MEDIActive
YOUTH
BALKANS

Sorting Fact from Fiction

Critical Thinking

vs

Information Disorder and Propaganda

CURRICULUM
2025

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Lesson 1

Introduction to News Literacy

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson introduces participants to the concept of news literacy, focusing on its definition, importance, and practical applications in today's media landscape. Participants will explore how to critically evaluate news sources, identify biases, and discern credible information. Through discussions, activities, and real-world examples, the lesson aims to equip participants with the tools to navigate misinformation, understand the role of news in society, and become responsible media consumers.

Online educational resources

- ***Lesson*** on News Literacy from the *Sorting Facts from Fiction* online Moodle course
- ***Quiz*** on News Literacy from the *Sorting Facts from Fiction* online Moodle course
- ***Fact-checking tools*** like *Google Fact Check Explorer*, YouTube DataViewer, and Google Lens

Keywords

News Literacy, Credible Sources, Fact-Checking, Misinformation

Lesson aim

This lesson's objective is to introduce young people to the importance of news literacy in the digital age. It highlights the ability to critically analyze news sources and verify the accuracy of information. The goal is to empower participants to make informed decisions and contribute to a more informed society by reducing the spread of misinformation.

Lesson outcome

Participants will:

- Understand the concept and scope of news literacy.
- Recognize the role of news in shaping public understanding and democratic engagement.
- Develop skills to critically evaluate news sources and identify biases.
- Learn practical steps to verify information and responsibly share content.
- Reflect on the societal importance of being media literate.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5: Warming Up

- Begin with an engaging question: *"What does news literacy mean to you?"*
- Provide a *brief overview* of the lesson and its relevance in today's media-dominated world.
- Present *an example* of misinformation and its impact, such as a viral fake news story.

min. 6 - 20: Collaborative Learning

- Discuss the definition and scope of news literacy, emphasizing the distinctions between hard news, editorials, opinion pieces, and sponsored content.
- Explore the role of news in society, highlighting its function in informing citizens, holding institutions accountable, and fostering social cohesion.
- Facilitate a group discussion on the challenges of misinformation in the digital age.

min. 21 - 50: Practical Application

- Guide participants through a fact-checking exercise using real-world examples.
- Lead a group activity where participants analyse a news story for credibility by examining its source, evidence, and potential biases.
- Introduce fact-checking tools and demonstrate how to use them effectively.
- Encourage participants to evaluate multiple news sources to cross-check information.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion

- Summarize the key points discussed in the lesson, emphasize the importance of critical evaluation and responsible media consumption.
- Pose reflective questions such as:
  - "How can you apply news literacy skills in your daily life?"
  - "What steps can you take to combat misinformation in your community?"
- Provide resources for further learning, including online tools and articles on news literacy.

Materials / Tools

Video projector; laptop/desktop; Internet connection; access to *Moodle*; examples of news articles and fact-checking scenarios; handouts or digital links to fact-checking tools; *PowerPoint/Prezi* presentation enriched with visual materials (images and video clips).

Lesson 2

Media Types: Traditional vs Digital, Mass and Social

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson explores the evolution of media from traditional to digital platforms, examining their distinct characteristics, roles, and influences on modern communication. Participants will gain insights into the defining features of traditional media, including print, broadcast, and outdoor formats, as well as the rise of digital media platforms such as websites, blogs, social media, and video streaming services. The lesson highlights the differences between one-way communication in traditional media and the interactive nature of digital platforms, emphasizing audience engagement, accessibility, content customization, and credibility. Participants will understand the challenges posed by misinformation in digital spaces and the importance of fact-checking and critical evaluation of information sources.

Online educational resources

- ***Lesson*** on Traditional Media vs Digital, Mass and Social Media from the *Sorting Facts from Fiction* online Moodle course
- ***Quiz*** on Traditional Media vs Digital, Mass and Social Media *from Fiction* online Moodle course

Keywords

Media Evolution, Traditional Media, Digital Media, Social Media, Interactivity

Lesson aim

The aim of this lesson is to develop learners' understanding of the evolution of media, focusing on the differences and interplay between traditional and digital platforms. It seeks to enhance their media literacy by fostering critical thinking about the credibility, accessibility, and interaction of various media types. The lesson also aims to equip participants with practical skills for evaluating information sources and promoting responsible consumption.

Lesson outcome

This lesson's objective is to introduce young people to the importance of news literacy in the digital age. It highlights the ability to critically analyze news sources and verify the accuracy of information. The goal is to empower participants to make informed decisions and contribute to a more informed society by reducing the spread of misinformation.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5: Introduction

- Begin with an engaging question: “What media platform do you use most often, and why?”
- Briefly outline the lesson’s aim and outcomes, emphasizing the importance of media literacy.

min. 6 - 15: Content presentation

- ***Traditional Media***: Explain the characteristics of print, broadcast, and outdoor media, focusing on credibility and one-way communication.
- ***Digital Media***: Discuss websites, blogs, social media, and streaming services, highlighting interactivity and customization.
- ***Comparison***: Use a simple Venn diagram or table to summarize differences and similarities.

min. 16 - 30: Interactive activity

- Divide learners into pairs or small groups.
- ***Task***: Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a provided media example (e.g., a newspaper vs. a social media post).
- Groups briefly present findings.

min. 31 - 50: Discussion and Practical Application

- ***Discussion***: Facilitate a class discussion on media credibility and misinformation. Pose questions like: “Why do you think misinformation spreads faster on digital platforms?”
- ***Practical Task***: Provide mixed examples of real and fake news articles. In pairs, learners identify credible information using fact-checking techniques.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion and Reflection

- Summarize key points.
- Reflect on the importance of media literacy.
- Assign a takeaway task: “Analyze your media consumption habits for the next week and identify one change you can make to improve it.”

