

NOT-EQUAL

EPSRC NetworkPlus: Social Justice through the Digital Economy

Project Review Form - Mid-Term Review Pilot Project

Please submit this form to notequal@ncl.ac.uk.

GENERAL INFORMATION	
<p>Lead Applicant (PI): Dr Yvonne Skipper</p> <p>Email address: Yvonne.skipper@glasgow.ac.uk</p> <p>Job Title: Senior Lecturer</p> <p>Department: Education</p> <p>Organisation: University of Glasgow</p>	<p>Co-Investigators (names and organisations):</p> <p>Dr Daniel Jolley, Northumbria University</p> <p>Joe Reddington, eQuality Time</p> <p>Project Title: Tackling Fake News via Fake People: Co-creating a toolkit to help young people recognise fake news</p> <p>Project Reference Number:</p>

1. SUMMARY

Please provide a summary of the activities and/or initial findings of your research project to date. This also includes events, engagement activities with non-academic partners and any other activities. Please include any images or website links that could be used for dissemination purposes (at least 500 words).

Our aim was to work with young people, social media influencers, teachers and academics to co-create materials to help young people to recognize fake news and to test these materials to ascertain their efficacy. To date we have:

- Successfully co-created 6 interactive sessions on fake news
- Tried the intervention in 3 Glasgow schools with around 420 young people
- Conducted focus groups to ascertain young people's views of the intervention
- Conducted teacher interviews to ascertain teachers' views of the intervention
- Collected questionnaire data before and after the intervention to ascertain its efficacy

Our results suggest that our intervention successfully improved knowledge, confidence and skills in recognizing fake news and that the intervention was engaging.

We recruited 3 schools in Glasgow which drew from a diverse group of young people. From these, we recruited around 18 young people and three teachers to assist in the co-creation. We also recruited 5 social media influencers to assist in the co-creation. As young people were not in school due to COVID-19 restrictions, we originally delayed the project. However, once it became apparent that the lockdown was not going to ease, we



decided to co-create online. We were able to arrange access for ourselves to a secure online site to work safely with the young people. This group met every week over a 6-week period for 1-3 hours per week to design the materials. The young people led on the topics and activities they wanted to see included and each school designed 2 sessions each. The team decided on a name for the project, 'Project Real' and a logo (see below)



We wanted to design 6 weeks of content as this would fit into a typical 6-week term, where each of the sessions would be an hour with lots of discussion, activities and videos from the influencers. We also decided that the government SHARE guidelines (Source, Headline, Analyse, Retouch and Errors) would be the framework we used to tie each week together.

The final topics which the group decided on were:

Fake News: how to recognize fake news stories

Fake Photos: why people might edit photos, the impact this could have on others and how to recognize fake photos

Fake People: how to recognize fake people on social media accounts

Fake Stories (Conspiracies): What a conspiracy is, how to recognise conspiracies and what impact they might have

Fake Videos: Why people might create fake videos, the impact this might have and how to recognise them

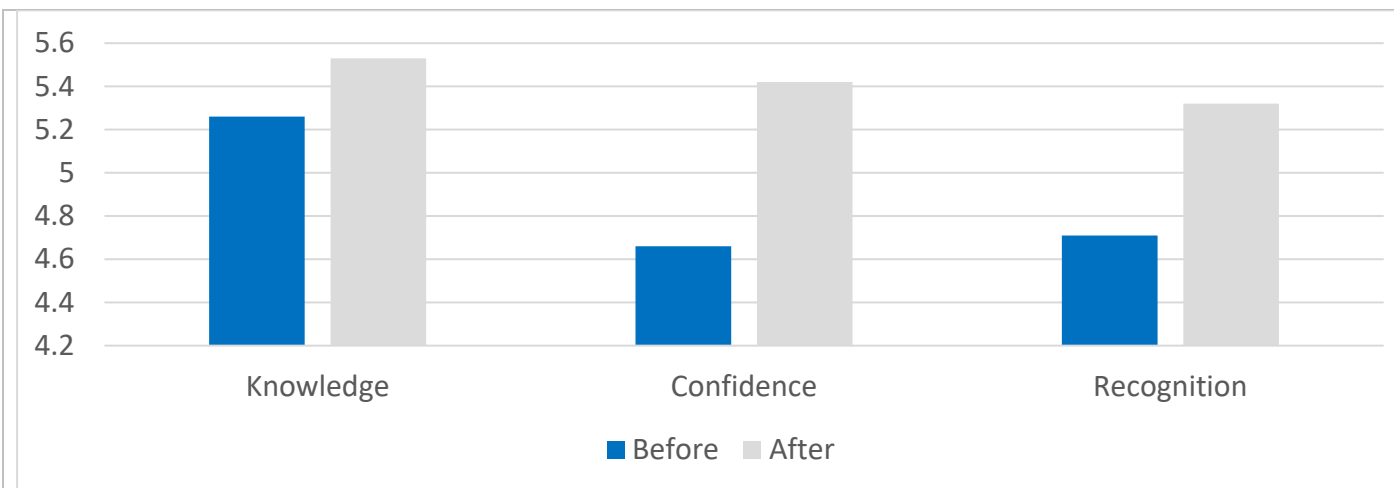
Keeping it Real: Bringing it all together and designing materials to help other young people learn more about fake news

