

Training high school students in resisting disinformation and conspiracy theories – preliminary findings and experiences from an ongoing research project.

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Abstract

This paper draws on findings from an ongoing research project called "Effects of a multi-module intervention designed to increase critical thinking and the ability to identify misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories in high school students". The aim of this project is to empirically evaluate an educational intervention consisting of six one-hour sessions. The sessions include traditional lectures regarding critical thinking, misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories but also includes a game (Bad news), and group discussions, all designed to train high school students in critical thinking as well as the capacity to identify disinformation and conspiracy theories. The project combines competences from media and communication studies, psychology, political science, and data communication, and the intervention has so far been implemented in three Swedish high schools. In the paper we discuss preliminary findings and experiences drawn from the first phase of the project. We will also discuss the applicability of the intervention, and challenges that we have identified.

Keywords

Critical thinking, conspiracy theories, disinformation, misinformation

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