Materials / Tools

Video projector; laptop/desktop; Internet connection; access to *Moodle*; examples of news articles and fact-checking scenarios; handouts or digital links to fact-checking tools; *PowerPoint/Prezi* presentation enriched with visual materials (images and video clips).

Lesson 3

The Role of Algorithms and Social Media

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson explores the role of social media algorithms in shaping the content users encounter on digital platforms. Algorithms influence the dissemination of all online information, including political discourse, and can contribute to the spread of misinformation. Students will analyze how these algorithms create "filter bubbles," reinforce biases, and influence public opinion. Additionally, the lesson will introduce practical strategies for recognizing algorithmic manipulation and diversifying news sources to enhance media literacy and critical thinking.

Online educational resources

- Studies about impact of algorithms on social media
- Online tools for news verification
- Case Studies on misinformation (elections, COVID-19)

Keywords

Algorithms, filter bubbles, social media, misinformation, media literacy, critical thinking

Lesson aim

The goal of this lesson is to help students develop a critical understanding of how social media algorithms shape the content they see and influence their perception of information. Through this lesson, students will learn to identify bias in their content feeds, develop strategies for diversifying their information sources.

Lesson outcome

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain how algoritms function and their role in shaping social media content
- Analyze the effect of algorithms on political discourse and how algorithms affect misinformations
- How to recognize filter bubbles and algorithmic bias

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5: Introduction

- Begin Interactive Poll: "*How do you chose the news you read?*" or "Do you think that social media influences how you view certain topics"?
- Discussion: show students two different social media feeds (one conservative, one liberal) and ask them to guess how algorithms may influence what users will see or which users will see them.

min. 6 - 20: Collaborative Learning

- Discussion topics: What effect algorithms have on filters and recommended content on platforms like Tik Tok, Facebook, Twitter/X; Twitter' s impact on U. S. Elctions and how algorithmic promotion of content affected voter behavior; Research shows that over 50 % of Facebook users only see content aigned with their views, and just 14,7 % regulary see opposing viewpoints.
- Group activity: Seperate students into small groups and assign each group different algorithmic scenario. Groups analyze how these scenarios will affect users and present their findings.

min. 21 - 50: Practical Application

- Exercise: Students will open their social media feeds and note which topic appears the most. Discuss differences in feeds between students and how the way its personalised affects content diversity.
- Debate on algorithmic influence: *"Should social media platforms be regulated to prevent manipulation? "* or *"Do algorithms help or harm democracy?"*
- Fact checking exercise: Introduce students to online tools for verifying news credibility. Students examine real and fake news articles and determine their reliability.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion

- Recap key points
- Reflective discussion: *"How can these skils help you navigate online information more effectively?"*

Materials / Tools

Video projector, laptop, internet connection, screenshots of different social media feeds, case study examples, powerpoint or prezi, canva

Lesson 4

Post-Truth and Information Disorder

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson explores the challenges posed by information disorder in the digital age. It examines how false and misleading information spreads and explores different categories of information disorder. It also goes into the notion of post truth Students will investigate real-world examples, explore different tools for verifying such content, and discuss the ethical and societal consequences behind misinformation. The goal of this lesson is to enhance critical thinking and media literacy skills to help students navigate a world of information disorder.

Online educational resources

- The Poynter Institute's *articles on online fact-checking*
- Arizona State University's *tools to identify fake images and videos*
- *FactCheck.org's debunking of false stories on Facebook and other platforms*
- *"Navigating a Post-Truth World"*, TEDx Talk by Charles Sykes
- Online verification tools: *Snopes, FactCheck.org, Politifact, guides.vote*

Keywords

Misinformation, Disinformation, Malinformation, Post-Truth, Media Literacy, Critical Thinking

Lesson aim

The aim of this lesson is to help students develop a strong understanding of how information disorder operates and how does it effect public perception. Through this session, students will learn how misinformation spreads, how to identify different forms of misleading content, and what strategies can be employed to verify the accuracy of information. Through a critical thinking approach, this lesson aims to prepare students to engage with media responsibly and thoughtfully.

Lesson outcome

Students will be able to:

- Differentiate between misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation.
- Identify techniques used in misleading content, such as manipulated and fabricated media.
- Recognize real-world examples of misinformation and analyze their impact.
- Utilize digital tools to verify information and counteract false narratives.
- Engage in discussions about the ethical implications of information disorder today.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 10 : Warming Up

- Engage students with an interactive poll: “Have you ever engaged with information online that later turned out to be false? That includes sharing or believing and spreading that information”
- Discuss personal experiences with misinformation and introduce the key concepts of the lesson.
- Short thought-provoking video clip about viral misinformation (optional, depending on how long the discussion lasts).

min. 11 - 30: Interactive activity

- Explain the three main categories of information disorder: disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation.
- Provide real-world examples, such as election misinformation, deepfakes, and conspiracy theories.
- Discuss how emotions and biases contribute to post-truth politics.
- Break students into small groups to analyze different misinformation case studies.

min. 31 - 50: Practical Application

- Facilitate Teach students how to verify information using fact-checking tools.
- Compare real and fake media content, looking for inconsistencies in context and image manipulation.
- Facilitate a class debate on ethical dilemmas: “Should social media platforms regulate misinformation more strictly?”

