical approaches outlined in this unit can be practically applied in various educational contexts:

- The theoretical content presented can itself be further disseminated to colleagues or learners / stakeholders themselves or used to influence and inform lesson planning.

The Practical Activities can be repeated with colleagues or learners / stakeholders themselves. The step-by-step guidelines provided can be used directly, amended for a specific context, or used to influence and inform lesson planning

Conclusions and recommendations

The unit focused on teaching social media literacy and internet safety through a combination of **Constructivist learning theory**, **Experiential learning theory**, and **Sociocultural learning theory** underpinned by a foundation of empathy. Key concepts included:

- **Constructivism:** Emphasises that learners construct knowledge through experiences.
- **Experiential learning:** Highlights the importance of learning through a continuous process of experience, reflection, and practical application.
- **Sociocultural learning:** Involves others in the learning experience both in a direct capacity as an educator, and in a more general sense as they facilitate discussion and engagement.
- **Empathy:** Weighing up others’ experiences and adjusting one’s behaviour accordingly.

Recommendations

1. **Incorporate real-world scenarios:** When discussing this topic further, research context-specific case studies and real-world examples from your own local area to enhance relevancy.

2. **Promote self-directed learning and reflection:** Recommend that learners take some time to engage with the theoretical aspects of this unit themselves, engendering a self-directed approach that aligns with constructivist learning theory. Adding in more experiential learning, encourage learners to then keep journals and participate in discussions that prompt them to reflect on their online experiences and how they align with best practices in internet safety.
3. **Encourage collaborative learning:** Create opportunities for learners to work in groups on projects, cementing the theoretical influence of sociocultural learning on this unit.

Future considerations

As the landscape of the online environment continues to evolve over time, educators should stay informed about the latest trends and adapt their teaching strategies accordingly. Future courses that are influenced by or borrow from the IPAD theoretical framework could explore emerging challenges and how they are likely to impact young people, helping educators and guardians stay ahead of potential issues. The empathetic approach to constructively discussing these and related topics with young people should be considered and reflected in future learning activities. By integrating these recommendations, adult educators can effectively teach social media literacy and internet safety, empowering learners to navigate the online world confidently and safely both now and in the future.



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Unit 4. Navigating privacy and security settings.

Introduction

In today's digital age, privacy and security are paramount concerns, particularly when it comes to social media and internet use. "Unit 4: Navigating Privacy and Security Settings" is designed to equip adult educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to guide families in understanding and managing their online privacy and security effectively. This unit focuses on critical aspects such as understanding digital footprints, configuring privacy settings, protecting minors' privacy, and managing personal data.

Within the context of the IPAD project, this unit aims to empower adult educators to help families navigate the complex landscape of digital privacy and security. By understanding the significance of digital footprints and the importance of privacy settings, educators can foster a culture of informed and responsible online behaviour among adults and children alike. This unit is integral to the broader objective of promoting social media literacy and internet safety, ensuring that individuals are not only aware of the potential risks but are also equipped to mitigate them through informed decision-making and proactive measures.

Description of the theoretical fundamental or the pedagogical approach

Theoretical framework

The theoretical foundation of this unit is grounded in several key concepts from digital literacy, data protection, and privacy studies. The framework draws on the theory of **Digital Literacy** by Paul Gilster, which emphasises the ability to understand and use information from a variety of digital sources, critically assessing its validity and relevance. Another significant theoretical underpinning is **Westin's Privacy Theory**, which views privacy as the right of individuals to control information about themselves. This theory provides the basis for understanding the need to manage digital footprints and privacy settings proactively.

Additionally, **Contextual Integrity** by Helen Nissenbaum plays a crucial role in framing privacy concerns in online environments, suggesting that privacy is preserved when information flows appropriately within the given context, aligned with the norms of that context. The unit also integrates concepts from **Social Cognitive Theory** (Bandura), particularly in understanding how individuals learn and adapt their behaviour in response to observing others, which is relevant when educating about privacy settings and online safety.

Key concepts

- **Digital footprint:** The trail of data that individuals leave behind when they use the internet, including social media interactions, online purchases, and browsing history.

