DIDACTIC CONCEPT

FOSTERING INTERNET LITERACY FOR YOUTH WORKERS AND TEACHERS WITH A FOCUS ON FAKE NEWS

FAKE OFF!

www.fake-off.eu

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FAKE OFF!

INTRODUCTION

Children and young people naturally move around in the digital world and use smartphones, online media and electronic devices daily. Nevertheless, many often lack a deeper understanding of this. Especially the technical media competence - i.e. how the smartphone can be operated - is very high. If, however, they come across content that is not suitable for them or that requires a content-related discussion of the topic, they will often be overwhelmed.

One term that is used in this context is "fake news". It is basically about the fact that children and young people are increasingly becoming the target of information campaigns, which pursue propaganda on the one hand, but also financial goals on the other. Especially in social networks - the main information channel of young people - the density of false information is very high due to the corresponding algorithms.

To support young people in the best way possible in dealing with this great challenge, the FAKE OFF! project has set the goal of promoting media competence with the help of various tools.

The present Didactic Concept is specially written for people who deal with these topics in extracurricular youth work: teachers, tutors and youth workers. The aim is to support them in discussing and consolidating the knowledge of the topic to apply to everyday life. The document is divided into the following sections:

· Background information on "Fake News" (Chapters 1-2): Here the topic "Fake News" is defined both historically and in terms of content. It is about understanding what "Fake News" is and what kind of false information there is. In addition, it will be discussed which forms of "fake news" young people are confronted with and in which channels this happens.

· General conditions about digital competences and critical thinking (Chapter 3): This chapter deals with the European classification of the topic and the examination of the terms critical thinking and media competence.

· Non-formal learning (Chapter 4): One focus of the Didactic Concept is the applicability in extracurricular youth work. Since there is often a lack of fixed framework conditions, such as school hours or compulsory attendance, tools are needed which function outside these. A focus of this chapter is therefore to discuss how, for example, gamification can be used in out-of-school youth work and which concrete examples there are for this.

· Pedagogical concept (Chapter 5): How can young people best be supported in dealing with the issues surrounding "fake news"? The pedagogical concept provides answers and practical examples in the three steps "Training of information competence", "Create new habits" and "Apply new skills in day-to-day life".

This didactic concept is part of the DIGITAL LEARNING PACKAGE, which will include APPs for dealing with "Fake news" and a RESOURCE TOOLBOX WEBSITE.

We wish all youth workers, teachers and people involved with young people lots of fun reading this document and looking forward to your feedback at :

www.fake-off.eu/contact

HISTORY OF FAKE NEWS

History is full of examples of **false information which was widely spread among people who believed in it** either because of ignorance, lack of scientific evidence, deliberate use to manipulate people for political and economic motives or because of religious beliefs, traditions and culture. From the witch hunts during the Middle Ages and the belief that the Earth is flat to religious practices during certain diseases. The number of examples of rumours or views based on misinformation or inaccurate facts is large, available in many spheres of society and dates back to a long time in history. Many of these views were not necessarily based on deliberate lies but rather on what people and science knew at the time.

Today's modern technology and the development of mass media have revolutionized the flow and speed of information and how people are informed about events and issues in the society, the economy, science, health, culture, spirituality and any other area of life.

There has **always been misinformation or biased content in traditional mass media**, such as television or radio, because of political and commercial interests, but the Internet has certainly brought new dimensions into the way people are informed and misinformed.

One important aspect which changed the modern communications technology, as well as the media, has been the Web 2.0. Whereas traditional mass media channels, and even the first generation of the Internet (Web 1.0) were single-directed, e.g. use one transmitter and many receivers of information, the Web 2.0 along with the social media put emphasized user-generated content and enabled users to share information, as well as interact and collaborate with each other. Social media dialogue was created out of user-generated content in a virtual community. This **development of the Internet offers a wide range of opportunities: it empowers and enables users to voice their opinions and views. At the same time, it represents a range of risks and threats, as the content may be dangerous** (scenes of violence, pornography, etc.) or **fake** (e.g. fake news).* **The fake news is intentionally created and spread among users**.

* *http://www.connectsafely.org/fakenews/*

WHAT IS "FAKE NEWS"?

There is a wide range of definitions for fake news. Most definitions include *"false information or news intentionally created to influence views and opinions or as a joke and which are spread in the media, in particular on the Internet"*.

Originally, the term "fake news" was used to categorize programmes that were devoted to **political satire**, such as The Daily Show with Jon Stewart or The Colbert Report. More recently, the term has become a fashionable expression that is mainly used to describe **social media content that has no factual basis but is presented as news**. Fake news are news articles, videos, etc. that are intentionally and verifiably false and could mislead readers. This definition does not include unintentional reporting mistakes, conspiracy theories and satire that is unlikely to be misconstrued as factual.

The term "fake news", however, has also been used more and more by politicians. A notorious example is US President Donald Trump who labels certain media or news and information as "fake news" just because they oppose or challenge his views.

While the Cambridge Dictionary defines fake news as "false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke", the spheres in which fake news try to influence opinions and beliefs go **far beyond political spheres and touch every aspect of society**.*

Before we look into the different spheres and different types of dis- and misinformation, it is worth to have a closer look at the differences between facts and opinions, as well as mistakes and lies.

FACTS AND OPINIONS

Daniel Patrick Moynihan said that *"everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not to their own facts"*. Facts and opinions are important to understand life, the world and the events that occur around us. While **facts are accurate reports about events and aspects of society**, such as the economy, politics or culture, **opinions are rather biased** and based on interpretations, perspectives and views of people, as well as on their background, experience or life situation. Even if opinions are important to understand different points of view, they should always be based on facts rather than on inaccurate information.

MISTAKES AND LIES

Writing articles and reports based on false information as a professional or even posting or sharing in the social media knowing that the information is not accurate is always wrong. However, there is a difference between the type of lies so it is not always easy to differentiate what is what. The different types are **obvious lies**, where people invent facts or knowingly report on falsehood; there is also **partial lies**, where people's reports are based on a fact, but they exaggerate, invent or add false information to it; and there is also the lies where people state or report on true events or facts but **deliberately leave out parts of the information** and therefore manipulate the truth in order to influence the audience in a certain way.

In the traditional media, the editors usually decide on what information, events and facts to report or focus on and what stories to cover. It is based on what they think is important or what their audience needs or wants to know. There is always a certain bias, even in professional journalism and there are always mistakes which can be made, as well as false information which can be unintentionally reported or published. But mistakes in the media can and should always be corrected when they are discovered, and they make a big difference to intentional lies and manipulation of the truth. What counts is the **intention of the author**. When being exposed to the information and news in the media, it is important to keep in mind the reliability of the source, as well as possible motivation behind a piece of information or news item.*

* http://www.connectsafely.org/fakenews/

MIS- AND DISINFORMATION: THE DIFFERENT TYPES

In her article „Fake news. It's complicated." Claire Wardle describes the complexity of fake news and today's information ecosystem, as well as the different **types of misinformation (the unintentional sharing of false information)** and **disinformation (the intentional creation and sharing of false information)**. In order to understand the information ecosystem, she differentiates between three main elements, such as: 1) different types of information being created and shared, 2) the motivations behind the creation, and 3) the ways in which the information is shared.

As mentioned above, the fact that the media or journalists publish misinformation or that people share false information unintentionally has always existed and is worrying enough. However, the fact that false information is intentionally created in high volume to influence public opinion in all fields of society using Web 2.0 and social media platforms as peer-to-peer networks is certainly **one of the biggest problems in today's media and information ecosystem**. Social media has the capacity for such disinformation to be easily shared among users in high speed. The nature of fake news has become more sophisticated so spreading them has become easy and fast. As a result, it has become quite difficult for users to spot what is true, false or partially fabricated.

Wardle differentiates between seven types of mis- and disinformation:*

Satire or parody: the intention is not to harm, but it has the potential to mislead or fool.
False connection: headlines, visuals or captions do not support the content.
Misleading content: misleading use of information in order to frame a person or certain topic.
False context: real information is shared with false contextual information.
Impersonation: real sources are impostures and faked.
Manipulated information: authentic information and images are intentionally manipulated in order to mislead.
Fabricated information: completely false information intentionally created to mislead and harm.

WHY IS SUCH CONTENT CREATED?

An important aspect about understanding fake news and finding solutions to this problem is to understand what the motivations behind them are and why people create such information.

While, fact-checker Eliot Higgins* speaks of the "four Ps" – Passion, Politics, Propaganda, and Payment, when analysing the driving forces behind fake news, Wardle extends these four Ps to eight Ps when talking about the motivations behind the creation of fake news. Mapping these motivations against the seven types of content which were mentioned above show interesting patterns and how the different types of disinformation are used for specific purposes.

* *https://www.bellingcat.com/author/eliothiggins/*

The 8 Ps showing the forces behind fake news

· **Poor journalism:** when there are mis- and disinformation based on a lack of research or fact and source checking.
· **Parody:** often the headlines or content are exaggerated and highly ironic aimed at making fun of a person or an issue.
· **Provocation:** the information is designed to provoke reactions from the audience.
· **Passion:** when the headlines, images and content are very explicit and colourful, the content might be driven by passion rather than precise research.
· **Partisanship:** when there is clear bias and prejudice towards a cause or an issue.

