A.R.T.S.
ANALYZE, REFLECT, THINK SMART

ATENEUL NAȚIONAL DIN IAȘI

solaris
Förderzentrum für Jugend & Umwelt gGmbH Sachsen

DAC

YOUTH WORK FOR CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY THROUGH ART

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

A.R.T.S. – Analyze, Reflect, Think Smart

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Partner Organisations

The A.R.T.S. – Analyze, Reflect, Think Smart project (2025-1-RO01-KA220-YOU-000366137) is implemented by a partnership of three organisations from Romania, Germany and Norway. Throughout this guide, partners are referred to interchangeably by organisation name, city or country, and are introduced below.

Ateneul Național din Iași (ANI)

Romania – Iași

A cultural institution founded in 1920, with theatre, music, film and visual arts programmes for children, young people and adults. It draws around 150,000 visitors a year and has a solid track record in cultural education.

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solaris Förderzentrum für Jugend und Umwelt gGmbH Sachsen (solaris FZU)

Germany – Chemnitz

A non-profit organisation active since 1993, with educational, social and cultural services for young people and communities. It specialises in STEM education, arts, sustainability and social inclusion. The organisation coordinates Erasmus+ projects and educational centres.

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DAC Music Performance (DAC)

Norway

Founded in 2017 by pianist Dragoș Andrei Cantea, DAC organises concerts, artistic productions and educational projects in Norway and across Europe. It is a lead partner of the Classix Festival, with expertise in classical music and the performing arts as pedagogical tools.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction 2
- Project context 2
- Purpose of the guide 2
- Who this guide is for 3
- About the research behind the guide 3

2. Methodological framework 4
- Core principles 4
- Evaluation methodology 4
- Lines of action 5

3. Pilot validation 6
- Implementation principle established through testing 6
- Adjustments resulting from pilot testing 6
- Aggregated results 7

4. Participant feedback 8

5. Educational tools 9
- Positive Gossip 9
- Urban Symbols: Decode & Create 11
- Bridge Between Generations 13
- The Hat of Truth 15
- Draw What You Hear 17
- Knowledge is Power 19
- From Reaction to Reflection 21
- Art and Democracy: a journey through time 23
- Influencer or Manipulator? 25
- Original or Algorithm? Unmasking AI Art 27
- True or False? 29
- I Am The Artist 31

6. Case studies 33

7. Appendices 41
- Appendix 1 - Comparative Research Report (Romania, Germany, Norway)



1. Introduction

Project context

Excessive use of social media and young people's exposure to media manipulation are a recognised problem across Europe. A recent World Health Organization study shows that Romania has the highest percentage of adolescents affected by problematic social media use among the countries taking part in the project, while Germany and Norway report similar challenges of their own. The lack of media education in schools, the influence of algorithms and unsupervised access to digital content all contribute to a heightened vulnerability to disinformation, with effects on mental health, social relationships and the ability to tell verified information apart from manipulative content.

The A.R.T.S. project - Analyse, Reflect, Think Smart, funded through the Erasmus+ programme, Cooperation Partnership in the field of youth (KA220-YOU), was developed in response to this need. The partnership brings together the National Athenaeum of Iași (Romania), solaris Förderzentrum für Jugend und Umwelt gGmbH Sachsen (Germany) and DAC Music Performance (Norway), each organisation contributing distinct expertise: cultural education through art, education for sustainable development and social inclusion, and innovation in arts education and the use of music as a learning tool, respectively.

Purpose of the guide

This guide brings together the methodology and the 12 educational tools developed within the project, which use art - theatre, music and the visual arts - to stimulate critical thinking and counter media manipulation among young people. The tools were developed on the basis of comparative research carried out in the three partner countries and later tested in 20 pilot workshops, involving more than 290 young people.

The versions presented in this guide reflect the adjustments that resulted from pilot testing, not the initial proposals. Alongside the tool sheets, the guide includes a methodological framework explaining the principles



Who this guide is for

The guide is intended primarily for youth workers and facilitators who want to bring media education through art into their activities, whether they work in formal, non-formal or informal settings. The tools were designed to be adaptable to both urban and rural settings, and to work with diverse groups, including young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The guide is also aimed at teachers interested in integrating media education and critical thinking into school or extracurricular activities, as well as at cultural

About the research behind the guide

The tools and methodology presented in this guide are based on comparative research carried out in Romania, Germany and Norway, examining how non-formal education, critical thinking and the arts contribute to young people's development in the three national contexts. The research included questionnaires completed by a total of more than 570 young people and youth workers, as well as round-table discussions with experts, artists, teachers and youth workers from the three countries.

Among the main findings: Romania shows the highest level of positive perception of non-formal education among the three countries, although participation is often occasional; Germany has solid cultural infrastructure that remains insufficiently connected to schools; Norway stands out for a coherent educational ecosystem in which critical thinking is treated as a cross-curricular competence. The full research report, including the methodology, the aggregated data and the SWOT analysis carried out for each country, is included at the end of this guide.

2. Methodological framework

The methodology presented in this guide was developed on the basis of the comparative research carried out in Romania, Germany and Norway, and was later refined through pilot testing of the 12 educational tools. It rests on three core principles and is organised into four lines of action, which apply across the board regardless of the tool being used.

Core principles

From intuitive to analytical thinking.
Comparative research showed that young people in all three participating countries tend to rely on intuition and first impressions when assessing information, rather than actively verifying sources. The tools developed within the project use art as a critical filter, gradually guiding participants from an instinctive assessment towards an analytical one, supported by reasoning.

Art as neutral ground.
Topics such as media manipulation, disinformation or social polarisation can be difficult to address directly, especially in groups with diverse opinions. Using art as a medium for exploration provides a safe framework in which these topics can be discussed without direct confrontation, while also reducing the risk of the group splitting along political or ideological lines.

Emotional anchoring.
Artistic practice gives participants a concrete tool for emotional self-regulation when facing manipulative content, which frequently relies on fear or outrage to suppress critical thinking. Through exercises that make the role of emotion in interpreting information visible, participants become better able to recognise when they are reacting to manipulation, rather than to facts.

Evaluation methodology

The impact of each tool was assessed through questionnaires completed by participants before and after each workshop, in digital or printed format depending on the local context of each session. In addition, the facilitators responsible for testing prepared activity reports immediately after each workshop, which is how we captured the actual course of each session and the group's reactions. The results of this evaluation, aggregated across the whole partnership, formed the basis for the adjustments described in the “Pilot validation” section.

Lines of action

I. Rapid analysis methods and micro-learning.

This line of action responds to young people's short attention spans and their predominantly short-form visual media consumption. The tools built around it use small sets of key questions that can be applied quickly to any media content, together with a progressive approach to learning, in which facilitator-led analysis is gradually replaced by the participant's own independent assessment .

II. Art as a tool for deconstruction and reflection.

Theatre, music and the visual arts are used to make manipulation mechanisms visible and to give participants a space to express their own perspective on social reality. Exercises such as forum theatre, the emotional decoding of music or media collage allow manipulation techniques to be deconstructed experientially rather than theoretically.

III. Reducing gaps and promoting social inclusion.

Pilot testing confirmed the need to extend access to these tools to disadvantaged areas and groups with fewer opportunities, where access to arts and media education remains limited. The tools have been adapted so they can be used in both urban and rural settings, and so they remain accessible to people with disabilities or from vulnerable backgrounds. For participants with disabilities, it is recommended that printed materials be adapted into accessible formats (Braille or large-print documents, where applicable) and that audio or video support be provided for the digital components of the tools. Workshop venues should be chosen so as to ensure physical accessibility for all participants.

IV. Training educators and engaging the community.

The sustainability of the methodology depends on facilitators' and youth workers' ability to apply it beyond the lifetime of the project. For this reason, the guide includes methodological recommendations aimed directly at educators, as well as suggestions for involving families and the local community in developing young people's critical thinking.

The tool sheets presented in the following sections put these four lines of action into practice, with each tool built on one or more of the principles described above.

3. Pilot validation

Between April and June 2026, the three partner organisations tested the 12 educational tools in 20 workshops held in Romania, Norway and Germany, involving more than 290 young people. Each tool was implemented in a real session by facilitators, who completed detailed reports immediately after the workshop; in every case, participants also completed questionnaires before and after the activity.

This stage was not meant only to confirm that the tools worked; it also generated a series of concrete adjustments, drawn directly from facilitators' observations and participants' reactions. The versions presented in the following sections already reflect these adjustments.

Implementation principle established through testing

During the transnational review meeting, a direct comparison of two sessions of the same tool (“From reaction to reflection”) revealed a significant difference in engagement: a whole class of 22 students versus a group of 14 volunteer participants. The smaller group showed noticeably higher engagement and produced a greater number of relevant insights.

