Case Study: Julia

Information and Misinformation

Nicole Hamilton, Melissa Mullis, Thai Nguyen

March 26, 2020

The scenario:

- Your friend, Julia, teaches grade 11 at a mid-sized high school in Vancouver.
- Julia's school is located in a mixed socio-economic neighbourhood. There is a significant number of first generation Chinese students attending this high school as well as 50 exchange students from Vietnam and China.
- The students at this high school are noted for their extracurricular participation in various teams at the junior and senior level and for their community involvement.
- The students, their parents, and staff range from mildly to very active on social media. Many of the students use SnapChat and Instagram while the adults use Facebook and Twitter.
- Julia does not use much social media herself, other than Facebook to connect with close friends and family.
- After the school returns from winter break, an epidemic of an unknown virus breaks out in China. There is a lot of media coverage through BC news services as the epidemic begins to spread to other regions of China and eventually other countries.
- During breaks and lunch, Julia notices that her students begin to share information with each other that they have "heard" or found on social media. Much of it is inaccurate—such as theories about how the virus can be caught and treated, as well as conspiracy theories about how it began. Some of the content being shared promotes racist content about Chinese people. Some non-Asian students are obviously avoiding Asian students in common areas like the multipurpose room during lunch--or in the halls.
- Julia knows that you have been studying the issues around social media, information and misinformation.
- Julia asks you for some advice, tips, or ideas you might have to work with her students to help them identify misinformation, information they can trust, and to combat racist sentiments.

Our Advice to Julia:

First we need to clarify exactly what it is we are talking about here, and we would advise Julia to do away with the term 'Fake News' immediately. It muddies the water, in our opinion, and we believe there is a clear distinction, based on the intent, that must be made.

Instead, from Andrea Bellemare (2019) we offer:

Misinformation: "...the act of sharing information without realizing it's wrong."

and

Disinformation: "...the deliberate creation and/or sharing of false information in order to mislead."

From the case study notes, it isn't clear what subject Julia teaches here, but that shouldn't matter; this is a critical teaching opportunity, and will address the following BC Curriculum Core Competencies:

1) From [Personal Awareness and Responsibility](#)

   Self-Regulating: Students who are personally aware and responsible take ownership of their choices and actions....They can persevere in difficult situations, and to understand how their actions affect themselves and others.

2) From [Social Awareness and Responsibility](#)

   Valuing Diversity: Students value diversity, defend human rights, advocate for issues, and interact ethically with others. They are inclusive in their language and behaviour and recognize that everyone has something to contribute.

Luckily for us (and for Julia), we have recently done an exploration on Misinformation and Disinformation, and so this time, we'd like to offer her a lesson series to do with her students, as we feel it is warranted. A huge shout-out to Avi Luxenberg who provided many of the 'hook' resources we will be sharing as they transformed our thinking. A second shout-out to Julia Hengstler, who introduced us to one of our experts, Andrea Bellemare, a CBC reporter in the field.

1) Introduce the topic and the vocabulary with Vassy Kapelos at CBC news by watching the YouTube video, [Why it's so easy to fall for fake news and how to spot it](). We would ask students to focus on the two definitions as they pop up, for discussion later. In addition, we would pause and draw attention to Taylor Owen's comments at 3:54, asking why political content that makes us angry pop up in our news feeds. Hmmm...

2) Break into smaller groups, find a quiet spot and together watch Markham Nolan's TedTalk, [How To Separate Fact and Fiction Online](). What are the most surprising/interesting things you saw (if any) on the video? Come back as a group and whip around share-out. Any commonalities?

3) Take the News Literacy [Fakeout quiz](). We would tell Julia that for us, it was the most eye-opening hands-on activity to clearly demonstrate how prolific 'fake news' is. It gave us easy and useful strategies to apply to any news we came across on Social Media Platforms such as Facebook. Armed with this knowledge, we would then ask her to assign students to find a piece of news or promoted item from a Social Media platform of their choosing. In groups, they would work together to decide whether or not it was verifiable content.

