Media literacy program and material for adult educators

THEME 3: INFORMED DECISIONS

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Project APRICOT:

Attentive parental education for wise being and co-being in changing times

This intellectual output has been conceived and developed by the Strategic Partnership in APRICOT project under the coordination and responsibility of *Šiuolaikinių didaktikų centras*/ *Modern Didactics Centre* (LT).

Thanks to all partners for their precious contributes:

Apricot Training Management Ltd. (UK)
ItF Institut Kassel e.V. – Frauencomputerschule (DE)
Planeta Ciencias (ES)

Editorial coordinator: Daiva Penkauskienė

Authors: Hilary Hale, Beate Hedrich, Betül Sahin, Alejandra Goded, Anca Dudau, Daiva Penkauskienė

Editorial Board: Sophy Hale, Seda Gürcan, Konrad Schmidt, Cihan Sahin, Josafat Gonzalez Rodriguez, Roc Marti Valls, Virgita Valiūnaitė

Month/ Year: November 2021

Chapter 4: Theme 3: Informed decisions

4.1 Introduction to the theme

The aim of this theme is to reflect on the skills necessary in order to select reliable sources of information and make informed decisions. This includes taking into account the health, social and environmental impact of our consumer decisions or the consequences of the time spent in front of screens, for example.

AE will learn:

- how to plan and implement hands-on, learner-oriented tasks to teach critical thinking skills necessary for making informed decisions;
- to facilitate discussion with adult learners on the various factors to take into account in order to make informed decisions and choose reliable sources of information;
- to use framework methodology for teaching target groups in practice;
- to help adult learners reflect upon the concepts learnt as well as the learning process.

How it works:

- The learning is based on the CEA approach and ERR framework (evocation/ realization of meaning/reflection).
- The AE will facilitate the learning process so that the participants find the answers on their own (rather than giving them the information and answers directly).
- A variety of active and participative learning methods are used such as pair and group work, dynamic exercises, experiments, challenges etc.
- The duration of delivery for this theme is 6 hours

Table 6. Overview of the theme

Learning objectives	Content	Activities/ Methods	Material	Time	Learning outcomes
To discuss main concepts of the theme To create a participative and stimulating learning environment	**Introduction to the theme:** Informed decisions	Team Building activities Interactive lecture and group discussions	Multimedia	0,5 hours	Create a participative and stimulating learning environment Acquaintance with main concepts

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Learning objectives	Content	Activities/ Methods	Material	Time	Learning outcomes
	Sub-theme 1 **Consumer decisions:** health impact and environmental impact; understanding product labels; official inspection bodies; lack of information; previous assumptions and prejudices; confirmation bias	Short group dynamics Group activity: the Shopping basket Group reflections and conclusions	A shopping bag with several products / group Worksheet: Product information table Handouts, Flipchart, markers	1.5 hours	Awareness of the health and environmental impact of consumer decisions. Awareness of the importance of selecting reliable sources of information. Knowledge of confirmation bias, prejudices and assumptions and ability to identify them.
	Sub-theme 2 **Reliable sources of information:** quality as a standard for information; references; primary and secondary sources; official sources, scientific community, missing information	Group work to create a catalogue of reliable sources of information Group discussions	Multimedia (Projector) Handout, Worksheets, Flipchart, markers	2 hours	Ability to identify reliable sources of information and to reflect on them. Ability to analyse a problem from different points of view by using different sources of information and drawing conclusions. Awareness of the standards that define the quality of information

Learning objectives	Content	Activities/ Methods	Material	Time	Learning outcomes
	Sub-theme 3 Use of screens		Handout, multimedia Flipchart, markers	2 hours	Awareness of the consequences of the overuse of screens and technology

What is it about?

Decision-making is a constant in our lives. We make decisions consciously and unconsciously whether in a personal or professional environment. In the information age it seems that we have all the information we could need at the click of a button. However, we also live in an age of fake news and the most extravagant conspiracy theories. It is therefore very important to equip ourselves with tools that allow us to identify the veracity and relevance of the information we see before we allow it to influence our decision making process .