MOTIVATIONS	TYPES			
	Satire or parodie	False connection	Mislanding content	False context
Poor journalism		✓	✓	✓
Parody	✓			
Provocation				
Passion				✓
Partisanship			✓	✓
Profit		✓		
Politics			✓	✓
Propaganda			✓	✓

· **Profit:** news articles that go viral on social media can draw significant advertising revenue when users click on the original site (Allcott & Gentzkow 2017:4).

· **Political motives:** political advertising has become a sophisticated and targeted industry, drawing on enormous pools of personal data on Facebook and Google. This means that campaigns create personalised ads for individuals (Sir Tim Berners-Lee cf. Irish Times 2017).

· **Propaganda:** many state-controlled news providers have spent resources on building a strong web presence where the control or nation of origin is masked, allowing them to flex soft power both within and without their countries.*

TYPES			
Impersonation	Manipulated information	Fabricated information	MOTIVATIONS
			Poor journalism
✓		✓	Parody
✓	✓	✓	Provocation
			Passion
			Partisanship
✓		✓	Profit
	✓	✓	Politics
✓	✓	✓	Propaganda

*Figure 1: Misinformation matrix***

* https://www.euronews.com/2017/01/24/everything-you-always-wanted-to-know-about-fake-news-but-were-afraid-to-google
** https://medium.com/1st-draft/fake-news-its-complicated-d0f773766c79

THE DIFFUSION OF FAKE NEWS

The diffusion of fake news in an information ecosystem where the main currency is attention is quite easy. The high volume and rapid dissemination of fake news on the social media platforms is facilitated through its features which allow users to like, share or re-tweet content in a fast and easy way and often without realising that the content, context or the entire information is manipulated or fabricated. The easy use of such features and the high volume and speed of articles, pictures and videos that users are exposed to on a daily basis might also lead to hardly ever taking the time and making the effort in researching and checking the source of the content.

The high volume and speed of information, as well as deliberate and coordinated efforts to spread fake news by means of available technology and visuals make people less critical and easier to be influenced, in particular when it comes to the content which supports their beliefs. When a picture or certain content is used repeatedly, the overloaded brain uses it as a shortcut to reliability.

In the journalistic field, the pressure of delivering the news and updates more and more frequently and in the real time format also contributes to the spread of dis- and misinformation. Sources are often not checked sufficiently, or journalists fall into the trap of sensationalism or want to get out the news item before the competitors which may result in publishing and disseminating unchecked content.

Another aspect are the networks. People connected through social media may deliberately spread false or partially fabricated information in order to influence public opinion. The most powerful form may employ advanced technological tools, such as bot networks, troll factories and a special technology which facilitates the creation of fake articles, such as meme-shells . When analysing today's information ecosystem and looking for solutions how to disclose fake news and its mechanisms, we might realise that we are "fighting against machines" using artificial intelligence or algorithms.

https://medium.com/1st-draft/fake-news-its-complicated-d0f773766c79

FAKE NEWS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Various international studies, for example the German Youth, Information & Media study (JIM-study),* prove that **children and young people spend increasing amounts of time online**. Their activities range from communicating via social media platforms to streaming video and music content. One of young people's main activities is gathering information for different purposes, ranging from school assignments to entertainment. Sources of information include online encyclopaedias, such as Wikipedia, but also news sites and social media platforms. While young people are using their smartphones to search for and download the content, a 2016 Stanford study has revealed that they are neither able to distinguish between different kinds of content, i.e. hard facts and fake news, nor able to verify if the source is credible.**

* *http://www.mpfs.de/fileadmin/files/Studien/JIM/2017/JIM_2017.pdf*
** *https://ed.stanford.edu/news/stanford-researchers-find-students-have-trouble-judging-credibility-information-online*

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The study has identified the following main problems:
· Most middle school students can't distinguish between native ads and articles.
· Most high school students accept photographs as facts without verifying them.
· Many high school students couldn't differentiate between a real and fake news source except on Facebook.
· Many college students didn't suspect potential bias in a tweet from an activist group.
· Most Stanford students couldn't see the difference between a mainstream and fringe source.

Taking the long-time span of more than 10 years into account, it is surprising that young people's Internet literacy has not improved; instead, due to the ever-increasing volume of online information and its high degree of distribution, adolescents have even more trouble to distinguish between different kinds of information and to determine the degree of a source's authenticity and credibility.

Also, the Austrian study "Internet rumours – How do teens evaluate information found on the internet"* shows the same results. Although social networks are the main information channel for young people, they are considered to be less trustworthy. 85% of the young respondents of the study are insecure about whether the information on the internet is true or false. When it comes to verifying the source also most of them are overstrained very quickly.

Ironically many young people even reject the premise of journalistic "objectivity" in an attempt to gain a more balanced understanding through blogs, Facebook posts, YouTube videos, fake news and other non-traditional sources of news. In this context, social media often serves as an "echo room" for users, i.e. where young people only hear the viewpoints which are similar to their own. While this way of dealing with online information may illuminate an area of potential improvement for mainstream news media, as well as social media, it actually means a considerable waste of time on consuming fake information. Consequently, without a strategy of identifying fake news and avoiding it, young people are lost in a jungle of **disinformation** – intentionally false or inaccurate information, as well as **misinformation** – unintentionally false information. As a result, fake facts are distributed and multiplied, which potentially endangers democratic values.

* *https://www.saferinternet.at/news-detail/aktuelle-studie-zum-thema-geruechte-im-netz-jugendliche-verunsichert-durch-fake-news/*

CHANNELS AND SPHERES OF FAKE NEWS

Whereas fake news in public discourse is often referred to politically motivated disinformation, young people are increasingly using alternative social media channels, such as Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube (Influencers and Vloggers). Many young people are not only interested in traditional forms of news, they find it boring (Marchi, 2012) and irrelevant to their lives. They are rather interested in topics that are relevant to their day-to-day lives and are presented in a format which is engaging and fun to consume.

The different spheres and topics young people are interested in and through which they are exposed to fake news:

Health:
What is healthy? What is unhealthy? How to react to serious illnesses? What do influencers recommend? How is your body supposed to be/work?

Sports:
What sports are good for you? What diet for what type of sport? How much can you do? How to react when problems occur? What do influencers recommend?

Food and Diets:
What additional supplements or drugs to consume? What medicine? What diet is good for you? Which diet does work? What do influencers and advertising recommend?

Body image:
What does a healthy body look like? What are gender stereotypes? Am I to fat? Is my hair too short?

Drugs:
Which drug causes which effects? Where to get drugs? Which drugs are harmless and don't make addicted?

Propaganda and politics:
What political party/ideas to follow? Whose fault is a certain problem (refugees, politicians)? Fostering of stereotypes, hate speech, etc.

Immigration and refugees:
How are they changing our live and are they causing political instability?

Civil Society:
What NGOs and organisations do cause harm? In what cause you should engage and in what not?

Stars and society:
Classical tabloid topics such as: What famous couple has split up?

Groups pressure:
YouTube Challenges which create self-harm, etc.

Sexuality:
Featuring pornography as a reference for adult sexual life or as sexual education.

How to deal and communicate with others:
"Anonymous" feedback from other people through apps such as Tellonym or ask.fm
Difference between online and face to face communication.

Cyber-bullying:
Giving "reasons" why a person should be bullied.

Rumours about other persons:
Who is the biggest idiot/bitch? Featuring of private and sometimes sexual explicit images.

Pranks/Violence:
Featuring of real and sometimes staged violence. Who is really being pranked, who is an actor? Is fake or real blood being shown?

Games, hacks, cheats:
How to cheat, what does work? Goal "helper" which are designed for password and account theft.

Advertisement:
How does it work? Why do I get this kind of ads?

Product placement:
How to detect them in online content? Who is getting paid for what?

Life-Style:
What to achieve by what kind of measures? What to dress and what fashion to follow? What makeup to wear and how?

Life-Hacks:
What does work, what does not work? So, called "grandmothers recipes"? Tips for DIY (do it yourself).

Spiritual life:
What "values" do count and are important? What religious movements or ideas to follow? What is useful or harmful?

Cults:
How to detect cults? What is useful or harmful?

HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS?

There is a range of tools how fake news can be spotted. It is important to be sure about the source of the information and to check the facts. You can use the 8 Ps (Poor journalism, Parody, Provocation, Passion, Partisanship, Profit, Political motives or Propaganda) to analyse if an article, picture or video is driven by these forces.

Here are some tips for checking on the sources and the facts in a piece of news.

The source:

Does the source sound true? Does the URL sound legitimate? You should be **sceptical about website names** like ".lo", or ".com.co" as well as strange URLs or news brands you have never heard of. **You should check out the source-website and its profile** (About Us), how transparent are they? Do they have experienced staff? What is their editorial policy? How long have they been publishing?

Also important is to **check the author**. Is the author mentioned? Is there proof that it is a real person? Can the author be contacted? You can check what else the author and the source have been publishing and if it is a "serious" source.

The content:

Does the news sound biased or one-sided? Does it sound exaggerated or extreme? Does it intend to provoke a strong reaction? Check if it is also followed by other mainstream media, if not, be sceptical and cautious.

You can also copy-paste part of an article or title and research in search engines if this story has been contested or labelled as fake news by others. Sometimes however, you might find sites which are just repeating the fake news. There are **fact checker sites** which exist in many countries and you can try to find out if the story is true or false.