4) Lastly, it is time to connect the mis/dis-information to what is happening now, not only in Julia's school, but everywhere. Andrea Bellemare's July 5, 2019 article, [So, you think you've spotted some 'fake news' — now what?]() Contains a handy question-based 'checklist' that will help guide and challenge students to find reliable news sources that disseminate current and accurate information on the current global Covid-19 pandemic. Bring them to class and share with each other. A follow up discussion should happen here. Are their fears and resulting attitudes toward Chinese students in their school justified? Do they understand how their actions affect others? Do they practise inclusive behaviour? Do they value diversity? If so, how can they model these core competencies as educated citizens?

In closing, we share with Julia, this assertion from danah boyd, "The term "the culture of fear" refers to the ways in which fear is employed by marketers, politicians, technology designers [e.g., consider security narratives] and the media to regulate the public...The culture of fear is what emerges when fear is used at such a widespread level that it shapes people's worldviews." (boyd, 2012). Now, more than ever, it is critical that she, and all educators take the time to facilitate a real understanding of the real-life

consequences of misinformation and disinformation in our understanding of the world's past, current, and future events.

Items for Follow-up:

From the scenario, it's clear that the amplification of the crisis was the direct result of triggering people's emotions. From your brief regarding "Fake news, Misinformation, and Disinformation," the most successful problematic content are ones that play on people's emotions, encouraging feelings of superiority, and anger or fear. If you don't mind (as you might be exhausted by this topic) we are wondering your take on what makes misinformation so pervasive during a crisis like the coronavirus pandemic? Also, from a research perspective, can you describe how one collects data to study misinformation during a crisis like this when new and varied information seems to be uploaded by the minute?

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Case Study: Chris
Safety

—

Nicole Hamilton, Melissa Mullis, Thai Nguyen

Date March 23, 2020

The scenario:

Chris is a tech savvy English teacher. She is a long-time technology leader in the district. With administrative and parental permission, she incorporates social media into her courses. A social acquaintance, Sylvia, asks Chris' advice. Sylvia's 16-year-old son, Jason, posted a picture of his 15-year-old ex-girlfriend, Nancy, in skimpy lingerie on his Facebook account. Nancy first posted the image on her own Facebook account. Jason has 300 Facebook friends but in the 24 hours after posting Nancy's image he got 60 new friend requests from other boys including 2 adult men from the US. Jason was concerned and told his mother. With some investigating, Chris finds out one of Jason's new "friends" is a registered US sex offender. Chris is worried about Nancy and Jason's situation. Neither teen is Chris's student, and they do not attend Chris's school. Chris is not sure what to do next. Chris's school does not have a published protocol for these types of events and Chris has only ever received training for duty-to-report instances as they relate to parental abuse/neglect and potential suicide in her school.

Our Advice to Chris:

1. **Is there a legal obligation for Chris to report this incident?**
A) <mark>Yes</mark>   B) No

As outlined in the analysis of this case study, Section 13 of the Child, Family and Community Services Act of BC is the relevant legislation that provides Chris with her answer to this question (Hengstler, Krivel-Zacks & Kroeker, 2014). Specifically, this section of the Act states conditions under which a child needs protections, one of which is, "if the child has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed, sexually abused or sexually exploited by another person and if the child's parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child" (Child, Family and Community Services Act of BC, 1996). Given that two US adult males, one of which is on the sex offender registry, friended Jason after he posted Nancy's image, there is significant reason to believe that Nancy may now be at risk of sexual exploitation. This means that Chris has a clear duty-to-report this incident, as stated within Section 14 of the Act (Hengstler, Krivel-Zacks & Kroeker, 2014) and would in fact be committing an offence with a possible fine of up to $10 000 or imprisonment for up to 6 months is she does not report it (Child, Family and Community Services Act of BC, 1996).

2. If Chris reports the incident who will she be reporting on?

A) Nancy   B) Jason   <mark>C) Both</mark>

While Nancy seems to be the primary focus in this case as the problem resulted from her image being shared on Facebook, Jason is also a minor and he has been friended by a registered sex offender, meaning that he too may be at risk.