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion

- Recap the key lessons learned, including the importance of media literacy.
- Conduct a Kahoot quiz to reinforce key concepts of information disorder.
- Encourage students to practice media verification techniques beyond the classroom.

Materials / Tools

Projector, laptop/desktop, internet connection; Examples of manipulated and fabricated content; Access to verification tools (Snopes, TinEye, FactCheck.org); Kahoot or a similar quiz.

Lesson 5

Effective Search Strategies

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson explores how to navigate the vast world of online information using effective search strategies. Participants will learn to use keywords and operators, advanced search tools, and cross-checking techniques to locate accurate and relevant information efficiently. The session emphasizes the importance of verifying sources, understanding bias, and employing precision tools to transform the search process into a valuable skill for personal and professional contexts.

Online educational resources

- Lesson on Effective Search Strategies from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course
- Quiz on Effective Search Strategies from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course
- Library of Search Strategy Resources

Keywords

Search Strategies, Keywords, Search Operators, Advanced Tools, Cross-Checking, Information Credibility

Lesson aim

This lesson's objective is to enhance participants' ability to effectively search for information online by teaching them strategies to refine their searches, verify credibility, and identify biases. By mastering these skills, participants will be better equipped to find reliable information, save time, and avoid misinformation.

Lesson outcome

- Understand the importance of effective search strategies in navigating online information.
- Learn to use keywords and search operators to refine search results.
- Apply advanced search tools for precise and targeted searches.
- Develop cross-checking techniques to verify the credibility of sources.
- Recognize the role of reliable information in making informed decisions.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 10 : Warming Up

- Begin with an engaging question: *"What challenges do you face when searching for information online?"*
- Provide an overview of the lesson, emphasizing the value of *efficient and accurate* searches.
- Share an example of a common search challenge, such as finding credible sources on a trending topic.

min. 11 - 30: Collaborative Learning

- Discuss the role of keywords and search operators in refining search results. Introduce operators such as quotation marks (" "), minus sign (-), OR, and wildcard (*).
- Provide examples of how specific searches can give more accurate results.
- Explore the benefits of advanced search tools, such as filters for date, language, and file type.
- Facilitate a group discussion on common pitfalls in online searches and how to overcome them.

min. 30 - 50: Practical Application

- Conduct a hands-on activity where participants practice using search operators and advanced tools to find specific information.
- Guide participants in analysing a search to verify for trustworthiness and neutrality. Introduce cross-checking techniques by comparing information from multiple reputable sources.
- Encourage students to share their experiences and discuss strategies for improving their search habits.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion

- Summarize the key strategies discussed, highlighting the importance of precision and credibility in online searches.
- Pose reflective questions such as:
  - *"How can these strategies improve your research process?"*
  - *"What steps will you take to ensure the information you find is accurate?"*
- Provide resources for further practice, including tools and guides on advanced search techniques.

Materials / Tools

Video projector; laptop/desktop; Internet connection; access to Moodle; examples of useful websites for effective research; handouts or digital links to advanced search tools; PowerPoint/Prezi presentation.

Lesson 6

Fake News: Disinformation and Misinformation

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson addresses the prevalence of "fake news" in today's digital world and clarifies the difference between misinformation (unintentionally false information) and disinformation (deliberately false content). By examining real-world examples, students learn to identify the traits of misleading media and practice using tools to verify or debunk dubious claims. The lesson emphasizes the importance of staying informed and critically engaged online.

Online educational resources

- *Lesson on Fake News* on the online Moodle course
- *Quiz on Fake News* on the online Moodle course
- Fact-checking websites *(e.g., Faktograf, Raskrikavanje)*
- Reverse image search tools *(Google Reverse Image Search, TinEye)*

Keywords

Fake News, Disinformation, Misinformation, Fact-Checking, Media Literacy, Critical Thinking

Lesson aim

- To define "fake news," disinformation, and misinformation, and clarify how they differ.
- To help students develop practical skills for detecting and debunking misleading or false information.
- To emphasize the real-world consequences of spreading unverified claims.

Lesson outcome

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify key distinctions between misinformation and disinformation.
- Spot common warning signs of fake news.
- Apply basic verification tools to assess the credibility of news stories.
- Reflect on the ethical implications of sharing unverified information.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5 : Introduction

- Activity: Ask students to recall a piece of "shocking" or "unbelievable" news they recently encountered on social media. Did they verify it before believing or sharing?
- Discussion: Briefly explore how easy it is to see surprising stories online but not confirm their authenticity.

min. 6 - 20: Collaborative Learning

- Presentation where key definitions such as Fake News, Disinformation, Misinformation are introduced
- Group Discussion where you explore the reasons behind creating or spreading fake news (financial gain, political agendas, or simple mistakes) and how to debunk them.
- Show short regional examples of disinformation and misinformation.

min. 21 - 50: Practical Application

- Activity: *"Real or Fake?"*
  - Provide small groups with sample news articles (some legitimate, some fake).
  - Students analyse each sample using guiding questions: Is the source reputable? Are there obvious red flags in headlines or images?
  - Have them label each as likely real, likely fake, or uncertain.
- Tool Demonstration where you show how to conduct reverse image searches using Google Reverse Image Search or TinEye and use a fact-checking website (e.g., Faktograf) to see how claims are typically verified.
- *Debrief*: Discuss each group's conclusions, highlighting especially clever or subtle fake stories.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion

- Summarize the essential points such as Disinformation vs. misinformation, clues to look for (exaggerated headlines, suspicious sources), and practical tools (fact-checking sites, verifying source credibility)
- Reflective Questions:
  - "How can verifying information before sharing it reduce the spread of fake news?" or "Why might someone create disinformation on purpose?"
- Extension: Encourage students to practice verifying one trending news story before the next session, using the tools demonstrated.