How we obtain the information and the value that we place upon it is a very important part of making a decision. Knowing how to determine the reliability of sources, recognise our own biases and interpret the information obtained are very important skills. Although it may seem very abstract, in reality improved decision-making skills affect our daily lives in so many ways – from small, daily decisions such as which items we choose to buy to wider issues such as how we may reduce our impact on the environment.

It's not about becoming an expert in everything, neither is it a recipe for never failing. It's about being able to use the potential of today's access to information to facilitate and improve our decision making.

Rethinking how we make decisions, how we access information and determine the quality of it will allow us to prepare for future decisions as well as for unexpected scenarios by acquiring skills that will be useful in many situations.

Structure

Part I. Presentation of Model Activity

1. General introductory activities to be decided by workshop presenters
2. Introduction to a session/theme, describing what will occur during it
3. Experiencing a guided lesson/activity
4. Reflection on a guided lesson/activity

Part II. Analysis of the Process

1. Recalling all steps of a model activity/lesson
2. Analysis of a model activity/lesson from learner's perspective
3. Analysis of a model activity/lesson from teacher's perspective
4. Discussions

Part III. Planning for Implementation

1. Discussions about how & to whom this lesson/activity can be applied at local contexts
2. Development of a draft plan for implementation

4.2 Consumer decisions

Part I. Presentation of Model Activity

Step 1. General introductory activities

This activity will help participants get to know each other. We take advantage of the activity to divide them into groups of 3.

I just bought this...

The trainers put a variety of different objects on the floor. Each trainee must pick up one of them and explain their choice in turn using the sentence "my name is… , and I just bought this because…".

It should be something that helps the rest of the class to know them better.

How much would you pay for this?

After that, the trainer offers some products to 'buy' (chocolate, a flying car, a ticket to the moon, a sock used by Marie Curie, a magic plant that absorbs bad radiations from outside...). The trainees then decide how much of their salary they would be willing to pay for each object and put the items in order of their perceived monetary value. The order in which the objects are placed will be used to arrange the groups for the next activity.

We presume that the group who paid more for the magic plant would be more critical about chemical substances and the group that paid less, would be more critical of natural alternatives.

Step 2. Introduction to a session/ theme, describing what will occur during it

This activity is aimed at discerning the importance of access to information in our day-to-day lives and to reflect on the complexities of making informed decisions on a normal, everyday task such as shopping. Fictional shopping baskets will be assigned to small

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

teams, and each one will have to discuss if it seems like a purchase they would make, and if they know all the ingredients contained in it.

“Knowing the products” implies that we know what they are made of? Several of the products will have certain ingredients underlined and participants will be asked to seek information about them, within a limited time and then take part in a discussion between groups - did all groups choose the same underlined ingredients? Did they all find the same information? How valid is the information found? Are there any biases? The workshop educator will be responsible for moderating these issues throughout a collective debate, and to introduce key concepts in making informed decisions, such as the reliability of sources. This first activity aims to present the importance and complexity of the concepts that we are going to work on in this part of the course, by reflecting upon a practical, everyday example.

Step 3. Experiencing a guided lesson/activity

Task 1: Shopping basket

Each group receives a shopping bag with several products. Or, if not possible, a list of ingredients present in everyday consumer products.

They are given 5 minutes to open the bag and talk about the products, deduce what they are if the package is in another language and say whether they use them or not. This helps them to get to know each other a little.

Each product has some substances underlined in its list of ingredients. They choose one of them and look on the Internet for information about it to fill in the following table.