Based on this observation, the consortium established a general implementation principle for the whole project: wherever possible, workshops are run in person, in small groups, with voluntary participation, rather than with whole classes.

Adjustments resulting from pilot testing

“True or False?” - adding a supplementary exercise.
Facilitators noted that, in its original form, the activity remained mostly static, with participants filling in worksheets without any dynamic component. As a solution, a “broken telephone” exercise was added at the end of the workshop, applied to a real news story, comparing the original version with the one that resulted after it was passed along successively. Several participants explicitly named this exercise as their favourite part of the workshop.

“Influencer or manipulator?” - restructuring into two sessions
The facilitator responsible for testing observed that participants tended to judge influencers as people rather than the manipulation techniques they use. To clarify this distinction, the tool was restructured into two separate sessions: one dedicated to presenting the theoretical concepts, the other to applying them to real examples proposed in advance by participants.

“Urban Symbols: Decode & Create” - recommending a larger facilitation team.
Testing showed that a single facilitator cannot adequately support all the small groups formed during the activity, particularly during the stage of identifying and discussing symbols. The resulting recommendation is to form a team of at least 2-3 facilitators to run this tool.

“Draw What You Hear” - clarifying the thematic link.
Facilitators in Norway found that, although the activity generated a high level of engagement, the connection between the exercise and the goal of media literacy was not sufficiently clear to participants. The structure of the activity remained unchanged, but the introduction and the conclusions stage were expanded with direct explanations of the exercise's relevance to developing critical thinking.

“I Am The Artist” and “The Hat of Truth” - recalibrating the duration.
Both tools were flagged as not allowing enough time for the information to settle. As a result, the duration of the activity was linked directly to group size, rather than being fixed independently of the number of participants.

Aggregated results

The questionnaires completed by participants, both before and after each workshop, consistently confirmed an improvement in critical analysis skills and a high level of satisfaction with the activities, across all three countries involved in the project.
The tool sheets presented in the following sections correspond to the final versions resulting from this process of testing and refinement.



4. Participant feedback

Beyond the progress indicators presented in the previous section, pilot testing generated a substantial amount of direct feedback from young participants, collected through questionnaires completed before and after each workshop. The overall pattern was consistent across all three countries: high satisfaction with the activities, a clear increase in attention paid to verifying information, and an unexpectedly high level of openness towards topics that are usually considered difficult to raise with young people.

One of the clearest patterns emerged with the tools focused on verifying information. In “True or False?”, several participants said they had not previously realised how rarely they checked sources before sharing information, and the “broken telephone” exercise remained, in the words of several participants, the most memorable moment of the session:

> ***“I found it surprising how easily fake news can be created online.”***

In “Influencer or Manipulator?”, the feedback showed a genuine shift in perspective, not just passive reception of information: participants were able to separate the influencer as a person from the manipulation techniques they use, a distinction the facilitator had initially flagged as difficult to grasp:

> ***“I learned the difference between influence and manipulation on social media.”***

Tools based on direct interaction (“Positive Gossip”, “Bridge Between Generations”) also recorded an almost unanimous level of satisfaction, with participants consistently highlighting the value of the connection created with others, rather than the theoretical content of the activity. In “Urban Symbols: Decode & Create”, enthusiasm was most often expressed directly, without qualification:

> ***“It was cool!”***

Taken together, these reactions confirm something important for the project as a whole: art worked as a genuine bridge to critical thinking. Young people experienced media manipulation directly, through drawing, role play or “broken telephone” exercises, and this was consistently reflected in their feedback, regardless of country or tool.

5. ARTS-TOOLS

POSITIVE GOSSIP – ANONYMOUS APPRECIATION TOOL

10-30

30-45'

Short overview

To create a positive and safe group climate through a structured peer-appreciation exercise, aimed at developing empathy, group cohesion and the ability to give constructive positive feedback. One element that worked particularly well in practice: connecting the activity to the concept of "Socrates' three sieves" (Is it true? Is it good? Is it necessary?) - a simple, memorable way to help participants reflect before speaking about someone else.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- formulate appreciation messages to peers in a concrete and respectful way
- identify positive qualities and behaviors in others
- reflect on the emotional impact of mutual appreciation
- contribute to a group climate based on support and trust
- practice positive expression in interpersonal relationships

Tool type:
participatory activity reflection method

Duration:
Ongoing (weekly or monthly sessions, 30-45 minutes)

Number of participants:
10-30 (adaptable up to a whole class)

Necessary materials

- small paper slips (or cut sheets)
- pens or pencils
- a box/large envelope ("the appreciation box")
- (optional) board or flipchart for the rules

Description of the activity – step by step

1

Introduction
The facilitator explains the purpose of the activity: creating a safe space where participants express appreciation for their peers, anonymously or semi-anonymously. Clear rules are set:

- messages must be positive, respectful and genuine
- irony, sarcasm or negative comparisons are avoided
- focus on observable behaviors ("what the person does"), not general judgments

2

Drawing names (5 minutes)
All participants' names are written on slips of paper. Each participant:

- draws a random name
- checks that they haven't drawn their own name (if this happens, they draw again)

3

Writing the appreciation (10-15 minutes)
Each participant writes a note in the format:
"[Name], I appreciate that you..."
Specific phrasing is encouraged, for example:

- observable behaviors
- attitudes
- moments from group interactions

4

Collection (2-5 minutes)
All the slips are placed into a shared appreciation box or envelope.

5

Reading messages and discussion (10-15 minutes)

- The facilitator reads the notes aloud (or participants do, if the group is ready and time allows). After each message, a short pause can be given for natural reactions (smiles, reflection, silence).
- Guiding questions for discussion:
- How did it feel to write the message?
- How did it feel to receive an appreciation?
- What did you notice about your peers that you might not have noticed before?
- How do messages like this affect the group's atmosphere?

Risks/challenges

- messages that are too general ("you're okay") - need guidance
- risk of superficiality if no examples are given
- possible strong emotions when receiving appreciation
- need to maintain a strictly positive framework

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

- create a safe and respectful space
- clearly explain the rules of positive communication
- monitor the quality of messages (before reading, if needed)
- ensure no participant is excluded
- support emotional reflection without forcing participation
- manage group dynamics in a balanced and calm way

Skills developed

- empathy
- positive communication
- group cohesion
- self-confidence and confidence in others
- attention to constructive behaviors
- emotional intelligence

Implementing suggestions

- provide clear examples before starting
- encourage specific messages, based on observed behaviors
- maintain a relaxed atmosphere, free of pressure
- repeat the activity periodically for a cumulative effect
- you can create an "appreciation wall" where selected messages are displayed
- avoid evaluation or comparison between participants
- consider using the "Socrates' three sieves" concept as a simple philosophical starting point for the activity
- where possible, the physical format may offer a deeper connection with the facilitator

Urban Symbols: Decode & Create

5-12

90'

Short overview

To develop visual literacy, symbolic interpretation and critical thinking by exploring local murals and graffiti, analyzing messages and optionally creating participant-inspired artwork.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Analyze local murals and graffiti for symbolism, composition, color and hidden messages
- Identify social, political, or emotional commentary conveyed by the artwork
- Interpret meanings and reflect on connections to community, history or culture
- Optionally create personal artwork inspired by the analysis, applying symbolic thinking

Tool type:
art workshop
symbolic analysis

Duration:
90 minutes (creation phase optional)

Number of participants:
5-12

Recommended team: minimum 2-3 facilitators - identifying and discussing symbols/messages requires active support for each small group

Necessary materials

- photos of local murals or graffiti
- paper, markers, paints or collage materials
- optional mural wall or outdoor site

Description of the activity – step by step

1

Introduction
The facilitator introduces the activity: exploring local urban art to interpret symbolism and messages. Key terms like symbol, composition, social commentary, and visual storytelling are explained.

2

Observation and analysis
Participants observe selected images or visit a local mural/graffiti site. In small groups, they discuss:

- What symbols, colors, or patterns are used?
- What message or emotion is conveyed?
- How does the artwork connect to community, history or culture?
- How might the artist want the viewer to feel or think?

3

Group discussion
Groups share observations with the class. Facilitator guides discussion, highlighting different interpretations and encouraging reflection on perspective and bias. Optional QR codes linking to artist stories or background can enrich understanding. It's normal for some participants to be initially reluctant to share their interpretations - they tend to open up over time, with encouragement.