An international network of factchecker organizations:
https://ifcncodeofprinciples.poynter.org/signatories

Fact checker site	Language
www.snopes.com/	English (American)
www.factcheck.org	English (American)
www.channel4.com/news/factcheck	English
www.bbc.com/news/topics/cp7r8vgl2rgt/reality-check	English
www.mimikama.at/	German (Austrian)
www.tjekdet.dk	Danish
www.konspiratori.sk/	Slovak
www.davidpuente.it/blog/	Italian
www.faktabaari.fi	Finnish
www.theJournal.ie	Irish
http://www.maldita.es/malditobulo/	Spanish

With regard to this, as mentioned above, young people (as well as adults) often do not take the time to fact or source check the news they are exposed to; while there are ways to spot "obvious" fake news, the issue is far more complex. There is a wide range of types of dis- and misinformation and more sophisticated aesthetic (visuals, pictures, videos, etc.) and technological (algorithms, troll factories, etc.) means and strategies to disseminate fake news. Also, the ways to influence young people are becoming more creative and often persuasive: influencers and vloggers with thousands and sometimes millions of followers and subscribers may spread dis-and misinformation on a large scale.*

However, the reason fake news is reaching such a wide audience is not only because of its creators. It is mainly due to users who share the content on a massive scale. It is not just a question of the lack of media literacy, critical thinking and skills which would allow to spot fake news but also a lack of responsibility, ownership and ethics of users.**

In order to avoid further polluting and enhancing the information ecosystem and the problem by mindlessly sharing fake news without fact checking, the users of social media (young and old) need to empower themselves to become more media and information literate. They need to become active agents of change and part of the solution rather than victims of this phenomena.

* *https://www.connectsafely.org/wp-content/uploads/Media-Literacy-Fake-News.pdf*
** *http://www.euronews.com/2017/01/24/everything-you-always-wanted-to-know-about-fake-news-but-were-afraid-to-google*

HOW TO COUNTERACT FAKE NEWS?

The first step to become active agents rather than passive victims is **becoming more conscious** about the phenomena of fake news and its complexities as well as of different trends and mechanisms of the information ecosystem. Developing **critical thinking and media literacy** in order to understand how the content is created, who creates it and how it is spread in the media, and in particular on the social media, should be an important part of young people's and adults' personal development in the current technological age where the speed and the amount of the different types of information is constantly increasing.*

If media literacy is one important thing, another important aspect is to also develop **emotional intelligence** and to question our own emotional reactions to media content. A lot of fake news is emotionally driven or designed to provoke emotions, so when spotting an article, picture or video that makes us very angry or which makes us feel reaffirmed in our beliefs, we should be conscious of that effect and check facts before sharing.

If the first step is **raising awareness** and developing media literacy skills and emotional intelligence, the next step can and should be to **actively do something** against the spread of fake news by **pausing and thinking twice** before sharing a piece of news. If we see something suspicious, **fact- and source checking** and doing a little research is the next step to take in order to find out if the source can be trusted or the information has been manipulated.**

Once we know that an article, a picture or video is based on satire, false connection, content or context, or is simply invented and used for propaganda and political or commercial purposes, we can intervene and use the comment or response section to make people aware about the content being manipulated or fake, so that people can either take the content down if they have shared it or to make them think twice and be more critical next time they want to share content.

Critical thinking along with media literacy and digital wellbeing are crucial competences not only for young people, but also for adults in today's 21st century media culture and in the era of fake news. It allows to understand the modern debates, as well as contribute to them. This possibility gives to an individual a sense of dignity as a human being or active citizen in a democratic society.

HOW NOT TO PRODUCE FAKE-NEWS

As young people are confronted with fake news a lot, the step to producing them themselves, is a small one. To exaggerate about one's life in social media, to brag about successes, to produce misleading pictures online, all this is too tempting sometimes. So critical thinking also has to apply to the young people as media producers, not only when consuming digital content.

Since young people see lots of misleading examples online, the ethical question, whether it is ok to lie online, is rarely raised. Is it ok to lie or exaggerate in order to get more likes or followers?

PROMOTING DIGITAL COMPETENCES

EUROPEAN INITIATIVE: DIGCOMP 2.0

The European framework for digital competences (Digcomp 2.0) provides a strategic goal for enhancing digital knowledge among European citizens. Critical thinking and information literacy are an important part of this set of competences.

In many European countries, similar or connected competences were defined for young people. In many countries Ministries for Education have their own strategies concerning the enhancement of digital knowledge among European youth. How these strategies are implemented, the age of starting the teaching and goals are different throughout Europe, but the general goal of enhancing critical thinking is similar.

*EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK**

Overview: **Information and data literacy** to articulate information needs, to locate and retrieve digital data, information and content. To judge the relevance of the source and its content. To store, manage, and organise digital data, information and content.

1.2 Evaluating data, information and digital content
To analyse, compare and critically evaluate the credibility and reliability of sources of data, information and digital content. To analyse, interpret and critically evaluate the data, information and digital content.

How to deal with fake news is generally being seen in this competence field: How to judge the relevance of data and its content. It also includes the sources of content and the necessity to articulate information needs.

How to react to fake news, how to deal with one's own emotions, is being defined in other fields, whereas it is not so clearly shown, as the area of critical thinking.

2.2 Sharing through digital technologies
To share data, information and digital content with others through appropriate digital technologies. To act as an intermediary, to know about referencing and attribution practices.

2.5 Netiquette
To be aware of behavioural norms and know-how while using digital technologies and inte-racting in digital environments. To adapt communication strategies to the specific audience and to be aware of cultural and generational diversity in digital environments.

4.3 Protecting health and well-being
To be able to avoid health-risks and threats to physical and psychological well-being while using digital technologies. To be able to protect oneself and others from possible dangers in digital environments (e.g. cyber bullying). To be aware of digital technologies for social well-being and social inclusion.

5.3 Creatively using digital technologies
To use digital tools and technologies to create knowledge and to innovate processes and products. To engage individually and collectively in cognitive processing to understand and resolve conceptual problems and problem situations in digital environments.

5.4 Identifying digital competence gaps
To understand where one's own digital competence needs to be improved or updated. To be able to support others with their digital competence development. To seek opportunities for self-development and to keep up-to-date with the digital evolution.

* *https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomp/digital-competence-framework*

CRITICAL THINKING AS CORE COMPETENCE

In the European Eurobarometer (9/2017 Flash Eurobarometer 455) youth was asked about their views on Europe. Nearly 50% stated, that dealing with fake news is an important future topic ("Promote critical thinking and the ability to search for information in order to combat fake news and extremism".* Especially young people in Austria and Germany see a high priority in this field. This refers to the competences regarding information and data literacy.

CRITICAL THINKING AND MEDIA LITERACY

A common definition for media literacy is the **ability of critical thinking when it comes to the consumption and creation of information**. This includes the **ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create information, as well as understanding the difference between facts and opinion and the forces behind manipulation** of different kinds of information within the information ecosystem.

So, it is as much about the receiver, his/her **understanding of the media**, its different forms and its role in society, as well as about the transmitter as a user of media tools and possibilities for self-expression. This is important because it is not just about protecting (young) people and treating them as potential victims, it is about empowering them as active, critical, mindful and responsible media users.**

According to an article of the Centre for Media Literacy, it is about becoming literate in all media forms, so that **people control the interpretation of what they see, hear or interact with rather than letting the interpretation control them**. It is about thinking for oneself and asking the right questions what you watch, read, listen or comment on, rather than memorizing facts or statistics about the media.***

The need for media literacy has become more important than ever in a time where anyone can be a "citizen journalist" publishing and creating content or commenting on the topics in any field of society. While this phenomenon has certainly created a wider range of opinions and has empowered media users to speak up, it has also become more difficult to differentiate between facts and opinions and (un)trustworthy sources.

* *http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/ instruments/FLASH/surveyKy/2163*
** *https://www.connectsafely.org/wp-content/uploads/Media-Literacy-Fake-News.pdf*
*** *http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/what-media-literacy-definitionand-more*

DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital literacy is a component of media literacy. The American Library Association's digital-literacy task force offers this definition: "Digital literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills".* The graph below from the study of Digital Literacy across the Curriculum by Future Lab presents the components of digital literacy as necessary skill sets.**
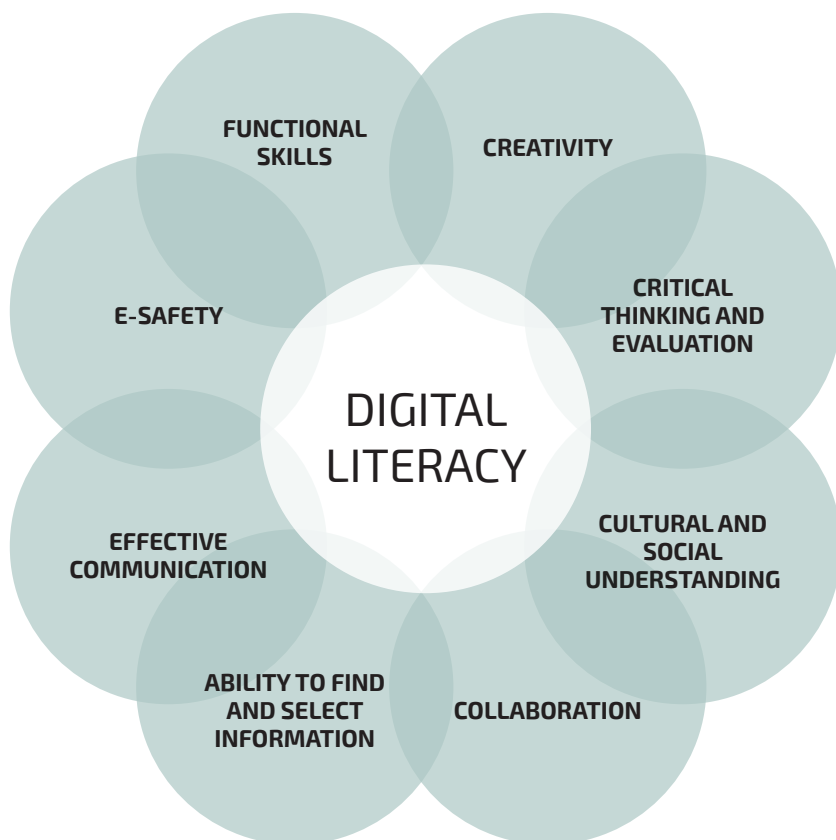
*Figure 2: Digital Literacy across the curriculum****