3. What are the main components that are used to assess risk?

A) Identify a potential risk B) Weight the nature and severity of the risk   <mark>C) Both A and B</mark>

According to the analysis of this particular case provided by Hengstler, Krivel-Zacks and Kroeker (2014) identifying the risk and weighing the risk are both components of triggering duty-to-report. Weighing the risk is part of assessing whether the child is at risk for immediate or likely harm (Hengstler, Krivel-Zacks & Kroeker, 2014). The answer to this will inform the reporting decision making as police will need to be notified if the child is in imminent danger.

4. If Chris decides she does need to report, who will she report to?

A) Ministry of Children and Family B) The Police C) The principal in her school

<mark>**D) All of the above**</mark>

According to the Family and Community Services Act of BC, "a person who has reason to believe that a child needs protection under section 13 must promptly report the matter to a director or a person designated by a director (Section 14, 1996). The B.C. Handbook for Action of Child Abuse and Neglect For Service Providers states that, "If you have reason to believe that a child or youth needs protection under section 13 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act you must promptly report the matter to a child welfare worker" (British Columbia, 2017, p.4). A director is "a person designated by the Minister of Children and Family Development under the Child, Family and Community Service Act. The director may delegate any or all of his/her powers, duties and responsibilities under the Act" (British Columbia, 2017, p. 8), which would be the case with a child welfare worker. If Chris believed that Nancy was in immediate danger she would also need to phone the 9-1-1 or the local police (British Columbia, 2017).

The policy manual regarding child abuse and neglect for School District No. 71, the one in which our team members all work, states, "the legal duty to report is the responsibility of each individual. Any person, including school employees and police officers, with reason to believe that a child needs protection has a duty to report directly to a child protection social worker" (School District No. 71, 2009, p.2), reinforcing what is outlined in the Family and Community Services Act and the B.C. Handbook referenced previously. This SD 71 policy further clarifies

that, "Informing another person e.g. a colleague or a supervisor, does not discharge the legal duty to report directly to a child protection social worker" (School District No. 71, 2009, p.2) and outlines when it would also be necessary to notify a principal, supervisor and/ or superintendent of schools. This additional step would be required in most scenarios. In this particular case, we are making the assumption that although neither Jason nor Nancy are Chris' students nor students at her school, that they would most likely be students in her school district. This necessitates also reporting to a school designate, such as the principal of Chris' school.

5. What is the training responsibility of the school district?

The school district needs to provide training for their staff members around identifying the need for protection, for example signs of abuse neglect in both physical and digital environments, the associated duty-of-care and and how to respond to these situations so that their staff are well equipped to support and protect the student community and also to protect themselves from allegations of negligence (Hengstler, Krivel-Zacks & Kroeker, 2014). Having designated staff that are able to support risk assessment in online environments, develop relevant policies and documents, and work to support ongoing staff training in this area, as is done by the e-Safety Strategy Group in Kent County Schools in the U.K. are positive steps that a school district could take (Hengstler, Krivel-Zacks & Kroeker, 2014).

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Case Study: Dana
Social Justice
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Nicole Hamilton, Melissa Mullis, Thai Nguyen

March 21, 2020

The scenario:

- Your friend, Dana, teaches grade 6 at a small elementary school on Vancouver Island.
- Dana's school is located in a privileged socio-economic neighbourhood.
- Dana assumes that all her students have access to adequate internet for completing work and assignments, but has never formally surveyed her class.
- Dana wants to collaborate with a colleague at another school some distance away to do a hybrid activity involving social media and language arts.
- Dana puts out a tweet to solicit a partner for the activity and connects with Stella.
- Stella teaches in an elementary school near Prince Rupert, BC (SD 52).
- When Dana Skypes with Stella to first discuss the project, Dana is told that five of the students in Stella's class are First Nations' students from families who strongly value their traditional language and culture.
- These 5 students also live on a reserve where internet access extends only as far as the health centre.
- Dana knows that you have been studying the issues of social justice, Aboriginal contexts, and social media.
- Dana asks you for some advice, tips, or ideas you might have that might support her partnership and work with Stella's class.

