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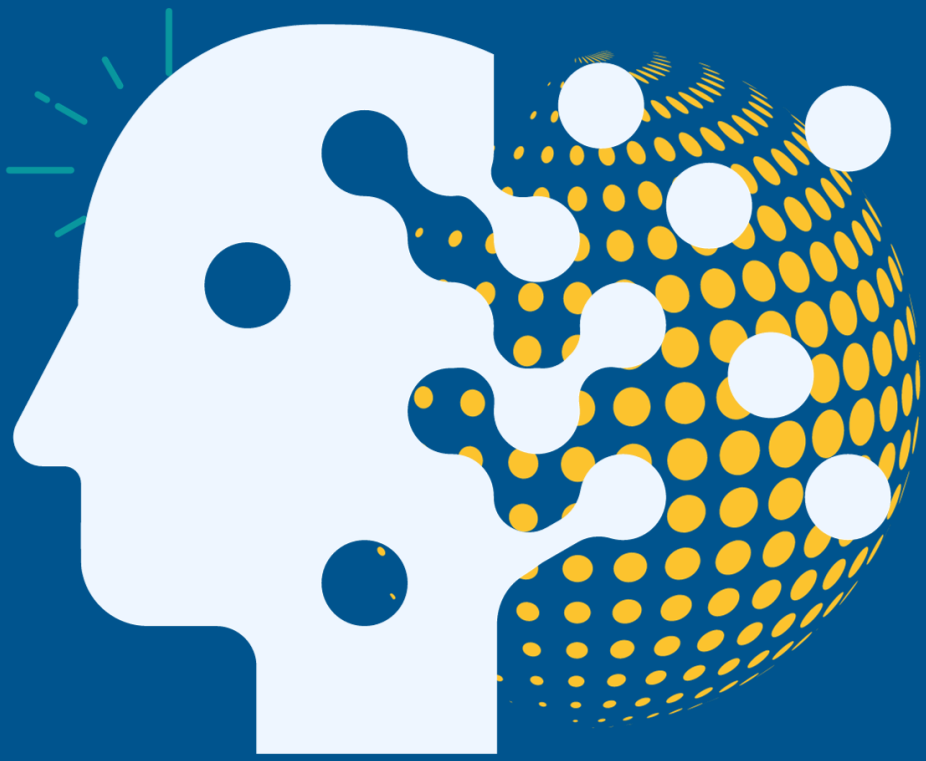

USING DEBATE METHODOLOGIES FOR MEDIA INFORMATION AND LITERACY EDUCATION

Co-funded by the European Union

idea

IDEBATE Press

Empowering Minds

Using Debate Methodologies for Media Information and Literacy Education

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International Debate Education Association

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Introduction

Welcome to this comprehensive manual designed for educators, youth workers, and all who want to develop media literacy working with high school students. This guide will equip you with the tools and methodologies needed to foster a more informed, critical, and empowered classroom or educational setting.

How to Use This Manual

While the manual is designed for a linear reading experience, it is modular enough to jump between sections based on your needs. If you're new to the field, we recommend starting from the beginning for a foundational understanding. This manual is structured to be user-friendly and modular, allowing you to navigate through various topics and methods at your own pace and according to your specific needs. Chapters include different content to cater to different experience levels of educators. Those who feel completely empowered to work with MiLE might just be interested in lesson plan or case studies. Those who wish to explore more methodology will probably engage with more chapters. All is ok. We invite you to explore, experiment and adapt this material and are looking forward to your feedback!

What is inside

THE PROBLEM Lays the groundwork by defining the challenges associated with media and information literacy (MIL) as well as political bias in educational settings.

LESSON PLAN OVERVIEW Offers a bird's eye view of different lesson plans and their objectives, serving as a roadmap for educators.

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDES These sections, such as “Empowering Students through media and Information Literacy”, "Project-Based Learning ", “Debate in the classroom” and “Online teaching” offer theoretical frameworks and teaching methodologies to help you make the most of the lesson plans.

UNBIASED TEACHER chapter addresses the complexities and responsibilities educators face when dealing with political topics and viewpoints in an educational setting. Given that the classroom is a microcosm of society, it's inevitable that varying political beliefs and opinions will arise. This chapter offers a nuanced look at the role of an educator in navigating these conversations and ensuring a balanced, impartial educational environment.

CLASSROOM MATERIAL PREPARATION Takes you through the different stages involved in preparing your teaching materials, offering a systematic approach to lesson planning for Media information and literacy education.

CASE STUDIES The last section includes case studies focusing on misinformation, which can be used as practical examples for your lesson plans.

IDEA created this manual in cooperation with partner organizations, schools, teachers and students from the Netherlands, Estonia, Slovenia and Poland and both these chapters and lesson plans they support are product of countless feedback sessions, testing, changes and positive practice examples. We hope you will enjoy using it. We trust that this manual will serve as a valuable resource in your journey towards fostering a more informed, unbiased, and critical educational environment.

For any additional information please contact us at melitaproject.eu or idebate.net.

From all of us at team MeLiTa we wish you happy Teaching!

The problem

The world we inhabit is teeming with information; given that we are beings of reason we could very well say that the world we inhabit is built of information. Some simple and immediate, such as is received through senses, yet some complex and mediated -- using abstract terms and long messages. We are no passive recipients, however. We communicate with ourselves, and we can think. The relation between a rational being and the world is active — thoughts compose an arsenal of tools to which the world around appears malleable.

The media often seem like a mundane part of human society, overlooked and taken for granted. But without media our world would be much smaller -- it would consist of what we would learn through the means of direct experience and, depending on the definition of media, accounts of friends and family. Much of our informational landscape -- and therefore the world, as it shows itself to us -- is provided by various media. It is therefore instrumental that we know how to wield this information, and what to make of it (cf. Floridi, 2011)[1]. This, broadly, is what we aim to achieve with Melita, a project by teachers and debate coaches, for teachers and debate coaches. We think that the way we teach young people media literacy can be improved. More specifically, and this will be further discussed below, we believe that media literacy is a skill; one that can be most efficiently acquired with practice and active learning.

[1] Floridi, L. (2011). The Philosophy of Information [Book]. Elsevier Scopus. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199232383.001.0001

The difficulty with media literacy

Media literacy is currently a popular topic; many parts of the world and global society have recognized how important it is, especially in the aftermath of infamous examples of manipulation and misuse, such as the Cambridge Analytica scandal, where algorithms were used as a tool for mass manipulation. Yet this has proven to be a difficult task that does not always yield satisfactory results. There are, in my view, three broad reasons behind this difficulty:

I. Media literacy appears illusory, simpler than it actually is. On surface level it seems as though it mostly concerns the actual *media* of information; that what we must understand is how *the media* (which usually means a certain combination of journalist institutions and social networks) works, and that, armed with this knowledge, we will be able to safely navigate the informational landscape. This simplicity is precarious (*cf. Jones-Jang, Mortensen & Liu,2021)*[2]; media literacy does not only concern the actual media, but rather generally the way we interact with information we receive. This means that teaching media literacy impacts students on a more fundamental level than simply passing over knowledge about how *the media* works: we are teaching them about information and epistemology, which includes

[2] Jones-Jang, S. M., Mortensen, T., & Liu, J. (2021). Does Media Literacy Help Identification of Fake News? Information Literacy Helps, but Other Literacies Don't [Journal Article]. *The American Behavioral Scientist (Beverly Hills)*, *65*(2), 371–388. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219869406

various fields, for example (but not limited to): philosophy, sociology, media management etc. It is in fact a very interdisciplinary endeavor.

II. This is further made harder by there not being a simple, clear, and self-evident way of measuring media literacy (once again I can recommend *Jones-Jang, Mortensen & Liu,202)*. Academia, of course, is able to formulate qualitative and quantitative standards which can define media literacy, but these are not always easily implementable in practice. More importantly, however, it is hard to apply these standards to oneself: many people are firm in their belief that they *in fact are* media-literate. While I cannot support this thesis with data, I might even posit that people *we generally take to be media-illiterate seem more confident in their media literacy than other people*. This is if you will, a feature, not a bug. Therefore, teaching media literacy must include teaching self-criticism, questioning of one's beliefs.

III. Finally -- and this is drawing from the points -- media literacy is crucially a skill. Theoretical knowledge about *the media* is far from useless. However, if we instill purely theoretical knowledge, we *rely on the students* to be able to put this knowledge to use. We can make learning more efficient by making it active. More on this later, but the basic premise of Melita, to put it shortly, is to provide teachers with different ways to teach media literacy *actively*, with the most general goal being simply that we should not only teach about media literacy, but also ensure our students end up using the skills we would like them to.

The opportunity of active learning

We are firm believers in active learning. What exact tools we use -- and why -- is described in subsequent chapters, here I shall propose two ways of thinking about active learning:

I. Most teachers are acquainted with Bloom's taxonomy, which orders knowledge in the following fashion: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and finally creating. Active learning as an approach is not simply focusing more on the final three (though we think they should play a larger part in the learning process anyhow), but rather that, as much as it is possible, *all types of knowledge should be produced together*. What does this mean? Learning is more efficient if knowledge to be recalled, understood, and applied is already impaired through analysis, evaluation and, by far the most important, independent creation. There are many different methods of active learning, which serve many different purposes, the most comprehensive, however, is debate in the classroom (or even competitive debate). There are various reasons behind this, which are going to be explored in a specific chapter, but it shall here suffice to say that debate unites most aspects of active learning in one exercise:

   A. The students must independently prepare for a debate topic (which should reflect current problems and questions);
   B. They are forced to defend their arguments and criticize other students' arguments which forces them to consider the quality of information they are receiving;
   C. This therefore includes all kinds of abilities: reading, analyzing, understanding, comparing, communicating, etc.

II. Besides its direct benefits as a teaching tool, active learning also contributes to the quality of the teaching experience in one other way: it takes students seriously and treats them as independent beings able to think for themselves. This can sometimes come as a shock to students usually used to a mostly frontal approach in which they are mostly forced to reproduce knowledge; but it always gives them

additional motivation to cooperate. There are two specific reasons why we especially appreciate this about active learning:

A. We are teaching students media literacy *so they can be active citizens*, able of participating in their communities and thinking critically and independently -- therefore we should teach them to be critical and independent *and not rely on them to magically put what we write on the whiteboard to practice*. To put it otherwise, we do not only want to teach them *how* to be an active citizen, but we also want to make them *want to participate*.
B. It may often occur -- especially for issues of different minorities -- that students need encouragement to start thinking about problems in their community. We strongly believe that *a platform for thinking and speaking precedes actual thought*, and therefore think it is crucial that students, especially those of marginalized backgrounds, be actively included in the learning process so that they can develop their own voice.

Lesson plan overview

In this chapter, we will look at the main topic areas covered by the lesson plans available at melitaproject.eu[3]. This will serve as a sort of an introduction to the content that you will be teaching. Note that lesson plans contain their own theoretical sections that describe in detail what you are teaching in that lesson plan. The goal of this chapter is to show you what is envisioned in our concept of media literacy education, and the following chapters in this manual will help you in any methodological support you might need to use the lesson plans. Enjoy!

What is media?

The medium is, in a strict sense, the material foundation in which something takes place. Sound is essentially vibration of some substance — most often air. In this case, air is literally the *medium* through which sound is conducted. When we talk about communication and human society, the *medium* similarly means what communication is conducted through: the sound of speech, the gestures of hand signs, the letters on paper. Though all communication is important and warrants examination, some forms of communication are more important, because they wield more power and address a wider number of people — the most ancient example would be that of a god-king, who speaks from a temple to their people. The modern usage of the word *media* stems from the plural version of *medium*: when we say media, we usually mean means of mass communications, like the newspapers, television, internet, etc.

[3] https://melitaproject.eu/

McLuhan very famously said that "*the media is the message*." What does this mean? One would assume that to understand mass communication, one ought to understand its content. And, to an extent, this is true. You will find many lesson plans *about* certain topics that are of paramount importance and that students need to be familiarized with. However, as McLuhan notes, the media through which a communication is emitted, or uttered, matters just as much — if not perhaps even more. This might seem to correspond with the old divide between the form and the matter, and such a comparison would not be wrong. But what determines "*the media*"? This might seem abstract, but we will see that it is very tangible. Let us list some examples of how the medium might determine the message:

1) In what way is information presented? On TikTok and other byte size media, information is extremely condensed. You can only ever present the most simplified arguments and ideas, which might "dumb down" any discussion and drown out nuances in the noise of the discussion.
2) Who can contribute the information? Traditional media have a high buy-in. If you want to, say, publish a newspaper or run a TV station, you need significant financial and organizational capital. That means that not just anyone can decide to publish and broadcast information. It is, for instance, much easier for a rich person to own a newspaper agency than it is for a labor union (though labor unions have bound together throughout history to publish workers' newspapers). Modern media are — at least on paper — much more democratic, as they open up the possibility to communicate on a mass scale to a lot more people. Pretty much anyone with access to the internet can become *the media* nowadays. Or can they? Social media with their algorithms make it so that you still need a lot of capital — and know

how — to actually gain the ability to address the public. Many lesson plans deal precisely with this question.

3) How is information presented? We usually say that a picture contains a thousand words — seemingly equating them. But reading a report on war casualties and seeing a graphic picture or devastated skyline are two vastly different experiences that change the way we think, and more importantly, empathize with people in some situations. Same information — at least in some abstract way, it is hardly the same — can be presented in many ways, be it through radio, newspaper, or an internet meme. You will find a lot of lesson plans that deal with the different technical media, so your students can learn to appreciate these differences.

We have prepared many lesson plans, which will help you and your students explore the world of media and mass communications. It is important to remember that mass communications always assume a sort of power imbalance between the reader and the publisher: if anything, your message to the students should be beware!

What is media literacy?

Media literacy has become an oft repeated buzzword. But what does it even mean? The most common-sense definition can simply say that media literacy means the ability to consume media competently and independently. Competently and independently in this case means to be able to understand information, not only at face value, but also in the context of mass media: who is producing this information, how are they broadcasting it to me, what are their interests, what should I make of this. Essentially, media literacy is very akin to critical thinking.

The best way to achieve media literacy — in our opinion, that is — is to get to know media and learn about how media works in practice. We are proponents of active learning. What we mean by this is quite simple: if we want students to understand how media works and where information they consume comes from, we should show them how it works. We can make it fun — and even more entertaining — if we let them actively participate by seeing and trying first-hand what it is like to be a journalist.

We live in an ever-changing world. The media — literally — changes all the time. It is hard for consumers of media to keep up with the mass media, and they are already in a disadvantaged position. Even though we can be (and should be) highly critical of the term media literacy itself (and of putting the responsibility for quality media on the shoulders of the individual), we should make sure that our students know how to consume media in an active and critical way, rather than just passive reception of information and manipulation.

What is active learning?

Most of the lesson plans include active learning. As said before, it is important to make sure students get a firsthand experience of what they are learning. This is so because we are literally trying to teach them skills — if we resort to theory alone, we depend on them to put it into practice.

Active learning has the following benefits that differentiate it from other forms of learning:

- students actually practice some skill instead of knowing about it;
- gives students a voice — very often we do not even begin to develop opinions before having some platform, which is why it is important to offer our students one, this makes it far likelier that they shall become active citizens when they are older;

- It makes lessons more varied and thus motivates the students to be more present.

You will find that most lesson plans explicitly tell you how to organize an activity. In our experience, teachers are often nervous about deviating from lesson plans, especially if they are not familiar with an activity. We want to reassure you: you can take lesson plans and adjust them to your needs. The point of active learning is that students are actively thinking, discussing, writing, creating, imagining, etc. That means that, even if you deviate from a lesson plan, you can still have a very productive session. In the beginning, you might want to stick more closely to them, but eventually (or from the very beginning) you can use them as ideas and guidelines that you adjust for your level of students.

If some lesson plan contains an idea that you like but is in the present version unsuitable for your classroom for any reason, you can easily adjust it. Your guiding principle should be students ought to be active.

How to use the lesson plans

The project platform offers several filters you can use to narrow down your search for the lesson plan most closely aligned with the needs of your class.

You will notice that we have prepared many lesson plans that you can access. These include:

1) theoretical lesson plans: while most lesson plans contain at least *some* activities, some are more theoretical than others. These are good ways to cover the basics in the event your students lack this or that theoretical knowledge.
2) debate lesson plans: we think media literacy goes hand in hand with critical thinking and debate, because debate invites students to

critically examine real life arguments and communicate their thoughts clearly. You have lesson plans for any level, from total beginners who must learn how to make an argument to organizing actual public debates for the whole school. The way you can use debate lessons is that they propose a rough format for how a classroom debate can go. This format is not set in stone, you can adapt it to your use. Each debate lesson plan includes some pre-made arguments that you can use — they are meant as a help to you, the teacher, students should ideally come up with their own arguments, but if they struggle, you can use these as suggestions.

3) games: a lot of our lesson plans are partially gamified. This makes them more fun, while still retaining the learning dimension of it and introduces an element of competition, which makes students more motivated to achieve the goals set. We suggest you use these in between more intense sessions.
4) journalism practice: we have designed many lesson plans to focus on what it is to be a journalist and how journalists operate, how does one write an article, what does an editor do, how to read articles and fact check them, etc.
5) new media practice: we have tried to incorporate as many of the new media into our lesson plans as possible. It is possible your students will teach you about this as much as you will teach them, but do not let that deter you.

You do not need to follow the lesson plans in order. We propose you select what you want to do on your own based on what you think your students would benefit from most. The lesson plans are designed in a way where you

can synergize them, so you might want to plan your activities based on how much time you have got and what you plan to teach.

