EMOJIS: MEANINGS AND USES

COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION > 2.1 INTERACTING THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

TARGET GROUP	AGE GROUP	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	FORMAT	COPYRIGHT	LANGUAGE
All	All	Level 1	Activity sheet	Creative Commons (BY-SA)	English, French

During this workshop participants will learn how to react to information or messages using images (emoticons). This will help them learn how to communicate on social media.

General Objective	Skillset building
Preparation time for facilitator	less than 1 hour
Competence area	2 - Communication & collaboration
Time needed to complete activity (for learner)	1 - 2 hours
Name of author	Nothing 2hide
Support material needed for training	Coloured post-its-Black markers-Writing surface-Scissors
Resource originally created in	French

WORKSHOP DIRECTIONS

1 Introduction

During this workshop, participants will become familiar about the ways emojis are used and the many ways in which a written message can be interpreted. For this, you can write several phrases on the board to which participants can react only with a smiley. Here are the 4 post-it types you will need for the workshop:

- Thumbs up – prepared by you. Kids will find it more difficult
- Thumbs down – prepared by you Kids will find it more difficult
- Smiley – prepared by the kids
- Frown – prepared by the kids

Each child will need a post-it of each type.

Facilitation tip: For keeping the attention of the kids and so they understand the exercise well, we recommend you don't distribute the material from the beginning. To keep things varied, and depending on the age of the kids, you can ask them to create their own emoji to react to every statement written on the board.

2 Beginning

To start, describe emojis on the board: a simple illustration, a circle with two eyes and a mount. The smiley can represent a happy person (smile), or a sad person (frown). Feel free to ask them, before adding the mouth, what to draw to represent happiness or sadness. Next add thumbs up and thumbs down to the table. Ask participants the meaning (brilliant, yes, super, ok, nice, terrible, no, etc.). Now give out 2 post-its and 1 marker per participant and have them each make 2 happy and 2 sad emojis. At the end, everyone will need to have 4 post-its, each one representing a different emoji:

- Thumbs up
- Thumbs down
- Happy emoji (smile)
- Sad emoji (sad)

On the board, write several statements to be responded to and ask participants to come and stick one of their emojis under each phrase.

Example:

> ‘There will be free time all day as the teacher is sick’

A thumbs up or smile can mean ‘lovely – no class today’ but also ‘great – the teacher is sick’. A sad smiley would perhaps be more appropriate. Bring participants to understand that emojis can be misinterpreted and can be taken as insulting. Imagine for example that the teacher saw the board with the happy emojis, how would they feel? Ask the kids to try to put themselves in this position. Would they be happy?

> ‘School is closed due to flooding’

You can use this type of ambiguous example to explain that we sometimes cannot rely on only one emoji to communicate our feelings.

> ‘A classmate slipped and fell in class in front of everyone’.

Leave them ‘vote’ on whether a happy smiley would be mean in this instance. To finish, have participants come up with their own statements and reactions amongst themselves.

3 Conclusion

To conclude, discuss the following:

- We can communicate emotions using emojis
- Depending on the situation or context, an emoji can have different meanings and interpretations
- Sometimes a situation can be misinterpreted
- Understanding the context and situation are important to give an appropriate response