

Chapter 21

Adolescent Co-Researchers Design Media Literacy Lessons to Address Cyberbullying Through Design Thinking: Encouraging Passive Bystanders to Protect Cyber-Victims

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ABSTRACT

To date, media literacy lessons in schools have been successful in dispensing knowledge but few have influenced a change of intention. This chapter explores how lessons in the context of cyberbullying can be designed to help adolescents move beyond students reciting correct answers to intending to behave responsibly online. At phase one of the research, an adult researcher worked with seven adolescent student co-researchers to develop lessons that are relevant to adolescents, guided by the design thinking processes. Theory of planned behavior framework was used to guide the development of lesson content and Kolb's experiential learning cycle framework informed researchers on how to design experiential learning experiences that would help adolescents empathize and create knowledge. At phase 2, the student co-researchers facilitated three lessons to their peers (N= 99). The goal was to encourage passive bystanders to become positive bystanders who will protect cyber-victims instead of remaining inactive. After the lesson intervention, there was an increase of 42.7% of positive bystanders.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an extension of a research study conducted by Aileen Chai at a secondary school in Singapore in 2018 and the Masters dissertation was submitted in 2019. Chai was the adult researcher who worked with seven student co-researchers (age range from 14 to 15 years old) from a secondary school to re-design one media literacy package that would be relevant to them (2019). Chai and the student researchers sought to find out how to design media literacy lessons that would convince adolescents to behave wisely online. With the information gathered, they developed a series of three media literacy lessons and the student co-facilitators, with their teachers, enacted those lessons in school.

This chapter aims to:

- Share how the design thinking (DT) process guided the research process that was not elaborated in Chai's dissertation (2019) by
 - Explaining how the results and findings that emerged at each stage of DT informed the subsequent research steps
 - Synthesising the findings highlighted in Chai's dissertation to two key considerations to inform the design of future media literacy lessons
 - Suggesting future direction to address a limitation that was highlighted in Chai's 2018 research study

BACKGROUND

For years, one of the educational goals was to prepare students for society and the workforce in the physical world. With the recent rapid development of technology, people no longer just socialise, communicate and work in the physical world but also in the online world. Today's adolescents have grown up in a digital world and are accustomed to socializing and learning online. According to the Pew Research Centre, 73% of Americans between the ages of 13 and 17 own smart phones and out of these, 92% are online daily (Pew Research Centre, 2015). Singaporean teenagers are of no exception. In 2016, a pilot study conducted by think-tank DQ Institute and the Nanyang Technological University surveyed 1,407 children aged eight to twelve in Singapore. The study revealed that 77% of twelve-year-olds in the study were actively using social media. In other words, Singaporean children and youths regularly visit online and social media platforms (DQ Institute, 2016).

Adolescents are constantly bombarded with unmoderated online information. Not only do they consume online information, often, they also produce content themselves. Thus, they are at risk of being exposed to or contributing to social perils such as shaming, cyberbullying, uploading video clips and photographs of risky or risqué actions. Singaporean adolescents can be susceptible to such social perils. According to the Teens and Screen study conducted with Singaporean adolescents (age ranged from 13 to 18 years old) and released by McAfee Intel Security company in 2014, 71% of Singaporean adolescents reported looking for social acceptance online, 34% of Singaporean adolescents had regrets about something they had posted online and 33% of Singaporean adolescents had been victims of cyberbullying or had witnessed cyberbullying (McAfee, 2014).

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