Melita lesson plan

For your reference, we are providing the full list of available lesson plans, sorted into thematic groups, below:

Argumentation

- Basic argument structure
- Advanced argumentation
- Media literacy balloon
- Refuting arguments
- Logical fallacies in arguments

Debates

- Debate about TV - We would introduce ethnic and gender quotas for film and television programs
- Debate about social media - We believe that social media has done more harm than good
- Debate about social media - We regret social media being the primary source of news
- Debate about podcasts - We regret the popularity of podcasts
- Debate about news piracy - We believe that it is legitimate to pirate news
- Debate about media streaming - We regret the rise of online streaming platforms
- Debate about media ownership - We prefer publicly owned media to privately owned media companies
- Debate about media funding - We prefer media funding models that rely primarily on advertising to models that rely primarily on subscriptions

- Debate about journalism - We regret the rise of citizen journalism
- Debate about academic piracy - We believe that it is legitimate to pirate academic articles
- Motion analysis

Fact-checking

- How fact-checkers check facts
- Geolocation

History of fake news

- Before the printing press
- After the printing press
- Simulation game

How media make money

- Newspapers
- Online media
- Paywalls

New media

- What are new media?
- Podcasts
- Data visualization and infographics
- Multimedia
- YouTube and short-form videos
- The future

Our media environment

- Citizens of the world
- Breaking the bubble

- Fake news bluff
- Sponsored content: the theory
- Sponsored content: the game
- Deepfakes
- Statistics in the media
- Clickbait
- Clickbait bingo
- Identifying stakeholders in media
- Analyzing stakeholder biases
- Mock stakeholder debate

Projects

-
- National media landscape
- Public debate
- Red flag day
- Round table
- Wikipedia project

Reading and writing

- Media consumption: critical reading
- Media consumption: close reading
- Editor in chief
- The language of balanced reporting
- Syntax, composition, and tone
- Journalist for a day

Social media

- What social media has on you

- Meet the meme
- Master the meme

Thinking exercises

- Your life online
- Discussing controversial topics - context analysis
- Designing a political ad

Conclusion

We hope these lesson plans will help you in the classroom. The most important tip that we want to give you is that you should not be afraid of making your class active, even if you are not feeling the most confident about some topic. You can explore activities and also real-life issues together with your students.

Furthermore, you should not be afraid to adjust any of our materials to better suit your classroom. We will have succeeded if you are able to use our materials as a sort of toolkit that you can use when, and however necessary.

Empowering Students Through Media and Information Literacy (MIL)

Why should you go through all hte trouble of teaching media and information literacy? In a democratic society, the power of governance is vested in the hands of the people. This power is not merely symbolic; it is a functional aspect of democracy that allows citizens to make choices that directly impact their lives and the community at large. However, this power comes with the responsibility of making informed decisions, a task that is increasingly complicated in our information-saturated world. This is where Media and Information Literacy (MIL) comes into play as a transformative tool for empowering citizens.

MIL equips individuals with the critical thinking skills required to navigate the labyrinthine landscape of modern media. It teaches them not just to consume information but to dissect it, to look beyond the headlines, to question the source, and to understand the context. In doing so, MIL fosters a more discerning citizenry capable of making nuanced judgments about complex social issues, political policies, and public debates.

Understanding complex social issues is not a straightforward task. Issues like climate change, social inequality, and public health are multifaceted, often requiring an interdisciplinary approach to fully grasp their intricacies. MIL provides the analytical tools to dissect these issues, to understand the various narratives that surround them, and to recognize the vested interests that may be shaping these narratives. This level of understanding is crucial for

meaningful civic engagement. It allows citizens to move beyond surface-level discourse and contribute substantively to public debates.

Political policies are another area where MIL's impact is profoundly felt. Policies are often presented in a way that simplifies complex issues, sometimes reducing them to sound bites and slogans. While this may make for effective campaigning, it does a disservice to the democratic process. Citizens need to understand not just the what but also the why and the how of political policies. They need to know the implications of these policies, the ideologies that underpin them, and the trade-offs involved. MIL enables this level of understanding by teaching citizens to look beyond the rhetoric, to question the assumptions, and to seek out diverse perspectives for a more rounded view.

Public debates are the lifeblood of a democratic society. They are the forums where ideas are exchanged, opinions are formed, and consensus is built. However, the quality of these debates is only as good as the quality of information that fuels them. In an age where misinformation can spread like wildfire, the role of MIL in ensuring the integrity of public debates cannot be overstated. It teaches citizens to be vigilant consumers of information, to cross-reference facts, and to challenge falsehoods. This not only elevates the level of public discourse but also fortifies the democratic process against the corrosive influence of misinformation.

We must constantly ask ourselves how we create these critically-thinking, ethically consuming active analyses of media information. Well, the process is hard, we are not sure how it ends but we are completely certain it starts with education.

In the quest to empower citizens through Media and Information Literacy, the role of teachers and educators is pivotal. They serve as the conduits through

which the principles and practices of MIL are transmitted to the next generation. The transmission's role extends far beyond mere transmission; they are the architects of a learning environment that fosters critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and active civic participation.

Teachers and educators are often the first point of contact for students in their journey towards becoming informed citizens. They introduce students to the foundational skills of MIL, such as how to access, analyze, and evaluate information. But more importantly, they model these skills through their own practices. When a teacher critically examines a news article in class, discusses the ethical implications of a social media campaign, or encourages students to question the source of an online meme, they are not just teaching MIL skills; they are embodying them. This form of experiential learning is invaluable, as it allows students to see the practical application of MIL in real-world contexts.

The classroom itself becomes a microcosm of the democratic process under the guidance of skilled educators. Through open discussions, debates, and collaborative projects, teachers create a democratic space where students can practice the skills they have learned. They encourage students to voice their opinions, to listen to differing viewpoints, and to build consensus—skills that are essential for democratic participation. In doing so, they are preparing students for the complexities of the world outside the classroom, where the ability to engage in reasoned debate and make informed decisions is crucial.

Moreover, teachers have the unique opportunity to contextualize MIL within the broader framework of social justice and equity. They can highlight how the unequal distribution of information resources can perpetuate social inequalities and how critical media literacy can serve as a tool for social empowerment. By linking MIL to larger societal issues, teachers can instill in

their students a sense of civic responsibility, encouraging them to use their MIL skills not just for personal gain but for the betterment of society.

However, the role of teachers and educators is not without its challenges. The rapidly evolving landscape of media and technology means that they must be continuous learners themselves. Professional development in MIL is essential to keep abreast of new media forms, emerging ethical dilemmas, and the latest pedagogical approaches for teaching MIL. This commitment to lifelong learning is what sets apart effective educators, enabling them to adapt their teaching methods to meet the needs of a new generation of digital natives.

Navigating the Rapidly Evolving Media Landscape

The digital age has ushered in an unprecedented rate of change in media and technology. For teachers and educators committed to Media and Information Literacy (MIL), this means that their role is not static; it's ever evolving. The platforms that are popular today may be obsolete tomorrow, replaced by new forms of media with their own unique challenges and ethical considerations. This dynamic landscape necessitates continuous professional development for educators. Workshops, seminars, and courses in MIL become essential to keep up with new media forms, emerging ethical dilemmas, and the latest pedagogical approaches for teaching MIL. This commitment to lifelong learning is not just a professional requirement; it's a necessity for effective education in MIL.

The Challenge of Political Bias

In an era where information is often polarized along political lines, the act of educating itself can become a subject of controversy. Teachers and educators are not immune to the biases that permeate society, and these biases can inadvertently seep into the classroom. The challenge here is twofold. First, educators must be aware of their own biases and how these may influence

their teaching. Self-awareness and reflection become crucial skills in this context. Second, they must create an educational environment that is inclusive and respectful of diverse opinions. This is particularly important in MIL education, where the ability to engage with multiple perspectives is a key competency. The classroom should be a space where students feel empowered to question, debate, and form their own opinions without the fear of retribution or judgment.

The Controversial Nature of Educating in MIL

Given that MIL involves the critical examination of media, including news outlets and social platforms, the act of educating in this area can sometimes be viewed as a political act. Topics such as media bias, representation, and ethical reporting can quickly become flashpoints for controversy. Educators may find themselves walking a tightrope, striving to provide a balanced view while facing scrutiny from parents, administrators, or even the community. This places an additional burden on educators, requiring them to be not just knowledgeable in the subject matter but also skilled in the art of diplomacy. They must navigate these sensitive issues with tact, ensuring that the focus remains on equipping students with the skills to think critically and make informed decisions. We will deal with this issue in more detail in chapter „Unbiased teacher“

Unbiased teacher – Dealing with politics in the clasroom

Teaching media and information literacy holds a unique set of challenges and responsibilities that make the practice of self-reflection and the awareness of biases even more critical. In the digital age, media and information literacy is not just about understanding how to use technology or navigate the internet; it's about discerning the reliability of sources, understanding the influence of media on opinions, and recognizing the role of algorithms and data in shaping what information we consume. As an educator in this field, you are tasked with equipping students with the tools they need to critically evaluate a world that is increasingly complex and fraught with misinformation.

Firstly, media itself is inherently influenced by a range of biases: political, economic, cultural, etc. When teaching students how to analyze media messages, any unconscious biases on the part of the educator can inadvertently skew the student's understanding of what constitutes a 'neutral' or 'reliable' source. It's essential to approach this with a balanced view, exposing students to a variety of perspectives so they can form their own informed opinions.

Secondly, the critical thinking skills required for media and information literacy are often directly influenced by the teacher's approach to discussing controversial or sensitive topics. If educators do not critically reflect on their biases, they might present information in a way that discourages open dialogue or stifles opposing viewpoints. This is counterproductive to the very essence of media and information literacy, which aims to foster discernment, critical thinking, and the ability to engage in constructive debate.

Thirdly, media and information literacy is not just about consuming information but also about creating it. In teaching students how to responsibly generate content, whether it be through social media, blogs, or other platforms, educators need to be aware of how their biases could impact their guidance. For instance, stressing the importance of objectivity and corroborating information can inadvertently be undermined if the teacher's own biases seep into their teaching materials or classroom discussions.

Finally, students often model their behavior, consciously or unconsciously, based on what they observe in authoritative figures, including teachers. If they see that you, as their educator, are willing to question your assumptions and are open to multiple perspectives, they are more likely to adopt a similar approach when navigating media and information landscapes.

Given the significant impact that media and information have on public opinion and democratic processes, the stakes are high. Unchecked biases can not only limit the effectiveness of your teaching but can also perpetuate misinformation and contribute to a polarized society. Therefore, continuous self-reflection and the identification and management of biases are absolutely crucial when teaching media and information literacy.

Self-awareness

The concept of self-awareness in acknowledging one's biases is critical, not just for educators but for anyone in a position of influence or authority. Self-awareness requires a deep dive into one's psyche, attitudes, and belief systems. It's an ongoing process of asking uncomfortable questions about why you think and act the way you do. Teachers, given their role in shaping young minds, have an extra layer of responsibility to carry out this introspection. They need to examine how their own worldviews, formed by a lifetime of experiences and cultural upbringing, could influence their

interactions with students. This is especially crucial in diverse classrooms where cultural, racial, and social-economic backgrounds come into play.

The classroom is a microcosm of society, and biases—whether based on race, gender, academic ability, or other factors—can have a profound impact on students. For instance, if a teacher unconsciously favors certain students, this can manifest in various ways, such as allocation of time, level of engagement, and even grading. These biases could be based on anything from academic performance to behavioral traits or cultural affinity. Subtle hints of favoritism can affect the class dynamic and the academic and social development of the students involved. It's therefore critical for teachers to be vigilant in identifying these biases in the everyday choices they make.

Preconceived notions about certain subjects or topics can also indicate underlying biases. For example, if an educator holds stereotypical views on gender roles, this may seep into classroom discussions or the choice of examples used in teaching. These micro-moments may seem insignificant but can cumulatively shape how students perceive themselves and their place in the world.

Acknowledging biases doesn't imply a moral failing; it's a part of the human condition. The key lies in mitigating the impact of these biases. Once identified, mechanisms can be put in place to check them, from involving neutral third parties in grading to actively seeking out diverse points of view in classroom discussions. Teachers might also consider ongoing professional development that includes anti-bias training, as well as seeking feedback from students and peers.

Education is not a static field; it's a dynamic interplay between teaching and learning, influenced by a host of external and internal factors. Achieving true self-awareness is a lifelong journey but one that is essential for anyone

committed to fostering an equitable learning environment. Teachers have a pivotal role in this context, serving not just as transmitters of knowledge but as architects of a social space where the next generation learns how to think, interact, and understand the world around them.

These are some mechanisms that can help us be better self-aware teachers

Peer reviews: Having colleagues review your teaching materials, assessment rubrics, and even observe your classroom can offer an outside perspective on any biases you may not be aware of. Peer reviews can be a constructive way to gain unbiased feedback.

Student feedback: Anonymous student evaluations or surveys can provide valuable insights into how students perceive your teaching style, the classroom environment, and any perceived biases. This can be eye-opening and guide you toward areas for improvement.

Self-monitoring tools: Reflective journals, video recordings of classes, or tracking your interactions can help you be more conscious of your actions. Reviewing these materials can help you identify patterns of behavior that may indicate biases.

Diverse teaching materials: Deliberately choosing textbooks, articles, and supplemental materials that represent a diverse range of perspectives can minimize the expression of bias in the classroom. This not only enriches the educational experience but also sets a good example for students.

Co-teaching: Pairing up with another educator to share teaching responsibilities can mitigate the influence of individual biases. Each teacher can serve as a check on the other, ensuring a more balanced approach to teaching.

Reflectin on decisions and practices

Reflecting on one's decisions is an indispensable aspect of personal and professional growth, especially in the educational context. Reflection isn't just a retrospective act; it's a tool that fosters greater self-awareness and better decision-making moving forward. Educators are continually making choices that affect their students' learning experiences, sometimes without fully realizing why they make these choices. By pausing to reflect, teachers create the space needed to examine their motivations and the implications of their actions.

When you call upon a particular student in a classroom discussion, the act may seem mundane, but it is fraught with complexities. Did you choose the student because they are more vocal, and you felt they would provide a 'safe' answer? Did you avoid another student because you believed they might not have something valuable to contribute? Reflecting on these decisions helps unearth the subtle biases and assumptions that guide your actions. It's a way to bring these subconscious drivers into the light of your conscious mind, where they can be assessed and, if necessary, corrected.

Reflection also has an ethical dimension. When you reflect on why a student performed poorly on an assignment, for instance, you are essentially engaging in an act of empathy. You're moving beyond the easy, surface-level explanations—like a lack of effort—to consider a myriad of factors that could have influenced their performance. It could be a lack of understanding, personal issues, or even systemic factors like educational inequity. Reflecting in this manner allows you to approach students not as problems to be solved but as individuals with unique circumstances.

Questioning your decisions adds a further layer of rigor to the reflective process. It's one thing to acknowledge your actions; it's another to critically assess them. Questioning allows you to engage in a dialogue with yourself, challenging your preconceived notions and existing biases. This isn't an exercise in self-criticism but a constructive process aimed at self-improvement. It also cultivates a mindset of intellectual humility, acknowledging that we all have blind spots and biases that influence our actions.

Far from an admission of weakness, acknowledging that one may have biases is a sign of professional maturity. The ultimate goal is not self-flagellation but growth. Reflecting on and questioning your decisions regularly doesn't just make you more aware of your biases; it equips you with the insight needed to mitigate their impact. It leads to a more considered, empathetic, and effective teaching style, benefiting not just you but your students as well.

The act of consciously reflecting on your choices in the classroom, especially something as seemingly trivial as calling upon a student, is a multi-step process that requires time, effort, and most importantly, a willingness to be honest with yourself. Here's how you can approach it:

Pause and observe: After teaching a lesson on evaluating news sources, social media ethics, or any other media literacy topic, take a few moments to reflect on your classroom interactions. Did you encourage discussion? Who did you call on? Record these observations for later reflection.

Ask 'Why': When you selected a particular media clip or called upon specific students during a discussion on media biases, what was your rationale? Was it pedagogically motivated, or were there other factors, such as your own political beliefs or preconceptions about student participation? Did you like some of the students' attitudes better and that's why you maybe gave them

a little more space? Or did you do the opposite, afraid you might look biased provided more space to the students you disagree with?

The act of asking "Why?" in relation to your teaching choices is an introspective exercise that dives into the motivations behind your decisions. When focusing on Media and Information Literacy, this is especially important due to the subject's sensitive nature—dealing with biases in news, politics, and social media, among other topics.

Suppose you decided to show a media clip from a certain news outlet during a discussion on media biases. Asking "Why?" can unfold different layers of your decision-making process. Did you choose that clip because it serves as a clear example of a particular bias, or did you choose it because it aligns with your personal beliefs? The educational impact of such a choice can be significant. For instance, if you consistently choose clips from news outlets that align with your own political leanings, students might leave the class with a skewed understanding of media biases, reflecting your own biases rather than a balanced view.

Similarly, when calling on students during class discussions, asking "Why?" can reveal subconscious motivations. If you find that you're more likely to call on students whose viewpoints align with your own, ask yourself whether you're favoring these students to create an echo chamber that supports your views. Conversely, you might be overcompensating by giving more time to students whose opinions you disagree with, to avoid appearing biased. Both approaches can result in an unbalanced classroom dynamic and compromise the learning experience for everyone involved.

If you discover that your selections—be it media clips or student contributions—are influenced by your own biases or preconceptions, it provides an opportunity for course correction. Becoming aware of your

motivations allows you to make more balanced, informed decisions in the future, thereby creating a more equitable and educative environment.