- **Privacy settings:** Tools provided by digital platforms that allow users to control who can access their information and how it is shared.
- **Data management:** The process of controlling and protecting data that individuals share online, ensuring it is only accessible by intended parties.
- **Minor's privacy:** Specific considerations and protections applied to the data and digital activities of children and adolescents, acknowledging their vulnerability in the digital space.

Methodology

The **pedagogical approach** for this unit emphasises active learning and practical application. The proposed pedagogical approaches are aligned with the theoretical frameworks discussed above, fostering a deep understanding of the concepts while encouraging practical application in real-world contexts. Proposed methods include:

- **Interactive workshops:** Engaging sessions where educators and learners explore privacy settings on various platforms, practising the application of these settings in real-time.
- **Scenario-based learning:** Creating hypothetical scenarios that simulate real-life online situations, such as the consequences of oversharing information or failing to adjust privacy settings.
- **Role-playing exercises:** Participants assume roles, such as parents or children, to understand different perspectives on privacy concerns and practice managing them.
- **Guided discussions:** Facilitated conversations that encourage critical thinking about privacy and data management, allowing participants to share experiences and strategies.
- **Storytelling sessions:** Real-life stories about the consequences of poor privacy management will be shared to illustrate the potential risks and to highlight effective strategies for safeguarding information. These stories will serve as cautionary tales that underscore the importance of privacy awareness.

Benefits

The theoretical and pedagogical approaches outlined in this unit offer significant advantages. Learners will gain a comprehensive understanding of the importance of privacy and security settings, enabling them to make informed decisions about their online behaviour. These approaches also equip participants with practical skills to configure privacy settings and manage their digital footprints effectively, thus enhancing their ability to protect themselves and their families online. Additionally, educators are empowered to support families in navigating the digital landscape safely, fostering a culture of responsible and informed digital practices.

Challenges

Despite the benefits, there are several challenges to implementing these approaches. The complexity of privacy settings across different platforms can make it difficult for educators to provide comprehensive guidance. Furthermore, the rapid evolution of digital technology means that privacy features and risks

are constantly changing, requiring educators to continuously update their knowledge. Additionally, there may be resistance to change, as individuals might be reluctant to adjust their privacy settings or alter their online behaviour, especially if they do not perceive immediate risks.

To address these challenges, continuous learning is essential, as it allows both educators and learners to stay updated on the latest privacy tools and risks. Simplifying complex privacy settings into easily understandable and actionable steps can also help overcome the difficulties associated with guiding learners through these processes. To counteract resistance to change, educators can increase engagement by making the concepts relevant to learners, highlighting the real-world consequences of poor privacy management to motivate behavioural adjustments.

Practical application

Educators can apply the theoretical and pedagogical approaches discussed in various educational settings:

- **Workshops for parents and families:** Conduct sessions where families can learn together about privacy settings and the importance of digital footprints, using real-life examples and demonstrations.
- **Classroom activities:** Implement role-playing exercises where students practise adjusting privacy settings and discuss the impact of their choices.
- **Community outreach:** Develop informational campaigns or webinars to raise awareness about the importance of online privacy and security within the broader community.

Conclusions and recommendations

The theoretical and pedagogical bases for the unit "Navigating privacy and security settings" are designed to provide adult educators with a robust framework to teach and support families in managing their online privacy and security effectively. By grounding the unit in solid theoretical knowledge and employing dynamic and interactive pedagogical methods, the curriculum aims to develop comprehensive digital literacy skills that are crucial for safe internet usage. These foundations ensure that educators are well-prepared to address the challenges of social media literacy and internet safety, making a significant impact on the digital well-being of families and their children.

For effective implementation, adult educators should:

- Regularly update their knowledge on privacy settings across different platforms.
- Use interactive and practical teaching methods to engage learners actively.
- Encourage families to have open discussions about privacy and security, reinforcing the importance of responsible online behaviour.
- Provide continuous support and resources to help learners stay informed about new privacy features and risks.

