Examining Gambling
Deconstructing Media Messages

Introduction to the theme

Research suggests that problem gamblers and those at particular risk of developing gambling problems have had higher exposure to gambling advertising and are more likely to report that they have been influenced by that advertising. One way to counter this is to increase the awareness of the potential influence advertising may have on our behaviour and to develop critical skills in deconstruction the media messages about gambling.

This lesson aims to do just that. By looking at different online gambling advertisements and engaging in critical reflection on these images and their messages, students can develop greater intentionality and control of their own behaviour.

The supplied slides include five images from gambling-related media ads along with discussion questions designed to promote reflective thinking and engage students in a conversation regarding the influence of advertising on gambling behaviour and the place of gambling in our society.

Instructional strategies

1. Review the supplied slides and modify questions if desired. Then use the slides to engage students in a discussion about media advertising and messaging and gambling behaviour in their society and community.

2. Invite students to spend some time exploring the "Game Sense" website developed by the BC Lottery Corporation. (http://gamesense.bclc.com/how-gambling-works/gamesense-tips.html). Then facilitate a class discussion using questions such as:

   a. What do you think about the videos and other tips and resources on the Game Sense site?
   b. How do the messages there compare and contrast with those presented in the PowerPoint images?
   c. What useful ideas are presented on the Game Sense site?
   d. What is unhelpful about the site? Is there any misleading information? Is anything missing?

3. Invite students to form small collaborative policy teams. Challenge the teams to develop a balanced approach to responsible gambling. Some factors they should consider include:

   a. What responsibility do gambling providers have in ensuring responsible gambling? What should they not be allowed to do? How can they be held accountable?
   b. What responsibility do individual gamblers have in ensuring they gamble responsibly? How can they be encouraged to do so? What messaging/incentives might be used? What should happen when they don't?
   c. How should the profits from gambling be used? Who should benefit? How can this be ensured?

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Gambling literacy

Big ideas

- Gambling can be a fun recreational activity but can also lead to significant harm
- As humans, both individually and as communities, we need to learn how to manage gambling in our midst
- We can learn how to control gambling by examining the different ways people have thought about it, engaging in critical self-reflection and listening to each other

Competencies

- Assess the complex ways in which gambling is linked to human culture and impacts the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and societies
- Assess the ways in which material goods are distributed in society, how those goods are valued and how this is related to gambling policies and behaviours
- Recognize binary constructs (e.g., win vs lose or success vs failure) and assess their limitation in addressing complex social issues like gambling
- Consider dominant social discourses and assess their impact on the distribution of risk and benefit associated with gambling
- Explore and appreciate the diverse cognitive, social, emotional and physical factors that impact gambling behaviour
- Develop personal and social skills to reflect on and manage personal behaviour and choices related to gambling

For a complete look at the gambling literacy competencies, as defined by the Centre for Addictions Research of BC, see: http://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/assets/docs/iminds/hs-gambling-curriculum.pdf)

Links to Curriculum

First Peoples' principles of learning

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

English Language Arts – New Media 10/11, English 12

Big ideas

- The exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity, others, and the world
- People understand text differently depending on their worldviews and perspectives
- Texts are socially, culturally, geographically, and historically constructed
- Language shapes ideas and influences others
- Digital citizenship requires both knowledge of digital technology and awareness of its impact on individuals and society (New Media 10/11)
- Questioning what we hear, read, and view contributes to our ability to be educated and engaged citizens (English 12)

Competencies

- Access information for diverse purposes and from a variety of sources and evaluate its relevance, accuracy, and reliability
- Apply appropriate strategies in a variety of contexts to comprehend written, oral, visual, and multimodal texts; guide inquiry; and extend thinking
- Recognize and appreciate how various forms, structures, and features of texts reflect a variety of purposes, audiences, and messages
- Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts
- Recognize and identify the role of personal, social, and cultural contexts, values, and perspectives in texts
- Construct meaningful personal connections between self, text, and world

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