So, routinely asking "Why?" is not just a momentary pause for thought but an essential practice for self-awareness and professional growth in teaching Media and Information Literacy. It ensures that you are not just transferring information but are truly educating—guiding students to think critically and engage thoughtfully with media and information.

Consider the impact: Your choices in teaching media literacy have long-term impacts on how students perceive and engage with media. Are you empowering all students to become critical thinkers, or are you inadvertently reinforcing societal stereotypes by favoring certain voices or perspectives? onsidering the impact of your teaching choices in Media and Information Literacy is essential, as these choices have ripple effects that extend far beyond the classroom walls. The media landscape is a pervasive and influential force in today's society, shaping public opinion, influencing behavior, and even affecting policy outcomes. Therefore, how you equip your students to navigate this complex landscape can have long-term implications on their ability to engage critically with media and, by extension, the world around them.

For instance, if you consistently give more airtime to certain perspectives or voices, be it in the teaching materials you use or the students you call upon, you're sending a subtle message about what views are valued. Over time, students may internalize these preferences as norms, potentially skewing their own media consumption habits and critical analysis skills. They might end up predominantly consuming media that aligns with those norms, thereby limiting their exposure to a diversity of perspectives.

If you tend to reinforce societal stereotypes through your choice of examples or case studies, you risk perpetuating these biases among your students. Let's say you only use examples of disinformation campaigns from non-Western countries while discussing "fake news." This could inadvertently reinforce stereotypes about the credibility of information based on geographical origin, impacting how students evaluate and engage with international news.

On the other hand, a well-balanced and thoughtfully designed Media and Information Literacy curriculum can empower students to become discerning consumers of information. If you present a variety of perspectives, challenge societal norms, and foster an inclusive environment where all voices are heard, students are more likely to develop the critical thinking skills needed to engage responsibly with media.

Identify biases: Identifying biases in your teaching materials and discussions within the context of Media and Information Literacy education requires a thoughtful and structured approach. Start by reviewing the resources you currently use. Look at the authors, the platforms they are published on, and the perspectives they represent. Are they predominantly from one political background, country, or cultural viewpoint? If so, this could be a red flag. Similarly, pay attention to the discussions that unfold in your classroom. Are they slanted toward a particular view because of the materials you've presented or the questions you've posed?

Once you've conducted this review, consider diversifying your curriculum. Look for materials that cover the same topics but from different perspectives. For example, if you're teaching a lesson on news bias, include examples from both conservative and liberal media outlets. If your course materials are predominantly Western-centric, seek out scholarly articles, documentaries, or case studies that offer non-Western perspectives on media literacy.

Also, be open to student suggestions for resources; they can bring in different viewpoints you might not have considered. Your role here is as a facilitator, guiding the students through the complex landscape of media and information while making sure that multiple perspectives are considered.

Lastly, keep abreast of current research and discussions in the field of media literacy. New viewpoints and methodologies are continually emerging, and these can provide fresh angles from which to approach your teaching.

Seek feedback: Media literacy is a continually evolving field, and it's crucial to know if you're meeting your students' needs. Use anonymous feedback forms or solicit peer reviews to gain insight into how your teaching may be perceived and where you might improve.

Corrective action: If you find that your teaching leans towards certain biases, take action to correct this. This could be as simple as incorporating various media sources in your examples or making a concerted effort to include more diverse voices in classroom discussions. Incorporate some of the previously discussed mechanisms like diverse teaching materials, third-party grading, or co-teaching to minimize biases. Especially in media literacy, employing a range of perspectives can help students understand the multifaceted nature of media and information.

Given the rapidly changing nature of media, regular self-checks are crucial. The more consistently you reflect on your teaching practices, the better equipped you'll be to adapt your methods to be more inclusive and less biased.

Corrective action is not a one-time activity but rather an ongoing process. Consistently assess the effe the role of a teacher in Media and Information Literacy education is a complex and impactful one, requiring a thoughtful approach to mitigate biases and create an inclusive learning environment.

Recognizing one's own biases is the crucial first step in this ongoing process, followed by a regular practice of self-reflection and introspection to question the motivations behind your choices. From there, you must consider the long-term impact of these choices on your students' ability to think critically and engage with media. If biases are identified, taking corrective action becomes essential. This could involve diversifying teaching materials, altering classroom dynamics, or seeking external feedback for continuous improvement.

"Recognizing my own biases was a humbling experience, but it was a necessary step in becoming a better educator. I've learned that being impartial isn't just about avoiding overt favoritism; it's about actively seeking balance in the perspectives I present to my students. Now, our classroom discussions are richer, I hope more inclusive, and I believe, more educational for all of us. I'm still a work in progress, but I'm committed to offering a classroom environment where all voices can be heard, and critical thinking is the norm, not the exception."

Sara, a high school teacher from Ljubljana, Slovenia

The commitment to this introspective and corrective process is not just an ethical imperative but also a pedagogical one. In a subject as influential as Media and Information Literacy, your actions as an educator can significantly shape how students interact with information and form opinions, affecting their civic participation and their role in society at large. Therefore, continually striving to mitigate your own biases is not only beneficial for your personal growth as an educator but is also critical for preparing your students to be informed, critical, and responsible citizens in an increasingly complex media landscape.ctiveness of your corrective steps and be willing to adapt further. The goal is continuous improvement in providing a balanced, equitable educational experience for all students. Given the critical role

Media and Information Literacy plays in shaping how individuals interact with information and form opinions, the importance of taking corrective actions to address any biases cannot be overstated.

Project-Based Learning and Debate Methodology in MIL Education

"The best response to complexity is not simplicity but clarity, and both project-based learning and debate methodology provide that clarity by equipping students with the skills to navigate the complexities of our information-rich world."

In the complex landscape of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) education, teachers and educators often find themselves at the intersection of rapidly evolving technology, political bias, and the inherently controversial nature of media topics. Navigating this intricate web of challenges requires more than just traditional pedagogical approaches; it calls for innovative methods that are both practical and intellectually rigorous. This is where the synergy of project-based learning (PBL) and debate methodology comes into focus as a comprehensive educational approach that addresses the multifaceted challenges of MIL education.

Project-based learning serves as the cornerstone for practical skill development. In a PBL environment, students are not passive recipients of information; they are active participants in their own learning journey. They engage with real-world issues that require them to apply the principles of MIL in a concrete manner. For instance, a project could involve evaluating the credibility of different news sources covering a current event. Students would

need to delve into the nuances of journalistic integrity, source reliability, and potential biases, thereby gaining a hands-on understanding of these critical MIL components. The tangible nature of these projects makes the learning experience not just theoretical but profoundly practical. It prepares students for the complexities they will inevitably face outside the educational setting, making the skills they acquire immediately applicable and deeply relevant.

On the other side of this educational synergy is debate methodology, which serves as the crucible for critical thinking and intellectual rigor. Debate is not merely an exercise in rhetorical skill; it is a structured format for the exploration of ideas, requiring participants to examine issues from multiple perspectives. In the context of MIL, debate methodology can be particularly effective in addressing the challenges of political bias and controversial topics. When students are encouraged to articulate their viewpoints, defend their positions, and critically evaluate opposing arguments, they are essentially practicing the core skills of MIL. They learn to question not just what they are told but also their own underlying assumptions and biases. This form of intellectual engagement is invaluable in fostering a nuanced understanding of complex issues, whether they be political, social, or ethical.

The confluence of project-based learning and debate methodology creates a dynamic educational environment that is both robust and flexible. PBL provides the framework for practical application, while debate offers the intellectual tools for critical analysis. Together, they form a holistic educational approach that is greater than the sum of its parts.

In the following pages we will focus on **key** aspects of PBL in context of media information and literacy education while debate methodology will be tackled in mode detailed in later chapters.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) - Methodological Guide for Teachers

"The art of teaching in a PBL environment is not just in knowing the subject matter but in mastering the methodological tools that transform information into wisdom."

Project-Based Learning (PBL) has gained significant traction as an effective pedagogical approach that fosters student engagement, critical thinking, and real-world problem-solving. However, the success of PBL largely depends on the methodological tools employed by teachers to facilitate this learning process. This chapter aims to explore the key methodological tools that teachers can use to optimize the PBL experience for their students.

The Foundation of PBL: Learning Objectives

In the realm of PBL, defining clear learning objectives is not just a preliminary step; it's the foundation upon which the entire educational experience is built. These objectives serve as the roadmap that guides both the teacher and the students through the complex landscape of PBL. They act as the anchor points that provide direction and purpose, ensuring that the learning journey is not just an aimless exploration, but a focused endeavor aimed at achieving specific educational outcomes.

Alignment with Curriculum Standards

One of the first considerations in defining learning objectives is their alignment with existing curriculum standards. Teachers must ensure that the

objectives are not isolated goals but are integrated into the broader educational framework. This alignment is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it ensures that the project contributes to the overall educational development of the students, complementing and reinforcing what they are learning in other parts of the curriculum. Secondly, it provides a basis for assessment, making it easier for teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of the PBL initiative in terms of recognized educational standards.

The SMART Criteria

When defining learning objectives, employing the SMART criteria—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound—can be highly effective.

- **Specific** - objectives should be clear and specific, outlining exactly what the students are expected to learn or achieve. Vague objectives can lead to confusion and lack of focus.
- **Measurable** - the objectives should be quantifiable, providing a means to evaluate whether they have been met. This could involve specific metrics like the completion of a project deliverable or the demonstration of a particular skill.
- **Achievable** - while it's important to challenge students, the objectives should be within the realm of what is achievable within the given timeframe and with the available resources.
- **Relevant** - the objectives should be directly relevant to the students' educational needs and interests. Relevance increases engagement and the likelihood of successful project completion.
- **Time-bound** - each objective should have a timeframe, providing a sense of urgency and focus.

Learning objectives should not be designed in a vacuum; they should be closely tied to the educational needs and interests of the students. This

relevance is crucial for student engagement. When students see the direct applicability of the project to their own lives or future careers, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged, thereby increasing the chances of a successful learning experience.

Scaffolding

In the context of Project-Based Learning (PBL), scaffolding is more than just a pedagogical technique; it's a methodological cornerstone that enables effective learning. The term "scaffolding" is borrowed from construction, where temporary structures support the building process. Similarly, in PBL, scaffolding involves providing students with temporary academic support structures that assist them in accomplishing tasks and mastering concepts they might find challenging to do on their own. **Scaffolding in PBL is not about making tasks easier; it's about making them possible. It bridges the gap between what students can do alone and what they can achieve with guidance.**

Types of Scaffolding

Scaffolding can take various forms, each serving a specific purpose in the learning process. For example, you can use:

- **Guided Questions** – use them to steer students' thinking and problem-solving processes. These questions are designed to prompt critical thinking and help students make connections between different aspects of the project.
- **Templates** - for tasks that have a specific structure or require certain steps, templates can be invaluable. They offer a framework within which students can organize their thoughts and actions, making the task more manageable.

- **Checklists** - particularly useful for complex tasks that involve multiple steps or components. A checklist provides students with a sequential guide to completing the task, ensuring that important elements are not overlooked.

The Dynamic Nature of Scaffolding

One of the key aspects of scaffolding is its dynamic nature. It is not a "set it and forget it" tool but requires ongoing adjustment. As students gain more expertise and become more comfortable with the project, the level of scaffolding can be reduced. This gradual removal of support is crucial as it allows students to take greater ownership of their learning, fostering independence and self-efficacy.

Timing and Adaptability

The effectiveness of scaffolding also depends on its timing and adaptability. Teachers need to be attuned to the needs of their students, introducing scaffolding at moments when students are struggling and gradually removing it as they gain competence. This requires a keen sense of observation and the ability to adapt the scaffolding tools to the evolving needs of the students.

The Role of Peer Scaffolding

In the realm of Project-Based Learning, the concept of scaffolding extends beyond the traditional teacher-student dynamic to include the often-underestimated power of peer scaffolding. Peer scaffolding emerges naturally in collaborative projects, where students work together to achieve common objectives. In such settings, the diversity of skills, knowledge, and perspectives among students becomes an asset rather than a hindrance. More advanced or experienced students find themselves in positions where

they can offer guidance and support to their less experienced peers. This is not a one-sided transaction; it's a mutually beneficial relationship.

The more advanced students gain the opportunity to reinforce their own understanding and skills by teaching them to others, a process that often leads to deeper comprehension. Teaching is, after all, one of the most effective forms of learning. On the other hand, struggling students receive personalized, immediate assistance from their peers, which may be less intimidating than seeking help from a teacher. This form of peer-to-peer interaction is often more relatable and can be delivered in a language and tone that are more easily understood.

Moreover, peer scaffolding contributes to a sense of community within the classroom. When students help each other, they are not just sharing knowledge; they are also building relationships. This fosters a sense of teamwork and collective responsibility for each other's learning. It creates an environment where students feel supported and valued, not just by their teacher but also by their peers. This emotional and social support can be just as crucial for learning as academic support, particularly in challenging projects that may require sustained effort and resilience.

The benefits of peer scaffolding also extend to the development of soft skills, such as communication, empathy, and leadership. When students take on the role of a 'peer teacher,' they practice how to convey complex ideas in an understandable manner, how to listen actively to questions and concerns, and how to provide constructive feedback. These are skills that will serve them well beyond the confines of the classroom, in higher education, and in the workplace.

Formative Assessment

In PBL formative assessment serves as the navigational instrument that helps both teachers and students stay on course. Unlike summative assessments, which evaluate learning outcomes at the end of an instructional period, formative assessments are ongoing and occur throughout the project. These assessments provide real-time feedback, allowing for timely adjustments and refinements to both teaching strategies and student work.

Formative assessments in PBL can take various forms, each with its unique advantages. One common method is the use of rubrics, which outline specific criteria and performance levels for different aspects of the project. Rubrics offer a structured way to evaluate student progress and can be shared with students at the outset of the project, giving them a clear understanding of expectations and goals. Teachers can use these rubrics during various stages of the project to assess student work, provide feedback, and guide improvements.

Another formative assessment tool is the student journal or reflection log. Encouraging students to regularly document their thoughts, questions, and insights related to the project can provide valuable data on their learning process. Teachers can review these journals to gauge student engagement, identify misconceptions, and assess the development of critical thinking skills.

Peer reviews also serve as an effective formative assessment strategy. Students can be asked to evaluate each other's work based on predefined criteria. This not only provides multiple perspectives on the quality of the work but also fosters a sense of collective responsibility for learning. Peer reviews can be particularly insightful because students may notice details or raise questions that the teacher might not have considered.

Interactive discussions and question-and-answer sessions during class can also serve as informal formative assessments. Teachers can pose questions that require students to apply what they've learned in the project to new situations or to make connections between different aspects of the project. The quality of the responses can offer insights into the depth of students' understanding and reveal areas where further instruction or clarification is needed.

Formative assessments are not just evaluative tools for teachers; they are also learning opportunities for students. The feedback received helps students become more aware of their learning styles, strengths, and areas for improvement. It encourages them to reflect on their learning journey, make adjustments, and take an active role in their own educational process.

Example:

Imagine a project where students are tasked with creating a comprehensive campaign to educate their community about identifying and combating fake news. Formative assessment tools could include:

Rubrics

At the beginning of the project, the teacher provides a detailed rubric outlining the criteria for evaluating different components of the campaign, such as research quality, presentation skills, and community engagement. This rubric is shared with students to set clear expectations. Halfway through the project, the teacher uses the rubric to assess the students' progress, offering constructive feedback that helps them refine their campaign strategies.

Student Journals

Students are encouraged to maintain a reflection journal where they document their weekly activities, challenges, and learnings. For instance, a student might write about how they initially struggled to distinguish between biased reporting and fake news but gained clarity through research. The teacher reviews these journals periodically to gauge student engagement and to identify any misconceptions that may need to be addressed in class.

Peer Reviews

As part of the project, students are divided into teams, each responsible for a different aspect of the campaign. At various milestones, peer reviews are conducted where teams assess each other's work based on predefined criteria. For example, one team might evaluate another team's draft of a social media post intended to educate people about fake news. The feedback from peers can offer fresh perspectives and help improve the quality of the campaign.

Interactive Discussions

During the project, the teacher organizes interactive Q&A sessions where students are asked to apply their understanding of fake news to real-world scenarios. For instance, the teacher might present a controversial news article and ask students to identify elements that could signify it as fake news. The students' responses serve as an informal formative assessment, helping the teacher understand the depth of the class's understanding and whether additional clarification is needed.

Through these various forms of formative assessment, both the teacher and students receive ongoing, actionable feedback. This allows for timely adjustments to teaching methods and project directions, ensuring that the

learning experience is as effective as possible. Moreover, the assessments serve as learning tools for the students, helping them become more self-aware and proactive in their educational journey.

Collaborative Learning Environment

The creation of a collaborative learning environment is not merely an option but a necessity for the methodology to reach its full potential. The classroom becomes a microcosm of the real world, where diverse teams work together to solve complex problems, innovate, and create. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping this environment, and their methodological choices can significantly impact the quality of collaboration and learning outcomes.

One of the first steps in fostering a collaborative learning environment is the formation of student teams. Teachers can strategically organize these teams to ensure diversity in terms of skills, knowledge levels, and perspectives. This diversity enriches the learning experience, as students are exposed to different ways of thinking and problem-solving. It also mirrors real-world work settings, where multidisciplinary teams are often the norm.

Peer-to-peer learning is another cornerstone of a collaborative learning environment. In such a setting, each student becomes both a learner and a teacher. Students learn not just from the instructor but also from each other, through discussions, peer reviews, and group activities. This form of learning is often more organic and can lead to deeper understanding, as students may be more comfortable asking questions or seeking clarification from peers.