Materials / Tools

Projector or screen for showing example headlines and images; Internet-connected devices (laptops, tablets, or smartphones) for fact-checking and reverse image searches; Access to fact-checking websites (Faktograf, Raskrikavanje).

Lesson 7

Fact Checking and Verification Tools

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

In today's digital age, misinformation and disinformation spread quickly. It's vital to have the ability to critically analyze and verify information, especially for journalists, educators, and everyday media users. This lesson will focus on tools and techniques for effective fact-checking and verification, along with common pitfalls to avoid. Participants will gain hands-on experience using resources to verify claims, images, videos, and sources, fostering informed and responsible media consumption.

Online educational resources

- ***Lesson*** on Fact Checking and Verification Tools from the *Sorting Facts from Fiction* online Moodle course
- ***Quiz*** on Fact Checking and Verification Tools from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course

Keywords

Fact-checking,
Verification tools,
Media literacy,
Disinformation,
Misinformation

Lesson aim

The aim of this lesson is to equip participants with the skills and knowledge to use fact-checking and verification tools, employ critical techniques to assess sources, and identify common pitfalls in the process of verifying information.

Lesson outcome

By the end of the lesson, participants will develop a critical understanding of the importance of fact-checking and its role in combating misinformation. They will gain familiarity with key fact-checking tools and techniques, enabling them to verify news, images, videos, and other forms of media effectively. Additionally, they will learn to assess source credibility, recognize and avoid common pitfalls such as confirmation bias and misinterpreting satire, and apply these skills to become more discerning media consumers

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5: Introduction

- **Discussion**: Ask participants about their experiences with misinformation and how they verify information when they come across something suspicious.
- **Present the topic**: Briefly explain the significance of fact-checking and the risks of misinformation and disinformation.
- **Define key terms**: Introduce concepts such as fact-checking, disinformation, and misinformation

min. 6 - 15: Minutes: Overview of Fact-Checking Tools

- **Present a list of tools**: Introduce tools like *Google Fact Check Explorer, Snopes, PolitiFact, FactCheck.org, TinEye,* and *InVID*. Provide a brief overview of each tool and demonstrate their use with examples.
- **Group discussion**: Have participants share which tools they find most useful and why.

min. 16 - 30: Activity 2 - Techniques for Verifying Information

- **Cross-referencing sources**: Show how to cross-reference claims with reputable sources. Use an example of a health claim or news story, and demonstrate how to consult trusted websites (e.g., *WHO, PubMed*).
- **Reverse image search and metadata**: Show participants how to use *Google Reverse Image Search* and other tools like *FotoForensics* to check the authenticity of images.
- **Assessing source bias**: Briefly demonstrate how to check a source's bias using tools like *Media Bias/Fact Check.*

min. 31 - 50: Activity 3 - Identifying Common Pitfalls

- **Present common pitfalls**: Discuss confirmation bias, over-reliance on one source, misinterpreting satire, and ignoring context.
- **Interactive discussion**: Provide examples of each pitfall and ask participants how they would address each scenario.

min. 51 - 60: Minutes: Wrap-Up and Q&A

- **Recap the main points**: Summarize the tools, techniques, and pitfalls discussed.
- **Q&A session:** Allow participants to ask any questions or share thoughts on the lesson.

Materials / Tools

Video projector, computer or smartphone, internet connection, *Google Fact Check Explorer, Snopes, PolitiFact, FactCheck.org, TinEye*, handouts for summarizing and examples, *Prezi* or *Power Point* Presentation

Lesson 8

AI Generated Images and Videos

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson explores the growing prevalence of artificial images and videos, focusing on how they are created, the impact they have in our society, and strategies for detecting AI generated content. Students will examine well-known instances of AI-generated media, discover techniques for debunking such content, and discuss ethical and moral implications. The goal of this lesson is to strengthen students' media literacy and critical thinking skills in the AI era.

Online educational resources

- Lesson on *AI Generated Images and Videos* from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course
- Quiz covering various aspects of *AI-generated content* from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course
- Online sources for verification such as: *TinEye*, *Google Reverse Image Search*, *FotoForensics*, *InVID Verification Plugin*, *Sensity*.

Keywords

AI-Generated Media,
Deepfake,
Media Literacy,
Critical Thinking,
Ethical AI

Lesson aim

The aim of this session is to provide students with a comprehensive lesson in understanding AI-generated images and videos, how they are created, and the societal implications. Its purpose is to enhance participants' critical thinking and media literacy skills by teaching them how to detect AI media, assess its authenticity using a variety of tools and methods, and consider the ethical implications of its use. The understanding of AI technology is essential for navigating a digital world increasingly influenced by it, and this lesson helps to enable informed and responsible interactions with such media material.