4

Optional creation phase
Participants create their own artwork inspired by the analysis. They apply symbolic thinking:

- Choose a message or theme to communicate
- Use paper, markers, paints or collage materials
- Share creations with peers and explain the symbolic choices

5

Reflection and conclusions
Facilitator guides a discussion - allow generous time for this stage, as it tends to generate the most valuable insights and the most active participation:

- How did interpretation differ between participants?
- What symbolic elements were most effective?
- How can street art inspire social awareness or personal expression?

Risks/challenges

- Skipping the creation phase may reduce engagement
- Some murals may contain sensitive political or cultural messages
- Participants may interpret symbols very differently; facilitator must guide discussion constructively
- Identifying and discussing symbols can be more demanding than it appears - hence the recommendation for a team of 2-3 facilitators

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

- Select murals or graffiti appropriate for age and context
- Guide observation and discussion, encouraging multiple perspectives
- Ensure all participants feel included and supported - including shyer participants, who may need more time to open up
- Explain symbolism, cultural context, and artistic techniques
- Support the optional creation phase and facilitate sharing
- Work alongside 1-2 co-facilitators, to support each small group in identifying symbols

Skills developed

- critical thinking
- visual literacy
- creativity
- teamwork and collaboration
- cultural literacy
- observational and interpretative skills

Implementing suggestions

- Provide QR codes or short artist bios to enrich understanding of local context
- Encourage peer discussion to explore multiple interpretations
- Use reflection questions to link art to social, political, or personal themes
- For the creation phase, emphasize symbolic intent over artistic skill
- Rotate participants in leading discussions or presenting artwork to strengthen teamwork
- Explicitly allocate more time for the final reflection and discussion stage



Bridge Between Generations

5-30

1 hour

Short overview

To foster intergenerational learning, mentorship, cultural exchange and mutual understanding through creative activities, discussion and collaborative projects.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Engage in mutual learning and knowledge-sharing across generations
- Introduce seniors to new technologies, including AI and digital tools
- Learn from seniors' life experiences, historical context and cultural knowledge
- Practice empathy, active listening and self-expression
- Reduce social isolation among seniors and combat generational stereotypes

Tool type:
intergenerational workshop
participatory activity

Duration:
1 hour weekly (flexible) - start with slow-paced, low-pressure activities

Number of participants:
a classroom + seniors (5-30)

Necessary materials

- paper, pens, markers
- tablets, computers, or other digital devices
- optional art supplies (paints, collage materials)
- printed prompts or games for collaboration

Description of the activity – step by step

1

Introduction / Icebreakers
Facilitator introduces participants and the goals of the session.
Simple icebreakers to build comfort and engagement (e.g., sharing a favorite memory or hobby).
Always start with low-pressure activities - this was confirmed essential for reducing the initial distance between generations.

2

Shared exploration
Participants engage in activities such as storytelling, digital art or collaborative games.
Young people may introduce seniors to AI tools, apps, or digital art programs.
Seniors share personal experiences, historical knowledge or cultural insights.

3

Reflection and discussion
Group discussion about emotions, personal experiences, or cultural knowledge revealed during the activity.
Facilitator encourages dialogue, active listening and cross-generational questioning.

4

Optional creative projects
Collaborative creation: stories, drawings or digital media inspired by shared experiences.
Participants can present their work to the group and discuss the creative process.

5

Conclusions
Facilitator summarizes learning points: intergenerational understanding, mutual respect and cultural exchange.
Encourage participants to reflect on what they learned from the other generation and how they might continue collaboration.

Risks/challenges

- Differences in energy, mobility, or tech literacy between teens and seniors
- Seniors may feel intimidated by technology; facilitator must support them patiently
- Teens may dominate conversation; facilitator ensures balanced participation
- Sensitivity to potentially emotional or personal stories
- Language or expression differences may arise, especially in groups with participants from diverse backgrounds (migrants, rural areas)

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

- Create a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment
- Adjust pace according to different energy levels and tech familiarity
- Support seniors in using digital tools while encouraging teens to teach patiently
- Guide discussion to ensure all voices are heard
- Encourage empathy, reflection, and cross-generational mentorship
- Provide optional creative projects without pressuring participants
- always start with simple, low-pressure activities, especially at the first meeting
- use icebreakers to reduce the initial distance between generations

Skills developed

- empathy
- active listening
- communication
- critical thinking
- digital literacy
- mentorship
- collaboration and teamwork
- cultural literacy

Implementing suggestions

- Start with slow-paced, low-pressure activities to build comfort
- Include icebreakers to break generational barriers
- Encourage teens to act as mentors for digital tools while learning from seniors' experiences.
- Make creative projects optional but meaningful
- Emphasize active listening and reflection after each activity
- Repeat weekly to build long-term connections
- Feedback from pilot testing confirms: discussion and shared games, alongside genuine exchange between generations, remain the elements most valued by participants, regardless of age



THE HAT OF TRUTH

5-10

1 hour

Short overview

To distinguish between truth, misinformation, emotional framing and rational arguments through interactive improvisation.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Explore how different perspectives shape narrative understanding.
- Practice critical thinking while improvising.
- Construct and deconstruct stories from multiple viewpoints.
- Recognize signals of truth, exaggeration, bias and manipulation.

Tool type:
participatory activity
improvisation
storytelling

Duration:
60 minutes

Number of participants:
5-10 (with or without an audience)

Necessary materials
one hat (or box)
role notes (e.g., truth, exaggeration, fear, rationality, etc.)
paper hats or labels (optional)
printed scenarios
markers
simple props
optional: digital/video support

Description of the activity – step by step

1

Introduction
The facilitator explains the concept: each participant receives a "hat" that represents a way of telling a story: truthful, emotional, misleading, rational, exaggerated, overly optimistic, etc. The audience's job is to analyze the performance and identify which perspective is being used.

2

Assigning roles
Participants take a small "role note" from the Hat of Truth (one shared hat).
Each note corresponds to a specific narrative style:

- Truth-teller
- Exaggerator
- Fear-monger
- Rational analyzer
- Misinformation spreader
- Emotional storyteller
- Skeptic
- Optimist

The role is secret - the audience does NOT see the notes.

3

Improvisation scenario
The facilitator reads a simple scenario such as:
"Your town is planning to build a new park. You must convince the audience why your perspective is the right one."
Participants improvise according to their hidden role.

4

Audience analysis
After the performance, the audience discusses:

- Which player represented which narrative style?
- What clues made the style obvious?
- How did each style change the understanding of the story?
- Which arguments sounded credible or manipulative?

Allow generous time for this stage - the reflection part tends to need more time than it first appears, for the information to truly sink in.

5

Conclusions
The facilitator highlights how storytelling perspectives influence perception, emotions and credibility.
Participants reflect on how similar techniques appear in media and public debates.

Risks/challenges

- Participants may focus more on acting than on reflection.
- Some players may over-dramatize the role.
- Misleading styles may cause confusion if not debriefed properly.
- Facilitator must balance creativity with learning goals.

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

- Prepare clear role notes and simple scenarios.
- Ensure psychological safety and encourage creativity.
- Explain narrative styles in simple terms.
- Keep participants focused on improvisation, not performance quality.
- Guide the audience to analyze both emotional and manipulative cues.
- Rotate roles between rounds if time allows.

Skills developed

- critical thinking
- communication
- empathy
- improvisation
- teamwork
- media literacy
- storytelling

Implementing suggestions

- Provide one short demonstration before the activity starts.
- Rotate roles in a second round to help participants try new perspectives.
- Encourage exaggerated but believable performances to show how manipulation works.
- Use very simple scenarios at first (e.g., “extra homework”, “new school rule”).
- Keep the core message clear: the way a story is told changes how it is understood.
- Where possible, use multimedia material (short clips, video news) alongside printed scenarios - it adds authenticity to the exercise.
- Don't rush the final reflection stage - it's worth allowing extra time beyond what's planned.



Draw what you hear – Emotional music interpretation through drawing

4-10

1 hour

Tool type:
art workshop
emotional exercise
participatory activity

Short overview

To develop emotional awareness and creative self-expression by translating music into visual art. Participants listen to a musical piece with their eyes closed and immediately draw what they feel, imagine or associate with the music.
Make the connection between this exercise and the broader project theme (media education, critical thinking) explicit from the introduction - pilot testing showed this link isn't always obvious to participants unless stated directly.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- interpret music emotionally through visual expression;
- reflect on how sounds influence inner states and imagination;
- compare different personal perspectives on the same audio stimulus;
- articulate feelings and sensations through drawing and dialogue;
- understand that artistic expression is subjective and non-judgmental.

