Challenging Hate Online

This lesson is part of USE, UNDERSTAND & CREATE: A Digital Literacy Framework for Canadian Schools: http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/digital-literacy-framework.

Overview

In this lesson students learn how digital media is used to promote or combat hatred and intolerance. The class begins with a discussion on the different ways that hate organizations disseminate their messages using digital media and how this medium offers the potential to work against hatred and intolerance. In a jigsaw activity, students visit and analyze the supporting websites of five anti-hate organizations/initiatives and then apply what they've learned to the development of their own anti-hate campaigns.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Explore the issue of hate and various ways to challenge it
- Be aware of the strategies used by anti-hate organizations to promote tolerance and respect
- Understand how the Internet can be used to facilitate the promotion of tolerance and respect
- Recognize the characteristics of a successful awareness campaign
- Understand the role we all can play in countering racism and intolerance

Preparation and Materials

Have the following handouts available:

- *Challenging Online Hate Questionnaire*
- *Activism Survey*
- *A Quick Guide to Online Activism*
- *Developing an Anti-Hate Campaign*

Prepare to project or distribute the *Jigsaw Activity Instructions*

Prior to starting this activity, ensure that you have access to at least five Internet-connected devices. You may want to have computers already connected to one of these websites:

1. AntiHate.ca (https://www.antihate.ca/)
2. Project Someone (http://projectsomeone.ca/)
3. No Hate Speech Movement (http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/)
4. Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (https://info-radical.org/en/)
5. Canadian Race Relations Foundation (https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/)

Review the teacher backgrounder *Complicated Conversations in the Classroom*

- *Optional:* Send home the parent tip sheet Talking to Kids About Hate Online
- *Optional:* Review the MediaSmarts article on Online Hate

Procedure

Start the lesson by asking students if they have ever been involved in any kind of activism (defining "activism" as any action, online or offline, that was trying to change something. This can range from very practical activities such as volunteering to help clean up a park or support a charity, or more abstract things such as participating in a public awareness campaign about an issue.)

Distribute the handout *Activism Survey* and have students complete it. As a class, go through each of the 5 categories and have one student speak to their experience in each:

- Online (sharing content on social media, responding to someone else's post)
- In-person activities (discussion at the dinner table)
- Civic engagement (volunteering)
- Activism (petitioning)
- Formal politics (joining a political party, donating to a candidate)

Prompt student reflection with questions like:

- What was the issue you were involved with, and how did you get involved initially? Was there someone who invited you to participate or did you discover the issue/cause independently?
- Are you currently involved with the same cause or a different one?
- What was your experience like? Did you find it effective or a satisfying experience? In your opinion, how effective are the different categories?
- With the shift in politics to more and more online forums and outlets, do you think there is still value in the face-to-face participation?
- What are the advantages to the on and offline methods?

Now ask students:

- Can you think of any cause-related online campaigns that have resonated with you?
- What were some of these causes?
- What level(s) of the engagement pyramid did they focus on?
- What kind of campaign was it? (For example, was it to promote an event? To raise awareness? To raise funds? To let people know about services that are provided?)

Next, have students consider how these campaigns used digital media to amplify their message, promote their services and/or help them find support for their cause by asking them:

- How were these campaigns promoted online? (Have students consider both methods and platforms.)
- What was it that caught your attention and made the cause resonate with you?
- Was this solely an online campaign, or was other media used?
- Which was better at getting your attention?

Based on this discussion, try to flesh out what kinds of benefits an online presence would have for a social justice group. As students bring up each benefit, write the main word on the board (i.e. cost, reach, cooperation…)

Answers and guided discussion should include the following:

Cost – *Publishing material online costs significantly less than actually printing distributing flyers and documents.*

Reach – *The Internet can quickly and effectively reach a global audience.*

Cooperation – *The Internet facilitates networking among likeminded individuals or groups located at a distance from each other.*

Engaging Youth – *Since youth spend so much time with online technology, Internet-based content can more easily reach young people than other methods.*

Multimedia – *It is fairly easy to develop various multimedia applications for very low cost. When used well, videos, animations, games, and music can add value and polish to the message.*

Branding – *A cause can be promoted across a series of branded games or viral marketing techniques.*

Publicity – *The Internet allows ideas and concepts that were previously obscure to be visibly displayed in the public eye.*

Wealth of Information – *The Internet is the world's largest encyclopedia and is available for reference at all times.*

