Case study 7: MediaWatch – a game that integrates media and information literacy into statistics

MediaWatch is a game with the aim of supporting young people to think critically about graphs and diagrams. MediaWatch has been developed by researchers at Tampere University in Finland alongside the Strategic Research Council and the University of Helsinki.[258] The game offers insight into how media and information literacy could be included in the learning areas of Mathematics and statistics. The game is centred on a fictional island, with four different villages each with their own economy and industry and therefore own motivations and intent. The game uses press releases from the villages that contain graphs depicting fictional examples of social, economic, and environmental issues that are relevant offline, with a question about if and how the graph may have been manipulated. The idea is that young people traverse issues similar to those of the real world, gathering skills and understanding about how to critically engage with the information in the press releases and graphs, thinking about them and how they might apply these same skills outside the game. By placing the graphs as part of a press release, the young person is encouraged to reflect on questions that are key to media and information literacy: who is producing this press release? What is their intent? What do other sources say about this information?

The game explains and showcases ways that graphs may be used to mislead: the axis not starting from zero, reversing the axis, not having a consistently spaced axis, and the y axis being extended to obscure the graph.[258] After young people select the headline that best describes the graph, they are guided through why a graph is inaccurate and why the village may have decided to manipulate the graph. This gives young people a greater ability to make connections between manipulation and intent, in the game and how this might occur in the real world.

References

258. Critical Education Project, MediaWatch. Retrieved 25 June 2023 from https://webpages.tuni.fi/gamelab/2022/mediawatch/