Lesson outcome

Students will learn how AI-generated media is produced and consumed, as well as how to recognize and verify artificial content through critical analysis and digital tools. They will consider some ethical concerns such as misinformation and privacy when it comes to using AI, apply the newly learnt skills to assess authenticity, and will engage in informed discussions about the AI-generated media impacts today's society.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5: Warming Up

- Engaging participants and introducing the topic by asking general questions regarding the topic
  Example: An interactive poll on Mentimeter: "Have you encountered an AI-generated image or video? If yes, where?"
- Display examples of such generated media (deepfake videos, AI-generated art)
- Introduce the topic and outline the lesson objectives

min. 6 - 20 : Collaborative Learning

- Explain Discussion: Notable cases of AI-generated media:
  - Tom Cruise DeepFake TikToks
  - AI-generated artwork winning competitions
  - Fake Kamala Harris campaign video
- Describe the common tools and technologies used in AI-generated content, such as Deepfake models and DALL-E 2.
- Lead conversations in small groups about how these technologies affect society (misinformation, creative potential, copyright issues).

min. 21 - 50: Practical Application

- Practice identifying AI-generated content:
  - Compare authentic and AI-generated media.
  - A nalyse fake videos that exhibit irregularities (in lighting, symmetry, and metadata).
- Debate ethical dilemmas:
  - "Should AI-generated images be labelled to distinguish them from authentic ones?"
  - "Does AI-generated art diminish the value of human creativity?"
- Students practice online tools (e.g., TinEye, FotoForensics) for verifying images and videos.
- Run a Kahoot quiz focusing on ethical issues and the main facets of AI-generated media detection.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion

- Recap the key points: Tools and methods; Ethical considerations
- Encourage students to keep practicing media verification using tools
- Reflective questions with an emphasis on what they should remember from this lesson like: *How can these skills help you in daily life? How do you intend to use AI media?*

Materials / Tools

Video projector; laptop/desktop; Internet connection; Examples of AI-generated images and videos; access to verification tools (e.g., TinEye, InVID); access to Moodle; PowerPoint/Prezi presentation which is enriched with visual materials (images and video clips) and research based factual information.

Lesson 9

Youth Media Activism

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson explores youth activism and how it evolved in the digital age. It provides an overview of youth activism, its main forms, recent key examples, and the role of social media in shaping political awareness and growing larger engagement. Students will examine the nature of digital activism such as its benefits and challenges and assess the impact of media literacy on how youth can make informed participation. The goal of this lesson is to strengthen students' critical thinking and understanding of digital activism today.

Online educational resources

- Arab Spring and social media (case study)
- Climate Change Activism (Greta Thunberg's use of social media)
- #MeToo Movement and online activism
- *European Commission report on youth social media use*
- BBC report on Cambridge Analytica's impact on Brexit and U.S. elections
- Youth Activism in the Digital Age

Keywords

Youth Activism,
Social Media,
Digital Engagement,
Media Literacy,
Political Awareness

Lesson aim

The objective of this lesson is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of youth activism in the digital age. Students will explore how social media has transformed activism, both as a tool for mobilization and as a potential limitation to long-term engagement. They will also evaluate the ethical concerns surrounding digital activism and misinformation, gaining critical media literacy skills to navigate online spaces effectively.

Lesson outcome

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Analyze the role of social media in modern activism, including its benefits and risks.
- Evaluate case studies of youth-led movements facilitated by digital platforms.
- Identify challenges in sustaining engagement and avoiding misinformation.
- Develop critical thinking skills to assess online activism and media influence.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 10: Warming Up

- Interactive poll: “Have you ever engaged in or been influenced by online activism? If so, how?” (Use tools like *Mentimeter* or *Poll Everywhere*)
- Show brief examples of digital activism (e.g., Greta Thunberg’s climate activism on Twitter, viral campaigns like #MeToo).
- Discuss the lesson objectives and the importance of understanding digital activism.

min. 11 - 30: Collaborative Learning

- Define youth activism and its historical significance.
- Discuss real-world examples:
  - Arab Spring protests and the role of Twitter.
  - Black Lives Matter’s use of social media for mobilization.
- Small group discussions: How has social media changed activism?

min. 31 - 50: Practical Application

- Students analyze the benefits and risks of social media activism:
- Potential debate topics:
  - “Is social media activism real activism?”
  - “Should social media companies regulate political content?”
- Students assess news sources and discuss credibility in social media activism.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion

- Recap key points
- Reflective discussion: “How can you use social media responsibly for activism?”

Materials / Tools

Video projector; laptop/desktop; Internet connection; access to *Moodle*; examples of news articles and fact-checking scenarios; handouts or digital links to fact-checking tools; *PowerPoint/Prezi* presentation enriched with visual materials (images and video clips).

Lesson 10

What is Critical Thinking?

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson explores the essence of critical thinking, tracing its origins, significant contributors, and practical applications. Participants will learn how critical thinking enables individuals to analyze information, evaluate evidence, and form reasoned conclusions. Using historical examples like Socrates' Socratic Method and contemporary applications in various fields, the lesson highlights the importance of critical thinking in navigating modern societal challenges. Interactive discussions and activities will enhance participants' ability to think clearly, rationally, and critically in diverse contexts.

Online educational resources

- Lesson on Critical Thinking from the *Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course*
- Quiz on Critical Thinking from the *Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course*
- Online games and activities to enhance Critical Thinking like: *Chess.com*, *The Talos Principle*, Spent, Brainstorm Numberdyslexia.com,

Keywords

Critical Thinking, Socratic Method, Media Literacy, Problem-Solving, Rationalism

Lesson aim

This lesson's objective is to introduce students to the concept of critical thinking by highlighting its core ideas, providing historical context, and applicability in contemporary society. It aims to improve their ability to analyze information, evaluate evidence, and draw reasonable conclusions, so they can successfully navigate complex issues and make informed decisions in various personal and professional contexts.