Hyperlinking and Embedding – *allows you to link directly to your references or to debunk erroneous claims. The Internet makes it possible to provide a virtual library on a particular topic to anyone who wants to click. You can embed official documents, research, and information on allied groups on your webpage or within your social media feed.*

Social Organizing – *By making planned actions or rallies visible to a wider public, the Internet facilitates the organization of protests, demonstrations, or other direct action. It also allows a group to conduct multiple events at the same time across the country or even across the world.*

Outreach – *The Internet makes it possible to provide access to services and resources to individuals who would otherwise miss out on these tools.*

Point out factors such as cost, reach cooperation engaging youth, multimedia, branding, publicity, social organizing, outreach, being able to hyperlink and embed materials, and, most importantly, being able to be anonymous and evade the law are all good reasons why hate groups have also turned to digital technology to spread their messages.

Despite this, the Internet is also an effective medium for those who are fighting hatred and intolerance.

Ask students to consider how features of the Internet may benefit anti-hate organizations. Answers may include:

- *the Internet takes views and opinions that used to be clandestine and posts them in a public and global medium where they are out in the open for all to see*

- *the Internet makes it easier to openly challenge misinformation provided by hate-mongers*

- *by posting their views online, hate organizations make it easier for anti-racism and anti-hate organizations, law enforcement agencies, governments and educators to address the fallacies and prejudice in hate ideology*

- *as with hate sites, the Internet permits anti-hate organizations to reach and network with a wide, global audience*

Distribute the handout *A Quick Guide to Online Activism* and go through it with the class. Ask them if they can think of activist campaigns they have seen that were aimed at different parts of the engagement pyramid (interesting a general audience, engaging an interested audience, and mobilizing an engaged audience). How were the approaches different at different levels of the pyramid?

Jigsaw Activity

Set up five computer stations. On each of the five computers, have one of the following websites open.

1. AntiHate.ca (https://www.antihate.ca/)
2. Project Someone (http://projectsomeone.ca/)
3. No Hate Speech Movement (http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/)
4. Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (https://info-radical.org/en/)
5. Canadian Race Relations Foundation (http://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/)

Divide the class into five groups and assign each group to a computer station.

- While at their computer station, groups will research how the featured website is being used to address hate by answering the questions on the *Challenging Online Hate Questionnaire*. Every student needs to record their answers.

- Once this is done, have students form new groups in which there is at least one member from each of the original groups.

- Within these new groups have each group representative take the time to explain their websites to group members.

- Once this is done, have students rejoin their original groups. Using the *Challenging Hate Online Questionnaire* as a guide, discuss the various websites as a class.

From class discussion and the sites they've visited, have students put together a list of "best practices" or particularly effective approaches and techniques.

Now have students discuss how they would launch an online campaign for a group that is promoting tolerance. Point out to students that hate online is directed at any number of groups – visible minorities, religions, Indigenous people, women, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities – and their campaign can promote tolerance in general or confront hate against any particular group.

If students wish to campaign against hatred towards dominant or advantaged groups (e.g. Whites, men, heterosexuals) explain that while it is possible for *individuals* to be prejudiced against these groups it's not generally part of an *ideology of hate* and, even in the few cases where it is, these groups already have no shortage of people and organizations working on their behalf.

If after the discussion, any student still wishes to direct their campaign promoting tolerance towards a group that you feel is dominant or advantaged take a few minutes to do the *Unpacking Privilege* mini-lesson and make your decision based on the students' analysis in that activity.

As a class, have students brainstorm and record the various strategies and tools they would use to get their message out and attract members and supporters.

Assessment/Evaluation Activity: Create an Anti-Hate Website

Distribute the handout *Developing an Anti-Hate Website* and have each group apply what they have observed by developing a youth-oriented anti-hate website.

Depending on the time and technology available, you may either have them create a paper version of the website or make their website online. This can be done by cutting-and-pasting printed text and graphics onto poster paper or done entirely by hand, at your discretion.

If your students already have Google accounts, the easiest option will Google Sites (https://sites.google.com/new). You can get an overview of how it works here: https://support.google.com/sites/answer/6372878?hl=en

If your students do not have Google accounts, you may create an account specifically for this project and have students create different pages using that account. *If you choose this option students will be able to access each others' pages, so make sure they know to only access their own.*

If you would prefer not to use Google Sites, you can explore the following free website creation tools:

- https://snappages.com/
- https://www.sitey.com/
- https://www.weebly.com/ca
- https://www.wix.com/

The assignment sheet has some suggestions for sources of copyright-free images for students to use in their websites. You may also want to read the MediaSmarts article *Fair Dealing for Media Education* (https://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/media-issues/intellectual-property/fair-dealing-media-education) to help give your students guidance on using other images legally and ethically.