Duration:
45-60 minutes (recommended) or up to 2 hours (extended format) - allow flexible time for the reflection stage, without rigid fixed breaks

Number of participants:
min. 4 - max. 15

Necessary materials

- paper (A4 or larger)
- pencils, markers, crayons
- music player / speakers
- optional headphones (for individual sessions)
- comfortable seating
- (optional) projector for ambient visuals or mood lighting

Description of the activity – step by step

1

Introduction (10 min)

- The facilitator explains the purpose: not to create “beautiful art,” but to express feelings freely.
- Introduces the idea of drawing with closed eyes after listening to music.
- Clarifies that participants work individually but will share in pairs or small groups afterwards.
- Presents the selected music genres: preferably instrumental pieces without lyrics (classical, orchestral, ballet music, film scores).

2

Artistic activity (20-30 min)

- Participants sit comfortably and close their eyes.
- The facilitator plays a 2-4 minute musical piece.
- While listening, participants focus on emotions, colors, sensations, shapes and spontaneous imagery.
- When the music stops, they open their eyes and immediately draw what they felt, not what they “think they should draw.
- Drawing continues for 5-10 minutes, using simple materials (pencils, markers, crayons).
- Optional: repeat with a second contrasting piece of music (slower vs. dynamic).

3

Media analysis (5-10 min)
Guiding questions:

- What type of music did you listen to? How would you describe it?
- How did the sound influence your imagination or emotions?
- What elements of the music (tempo, rhythm, mood, instruments) affected your drawing?
- Would a different genre (pop, electronic, jazz) create a different drawing? Why?

4

Reflection/discussion (10-15 min)
Participants share in pairs or small groups:

- What did you feel during the music?
- What does your drawing represent?
- How is your drawing different from your partner’s?
- Why do you think the same music produced different images?

After pair discussions, the group can reconvene for optional collective sharing. Allow generous time for this stage.

5

Conclusions (3-5 min)

- The facilitator highlights the importance of emotional expression through art.
- Reinforces that there is no “right” interpretation - only personal experience.
- Encourages participants to observe how sound affects imagination and mood.

Risks/challenges

- participants may feel insecure about drawing ability
- some may struggle to identify emotions
- the music may trigger unexpected emotions
- distractions may reduce focus during listening
- the connection to the broader theme (media disinformation) may remain unclear to participants if not explained directly

How to manage: Emphasize process over skill, offer reassurance, choose music carefully, maintain a calm atmosphere; clearly explain the connection to media education.

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

- choose appropriate music (instrumental, expressive, no lyrics) based on the emotional objective;
- create a calm, safe, non-judgmental atmosphere;
- emphasize self-expression over artistic skill;
- guide participants to trust their spontaneous imagery;
- encourage open conversation and emotional sharing;
- adapt the music length and complexity to the group's age;
- - clearly explain the link between the exercise and media education - allow flexible time for reflection, without imposing rigid breaks.

Skills developed

- emotional awareness
- creativity
- communication
- artistic literacy
- self-expression
- active listening
- reflection skills

Implementing suggestions

- Use a variety of music genres: orchestral, ballet scores, classical suites, atmospheric film soundtracks.
- Avoid lyrics, as they can influence interpretation too strongly.
- Try contrasting pieces (slow vs. energetic) to show emotional diversity.
- Allow sharing in pairs first: safer for shy participants.
- Encourage participants to display drawings in a mini-gallery at the end.
- Optional: repeat the activity at different times to compare emotional states.
- Allow extra time beyond the plan, especially for the reflection stage - participants may otherwise feel rushed.
- Explicitly explain, at both the start and end of the activity, the connection to media education and disinformation.



Knowledge is power – Reconstructing information and critical reflection

5-10

1 hour

Short overview

To help participants understand how incomplete or misleading information (visual or textual) influences perception, emotions and interpretation and to foster awareness of intuition versus verified knowledge.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- reconstruct incomplete visual or textual information (artworks or news headlines);
- reflect on their assumptions and intuitive reasoning;
- discuss how missing information can influence understanding, emotions, and decision-making;
- compare initial perceptions with verified facts.

Tool type:
media analysis / critical thinking exercise
participatory activity

Duration:
1 hour

Number of participants:
min. 5 - max. 10

Necessary materials

- fragmented images or headlines (printed)
- paper for notes
- markers or pens
- optional projector for displaying examples
- optional handouts with reflection questions

Description of the activity – step by step

1

Introduction (10 min)

- Facilitator introduces the activity: exploring how incomplete information affects perception.
- Explains that participants will work with fragmented artworks or headlines.
- Clarifies that the goal is to notice intuition and assumptions, not to "guess correctly" immediately.

2

Reconstruction exercise (15-20 min)

- Each participant receives a fragmented image or incomplete headline.
- Using paper and markers/pens, participants attempt to reconstruct the original artwork or story based solely on intuition and imagination.
- Encourage them to annotate thoughts, guesses and assumptions while working.
- Careful selection of the image fragments is pedagogically essential - they need to be ambiguous enough to spark diverse interpretations, but not so unclear that they discourage participation.

3

Comparison and verification (10-15 min)

- Participants receive the full artwork or complete article.
- They compare their reconstruction with the original.

Facilitator prompts reflection:

- How close were your assumptions to the actual content?
- What did you fill in based on prior knowledge or bias?
- Were there emotional reactions caused by missing information?

4

Reflection/discussion (10 min)

Guiding questions:

- How does incomplete information influence perception and interpretation?
- Did intuition help or mislead you?
- How does this relate to news, social media, and everyday information consumption?
- What strategies can help verify information before forming judgments?

5

Conclusions (5 min)

- Facilitator summarizes key lessons: critical thinking, the role of verification and awareness of personal bias.
- Emphasize that perception is subjective but can be improved with careful analysis and reliable sources.

Risks/challenges

- participants may over-rely on intuition without verification
- some may feel frustration if guesses are far from the original
- sensitive content in news examples may trigger emotional reactions
- too strong a focus on visual art may make the activity less relevant for participants with other interests (music, writing) - vary the type of material used

How to manage: Start with simple examples, maintain a safe discussion environment, focus on learning from the process rather than “right” answers, and guide reflection on personal assumptions.

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

- prepare fragmented artworks or incomplete/misleading headlines in advance;
- guide participants to reflect critically without judgment;
- start with simple examples and gradually increase complexity;
- encourage discussion about assumptions, bias and emotional reactions;
- connect the exercise to broader media literacy skills and real-life information evaluation;
- adapt the type of content (visual art, music, text) to the group's interests - the tool works very well, but can end up too centered on visual art if not diversified

Skills developed

- critical thinking
- media literacy
- observation skills
- reflection and self-awareness
- communication (discussion and sharing)
- optional artistic literacy / storytelling

Implementing suggestions

- Begin with simple, recognizable images or headlines.
- Gradually increase the difficulty of fragmented or misleading content.
- Use a mix of art and news to show different types of information processing.
- Encourage participants to annotate assumptions and emotional reactions.
- Link the activity to everyday media literacy: social media, news articles, and advertising.
- Actively adapt the tool to the type of participants - if the group has interests beyond visual art, use the lyrics/script/story variant described below;
- Optional: create a “gallery walk” to share reconstructed images and reflect collectively.



**You can also use lyrics, scripts, or stories, not only visual artworks. Participants can create an ending or interpretation for a story, song, or scene based on incomplete material, then compare it with the “original” ending. The activity can be adapted to different media types: music, written stories, or visual art. For more effective reflection, participants can be divided into groups by media type (e.g., one group works with music, another with writing, another with visual art). After completing the exercise, groups can share their interpretations, compare outcomes, and discuss how incomplete information produces different perspectives. For music-based exercises, allow more time to listen, respond and reflect.*

From reaction to reflection

5-12

1 hour

Short overview

To help participants recognize, reflect on and manage their emotional responses to news and media content, while developing self-awareness and constructive communication.
This activity works noticeably better with smaller groups of participants who genuinely want to be there, rather than an entire class. Pilot testing directly compared a 22-person whole-class group with a 14-person volunteer group: the smaller group was visibly more engaged and produced more insights.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify three positive and three negative emotions triggered by a news story
- Reflect on how media content affects their thoughts, mood and perspective
- Share insights with others in a respectful, constructive way
- Understand their own biases and reactions

Tool type:
participatory activity
reflection method

Duration:
1 hour

Number of participants:
5-12

Necessary materials
- printed news articles
- worksheets
- pens
- markers
- flipchart (optional)
- projector (optional for online/hybrid)

Description of the activity – step by step

1 **Introduction**
The facilitator introduces the activity, explains the goal (moving from immediate emotional reaction to thoughtful reflection) and distributes the news articles or offers a selection to choose from. Participants are reminded that emotions are personal and valid.