The substances are these:

IODOPROPYNYL BUTYLCARBAMATE
PARABENS
PHTHALATES
BISPHENOLS
TRICLOSAN
ALUMINIUM
BHT (BUTYLATED HYDROXYTOLUENE)
PESTICIDES-CHLORPYRIFOS
BENZOPHENONE
FLAME RETARDANT

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

SUBSTANCE EXAMPLE: SUGAR		
What is this substance used for?	Flavour enhancer, conservative	
Which kind of products contain this substance?	Animal and human processed food, candies, sweets, ice-creams, bakery, sodas, sweetened beverages, juices, etc.	
	INFORMATION A (And other information supporting A)	**INFORMATION B (Not supporting A)**
Is it harmful for the health, the environment or both?	It is one cause of metabolic syndrome, diabetes caused by insulin resistance, and obesity.	It is a quick source of energy. It is good for brain health
Link(s)	https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/carbohydrates/carbohydrates-and-blood-sugar/	https://zukan.es/10-beneficios-azucar/
Blank space*		
?		
?		
Decision: Would you buy it?	**No… But actually I will!**	

*This field is very important, since at the end of the activity we will see that, for example, in this case the relevant data is "what amount of this molecule is necessary to produce that damage". This is one of the fundamental lessons, that of reading between the lines, or looking for the missing data.

What is this substance used for?	Substance exercise	
Which kind of products contain this substance?		
	INFORMATION A (And other information supporting A)	**INFORMATION B (Not supporting A)**
Is it harmful for the health, the environment or both?		

Link(s)		
?		
?		
?		
Decision: Would you buy it?		

The other possible untitled field would be:

- Is this substance essential for the use of the product, or, similarly: is it the cheapest alternative or the least toxic?
- How come the governments allow the use of this molecule if it is so harmful?
- What is the amount of these molecules in a product so it is dangerous?
- What daily exposure levels to phthalates are considered safe?
- How can we find out if there are some phthalates in the products?

Task 2: Sharing impressions

Each group presents which product they have chosen, which substance in the ingredients list was underlined and what they have found out about it.

As they talk, **the question of the reliability of the sources will naturally arise**. They could complain about the short amount of time we have given them.

If several groups have chosen the same substance, this will enable comparisons.

We are leading the activity towards the conclusion that it is important to choose the sources well, so we will encourage them to keep examining this point critically.

When all the groups have finished their presentations, the trainer encourages them to think about the blank columns. They then discuss what information could be included in that section of the table to make the information more complete and to facilitate a more informed decision about the substance.

(We want them to conclude that the amount of a substance that makes it harmful is what makes the difference in deciding whether or not to use a product. Task 3 is designed to guide them to this conclusion)

Task 3: Checking conclusions

1. The Scientific check

Let's check if the table has enough information. Sometimes it can be easier to think on a lower level. We don't know much about parabens. But we are more used to thinking about some of the other ingredients: sugar, Vitamin C, water, soap.

Now, the groups are asked to look for information about how harmful for humans and for the environment these substances are and to fill in the relevant parts of the table.

A quick google search should show numerous web pages referencing the harmfulness of these substances presuming the same information: "too much".

So, very soon they will write something like "how much…?"

2. The naturalistic check

For the last column, there is one more question to be asked. Something little children ask a lot, but adults don't, because we usually think it is too simple. The question is Why?

Why does this product use this substance? Is it really necessary? Are there any alternatives? Is the lack of it so bad that environmental and health impacts are worth it?

Sometimes the decision to use a particular substance in a product is based more on economic reasons than environmental or health reasons.

3. Conclusions

The trainer then explains how important it is to identify misinformation and to ask good critical questions about the information we have found. A key question underlying this activity is : "should I trust this information or not?".

The trainer then summarises the conclusions:

- The amount of product is important to understand how harmful it is. We can find information stating that a substance is dangerous, but in much higher doses than those found in the product.
- It is easier to find information on the potential harm of a substance to the human body than on the environmental impact. In addition, regulations can be overly permissive in this respect.
- Sometimes the regulations are based on incomplete research about the effects of the substances. Regulations may change as more information comes to light. They are not unwavering.
- It is important to find reliable sources of information. We will go back to this issue later on.
- Any other interesting conclusions proposed by the group…

Now he/she asks the groups to change what they wrote on the column "decision" and to say whether they think they have all the information or not.

Task 4: Confirmation Bias

Now, let's take a look at the decisions made by each group.

We can draw two graph axes. In the X axis we have the number of the groups. In the Y axis, we have how likely they are to decide to buy this product with the information found.