Once completed, groups will present their websites to the rest of the class. Groups will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Content

- Clearly identified issues
- Clearly defined goals
- Effectively communicated campaign message
- Effective use of digital media

Production

- Creativity
- Appeal
- Effectiveness
- Informative
- Effective use of design elements

Extension Activity

As a class, launch an anti-hate/tolerance awareness campaign within the school or in the wider community. Have students collaborate on gathering information and constructing a message and then on disseminating their information through both traditional and digital methods. If you have contact with a school in another municipality, this could be a great way to show students how a network of activists can initiate a wide ranging campaign. Posters, flyers, public service announcements, social media feeds, blogs, online videos, or even websites could all be ways that students could get the word out about promoting tolerance and respect for others.

Challenging Online Hate Questionnaire

Answer the following questions as completely as possible on a separate piece of paper. You will need this information to be able to discuss your assigned website later.

Website Title: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Website URL: _____

Questions

1. Who is behind this website?

2. What is the main purpose of the organization?

3. What is the purpose of this website?

4. Use Wikipedia or a search engine to find out more about this organization. (Remember to remove the Web address from searches so you don't get the website itself, like this: mediasmarts –mediasmarts.ca) Did you learn anything that the site didn't tell you?

5. What kinds of hate does it address?

6. Who do you think is/are the website's intended audience(s)?

7. Which level(s) of the engagement pyramid does it address? (For example, does it try to show you why its issue is important, or does it assume you already think it is?) If it addresses more than one level, how are the approaches different?

8. What approaches, techniques or initiatives does this organization use to address hatred?

9. Which, if any, elements or initiatives do you think would resonate with youth?

10. Identify approaches, techniques, or strategies from the website that you might like to integrate into your own educational or anti-racism campaign or anti-racism site.

11. Question 1 of this exercise is "Who is behind this website?" and question 4 asks you to find out what other sources say about it. Why do you think these would be important questions when you encounter a site like this?

Developing an Anti-Hate Website

As a group you will apply what you have learned about Web-based and offline anti-hate initiatives by developing a youth-oriented anti-hate website.

Your website should include:

A logo representing the group that runs the website. Think about logos you know and recognize: what makes them clear and memorable and makes you feel positive towards them?

For example, the World Wildlife Fund logo uses black and white and heavy text to show that it's dealing with a serious issue, while the panda image gets across what their mission is (protecting endangered species) and makes a positive impression.

Information about the group's mission or services. What do you want people to know (or believe) about your topic? Think about ways you can make this look more convincing.

At least three different pages including a Home page. A web site includes all of the web pages that cover different topics. The Home page of a website introduces the topic and shows why you should care; the other pages cover more specific topics.

Graphics. Choose graphics that illustrate your site's content and will appeal to the desired audience. Here are some sources of copyright free and Creative Commons graphics you can use:

- pexels.com
- thenounproject.org
- archive.org
- pics4learning.com
- This Person Does Not Exist (https://thispersondoesnotexist.com/) creates AI-generated faces you can use if you need pictures of people

Under Canadian copyright law, you also have a Fair Dealing right to use copyrighted material for educational purposes or for non-commercial user-generated content. If you do this you must give credit to the original creator and you can't use images in ways for which the creator or owner would normally be paid.

Think about these best principles of web design:

Clarity. It should not take users more than five seconds to figure out what the site is about.

*Navigatio*n: Users can move within a page (either by scrolling or with anchor text links to different parts of the page) and between pages. Think about these principles:

- Users should always know where they are going before they click a link.
- Users should never have to use the Back button to get back to where they were before.
- It should not take more than five seconds for users to figure out how to get anywhere on the page, or to any other page on the site.
- It should not take more than one second for users to figure out how to get back to the home page.
- Choose the right navigation tool for the job:

- Use headers (at the top of the page) to let users move between the pages.

- Use buttons when you want to let users do something (like signing a petition, or the Checkout button on shopping sites.)

- Use menus if you need to give users a lot of choices all at once.

- Use links when users know exactly where they want to go.

Consistency. Choose a single colour scheme for the site. Make sure the colour, the images and the font (what the text looks like) match the subject.

- "If you're a dentist, your visitors expect your web site to look like it belongs to a dentist — not to someone who is going to the opera." – Vincent Flanders, Web Pages That Suck

Simplicity. Even if your site has a lot of content, don't give it to your users all at once.