Future considerations

Looking ahead, educators should remain vigilant in monitoring the ever-evolving digital landscape, as new privacy concerns and security challenges continue to emerge. It's essential to stay informed about the latest developments in privacy tools and data protection strategies, ensuring that the knowledge imparted remains relevant and effective. Furthermore, there is a need to explore and integrate innovative teaching methods that can adapt to the changing nature of digital technology, helping learners to build resilience and adaptability in their online practices. Educators should also consider fostering a continuous dialogue with families about digital privacy, encouraging ongoing learning and adjustment as new risks and technologies arise.



Unit 5. Netiquette: Promoting participation in society and empowerment.

Introduction

Unit 5 is designed to equip adult educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to guide families in fostering positive online behaviour through the principles of netiquette. By mastering respectful communication and ethical conduct in digital interactions, educators can support parents, and their children develop a sense of responsibility, empathy, and digital citizenship.

The primary objectives of Unit 5 are to provide an understanding of netiquette by defining it and highlighting its importance in online interactions, while exploring the principles of respectful and responsible digital communication; to promote positive online behaviour, by teaching strategies for fostering respectful dialogue and interactions in digital spaces, and emphasising the role of empathy, kindness and constructive feedback in online communication; to empower families by equipping educators with tools to help parents model and instil netiquette principles in their children and promote a sense of responsibility among family members for their online actions and interactions; to mitigate online risks, by addressing specific risks associated with online interactions, such as cyberbullying, misinformation, and privacy issues and providing practical guidance on how to navigate and respond to these risks effectively; and to enhance digital citizenship, by fostering an understanding of digital citizenship, including ethical behaviour and the impact of online actions on others, encouraging participation in online communities with a focus on inclusivity and respect.

Unit 5 is a crucial component of the "Innovative Digital Awareness Resources for Parents on Social Media Literacy and Internet Safety" as it aligns with the project's goal of enhancing digital literacy among families by focusing on positive online engagement, family empowerment, and preventative measures. This unit will ultimately contribute to building a more inclusive and respectful digital society by fostering better communication practices and ethical behaviour online, which is integral to the overarching goals of the IPAD project.

Description of the theoretical fundamental or the pedagogical approach

Theoretical framework

Social learning theory: The Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasises the role of observation and imitation in learning behaviours. This theory is foundational in understanding how individuals learn netiquette through modelling and observing others' online behaviours. It highlights that adults and children learn and adopt behaviours by observing the actions of role models (e.g., parents, teachers) and the consequences of those actions.

Digital citizenship framework: The Digital Citizenship Framework, developed by Mike Ribble, focuses on the responsible use of technology and the ethical considerations in digital environments. It encompasses nine elements: digital access, digital commerce, digital communication, digital literacy, digital etiquette, digital law, digital rights and responsibilities, digital health and wellness, and digital security. For Unit 5, particular emphasis is placed on digital etiquette and digital rights and responsibilities, which are crucial for understanding and practicing netiquette.

Theory of planned behaviour: This theory, proposed by Icek Ajzen, suggests that behaviour is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the context of netiquette, this theory helps in understanding how educators and families form intentions to engage in respectful online behaviour. By addressing these components, educators can foster a more profound commitment to positive digital interactions.

Constructivist learning theory: Constructivist theories, notably those by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, argue that learners construct their understanding through experiences and reflections. This perspective supports the idea that adult educators and families will better grasp netiquette principles through interactive, reflective learning processes that connect with their real-life experiences and challenges.

Key concepts

Netiquette: Netiquette refers to the code of polite and respectful behaviour that governs interactions in digital environments. It involves principles such as using appropriate language, respecting others' opinions, and maintaining privacy. Netiquette is essential for fostering positive online communities and preventing conflicts.

Digital citizenship: Digital citizenship encompasses the norms and behaviours expected from individuals in the digital world. It includes understanding and practicing respectful communication, ethical conduct, and responsible use of technology.

Empathy in online communication: Empathy in digital interactions involves recognising and considering others' feelings and perspectives. It is crucial for resolving conflicts and fostering respectful and supportive online environments.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying refers to the use of digital platforms to harass, intimidate, or harm others. Understanding and addressing cyberbullying is a key aspect of netiquette and online safety.