The purpose of this activity is to show some relation between the prejudices and the decisions made.

There are, mainly, two common starting hypotheses when facing this problem:

a) **Be critical of the system**. For example, stereotypically: we live in a capitalist system that puts the interests of the market before the health of people and the environment. The products we consume are full of toxic substances that are poisoning us and the planet and the official bodies allow this because it is money, rather than politics, that rules this world.

b) **Be critical of scientific illiteracy**. For example, stereotypically: the products we consume go through rigorous quality controls. Chemistry is everywhere, even in our bodies. Fear of chemicals comes from ignorance, because chemicals are not synonymous with harmful, just as natural is not synonymous with healthy.

c) **Is there a third option?** Is it necessary?

For reflection: Natural is not synonymous with healthy, scientifically proven is not synonymous with indisputable, and criticizing a lot is not synonymous with critical thinking.

Some reliable sources of information about the issue:

ECHA (European Chemicals Agency): https://echa.europa.eu/home

Chemical Safety Facts: https://www.chemicalsafetyfacts.org/

American Chemistry Council: https://www.americanchemistry.com/

Easier reading:

Snopes (English): https://www.snopes.com/

Maldita Ciencia (Spanish): https://maldita.es/malditaciencia/1

Part II. Analysis of the Process

1. Recalling the learning process - what, when, how.
2. Reflection upon the learning process – what learners felt, experienced, learned.
3. Reflection: The exercise was difficult to adapt to the level of the teachers. Can the same exercise be done by looking for other types of information easier to understand? What examples can you think of?
4. Reflection: Is it necessary to give the answers on the exercise molecules or is it better to leave them open-ended?

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Part III. Planning for Implementation

1. Discussions about how & to whom this lesson/ activity can be applied in local contexts.
2. Development of a draft plan for implementation.

Possible adaptations and recommendations for the adult educators

Shorter Duration:

The activity can be shortened by simply giving each group a table with chemicals they should look for without going through the previous part of discussing the products and how we use them.

Typically, the table should contain: one or two substances from the list of chemical additives, one substance from the list of common harmless substances, one alternative substance.

As the trainees progress through the exercise, they can fill in the boxes with additional necessary information. Reflections can be made after sharing the results and difficulties encountered.

Language difficulties:

The list of ingredients is given in English. They can translate them with wikipedia or with a translator to do the search in their own language.

4.3 Reliable sources of information

Are there universal guidelines or foolproof instructions for distinguishing reliable sources of information? In this part we will see that everything is relative to the particular and personal situation, but that there are some indicators that can help us recognise false information easily.

Part I. Presentation of Model Activity

Step 1. General introductory activities

To initiate a reflection on what is meant by a reliable source of information, we start with a game that tries to determine the participant‘s thoughts on this topic. For details on this game, please, go below to Introductory Game: Who should you ask first?

Step 2. Introduction to a session/theme, describing what will occur during it

We begin our session by saying that we are going to demonstrate an indisputable method of distinguishing useful sources of information: a sort of checklist of good practices, and

we ask if everyone agrees or if anyone has any objections. The idea is that people question any information presented as absolute and indisputable.

Whether they have reached the conclusion themselves or we have told them, we will talk about the fact that this method has to be personal and adapted to each specific circumstance. However, between us all we can write a kind of draft that will serve as a starting point for most cases.

We have thought of different options to work on, which can be presented to the students so that they can choose, in groups, the one that most appeals to them and work from there. After doing the work we identify the common points of view and work together on our checklist.

Step 3. Experiencing a guided lesson/activity

Task 1:

To start we will review the previous activity with the shopping bag - they have already searched for information on different ingredients and are asked to reflect in small groups on what elements make a source of information more reliable. To do this we ask them to divide into two coloumns those elements which they feel make an information source reliable, and those that make them more suspicious. Finally we ask them to elaborate a small decalogue about the reliability of the sources.

Task 2: Catching the lie

Continuing in small groups, we are now going to test the decalogue in an activity of catching lies. We will look at some topics from the perspective of two opposing and conflicting sources of information using the decalogue as a tool to decide which of the sources is more reliable.