The role of the teacher in a collaborative learning environment extends beyond that of a mere dispenser of knowledge. Teachers become facilitators who guide the learning process, mediate conflicts, and provide timely feedback. They set the tone for the classroom culture, creating a safe space

where open dialogue is encouraged, and constructive criticism is valued. This involves establishing ground rules for respectful communication and teamwork, which are essential for a productive collaborative environment.

Moreover, the collaborative setting in PBL also serves to develop essential soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution. These skills are increasingly valued in modern workplaces and are crucial for students' future success. The collaborative nature of PBL allows for real-time practice and refinement of these skills, making the learning experience more holistic and practical.

It enhances academic learning, fosters social and emotional growth, and prepares students for the complexities of the real world. By carefully crafting this environment, teachers can significantly amplify the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning, turning the classroom into a dynamic space where active learning, meaningful interactions, and personal growth coalesce into a transformative educational experience.

Interdisciplinary Integration

The concept of interdisciplinary integration serves as a catalyst for a richer, more comprehensive educational experience. Unlike traditional educational models that often compartmentalize knowledge into distinct subjects, PBL encourages a more holistic approach. It allows for the fusion of ideas, theories, and methodologies from different disciplines, providing students with a multi-faceted view of complex issues. This interdisciplinary integration is not just an added benefit but a fundamental feature that amplifies the effectiveness and relevance of PBL.

The role of the teacher in facilitating interdisciplinary integration is pivotal. One approach is to collaborate with colleagues from other disciplines to

design and implement projects that draw on multiple areas of knowledge. For example, a project on climate change could involve contributions from science teachers, social studies teachers, and even art teachers, each bringing their unique perspective to the table. Such collaborative efforts among teachers not only enrich the project itself but also model interdisciplinary teamwork for students.

Another approach is for teachers to independently design projects requiring an interdisciplinary perspective. For instance, a history teacher might design a project exploring the economic, cultural, and scientific factors contributing to a significant historical event. Students could be tasked with researching and integrating these aspects into a cohesive presentation or report. This kind of project encourages students to step out of their academic silos and see how different fields of knowledge intersect and interact.

Interdisciplinary integration also has significant cognitive benefits for students. It encourages them to think critically and make connections between seemingly disparate pieces of information. This kind of integrative thinking is highly valued in higher education and in the workplace, where complex problems often require interdisciplinary solutions. It also helps students understand the real-world relevance of their learning, as they see how different disciplines come together to address pressing issues. Interdisciplinary projects often lead to more engaging and motivating learning experiences. Students are more likely to be interested in a project that allows them to draw on different interests and strengths. For example, a student who loves both science and art might find a project that combines these disciplines particularly compelling. This increased engagement can lead to deeper learning and greater academic success.

Example:

Let's consider a high school activity focused the issue of "Fake News." In this interdisciplinary endeavor, students use strengths from English, Computer Science, and Civics classes to collaborate and create final solution. Students use English to dissect the language and rhetoric used in news articles to identify bias or misinformation. Computer Science focused students delve into algorithms that social media platforms use to curate news feeds, exploring how these algorithms can perpetuate fake news. Civics focused students investigate the impact of fake news on public opinion and democratic processes.

The teachers from these various disciplines work together to provide a well-rounded understanding of the issue. Each contributes subject-specific expertise, guiding students in their research and analysis. The culminating project could be a multi-faceted campaign aimed at educating the public about recognizing and combating fake news. This campaign could include a website with fact-checking resources coded by the Computer Science students, a series of articles or blog posts written by the English students, and community workshops organized by the Civics students to discuss the societal impact of fake news. Through this interdisciplinary approach, students gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding fake news, drawing from language arts, technology, and social studies to find viable solutions.

Reflection and Debriefing

After the completion of the project, it's crucial for teachers to facilitate a reflection and debriefing session. The reflection and debriefing process is the educational journey's closing chapter, but its impact reverberates far beyond the completion of the project. This phase allows both students and teachers

to pause and look back at the entire learning experience, evaluating its successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. It's a moment for collective and individual introspection, where the focus shifts from the product to the process, from the outcome to the journey.

Reflection is an integral part of the learning cycle, providing students with the opportunity to assess their own performance and development. It encourages them to think about what they have learned, how they have learned it, and how they can apply this knowledge in future endeavors. Teachers can facilitate this reflection by providing guiding questions or prompts that help students explore their thoughts and feelings about the project. Questions might include: "What was the most challenging aspect of this project for you?", "What skills have you developed?", or "How has this project changed your perspective on the issue at hand?"

Debriefing, often conducted as a group activity, complements individual reflection by bringing all participants together to discuss the project's overall impact and outcomes. This is an opportunity for open dialogue, where students can share their experiences, insights, and suggestions for future projects. Teachers can use this session to gather feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching methods, the clarity of the project guidelines, and the adequacy of the resources provided. It's a valuable source of information that can inform future teaching practices and PBL projects.

The benefits of reflection and debriefing extend beyond the immediate assessment of the project. They contribute to the development of metacognitive skills, enabling students to become more aware of their own learning processes and strategies. This heightened awareness is crucial for lifelong learning, as it empowers students to take control of their educational journey, making informed decisions about how they learn best.

Moreover, the act of reflecting and debriefing also serves to reinforce the learning that has taken place. When students articulate their experiences, they are essentially revisiting and consolidating their newly acquired knowledge and skills. This reinforcement aids in the retention of information and enhances the likelihood of transfer to different contexts.

Example:

Reflection:

After the project's completion, each student is given a reflection worksheet with questions such as:

- What was the most challenging part of this project for you?
- What skills do you feel you've developed through this project?
- How has this project changed your perspective on waste management and sustainability?
- What would you do differently if you were to undertake this project again?

Students spend time individually answering these questions, which not only allows them to think about their contributions but also about the broader implications of the project.

Debriefing:

The teacher then organizes a debriefing session where students are divided into small groups to discuss their reflections. Each group is asked to present:

- One key takeaway from the project
- One challenge they faced and how they overcame it
- Suggestions for improving the project in the future

After the group discussions, the class comes together for a full-class debriefing. The teacher synthesizes the key points from each group, discusses what worked well and what didn't, and talks about potential modifications for future projects.

The teacher also shares their own reflections, perhaps noting that they observed significant improvement in students' research skills but felt that more time could have been allocated for the community survey aspect.

Finally, the teacher collects feedback on the project guidelines, resources provided, and the overall PBL process. This information is invaluable for refining future projects and teaching methods.

Through this reflection and debriefing process, students gain a deeper understanding of their learning journey, becoming more aware of their strengths and areas for improvement. The teacher gains insights into the effectiveness of the project and the learning environment they've facilitated. Both parties come away with a clearer picture of what was achieved and how they can build upon it in future educational endeavors.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of Project-Based Learning is closely tied to the methodological tools employed by teachers. From defining clear learning objectives to facilitating reflection and debriefing, each tool plays a vital role in shaping the educational experience. By mastering these methodological tools, teachers can create a dynamic, engaging, and impactful PBL environment that prepares students for the complexities of the real world.

Unpacking the Fake News Phenomenon: A Practical Application of Project-Based Learning and Debate Methodology in MIL Education

"In the quest for truth, the journey is as important as the destination. Project-based learning provides the map, while debate methodology offers the compass, guiding students through the complexities of our information ecosystem."

The term "fake news" has become a ubiquitous part of our lexicon, often thrown around to discredit information or sources that one disagrees with. However, the actual phenomenon of fake news—deliberately misleading or false information disseminated through various media channels—poses a serious threat to democratic societies. This chapter aims to illustrate how the combined forces of project-based learning (PBL) and debate methodology can be effectively applied to dissect and understand the intricacies of fake news within the framework of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) education.

The Project-Based Learning Approach: Investigating Vaccine Misinformation

In a high school MIL course, students could be assigned a project that focuses on vaccine misinformation, a timely and impactful example of fake news. The project would require students to identify, analyze, and trace the origins of false claims about vaccines circulating on social media platforms. They would be tasked with evaluating the credibility of the sources, the logical fallacies employed, and the emotional triggers used to spread such misinformation.

The project would culminate in creating a digital resource, such as an infographic or a short video, aimed at debunking these myths and educating the public about the importance of vaccines. This hands-on experience allows students to apply their MIL skills in a real-world context and empowers them to contribute positively to a pressing public health issue.

Debate Methodology: The Ethics of Content Moderation

After completing the PBL project, students would engage in a structured debate on the ethical dimensions of content moderation on social media platforms. The question could be: "Should social media platforms be held responsible for removing vaccine misinformation or does this infringe upon freedom of speech?". The debate could also focus on personal autonomy and ask, “Individuals should have the right to refuse a vaccine” or consequences of our rights with questions such as “Unvaccinated people should not participate in public health care plans.”

These debates would compel students to delve into complex ethical and legal considerations, such as the balance between public safety and individual liberties. It would also require them to employ critical thinking skills to evaluate the merits and drawbacks of different viewpoints, thereby enriching their understanding of the ethical landscape surrounding fake news and content moderation.

The Synergistic Effect: Creating Informed Citizens

The seamless integration of project-based learning and debate methodology offers a holistic educational experience that is both intellectually stimulating and practically relevant. The PBL project provides students with the tools to dissect and understand the mechanics of fake news, while the debate equips them with the intellectual rigor to explore the ethical nuances of the issue.

Together, they create a comprehensive educational framework that prepares students to be discerning consumers and ethical producers of information.

In conclusion, the challenges posed by the fake news phenomenon are not insurmountable. Through the strategic application of project-based learning and debate methodology, MIL education can equip students with the practical skills and intellectual acumen they need to navigate the complexities of our digital age. This synergistic approach not only enhances the quality of MIL education but also empowers the next generation to engage with our information-rich world in a responsible and informed manner.

Debate in the classroom

As competitive debate made it into most European educational systems – at primary, secondary, and tertiary level – it became the first point of contact with debate for teachers and students alike. While many different competitive debate formats – such as the British Parliamentary, World Schools, Karl Popper – exist today, most competitive debates are conducted in a similar way: students participate in different training sessions and practice debates where they develop debating skills to successfully participate at debate tournaments. For many students, then, competitive debate is *the* debate known to them.

However, debate can be more than just a competitive extracurricular activity. In some educational systems, debate was incorporated as an educational activity that develops debating skills while also deepening the students' engagement and understanding of the subject-content. Be it formally incorporated in the educational system or included on teacher's own initiative, educational debate can be, as this chapter argues, a valuable teaching tool. Thus, this chapter outlines the benefits of educational debate and the guidelines on how to include debate in the teaching process, hopefully dispelling potential concerns along the way. It is split into three parts. Firstly, it examines what debate and debate activities are. Moving from a general definition of debate towards a definition of formal educational debate, it highlights the differences between competitive and classroom debate, providing the teachers with an idea of what they should be aiming for. Secondly, the discussion moves to the benefits of classroom debate. By outlining the benefits of debate, teachers can identify which educational outcomes can be achieved with the incorporation of debate activities. Lastly, the chapter turns to the practical guidelines for educational debates. It

focuses on three aspects – how to approach argumentation; what forms (or formats) of debate are suitable for the classroom; and what topics can be chosen for debate.

What is debate?

Many things pass for debate in our daily lives. The discussion between a teacher and a student about the necessity of handing assignments in on time, a political dispute in the parliament, and roundtable media debates are all colloquially considered debates. When one discusses formal debate, however, they have in mind "an equitably structured communication event about some topic of interest with opposing advocates alternating before a decision-making body."[1] In other words, formal debate is a deliberation on a topic under pre-agreed rules in which different sides – usually in favour and against – argue their case in front of a body that reaches decisions based on the preceding communication event.

Several structural characteristics, of both competitive and educational debate, can be identified. To begin with, debates should be equitable, meaning that both teams must have equal opportunity to present and argue their side.[2] Both teams must be subjected to the same pre-agreed set of rules, which are termed 'formats' in debate jargon. For example, teams are allocated equal amount of time, the roles of individual speakers are pre-agreed, and so on. Secondly, debates must be centred around the topic of interest ('motion' in debate jargon) in order to be more focused than ordinary conversations.[3] In competitive debating, motions usually reflect societal discussions and controversies – for example, topics can require debaters to debate what are the best ways to address climate change. Thirdly, formal debates are concluded with a decision of a decision-making body – a panel of judges.[4] In competitive debating, this decision pertains to the winner of the debate. Judges are therefore expected to be well-versed in the format rules

to make an objective decision; competitive debate does not presuppose a winner, so the judges must be swayable.

Like other forms of debate, competitive debates are about the presentation and arguing for ideas. Four conceptual processes occur in competitive debates: development, clash, extension, and perspective.[5] Debate requires ideas not to be simply stated, but also to be justified. In other words, it is not sufficient to simply state what side you support – reasons for your stance and demonstration of the reasons must be provided too. For example, when debating whether cars should be banned, it is not sufficient to simply state your position (e.g., "Cars should be banned."); the reasons why such a position was adopted must be provided as well (e.g., "Cars should be banned because they contribute to climate change."). Thus, through the means of description, demonstration, and illustration, the conceptual process of the *development of ideas* occurs in debates.[6] Moreover, as debate places ideas in opposition to each other, they *clash*.[7] Ideas are contrasted and negated, which, to hold value in debating, must be supported by reasoning and not simply stated. To illustrate, were one to negate the argument that cars should be banned because they contribute to climate change, they cannot just state they disagree (e.g., "The argument that cars should be banned because they contribute to climate change is not true.") but need to also provide reasons (e.g., "The argument that cars should be banned because they contribute to climate change does not support the motion, because one can address climate change without banning cars.") As ideas clash in debate, they must be defended too – new reasons and illustrations in their support must be presented. To defend why cars should be banned, one can argue that while climate change can be addressed without banning cars, banning cars presents a way of addressing climate change without adversely affecting the economy as, for example, reorientation of economic activity would. Therefore, one can

identify that *extension* of ideas happens in debates as well.[8] Finally, in debates ideas must be related to a *perspective* – put differently, ideas must relate to the greater questions underlying the debate topic.[9] Ideas can be equally developed, clashed, and extended; yet their weight in debate might differ. Only through perspective – the way in which ideas relate to the underlying questions of the debate – can the weight of individual ideas be determined. For example, when debating whether cans should be banned, the proposing team can take on the perspective of environmental protection; in other words, it argues that this debate should be evaluated on the grounds of environmental protection for environmental protection benefits the humanity. On the other hand, a car ban would only impact a fraction of humanity and the impacts would not be as detrimental as the potential negative impacts of climate change. Of course, the opposing team might propose a different perspective, accept the proposition's perspective, or it can just disprove the proposing team's arguments.

In what way, then, should one think about educational debate? The main difference between competitive and educational debate is in their aim and emphasis. If competitive debate aims to strengthen individuals public speaking, critical thinking, and debate competencies, then the primary aim of educational debate is to engage students with the subject matter. The difference in aims is also reflected in the emphasis – competitive debate emphasizes the skillful use of debate rules to win a debate (and often requires judges to disregard any knowledge beyond what the average citizen would know), while educational debate emphasizes the content of the debates and applying debate-related skills – such as public speaking and critical thinking – to the subject matter. This is not to say that knowledge or content do not matter in competitive debate or that format rules are not important for

educational debate. Rather, it is to highlight that the emphasis put on these two differs among competitive and educational debate.

In terms of structural characteristics, educational debate is more or less similar to competitive debate. In both, two opposing teams make opposing cases on a certain topic. Just as in competitive debate, the educational debate should happen under equitable and pre-agreed upon rules of a debate format. By the end of the debate, a decision should be reached by a decision-making body – in the classroom, this can be either the teacher or the audience of students. As mentioned above, debate should not presuppose a winner – they should be decided through the debate. For the structural characteristics between competitive and educational debates are very similar, the same conceptual processes of development, clash, extension, and perspective of ideas are expected to occur. However, as educational debate emphasizes engagement with and deeper understanding of the subject, the topics of educational debate should be the ones relevant to the subject, rather than of general interest. For example, in a literature class, students should be asked to debate a topic connected with literature. At the end of the day, the main difference between competitive and educational debate is one of emphasis, rather than structural characteristics or conceptual processes.

Benefits of classroom debates

With the definitional aspects of the chapter out of the way, it is time to turn to the benefits of debate in the classroom. The benefits of educational debate can be categorized either as transferable – skills that are applicable across different subjects – or subject-specific. This section of the chapter examines each of the two categories of benefits in turn.

Literature identifies five main transferable benefits of classroom debate:

- *Developing students' communication skills* – At the core, debate is an oracy activity; consequentially, students are expected to speak when participating in debate activities. Thus, students gain experience in having to argue for, defend, and develop their ideas orally – something they rarely experience in the classroom – leading to a self-reported improvement in their communication and presentation skills. Moreover, as debate activities require students to follow a certain structure, students learn how to express their ideas in a clearer and more structured manner.[10]

- *Teaching students how to effectively research and read* – As educational debate activities often include an element of competition; the students are motivated to research a particular topic to win the debate. Crucially, students must move beyond the basic reading comprehension, as they need to critically analyze and evaluate the texts to construct a persuasive argument. Moreover, they are incentivized to read with a specific topic or a question in mind, which makes it easier for them to compartmentalize the information they gather.[11] As not all of information is of equal importance, ability to read effectively and to determine which information is relevant and which not is key to developing students' research skills.

