

Reference Materials

The Design of the " Healthy Use of the Internet - Educational Kit for Secondary Schools "

The "Healthy Use of the Internet - Educational Kit for Secondary Schools" is designed by applying the concepts of value education, with an emphasis on students and the development of their values. Teachers play the role of a facilitator and select appropriate situations to stimulate students' thinking and discussion. With the aid of appropriate teaching strategies, teachers can guide students further to review their online attitude and help them use the Internet safely.

The instructional design incorporates the following strategies, the purposes of which are to facilitate students' analysis and exploration of the relevant subject matters from multiple perspectives:

➤ Value Analysis

"Value Judgement" is developed in accordance with the statement of facts and the analysis of the pros and cons of relevant information (Kniker, 1977). Value analysis is the process of guiding students to gather information, state their choices and the reasons from multiple perspectives, and analyse and discuss the consequences of their choices.

➤ Value Clarification

The "Value Development" process comprises three parts, namely choosing, prizing and acting. Through reviewing, comparing, evaluating and observing others' values, students can develop a better personal value framework for themselves in the learning process (Rath, 1966). In clarifying values, the emphasis is put on reflection and implementation and students are expected to apply these values in their daily lives.

➤ Moral Situation

The concept of "Moral Situation" is developed on the basis of Kohlberg's "Moral Cognitive Development" theory. The development of moral cognition is a gradual process and the occurrence of cognitive conflicts can stimulate reflection and development (Guo, Benyu 郭本禹, 1999). In the inquiry process, teachers propose a situation with conflicting moral imperatives for students to discuss and consider, and students then need to make their choices, review their rationales, and enhance their value cognition through discussion.

Collaborative learning

Collaborative learning is an instructional method which establishes an interactive learning environment through small group activities. Students consider an issue, share their views and support each other to achieve the learning objective (Parker, 1985). The learning activities can take the forms of Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD), Group Investigation, Jigsaw or Cooperative Learning and the process can enhance the co-operation and communication skills of students. (Huang, Zhengjie and Wu Junxian 黃政傑、吳俊憲，2006).

Cooperative learning is a simple and basic way for grouping, which has been proven to be effective for conducting many types of activity. Students typically work in teams of four or five, share resources and support each other in learning to accomplish the learning goals (Huang, Zhengjie and Wu Junxian 黃政傑、吳俊憲，2006).

For controversial issues, teachers should pay attention to the following points to enhance the effectiveness in teaching:

1. Neutrality: students should be encouraged to explore and consider the questions or situations by themselves and make their own choices;
2. Creating an open learning environment: teachers need to create an open learning environment for students to express their views freely. (Huang, Jianyi 黃建一, 1989); and
3. Focus on multiple perspectives: in the course of discussion, students should be encouraged to consider issues from multiple perspectives to enhance their ability in problem-solving (Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson & Coulson, 1992). Cognitive flexibility would facilitate the transfer of knowledge (Jacobson & Spiro, 1995).

Part 1 – The Internet

The Internet plays an important role in human interaction and the spread of information. It provides a virtual environment for people to interact and communicate with each other and its fundamental characteristics can affect the users' behaviour (Wallace, 1999).

Application of the Internet in Daily Life

The Internet has now become an indispensable part of our lives. The uses of the Internet can be subsumed under the following four major areas (Yuan, Mengyao and Huang, Shaohua 袁夢遙、黃少華 · 2010):

- a) Searching information: People can use search engines to search for information that they need easily on the Internet.
- b) Communication: Using online communication tools like email, social websites and instant messages, people can keep in touch with their friends who live in other territories very conveniently (Wellman et al. 2001).
- c) Provision of entertainment: The Internet can provide information in multimedia formats. According to a survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department in 2009, 63.3% of the respondents had used the Internet to listen to the music or radio programmes, 62.6% had watched online videos, and 60% had played online games in the 12 months before enumeration. The results of the survey show that the Internet is playing a very important role in the provision of entertainment services.
- d) Handling personal business: Many people now go online to handle their personal business, like shopping, banking and learning, etc.

Characteristics of the Internet

Anonymity

In the online world, individuals can re-name themselves to create new accounts easily and hide their real identities (Teng, Tianwu 藤田悟 · 2004). Besides, people can choose what image to use in interacting with others on the Internet.

Convenience

People can now use mobile devices like smartphones or tablet PCs to go online anytime and anywhere conveniently (Wang, Zhihong 王智弘 · 2005). The Internet provides a great variety of information that can be easily searched to satisfy our day-to-day needs in work, learning, living and entertainment.

No Borders

The Internet world transcends geographical borders. Internet users can easily access websites operating in foreign countries (Xiang, Qianyi 向倩儀 · 2006).

Autonomy

People have a high degree of autonomy in using the Internet. They can decide when to receive information, what information to receive and when to make a response (Chen, Yianhe and Chen, Yulin 陳怡安和陳俞霖 · 2013).

Interaction

The Internet allows people to communicate or express their views and there are no time or space restraints.