* *https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/11/09/what-is-digital-literacy.html*
** *https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/FUTL06/FUTL06.pdf*
*** *Digital Literacy across the Curriculum, p. 19. Future Lab 2010: www.futurelab.org.uk*

The Digital Action Plan for Education, published by the European Commission, outlines current challenges in the area of digital literacy:
"Digital advances also bring new challenges for Europe's pupils, students and teachers. Algorithms used by social media sites and news portals can be powerful amplifiers of bias or fake news, while data privacy has become a key concern in the digital society. Young people as well as adults are vulnerable to cyber bullying and harassment, predatory behaviour or disturbing online content. Everyday exposure to digital data driven largely by inscrutable algorithms creates clear risks and requires more than ever critical thinking and the ability to engage positively and competently in the digital environment. We face a constantly evolving need for media literacy and a wide mix of digital skills and competences including safety, security and privacy, but getting them to the wider population and more advanced professions and sectors remains a challenge".*

Measures in the area of raising media literacy among young people must be the answer to such challenges. A transformation of the school system and other pedagogical measures must include these challenges.

The United Kingdom has started a process of introducing such initiatives with a 5-resource model for **critical digital literacy**. The 5 resources model, presented below in a graph, is an updated framing of literacy skills that reflects the changing digital landscape. It shows necessary digital competences fields and clarifies which digital competences are really necessary in order to be able to find fake news and to act appropriately. Such an adjustment lays the foundation to enable young people to feel confident when engaging with news sources, to learn new perspectives and information, and to employ those skills in their school work, or in their conversations with peers, family members and teachers.**

In the UK, secondary school curriculum builds on these foundational skills and adds more specific critical literacy skills through various subjects such as English, history, citizenship, PSHE and subjects such as philosophy and sociology at A Level. For example, at Key Stage 4, history education aims to ensure that pupils know how to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments and develop perspective and judgement, whilst teaching citizenship should equip pupils with the skills and knowledge to critically explore political and social issues, to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments.***

* https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/digital-education-action-plan.pdf
** https://literacytrust.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/all-party-parliamentary-group-literacy/fakenews/
*** https://literacytrust.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/all-party-parliamentary-group-literacy/fakenews/ p18

DECODING

Learners need te develop familiarity with the structures and conventions of digital media, sensitivity to the different modes at work within digital artefacts and confident use of the operational frameworks within which they exist.

MEANING MAKING

This recognises the agency of the learners as a participant in the construction of a text. Making meaning is a reflexive process in which the context, style and purpose of the text is in dialogue with the prior experience, knowledge and responses of the reader. Making meaning implies both understanding and interpretatition.

CRITICAL DIGITAL LITERACY

USING

Learners need to develop the ability to deploy digital tools appropriately and effectively for the task in hand. They also need to be able to solve practical problems dynamically and flexibly as they arise, using a range of methods and aproaches, both individually and as part of communities.

ANALYSING

Learners need to develop the ability to make informed judgements and choices in the digital domain. They also need to be able to apply critical, aesthetic and ethical perspectives to the production and consumption of digitised material.

PERSONA

Sensivity to the issues of reputation, identity and membership within different digital contexts. The purposeful management and calibration of one's online persona. Developing a sense of belonging and a confident participant role.

Figure 3: The five resources model of critical digital literacy*

* Fake News and Critical Literacy. Final report of the Commission on Fake News and teaching of critical literacy in schools, p.17. National Literacy Trust 2017, www.literacytrust.org.uk; (CC-BY-NC-ND 2.0 UK Hinrichsen and Coombs)

IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL WELLBEING

Through the devices people carry the data as well as the representations they capture and share. Digital technology saturates people's lives and their digital and physical identities are passing each other on a constant basis. People's work and personal lives, their relationships with others, as well as their bodies and minds are strongly influenced and transformed through this process.

As stated in the Digital Education Action Plan, our personal wellbeing incorporates digital wellbeing which might be "**threatened by misinformation**, cyber bullying, data privacy issues".* Critical thinking is therefore not only an important part of performing well in a job, but also an important part of **personal wellbeing and health**.

Often the term "digital wellbeing" is referred to detoxing from too much time spent on a smartphone or tech-addiction.** It can also refer to other health areas as capacity to look after personal health, safety, relationships and work-life balance in digital settings, for example when you use digital technology like sensors or monitoring apps to get more aware of your health and needs so you can reduce your health care expenses.***

For young people spending a lot of time online, the following areas of digital wellbeing are relevant:

Digital wellbeing

· Privacy issues, which data is being collected or spread about a person, online identity (by persons themselves or others)
· Body image, weight, nutrition and food
· Time spent online and offline - "tech addiction"
· Work-life balance and diminishing borders between professional and private life
· How to deal with psychological harm on an individual basis
· Human behaviour and relationships, treating each other in a respectful way.

* *https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/factsheet-digital-education-action-plan.pdf*
** *https://www.wired.com/story/google-and-the-rise-of-digital-wellbeing/*
*** *https://www.eitdigital.eu/newsroom/digital-wellbeing/*

NEW SKILL SETS IN MODERN EDUCATION

The importance of new skill sets as opposed to one-lifetime job has been amplified in 2016 by the report the Future of Jobs of the World Economic Forum.* "By one popular estimate, 65% of children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don't yet exist. In such a rapidly evolving employment landscape, the ability to anticipate and prepare for future skills requirements, job content and the aggregate effect on employment is increasingly critical for businesses, governments and individuals in order to fully seize the opportunities presented by these trends — and to mitigate undesirable outcomes".

Another video for the Russian Education Forum 2018 points out that 77% of employers think that soft skills are at least as important as hard skills, and are needed in new combinations and to be learnt lifelong to meet the demands of the future labour market: "400 to 800 million people will lose their working places because they will be replaced by robots by 2030; 57 professions will disappear, e.g. ticket conductor, tourist guide, translator, tourist agent, but 186 professions will appear by 2020 in 25 branches".** Stability is no longer there, but there is flexibility and freedom. The top ten skills most needed by 2020, according to the World Economic Forum, are: complex problem solving, critical thinking, people management, interaction, emotional intelligence, decision making, creativity, service orientation, negotiation and cognitive flexibility. ***

The new Skills Agenda for Europe, adopted by the Commission on June 10th 2016, also accentuates the importance of the skills formation and the need for businesses to cooperate with governments, education providers and others to design a need-based 21st century curriculum. ****

* http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FOJ_Executive_Summary_Jobs.pdf
** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdEySpup8PY
*** https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-10-skills-you-need-to-thrive-in-the-fourth-industrial-revolution/
**** https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0381

YOUTH WORK AS A SPACE FOR NON-FORMAL LEARNING

For young people, there are many "spaces", where non-formal learning is taking place. And one of them is youth work. In order to provide this space also for topics regarding the digital world, youth worker need digital competences themselves. An expert group developed these under the European Union Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018 as in the following context:*

COMPETENCES FOR DIGITAL YOUTH WORK FOR...

TRAINING NEEDS AND COMPETENCE AREAS

YOUTH WORK COMPETENCES

ORGANISATIONAL DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

DIGITALISATION OF SOCIETY

So, youth work is a space where learning can take place as described in "digital youth work": in face-to-face-situations, but also in online environments or as a combination of both.

PLANNING, DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING DIGITAL YOUTH WORK

DIGITAL COMPETENCES (INDIVIDUAL)

03

02

01

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 4: Competences for digital youth work**

* *https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f01e8eee-07cb-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-77829916*

** *Developing digital youthwork. Policy recommendations and training needs for youth workers and decision-makers: expert group set up under the European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018, p 10 https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f01e8eee-07cb-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-77829916*

DIGITAL COMPETENCES VIA NON-FORMAL LEARNING

For young people to get more conscious of their use of the social media and learn new habits and skills that might take time and are not always easy-going, motivation must be high. To deal with this, a non-formal learning process may be a helpful tool. Whereas school is an important space to learn how to deal with misinformation and fake news, a non-formal or game-based learning can help to motivate young people and is an approach chosen in the FAKE OFF! project. The section below outlines the history of non-formal learning, as well as benefits and current challenges in practice.

TRANSFORMING APPROACHES TO EDUCATION

The world is changing – education must also change. Societies everywhere are undergoing deep transformation, and this calls for new forms of education (Unesco 2015).*

Learning in a school or university was regarded as a social norm for a long time. The highest value was placed on a structure, supported by the state, where a person could gain knowledge and skills that could give him/her later a guarantee for work placement and thus a secure life. "Go to school or fail" was a general belief. In 1973 it was first challenged by anthropologists Scribner and Cole who claimed that **most things in life are better learnt through informal processes and that complex learning still takes place in communities outside the formal institutions**.** Thus, the debate over the value of learning in everyday life has started, which led to reconsideration of the concept of education and learning, of the role that public and private institutions and initiatives play in it, as well as of alternative paths to education.