- *Developing students' critical thinking skills* – Critical thinking – "the active skills of applying knowledge new problems and controversies" – is fostered in debate.[12] Debate requires students to independently apply knowledge to a variety of different situations and problems, which in turn fosters their critical thinking skills. Additionally, students are encouraged to critically examine the roots of their beliefs and arguments in debate as they must present and defend them, and as they might have to defend a side they do not necessarily agree with.[13]

- *Improving students' writing* – Good debates flow like an essay. Debate, like an essay, requires students to define the problem, develop a stance towards the problem (like a thesis), and present arguments and evidence in support of their stance. Furthermore, debate argument structure is identical to argument structure in an essay – every argument requires a point, information, and explanation. Therefore, the students internalize the structure expected in an essay and, consequently, learn how to write in a clearer and more persuasive fashion.[14]

- *Increasing student engagement* – Often, teachers find students disengaged from the subject-content. Debate is one of the teaching strategies teachers can deploy to increase student engagement, as it is an imitating and problem-solving activity. To put it plainly, debate requires students to take up a stance – and, therefore, imitate societal stakeholders such as the governments, civil society, and individuals – and to resolve certain societal problems by deliberating about them. Thus, students are more likely to engage with the subject content, as the research shows that imitation and problem-solving education activities are more likely to be engaged with. Thus, debate can increase student engagement with the subject content.[15] This is not to say all students will suddenly happily engage with the content – it does not seem that they ever do – but they are nonetheless more likely to do so.

In addition to the transferable benefits outlined above, debate provides several subject-specific benefits. Contrary to the common belief, such benefits are not limited only to humanities, social science, or language classes, as even science classes can be enriched by the introduction of debate activities as they provide an opportunity to revisit scientific debates and examine the relationship between science and society. Table 1 outlines benefits for several subjects commonly offered in European schools. However, it is obviously not exhaustive in the scope of subjects that benefit from the introduction of debate activities.[16]

Subject	Benefits of classroom debate
Art	Art classes are about the learning of artistic production and its historical development. Debate can benefit the students in two ways – by discussing perspectives on art and its historical development.[17] The former encourages students to explicitly discuss and evaluate different perspectives on art. For example, rather than implicitly valuing the art's function of representation, the students can be asked to debate whether *mimesis* is the only criterion on which to evaluate art. Moreover, debate can be a useful tool for students to grasp the historical development of artistic production and artistic schools. For example, students can be asked to what extent artists' politics influenced modernist artistic works.

Civics, Politics, and Government	Often, Civics, Politics, and Government classes leave many ideas, beliefs, and assumptions unchallenged. Moreover, such classes often do not provide the students with an opportunity to critique or defend ideas on their own, rather than through textbook critiques.[18] As debate requires students' active participation, it gives them an opportunity to express their own views on certain norms, ideas, and beliefs in a structured and argumentative manner. In other words, debate provides them with an opportunity "to question and understand government policies and the social norms that guide a nation." [19]
Economics	Economics is often presented as a technical discipline – thus, debate might not seem suited for Economics classes. But debate is valuable to Economics classes in two ways.[20] First, all economic policies have certain costs, savings, and effects on human behavior. Second, real-life economic problems tie in with different economic theories that students are expected to know. In debates, students are incentivized to think about both, allowing students to quickly grasp costs and savings of policies, as well as to understand their theoretical underpinnings.

Environmental Studies	For Environmental Studies, debate can make the subject content important and meaningful by discussing the potential implications of environmental problems and ethical dilemmas surrounding them.[21] Additionally, it offers a platform for a more nuanced discussion of ideas than what students might engage with through public discussions on the topic.[22] Thus, debate offers a way for students to critically reflect on the complex environmental problems they studied.
Foreign Languages	Learning a foreign language requires more than just simple memorization of vocabulary and grammatical rules, and their application. It requires a certain fluidity in the use of the language – the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and to apply linguistic knowledge beyond the familiar scenarios. By requiring from students to think in a different language, debate allows them to grapple with that – as students are expected to react intuitively and somewhat naturally, their acquisition of relevant communicative skills is faster.[23]

Geography	Debate can be useful in geography classes for both the social and physical geography lessons.[24] For the former, debate can help illuminate various social processes caused by geographical changes – for example, it can help discuss the problems and nature of migration and demographic shifts. For the latter, debate is a good way for students to grasp the meaning and importance of fixed topographical feature for the society at-large – for example, students can be asked to debate to what extent the geographical feature influence the impact of climate change on countries.
History	As a field of interpretation and reconstruction of the past, history classes can draw a variety of benefits by incorporating debate. To begin with, historical events and processes are subject to different competing explanations. Through debate activities, students familiarize themselves with competing historiographical explanations.[25] To illustrate, students can be asked to debate the origins of World War One to evaluate the competing historiographical explanations. Furthermore, debate helps students grasp with the metanarratives that historians, explicitly or implicitly, use – for example, it can help illuminate the relationship between structural factors and individual agency.[26] Lastly, debate offers an opportunity for the students to submerge themselves into historical subjectivities – for example, by asking students to debate to what extent the French Revolution

	undid the French feudal regime, they are incentivized to consider the position in which the French peasantry found themselves.[27] In sum, debate activities enhance the students' engagement with the past.
Literature	Discussion and personal interpretation are key aspects of students' engagement with literature. However, literature classes often lack a dimension that would allow students to express themselves. Debate offers students to do so, as they can present their own interpretations and are required to think about how to justify their interpretations.[28] Moreover, debate is helpful to introduce students to discussion of stylistic approaches and meta-narratives present in literature.[29] For instance, students can be asked to debate how stylistic expression influences the literary expression.

Mathematics	Perhaps the inclusion of debate in math classes seems counterintuitive. Nonetheless, debate can provide an interesting addition to mathematics classes, especially by illuminating the historical and theoretical context of important mathematical advances and dilemmas.[30] In this way, students' understanding of subject-matter and mathematical conventions, and makes for a more engaging class. For example, students could debate whether formalism represents all mathematical theory or whether calculators should be allowed during tests.
Media Studies	In Media Studies, debate can be useful in several ways. In addition to providing a platform where media issues can be discussed (such as whether the media should be publicly owned), debate teaches students to decode media messages and evaluate sources. Debate requires students to critically examine the sources – especially the ways in which language and arguments are used. This obviously applies to media as well, with debaters being taught to recognize implicit media messaging. Moreover, debate requires students to evaluate media landscape, making it easier for students to identify how certain media positions itself and to recognize the facts from interpretation.

Philosophy	There is a strong historical link between philosophy and debate, stretching all the way to Socrates and the Socratic method. In the philosophy classroom, debate allows students to debate philosophical concepts and engage in contemporary philosophical debates. In this way students learn how to flesh out arguments and definitions – something that is useful both when it comes to the comprehension of the subject matter, as well as for the writing of philosophical essays.[31]
Sciences	Science classes and debate are among those combinations that seem unlikely at first glance. However, both science and debate are based on investigative methods; therefore, when students debate, they learn the methodology integral to science and science classes.[32] Additionally, debate is a platform where important ethical and social issues connected with science are discussed.[33] For example, students can be asked to discuss the ethics of genome editing or whether vaccinations should be mandatory.

Sociology	Most debates include a sociological component, which makes debate and sociology classes a natural combination.[34] Debating whether states should adopt a rehabilitative instead of a punitive justice system, for example, includes important sociological questions about the nature of crime and recidivism. Moreover, debate is useful for teaching students how to relate sociological theory with real-life examples and problems. For example, when students debate whether schools should be abolished, they engage with competing sociological theories – such as functionalism and Marxism – about the role of schools in society.

After the exposition of the benefits of debate in the classroom, some common objections need to be dealt with. While all these objections have some merit, the purpose is to show how teachers can address them constructively. Often, teachers object to debate on the following grounds:

- *"Debates force teachers to sacrifice other content."* Often, teachers feel like debate forces them to add new material to an already packed curriculum. This is a misconception. The point of this chapter – and classroom debate in general – is to teach subject-content through debate. For example, instead of giving a lecture on the benefits and drawbacks of state intervention in the market, students can be asked to prepare and debate the topic in an Economics class. Thus, when conducted properly, debate does not require teachers to add additional content. Rather, it provides teachers and students with an opportunity to engage with the content more actively and engagingly.

- *"Debates consume too much time."* Similarly, teachers worry that debates consume too much time – the most precious resource of education. A full debate in a World Schools or British Parliamentary format certainly takes up more than a single class, even more so when preparation is accounted for. But, as it will be elaborated upon in the remainder of the chapter, there are many debate activities that take up less time and provide a valuable addition to the classroom. Moreover, preparation activities – revising lecture notes and researching the topic – can be valuable additions to the educational process too.

- *"Debate makes a game out of serious issues."* As the novelist and former debater Sally Rooney puts it in her 2015 essay:

"Debating takes argument's essential features and reimagines them as a game. For the purposes of this game, the emotional or relational aspects of argument are superfluous, and at the end there are winners. Everyone tacitly understands that it's not a real argument." [35]

While this objection is true for many competitive debates, it does not really apply to the classroom debate. First, educational debate prioritizes the strength and value of the arguments over the technical and stylistic aspects of the debate format. In this way, topics are less of a game and more an intellectual exercise of problem-solving and critical thinking. Second, it is important to remember that classroom debate is a pedagogical tool and nothing more. Its goal is for students to master the subject content and learn valuable skills along the way. Therefore, debate should not be considered as an end, but as an educational method.

Practical guidelines for classroom debates

At this point, it is time to turn to the practical guidelines for conducting classroom debate. This part of the chapter presents guidelines for three different aspects of classroom debate. First, it introduces how teachers should approach the teaching of argumentation and refutation. The focus here lies on the basic argument structure and what students are expected to do with their arguments in debate – refutation in particular. Second, debate formats appropriate for classroom debate are presented. It is important to note that while some aim for a full debate, others include shorter debate activities. Third, the chapter turns to the ways in which teachers should approach the formulation of a topic. Overall, the aim of this part of the chapter is to make the introduction of classroom debates easier.

Argumentation and debating

Arguments are the basic building blocks of debating, for they are the way in which ideas are expressed in debates. Importantly, they are not simple assertions or statements – they must be supported by reasoning and evidence as well.[36] For example, a statement "a car ban protects the climate" is not an argument, for it provides no reasoning or evidence in support of it. Assertion, reasoning, and evidence are key components of any argument.

Therefore, any argument formats that include these components are suitable for classroom use. The PIE format, for example, is perhaps one of the more widespread argument formats. However, ARE format is useful for classroom use, as it emphasizes the three key argument components outlines above.[37] ARE stands for Assertion (also referred to as statement or thesis), Reasoning, and Evidence. Assertion is the central claim the argument makes. Reasoning refers to reasons why the statement is true. Evidence is support for the

assertion and reasoning, usually in the form of examples, empirical data, or illustrations. Following the ARE format – or any other argument format – does not guarantee that the argument will be strong. Nonetheless, it does provide a clear structure to the argument and helps avoid common pitfalls of argument construction – for example, it reminds the students of what the basic argument components are so that they do not forget them when building arguments.

Argument component	Description	Example
Assertion	The central claim of the argument.	Car ban protects the climate.
Reasoning	Reason(s) why the statement is true.	Burning of fuel in internal combustion engines produces greenhouse gases (such as CO2) and thus contributes to global warming. Therefore, banning cars helps protect the climate.
Evidence	Support for the assertion and reasoning.	The transportation sector accounts for 27% of all US greenhouse gas emissions.

For the more advanced debates, an additional layer can be introduced. Debaters should also explain why their arguments matter in terms of the perspective of the debate. This can be done simply by saying "This argument is impactful for the reason X." For example, one can argue that climate protection matters most, for it impacts everyone and helps protect the most vulnerable – people living in developing countries that will feel most consequences of climate change yet have the least means to adapt themselves. In this way, they are not only taught to think about what arguments they are making but why they are relevant to the topic at hand. In this way, argument construction is related to two conceptual processes at the core of debate – development of ideas and perspective.[38]

Refutation is an essential part of debate, not the least so for it is directly linked to the conceptual processes of the clash and extension of ideas. Through refutation, different ideas clash in debate, while it also forces speakers to defend their own arguments by extending them – for example, by providing new reasoning or evidence for why the assertions are true. How, then, should one approach refutation? A simple yet efficient way of presenting refutation to students is to explain it as a four-step process. It is composed of the following steps:[39]

- *"They say…"* – At the beginning it is important to reference the argument one is refuting. There is no need to repeat the whole argument; rather, it should be summarized in a sentence or two.

- *"But I disagree…"* – Next, one should state the reason for disagreeing with the argument. This should be stated clearly in succinctly. In a way, this is similar to the assertion of the argument, but one is stating why they disagree with a particular argument.

- *"Because…"* – Afterwards, reasons (and evidence) in support of your refutation should be provided.

- *"Therefore…"* – At the end, one must draw a conclusion that compares your refutation and the argument, showing why the refutation defeats the argument. This can be achieved by showing that your refutation is better reasoned, evidenced or of greater significance than the refuted argument.

If the basics of argumentation and refutation are explained to the students, they should be equipped with the skills necessary for the participation in classroom debate activities.

Classroom debate formats

A variety of debate activities can be utilized in the classroom. The following section aims to provide some information on the most useful ones. Some of them, like the soapbox, are shorter and intended as an introduction to the debating process or as a compliment to other teaching activities. Longer activities, predominantly different varieties of full debates, are outlined as well to make it as easy as possible to introduce them into the classroom. The following list is, of course, by no means exhaustive.[40]

- *Soapbox*:[41] The teacher should set a chair in the front of the classroom to imitate a soapbox and then choose a topic from a list of topics given to students in advance. Ask students to rotate at the mock soapbox and present arguments in favor as a topic. You can divide them into pairs or small groups to use up time more effectively. Additionally, you can encourage them to imitate politicians' style and form and set a time limit for their speeches. This activity is useful for students with little experience with debate activities as it does not impose stringent format rules on students and makes it easier for them to overcome the fear of public speaking.

- *Four Corners*:[42] Label four corners with signs: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Announce the topic and ask all students to move to a corner that best describes their opinion on the topic (there is not an option to not take a stance). Ask several students from each corner to explain why they chose their spot. You can also announce the topics in advance, ask students to think about their stance in advance, and ask them to search for evidence that supports it. The activity is useful for students with little experience, for it encourages them to think critically about why they take a certain position and how to justify them.

- *Mini Debates*:[43] These can act either as a trial run for a full debate or as an individual activity. Announce a topic to the class and split them into two groups: proposition and opposition. Let them prepare in a large group; you can also incentivize them to divide the work – e.g., after they come to general points they want to bring up, some can further develop the arguments, some can prepare refutation to the points they expect the other team to bring up, and others can search for evidence. After, let them choose the designated speakers (3-4 per side) and give each speaker up to two minutes to present an argument and refute opposing speakers' ideas. The rest of the class should take notes and should deliberate on which team they thought has won the debate. It is helpful to set some criteria students must fulfil in their speeches as well. For example, you should require speakers to use at least one piece of textual evidence (you can provide a compilation of useful readings on your own, but it is good to let students do the work on their own too) and to follow the ARE argument structure. In this way, students internalize argumentative structure and become comfortable with using textual evidence. Mini debates work best with students with intermediate experience with debating, for they rely on students losing the initial fear of public speaking and introduce them

to the demands for textual evidence, structure, and argument building expected in more advanced formats.

- *Socratic Seminar*:[44] The Socratic Seminar requires a teacher to split the students into two groups. You ask one group to sit inside the circle and the other group to sit outside. The inner group should discuss the topic first, while the outer group takes notes. After about 10-15 minutes, the groups should switch. At the end, several students (who must be designated at the beginning) provide a summary and reflections on the discussion. The activity is concluded by teacher's remarks on the topic and the evaluation of the discussion. This format is useful for deliberation on textual interpretations and debates in the field and is more appropriate for students that are comfortable working in groups and reporting in front of the class. As it lacks the competitive element, it might also be less engaging than other forms of debate activities. On the other hand, it does allow the discussion to develop further and for students to engage with the subject material.

- *Spontaneous Argumentation*:[45] After the teacher prepares a list of topics to be debated, two students are selected to speak each round. A topic is randomly allocated to them (for example, it can be drawn) and they are given a few minutes (2-5) to prepare. Affirmative speaker delivers the opening speech (1 minute). Then, the opposing speaker gets to question the affirmative speaker (1 minute) and then delivers their own speech (1 minute). After the negative speaker's speech, the affirmative speaker questions the negative speaker (1 minute). At the end, the audience is given a chance to ask questions and make comments (about 5 minutes). This is a very dynamic and exciting activity that requires students to think about the topics quickly and present their arguments based on the class material. In addition to being a good way to engage with different topics quickly, it also acts well as a confidence-building exercise as students to get to speak often. However,

teachers need to be aware that without additional guidance, depth can quickly be lost in Spontaneous Argumentation debates.

At the end of the day, teachers should consider which format fits their teaching style and debate topic best. Two aspects should be considered here. First, teachers should consider what they aim to achieve with the incorporation of debate activities. If they wish to deepen students' knowledge or flesh out their positions, longer debate formats – like the Socratic seminar – are more appropriate. On the other hand, when teachers wish to introduce a new topic or refresh students' knowledge, shorter debate activities – like spontaneous argumentation – might be more suitable. Second, teachers should consider how familiar students are with debate activities. For students that were just introduced to educational debate, shorter activities like soapbox or four-corners debates are more appropriate so that they get an opportunity to grow their skills. For students with more experience, mini debates, Socratic seminars, and spontaneous argumentation are more appropriate. Often, teachers might find themselves in a situation where a class has a mixed level of experience with debating. In that case some beginner exercises – like the four corners – and intermediate activities – like mini debates – might work best. At the end of the day, teachers have a great degree of flexibility here as there are numerous other formats of debating activities that might prove useful.

Choosing a topic

An important part of the debate process is setting up a debate topic. After all, debate topics help focus the debate – they indicate, to both debaters and the audience, what the debate will be about. For debaters, it is important to know what to research and what to argue in a debate. For the audience, the topic provides some clarity on what they are to expect from each team. In other

words, the topic represents the framework of the debate by providing the debaters and audience with the basic idea of what the debate should be about.