2 **Emotional identification**
Participants read the chosen news story individually.
They list three positive and three negative emotions the article triggers.
They can express these emotions through words, quick sketches, symbols or short notes.

3 **Reflection**
Each participant reflects on questions such as:
- Why do I feel this way?
- What part of the story triggered this?
- How does this influence my perception of the issue?

Participants fill in a short worksheet or write freely.

4 **Group discussion**
In pairs or small groups, participants share some insights (only what they feel comfortable sharing). They compare emotional reactions, notice differences, and explore how media framing shapes feelings.

5 **Conclusions**
The group comes together to summarize what they learned about emotional reactions, media influence and personal interpretation. The facilitator reinforces the importance of self-awareness when consuming media.

Risks/challenges

- Participants may feel vulnerable when sharing emotions.
- Some news topics may be too sensitive or triggering.
- Risk of disagreement if emotions differ widely.
- Facilitator must maintain psychological safety and respect.
- Large groups (20+), especially whole classes rather than volunteers, tend to reduce individual engagement and participation

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

- Provide safe, non-judgmental space for emotional sharing.
- Choose appropriate news stories (not overly traumatic).
- Encourage participants to express emotions without fear of criticism.
- Guide reflection with simple questions.
- Clarify media literacy concepts (bias, framing, emotional language).
- Support participants who feel overwhelmed.
- Ensure respectful communication at all times.

Skills developed

- critical thinking
- media literacy
- emotional awareness
- communication
- empathy
- active listening
- self-reflection

Implementing suggestions

- Choose news stories that are relevant but not emotionally overwhelming
- If possible, involve a psychologist or media expert for deeper reflection
- Use simple visual tools (emotion cards, color coding) to help participants express themselves
- Encourage journaling as a private option for those who don't want to share publicly
- The activity works very well with a trainer who has experience in youth communication or journalism
- Whenever possible, recruit participants on a voluntary basis rather than running the activity with an entire class - this was confirmed to make a significant difference in engagement and depth of reflection - for larger groups, consider extending the duration slightly (1h to 1h30) and adding a short break between the emotional identification and reflection stages



Art and Democracy: a journey through time

classroom

1 hour

Short overview

To explore historical periods and cultural contexts through art and to develop critical thinking, media literacy and interpretative skills.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Analyze artworks from different eras and cultural backgrounds, including propaganda pieces
- Compare personal interpretations and perspectives
- Understand the historical and societal context behind an artwork
- Identify visual codes, symbols and messages (explicit or hidden)

Tool type:
educational game
media analysis exercise

Duration:
1 hour (Can be run weekly or monthly; maximum 4 artworks per session - no more to avoid cognitive overload)

Number of participants:
Minimum 5 – maximum: a full classroom

Necessary materials

- Reproductions of artworks (physical or digital)
- Printed worksheets or question prompts
- Paper, pens, markers
- Projector or screen (optional)

Description of the activity – step by step

1 **Introduction (5 minutes)**
The facilitator introduces the topic: how art reflects society, democracy, daily life and cultural values across different historical periods. Participants are briefly presented with the theme of the session (e.g., fashion in different eras, everyday life, propaganda, cultural contrasts).

2 **Group Formation (2 minutes)**
Participants are divided into small groups (3-5 people) and each group receives a set of artworks from different eras, cultures, or political contexts.

3 **Individual Observation (5 minutes)**
Participants silently observe the artworks. They note what they see, feel and associate with the image: symbols, colors, people, objects, emotions, context clues. Optional/consider skipping: pilot testing showed participants have a natural tendency to verbalize their intuitions right away. If the group seems eager to discuss directly, you can skip the individual observation step and move straight to group analysis, without losing discussion quality.

4 **Group Analysis (10-15 minutes)**
Each group discusses the artwork using guiding questions provided by the facilitator.
Examples:

- What do you think is happening in this artwork?
- What period or culture might it represent?
- What message is the artist sending - explicit or hidden?
- How does this artwork relate to ideas of society, freedom or democracy?
- What does it say about daily life in that time or place?

5 **Comparative Reflection (10 minutes)**
Groups compare artworks from different time periods or cultures and identify contrasts:
How do depictions of society differ?
What changes can be seen in fashion, roles, values or power?
How might two cultures portray the same historical moment differently?

6 **Creative Interpretation (10 minutes)**
Each group summarizes their interpretation and prepares a short presentation, either verbally or visually (mind map, quick sketch, collage). They highlight key messages and how the artwork communicates ideas related to society or democracy.

7 **Group Presentations (10-15 minutes)**
Groups present their interpretations to the whole class.
Participants are encouraged to ask questions, agree/disagree respectfully and offer alternative readings.

8 **Facilitator's Context Input (3-5 minutes)**
After presentations, the facilitator reveals historical and cultural background information for each artwork, clarifying:

- the real era and location
- the intended message
- political context (if any)
- why artists used certain symbols or styles

9 **Final Reflection & Discussion (5 minutes)**
Participants discuss what surprised them, what interpretations differed across groups and how art can shape or question societal values. They reflect on the connection between media literacy, democracy, and cultural understanding.

Risks/challenges

- Some historical topics may be sensitive; the facilitator should frame them carefully
- Participants may project modern values without understanding context - guidance is needed
- Strong opinions might emerge; facilitator should mediate respectfully

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

- Select appropriate artworks and ensure they are culturally and historically accurate
- Provide simple guiding questions to support analysis and interpretation
- Encourage open discussion and ensure all participants feel safe to share ideas
- Clarify misunderstandings and offer historical or cultural context when needed
- Manage time and keep the group focused on the learning objectives
- Handle sensitive topics with care and promote respectful dialogue

Skills developed

- Critical thinking
- Media literacy
- Artistic and visual analysis
- Cultural literacy
- Empathy and perspective-taking
- Teamwork and collaborative interpretation

Implementing suggestions

- Provide guiding questions (e.g., What story does this image tell? What symbols suggest power, freedom, fear or tradition?)
- Allow free personal interpretation before offering historical context
- Encourage debate and comparisons between artworks
- Start with more accessible or familiar images; gradually introduce more complex pieces

Influencer or manipulator?

5-15

1 hour

Short overview

To develop critical thinking and media literacy skills that help participants evaluate social media posts, detect hidden advertising and understand emotional or persuasive manipulation used by influencers.
Note from pilot testing: participants tended to judge influencers as people rather than the techniques they use. Make it explicit from the introduction that the exercise analyzes techniques and content, not people.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Analyze social media posts with a critical eye.
- Identify sources, conflicts of interest and persuasive/emotional techniques.
- Detect hidden advertising, misleading claims or manipulative messaging.
- Evaluate the credibility and intentions behind influencer content.

Tool type:
media literacy exercise
educational game

Duration:
1 hour

Number of participants:
5-15

Necessary materials

- printed or digital influencer posts
- worksheets for analysis
- pens / markers
- projector or screen (optional)
- phones or tablets (if working digitally)
- optional: a form sent in advance where participants suggest examples of influencers/posts relevant to them

Description of the activity – step by step

1 **Introduction**
The facilitator explains the goal of the activity: to better understand how influencers shape opinions, emotions and behavior. Participants are introduced to concepts like emotional manipulation, hidden ads and credibility indicators.
Make it clear from the start that the goal is analyzing techniques, not judging influencers as people - participants tend to conflate the two.

2 **Group work: Post analysis**
Participants work in small teams. Each team receives 2-3 influencer posts (printed or digital). They analyze:

- Who is the author?
- What is being promoted?
- Are there sources or evidence?
- Are there potential conflicts of interest?
- What emotions or persuasive techniques are used?

Teams fill in a short analysis worksheet.

3 **Discussion: Credibility and manipulation**
Teams share findings. Together, they discuss:

- Is the post credible?
- Does it contain hidden advertising?
- Does it manipulate emotions or create pressure?
- How does the influencer shape their public image?

4 **Role-play variation (optional)**
Teams create their own ambiguous or manipulative influencer-style posts (written or sketched). Another team must fact-check and analyze the post using the same criteria.

5 **Conclusions**
The facilitator highlights the signs of manipulation, the importance of source checking and the impact influencers have on young people's perceptions.

Risks/challenges

- Participants may take criticism of influencers personally.
- Some posts may trigger emotional reactions.
- Risk of focusing on the influencer instead of the techniques used.
- Facilitator must redirect discussions toward analysis, not judgment.
- In an international context, finding examples that resonate across all groups can be difficult.