Some considerable policy developments by a number of institutions which increased the value of learning in life outside of formal education:

· 1996 declaration of "life-long learning for all"*** by OECD. Learning was defined there as "ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons". The declaration introduced three styles of learning: formal, non-formal and informal.

· 1999 Council of Europe report on Non-formal education. It stated that formal educational systems alone cannot respond to rapid and constant technological, social and economic change in society, thus they should be reinforced by non-formal educational practices.****

· 2001 EC Communication on Lifelong Learning: formal, non-formal and informal learning with the guidelines for the definitions and focus on the need to identify, assess and certify non-formal and informal learning, particularly in the workplace.*****

Over the number of years, European institutions and researchers have used both terms non-formal education and non-formal learning. So, when do we talk about what?

* *http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002325/232555e.pdf*
** *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonformal_learning*
*** *http://www.oecd.org/fr/education/apprendre-au-dela-de-l-ecole/recognitionofnon-for-malandinformallearning-home.htm.*
**** *http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewHTML.asp?FileID=8807&lang=en*
***** *http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/committees/cult/20020122/com(2001)678_en.pdf*

Council of Europe points out that learning is the purpose and the result of all educational activities. In the EU education policy project Young Adult, non–formal education is defined as **"any type of structured and organised learning which is institutionalised, intentional and planned by an educational provider, but which does not lead to formal level of qualification recognised by the relevant national education authorities**".* Non-formal education is thus a more structured way to define non-formal learning. It can be offered through courses, workshops, seminars and is open to people of all age groups.

Since the value of Lifelong Learning has increased and the forms of learning became more diverse influenced by technological progress and increased mobility of individuals, the term "non-formal learning" is used to define the acquisition of skills and competences in any setting or environment not confined solely to a place and time. For that reason, non-formal learning is the term used in the Fake OFF! Project.

FORMS OF LEARNING

The Communication on Lifelong Learning from the European Commission in 2001 defines core concepts as follows:**
1. formal learning is typically provided by education or training institutions, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective;
2. non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically it does not lead to certification. However, it is structured, in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view;
3. informal learning results from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time and/or learning support). Typically, it does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but, in most cases, it is non-intentional (or incidental/random) and sometimes called experiential.

This definition insists on the importance of context and the intention to learn. For the purpose of the Fake OFF! Project it is useful to assess how to plan or structure a learning process to enable learning in terms of objectives, time and support, and how to validate the learning outcomes.

* http://www.young-adulllt.eu/glossary/listview.php?we_objectID=193
** http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/committees/cult/20020122/com(2001)678_en.pdf

WHY NON-FORMAL LEARNING?

The pressure on the formal education systems to effectively meet the needs of individuals and the society at all levels and be in line with the technological development of the modern age has shown the need to develop alternatives to learning and access qualifications, which called for non-formal learning to rise up.

Non-formal learning takes place outside a formal educational system, has some planned learning activities and learning support. Examples can be employability programmes for early school leavers; in-company training; online learning; language tandems, sports clubs, debating societies, amateur choirs and orchestras. Most offers are to be found in non-governmental organisations involved in youth and community work.

As opposed to the formal system, an individual decides on what, where and when s/he wants to learn and takes the responsibility for the assessment of the learning outcomes. Another outstanding feature of non-formal learning is a possibility to combine the knowledge with the practical experience and so acquire both "hard" skills - skillsets of a certain profession that are easy to quantify, e.g. proficiency in a foreign language for the job of an interpreter, and "soft" skills, e.g. intercultural competence. As stated in the Council of Europe 1999 Report on non-formal education, these are the skills that are "generally related to the employability and lifelong learning requirements of the individual person".*

Current research on modern trends in education looks into 50 different approaches to learning, among them competency-based education, underground education, blended learning, problem-based learning, "school of the air" in Australia and e-learning.** It is obvious that any successful type of learning should be inclusive, affordable and fit the digital age. For the Fake OFF! project, the form that is chosen is eLearning. This form is described below.

* *http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewHTML.asp?FileID=8807&lang=en*
** *https://www.teachthought.com/pedagogy/modern-trends-education-50-different-approaches-learning/*

DIGITAL LEARNING / E-LEARNING

There are different terms which describe computer-based learning: "eLearning", "blended learning", "virtual learning environment", "media-based learning", "online learning". The use of technologies which are becoming part of our everyday lives helps to create new spaces and learning environments where the learners are being motivated thanks to interactive, visual and playful elements.

One particular technique in eLearning is gamification – the application of game design elements in non-game contexts – to boost user engagement. Gamification may improve an individual's ability to comprehend digital content and understand better a certain area of study, that is why game-based learning is a learning tool for young people involved in the Fake OFF! project.

Goethe-Institute, the German institution in charge of world-wide German language learning, is increasingly using online learning elements in their classes. They classify current media- and computer-based learning concepts in four types: 1) open- and 2) closed-source learning platforms (eLearning), 3) learning on mobile terminals such as tablets and smartphones (mLearning), and 4) online material designed to supplement textbooks and classroom teaching.* Open- and closed-source learning platforms are based on the learning management systems (LMS): they enable sharing of teaching materials across distances, allow students to communicate with one another (usually in writing) and enable them to perform simple or complex learning tasks. Mobile media-based learning (mLearning) is a relatively new segment which relies on using interactive exercises and games, and though their quality may differ considerably, they can make learning more attractive. Online material to supplement textbooks varies from progress tests, handouts, interactive online learning platform, electronic adaptations of textbooks and audio-visual files. A hybrid form of learning is gaining popularity in the formal environment, which means that some elements from non-formal learning are taken in the official education system, causing the forms of learning to merge.

A successful learning is shaped by the attempts of young people to satisfy their curiosity and some social needs, gives them the skills they can transfer to multiple fields, and comes as a result of their participation in the process.

* *https://www.goethe.de/en/spr/mag/sta/20475253.html*

Benefits of non-formal learning

· It starts from the **basic need** of the students.

· It is open to **people of all ages**.

· It promotes **equal access to education** for individuals and groups who are beyond the reach of formal education, e.g. young people with fewer opportunities, migrants, women, people with disabilities.

· It involves **multiple community stakeholders** in the learning process – families, parents, community residents who become multipliers and beneficiaries, which fosters social cohesion.

· It enhances active citizenship due to **freedom to choose what and how a person wants to learn**, work together, engage in community affairs and practice democratic decision-making and negotiation.

· It **increases learner's confidence** through experimenting in a relatively safe environment and gaining an experience of trial and error without the fear of being punished by strict notes as opposed to the formal education system.

· It allows the learners **to take on responsibilities for their own learning** and also for the evaluation of their learning outcomes, which is an empowering experience.

· It **offers flexibility** and freedom for young people to choose for themselves where, when and at what pace they wish to learn, to explore their emerging interests and provides them with an opportunity to develop decision-making skills because they can choose and shape their own programmes and projects. It also helps in building interpersonal skills as they learn to interact with peers outside the class and with adults in the community.

· It can **take complex subjects**, e.g. mathematics or geography, and **teach it in an engaging way** using authentic sources, animation, illustration and playful elements.

· It **fosters soft skills and qualities**, such as commitment, engagement, responsibility, solidarity, democratic awareness, motivation, initiative, emancipation and empowerment, creativity, respect, tolerance, intercultural awareness, criticism, intellectual independence and self-confidence - which are called employability skills.

· It opens up to **peer learning** as an endless sharing process among each other with pure freedom and no necessary filters in their minds.*

* *"Young people like learning with their peers, sometimes in an endless seeming sharing process, in structured or non-structured contexts. The main affecting element is the feeling of freedom that allow them to open their individual with almost no filter. To be natural they do not have any 'affective filter' (as we call in linguistic sphere) elevated. This means no stress, no stage fright, no judgement, etc. nothing that can 'block' them." Alice Trevelin (2018) in feedback on this paper.*

CHALLENGES OF NON-FORMAL LEARNING

While formal education can be quantified and described, it is more **difficult to assess the success of non-formal learning activities**. Those might but do not necessarily have a structure, a curriculum and defined learning goals. The outcomes may vary depending on the content, the level of difficulty, as well as on the setting.

The difficulty of evaluation leads to the shortage of information and statistics on the success of non-formal learning, and hence to the challenge of validation and funding. The European institutions and organisations, such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum, call for national education planners to allocate resources and time to promote non-formal education as a means of increasing skills and certifying knowledge.

While the focus on non-formal and informal learning has increased political attention to learning taking place outside schools, the imprecise character of the concepts has attracted criticism from researchers who claimed that there was no absolute borderline between formal, non-formal and informal learning, thus adding to the complexity of approaches.

As for "digital" learning challenges vs. "analogue" learning, not all technical innovations and forms of usage of the new media prove useful. Success in both cases depends on motivation, the availability of lesson materials and lesson forms tailored to the learner's requirements, appropriate methodological and didactic concepts, diverse and interesting learning settings, and individual support and guidance with learning.

VALIDATION

The validation of non-formal and informal learning is a central element of European educational policy alongside the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning. It was endorsed by the Council Recommendation of 2012 on validation of non-formal and informal learning and goes together with the European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning* - a tool developed by CEDEFOP to support countries to develop and implement validation arrangements.**

According to 2005 CEDEFOP study of national policies and practices in validation,*** learning acquired outside formal education and training institutions has become a core element in national strategies for lifelong learning. These cover three central objectives:

The first objective is to address individual learning needs and emphasise that all learning is valuable. This objective is closely related to strategies on lifelong and lifewide learning. It requires that individuals are granted flexible access to institutions capable of taking into consideration the full range of competences held by individuals. This political objective is expressed by a large number of Member States.