There are three types of debate topics – fact, value, and policy.[46] First, *fact* topics require debaters to debate whether a fact is true or not. Debaters must discuss what is, was or will be. For example, 'Plant-based diet is the most an individual can do to stop climate change' is a fact topic, as it requires students to think about whether changing to a plant-based diet *is* the most individual can do. Fact topics deal with causality ('Consumerism drives climate change'), definition ('Whistleblowing is treason'), conditions of the past ('Invention of the steam-engine is the most important event in human history') and predictions ('China will become the most powerful superpower by 2030'). Second, *value* topics invite debaters to debate about the evaluation of persons, actions, places, things, or events. Value topics offer an abstract evaluative term – such as terms of morality, ethics, aesthetics – and an object to which the term is related. 'Lying is always wrong' and 'Violent protest is sometimes justified' are examples of value topics. Third, *policy* topics concern the impacts of an individual or social action. Essentially, debaters are expected to answer the question of "What should be done?" Policy topics should specify the action or policy in question and the agent of that action. 'Whaling should be banned,' 'US should adopt universal healthcare,' or 'We, as the EU, would open borders for all refugees' are examples of policy topics.

Whatever type of topic one might choose, it is important to keep in mind the following guidelines when choosing or constructing a topic. Topics should:[47]

- *Explore an important part of the subject matter* – For topics to succeed, they should be linked to the subject matter. Topics can investigate multiple things. On the one hand, they can be used to discuss ongoing controversies – for example, whether researchers should disclose their sources of funding. In

this way, students can draw on a variety of existing materials dealing with the controversy. On the other hand, topics can simply deal with common debates or material covered in class. In philosophy class, for example, students can revisit the deontology contra utilitarianism debates. Overall, it is important for topics to explore an important part of subject matter so that the students have access to reliable materials to draw their arguments from and for the debate to effectively use the limited time available to teachers. Debate unrelated to the subject content might be fun, but it would not provide the same subject-specific educational benefits.

- *Be debatable and interesting* – Teachers should avoid setting debates about truisms ('Murder is bad') or uninteresting topics. Truisms do not allow for the debates to develop, as there is obviously a side for which the possibility of coming to "a reasonably sound conclusion" is non-existent.[48] Thus, teachers must aim to set up topics that allow for reasonable conclusions on both sides. Of course, this does not mean that teachers cannot decide to debate well-established theories or orthodoxies. That is perfectly fine, just as long as both sides can present reasonable arguments. Uninteresting topics, furthermore, present a problem for there is hard to motivate people to produce arguments on a topic they are completely disinterested in. By going for ongoing debates, important issues, or controversies, students are more likely to be able to debate the topic. Surely, not all students will always be interested; nonetheless, more will be if this recommendation is followed.

- *Have one central idea* – One of the purposes of the topic is to focus the debate. When debate is focused, there is enough time for debaters to develop important ideas and to be able to prepare themselves for the ideas of the opposing side. Thus, debates should generally focus on a single idea, to be able to achieve enough depth in argumentation. There is, however, one

exception to this – when comparative topics are set, two ideas are going to take the centre place.

- *Use simple and neutral language* – It is important that the topics not only cover the important ideas and subject matter, but that they are phrased in a comprehensible and unbiased way. This means that teachers should prioritize simplicity of language over complexity when setting up the topic and adjust it to the students' level of language comprehension. To ensure neutrality, loaded language should be avoided, for it can lead to teams holding each other to unreasonable standards or to an implicit favoring of a certain side. The simpler and the more neutral the language of the debate topic, the higher the likelihood of a good debate.

- *Stick to the topic type* – Lastly, when setting the topic, teachers should not forget the type of the topic – fact, value, policy – they want to set. They should indicate that with key words that students can use to identify the motion type – 'is,' 'was', or 'will be' for fact topics; evaluative terms (such as 'wrong,' 'evil,' 'good,' 'valuable') for value topics; and 'should' or 'would' for policy topics. Additionally, do not forget to explicitly state what is discussed in the motion. This way, confusion can be avoided.

In the end, it is good to remember that setting topics takes some time. It also takes a while for the teacher to feel confident doing it. While the guidelines outlined here should make that job easier, teachers' confidence and topic-setting skills will improve with more topics they set and more feedback they receive from students. With time, topic setting will become less stressful and more fun.

Conclusion

Educational debate, a debate conducted in the classroom with the purpose of deepening students' knowledge of the subject, is a valuable addition to the educational process. Educational debate activities allow students to develop a variety of transferable skills, such as communication, research, and critical thinking skills, which are crucial in the educational context and beyond. Moreover, as debate is an imitating and a problem-solving activity, it increases student engagement which leads to better educational outcomes in the classroom. In addition, debate provides a variety of such specific benefits. This is true for humanities and social sciences, as well as for the science and mathematics classes. In sum, introducing educational debate activities into the classroom is beneficial to the teaching process.

Incorporation of debate activities is not without its challenges. Teachers need to pay attention to three areas in particular. To begin with, they need to provide students with the basic argumentative (and refutation) skills, which allow debates to take place. If students lack those, the debates will not provide the desired outcomes. Next, teachers must choose a suitable debate format. They need to discern what they aim to achieve with the incorporation of the debate activity and evaluate what is the level of experience with debate among their students then choose an appropriate debate format. Last, the teachers need to come up with a relevant and debatable topic. Additionally, topics should follow the topic type, be set in simple and neutral language, and have one central idea. The previous pages provide teachers with tools on how to approach these challenges. Teachers should not immediately shy away from debate activities, even if their immediate implementation will not go as well as they imagined. At the end, teachers introducing a new activity will, just like the students, must trust the learning curve as well. But with time, they can be sure that the rewards can be plentiful.

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Melita - Classroom material preparation

Preparing for interactive lessons takes more work than regular lessons. That does not mean that they are actually more difficult to do - teachers often find them less draining than frontal teaching, as they usually flow more naturally, which does not only stimulate the students. However, many teachers report that they find the initial preparation to be insurmountable, usually because they are not sure *how* to do it. The purpose of this chapter is to cover all the steps that should be taken when preparing for a lesson. Note: the lesson-plans in O3 include base materials. That means that, in theory, you can take those and use them in the classroom. However, there are many reasons why you will eventually want to create your own material:

- it makes sense to use material from your local media landscape, both because this is the landscape most of your students will need to know and because it is easier to get their attention if they see the direct application/relevance of the media they analyze;
- in terms of content, you will probably (for similar reasons as above) want to make sure that the content is relevant and up to date. For example, if you analyzed a lesson-plan from 2016, for instance, the Brexit referendum might feature as a core example. While it remains interesting, and should not be forgotten, there are new, more important and relevant examples you can use.
- you might want to fine-tune the lesson-plans to your needs which might compel you to also pick your own material.

We encourage you to prepare your own material. We have summed up the steps required to do so in the so-called **CCC method**, which is summed up in **TABLE 1**. The point of this "method" is not so much to provide a set-in-stone procedure that you must follow to the point, but rather to provide a broad overview of different things to consider while planning. It is, in a way, an idealized example of a workflow for preparation of an active-learning lesson.

The CCC format

Step 1: Create

What do you want to achieve?

- learning outcomes
- skill level
- content

How will you achieve it?

- what technology is helping
- what medium will you use

Step 2: Choose

- browse your media landscape
- check your biases
- strive for diversity

Step 3: Check

- do the task yourself (so you see if it works)
- prepare the task yourself (so you will be able to help your students, know the material)

Step 1: Create

What do you want to achieve?

Before you can begin picking the materials for your lesson and preparing them, you must know what you are trying to achieve and what tools you are going to be using. There are broadly three questions you need to know the answers to:

- What learning outcomes am I trying to achieve?
- What skill level are my students?
- What content do I want them to be working with?

Learning outcomes

We encourage you to think of learning outcomes in terms of concrete skills and abilities more than broad abstract assessment — that is to say that every abstract idea must have a concrete manifestation. That will help you understand how successful you are better. Below we list a few examples of desired learning outcomes and how that ought to inform your material preparation:

I want my students to:	Therefore I will:
recognize problematic parts of news reporting.	perform an exercise where they have to recognize red flags within a text.
be able to analyze individual media, their intentions, political leanings etc.	make them analyze one media house each for homework and then have them present their work and compare it.

understand the process of journalistic work and reporting.	play “journalist for a day” where we are collectively going to create a short newspaper, writing about current events at the school.
recognize misleading visual representation of data	go over various examples of bad and misleading graphs together, identifying basic principles of visual representation of data.

The point is simple: you can change the materials you are preparing to better fit what you are trying to achieve. Instead of listing all possible circumstances that might inform your choice, we want to give you a simple principle: **when you decide what skill you want your students to practice, choose materials so that they spend the most amount of time practicing that skill**.

Student skill-level

A key to success in your classroom is knowing what your students can do. This is relevant for any approach to teaching, but it bears an even greater importance with active learning: you want to observe students actually performing the task so you can correct and adjust what they are doing. Imagine teaching them how to kick a ball: if they cannot hit it, practicing volleys is not going to help them much.

You can accommodate your students’ skill level in three ways:

- you can select exercises that you know they will be able to perform, because even though you want to push them outside their comfort zone, you do not want to push them too much, lest they will not learn;

- you can adjust exercises, tweaking them to better reflect your students' skill, again, to make sure the exercises are challenging but still a learning experience. This includes adjusting exercises for mixed abilities, so that all students get some challenge but also some familiarity;
- planning long-term, asking "what can I do so that my students will be able to do this exercise?

My students have trouble:	Therefore I will:
clearly expressing their thoughts and opinions.	hold short classroom debates on topics similar to that which we have covered so far.
recognizing problematic parts of news reporting.	plant obvious red flags and use several materials that are going to be less and less apparent as a way to practice.
working in groups.	make them analyze one media house each and then, in class, have them work together (under my guidance) on patching together the media landscape of our community.
understanding bias and political leaning in media	analyze a particular media house and - individually - analyze different stories of that house to try and

	identify what guided their reporting.

Content of the exercises

No matter what you choose, your students will work on real life examples, which means they will indirectly consume various content. This is not merely a fact - you can use it to your advantage by making sure that you pick diverse topics so that besides developing their media literacy, your students also engage with different subject areas, relevant questions, etc. Besides learning more this also makes sure they stay motivated - as long as you pick topics that are important to them (even if they do not know they are important) or interesting. You should therefore strive that they consume relevant and important content - with special focus on subject areas they would otherwise not come into contact with.

Content plan for MeLiTa class
Important topics: - upcoming local elections; - war in Ukraine; - Covid-19 pandemic; - climate crisis; Topics my students rarely engage with:

- growing instability in sub-Saharan Africa;

- retirement home quality of care;

- EU agricultural policy;

Interesting topics:

- development of video-game industry;

- British museums returning stolen artefacts;

- the rise of vegan meat substitutes.

How will you achieve it?

T stands for technology

The use of technology is very important. On the one hand, it can help facilitate class when other means are unavailable (*cf.* Covid-19 pandemic) but on the other ***it can help you achieve your goals with greater ease***. You can use technology to conduct exercises more efficiently and interactively. This can lead to your students spending more time learning the skills you want them to practice. We think the use of technology is especially important, therefore we dedicated a whole chapter to it.

What I am trying to do:	Technology will help me, because:

I am trying to have some of my students plant the red flag in the news media, while the rest look for the red flags.	I can use cloud editing platforms (e.g. Google Docs, Microsoft 365) so that the students can edit the document on the cloud - and also immediately read it. I can also make use of a projection screen in the classroom when we want to analyze a text together.
I delivered a lesson last week, and I want the students to remember and refresh before today's activity.	I can use different quiz-creation options (e.g. Kahoot) to create fun and interactive pop-quizes that can (while not being graded) serve as a fun ice-breaker and refresher before the session.
I want my students to play journalist for a day to learn about media creation.	I can have them record statements, narrate the news with the use of their own mobile phone devices and then put it together with the use of various open source software (e.g. Audacity) to create a proper radio emission. For added motivation they could play it on the school's PA system, if that is an option.
I want my students to understand the importance of jokes and internet memes for	We can make memes together using various technological options, either on mobile phones or on personal computers at home. We can simulate

the political culture of a community.	making memes in favor or against a fictional candidate.

Diversity of mediums

One thing we want you to consider is what type of content your students practice on - quite literally, on what *media*, here understood as the *technological framework*. It is important that you do not limit yourself to written media - there are many different types of media and the skills required for their analysis do not necessarily always translate easily, even if - in an abstract sense - they are the same.

Nowadays we consume content in different ways:

- we read the newspapers (either in print or digitally);
- we listen to the radio;
- we watch television;
- we follow podcasts;
- we see memes;
- we engage on social media.

They are all particular in different ways - it is important we strive for diversity:

Media type	is special because:
Newspaper	● it is arguably the clearest and most direct way of communicating information; ● it is also the oldest, most “classic” type of media;

	● there is a long process of editing that takes place; ● big newspapers can afford to have dedicated investigative journalists who only publish a couple of important articles each year; ● it has a barrier of entry.
Radio	● it takes a lot of work and attention for radio-presenting to be understandable, because listeners cannot re-read the sentence, nor do they see visual cues and props; ● most of the times a very seamless blend of music, news, and commercial messaging; ● it has a barrier of entry, smaller than running a TV station, but you still need a studio, an antenna, permits, etc.
Television	● big television stations have gigantic followings that are tuning in for prime time news; ● news reporting always accompanied by a variety of props, visual representations, statements, comments, etc. ● it has a barrier of entry.
Podcasts	● emerging type of media; ● very decentralized (as opposed to previous three categories), low barrier of entry, many podcasters amateurs;

	● usually in depth reporting on various topics, often niche, with passionate following.
Memes	● emerging type of media; ● extremely decentralized and mostly anonymous, everyone can contribute memes, which spread on various social media, message boards, etc; ● explicitly visual, usually with little written content; ● usually satirical or ironic.
Social media	● one of primary ways people engage in public discourse and also gather news; ● content is ordered with various algorithm who adapt the feed to the user; ● prevalence of echo-chambers.

Step 2: Choose

After you have clearly decided what you want to do, you ought to pick your material. How you do this is to a large extent up to you, but we have nonetheless prepared some pointers to help you along the way.

Browse your media landscape

It probably goes without saying that you will be browsing the media landscape of your community, but we still wanted to emphasize the "browse" part of it. The best way to look for materials is that once you have roughly decided a) what medium you are pursuing (e.g. radio emissions, television shows, …) and b) what content you want to focus on (e.g. upcoming local elections), you **browse the media landscape**. This means that you strive to check as many possible sources as possible, so you have as large a pool of possible candidate-materials as you can.

After you have acquainted yourself with all the options you have, you should pick the materials you will use. The choosing part is, again, largely up to you. There are, however, two general guidelines you should follow.

Check your biases

The first thing to note when picking and preparing the classroom material is your own bias. We all have different biases - and that is alright. It is unrealistic to expect total impartiality. That said, it is also important to try and be aware of them: we are often less critical of media sources that support our own worldview. You do not need to over-correct for your biases, nor do you need to avoid certain topics because you feel you are not neutral over them. What is important, however, is that you recognize where you are not neutral and check your preparation. It is, for instance, very common that teachers who

seek materials for fake news recognition intuitively find most examples in the media representing worldviews they disagree with.

Strive for diversity

Regardless of your personal biases, you should strive for diversity. If not for any other reason, it is useful because learning various skills improves when the contexts of the examples vary. You should make sure that you are covering different individual media institutions of varying sizes, political backgrounds etc. You should also make sure that you are - as said before - covering various mediums and technological approaches.

Step 3: Check

After you have chosen your material, you are almost set - almost. You only have to do two more things:

Prepare the task

Make sure you prepare the materials chosen. There are roughly four main questions you can ask yourself to make sure you are sufficiently prepared:

- will the students receive sufficient instructions;
- is the material ready to be distributed (do I know how I will be sharing it or printing it);
- is the material prepared ready to be used (if not, can it be prepared prior to the lesson);
- are all the technologies I want to be using workable (do I know how to turn devices on, do I know who to call if I cannot, do I have a back-up in case something does not work).

Do the task yourself

When you think that you have everything prepared it is useful - especially if you have not done the task before - to perform the task yourself. This can help you in several ways:

- you can see if the task is technically doable, ie. is your vision of the task realistic, or are there technological (or other barriers) that render the task unperformable. If that be the case, you can tweak it so that it performs better;
- you can see if your timing of the session makes sense - if your expectations are realistic (you as the teacher should be able to do it significantly faster than your students;

- you can see if the choice of content actually makes sense/if it pairs well with the intended skill effect.

Conclusion

We hope that - armed with the practical advice given in this chapter - you will be able to prepare your own material for your lessons. We strongly believe that you can, with this, unlock the full potential of the lesson plans we prepared as part of this project.

The final thought, with which we conclude this chapter, ought to be that you should be confident in your abilities. We are often faced with teachers who doubt themselves and are slow in taking up methods of active learning. To that we say: the perk of active learning is that students learn by being active, which means that you already achieve a lot just by promoting and facilitating this activity, even if you sometimes improvise and learn on the job. We are certain you will quickly gain experience - but until then, these practical guidelines can aid you on your path. Good luck.