Instead of working deductively, or with ad hoc hypotheses, we can do the opposite: start from two sources of information that say opposite things and try to investigate which of the two is more reliable. This makes the discovery more autonomous and personal, allowing learners to better internalise the technique and the conclusions reached. To start this task participants are first given one piece of information. The idea is that the group works on the text trying to determine whether it is reliable or not. The group explains as objectively as possible what has led them to this conclusion. After that, the trainer can give another text from a different source with contradictory information and ask the participants to determine which one is more likely to be true.

Some examples

1) Donald Trump touched Rupaul inappropriately in the 1990s
https://worldnewsdailyreport.com/rupaul-claims-trump-touched-him-inappropriately-in-the-1990s/
2) Is food cooked in the microwave safe?
https://www.who.int/peh-emf/publications/facts/info_microwaves/en/
3) Is food cooked in the microwave safe? (contra information)
https://www.health-science.com/microwave-hazards/
4) Is climate change due to humans?
https://climate.nasa.gov/causes/
5) Is climate change due to humans? (contra information)
https://www.onepetro.org/conference-paper/SPE-109292-MS

Task 3:

With the whole group, we will reveal which information was correct and which was inaccurate. We will see how many groups got it right and reflect on which elements of their decalogues worked and which elements might not have been so successful.

Solutions to the examples:

1) Donald Trump touched Rupaul inappropriately in the 1990s

The news is false. It is enough to take a look at the website to see that it is a news site with humour, parodies and mockery of current affairs.

2) , 3) Is food cooked in the microwave safe?

Links 2 and 3 are two websites of scientific information on the same subject where the information contradicts each other. How do you know which one is reliable and which one is not?

While it is true that the World Health Organisation sometimes makes mistakes, it is a United Nations organisation set up to deal with global health issues. It has no economic interests and cannot be lobbied by corporations. Although its control mechanisms may be flawed.

As for the second link, it is not a famous or recognised entity, but the name inspires confidence: Health Science Research.

However, there are several aspects that cast doubt on the claims it makes:

- Most of the references cited lead to pages that either do not lead to the article they promise, lead to an article that says nothing related to the topic, or lead to a non-scientific publication.
- The only scientific articles cited are from 25 years ago.

- There is no “about us” section on the website that explains who is writing the information, their academic background, their knowledge of the subject or possible conflicts of interest.

4) , 5) Is climate change due to humans?

Article 5 is scientific and it is reliable. So, why should we not give credit to it?

- The web site owner is a petrol company that obviously has interest in finding evidence that petrol is not one of the causes of climate change.
- Some scientific papers find contradictory results with climate change being caused by humans. And the research may be correct, as climate change is a complex issue. However, isolated scientific research cannot counter the sum of arguments found by thousands of pieces of research from different branches of science (biology, chemistry, physics, environment, meteorology, geology) all over the world. It is the Scientific Community that agrees and not just a few isolated individuals.

Task 4:

Finally, we will share the valid elements of the different checklists and build a final checklist of the entire group.

We will give a list of Decalogues produced by organisations that fight against deception on the internet so that they can compare this with their own.

DECALOGUE OF THE RELIABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION

1. **Accuracy:** Compare the information you already know with that found in the source, or with that provided by another source you consider reliable. Also look for disclaimers as to the accuracy of the content, which can sometimes be easily found, especially on health-related topics. Technical jargon is no guarantee that the content is reliable.
2. **Authority:** Is the author of the source an expert or a trusted institution? On a web page, you can usually identify the owner/publisher by the URL, or check if there is a copyright statement at the bottom of the page.
3. **Conflict of interest:** It is also necessary to determine whether the source is biased. For example, if it is medical information from a pharmaceutical company, that company will provide information in support of its product. Consider the author's objectivity and views. Are there advertisements on the site? - Advertisements may indicate that the information may be less reliable.
4. **Timeliness:** When was the information written, and is there be more recent information on the subject? For websites, you can often find the copyright date near the bottom. Also, look for the words "revised" or "updated" to find the date of the website.
5. **Audience:** Who are the intended readers and what is the purpose of the publication? There is a difference between a magazine written for the general public and a journal written for professors and experts in the field.