- Think about ways to let them explore it at their pace.

- Don't give users too many choices (like links) all at once. Too many choices feels stressful and confusing.

- Use lots of white space to keep them from feeling overwhelmed.

- Use colour when it has meaning (for instance by colour-coding different topics or pages) but don't use it if it isn't meaningful.

Once completed, your group will present your campaign to the rest of the class:

- Explain the purpose of your campaign
- Present the website you have created
- Explain how your website tries to motivate audiences at one or more levels of the engagement pyramid

Groups will be assessed according to the following criteria:

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- Clearly identified issues
- Clearly defined goals
- Effectively communicated campaign message
- Effective use of digital media

Production

- Creativity
- Appeal
- Effectiveness
- Informative
- Effective use of design elements

Jigsaw Activity Instructions

Your teacher will assign you into one of five groups.

Each group, will go to one of the five computer stations.

On each of the five computers, one of the following websites will be open:

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5. Canadian Race Relations Foundation (https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/)

- While at the computer station, group members will research how the featured website is being used to address hate by answering the questions on the *Challenging Online Hate* Questionnaire. **Every student must record his or her answers**.
- When told to do so, you will then form five new groups that are made up of at least one member from each of the original groups.
- In the new group, each group representative will report to other members about the website his or her original group visited.
- Once this is done, you will rejoin your original group for a class discussion.

A Quick Guide to Online Activism

Thanks to the internet and social media like Instagram, Snapchat or TikTok, it's easier than ever to share your views and encourage others to join you in making change.

Because everything on the internet is connected, anyone has the chance to reach a worldwide audience, but not everyone will respond to the same message.

Think of the people who might see what you post as being a pyramid.
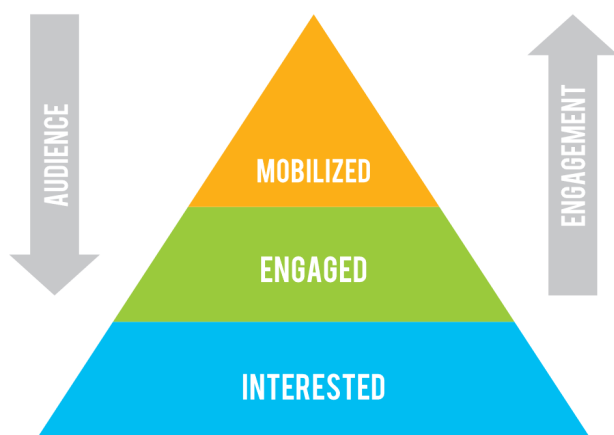
Based on Mobilisation Lab's *Engagement Pyramid*

As you go up the pyramid, you reach fewer people, but the people that you reach are more engaged.

To promote your cause, you need to make the base of the pyramid bigger by getting more people interested in your cause, and also move people further up the pyramid by getting them more engaged

How to interest a wide audience

"The more educated I got, the angrier I became." Shiden Tekle, 18, *Legally Black* cofounder

EDUCATE OTHERS AND RAISE AWARENESS. The best way to widen the base of your pyramid is to let people know more about your issue.

Don't just use facts and figures – tell a story about a person or group of people directly affected.

Use images and video. Most social networks rank posts with images and video content higher, and people are more likely to interact with them too (sharing, clicking on links, etc.) Memes are another way of getting your message across in a way that can be funny but also call attention to serious issues.

How to engage an interested audience

SHARE WHAT YOU'RE DOING. Sharing is what social media is all about, and it's also one of the best ways to convince people who are interested in your issue to get more involved. Showing people what you're doing can make them feel like they can do it, too.

Another way of engaging people in a cause is to show them that other people believe in it. Most of us base our beliefs, at least partly, on what we think most other people believe, and social media can create a "majority illusion" that makes it look like the loudest voices are the majority. If your audience sees that lots of people care about your issue, it will make them a lot more likely to get involved.

CONNECT WITH OTHER PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT THE SAME THINGS. Social media is also about making connections, and it can be a great way to find other people who care about the same issues as you. You can do things like search hashtags or see who other people are following to find allies you didn't know you had.

AMPLIFY OTHER PEOPLE'S VOICES. Don't just use social media to promote your own voice: once you have a platform, you can use it to help other people be heard as well. You can do this through a hashtag that invites other people to speak out, like #MeToo, but you can also make a point of inviting and sharing voices that might otherwise not be heard. That's extra important when there are people who might have a different perspective or are more directly affected by your issue than you are.