Lesson outcome

Students will learn about the history and development of critical thinking as well as its use in a variety of industries, including business, healthcare, and education. They will learn to apply critical thinking techniques which can be carried out in real-world situations, such as challenging presumptions and assessing the evidence. Additionally, students will reflect on the societal importance of critical thinking society for encouraging cooperative problem-solving and informed decision-making.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5: Warming Up

- Involving participants and introducing the topic by asking general questions regarding the topic such as: *"What does critical thinking mean to you?"*
- Provide a brief lesson overview, focusing on the relevance in the modern world.
- Present an example of critical thinking in action, such as a decision-making scenario

min. 6 - 20: Collaborative Learning

- Discussion: The origins of critical thinking, emphasizing on Socrates' contributions and the Socratic Method.
- Highlight key historical developments (the Enlightenment, different thinkers). Have students in small groups do some research.
- Lead a group discussion on how critical thinking applies and works in democratic societies and in relation to media literacy.

min. 21 - 50: Practical Application

- Use the Socratic Method to explore a complex question
  - Guide participants to analyse the question, consider multiple viewpoints, and draw reasoned conclusions.
- Conduct a group activity where participants analyse a real-world scenario (evaluating conflicting news articles).
- Encourage students to individually or in pair use games like Chess.com or Spent to enhance strategic and reflective thinking.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion

- Summarise the lesson by highlighting the significance, uses, and history of critical thinking.
- Reflective questions with an emphasis on what they should remember from this lesson like:
  - *"In which aspect of your life do you think you can apply critical thinking?*
  - *"What barriers might prevent people from thinking critically?"*

Materials / Tools

Video projector; laptop/desktop; Internet connection; access to Moodle; examples of Socratic dialogues and critical thinking scenarios; access to online games like Chess.com and Spent; handouts or digital links to further reading materials on critical thinking; PowerPoint/Prezi presentation which is enriched with visual materials (images and video clips) and research based factual information.

Lesson 11

Critical Thinking Tools & Skills

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This learning scenario expands on the notion of critical thinking and introduces the main critical thinking tool and skills. Critical thinking skills and tools are intended to improve awareness, thinking, and thinking critically, about an angle that the story is being told. Participants will be introduced to various tools and techniques that can significantly improve critical thinking skills and learn through practical exercises and historical examples to illustrate their application. They will also be introduced to the concept of narrative theory that considers every news footage as a narrative, which means that it has someone telling it, and that every story has a particular angle from which it is narrated or told. This particular angle is called the perspective or point of view.

Online educational resources

- Lesson on Critical Thinking Tools & Skills from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course
- Quiz on Critical Thinking Tools & Skills from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course
- Explore argument mapping with *Rationale*

Keywords

Critical Thinking,
CT Tools & Techniques,
Analysis & Interpretation,
Understanding CT,
The Socratic Method

Lesson aim

The aim of the lesson is for students to understand that critical thinking is a fundamental, essential skill for today's media literacy and orientation in the current media world, but also a crucial cognitive skill. They will be introduced to various tools and techniques, such as: Analysis, Interpretation, Inference, Explanation, Self-regulation, Open-mindedness, that can significantly improve their thinking abilities, along with practical exercises and historical examples to illustrate their application.

Lesson outcome

Students will have a better understanding of key critical thinking skills and tools and their importance for today's media literacy and orientation in the current media world. They will be able to identify sources to practice and improve their critical thinking and understand the historical examples of critical thinking methods.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5: Warming-up

An effective way of involving participants and setting common expectations about what they will learn is to ask a few preliminary questions on the subject. The educator introduces the topic and class contents, prepares PowerPoint/Prezi presentation; various teaching methods: lecturing, discussion, group work, self-reflection.

min. 5 - 20: Collaborative learning

In the next 15 minutes participants talk about how critical thinking could be improved and what are the skills needed for it. The educator explains some key information: essential CT skills (Analysis, Interpretation, Inference, Explanation, Self-regulation, Open-mindedness) and mentions historical examples of critical thinking (The Socratic Method, Scientific Revolution, The Enlightenment, The Manhattan Project).

min. 20 - 35: Discussion and Practical Application

The educator asks a question to be examined critically in the form of the Socratic method (suggested topics are the most relevant one for today: Social Change in Todays' World is Impossible; The Economic Inequality in the World is rising vs "Absolute poverty is vanishing rapidly" (Jordan Peterson).; "Artificial intelligence will take all our jobs and that's not necessarily a bad thing" Elon Musk etc).

To effectively use these tools, the educator facilitates the following steps with the participants:

1. Identify the problem or question at hand
2. Gather relevant information from credible sources
3. Apply appropriate critical thinking tools
4. Analyze and evaluate the information
5. Draw conclusions and make decisions
6. Reflect on the process and outcomes

min. 35 - 50: A Kahoot quiz

Play the Critical Thinking Skills & Tools *Kahoot* quiz with the participants, covering various aspects of critical thinking tools and techniques.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion and Reflection

Make a short summary of the lesson, mentioning that thinking more critically and thoroughly about the pressing issues of today's world can help us understand it better, being more self-aware and making better decisions about your present and future. Present the sources for further reading and exercise. Ask a couple of questions which help reminding the participants about the most important messages you would like to give.