The second objective is centred on economic issues. Validation is part of a policy to strengthen competitiveness and to improve economic performance. It is asserted that this can be achieved by managing knowledge capital in a more efficient way.

The third objective is centred on institutional issues. Validation can improve the functioning of education and academic institutions by making them more flexible and open to learning outcomes acquired elsewhere. Flexibility and access of education and training institutions are at the core of this objective.

These objectives point out to the benefits of validation on multiple levels: individual, institutional and economic. Political initiatives have been taken in most countries. Nevertheless, the total number of individuals covered by the new approaches is still limited.

* *https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32012H1222%2801%29*
** *http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3073*
*** *http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5164_en.pdf*

A policy brief by the European Youth Forum outlines 6 recommendations for the youth sector in order to acknowledge and increase the contribution of non-formal education in developing key competences for youth:*

1. Coordinate multi-level stakeholders and involve youth organisations to **ensure a common understanding of validation** and contribution of each actor to make it happen.
2. Inform **beneficiaries about validation opportunities**, including young people with fewer opportunities.
3. Put the **learners at the centre of the process** to acknowledge their needs, make it transparent and accessible for everyone.
4. Provide **quality guidance and counselling** for young people to identify which competences they have and how it can be validated.
5. Capitalize on the **experience of youth sector for recognition and validation** tools and utilize those which can be transferable and complementary to the formal ones, e.g. European credit system (ECVET and ECTS).
6. See the **value and impact** of non-formal education through creating opportunities to meet and see the value of each other's work.

EUROPASS

Europass is an initiative of the European Union **to increase transparency of qualification and mobility of citizens in Europe. It is designed to help European** citizens to make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe.** In April 2018, EU countries adopted the Commission's proposal to revise the Europass framework.*** It is designed to ensure that the Europass framework can offer people better and easier-to-use tools to present their skills and obtain useful real-time information on skills needs and trends which can help with career and learning choices.

Actors offering non-formal learning to young people need to make use of the benefits validation offers and help young people to increase their awareness of skills acquired through a particular project or experience. One of the widely used tools which is offered in the Fake OFF! project is Youthpass.

* *https://www.youthforum.org/sites/default/files/publication-pdfs/Publication-Validation-NFE.pdf*
** *https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu*
*** *http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1223&newsId=2638&furtherNews=yes*

YOUTHPASS

YouthPass Certificate has been developed in 2010 by the European Commission as a **recognition tool for informal and non-formal learning** in youth projects funded by Erasmus+.*

All participants of Youth Exchanges, Youth Initiatives, European Volunteer Service projects and Training Courses, i.e. young people between 13 – 30 years of age and youth workers and youth leaders of all ages, are the target groups of this initiative.

A case study on the YouthPass in 2011 stated that it was a challenge to find an adequate solution which would enable people to **give proof of their experience** and at the same time present the acquired learning outcomes. Another challenge was not to copy formal systems and impose an additional process on projects, but to provide a possibility to integrate this process in the flow of project activities by giving added value and reflecting the specificity of non-formal education. This was overcome by using an open approach with common guidelines (for instance, provided by the SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre and helpdesk), but practical implementation undertaken in a decentralised manner (with the support of the National Agencies and trained mentors and facilitators).**

The benefits of YouthPass:
· It supports the **reflection** upon the personal non-formal learning process and outcomes as project participants create their Youthpass certificate together with a support person (a trainer, facilitator) and describe what they have done and learnt in their project.
· As a Europe-wide **recognition instrument** for non-formal learning in the youth field, it strengthens the social recognition of youth work.
· It supports **active citizenship** of young people and of youth workers by describing the added value of their project.
· It aims at supporting the **employability** of young people and of youth workers by raising their awareness of their competences and by documenting their acquisition of key competences on a certificate.

To apply YouthPass still means some additional work for project organisers and leaders and an extra time needed for participants to work on their YouthPass. There is still little proof that acquired certificates would produce real benefits for their holders and ultimately wider society. This future challenge will require new efforts by already involved stakeholders, as well as engagement with new ones on which would actually depend the real usability of the certificates acquired.

* *https://www.youthpass.eu/en/*
** *https://www.jugendpolitikineuropa.de/downloads/4-20-2920/youthpass_casestudy.pdf*

GAME-BASED LEARNING (GBL)

Learning based on games is not new, but it is becoming more and more important in our digitalized world. Today, children and young people in particular are surrounded every day by devices that have Internet and thus an almost infinite amount of information.

With so-called apps - computer programmes designed for a web browser or for mobile devices, such as a phone, a tablet or watch - they learn to network digitally, to exchange ideas, to try their hand at photos and videos and to master one or two games* at the same time. They are constantly tempted to reach the next level or get even more encouragement for the perfect photo. You will be rewarded with stronger avatars, great comments or virtual hearts.

Gamification

The concept behind GBL is called Gamification. The following definition can be used:**

Gamification is a set of activities and processes to solve problems by using or applying the characteristics of game elements.

Thus, the mechanics of games are used to transfer them to the content to be conveyed. There are point systems, success models, mentors and much more.

The concept itself is characterized by the following success factors :

- Increase student engagement and motivation
- Enhance learning performance and academic achievement
- Improve recall and retention
- Provide instant feedback on student's progress and activity
- Catalyse behavioural changes
- Allow students to check their progress
- Promote collaboration skills

* https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/05/21/how-fortnite-captured-teens-hearts-and-minds
** Gamification in Learning and Education: KIM, SONG, LOCKEE, BURTON; Springer 2018 p. 27-28
*** Gamification in Learning and Education: KIM, SONG, LOCKEE, BURTON; Springer 2018 p. 5

FAKE OFF!

Gamification in Learning and Education

GAMIFICATION IN LEARNING AND EDUCATION

WORLD IN GAME → EDUCATION IN REAL WORLD
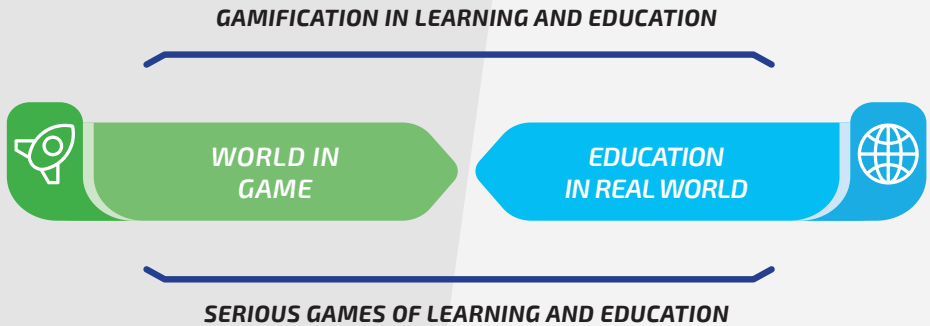
SERIOUS GAMES OF LEARNING AND EDUCATION

Figure 5: Gamification in Learning and Education*

The relation between serious games for learning and education and gamification in learning and education.** There are two possible scenarios for the use of GBL:

1) Use of gamification in teaching and instruction: To this end, well-known mechanics from games (leader boards, point systems, etc.) are used to motivate people to learn certain contents.

2) Use of digital games for the purpose of content delivery: Digital games, which serve the main purpose of knowledge transfer, are also called serious games.*** Especially for out-of-school youth work there are also games which have not been developed for this purpose but help to convey complex contexts.

The two worlds "World in game" and "Education in real world" face each other and ideally complement each other. For example, in a pedagogical concept, the gamification approach can serve to motivate students and digital games can be a tool for managing complex knowledge transfer.

* *Gamification in Learning and Education: KIM, SONG, LOCKEE, BURTON; Springer 2018 p. 29*
** *https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serious_Game*
*** *Gamification in Learning and Education: KIM, SONG, LOCKEE, BURTON; Springer 2018 p. 62*

Gamification framework

There are several frameworks around the development of gamification and games. Basically, however, it is always a combination of 3-4 factors that make up a game.
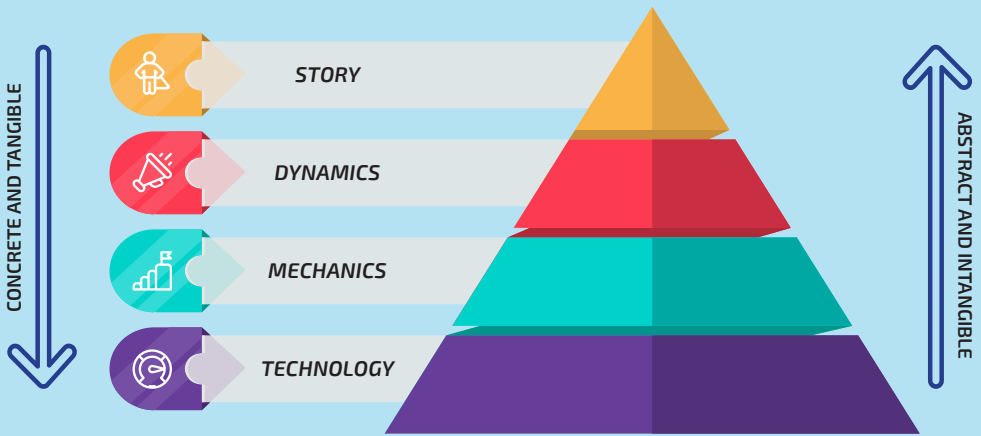

Figure 6: Integrative gamification framework*

The basis is always technology. In order to be able to implement a GBL approach as successfully as possible, it requires know-how about how all persons involved can participate in it. This can be the selection of the respective mobile platform (iOS, Android) or the decision for a web-based platform.