Methodology

Interactive workshops: Interactive workshops are used to engage participants in discussions, role-playing, and simulations of online interactions. These activities help learners practice netiquette principles in a controlled environment, fostering experiential learning.

Case studies and scenarios: Using real-life case studies and scenarios allows educators to explore and analyse various online behaviours and their consequences. This approach facilitates critical thinking and the application of netiquette principles to practical situations.

Reflective practices: Encouraging participants to reflect on their online experiences and behaviours helps them internalise netiquette principles. Journals, group discussions, and self-assessment tools are employed to promote reflection and self-awareness.

Peer learning and modelling: Peer learning involves participants sharing their experiences and strategies for practicing netiquette. Modelling respectful online behaviour through role models and case examples helps reinforce the desired behaviours.

Benefits

Enhanced understanding: The theoretical and pedagogical approaches used in this unit provide a comprehensive understanding of netiquette and digital citizenship. Educators gain a deeper grasp of these concepts, enabling them to effectively teach and model positive online behaviour.

Improved online behaviour: By applying these approaches, adult educators and families are better equipped to foster respectful and responsible online interactions. This contributes to creating safer and more inclusive digital environments.

Practical skills: Interactive and reflective methodologies enhance practical skills in managing online interactions, addressing conflicts, and preventing cyberbullying. Participants can apply these skills in real-world scenarios.

Empowerment: The unit empowers families by equipping them with the knowledge and tools to guide their children's online behaviour, fostering a sense of responsibility and ethical conduct.

Challenges

Resistance to change: Some participants may resist adopting new online behaviours or challenging their existing practices. Overcoming this resistance requires addressing concerns, providing clear benefits, and demonstrating the value of netiquette through practical examples.

Diverse backgrounds: Participants may come from diverse backgrounds with varying levels of digital literacy. Tailoring the content to different skill levels and providing differentiated support can help address this challenge.

Keeping up with evolving technology: The rapid evolution of technology and online platforms can make it challenging to stay current with netiquette practices. Ongoing updates and incorporating emerging trends into the curriculum are essential for relevance.

Practical application

Classroom integration: In educational settings, educators can integrate netiquette lessons into existing curricula by incorporating discussions, role-playing exercises, and reflective activities related to online behaviour.

Family workshops: Organise workshops for families that include interactive sessions on netiquette, case studies, and role-playing scenarios to practice respectful online communication.

Online platform: Develop online resources and modules that provide educators with tools and materials for teaching netiquette. Include interactive elements like forums or chat rooms where participants can practice and receive feedback on their online behaviour.

Community programmes: Implement community-based programmes that promote netiquette through local events, school partnerships, and public awareness campaigns, emphasising the importance of respectful digital interactions.

Conclusions and recommendations

Summary

Unit 5, "Netiquette: Promoting participation in society and empowerment," aims to equip adult educators with the skills necessary to foster positive online behaviour through the principles of netiquette. The unit is grounded in key theoretical frameworks such as Social Learning Theory, which highlights the role of observation and modelling in learning, and the Digital Citizenship Framework, which emphasises responsible and ethical online conduct. The Theory of Planned Behaviour addresses how attitudes and norms influence online actions, while the Constructivist Learning Theory supports interactive and reflective learning experiences. Key concepts include netiquette, digital citizenship, empathy in online communication, and the prevention of cyberbullying. Pedagogical approaches involve interactive workshops, case studies, reflective practices, and peer learning to enhance understanding and practical application. These methods aim to improve online behaviour and empower families, though challenges such as resistance to change and keeping pace with technological advancements must be addressed.

Recommendations

To effectively teach social media literacy and internet safety, adult educators should incorporate interactive learning techniques such as workshops and role-playing exercises that allow participants to practice netiquette principles. Using real-life case studies helps contextualise online behaviours and their impacts, while reflective practices, including journaling and group discussions, encourage self-evaluation and growth. Educators should model respectful online behaviour themselves, offer differentiated support to cater to various levels of digital literacy, and stay updated with evolving technologies and best

practices. Additionally, organising family workshops can address specific needs and dynamics, fostering a collaborative approach to online etiquette.