Online Teaching

Thirty-odd years ago, online education – education conducted on online technological platforms – was introduced into some educational programmes. Before the covid-19 pandemic, online education was largely constrained to the margins of the educational systems across the globe; it was predominantly practiced by institutions of higher education and systems where distance learning was a necessity. During the pandemic, the importance and extent of online education rapidly increased. As countries adopted measures to prevent the spread of the virus, most education systems moved to distance teaching at the peak of the pandemic – in most Western countries, this meant that education moved online.[1]

Teachers and students, then, had to rapidly transition to a new educational environment. The transition was not always a smooth one, which is unsurprising as neither the teachers nor students had much prior experience with online education. This chapter presents guidelines of how to navigate the waters of online education for teachers. After all, educators are crucial to the success of online education – World Bank report on distance learning during the pandemic concludes that where teachers possess "high subject content knowledge, technical skills in using technology and supporting resources, and appropriate pedagogical techniques," a more successful transition to the online environment can be expected.[2] Providing teachers with guidance on how to conduct teaching online, then, is crucial to ensure that students do not lose out on their educational experience.

Thus, the chapter is split into three parts. First, the main challenges of online teaching and educational strategies to minimize them are outlined. Three challenges in particular require attention by teachers – effective use of

technology, clear setting of expectations, and student engagement. While these challenges exist in in-person teaching too, they nonetheless operate differently in the online environment; thus, they require somewhat different responses. Second, the chapter analyses how media literacy and debate can help teachers overcome the aforementioned challenges. The values of media literacy and debate as problem-solving and group activities are highlighted as particularly important. Third, the chapter considers ways in which online teaching can be combined with in-person teaching into so-called "hybrid" modes of education. After all, educational systems would benefit from a successful synthesis of the two modes of education, as this could bring about the best of online and in-person education.

Challenges of online teaching and how to address them

Most of pedagogical approaches are premised on the existence of a physical classroom where the educational process is to take place synchronously and under the teacher's guidance.[3] Therefore, when one thinks of the educational process, they usually imagine a classroom where teachers meet with their students and guide them through the educational process in real time. Rather obviously, this is not the case with online education. To begin with, online teaching occurs in a virtual, rather than physical, classroom. Moreover, teachers and students might not engage with the educational process simultaneously as it can take place either synchronously or asynchronously. Therefore, teachers also lack the knowledge and tools accessible in physical classroom – they cannot evaluate in real time how students are engaging with the educational process nor what guidance and supervision they need. Similarly, teachers cannot adjust to the students' reception of the material as easily as in the physical classroom – after all, if they do not see whether students struggle with the material or find it boring, it is much harder for teachers to adjust their materials. Because of these

differences, teachers need to adjust how they engage in the educational process when teaching online.

Online teaching faces three main challenges: effective use of technology, clear setting of expectations, and student engagement. These challenges exist outside of the online environment too. However, they operate differently in the online environment and are crucial for achieving educational outcomes in the online educational environment. These online-specific characteristics require teachers to approach these challenges somewhat differently as they would in person. Thus, the following pages provide teachers with guidelines on how to address the challenges of student engagement, clear setting of expectations, and effective use of technology when teaching online.

The following checklist, which is followed in this chapter, can be useful for teachers to prepare themselves on the transition to online teaching:

- Is the chosen technological platform appropriate? Essentially, does it allow you to use all the functions needed for your teaching; are you able to use effectively, and is it accessible for students?
- Are the expectations clearly set? Are students aware of what is expected of them? Are the expectations easily available?
- Is the subject content engaging for students? Online, students are quick to feel disengaged and bored. Are the educational activities constructed in a way that minimizes such feelings? Are there ways in which students can interact with each other and teachers?

Effective use of technology

One of the first things teachers need to consider when teaching online is what technology to use. In the online environment, the choice is even more important, for the technological platforms act as the foundation of the whole educational process – in the end, the whole teaching process is mediated through the chosen technological platform. Three separate criteria are important when making this decision – what functions does the platform offer; your familiarity with the platform; and its accessibility for students.

First, analysing the functions offered by the platforms. When doing so, teachers should prioritize different functions if they intend to conduct synchronously or asynchronously.

Asynchronous teaching: As the teaching process does not take place at the same time for all students, teachers should focus on the following features:

- Ability to upload class materials (PDFs, presentation slides, lecture videos) into a joint study space.
- Students should be able to engage with the teacher either through comments, discussion boards, or by direct message function, so that they can enquire about class material if needed.
- There should be an option for students to upload their homework and coursework so that their progress can be followed.
- Platforms: Google Classroom, Moodle, etc.

Synchronous teaching: When teaching process takes place at the same time, the teachers should focus on ensuring that the technological platform allows them to:

- Share video and audio so that they can deliver the lecture.

- Share their own screen. In that case, teachers can use lecture slides as they would in a physical classroom, making it easier for students to follow lectures.
- Virtual hand raising and/or chat option as they allow for students to ask questions during the lecture without interrupting the teaching flow.
- Create polls, which can help you check on your students' progress and to brainstorm ideas.
- Create small rooms for group work.
- Teachers also need to consider where the instructions and homework will be published, as they might require an additional platform to do so.
- Suitable platforms: Blackboard Learn, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet

Overall, teachers should opt for platforms that allow them to use the functions they need. While sharing class material (either prior to the class or through screensharing) and audio-video transmission are a must, some teachers might not need all the functions listed above.[4] That is perfectly fine; the primary purpose of the lists above is for teachers to be aware what functions might be useful and which platforms are compatible with their needs.

Secondly, teachers must be familiar with the technology they are using. Often, teachers assume students are "digital natives" – in other words, they assume that students are familiar with the information technology used.[5] Accordingly, the teachers view that students can help them with potential tech issues and that students do not require help navigating the new technology.[6] However, such a view is erroneous. Most students are unfamiliar with the videoconferencing technology and many simply lack the

essential digital skills in the first place.[7] After all, the technology used in the classroom is different to the technology that students might encounter in their free time. For example, while the use of social media and some communication platforms (like Discord) is widespread among the youth, these use very different features and require different skills than videoconferencing platforms, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, commonly used for online teaching. Hence, teachers cannot rely on students' help with tech issues or their ability to use the technology effectively.

For these reasons, *teachers must familiarize themselves with the basic tech manuals* for the technology they want to use for teaching. Videoconferencing platforms provide their own manuals on their websites and many other manuals are easily located online. By reading the manuals or watching instructional videos, teachers can acquire the basic knowledge necessary for effective online teaching. This way, they can avoid wasting time when they encounter easily solvable or preventable problems during classes. In addition, it is important to make the *resources available to students and require the students to familiarize themselves with them*. Even if students feel like they have a good grasp of the necessary technology, this is often not the case. Only when both students and teachers are familiarized with the technology – and teachers should be able to do basic troubleshooting without the help of students – both can be expected to successfully navigate the technological aspect of online teaching.

Thirdly, teachers should *consider the accessibility* of the technology for the students as well. Some platforms are quite expensive for individual acquisition – teachers, then, should opt for those options that are *friendly to institutional access*, as this drives the costs of online teaching down. Furthermore, teachers should not require students to have expensive pieces of technology to participate in class, as digital poverty might prevent students

from participating in that case. For example, recent research estimates that one in twenty children in Europe suffers from digital poverty, with the rate significantly higher in some European countries. [8] Obviously, some problems with accessibility remain regardless of teachers' actions – at the end of the day, teachers can do very little about system poverty and digital infrastructure of their country. However, they can use the technology and technological platforms which minimize the impact of technological poverty on students' involvement in the educational process.

Setting clear expectations

Online teaching can be an isolating and confusing experience for students, especially as the student-student and student-teacher interactions are more limited than in-person teaching. The fact that students often must engage with unfamiliar technology and a wholly different mode of education, further exacerbates such feelings. It is for these reasons that the setting of clear expectations is even more important in the online environment. If teachers want to avoid students' feeling lost, they must clearly express what is expected of them throughout the process of online teaching. If the expectations are not set, students might lose motivation to participate or might not know how to participate appropriately in the first place.[9]

When setting the expectations online, teachers must keep three things in mind:

The expectations should always be accessible to all students. When teaching online, teachers must be aware that students are often flooded by a barrage of messages, notifications, and emails, making it easy for the important information to slip past them. Thus, teachers must make sure that their expectations are posted somewhere that is easy to always access. This is true

for synchronous teaching too – it is better to have your expectations set in writing somewhere, not only as verbal reminders during the classes.

Students must be explicitly reminded of the expectations. Students, like everyone else, tend to forget things. Thus, it is important to remind them of what is expected of them and where they can find the expectations you set at the beginning.[10] This should be done verbally and in writing, so that the reminders reach as many people as possible.

Teachers should implicitly reward desirable behavior. Students that display behavior in line with the expectations should be implicitly rewarded.[11] This can be simply done by commending people who are regularly present at lecture or by offering positive incentives – for example, by offering bonus points if students regularly do their homework or participate in the class.

When expectations are set in that way, students are more likely to follow them. When students follow the expectations, they have an easier way to engage with the subject material and are less likely to fall behind. Furthermore, they are more likely to acquire the necessary digital skills required to participate in online education if they know what skills they need in the first place. Thus, setting clear expectations does not only improve the way in which students respond to the expectations themselves, but also how they engage with the educational materials and helps them use technology effectively. Accordingly, it should not be neglected.

Student engagement

Student engagement is crucial to any for students' educational attainment – if students do not engage with the subject content, they cannot obtain the knowledge and skills that they are supposed to. Student engagement is composed of the following three dimensions:

Behavioral dimension, which refers to students' positive responses to and participation in classroom learning activities. In other words, when students participate and display positive conduct, they are considered to display a high degree of behavioral engagement.[12]

Cognitive dimension, which refers to students' mental effort in interactions with subject content. It is indicated by the students' understanding of the subject content and deep learning.[13]

Affective (or emotive) dimension, which refers to students' emotional investment in the learning process. It is most elusive of the three dimensions but is generally characterized by the students' positive perception of the subject, and positive reactions to peers and teachers.[14]

In the online educational environment, student engagement often decreases across all three dimensions. Online teaching can often be a very isolating experience for teachers as well as students, especially as it often includes very little student-student and student-teacher interactions.

Online education often feels like working in the void. If the teaching is conducted asynchronously, one is expected to do the work, while receiving very little student-student and student-teacher interactions. In that case, people lose out on the feeling of learning community among peers and on feedback and guidance that the teacher would provide.[15] But even when teaching is conducted synchronously, the students' educational experience is not the same as in person. To begin with, they still miss out on the possibility of student-student and student-teacher interactions.[16] When students share a physical space with peers and teachers, there are several avenues of social interaction – chatting before or after classes, asking the teacher a question immediately after the class or when walking down the hallway – that do not exist in the online environment. Additionally, the effort required for

interactions is often greater in the online environment. When students are in the same classroom together, they can see each other's faces and chat without anyone putting in additional effort; in the online environment, someone needs to take a leap and turn their camera on first.

Another factor contributing to feelings of isolation is the limited ability of teachers to offer guidance to students.[17] In the online environment, it is harder for teachers to read non-verbal signs, such as feelings of boredom or discomfort when performing a task. When students keep their cameras off, one is unable to read such feelings; even if they keep the cameras on, non-verbal communication does not equally translate over video conferencing platforms.[18] This, then, leads to the fact that teachers only know about the needs of those that are vocal enough to express their needs. The quieter students, on the other hand, cannot be considered to the same degree as in an actual classroom.[19] Thus, students can often feel as if they are working into the void – they are present and often do similar amount of work as in person, but they do not receive the same amount of attention and guidance as they would otherwise.

For these reasons, students are less likely to engage with the subject content in the online environment. When students feel isolated – both from their peers and teachers – they tend to withdraw from the educational process due to the decrease in motivation.[20] This can be expressed in either (or in all) of the three dimensions – students are less likely to participate and display positive conduct towards educational activities, less likely to cognitively engage with the subject content, and hold a less positive perception of the subject. To conclude, online environment can prove an isolating experience for students, leading to a decrease in their motivation which is in turn reflected in their lower engagement with the subject content.

To maximize student engagement, then, teachers can implement the following strategies: use of real-life examples and problem-solving activities, assigning group tasks to students, using the synchronous mode of online teaching, and creating open channels of communication between the teacher and the students (see Table 1). Obviously, not all students will engage with the subject content even if all of the strategies are successfully implemented. However, the point is to increase the opportunities for students to engage by making the form and content of the subject appropriate to the online environment.

Teaching strategy	Implementation and benefits for student engagement
Real-life examples and problem-solving activities	Teachers should aim to use real-life examples and assign problem-solving activities to students, as these require students to think about existing problems and attempt to resolve them. For this reason, they are more cognitively engaging for students.[21] Thus, students are more likely to engage with the subject content, as they find it more interesting and applicable to the real world.[22] For example, rather than discussing the characteristics of the media landscape in the abstract, teachers can discuss the national media landscape and ask students to think how it could be improved.

Group tasks	With group activities, teachers can kill two birds with one stone. To begin with, group activities foster student-student interactions, thus strengthening the feeling of belonging and community. When these feelings are strong, students engage with the subject content more.[23] Furthermore, group activities encourage more students to participate, as they cannot retreat into the metaphorical 'back row' of the classroom. This is especially true for activities in small groups of three to five students, where people are more likely to speak up and participate; in small groups opinions and ideas of everyone matter. Thus, students are both more likely to speak up on their own and to encourage others to share their ideas, so that they get the best possible outcomes.[24] Overall, groups activities make students more likely to engage with subject content.

Synchronous mode of teaching	While asynchronous teaching might offer more flexibility to students, synchronous teaching tends to result in higher student engagement, as it offers a way for the teachers to monitor more closely, and address students' needs and behavior.[25] When teachers can adjust their content to students' needs, students are more likely to engage with it. Synchronous teaching, however, does not mean that all work must be done simultaneously. While that is certainly an option, teachers can also assign tasks and coursework to students and meet up only to discuss potential questions and problems that arise during the process. In this way, students can do their work when it best fits them, while still having the opportunity to discuss the tasks simultaneously.
Open channels of communication	Teachers must ensure that students can communicate freely with them in the online environment as well. When open communication channels between students and teachers exist, students feel less isolated in the online environment.[26] Thus, they are more likely to engage more with the subject. This can be done by creating a discussion board where students can ask questions and the

	teacher responds to them or by reminding students that they can send any questions via email whenever they feel so. In this way, teachers can foster the feeling of constant presence, if students need them.
Use of interactive technology (Kahoot, Quizlet, etc.)	Interactive technology like Kahoot and Quizlet can be useful for it introduces an interactive quiz component which teachers can use to revise the subject content or simply to see what the knowledge level of their students is. As it is interactive, it is more likely that students will engage with the subject content than if they just listen to a lecture or repeat after the lecturer.[27] However, it is important to remember that interactive technology is a useful addition for the online classroom. Nevertheless, it should not be the only thing students engage in. After all, students get bored of these, if used too frequently, too.

Media literacy and debate in the online teaching environment

The previous section of this chapter outlined the online teaching guidelines in general – how to efficiently use technology, set clear expectations, and

engage students. This section, then, aims to bring forward another teaching strategy for boosting student engagement online – the use of debate and media literacy activities.

Previous chapters already elaborate on how debate and media literacy activities are to be utilized in the classroom. Their adaptation for the online environment is not that different than adaptation of other teaching activities; therefore, teachers can consult the guidelines elaborate on the previous pages of how to approach debate and media literacy activities online. However, two things need to be highlighted:

1. Teachers need to ensure that the chosen technological platform offers easy ways for conducting group work (Zoom and Microsoft Teams are good in this regard). At the end of the day, debate and (most) media literacy activities are conducted in groups. Thus, teachers must be able to break students into groups as quickly as possible to avoid time loss. Additionally, voice and video transmission for all participants must be enabled so that students can participate in the debate.
2. Students must be made aware of what is expected of them beforehand. For example, students need to know what format of debate they will debate or whether they are expected to read the news articles beforehand. Otherwise, students might get flustered by a flood of instructions given to them minutes before they are expected to perform a task, not to mention that this eats up the limited classroom time.

When debate and media literacy activities are conducted online, they tend to boost student engagement for three reasons:

- *Real world problems and scenarios* – Debate and media literacy touch upon the issues pertinent to the real world, as the debate often focuses on

controversial social topics, while media literacy activities aim to explain the media landscapes in which one finds oneself. For example, one of the lessons created as part of this project leads students to the analysis of their national media landscape, appealing directly to issues they engage with. When educational activities include real world scenarios, students tend to engage with the subject content more, as they feel that their knowledge is applicable beyond the classroom.[28]

- *Problem-solving and simulation activities* – Debate always attempts to address some societal problems by simulating a wider social discussion within the simplified framework of the classroom. For example, during some debates students need to put themselves in the shoes of a particular actor (This House as X would…) or act as a government proposing a policy (This House would introduce…); in this sense, they imitate the actions of social actors to address a particular societal problem. In a similar way, many media literacy activities allow students to put themselves in the shoes of journalists or editors. **Lesson plan Red flag day**, for example, invites students to 'plant the red flag' – they must try to incorporate biased language in a news piece they are writing. When students participate in imitation and problem-solving activities, they are more cognitively engaged.[29] In this sense, debate and media literacy are, like it is argued in the *Introduction*, types of active learning – students are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process, acquiring their knowledge and skills actively, rather than passively. Thus, debate and media literacy content might make online education more interesting to students by presenting them with problem-solving and imitation activities.

- *Group work* – Debate is by default a small-group activity, as it requires students to work together to prepare on their side in the debate. **Similarly, many media literacy activities require students to work in groups or pairs –**

Designing a political ad, Conducting an interview, to name a few. This means that participation from all students is encouraged.[30]

Introducing debate and media literacy activities, then, can be one of the online teaching strategies for boosting student engagement.