Part 2 – Causes of Internet Risks

The Internet is a prominent source of rich information and entertainment, but the lack of transparency and its speed of transmission have posed new risks, such as Internet frauds, Internet pornography, Internet addiction and Internet violent games.

(a) Inappropriate attitude in using the Internet

- (i) Not alert to the need to protect personal information.
- (ii) Underestimate the influence of Internet communication.
- (iii) Pressure other people through peer groups.

(b) Teenagers' development needs

- (i) Due to the anonymous nature of the Internet, it is easier for youngsters to develop intimate relationships with other people (Hu, Yuzhen 胡玉珍 · 2010).
- (ii) Some youngsters may attempt to make friends on the Internet by sharing sex information.
- (iii) Faced with a lot of changes in growth, some teenagers may feel lost and try to win their peers' recognition and support on the Internet.
- (iv) Some online games provide very strong sensory stimulations and attract a lot of teenagers to indulge in playing them (Wang, Zhihong 王智弘 · 2005).

Internet risks

It is more difficult to regulate people's behaviour in the online world than in reality. The common problems on the Internet are set out below:

- (a) Internet fraud: It is not difficult for swindlers to carry out fraudulent activities on the Internet as the Internet is anonymous and it is connected to almost anywhere in the world. Major Internet frauds include selling fake, inferior or pirated products and cheating money on social forums.

- (b) Internet pornography: It is not difficult to access pornographic materials like obscene or indecent texts, images, sounds, animations and sexual solicitations on the Internet (Whitaker & Bushman, 2009). Although the Internet is regulated under the COIAO there are no national boundaries on the Internet and foreign websites are not subject to the jurisdiction of the laws of Hong Kong.
- (c) Internet addiction: Excessive use of the Internet can affect one's studies, work or social life. People who are addicted to the Internet may feel anxious, uneasy or depressed if they are forbidden to go online (Whitaker & Bushman, 2009).
- (d) Violent online games: Some online games have a lot of violent contents. The teenagers who play violent online games for a long period of time may imitate the violent acts of the games (Anderson & Bushman, 2001).

Internet's impact on youngsters' development

Self-image

Some research reveals that the proper use of the Internet can help youngsters obtain "psychological feedback" and enhance their self-image (Huang, Houming 黃厚銘 · 2000). However, if people indulge themselves too much in the virtual world, they may become self-centred (Liu, Guiping 劉貴萍 · 2002)

Peers' recognition

Online communities have their common interests and people can easily win their peers' support and recognition. Peer recognition is beneficial to the development of self-esteem (Chen, Yulin 陳俞霖 · 2002)

Social development

Youngsters can get social experience by interacting with other people on the Internet. However, indulgence in the Internet may lead to the neglect of real social life and cause people to develop a solitary personality (Xiang, Wei 向巍 · 2007). On the Internet, one may choose to communicate with one's friends only, but human relationship in real life is much more complicated.

Violent and aggressive behaviour

Violent online games may affect the emotional development of teenagers. Some research shows that those teenagers who indulge themselves in playing violent online games for a long period of time may become more aggressive (Xiang, Wei 向巍 · 2007).

Emotional development

Experiencing different emotions (e.g. joy, anger, sadness, happiness) is beneficial to youngsters' growth. However, indulging in the Internet and dissociating from the real life too much may cause one to become more apathetic (Liu, Guiping 劉貴萍 · 2002).

Sexual attitude

Most teenagers do not have direct experience in sex and some may wish to know more about sex by viewing pornographic materials (Luo, Wenhui, et al. 羅文輝、吳筱玫、向倩儀和劉惠苓 · 2006). However, the sex information published on the Internet may be inappropriate or unreasonable in nature. Exposure to inappropriate sex information for a long period of time may affect teenagers' behaviour and attitude towards sex.

Social responsibilities

Excessive use of the Internet may distort youngsters' cognitive development and they may mistake the virtual world for the real world (Liu, Guiping 劉貴萍 · 2002).

Part 3 - Moral Issues on the Internet

How to help teenagers to deal with the temptations posed by the Internet? To help solve teenagers' behavioural problems on the Internet, the most effective way is to enhance their information literacy and cyber ethics.

Information Literacy

There are a broad and a narrow definition of information literacy. The broad definition of information literacy includes traditional literacy, computer literacy, media literacy and network literacy. The narrow definition of information literacy, on the other hand, refers to the ability to make use of the computer and the Internet to solve particular problems (Chen, Mingyue 陳明月 · 2008).

Cyber Ethics

The study of cyber ethics is purported to develop a set of standards for guiding online behaviour (Huang, Zhikun 黃誌坤 · 2006).