Future considerations

Looking ahead, educators should remain vigilant about emerging technologies and their impact on netiquette, ensuring educational materials reflect current trends and issues. Considering the diverse cultural and contextual backgrounds of learners is crucial for adapting netiquette principles to align with different norms and values. Staying informed about ongoing research and developments in digital citizenship will help refine educational practices, while engaging in policy discussions and advocacy can support broader efforts to promote responsible online behaviour and inclusivity.



Picture by Julia M Cameron:
<https://www.pexels.com/es-es/foto/foto-de-mujer-y->

Unit 6. Parental mediation for reflective handling.

Introduction

Unit 6, “Parental mediation for reflective handling”, aims to equip adult educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to guide parents to effectively mediate their children’s online activities. Parental mediation involves educating and supporting parents to protect their children online. This unit covers strategies for active and restrictive mediation to avoid online harm, as well as methods to handle any potential conflict which may arise during parental mediation.

The IPAD project addresses the need for a comprehensive education specific to the age of Social Media Literacy and Internet Safety. Unit 6 is particularly relevant in this context because, as social media and online technology continues to advance, the need for social media-specific digital literacy becomes increasingly critical because it recognises that social media and online technology are an integral part of many people's daily lives, especially young people. Unit 6 focuses on the need to educate people on how to use these tools safely and responsibly.

Theoretical framework

This unit is underpinned by theory defined by the European Commission in their Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) Strategy. The EC defines the issues which are addressed by the Strategy and provides evidence to show why a strategy to improve children's well-being online is required.

The 3 pillars of the BIK+ are: 1/ A safe digital environment to protect children from harmful and illegal content, conduct, contact and risks as young consumers; 2/ Empower children in the digital world and give them the necessary skills to make safe choices and express themselves online; and 3/ Improve children's active participation, with more child-led activities to foster innovative and creative digital experiences. ¹

The BIK+ Strategy aims to “complement and support the practical implementation of the existing measures to protect children online, develop children’s skills and empower them to safely enjoy and shape their life online.”²

Key concepts

- **Parental Mediation:** The activities and strategies implemented by parents to guide, regulate and safeguard their children's online experiences, with the aim of minimising negative effects and maximising positive effects.

¹ Better Internet for children | Shaping Europe's digital future (europa.eu)

² EUR-Lex - 52022DC0212 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)

- **Active Mediation:** A respectful, understanding and instructive Parental Mediation strategy which involves parents actively engaging in open communication with their children about the internet to guide and support their online experiences to minimise potential risks and harm.
- **Restrictive Mediation:** Involves the setting of rules and restrictions, for example, time restrictions, restricting social interactions, website and content access restrictions, the use of technical tools to monitor, filter or block websites and parents actively monitoring websites children have visited and emails/ messages received and sent.

Methodology

This learning unit will be taught through blended learning methodology. Learners will engage with the Online Course through the Online Platform. They will read the e-Learning content which is structured into Learning Units and Lessons. At the end of each Learning Unit, learners will take an Assessment, consisting of single or multiple choice and True / False questions. Learners can engage with the learning content when it suits them, where it suits them, and at their own pace entirely. This method of online flexible learning facilitates learning due to the fact learning can take place at any time and any place, thus it can be fitted into the normal daily routine of the learner when it suits, and from where it suits.

The Practical Activities will provide Adult Educators with activities they can apply on their learners in person, face-to-face. These activities will be broken down into step-by-step instructions, providing ready to go classroom activities that can be used to upskill final beneficiaries in internet safety and social media literacy. Practical activities will include methodologies such as group discussions, role-play and workshops.

Benefits

The benefits of a flexible learning online course are enormous. Learners can work full-time and upskill in the comfort of their own home, as and when suits them. This makes the learning content much more accessible. The Assessment at the end of each learning unit provides an effective method for checking learner comprehension and progress.