Our Advice to Dana:

Internet and digital hardware have become fundamental building blocks for students to achieve visions of their future. It opens doors to the wealth of information, resources, and opportunities for learning within and outside the classroom. Based on the scenario description, Dana fundamentally believes in the power of the digital world as evident in her attempt to connect student learning through social media and language arts. However, she has made some major assumptions that are holding her back. She has failed to step back and think about the communities within the province who hardly possess access to the digital world (Warschauer & Matuchniak, 2010). While there are students in her community who enjoy unlimited access to the internet and digital technology at home, there are other students that are just as capable and full of potential, who struggle with the basics of using a computer due to this lack of access (Hengstler, 2020).

Our first piece of advice to Dana is that the project must be designed so that students carry out the technology portion at school. Student work does not have to be completed at home for both the Vancouver Island and Prince Rupert students. Dana has fallen into the first assumption in the privilege of online education: Everyone has internet access (Hengstler, 2016). In the scenario description, Dana assumes that all her students have adequate internet, but has failed to verify this with her class. Dana and Stella can reverse this shortcoming by assuming no student has internet access at home. Applying the opposite assumption to both classrooms remedies Dana's initial assumption of access and guarantees that learning is occurring for Stella's Indigenous students.

The second piece of advice before collaborating with Stella is to not assume that all students have the same ability with technology. This adds to the issue of the digital divide (Hengstler, 2020). The problem of digital divide relates to her initial issue with access. When students lack previous exposure to online technologies such as Google Apps, they fall behind in meeting content standards like using keyboards and texting. Therefore, a social media project might be a huge leap for some students. Dana and Stella must scaffold how to use social media from the very basics, including review of rudimentary icons and symbols.

Lastly, we would mention the opportunities that social media offers to maintain and protect Indigenous culture. Social media has been shown to benefit Indigenous Peoples in terms of identity, power and control, education, culture, and connection (Korff, 2019). Since there are Indigenous students in the group with families who value their traditional language and culture, Dana could take this opportunity to create a project that highlights the positive aspects of social media and Indigenous culture. For example, emphasizing social media as a multimedia tool that matches the oral and visual culture of Indigenous Peoples, rather than an expression of a Western-based literacy and numeracy tool. While there are positive aspects of social media for Indigenous students, Dana must be wary of the dark corners of the web. According to Korff (2019), 44% of Aboriginal Australians in remote areas use Facebook daily. But astonishingly, 88% of Aboriginal people who use social media have seen racism towards Aboriginal People online.

Items for Follow-Up:

We found the connection between social media use and Indigenous Peoples quite interesting and prudent to every teacher's practice. The additional readings allowed us to create a frame of reference for Indigenous students and tech education. Within the optional readings, we found an array of articles that shed light on Indigenous Peoples and technology use in Canada. But the majority of articles that relate social media directly with Indigenous youth are found in Australia. Simple literature searches yield similar results, with the connection between Indigenous youth and social media use in Australia dominating the top results. We are wondering if you can speak to this? Are there major studies in Canada relating to social media and Indigenous youth that we are missing?

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Case Study: Navid
Privacy

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Nicole Hamilton, Melissa Mullis, Thai Nguyen

March 17, 2020

The scenario:

- Your colleague, Navid, teaches a social studies 10 course in the local public high school.
- Navid wants to help his students understand the varied demographic in the neighbourhood and the importance of immigration in Canadian life. As an immigrant himself, he thinks this would be a great activity.
- Based on previous discussions you had about the potential usefulness of social media use in the classroom, Navid decided to have his grade 10 students create and post YouTube videos interviewing immigrant families from the local communities about life in Canada.
- Navid has written this project into his course plan as a major required assignment (15% of the course grade) and plans to post the "good" videos on a class YouTube Channel he will create.
- Navid has not created permission forms for his students, and has not planned any training around privacy in the YouTube environment.
- Navid has no permission/release forms for the participating immigrant families.
- Navid is unaware that YouTube is now owned by Google and requires users to have Google accounts to use YouTube.
- At the end of the first grade 10 social studies class, a student approached Navid and said that she is unwilling to participate in the "required" YouTube activity. The student feels uncomfortable about creating a YouTube account and also asks Navid whether the students will have some permission form for the immigrant families to sign.
- Navid meets with you after the first day, and asks what he should do about the situation and questions raised by his student because he knows you've been studying social media use in education.

