

Boosting information literacy in civics education

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In a world of disinformation there is today a loud call for educational interventions to support students' information literacy to safeguard democracy. But, how can the teaching of information literacy skills be improved in civics education? With our study, we present a novel educational design for teaching and learning information literacy skills that we have termed digital apprenticeship. The design provides the apprentice with a pretest of digital tasks, followed by video tutorials on expert performance on those tasks, and finally a posttest with a set of new tasks. In an experiment with 16–19-year-olds, we investigate whether the educational design can be applied to boost adolescents information literacy competence. Through an online workshop called The News Evaluator, lateral reading and click restraint is taught through tutorials. This fact-checking procedure is central for all citizens who wish to determine the credibility of online news. Results from our experiments show that the educational design works in the context of information literacy by showing (a) an increase in reading laterally, click restraint and using digital aids, and (b) an increase in the quality of reliability assessment of news items among our participants. Digital apprenticeship is a fruitful approach to teach information literacy skills and it has great potential for future adaptations and improvements.

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