Based on this, the mechanics required to support or execute certain actions and reactions are defined. The rules and limits of player interaction are defined here. According to the framework of Werbach & Hunter there are 10 elements:** Challenges, chances, competition, cooperation, feedback, resource acquisition, rewards, transactions, turns, and win states.

The dynamic describes the goal of the game in the form of visions and guidelines that can be achieved. This area usually consists of five elements:*** constraints, emotions, narrative, progression, and relationships.

At the top of the framework is story. This defines a sequence of events that players experience while playing. There is the possibility to make these games very linear, as a consecutive sequence of events or very branched. The second option allows players to dive even deeper into the game, as decisions are not necessarily answered yes or no, but may only have an effect on the course of the game later on.

In summary, the framework enables to convey user content through less complex to highly complex GBL approaches.

* *Gamification in Learning and Education: KIM, SONG, LOCKEE, BURTON; Springer 2018 p. 67*
** *https://www.researchgate.net/figure/While-serious-games-have-a-specific-rule-set-and-are-often-well-balanced-based-on_fig1_265337179*
*** *https://www.uwplatt.edu/ttc/gamification-mechanics-dynamics-and-components*

GAME-BASED LEARNING IN THE WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

In contrast to school, youth work always has the disadvantage that there is no fixed environment such as teaching units, classrooms or similar. That is why it is particularly important here to incorporate the contents to be conveyed into the reality of life of children and young people.

The following 10 reasons* speak for the use of Game Based Learning in extracurricular youth work:

1. Computer games are part of the lives of children and young people
Children and young people are surrounded daily by games and elements from games (like buttons, notifications,…). Using this reality helps to convey content more easily.

2. Children and young people can be experts
Many apps and games are nowadays a very complex treatise of actions and reactions for which one has to invest time to master them. Acknowledging this and using it to encourage children and young people as experts to present their digital world is very motivating for many.

3. Points of contact for talks
An understanding of current games and apps creates a good basis for discussion on which to build. Games are most often not boring, so it is more appealing to talk about them.

4. Reflection of media usage behaviour
Together with the children and young people, practical examples from everyday life can be used to reflect on their own media usage behaviour.

5. Transfer processes
Gaming experiences can be verbalized together and what has been learned in computer games can be put into practice.
In addition the learning process is not being felt as such, so the transfer goes immediately.

6. Computer games require and promote a variety of skills
These can be thematized and shown.

7. Computer games offer interactive spaces of experience
Experience can be gained in computer games, outside the limitations of real life. This involves not only creative tasks but also the simulation of different processes or emotions.

8. Collaboration, cooperation and competition
Games offer space for important aspects, which later also become important in a professional context, for example.

9. Playing together connects
Playing together connects and breaks down social and cultural barriers.

10. Making youth facilities more attractive
Providing computers and consoles can be attractive for children and young people. Above all the selection of the appropriate games makes it possible to deal with the topics mentioned above.

* Game Based Learning in children and youth work: Danube University Krems, Center for Applied Games Research; 2017 p3-4

EXAMPLES OF GAME-BASED LEARNING IN YOUTH WORK

Game Based Learning always means more than just playing the game. To turn gaming experiences into learning experiences and to achieve certain learning goals, a pedagogical framework and appropriate support are required. GBL methods can be about the use of concrete games, or computer games in general. For example, game preferences, game content or gaming behaviour can be discussed and reflected on together or creative works about games can be stimulated.[1]

· Experience history virtually with "Civilization VI"[2]
· Promoting teamwork with "Shift Happens"[3]
· Exploring fairy tales and seasons with "Seasons after Fall"[4]
· Try physics for yourself in "Rub's Lab"[5]
· Learn to program with "Lightbot: Code Hours"[6]
· Even stop-motion films produce with "Lego City Undercover"[7]

So-called "serious games" offer the opportunity to deal with a serious topic thanks to the gaming experience. This is usually strongly integrated into the game mechanics and/or narration. If the gaming experiences are subsequently thematized, this can be a good starting point for further discussion on the topic in the youth institution. In the following list you will find some successful games that deal with serious topics.

Dealing with the themes of death, illness, dying
· "What Remains of Edith Finch"*[8]
· "In Between"*[9]
· "That Dragon, Cancer"*[10]

Dealing with the topics of war, morality, politics
· "Paper, Please"*[11]
· "This War of Mine"*[12]
· "Valiant Hearts"*[13]

*[1] *Game Based Learning in children and youth work: Danube University Krems, Center for Applied Games Research; 2017 p. 8*
*[2] *https://civilization.com/*
*[3] *http://www.shifthappensgame.com/*
*[4] *http://www.seasonsafterfall.com/*
*[5] *https://rubeslab.com/*
*[6] *http://lightbot.com/hoc.html*
*[7] *https://www.lego.com/en-us/games/lego-city-undercover-ca6ec868d7d14d52981c55f608730bda*
*[8] *http://edithfinch.com/*
*[9] *https://headupgames.com/game/in-between*
*[10] *http://www.thatdragoncancer.com/*
*[11] *http://papersplea.se/*
*[12] *http://www.thiswarofmine.com/*
*[13] *https://www.ubisoft.com/de-de/game/valiant-hearts*

PEDAGOGICAL
CONCEPT

*B*ased on the concepts of media literacy, digital literacy and digital competences, the next question is **how to really change processes in young people's life**. How to encourage them to step out of the neglection phase, but to **take control** and **get more self-esteem** to be proactive in dealing with news.

This pedagogical concept has a holistic approach on young people's life and covers more areas than concepts of critical thinking. It encourages young people by different stakeholders, not only schools.

It is based on a necessary previous step: **Young people have to be aware that fake news plays a role in their life and they see a necessity to change that**.

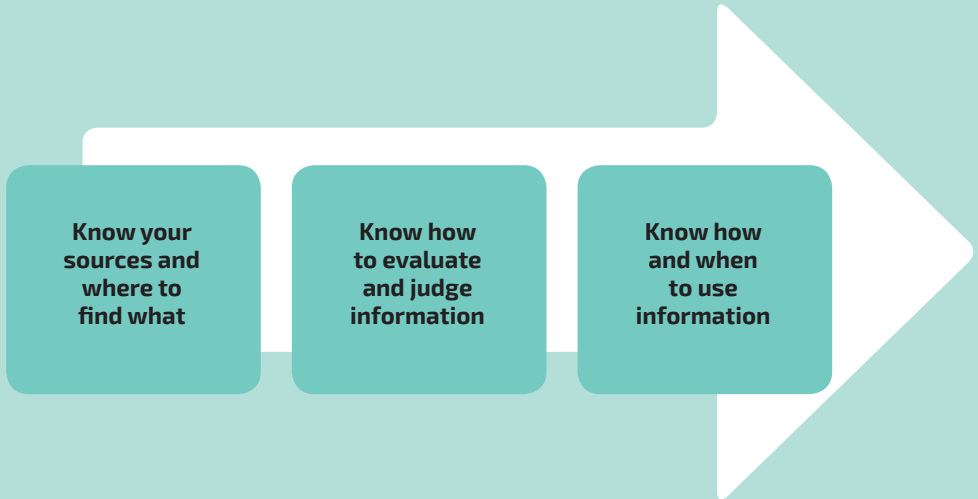**How to deal with information? How to judge news? How to interpret an image?**

For young people it is a daily struggle to find their way through information, mis-information, propaganda and commercials. Since it is not very attractive to evaluate online information, but rather to trust the guts feeling, new ways in training must be found.

· How can young people be persuaded into changing their habits?
· Their daily behaviour?
· How can they be persuaded that information literacy is relevant and important?
· How can they be persuaded that their guts feeling is not enough?

The Didactic Concept of FAKE OFF project aims at improving young people information literacy, as well as at affecting their daily routines. Not only the knowledge and competence is important in evaluating online information, but also application of that into daily routines.
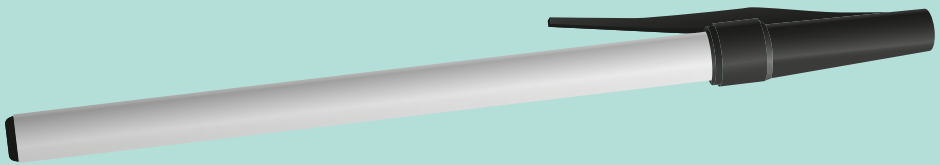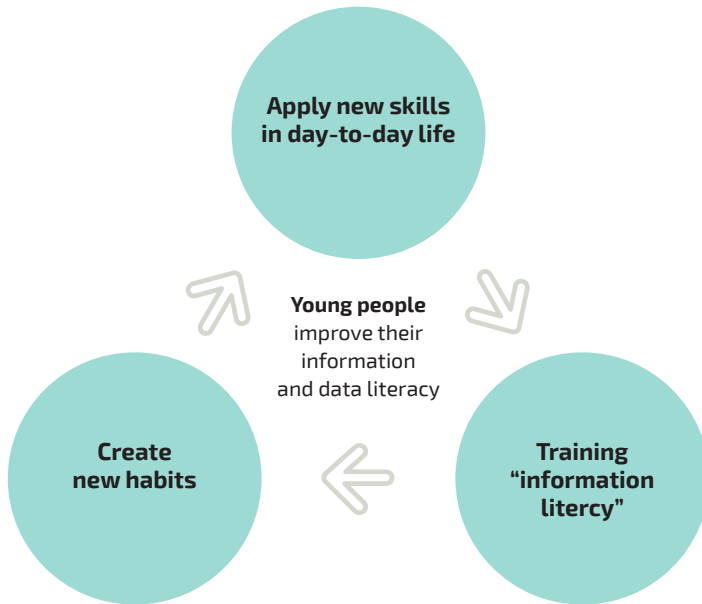
FAKE OFF: Didactic concept

The next graph presents the 3-step didactic approach of the FAKE OFF project.