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

- Choose relevant and age-appropriate influencer posts.
- Encourage critical, not personal, analysis (focus on content, not attacking people).
- Guide the discussion on ethics, emotional impact and credibility.
- Explain techniques like framing, exaggeration, aesthetic persuasion and hidden ads.
- Support respectful teamwork and ensure everyone participates.
- Make explicit that the focus is on techniques, not people.

Skills developed

- media literacy
- critical thinking
- communication
- ethical reasoning
- teamwork
- observation and analysis

Implementing suggestions

- Choose influencers currently trending to keep engagement high.
- Include a short debrief on why certain tactics feel manipulative.
- Discuss how influencers construct their public persona through images and words.
- Encourage participants to think about ethical online behavior and transparency.
- Consider splitting into two separate sessions (theory, then application on real examples).
- Send a form in advance where participants suggest examples relevant to them .
- Make it explicit that the focus is on techniques, not on judging people.

Original or Algorithm? Unmasking AI Art

5-15

1-1.5 hours

Short overview

To develop critical thinking and media literacy regarding AI-generated art, foster appreciation for human creativity, and encourage ethical reflection on the role of AI in art and culture.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- identify works created by humans vs AI;
- discuss emotional, creative, and technical aspects of art;
- reflect on career paths that rely on human creativity;
- consider ethical and personal implications of AI in art and culture.

Tool type:
media analysis exercise
participatory activity

Duration:
1-1.5 hours (no breaks) - consider allowing extra time if the schedule permits;

Number of participants:
5-15

Necessary materials

- AI-generated and human-made artworks (images, videos, music, stories)
- devices for viewing or listening (computers, tablets, speakers)
- printed sheets or worksheets for noting observations
- pens / markers
- optional projector or screen for group viewing

Description of the activity – step by step

1

Introduction (10 min)

- Facilitator introduces the activity and explains objectives: analyzing artworks created by humans vs AI.
- Emphasizes the exercise is not about "guessing correctly" but developing critical awareness.
- Shows examples of very simple, easy-to-analyze works so participants can engage without feeling overwhelmed.
- Keep the theoretical part brief - the focus should be on the hands-on activity, not on lengthy explanations.

2

Analysis (15 min)
Participants individually or in pairs examine the selected works (music, images, stories, videos).
They note features that suggest human or AI creation, focusing on:

- emotional expression or lack thereof
- imperfections or spontaneity
- originality and narrative coherence
- technical style

Facilitator encourages observation of both obvious and subtle cues.
Careful selection of examples is essential for maintaining interest - AI-generated content is becoming increasingly realistic, so examples need to be checked and updated regularly.

3

Discussion / Debate (45 min)
Participants share their analyses and justify which works they think are AI-generated.
Group debates the elements that seem "AI-like" vs human, discussing:

- subtle imperfections in human works
- consistency or predictability in AI outputs
- emotional resonance, storytelling, and creativity

Facilitator guides ethical reflection:

- What can AI do well?
- What uniquely requires human creativity?
- How might AI impact future careers in art, music, writing, and other creative fields?

Discussion is dynamic; facilitator encourages respectful debate and reasoning rather than "correct answers."

4

Reflection / Conclusions (10-15 min)
Facilitator summarizes key takeaways:

- Humans bring unpredictability, emotion, and cultural context to creative work.
- AI can produce impressive technical outputs but often lacks intentionality or emotional depth.
- Recognizing both strengths and limitations fosters ethical, critical, and creative thinking.

Participants reflect on their own preferences, insights, and assumptions about AI art.

Risks/challenges

- participants may overestimate AI capabilities; telling human from AI content apart is becoming harder even for the facilitator, as the technology keeps advancing
- some may focus only on “guessing correctly” instead of reflection
- ethical discussions may be challenging for younger participants
- differences in familiarity with media may influence confidence

How to manage:

- Use simple examples first to build confidence
- Emphasize reasoning over “correct answers”
- Guide discussion to explore both emotional and technical qualities
- Ensure all participants have equal opportunity to contribute; allow enough time beforehand to select and verify AI vs. human examples

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

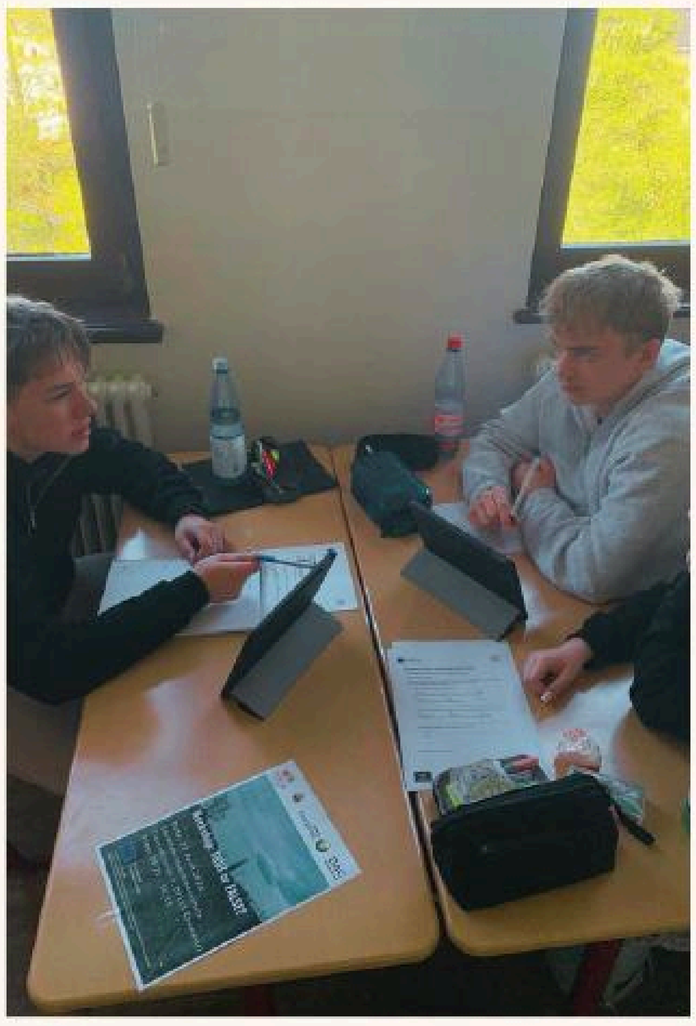
- select simple, accessible examples to start with;
- guide participants to analyze critically rather than only guess;
- encourage discussion of emotional, creative and ethical aspects;
- support debate with questions and examples;
- ensure participants understand the distinction between AI capabilities and human creativity;
- moderate discussions to avoid domination by more vocal participants;
- keep the theoretical portion short and focus on the hands-on activity - provide individual access to devices for research whenever possible - it sparks curiosity and engagement.

Skills developed

- critical thinking
- media literacy
- artistic creativity
- ethical reasoning
- teamwork
- reflection and discussion skills
- observation and analysis

Implementing suggestions

- Start with very easy examples to familiarize participants with AI vs human differences
- Encourage participants to explain their reasoning, not just state guesses
- Focus discussion on creative elements, imperfections, emotional resonance, and ethical implications
- Can be applied across different media types: music, visual art, storytelling, video
- Consider dividing participants into media-specific groups (e.g., one group for music, another for images, another for stories) to deepen focused analysis
- After group discussions, share outcomes collectively to compare interpretations and reflections
- The activity is easy to implement and does not require a break; timing allows 15 minutes for analysis and 45 minutes for discussion/debate
- If time allows, consider extending beyond the standard 15 minutes for the individual analysis stage - provide tablets or other devices for individual research - it turns the exercise into a "detective work" experience that sparks curiosity.



TRUE or FALSE?

small groups

1 hour

Short overview

To teach participants how to verify information using multiple sources and reflect on why emotions and first impressions often influence belief.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Verify surprising or controversial news using three different sources (official, credible, independent).
- Identify contradictions and emotional framing within a news story.
- Discuss why first impressions shape belief and how to counteract this.
- Reflect on the importance of fact-checking before sharing information.

Tool type:
participatory activity

Duration:
60 minutes
(Can also be used as homework if participants need time to search for sources)

Number of participants:
Minimum 5 – maximum a classroom

Necessary materials

- printed news items (real and fake)
- worksheets
- pens and markers
- internet access (computers, tablets, or phones)
- projector (optional)

Description of the activity – step by step

1

Introduction

- The facilitator explains the objective: verifying information and understanding how emotions impact belief. The rule is introduced: “If you can’t find three different sources, don’t share.”;
- Participants are divided into small groups with a leader and two support roles (note-taker, researcher);
- A short icebreaker at the start goes a long way for engagement. In online sessions, pay extra attention to this step, as it's harder to sustain and often isn't enough on its own.