6. **Perspective:** Biased sources can be helpful in creating and developing an argument, but make sure you find sources to help you understand the other side as well. Extremely biased sources will often misrepresent information and that can be ineffective to use in your paper.
7. **Vague terms or emotional arguments**: Beware of sources that use vague terms like "recent studies show", or "many people believe", without backing up these claims with citations. Online sources are notorious for this - remember that their ultimate goal is to maximize their readership and not to produce scholarly, peer-reviewed articles. Also, beware of buzzwords playing on the readers' emotions. Many internet sources will use misleading titles in order to draw in readers
8. **Spelling and grammar:** Sometimes a simple glance at the way information is written gives us clues as to whether we are on a reliable page or not.
9. **The look and feel of the website** - Reliable websites usually have a more professional look and feel than personal Websites.
10. **References and citations**: Are they real links? Do they lead to the information promised?

References

https://libanswers.tcl.edu/faq/6286
https://paperpile.com/g/find-credible-sources/
https://guides.lib.byu.edu/c.php?g=216340&p=1428399
https://www.stevenson.edu/online/about-us/news/how-to-identify-reliable-information
https://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/evaluating-health-information

Part II. Analysis of the process

We ask the participants to sit in a circle and the trainer asks some questions to reflect upon:

- What have been your general impressions of the activity?
- Have you ever done a similar activity with your students? What was it like?
- Why did we do it in small groups and not as a whole group session?
- Is it better for everyone to look at the same topic or for each group to look at a different topic?
- Why didn't we all do a Decalogue together to start with, instead of asking individual groups to do it first?
- Is the search for information different when you know you have to analyse the sources?
- How can we make people feel that way every time they look for something?

Part III. Planning for implementation

We bring the participants back together in small groups and ask them to design an activity that families could do with their children and grandchildren that would raise their awareness of the risks of relying on unchecked information.

To facilitate the programming, we propose some questions that can serve as a guide:

- What would we have to modify to perform this activity in the classroom with students?
- What topics might be interesting for young people?
- What additional difficulties do we encounter in working with families on information sources?

Possible adaptations

Duration:

If we do not have much time for the workshop, we can show two sources of information on a topic where it is easy to see which is reliable and which is not. The trainer can look for a topic that they know well and where it is easy for them to distinguish errors. A topic specific to the country where the workshop is being held is a good example of a topic where we can expect people to have previous knowledge.

4.4 The use of electronic devices and screens

How much time do we spend in front of screens?

One of the concerns among families is determining how much time is healthy for children and teenagers to spend using electronic devices such as tablet computers or cell phones. In part 1 we will search for information on this topic and collectively respond to this question with an informed decision. In part 2 we will review what decisions we have made as adults on the same subject and which of these decisions we might reconsider to become positive references for children and teens.

Part I. Presentation of Model Activity

Step 1. General introductory activities

What activities did you enjoy most as a child? We can start by introducing ourselves and talking about our favourite activity in childhood and teenage years and at the end we can see if there are substantial differences either by country or by different ages.

Step 2. Introduction to a session/ theme, describing what will occur during it

To introduce the topic we ask if they think that children and young people today engage in the same kind of activities, in the hope that the topic of screen time will come up. Then we ask for opinions on how much screen time is appropriate for different age groups. To make

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

this part more dynamic, once the different opinions are given, there will be an exercise in which each participants will estimate by age group how much time they should spend using screens. Finally we will show WHO data and see which participants were closer to the proposals of the WHO guidelines:

Guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 years of age:

https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/311664

More information:

https://www.who.int/news/item/24-04-2019-to-grow-up-healthy-children-need-to-sit-less-and-play-more

The workshop will find positive solutions to limit the use of electronic devices and strategies to facilitate these alternatives.