Know your sources and where to find what	Know how to evaluate and judge information	Know how and when to use information

So the three steps include:

1. Learn, how to detect fake news.
2. Get ideas, how to create new habits, so it is easier not to trap into fake news while browsing, e.g. through social media.
3. Apply these new habits into daily life and be better protected against fake news.

Apply new skills in day-to-day life

Young people improve their information and data literacy

Create new habits

Training "information litercy"

Young people involved in the FAKE OFF! project would:

· learn about fake news and the impact of intentional misinformation,
· learn about the mechanisms of propaganda and manipulation,
· foster their emotional intelligence - through understanding and expressing the emotions of vulnerability, confidence, as well as the concepts of ambiguity and resilience,
· foster their digital competence through research and evaluation of the different Internet sources,
· acquire digital literacy and critical thinking skills – ability to reflect on the perceived information, to become resilient against manipulation and propaganda and to build constructive discourse based on the principles of democracy,
· become aware of their learning process and motivation to learn,
· acquire skills in reflecting, evaluating, asking questions, giving feedback, observing and listening, analysing and planning their personal learning process,
· increase their creativity and enthusiasm,
· speak out their doubts about "news" to their peers.

STEP 1: TRAINING "INFORMATION LITERACY"

Goal: To learn how to check sources and detect fake news.

Train young people to:
· **know sources** which are relevant to find information (depending on topic, context, goal).
· **know how to evaluate** online information: What is true? What is false? What is a hoax, what is reliable information?
· **understand the motivation behind Fake News** (e.g. commercial – using sensationalism and playing with emotions to get many views clicks; political agenda; etc.).
· **know how and when to use this information**: when to spread information online, when to keep information for yourself, how liking and spreading is interlinked, how to deal with emotions that the online information can trigger.

Young people see several places where this training can be held (see fake-off Interviews with young people):
> · At school, in special subjects or included in traditional classroom activities
> · At youth centres

Methods how to work with young people in an interactive engaging way:

Title/Method	Goal	Comments
Two lies, one truth (Nr 14)	Be able to judge lies and true facts about other people in a group.	not fake news specific, but raising awareness for lies and fakes in general.
To recognise fake news (Nr 15)	Fake news are being spread about the youth organization within different social media channels. And then these fakes are being discovered and reflected.	This is being done within a youth centre or youth organization. Some preparation time is necessary.
Modify the filter bubble on face-book (Nr 16)	Change the algorithm for a specific facebook account and reflect, how this could be done for every person.	Generic facebook account is helpful. Takes some time.

Source: www.peerbox.at/en - All numbers reference to a certain method

Title/Method	Goal	Comments
Formulating search terms (Nr 17)	In a playful way, search terms for specific questions are being collected.	creative method
Searching for images (Nr 18)	Use reverse image search online and reflect the use of images in social media in different context.	digital tools are necessary
Fake news Bingo (Nr 20)	Create a bingo sheet with (for the playing young people) relevant fake news categories, then play Bingo in different social networks.	Some time for preparation is necessary. The preparation process in quite creative and playful, the Bingo game itself can be too boring for young people.
Misleading accounts - find and report	In a challenge all participants try to find misleading accounts (relevant topics for young people) and report them.	Use different social media platforms and prepare reporting methods in these platforms.
Film-concentrate	Young people produce a film themselves, in this film they try to concentrate all possible horror/Violence/prank criteria.	Use video-equipment, this takes a while.
Hoax factory - trace the evil	Young people search the route of articles, published by hoax factories.	Can be frustrating and shocking. Reflection is necessary.
Chain letters - Horror creatures (no 66)	Kids try to demystify horror creatures that are being spread via WhatsApp chain letters.	
Detect challenging posts (no 63)	Detect and understand the mechanisms of critical and challenging posts in social networks via spreading in groups.	Group game, that might not be liked by cool youngsters.

www.fake-off.eu/toolbox

STEP 2: CREATE NEW HABITS

Goal: In order to get out of an old habit, such as believing all information found on the internet, new habits have to be created.

New habits to create should address the following questions:
· Where to read news?
· Get out of the filter bubble, get involved with different opinions
· What is to be shared? Think before you "like" / "share"
· How to deal with emotions (especially anger, passion, rage, unfairness…)

As can be seen in the survey of the project Fake OFF among young people, the change of habits is quite challenging. Young people change habits:
· when old habits are getting boring
· when interests, such as hobbies or friends are being changed
· when they learn something new and interesting (school, family, friends, online)

Methods how to work with young people in this step:

Title/Method	Goal	Comments
Hate posts (No 19)	How to deal with hate posts. Find and reflect them.	Digital tools are necessary.
#tbt (No 6)	To think about which content of one's own internet activities one would like to see also in the future.	Might be a bit abstract to reflect new habits. But questions might help:
The influence of group pressure (no 28)	How can group pressure influence one's online behaviour? What can be done, when emotions are very strong? How to express such thing within one's peer group?	Reflection questions can be focused on one's owns emotions and how to handle them:
Social network training for younger ones	Prepare a training for younger kids and show them different social networks, what to take care of, how to do privacy settings.	Usually such a training is a good way to reflect one's own behaviour and change it.
Search routines for younger ones	Prepare a training for younger kids, how online search can be done effectively without using to much time, but check sources.	Find different ways in the preparation phase and then use one for the training. Reflect after the training, if that can be done on daily routine.
How to deal with fear (No 52)	Kids draw all the stuff they do not want to see online and then destroy the drawings. They reflect, what to do, when this happens online.	For younger kids, especially reflect with kids, what to do, if they feel fear and anger.

Title/Method	Goal	Comments
How to deal with fear from "killer-clowns" (no 54)	"Killer clowns" appear in movies and in social networks, preferable in WhatsApp chain letters. How to deal with this fear and how to stop it, is being discussed and reflected.	Especially reflect with kids, what to do, if they feel fear and anger.
Modify the filter bubble on Facebook (No 16)	Change the algorithm for a specific facebook account and reflect, how this could be done for every person.	Generic facebook account is helpful. Takes some time.
One day completely different	Young people "document" a day without their smartphone. How life is being organized, where to get information, how to communicate with friends.	This documentation can be real, but can be faked. They produce a video, a vlog or any other creative result in order to show, how this day is being set into practice.
One day completely different (2)	Young people spend one day (or a few hours) without their smartphone. After this time they reflect how that was possible. After that they reflect How life is being organized, where to get information, how to communicate with friends.	Put it into a challenge, into a game. Be sure that some benefit can be seen: a prize, some recognition within the organization. Make an event. A week later, reflect, how it has changed life after the event. Did something change?
My online past	Young people draw a timeline about their online past. They include social media accounts, show creative products. They highlight, where they changed their behaviour and reflect the reasons for that.	If digital tools are used, protect privacy.
What is boring?	What is boring online? Young people identify the most boring content they face in their daily routines.	Different creative tools can be used.
Emotions with emojis	Different emotional situations are being expressed via emojis, emojis statements are being translated into verbal descriptions.	Prepare situations for young people that will touch them.

Source: www.peerbox.at/en - All numbers reference to a certain method

STEP 3: APPLY NEW SKILLS IN DAY-TO-DAY LIFE

Goal: Single events, such as knowing how to detect fake news or learning to do different in the future is not enough. Habits have to be changed in day to day life.

Even if young people know how to react differently, it is not always easy to include these new behaviours into daily routines. It is a challenge to learn new habits and to be willing to change your digital behaviour. One needs to motivate him/herself enough to learn new habits, such as:

· Critically assess social networks
· Use several information sources
· Take time to evaluate information
· React online when mis-information is being spread (e.g. counter hate speech)

This step must also include to reflect one's personal online behaviour: Do I lie online? Do I leave out necessary information? Do I exaggerate about my successes?
Such ethical questions can be included into the work with young people.

Methods how to work with young people in this step:

Title/Method	Goal	Comments
Hate posts (Nr 19)	How to deal with hate posts. Find and reflect them.	Digital tools are necessary.
Internet consultation hour (Nr 44)	To offer the opportunity to reflect on, ask questions about and discuss topics concerning the internet on a regular basis.	Especially reflect on the sustainable change of behaviour. Ask questions, such as: How much do we like our new routines? How much more time do we need? Do/did our friends learn from us?
Speed-dating conversation in pairs (Nr 48)	Reflect in a larger group, how the changes could be seen already. Exchange best practices and encourage each other.	As a reflection method, but it could be also used as a start method: How could we change our behaviour, what could we do?

Source: www.peerbox.at/en - All numbers reference to a certain method

NOTES

FAKE OFF!

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