2

Group analysis
Each group receives one surprising or controversial news item (either the same story or different ones). Their task is to verify it by finding three types of sources:

- an official source (institution, authority)
- a credible source (reliable media outlet)
- an independent source (not connected to the subject)

Groups analyze:

- origin of the news
- data or numbers used
- contradictions between sources
- emotional framing influencing readers

3

Verification and comparison

- Groups document all findings on a worksheet.
- If working online, they can screen-share results.
- Teams compare sources and highlight inconsistencies or verified facts.

4

Presentation and reflection
Each group briefly presents their findings: Is the news true, false or misleading?
Discussion continues around:

- Why did the story seem believable at first?
- What emotions did it trigger?
- How did emotions affect our initial judgment?

5

Conclusions & recommendation

- As a closing exercise, apply the "broken telephone" game using a real news story - it's whispered or passed along from person to person, then the original version is compared with the final one.
- The facilitator emphasizes evidence-based thinking, source diversity and the need for verification before sharing.
- Participants reflect on how to apply the “three sources rule” in daily life.

Risks/challenges

- Participants may struggle to find credible or independent sources.
- Emotional or controversial news may trigger strong reactions.
- Risk of confusion if stories are too complex.
- Facilitator must provide support and clarity.
- The online version needs a better-prepared icebreaker, otherwise engagement may fall short of expectations.

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

- Select age-appropriate and diverse news items (real, fake, or mixed).
- Guide participants in finding and evaluating sources.
- Keep the focus on analysis, not personal opinions.
- Explain the difference between official, credible and independent sources.
- Encourage teamwork and support group leaders.
- Manage sensitive topics with care.
- Reinforce emotional awareness when news triggers strong reactions.
- Prepare a solid icebreaker, especially for online sessions.

Skills developed

- media literacy
- critical thinking
- teamwork
- emotional awareness
- research skills
- source evaluation

Implementing suggestions

- Use a dynamic, timed role-play version where one group creates misleading news and another verifies it.
- Choose short, simple news items for beginners; increase complexity later.
- Encourage creative presentations (infographics, charts, storytelling).
- Reinforce the core message at the end: “If you can’t find three different sources, don’t share.”
- Close with the "broken telephone" exercise, to visually show how information gets distorted.



I AM THE ARTIST
Creative Role-Play with Historical or Artistic Figures

up to 50

1-2 hours

Short overview

The activity aims to develop creativity, cultural awareness and public speaking skills through the first-person interpretation of a real artist or historical figure, using theatrical, expressive and informative elements.

At the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- research a real artist or historical figure using reliable sources;
- construct a short first-person monologue based on real events;
- reproduce elements of the style, life or context of the chosen character;
- perform in front of an audience using body language, voice and simple props;
- identify the difference between verified information and assumptions (media literacy);
- reflect on how culture and art influence society.

Tool type:
educational game
participatory activity

Duration:
1-2 hours (plus 1 day individual research) - duration should scale with group size

Number of participants:
min. 2 participants + audience up to 40-50 people (recommended: groups of 10-15 max for the best engagement)

Necessary materials
- flipchart, markers
- paper sheets for notes
- simple props (hats, scarves, frames, symbolic objects)
- phone/tablet for research
- cards with artists or historical figures

Description of the activity – step by step

1

Introduction (10 min)
- The facilitator introduces the activity.
- Shows example cards or images of possible artists/historical figures.
- Explains the main rule: participants will perform a first-person monologue.
- The group takes 1 minute to choose their character (if they haven't already chosen one the day before).

2

Artistic activity (preparation + performance) (30 min)
- Each participant prepares a 1-2 minute monologue: "I am... and I am known for..."
- They can write down a few key ideas.
- They use body language, gestures, voice modulation, posture and simple props (hats, scarves, frames, symbolic objects).
- One by one, they present their monologue to the group.
- The audience tries to guess who the character is.

3

Media analysis (10 min)
Guiding questions:
- Where did you find information about your character?
- How did you check that it was accurate?
- Which sources seemed credible and why?
- What type of media influenced your perception of this character (videos, documentaries, social media, articles, etc.)?

4

Reflection/discussion (7-8 min)
Suggested questions:
- How did it feel to "step into the shoes" of this artist or figure?
- What emotions came up?
- What was easy or difficult about performing?
- What did you learn about the historical/cultural context of your character?

5

Conclusions (3-5 min)
- The facilitator summarizes the competences involved: research, creativity, empathy, critical thinking, public speaking.
- Highlights the importance of fact-checking when representing a real person.

Risks/challenges

- participants may feel shy or uncomfortable performing
- fear of public speaking
- finding inaccurate information online
- uneven preparation time between participants
- large groups may require time management

How to manage: Use warm-up exercises, offer examples, provide reassurance and allow optional pair work during preparation.

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator should:

- provide a set of artist/figure cards to help participants choose;
- create a safe and inclusive environment;
- clearly explain each step of the activity;
- support shy or anxious participants;
- encourage the use of reliable sources;
- moderate the discussion and offer constructive feedback.

Skills developed

- critical thinking
- media literacy
- artistic creativity
- teamwork
- communication & public speaking
- empathy
- research skills
- self-confidence

Implementing suggestions

- It is highly recommended that the facilitator prepares a set of artist/figure cards with short descriptions to inspire participants who don’t know whom to choose.
- You can include international figures as well as local or lesser-known cultural personalities.
- Pair rehearsals can help build confidence before the final performance.
- In an online version, participants can record and submit their monologue as a short video.
- Scale duration proportionally with group size (roughly 6 min/participant as a rule of thumb) - for participants who need more support during the research stage, consider supplementary general knowledge activities before the workshop



6. Case studies

The sheets presented in the previous section describe the final form of each tool, as it resulted from pilot testing. This section serves a different purpose: it shows how some of the tools were actually implemented in workshops, as documented directly by the facilitators responsible for testing.

The materials that follow are the actual presentations used by facilitators when running the workshops, and show how each tool was concretely brought to young people: the structure of the activity as presented to the group, the examples and visual materials used, and any adaptations made.

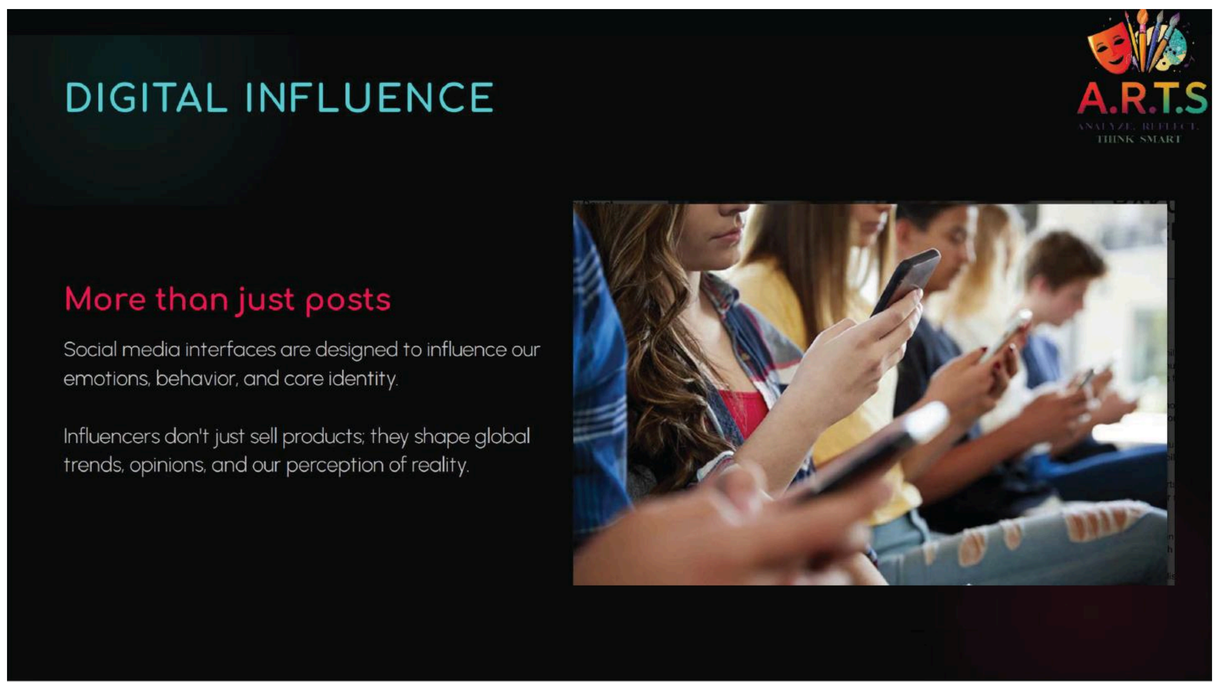
The purpose of these materials is to give a direct picture of how the tools were implemented in practice, beyond the summary presented in the “Pilot validation” section.