The Practical Activities are beneficial as they will provide Learners attending the online course with actual examples of classroom tasks relevant to each learning unit which they can apply on their own learners in the classroom. They will provide a solid base from which to explore internet safety and social media literacy with final beneficiaries.

Challenges

Potential challenges in implementing a blended learning approach to learning could be: a/ access to the internet, b/ access to technology, c/ motivation. Learners who do not have access to the internet or required technology could overcome this challenge by using the technology and internet at their local library. Also, it may be possible to loan a laptop from their workplace, and even use the wifi there. Most

people nowadays however do have access to the internet, even if it just through their mobile phones. Regarding motivation, learners could set aside a certain day and time which they will devote to taking the course. Creating a structure for learning could help motivation levels.

Additionally, although the Online Course can be undertaken in your own time, learners with young children or others who just don't have the time outside of working hours might not be able to engage with the course. To solve this, employers could provide time within working hours for personal development and encourage employees to engage with the lessons during this time. This could lead to fruitful group discussions about the lessons learned and key takeaways.

Potential challenges when implementing the practical activities could include that they are not suited to their particular group of students for a variety of reasons. To overcome this, the practical activities can be adapted to better suit their students' learning needs.

Practical application

The theoretical and pedagogical approaches can be applied in educational students by learners of the online course. The practical activities set will outline ways in which the theory and teaching methodology can be implemented. Each activity comes with step-by-step instructions which should be followed but can of course be adapted to suit the particular group of learners being addressed.

In terms of this learning unit, parents/ adults can explore the different types of parental mediation with adult educators, assessing the pros and cons of each and discussing which would work well and how they can implement these in their own homes. They can be introduced to the idea of establishing a family agreement for internet use, where key ideas regarding the safe and responsible use of the internet are set out, such as time restrictions for phone use (phone away/out of reach most of the time but an agreed time each day is agreed when the internet can be accessed).

Conclusions and recommendations

In summary, the most important theoretical and pedagogical approaches introduced in this learning units are:

- **Parental Mediation:** The activities and strategies implemented by parents to guide, regulate and safeguard their children's online experiences, with the aim of minimising negative effects and maximising positive effects.
- **Active Mediation:** A respectful, understanding and instructive Parental Mediation strategy which involves parents actively engaging in open communication with their children about the internet to guide and support their online experiences to minimise potential risks and harm.
- **Restrictive Mediation:** Involves the setting of rules and restrictions, for example, time restrictions, restricting social interactions, website and content access restrictions, the use of technical tools to monitor, filter or block websites and parents actively monitoring websites children have visited and emails/ messages received and sent.

- **Handling/Avoiding conflict:** Studies show that open communication about safe and responsible use (Active Mediation) leads to a good parent-child relationship, and this in turn leads to safer and more responsible internet use. So, to avoid conflict, engaging in respectful, open and continuous communication is key.³ Restrictive mediation is more likely to lead to conflict, but combining this type of mediation with Active Mediation is recommended to handle and reduce any conflict.
- **Blended learning:** Online learning is beneficial as it can be done when and where suits the learner, at their own pace. The practical activities which are to be applied by learners (adult educators) of the online course with their own students give adult educators access to relevant classroom activities which implement what they have learnt on the course online in real educational settings.

Recommendations

It is recommended that adult educators:

1. Comprehend and highlight the significance of parental mediation to foster safe and responsible internet use among children.
2. Provide information to parents about parental mediation strategies (Active and Restrictive) so parents can keep their children safe online.
3. Stress the importance to parents of the impact of a good parent-child relationship in the reduction of online risk.
4. Provide parents with advice regarding methods for avoiding and handling conflict which may arise between parent and child.

Future considerations

Adult educators should bear in mind that research in this area is fairly new and as time goes on, emerging strategies are bound to be tested and recommended. It is worth keeping an eye out for other recommended strategies which could prove effective in ensuring the safety of children online.

³ [Behavioral Sciences | Free Full-Text | Active Parental Mediation and Adolescent Problematic Internet Use: The Mediating Role of Parent–Child Relationships and Hiding Online Behavior \(mdpi.com\)](#)

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