"Part of [what I do] is ... give others a platform. I am very aware of the fact that I am white, middle-class and able-bodied, and there are a lot of things I feel I can't speak to." Ellen Jones, LGBTQ+ activist

How to mobilize an engaged audience

ADVOCATE FOR YOUR ISSUE. Because most politicians, corporations and government agencies have a social media presence, you can connect directly with them.

Once your campaign is off the ground, you might be able to get news outlets to cover it, so make sure to find reporters who cover the right "beat" (the topics they write about – for example, most news outlets have different beats for science, education, health, etc.) and either tag them or contact them directly. You can also get their attention indirectly by tagging them or using hashtags. Depending on your issue, you may also get results by contacting advertisers.

ORGANIZE FOR ONLINE AND OFFLINE ACTION. Whether you're trying to change people's minds, change the world, or both, you have a lot more impact when you're not doing it alone. Social media can let you work together with people from around the world who care about your issue, and sometimes it can be the best way to organize people in your own neighbourhood.

Some platforms, like Change.org, Dosomething.org and Ushaidi. com, were made for activism, but you can use the platforms that you and your audience are already on too.

ENERGIZE YOURSELF AND OTHERS. It can be hard to keep from getting discouraged, and even the most committed people in your movement can get burned out and drift away. You can keep them (and yourself) engaged by sharing your successes, and your frustrations too. Have fun and make it social by sharing funny memes and videos as well as more serious stuff.

Task Assessment Rubric: Anti-Hate Campaign

	Learning Expectations	*Achieve-ment*
Use Skills and competencies that fall under "use" range from basic technical know-how – using computer programs such as word processors, web browsers, email and other communication tools – to the more sophisticated abilities for accessing and using knowledge resources such as search engines and online databases and emerging technologies such as cloud computing.	*Ethics and Empathy* use digital media to promote ethical and responsible behaviour *Community Engagement:* use digital media to be part of a community exhibit leadership as a digital citizen *Making and Remixing:* communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats participate in society through online engagement in democratic actions (e.g. lobbying, petitions, parliament) locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media	Insufficient (R) Beginning (1) Developing (2) Competent (3) Confident (4)
Understand "Understand" includes recognizing how networked technology affects our behaviour and our perceptions, beliefs and feelings about the world around us. "Understand" also prepares us for a knowledge economy as we develop information management skills for finding, evaluating and effectively using information to communicate, collaborate and solve problems.	*Ethics and Empathy:* show understanding of the concepts of ethical behaviour and online ethics understand the dynamics of online hate material and how it affects all of the people involved *Community Engagement:* understand how meaning is produced through multimedia (text, images, audio, video) and how culture is produced through the Internet and social media in particular show an understanding of the issues through their creative work *Making and Remixing:* select and use applications effectively and productively (e.g. chooses the most appropriate technologies according to the task) understand the potential of digital devices and resources for her/his schoolwork understand the different purposes and contexts of digital image editing	Insufficient (R) Beginning (1) Developing (2) Competent (3) Confident (4)

	Learning Expectations	*Achievement*
Understand (continued)	understand how meaning is produced through multimedia (text, images, audio, video) and how culture is produced through the Internet and social media in particular	
	show an understanding of the forms and techniques of the medium and genre:	
	the chosen topic, issue and solution were clear	
	the product displayed an insight into a topic and opinion	
	the product showed an understanding of best practices of web design	
Create "Create" is the ability to produce content and effectively communicate through a variety of digital media tools. It includes being able to adapt what we produce for various contexts and audiences; to create and communicate using rich media such as images, video and sound; and to effectively and responsibly engage with user-generated content such as blogs and discussion forums, video and photo sharing, social gaming and other forms of social media. The ability to create using digital media ensures that Canadians are active contributors to digital society.	*Ethics and Empathy* create a digital work that effectively promotes positive online behaviour *Community Engagement:* make valuable contributions to the public knowledge domain (e.g. wikis, public forums, reviews) create a practical implementation plan *Making and Remixing:* contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems interact, collaborate, co-construct content and publish with peers, experts or others employing a variety of digital environments and media effectively apply the forms and techniques of the medium and genre: • photographs, images or video were taken with care and relevant to the topic at hand • visual components were complementary to the topic • Text was effectively integrated • best practices of Web design were used effectively	Insufficient (R) Beginning (1) Developing (2) Competent (3) Confident (4)