

TITLE

Researching online bullying

KEY CONCEPTS

Emotional intelligence, bullying, connections informal-formal learning, digital literacy, students as researchers

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Fred, a teacher, is aware that there have been some instances of bullying in his class and addressing bullying is on his curriculum. He is also aware that many of the children meet up online on synchronous communication and social networks after school.

Fred instigates a bullying project by asking the children "how many of you has a friend who's been bullied online?" and asks for the response via an anonymous learner response devices. The number affected is displayed on the board and with the figure in mind the students, working in groups, think of how they could undertake research into online bullying with a view to developing possible solutions. Teacher and learners consider what form their research might take eg:

- students gather existing information about online bullying
- students develop an online questionnaire to explore young people's responses to bullying
- students undertake an enquiry/research into how young people's feelings are affected by messages they receive from friends' online

The learners present their findings within the context of a class 'research conference' on bullying at the end of the term using whatever presentation format they prefer. Their research is shared via the school platform.

TREND/S:

Keeping up with informal learning

Students live in worlds filled with engaging technology and opportunities to pursue personal interests and motivations. Once they enter schools they have to leave behind such interests and motivations. This creates a divide between the way "schools teach" and the way "students learn" in informal learning environments. Teachers are nowadays facing a challenge trying to bridge this gap.

21st century skills in practice

Teachers are increasingly expected to incorporate the so called 21st skills in daily teaching. These include media and ICT literacy, communication, problem solving and collaboration.

VISION (ASPIRATIONS & AIMS)

- to support students to recognise and manage complex social phenomena, such as online bullying
- to afford connections between out of school and in-school experiences of technologies
- to develop students' 21st century skills, research skills and emotional intelligence.

ENVIRONMENT

- the classroom
- online spaces such as social networks
- an atmosphere that is supportive as potentially discussing emotional topics

PEOPLE & ROLES

- students as researchers
- parents, siblings and peers as possible research participants
- teachers supporting research process and ensuring students are equipped with relevant skills

INTERACTIONS (INCL. PEDAGOGIES)

- students working individually or in groups to undertake research
- research shared with the wider community
- teachers supporting students to deal with issues raised

ACTIVITIES

- activities to develop research skills
- research activities eg questionnaires, interviews
- communicating outputs
- activities that developing understandings of sensitive issues

RESOURCES (INCL. TECHNOLOGIES)

- netbooks/laptops
- search engines/survey monkey
- learner response systems
- resources for students to use to present their research
- shared online space for the school