Our Advice to Navid:

On the 'compliance continuum', Navid may fall under either 'Ignorance' or 'Knowledgeable Non-Compliance'. He knows enough to ask us for advice, demonstrating there could be some knowledge, but Navid may be ignorant of the existence of FIPPA or hopes to avoid the work involved to achieve compliance. From the information presented above, we'll have to take some liberties, so in this case, we'll assume he falls under 'Ignorance' in the Compliance Continuum. It is reasonable to assume that the only reason why he even approached us is because of the concerns of one of his students. From Hengstler, "Even if (he is) familiar with the concept of FIPPA, it is seen just as a document covering how schools handle students' personal records." (2014, p. 3).

Now that Navid has been made aware of student concerns, he is taking an initial step toward understanding student safety in an online environment. One of the first things we would share with him is just how global YouTube (owned by Google) is. An American-based corporation, Google, and by extension, YouTube boasts an estimated 2.5 million Google Data Servers **worldwide** (Google Data Centres, n.d.). For this reason alone, FIPPA must be utilized before moving ahead with the class project.

Moving ahead with the Project:

First, Navid should plan a lesson around privacy and technology. We understand that time is a limited commodity in secondary courses, but this kind of attention to detail will serve Navid well, especially if he plans other online or cloud-based projects in the future. If he is unsure where to start, we will suggest lesson plans for Navid, such as those offered through *Common Sense Media*, accessible [here](#). In addition, *Common Sense* has produced a series of short videos called, ['Privacy Tips and Strategies'](#) that are aimed toward helping educators keep students safe online while in their care.

Second, Navid must provide informed consent to both students and their families as well as the participating immigrant families. This means that "...the parent/guardian must be aware of the purpose for sharing the data, where it will be shared and with whom, (and) types of data that will need to be shared, including whether students are required to have their own accounts requiring specified personal information (Hengstler, 2013, p. 7). Navid should provide an outline of the planned project, and include relevant learning standards from the BC curriculum. A FIPPA informed consent should be created in

partnership with his district, and Hengstler's 2013 *K-12 Primer for British Columbia Teachers Posting Students' Work Online* would be a good resource for Navid. Appendix A contains a 'Privacy Protection Plan' that would be a useful planning checklist for someone new to drafting a consent form for students and families.

Lastly, Navid must also provide an alternate activity for those who do not wish to participate in the production of the YouTube Video. It is important to respect the student and family wishes. After all, "Student work done by the student is the property of the student-full stop." (Hengstler, 2013, p.4). Perhaps the concerned student has his/her/their own idea as to meet the requirements of the project without posting online at all. We believe this would be an excellent conversation to have with either that student and/or the whole class.

We believe that Navid's planned project has good educational value for his students, and do not want to discourage him from pursuing projects that involve informed consent. We plan to forward him the primer and encourage him to speak to his administrator, not only to support him constructing this FIPPA informed consent, but to see if there can be a professional development opportunity for the staff in the near future.

Item for Follow-Up:

Would Navid still need FIPPA consent if he removed all identifying features? For example, if Navid ensured no faces were shown, and no identifying features were, would that be sufficient? Here's something we were thinking about; although it may be complex, it gives an idea: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1F-7f-IryY

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Case Study: Ellen & James
Digital Professionalism
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Nicole Hamilton, Melissa Mullis, Thai Nguyen

11th March, 2020

The scenario:

