CYBERSAFETY

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Lesson: Create an Avatar

Lesson Background ✖

In this lesson, students will investigate one particular strategy for protecting identity online, by exploring the idea of and creating their own pictorial AVATAR. What many preadolescents and teenagers don't realise, is that in just about all social media circumstances, displaying a personal photo is not compulsory, and is in fact a very direct threat to their personal identity. Students will hopefully learn from this lesson that the use of an avatar image as opposed a personal photo is not only a Cyber Safe alternative, but can also be a fun way to represent yourself.

Curriculum Links ✖

HEALTH: Personal, Social & Community Health
- *Yr 5/6 - Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS054);*
- *Yr 7/8 - Develop skills to evaluate health information and express health concerns (ACPPS076);*

THE ARTS: Visual Arts
- *Yr 6 - Plan the display of artworks to enhance their meaning for an audience (ACAVAM116)*
- *Yr 7 - Practise techniques and processes to enhance representation of ideas in their art-making*

Preparation Materials ✖

- ✓ Create an Avatar Worksheet [DOWNLOAD]
- ✓ Blank A4 Paper
- ✓ Coloured pencils/textas or other colouring materials (depending on how you plan to take the task further)

Student Activity ✖

1) Ask the students if they understand what an AVATAR is. Discuss.
2) Discuss some real world examples of where avatars are commonly used that students may currently use without knowing (e.g. Wii Consoles require you to create your own 'Mii', which is a form of avatar. Windows asks you to choose an image to be used as your logon avatar)
3) Hand students the CREATE AN AVATAR worksheet. Read through the definition with the students, and discuss how an avatar is one good strategy for helping to protect your online identity (use as an alternative to a personal photo). Ask them to fill in their answer to that question on the sheet provided.
4) Tell students that they are now going to design and create their own avatar, which DOES NOT RESEMBLE themselves, but REPRESENTS THEM in some way. Ask students to look at some of the images on the worksheet as inspiration. The avatar should relate to their PERSONALITY and not directly reveal their identity. Examples for the kids to think about include:
   - Aspects of the personality (funny, sporty, smart, etc)
   - Hobbies/Sports they play
   - Things/items they like or have

5) Once they have completed their design, they must describe beneath it how it represents them.

6) On an A4 piece of paper, students recreate the design using drawing materials according to the requests by the teacher (pencils, charcoal, textas, etc.)

7) Have the students present their Avatar to the rest of the class, and explain how it reflects them as a person. The class can respond to their artwork to judge if it truly reflects the student, AND if it effectively conceals their true identity.

Extension Activity ✖

- Depending on the resources you have available at your school, the AVATAR that the students create can be further used in a number of ways, such as…
  - Turn them into BADGES that the students can wear
  - Painted as portraits that can be framed and hung around the classroom
  - Used to represent you at your desk (have it attached to where the student sits, in order to identify their desk)
- Discuss the different ways in which an Avatar can be created for your online profile (Google searches, copy and paste clipart, and generators).
- Explore such sites and mobile programs that have 'avatar' options built in (such as MSN, ICQ, etc.). Depending on the needs of your students (and the amount of them that use such programs), you can show them how to create one using those programs.
- There are many websites that offer 'generators' for creating an avatar, as opposed to copying clipart and images from the web. Have a look at the list of websites in the 'ADDITIONAL RESOURCES' tab at the bottom of this document for some potential sites.

Additional Resources ✖

AVATAR GENERATOR EXAMPLE SITES:

- ANIME FACE MAKER: http://www.manga.com/content/avatar-face-maker
- CREATE YOUR OWN SUPERHERO: http://marvel.com/games/play/31/create_your_own_superhero
- DOPPLE ME: http://www.doppelme.com/
- CARTOON AVATARS: http://www.planetcreation.co.uk/createpic/