Step 3. Experiencing a guided lesson/activity

We will start the activity with a quick brainstorming on how we can limit the use of the screens, and it is hoped that in a natural way two main approaches will be identified - one that seeks to forbid or limit the use of devices and the other that looks for alternative activities to the use of the screens. In general, positive education is more effective than imposing restrictions. In this workshop we will try to explore how to look for alternatives, although we understand that placing limits on screen time is also important.

Now it's time to think of alternatives. Without changing anything, on the same blackboard as before, each person proposes alternative activities to screen time for young people. As well as sport and physical activities, which are a significant contrast to screen time, we ask them to name activities that can be done inside the house. They should be inspired by what they did in their childhood.

Then, we produce a table with two or more columns. In one, we put screen-based activities and in the other, alternatives to screen-based activities. We gather people in small groups and ask them to write on post-it notes, the characteristics that the screen-based activities have that might make them more attractive than the other activities. We then ask for characteristics of the alternative activities that we could highlight to make them more attractive.

We propose the idea of a corner without screens. A corner without screens is a space in the house or in the classroom that aims to facilitate and motivate alternative activities. We show pictures of such corners for inspiration. Each group chooses an activity and designs a corner without screens: how should it look? what materials could be used? how it could be made accessible? etc. We understand that a corner without screens is a very open concept that allows both the trainers and the people who carry out the workshop to explore

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

in a creative way and decide for themselves what they want it to be and what they think it needs to contain. We believe this creative freedom is a positive aspect of the activity. In case of difficulty, in the section on possible adaptations there is a more specific example to guide groups in the process of creating their own concept of a screen-free corner.

Part II. Analysis of the process

So far, the process has been designed to begin engaging with the subject of reliable information sources prior to the participants being made aware of the issues we will be addressing in the next section.The exercise of discussing how many hours should be spent in front of a screen at different ages is a relaxed and experiential way of introducing the concept of the difference between an opinion and an informed decision.

In this part we use different critical thinking tools to facilitate and organise further discussion. Brainstorming is a very good tool as a first approach to a problem and allows us to ensure that everyone contributes. Following on from that, the information will be presented in lists which will allow us to see more easily the different characteristics of the activities as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Another aspect that we will take advantage of when working on lists is that it will be easier for us to compare the different activities and will help us see what we need in our screen-free corner.

The final part of the process, where participants design a screen-free corner in small groups, helps to consolidate the information presented in the workshop in an experiential way and allows identification of the potential benefits and challenges of a screen-free corner.

Part III. Planning for implementation

First, we will consider the role that we as educators play in regards to the amount of time children and young people spend in front of a screen. How should we take it into account when scheduling activities and tasks?

Finally, the entire group will discuss whether they see the possibility of working with families and students in the screen-free corner, how we should communicate with families, and what activities educators can use in the classroom or with families to implement this alternative strategy.

Possible adaptations

Reduced Duration:

We can present the problem of the excessive use of screens directly, citing specific studies from the start, rather than using an exercise to elicit personal opinions.

We present as a solution the idea of looking for positive alternatives.

Then the participants choose an activity suitable for their screen-free corner and we discuss what we would need to design it.

To help the search for alternatives

We can give an example of an activity that is easy to do, such as a painting corner.

Example of screen-free corner: Painting corner	
Activity	Painting
Material	Table, paints, brushes, colours, various papers or even canvases.
Place	The chosen place has to have good natural light and be spacious enough to work.
Inspiration	For inspiration we can leave in the art books, artists books, colouring books, chromatic circle.
Decoration	Print a few paintings by painters that we like and choose a space in the corner where we can place the different drawings produced.

This is an example of the way that the workshop trainer may adapt their approach depending on the interests and knowledge of the group they will be working with. Then we ask them to create their lists and design a screen-free corner for another easy activity, such as a reading corner. If we see that they are still having difficulties with the activity we can have more examples and more activities proposed by the trainer to continue practicing: music corner, project tree, science table, sewing workshop, recycling workshop, puzzles, etc.

The final objective would be the same, to design a screen-free corner encorporating an activity that motivates and interests the participants, but with a more guided look at practical examples that would help them to design their own .