Part 4 - Measures to enhance Internet safety

Internet risks should not be overlooked. People who are not alert to such risks may fall into Internet traps easily. The following are some measures that may be adopted to enhance Internet safety:

- (a) Some websites provide rewards (e.g. free download or discount coupons etc.) in order to collect personal data from the users. We should carefully evaluate the risks and verify the authenticity of the websites before providing personal information.
- (b) We can restrict the access rights of the social networking platforms (e.g. Facebook, blogs) to allow access to our personal information for designated persons only or decide the manner in which our personal information is published. This can prevent the leakage or fraudulent use of our personal data.
- (c) We should comply with the law. According to the COIAO, any person who publishes violent, depraved or repulsive information on the Internet (e.g. posting pornographic videos on a discussion forum) may be prosecuted.
- (d) Refrain from spreading rumors or ridiculing others as such acts of cyber bullying may deeply disturb or even cause psychological harm to the victims, particularly when information can spread widely and quickly on the Internet.
- (e) Most anti-virus software contains firewall programmes, which can be used to protect computers from cyber attacks and damages.
- (f) Regular exposure to pornographic or violent materials can affect a person's psychological development. To protect teenagers, parents may consider installing suitable filtering software to block out objectionable contents like those on pornography, violence, crimes, gambling and drugs on the Internet.

SMART (Cybersmart!Education, 2013 & Chen, 2007)

Please remember the "SMART" acronym while you use the Internet to ensure safety.

S – Safety

Pay attention to Internet security. Protect your personal privacy to prevent other people from impersonating you; use filtering and anti-virus software to block harmful information or programmes; and refrain from accessing pornographic or unknown websites.

M – Manners

Develop a proper attitude in using the Internet: be responsible; respect intellectual property rights; do not plagiarise other people's works; respect and never abuse other people.

A – Authenticity

Some of the information published on the Internet may not be genuine. We should critically evaluate the accuracy, objectivity and safety of the information obtained from the Internet.

R – Research

Learn to use Internet search engines to search for information.

T – Technology

Use appropriate information technology tools to help us learn.

Part 5 - Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance

The COIAO aims to regulate objectionable materials to protect young people. The Internet is also subject to the jurisdiction of the COIAO.

Definition of articles

According to the COIAO, the definitions of “indecency” and “obscenity” include violence, depravity and repulsiveness; “article” means anything consisting of or containing material to be read or looked at or both read and looked at, any sound recording, and any film, video-tape, disc or other record of a picture or pictures. In general, the publication of newspapers, magazines, books, comics, VCD, DVD, computer games, texts, images transmitted electronically and information on the Internet are subject to regulation under the COIAO. Films for public exhibition are regulated by the Film Censorship Ordinance (FCO).

Classification of articles

The Obscene Articles Tribunal (OAT), established under the COIAO, is responsible for classification of articles according to the following categories:

- Class I: Neither obscene nor indecent
- Class II: Indecent
- Class III: Obscene

The OAT is a judicial body that has an exclusive jurisdiction to determine the classification of articles. It comprises a presiding magistrate and at least two adjudicators who are members of the public.

There is no restriction on the publication of Class I articles.

Class II articles must not be published or sold to persons under the age of 18 years. Any person who publishes a Class II indecent article must comply with certain statutory

requirements, such as sealing the article in a wrapper and attaching a warning notice¹ on both the front and back covers of the articles.

Class III articles are prohibited from publication.

It is not necessary to submit articles to the OAT for classification before publication. The author, printer, manufacturer, publisher, importer, distributor or owner of the copyright of any article or any person who commissions the design, production or publication of any article may, however, submit that article to the OAT for classification. In addition, the Secretary for Justice and any authorised public officers (viz. authorised officers of Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration, Hong Kong Police Force and Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department) may submit an article to the OAT for classification.

Factors to consider in classification of articles

In determining whether an article is obscene or indecent, the OAT shall have regard to-

- (a) standards of morality generally accepted by reasonable members of the community;
- (b) the dominant effect of the article as a whole;
- (c) the class or age of the likely recipients;
- (d) the location at which the article is displayed; and
- (e) whether the article has an honest purpose.

Penalty

According to the COIAO, any person who publishes Class II (Indecent) articles not in compliance with the restrictions of the COIAO is liable to a maximum penalty of \$400,000 fine and imprisonment for 12 months on his first conviction, and \$800,000 fine and imprisonment for 12 months on a second or subsequent conviction. Any person who publishes Class III (Obscene) articles under any circumstances is liable to a maximum penalty of \$1,000,000 fine and imprisonment for 3 years.

Film Censorship Ordinance

Under the FCO, all films intended for public exhibition in Hong Kong shall be submitted to the Film Censorship Authority (FCA) for examination. In deciding the classification of a film,

¹ According to the COIAO, the warning notice shall adopt the wording below:-

“WARNING: This article contains material which may offend and may not be distributed, circulated, sold, hired, given, lent, shown, played or projected to a person under the age of 18 years.

the FCA shall consider whether the film portrays, depicts or treats cruelty, torture, violence, crime, horror, disability, sexuality or indecent or offensive language or behaviour and other relevant considerations. Unlike the COIAO, films are classified into the following four categories:

Class I : Suitable for all ages

Class IIA: Not suitable for children

Class IIB: Not suitable for young persons and children

Class III: Persons aged 18 and above only

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