Fertile Question: How do I know what’s good and evil?

Core Content Area 3: Recognition and Response

TOPIC 3.2: Action v Inaction

Extending Knowledge: The power of the press

In this lesson students will explore the connections between the media, truth, democracy and freedom.

For students to explore the connections between the media, truth, democracy and freedom, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the importance of trust and truth in the media.
   a. Access the website and complete the activities.
      i. Predict the consequences of relying on only the news to determine an accurate view of the world.

2. Examine the nature of censorship and its relation to truth, good and evil.
   a. Access the website regarding China and censorship and complete the activities.

3. Explore the limits of the freedom of speech in the media.
   a. Access the website regarding cartoons printed in the media in 2005.
      b. Investigate the controversies surrounding WikiLeaks or other whistle blowing organisations.
         i. Explore some of the consequences of the actions of these organisations.
         ii. Discuss the power of these groups to do good vs the power to do evil.
         iii. Read the quote from Quadragesimo Anno (The Fortieth Year) and Article 19 of the Declaration of Human rights given below and answer the following question:

        Just freedom of action must ... be left both to individual citizens and to families, yet only on condition that the common good be preserved and wrong to any individual be abolished. The function of the rulers of the State is to watch over the community and its parts; but in protecting private individuals in their rights, chief consideration ought to be given to the weak and the poor.        

        Article 19               

        Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

        Does a right to freedom of speech mean that the media (or anyone) should report everything to the public?

4. Conclude this lesson by reflecting on the power of the media to expose, exploit and express elements of good and evil in a society.