Hybrid teaching

So far, the focus of the chapter was online teaching – how to effectively conduct the online teaching process, and what role can debate and media literacy activities play. The last section, however, focuses on how to effectively combine in-person and online teaching into a hybrid teaching model. While in-person teaching is more familiar to most teachers and students, there are benefits to both modes of teaching. Thus, it makes sense to investigate in what ways can the two modes be brought together.

The *hybrid* in hybrid teaching can mean a variety of things. This chapter analyses and proposes some guidelines for three types of hybrid teaching most often encountered by teachers:

i. Introduction of an online element (such as interactive technology – e.g., Kahoot and Quizzlet – or online tasks) to in-person teaching. In these cases, online teaching methods are integrated as a component of the in-person teaching process.

ii. Supplanting of in-person teaching with online activities and homework. For example, students can be asked to conduct their independent research of online media landscapes for homework or can be provided with additional online materials (like lecture videos). In such cases, online teaching methods support the in-person teaching process outside of the physical classroom.

iii. Some students participate online, while others participate in person. For example, some students might participate online due to various health (for example, shielding, tested positive for covid-19) or accessibility reasons, while the rest of the class is able to participate in person. In such instances, online teaching happens parallel to in-person teaching.

The main guidelines are the same across types of hybrid teaching. Nevertheless, which guidelines matter more and need to be emphasized varies among them, as will be highlighted. First, as emphasized before, teachers must be clear in outlining their expectations. They must explain what students are expected to do online and what in person, what supplies they need to effectively participate in the class, and/or how and when to join the class if it is conducted both online and in person. Second, teachers should consult the section on the effective use of technology, with particular emphasis on the accessibility of the chosen technological platforms. This is especially important when online activities are integrated into the classroom, as teachers want to avoid wasting time with students having to go through convoluted set-up processes or being unable to access platforms integral to the teaching process. Third, teachers should not forget that hybrid teaching is not the same as in-person teaching; essentially, they need to follow the guidelines on student engagement for online teaching. Additionally, they must make sure that they are checking students' progress online and in person – when online and in-person teaching are conducted in parallel, this is especially important. After all, the students that participate online should not be penalized for not being able to join the classroom. Overall, the online component of hybrid teaching should follow the guidelines for online teaching as well.

Hybrid teaching, then, has several benefits, as it allows teachers to:

- *Develop students' digital skills* – Often, students do not have much interaction with the different technological platforms that are used in online education. Combining online and in-person education thus allows them to develop their digital skills, while still enabling them to conduct most of their learning in-person so they can request guidance and have more space to try out different things. For example, students can learn how to navigate online platforms like Google Classroom or how to conduct online research.

- *Make their teaching process more engaging* – Sometimes, the routine of in-person education can be somewhat demotivating to the students, especially if the teaching process looks similar across different subjects. Introducing different technology, then, might prove of interest of students, especially if this takes the form of interactive technology (like Kahoot or Quizlet). Moreover, hybrid teaching can be more dynamic as it is not chained to a single mode of education. Therefore, students are less likely to see it as monotone.

- *Combine the best of both worlds* – Many challenges of online teaching are watered down when combined with in-person teaching. To illustrate, students can get real-time feedback and guidance on the effective use of technology, while teachers can better monitor students' progress. When both modes of education are combined, students can experience both the social interactions and develop necessary digital skills, as well as engage in activities conducted online. Through such an educational process, students can develop a broader skill set. Additionally, by trying out different approaches, more students might find the process that works best for them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers must pay attention to the specific challenges of online education – effective use of technology, clear setting of expectations, and student engagement – and develop strategies that allow them to overcome these challenges. To effectively use technology, teachers must evaluate what their needs are, familiarize themselves with the technology they plan to use, and must consider the accessibility of the technology to create an educational environment that minimizes the effects of digital poverty on students. Clear expectations, which should be easily accessible to students, help students navigate the online teaching environment and achieve the educational aims. Student engagement can be fostered through a variety of educational strategies – such as real-life examples and problem-solving activities, group tasks, synchronous teaching, and open channels of communication – which address the somewhat isolating and disengaging experience of online education. Clearly, the teachers cannot eliminate all the drawbacks of online education and even if the most appropriate strategies are adopted, not all students perform as well as they could. However, as this chapter highlights, teachers have to adapt their teaching strategies in the online environment to allow as many students as possible to engage with the educational process.

Moreover, debate and media literacy activities can provide a valuable addition to online education. When planning for debate and media literacy activities in the online environment, teachers must make sure to choose technological platforms that suit the needs of such activities – for example, debate activities require groupwork, so teachers should choose platforms that facilitate it – and must relay what they expect from students beforehand. Such activities tend to boost student engagement with the course material for they involve groupwork, problem-solving and simulation activities, and engage with real life problems and examples. All of these were found to

increase student engagement. Thus, debate and media literacy could provide a valuable addition to online education for they boost student engagement.

In addition, the chapter highlights the value of hybrid teaching in the classroom. Instead of thinking about online teaching and in-person teaching as a dichotomy, one can integrate many online educational activities into the in-person teaching process. While hybrid teaching can take many different forms that integrate the online educational activities to varying degrees, hybrid teaching is likely to develop students' digital skills and increase student engagement, while also combining the best elements of both modes of education – flexibility of online education and support of in-person education. For these reasons, it would be a shame to not try to not experiment with hybrid teaching.

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[28] Ping Lim, 'Engaging Learners', 20-21.

[29] Gillet-Swann, 'The Challenges', 23; Ping Lim, 'Engaging Learners', 20-21.

[30] Gillet-Swann, 'The Challenges', 23.

Case study on misinformation – Immigration and minorities

Misinformation campaigns often exploit pre-existing biases, fears, and stereotypes, presenting skewed narratives and false information to manipulate perceptions and opinions. Here are some examples of specific topics that are often used in radicalization and misinformation campaigns targeting young people in Europe, especially in relation to migrants, minority groups like the Roma and Jewish communities.

Immigration and Crime: Misinformation often paints a false picture that migrants are major contributors to crime rates in host countries. This can include creating or sharing fake news stories about violent crimes allegedly committed by migrants, which are intended to stoke fear and hostility. Studies have consistently shown that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than native-born citizens. Painting all migrants as criminals is thus a false generalization. Specific incidents of crime involving migrants do not reflect the behavior of all migrants.

Economic Burden: Migrants are frequently depicted as a burden to the host country's economy, claiming they take jobs from citizens or misuse social benefits, even when evidence suggests that immigration can have positive impacts on the economy. Numerous studies indicate that immigrants often contribute significantly to their host economies. They fill crucial job gaps, pay taxes, start businesses, and can invigorate declining areas. The perception that all migrants are an economic drain is thus inaccurate and misleading.

Cultural Threat: Fearmongering about the 'loss' of national culture or identity is another misinformation tactic. This can involve spreading false stories

about migrants refusing to integrate, or suggesting that they are imposing their own cultures or religions on the host society. Migration can lead to cultural changes, but this is not synonymous with a 'loss' of national culture or identity. Societies are constantly evolving, and cultural exchange is a key part of this. The idea that migrants want to 'impose' their cultures is a form of fearmongering that does not reflect the reality of cultural diversity and integration.

Health Misinformation: There have been instances where migrants and minority groups are falsely blamed for spreading diseases or drugs, contributing to public health crises, or putting a strain on healthcare resources. Blaming migrants or minorities for public health crises is a common tactic in misinformation campaigns, but it is not based on facts. Health crises are influenced by many factors and attributing them to specific ethnic or migrant groups is misleading and discriminatory Note the difference between working hours and billable hours. All working hours are not billable. If the business has employees with differing skill levels (for example, in a law practice, there are associates, paralegals, lawyers, partners, etc.), indicate the various billing rates.

Anti-Semitism: For Jewish communities, misinformation often involves anti-Semitic tropes or conspiracy theories. This can include spreading false stories about Jewish individuals or organizations exerting secretive control over world events or economies. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have been debunked time and again. The suggestion that Jewish individuals or organizations control world events or economies is not based on any factual evidence.

Anti-Roma Discrimination: Misinformation about the Roma often involves negative stereotypes that depict them as untrustworthy, lazy, or criminal. This can be used to justify discriminatory policies or actions against them.

Negative stereotypes about the Roma, such as them being untrustworthy or lazy, are unfounded generalizations that fuel discrimination. Like any group, the Roma comprise individuals with diverse traits and behaviors, so painting them all with the same brush is a form of misinformation.

Political Manipulation: Misinformation might suggest that political leaders or parties are excessively lenient towards migrants or minority groups, or are being manipulated by them. This is often intended to undermine trust in those leaders or institutions. Claims that political leaders or parties are excessively lenient towards migrants or minority groups, or are being manipulated by them, are often based on skewed perceptions or outright false information. Policies related to migration or minority rights are complex and multifaceted, and cannot be accurately reduced to such simplistic narratives

Terrorism: Young individuals may be radicalized with misinformation associating migrants or certain ethnic/religious groups with terrorism. Such narratives can instigate fear and hatred, leading to social divisions. Associating all members of a specific ethnic or religious group with terrorism is misleading and harmful. It's a form of fearmongering that stigmatizes entire communities based on the actions of a tiny, unrepresentative minority. Terrorism is a complex issue that cannot be attributed to a single factor like ethnicity or religion.

Political manipulation in the context of misinformation often involves painting a picture of political leaders or parties as being under undue influence from or excessively lenient toward migrants and minority groups. This misinformation is designed to create a sense of outrage, fear, or distrust toward these groups and the political establishment.

To exploit misinformation those seeking to profit from it rely on several key oversigths citizens encounter when dealing with media and information.

Skewed perceptions: Often, claims about targeted groups rely on skewed perceptions or misinterpretations of political actions. For instance, if a government introduces policies to support refugee resettlement or improve conditions for minority groups, critics might argue that these actions indicate preferential treatment. However, these policies are usually part of a larger effort to uphold human rights, provide humanitarian support, or address historical disadvantages certain groups face.

False information: Some political manipulation involves spreading outright false information. For example, fabricated stories about politicians having secret deals with minority leaders or intentionally allowing illegal immigration to change electoral demographics. Such conspiracies are generally baseless and designed to incite division and resentment.

Policies complexity: Policies related to migration and minority rights are nuanced and multifaceted. They involve balancing various interests, including humanitarian concerns, international law obligations, economic factors, social integration, and national security, among others. Simplifying these complexities into narratives about undue influence or leniency needs to be more accurate and accurate. It's important to understand these policies in their full context, considering the wide range of factors at play.

Impact of such misinformation: This misinformation can undermine faith in political institutions, fuel societal divisions, and create an unwelcoming environment for migrants and minority groups. It can also unfairly shift blame for complex social or economic problems onto these vulnerable groups, distracting from the need for broader policy solutions. Countering this misinformation involves promoting media literacy, providing accurate and

balanced information about political policies, and encouraging open, respectful dialogue about these issues. It's also crucial for political leaders to transparently communicate their policy decisions to the public, explaining the diverse factors and considerations involved.

Misinformation and Fearmongering: Some radical groups or media outlets circulate false narratives or misleading statistics, purporting that there's a strong correlation between increased immigration and higher crime rates. This can take the form of unverified or sensationalized news stories, or the manipulation of crime data to create a distorted view. These misinformation campaigns are often designed to stir up fear and hostility towards immigrants, fostering division and prejudice.

Statistical Reality: However, a wealth of academic research contradicts this narrative. For instance, a large-scale analysis published in the Journal of Law and Economics[4] showed that immigration does not increase crime and can even contribute to decreased crime rates. A review in the Annual Review of Criminology in 2018[5] found that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than native-born citizens. These findings hold true across various countries and immigrant groups.

Individual Actions vs. Collective Blame: When immigrants commit crimes, they are often highly publicized and can lead to widespread fear and bias. But it's important to remember that individuals, not entire demographic groups commit criminal actions. Just as it would be wrong to judge all native-born

[4] https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/680935

[5] https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-032317-092026

citizens based on the actions of a few, it's unjust and misleading to stigmatize all immigrants due to the actions of a small number.

Root Causes: Crime is a complex social issue with numerous contributing factors, such as poverty, lack of education, social marginalization, and more. The nationality or immigration status of individuals is not a predictor of criminal behavior.

What we hope to create through project MeLitA are young people who can see through this misinformation attempts. False narratives about immigration and crime can have harmful real-world consequences, including discrimination, unjust policy decisions, and violence against immigrants. They can also create a climate of fear and hostility that hampers social cohesion and integration efforts.

Promoting accurate information about immigration and crime is crucial. This includes ensuring that crime statistics are reported and interpreted accurately, and that individual incidents aren't exploited to create broad-brush stereotypes. It's also essential to encourage empathy and understanding between different community groups, and to address the root causes of crime through social and economic policies.

What is equally crucial is that we as educators don’t focus on making students like or dislike immigration, the goal of media literacy education is not building and attitude towards a certain policy, it is creating an attitude towards veracity of information.

Case study on misinformation – Health

Vaccines and autism:

One of the most pervasive forms of health misinformation is the claim that vaccines, particularly the MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) vaccine, cause autism in children. This claim has been thoroughly debunked by multiple studies[6]. Despite the overwhelming scientific consensus supporting vaccine safety, the spread of this misinformation continues to discourage vaccination, posing a significant risk to herd immunity and public health.

Alternative treatments:

There's a growing trend of disinformation advocating for alternative treatments over scientifically-proven medical interventions. Whether it's promoting "miracle cures" for serious illnesses like cancer[7] or touting the efficacy of home remedies for COVID-19, such disinformation can prevent people from seeking appropriate medical care, leading to avoidable health crises. Young people are generally more engaged on social media platforms, where health misinformation often spreads rapidly. The algorithms can create echo chambers that continuously expose them to misleading health information, reinforcing their false beliefs.

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[6] https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/concerns/autism.html

[7]https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/treatment-types/alternative-medicine/what-is-alternative-medicine.html; https://www.cancer.org/cancer/latest-news/the-truth-about-alternative-medical-treatments.html

Nutrition and weight loss:

One of the most prevalent forms of misinformation that is especially pertinent for young boys and girls involves the promotion of fad diets that promise quick weight loss or dramatic health improvements. These diets often lack scientific backing and may encourage restrictive or unbalanced eating. They may lead people to eliminate essential nutrients from their diet, causing not only short-term health problems like fatigue or digestive issues but also potentially leading to long-term conditions such as nutrient deficiencies or even heart problems.[8]

Additionally, claims that specific foods or supplements can "burn fat" or "boost metabolism" are common and incredibly misleading. While certain foods may have a thermogenic effect, meaning they temporarily increase metabolic rate, the impact on overall weight loss is often minimal.[9]Nonetheless, these types of claims can lead people to focus their diet around a narrow range of foods, neglecting the importance of a balanced diet. This kind of misinformation can also be particularly damaging to young people, who may develop skewed perceptions of nutrition that can lead to disordered eating habits.

Misinformation can also be harmful when it claims that diet alone can cure chronic conditions like diabetes or heart disease. While a balanced diet can certainly play a role in managing these conditions, suggesting that diet alone can serve as a cure is not only scientifically inaccurate but also dangerously

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[8] https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20211206-does-seeing-food-on-social-media-make-us-eat-more

[9] https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/foods-that-boost-metabolism-what-does-the-science-say

misleading.[10] People may forgo medication or other necessary treatments, exacerbating their condition and potentially putting their lives at risk.

To add to the confusion, this type of misinformation is often propagated by celebrities or influencers[11] who have no background in nutrition or medicine. Their wide-reaching platforms can give these false claims more credibility than they deserve, amplifying their impact.

Misinformation about environmental health hazards poses a unique set of challenges, often fueling public fear and skepticism while diverting attention from legitimate concerns. Take, for instance, the debate around 5G technology.[12] While there's ongoing research about the long-term health impacts of 5G, misleading claims that it causes everything from cancer to COVID-19 have flooded the public discourse. This kind of misinformation can lead to unwarranted fears and even result in the destruction of telecommunications equipment, which in turn impacts communication infrastructure.

Similarly, fluoride in water has been a topic of much debate. While high levels of fluoride can be harmful, the levels used in water fluoridation are generally considered safe and effective in preventing tooth decay.[13] However, misinformation campaigns have led some to believe that fluoride in water is

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[10]https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/when-dieting-doesnt-work-2020052519889

[11]Foods | Free Full-Text | The Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Food Consumption Behavior (mdpi.com)

[12]https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/radiation-5g-mobile-networks-and-health

[13] https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/magazine/magazine_article/fluoridated-drinking-water/

linked to a host of health problems, from bone disease to cognitive impairments. This can result in unnecessary anxiety and even avoidance of tap water, which is usually a safe and inexpensive source of hydration.

The concept of "chemtrails" also falls under this category of environmental health misinformation. Some people believe that the condensation trails left by airplanes contain harmful substances intentionally released for various nefarious purposes. While there is no scientific evidence to support this claim, the belief persists and distracts from real environmental issues like air pollution or climate change.[14]

Given the complexities surrounding environmental health and the misinformation that abounds, educators have a critical role to play in media literacy education. Teachers are uniquely positioned to provide students with the tools they need to critically assess information. Addressing environmental health misinformation in the classroom not only equips students to discern fact from fiction, but it also promotes scientific literacy. This is essential for fostering a society that can engage in informed debate and advocate for evidence-based policies. In a world where misinformation can spread like wildfire, teaching young people to critically evaluate sources and think scientifically is more crucial than ever. Providing them with a robust understanding of environmental health issues can empower them to make better decisions, both for their personal well-being and for the community at large.

It’s important to note that while there are concerns about these environmental factors, they should be understood in the context of scientific

[14] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-7-2012-002906_EN.html

consensus and evidence-based research. Misinformation can indeed divert attention from real environmental health concerns and make it difficult to implement evidence-based policies.

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