Materials / Tools

Video projector; laptop/desktop; Internet connection; access to *Moodle*; examples of news articles and fact-checking scenarios; handouts or digital links to fact-checking tools; *PowerPoint/Prezi* presentation enriched with visual materials (images and video clips).

Lesson 12

Logical Fallacies

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson explores logical fallacies, which are errors in reasoning that weaken arguments and can be used to manipulate audiences. Students will learn to recognize and analyze common fallacies that people often use without being aware of them. They will engage in discussions, practical exercises, and debates to develop their critical thinking skills and ability to construct sound arguments. This lesson is designed to enhance students' reasoning skills, improve their ability to evaluate arguments, and strengthen their capacity to engage in logical discourse.

Online educational resources

- Thou Shall Not Use Logical Fallacies (website with posters, resources)
- Your Bias Is (website on cognitive biases)
- PRECOBIAS pedagogical resources (lesson plans on critical thinking)
- Online quizzes on logical fallacies

Keywords

Logical Fallacies, Critical Thinking, Argumentation, Misinformation, Cognitive Bias

Lesson aim

The objective of this lesson is to equip students with the ability to identify and avoid logical fallacies in arguments. By understanding the mechanisms behind flawed reasoning, students will enhance their own critical thinking, argument evaluation, and communication skills. The lesson also aims to make students more resilient against misinformation, enabling them to engage more thoughtfully with new information and in discussions.

Lesson outcome

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Understand what logical fallacies are and why they are problematic.
- Be able to identify and analyse common logical fallacies.
- Improve their reasoning and argument construction.
- Learn to engage in discussions and debates while practicing logical reasoning skills.
- Recognize the role of cognitive biases in fallacious reasoning.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5: Warming Up

- Start with an interactive poll: “What is a widespread misleading argument? What makes it misleading?” (Use tools like Mentimeter or Poll Everywhere.)
- Display a famous example of a logical fallacy (e.g., a well-known political or advertising claim).
- Briefly introduce the concept of logical fallacies and outline the lesson objectives.

min. 11 - 30: Collaborative Learning

- Discuss notable logical fallacies using real-world examples that students can commonly identify
- Students work in small groups to identify fallacies in provided statements.
- Discussion on why these fallacies are persuasive and how they can be misleading.

min. 31 - 50: Practical Application

- Analyse common logical fallacies in media, advertising, and debates.
- Role-playing activity: Students engage in mock debates where they must detect and call out fallacies in their opponents’ arguments.
- Use online tools and quizzes to test fallacy recognition skills.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion

- Recap the key points of the lesson
- Reflective discussion: “How can the skills discussed in this lesson be applied in academic writing, debates, and personal discussions?”
- Encourage students to keep practicing by analysing media and arguments they encounter daily.

Materials / Tools

Video projector, laptop/desktop, internet connection; Examples of logical fallacies in media (ads, political speeches, debates); Worksheets with fallacy identification exercises; Access to online verification tools and quizzes; Debate prompts and discussion questions.

Lesson 13

Critically Reading Media Messages

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson provides an in-depth exploration of how to analyze media messages with a critical eye. Participants learn to identify common signs of bias, manipulation, and unreliable information across various media formats. Through practical examples and group exercises, students will develop the skills needed to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different sources. This lesson promotes responsible media consumption, enabling learners to make well-informed judgments in an information-rich world.

Online educational resources

- Lesson on Critically Reading Media Messages from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course
- Quiz on Critically Reading Media Messages from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course
- Fact-checking tools/websites (e.g., *Faktograf, Raskrikavanje*)

Keywords

Media Literacy,
Bias Detection,
Source Credibility,
Fact-Checking,
Manipulative Language,
Critical Thinking

Lesson aim

- **Help** students recognize bias and manipulation in various media messages.
- **Guide** students in evaluating the reliability of media sources by analyzing their purpose, language use, and credibility.
- **Provide** practical tools and skills - such as fact-checking and reverse image searching - for verifying media content and assessing its truthfulness.

Lesson outcome

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- **Identify** and describe common signs of bias and unreliable information in the media.
- **Evaluate** source credibility by analysing intent, language, and factual backing.
- **Use** simple and effective methods to fact-check or verify media claims.
- **Understand** how emotional triggers and persuasive tactics can shape audience perception and opinion.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5: Warming Up

- **Activity**: Ask students to quickly brainstorm where they see media messages most often (e.g., social platforms, ads, news sites).
- **Discussion**: Prompt them to share recent media messages that caught their attention. Why did those messages stand out? (e.g., shocking headlines, emotional language, interesting visuals)

min. 6 - 20: Collaborative Learning

- Presentation on Key Concepts: *Identifying Bias, Evaluating Source Reliability, and Recognizing Intent*
- Group Activity: Have students compare two articles covering the same event but with different tones or word choices. Ask them to note differences in phrasing, selection of facts, or slant. Discuss how these subtle choices can shape public perception.

min. 21 - 50: Practical Application

- Tool Demonstrations: Show how to perform a reverse image search and see if an image is used in a misleading context. Visit a fact-checking site and Walk through an example of how a viral claim was authenticated or debunked.
- Activity to *spot manipulative language*: Display a set of headlines or short text excerpts, some using strongly emotional or sensational words. Students highlight or underline manipulative language and note what effect it might have on readers.
- Discussion: Reflect on how quickly we can be influenced if we don't pause to ask, *"Who wrote this? Why? What's the evidence?"*

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion

- Summary: Recap the importance of recognizing bias, understanding sources, and fact-checking.
- Reflective Questions: *"How can identifying bias change your perception of an online post?"* or *"Why do some media outlets rely on emotional triggers, and how might this affect public discourse?"*
- Encourage students to apply at least one verification step before sharing any potentially controversial content.