- You are personal friends with a couple who both teach in your district. Ellen is a veteran high school teacher of French, Spanish, Italian and German. She has a toddler of a year and a half. Her husband, James Hiesman, is a long time middle school P.E. teacher and coaches community sport teams. They live sparingly but are generally looking for ways to earn a few extra dollars to finance their vacation trips. James is a fairly proficient amateur photographer and sometimes sells his work.
- Ellen and James went on vacation to the island of Hawaii, during winter break. During the trip, James took pictures of Ellen at Honokohau Beach in Kaloki-Honokohau National Historical Park. One picture was taken at sunset and shows Ellen nude from the waist up.
- Ellen and James have you and a few friends over for dinner, drinks, and a slide show of their pictures from their Hawaii trip. They show the "artistic" photo of Ellen during sunset at the Honokohau Beach nude from the waist up. Ellen's face is angled away from the camera but since you know her, you can easily identify her in the picture.
- As most of the guests depart, you stay behind to help clean up until you are the last guest left.
- When you sit down to have a cup of tea with them, James mentions that a website is running a photography contest. Ellen tells you James wants to submit the picture of her at sunset on Honokohau Beach to the contest under the category "Amateur Artistic Erotica". They tell you that each semi-finalist entry will be published online and receive $500. The grand prize winner receives $2500.
- Ellen and James ask you for your advice--and whether you think they could keep their names anonymous.

Our Advice to Ellen and James:

In short, our advice to Ellen and James would be, "Don't submit the picture." As educators in B.C., we are bound by the principles and ethics described in the British Columbia Teachers' Council Professional Standards. One of these standards states, "Educators act ethically and maintain the integrity, credibility and reputation of the profession" (BC Teachers' Council, 2019, p. 4). The elaborated description of this standard explains, "Educators are held to a higher standard and are accountable for their conduct on duty and off duty...Educators' individual conduct contributes to the perception of the profession as a whole" (BC Teachers' Council, 2019, p. 4). Teachers being held to a higher standard of behaviour than other members of the general public holds significant implications for how we should be managing our online presence and digital footprints.

While neither Ellen nor James have done anything illegal, nor morally wrong in their eyes, the language within this professional standard is somewhat vague and therefore subject to interpretation. The appropriateness of certain behaviours for teachers can be determined by the local community, possibly leading to different outcomes for the teachers based upon the community in which they live, as represented in two legal case studies outlined and compared by Covert (1993). The Shewan case in which two married teachers, John and Ilze Shewan, were both suspended for six weeks from their jobs in the Abbotsford School District after a semi-nude photo of Ilze, taken by John, was published in a magazine should serve as a clear warning for Ellen and James given the very similar nature of their current situation for which they are seeking advice (Covert, 1993). In this Shewan case, the teachers conduct was found to have not met the standards of acceptability in their community (Covert, 1993).   Different people may view the topless photo in different ways and hold varying beliefs about whether such an image does indeed maintain the integrity, credibility and reputation of the profession. By sharing the image on a public platform such as this website running the contest, Ellen and James are setting themselves up for potential backlash from parents or other members of the community and potential professional consequences. The simple fact that the word "erotica" is used in the contest category heading should also give James and Ellen pause. This word can mean lots of different things to different people, igniting some potentially strong opinions when it is connected to an educator.

Attempts to protect themselves from the potential consequences by keeping their names anonymous are unlikely to work in this current digital age. Through the process of entering the contest their names would be attached in some way to the photo, creating a traceable link for those who wish to pursue it. The power of Google to aggregate information about people makes staying anonymous unlikely (Hengstler, 2011). Due to the ways in which social networking actually works, once the photo is out there on the web it cannot be taken back (Hengstler, 2011). The photo could be shared and re-shared, essentially creating innumerable copies that are impossible to fully trace or retract (Hengstler, 2011). This means that Ellen and James need to think carefully about their decision and its implications now, including potential negative impacts of their prospects for future employment (Hengstler, 2013) as they will not be able change their minds later if the photo is out there.

Items for Follow-Up:

1) The article by James Covert was published in 1993 and references cases taking place several years prior to that, and the Shewan ruling was in 1987. This is over 30 years ago and one would think that changes have come about since then, but we are not so sure. The BCTC Professional Standards are quite vague and open to interpretation. Do you have any more recent examples of the variation in decisions dependent upon the local community in which the incident occured? To your knowledge, does this variation still seem to exist as much as what was presented in the Covert article?

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