References

Teaching about confirmation bias: https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/standing-democracy/challenge-confirmation-bias

Safe and harmful products: https://www.fda.gov/

https://www.chemicalsafetyfacts.org/

The carcinogenic project http://cpdb.thomas-slone.org/

https://web.archive.org/web/20130216192905/http://www.toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/

Halth and environment impacto of products:
https://web.archive.org/web/20130213210059/http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/enviro.html

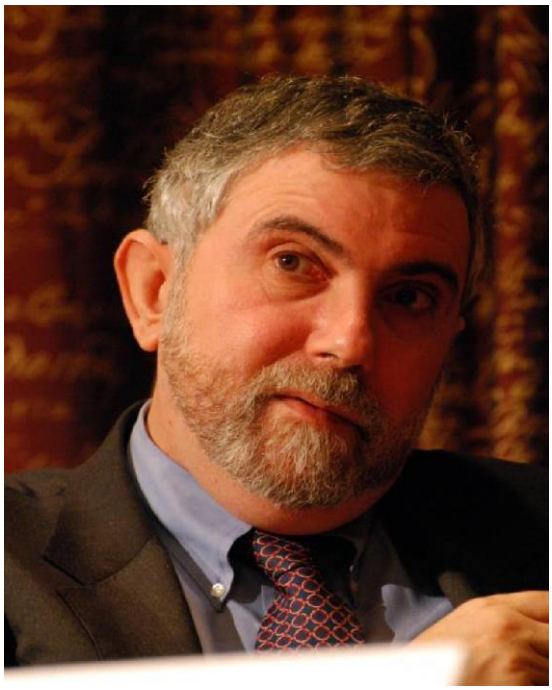
Chemophobia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chemophobia
Use of screens

Hamilton K, Spinks T, White KM, Kavanagh DJ, Walsh AM. A psychosocial analysis of parents' decisions for limiting their young child's screen time: An examination of attitudes, social norms and roles, and control perceptions. Br J Health Psychol 2016;21(2):285–301.

Reid Chassiakos, Y. (Linda), Radesky, J., Christakis, D., Moreno, M. A., & Cross, C. (2016). *Children and Adolescents and Digital Media. Pediatrics, 138(5), e20162593.* doi:10.1542/peds.2016-2593

Introductory Game: Who should you ask first?

We all rely on our instincts when making judgements in regards to another persons reliability. We want to be able help individuals in the development of good judgement when it comes to receiving messages where we do not see the facial expressions of the people who are communicating information with us.



The trainer shows pictures of two different people on the screen and proposes a situation where participants need to decide on the most reliable person to ask a specific question to. The trainer then asks participants to vote by a show of hands which of the faces they trust most on each issue. Some of the people in the pictures will be recognized experts, others will be anonymous faces, and still others will be familiar people. Some of the questions that can be asked:

- Where is the nearest bus stop?
- How long will the next economic crisis last?
- Is chemotherapy the best option for treating a brain tumor?
- When will humans ever set foot on Mars?
- Where is the home appliance section?
- What was the most popular song on Spotify in 2019?
- What is the best way to make fajitas?
- What was the most listened to song in 1969?
- Is '*Bisphenol A'* bad for your health?
- Where is the playground in this town?

At the end of the game, trainees are invited to comment on what they may have found interesting. The trainer brings his or her own conclusion:

- Our instincts may be right: Our assumptions may, for simple matters, help us to make quick decisions without much effort, since we cannot check the credentials of every person we ask a question to on the street.
- But they are often wrong: Prejudices and biases mean that our assumptions are often wrong.It is important that we should not rely soley on them.
- When we receive a message in digital or paper format, we do not see the face of the sender. However, there are many details that can help us to discriminate which sources of information are more reliable than others.

Source of the images
Paul Krugman: Prolineserver, GFDL 1.2 <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/old-licenses/fdl-1.2.html>, via Wikimedia Commons

Rita Levi-Montalcini: By Presidenza della Repubblica, Attribution, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11892465

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union