Activity: Cyber Guru

Theme

Use of the internet and mobile technologies is prevalent among young people today and brings with it many benefits. Students who understand the pitfalls are able to make better informed decisions about their behaviour and the risks they take.

Key learning/subject areas

Cross curricula.

Duration

Two to eight periods (this will depend on whether or not students explore the storyboarding/animation option).

Objectives

On completion of this activity students will be able to:

- understand the issues and risks confronting young people and their use of the internet and mobile technologies
- understand the process of drafting and storyboarding concepts prior to animating them.

Depending on available time the outputs will be:

- student-devised problems
- student-advised solutions
- a group-developed storyboard
- story animation.
Resources/links/materials required

CyberNetrix CD-ROM

This activity can be applied across all the themes explored in CyberNetrix.

Materials required at school

Computers with appropriate software e.g. PowerPoint.
Introduction

Each student creates a cyber problem. It could be about being bullied, wanting to meet someone they have met in a chat room, which is the best anti-virus software to use or online scams. Students will provide solutions to the range of cyber problems using a ‘Dear Cyber Guru’ letter approach and present potential solutions to the class. If possible, students will animate the cyber problem solutions.

Prior learning

Students need to have knowledge of:

- the issues confronting young people using the internet and mobile technologies (the real life case studies on the CyberNetrix CD-ROM and information contained in the chat room, mobile phone and quizzes will help students to understand the issues)
- actions in response to problems arising when using the internet and mobile technologies
- presentation software (e.g. PowerPoint) if choosing to animate the storyboard.
Activity description

1. **Whole class activity**

   Ask students to consider the types of problems that arise, or could arise, when they and their friends use the internet. This includes browsing, chat rooms, blogs, email, IM, MSN and mobile technologies such as mobile phones and PDAs.

2. **Individual activity**

   Each student writes a ‘problem’ to Cyber Guru on a piece of paper. The problems can cover anything, including being cyber bullied, meeting up with someone, privacy, scams, spam, rip offs.

   The problem needs to be written in the first person (using ‘I’) and should outline an issue which has placed a young person at risk. The letter should begin ‘Dear Cyber Guru’.

   Each letter is anonymous and is deposited in a box at the front of the classroom.

   When all letters have been collected, the deposit box will be passed around the class and each student will draw out a letter. If they choose their own letter, they need to replace it and pick another one.

   Each student then spends 10 minutes responding to the problem posed in the letter. They should aim to provide constructive advice in the appropriate language and sign off as ‘Cyber Guru’.

3. **Whole class activity**

   Break the class into small mixed ability groups of four to five students.

   A selection of problems and responses can be read out to the class.

   The class then agrees on five to six key problems, and proposed solutions, which have emerged from the letters.
4. **Small group activity**

Each group selects a cyber problem and solution.

Together, they develop a storyboard to plan a visual and text treatment of the problem.

The storyboard should contain appropriate visual elements and text to communicate the problem and the proposed solution.

If the student groups need to undertake research to assist with their storyboard, they could do some of the interactive learning activities, check the hotspots and download the tips and advice found on the CyberNetrix CD-ROM. This will depend on class time allocation and the availability of computers.

Again, if there is sufficient access to computers, software and appropriate expertise, these storyboards could be combined into a PowerPoint presentation with each slide being a screen from the storyboard or an animation.
Teacher notes

This activity provides a useful way to discover the types of problems considered most relevant to students. Advice given from peers is often the advice most heeded.

The level of discussion of these ‘cyber problems’ will of course depend on students’ technical ability and experience with these types of technologies.

If there is good access to computers, software and appropriate student expertise in the class, the paper storyboards each group develops could then be combined into a PowerPoint slide presentation with each slide being a screen from the storyboard or an animation.

Given the potentially sensitive nature of some of these topics, it may be important to debrief at the end of this activity, to ensure that students know who to talk to about certain issues and how to report issues if necessary.