Each week has a set of Powerpoint slides which teachers can use to introduce the topic. Each has videos embedded and a range of activities including a starter, main activity and closing activity. These include activities like 'spot the difference' between real and photoshopped videos, watching videos and guessing if they are real, and discussions. There is also a teacher's guide which gives more detail on timings and learning outcomes. We have developed a website and content can be found here: projectreal.equalitytime.co.uk

We trialed the intervention in the three schools. Around 420 young people aged from 11-13 participated in this trial. We intended to collect pre, post and delayed post test data as well as focus groups with pupils and interviews with teachers to allow us to evaluate the intervention. We obtained ethical approval from the University of Glasgow and Glasgow City Council to conduct this research. However, during this period, researchers were not allowed to enter schools (due to Covid-19) and we had also been approved to use opt in parental consent rather than opt out. Because of this, we were only able to gather pre and post test data from 85 students. Nevertheless, the questionnaire included items exploring knowledge about fake news, confidence in recognizing fake news and ability to recognize fake news (by providing some real and fake examples and asking students whether they knew which were real).

Our results suggested that the intervention successfully improved all of these variables in our participants:





Focus groups with young people showed that they found the intervention engaging and exciting and feel better able to recognize fake news:

- ‘Yeah I think now we look more aware of how you can spot fake news. And like, it **encourages me to like double check** or do a lot of research into what I've just read.’
- ‘Yeah, it (Project Real) **definitely made me more confident** myself. Like I said before, **I know what to do now**. Like usually now, when I look at the news, I'll like double check things to see if any other news, like website has wrote the same thing and like read beyond the headlines.’
- ‘I feel like I can like when I see it I'd be able to tell if it's fake news or like fake picture **easier than before**.’

Interviews with teachers also showed that they believed that the intervention was engaging, and had fit well with the curriculum and that they wanted to use it again:

- ‘the videos from the **Instagram influencers**. That was really good to relate it to the real world, um especially when this is becoming a quite an aspiring career to get into.’
- ‘I think having **pupils involved is the way forward**. Yeah. It's really, it's designing it with them.’
- ‘it's interesting, because young people just think that they know, everything, but then the examples that you had given, it was quite kind of thought provoking and things like that. **So it was it was really useful**.’
- ‘I genuinely think that when I could see **lightbulb moments** when we were chatting about things, and they were understanding it at the time.’
- ‘I've already had staff saying they thought it should be delivered to all year groups. Someone else who didn't deliver it, but heard about it said has said, asked me if we **could use it again next year**’

There was clearly a large appetite for this sort of intervention, and we intend to work on evaluating it with a larger number of participants in the coming year.

We have presented the work at the British Psychological Society Social, Educational and Developmental conferences in August and September 2021. Dr Skipper is also presenting the work at the ‘Scottish Researcher Showcase’ and running workshops for schools and parents as part of Explorathon, Festival of Social Science and COP26.

Please indicate if these details can be shared in a blog post on the Not-Equal website YES

But if you wish to do this, please let us know and we can make it more accessible.

We have also produced this video which can be shared on the website.

<https://www.kapwing.com/videos/613e2c45a2bde7007780a58a?fbclid=IwAR2fM9OsNpHrQoF4KmWqg1BLZWWOJZi16izG1YyyIFsf7oolXseffZ3O2w>

2. WORK PLAN

Please explain any deviations from your work plan, the reasons for this and plans to address the issue (up to 250 words)

We initially intended to co-create our intervention in person. However, due to challenges with school closures we had to co-create online. This was very challenging, in terms of ensuring that we had a safe platform for young people to engage with us. It was also more difficult to build rapport and ensure that everyone was comfortable to contribute. However, we produced some excellent materials and learned a lot about online co-creation. We will produce a paper on this to help others learn from our experiences.

In addition, the final number of participants in the intervention was high. We were delighted to see so much interest in the project from schools. However, the numbers of pupils completing the questionnaires was low, partly because we were not able to go into school to discuss the research with young people (due to covid-19 restrictions). This meant that we only have pre and post test data from 85 pupils, but we hope to gather more data this term to top up the numbers of participants.

Further Information

If you have any further questions regarding this form, please contact notequal@ncl.ac.uk.



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