Materials / Tools

Projector or screen for showing media samples; Internet-connected devices; Links to lesson and quiz on the online Moodle course; Access to websites for fact-checking and reverse image search.

Lesson 14

Analyzing News Articles

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson introduces the students on how to critically read and analyze news articles and written media. The students will learn about "inverted pyramid" which gives an overview of the structure and the elements that an article should comprise. Additionally, the incorporated method for investigating the news sources assists in better understanding the evaluation of the sources and the relevance of the evidence. This lesson will serve as a good basis to help the students identify the difference between plain facts and opinion in written media.

Online educational resources

- Lesson on Analyzing News Articles from the *Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course*
- Quiz on Analyzing News Articles from the *Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course*

Keywords

News Articles;
Inverted pyramid;
SIFT mechanism;
Facts vs Opinions;

Lesson aim

The aim of the lesson is to provide the participants with general knowledge on how to critically read the news and how to distinguish relevant from the irrelevant sources. The lesson also strives to familiarize the participants with the mechanisms of how to fact check, and also how to analyze articles as a precondition for further decision making regarding the issues they read about.

Lesson outcome

Students will be able to recognise how a well written news text is structured and the manner in which the information is explained. They will acquire skills in terms of how to critically read online articles they encounter and to be able to recognize which of the sources are irrelevant and whether they are showing factual or not. Moreover, the participants will be able to reflect on specific cases that they find online.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 15 : Introductory warm up

- Begin Introducing the participants with the lesson and brief explanation of the terms and key words used throughout the lesson.
- Asking the participants to share what type of articles do they read? From which sources they are retrieving the articles? What is for them a reliable article?

min. 15 - 30: Theoretical input

- Explaining the Inverted pyramid to the participants and showing it through a specific existing article
- Using the article abovementioned to explain the SIFT mechanism, with the specific focus on the source of the article

min. 30 - 55: Minutes: Practical task

- The participants will be divided into four groups and each group will have to search for an article and to find all the components of the inverted pyramid for that article. Also, the group should explain why they decided to retrieve the article from the source and what makes this source relevant
- Discussion: The participants from each group will present the article that they were working on in front all the others and will receive the feedback from the others
- Summarizing the conclusions from the group presentation and feedback

min. 51 - 60: Reflection

- Reflecting with the participants about the key points that they have learned and where and how they can apply the acquired knowledge

Materials / Tools

Projector; Laptop; Internet connection; Moodle; Canva presentation; Online articles.

Lesson 15

Global Perspective on News

Preparation time: ***30'*** *Teaching time:* ***1 x 60'***

Abstract

In an interconnected world, understanding how news is reported globally is crucial for developing media literacy and critical thinking skills. This lesson explores the differences in news reporting across countries, the influence of political and cultural contexts, and the role of international news agencies. Participants will gain insight into the diverse ways news is framed and learn to critically evaluate global news narratives

Online educational resources

- Lesson on Fact Checking and Verification Tools from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course
- Quiz on Fact Checking and Verification Tools from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course

Keywords

Global news, Journalism, media literacy, Press freedom, Cultural context, International news agencies, Political influence

Lesson aim

The aim of this lesson is to provide participants with the tools and knowledge needed to understand the diversity of global news reporting and critically analyze the impact of political, cultural, and economic contexts on journalism.

Lesson outcome

By the end of the lesson, participants will have a comprehensive understanding of how political, cultural, and economic factors influence news reporting across different countries. They will develop the ability to critically evaluate news narratives, recognizing biases and framing techniques that shape global events. Participants will also gain insights into the role of international news agencies in influencing public perception and learn to appreciate the diversity of news perspectives. Ultimately, they will be equipped to engage with global reporting more critically and thoughtfully.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 10: Introduction

- Brief discussion: *"Why does news reporting differ across countries?"*
- Present a short video clip showcasing news coverage of the same event by outlets from different countries.
- Highlight the lesson's key topics: comparative news analysis, political and cultural contexts, and international news agencies.

min. 11 - 25: Comparative Analysis of News

- Use slides to present examples of news organizations (e.g., *BBC, Fox News, Xinhua, Al Jazeera).*
- Discuss the differences in regulatory environments, press freedom levels, and journalistic standards.
- Group activity: Participants analyze brief news excerpts from two countries and identify differences in framing and tone.

min. 26 - 45: Impact of Political and Cultural Contexts

- Provide an overview of government influence, censorship, and cultural values in news reporting.
- Case studies: Compare coverage of a global event by outlets from a democratic country (e.g., UK) and an authoritarian country (e.g., China).
- Open discussion: "How do cultural norms shape the way news is presented?"

min. 46 - 55: Role of International News Agencies

- Introduce agencies such as *Reuters, AP, AFP*, and *Al Jazeera*, discussing their global influence.
- Showcase examples of how local outlets republish content from these agencies.
- Interactive activity: Participants assess the framing of the same story by a local outlet and its original source (e.g., *Reuters*).

min. 55 - 60: Conclusion and Reflection

- Recap key points from the lesson.
- Group discussion: *"How can understanding global news perspectives improve media literacy?"*
- Distribute handouts summarizing key takeaways and provide recommendations for further exploration.

Materials / Tools

Video projector, computer or smartphone, internet connection, Prezi or PowerPoint presentation, video clips, handouts materials for examples

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