Influencer or Manipulator?

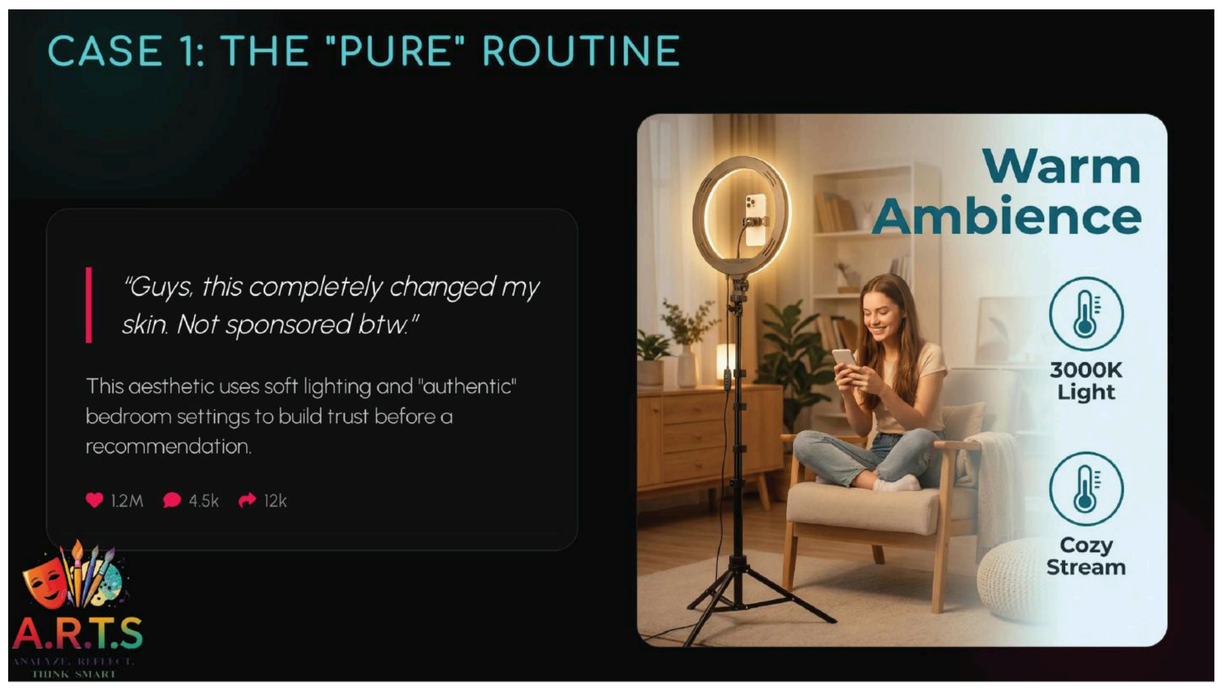
Facilitator: Patricia Brohanschi
Organization: National Athenaeum of Iași
Country: Romania

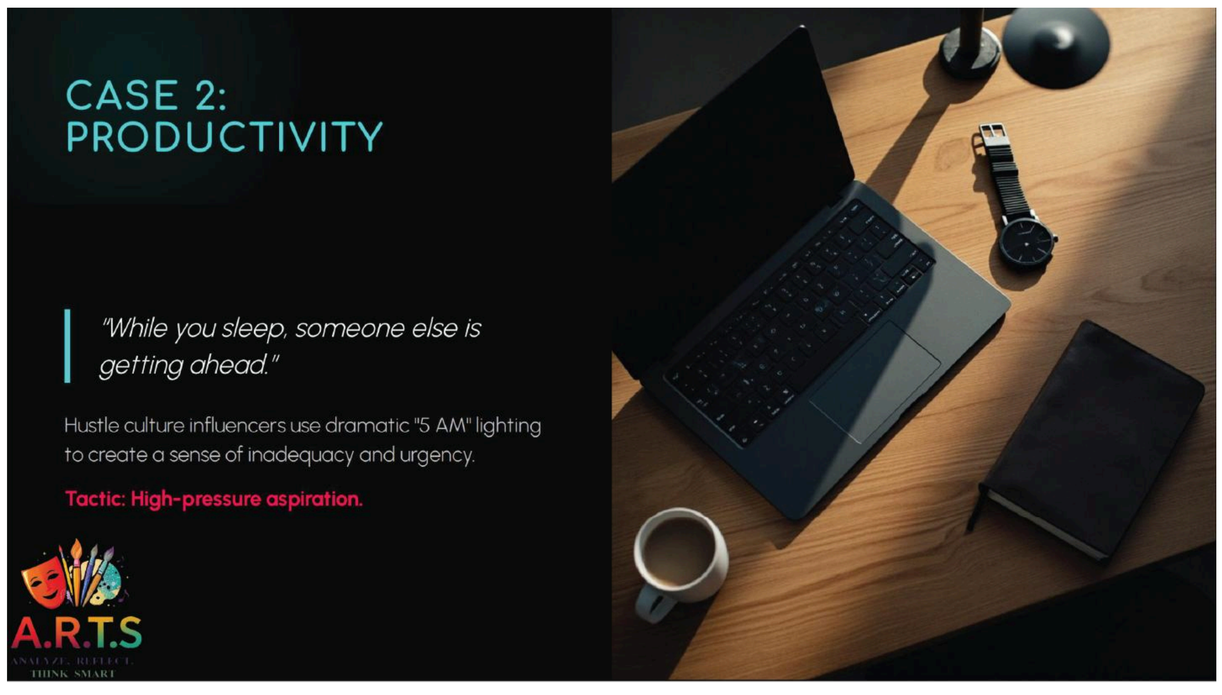


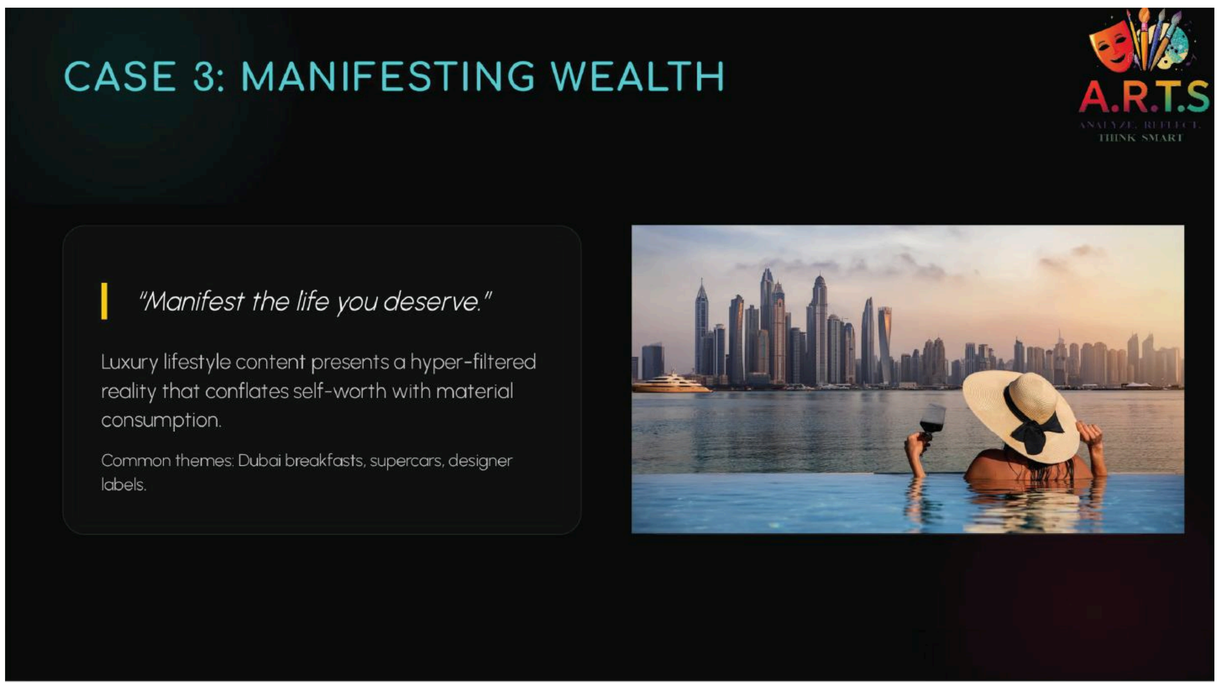












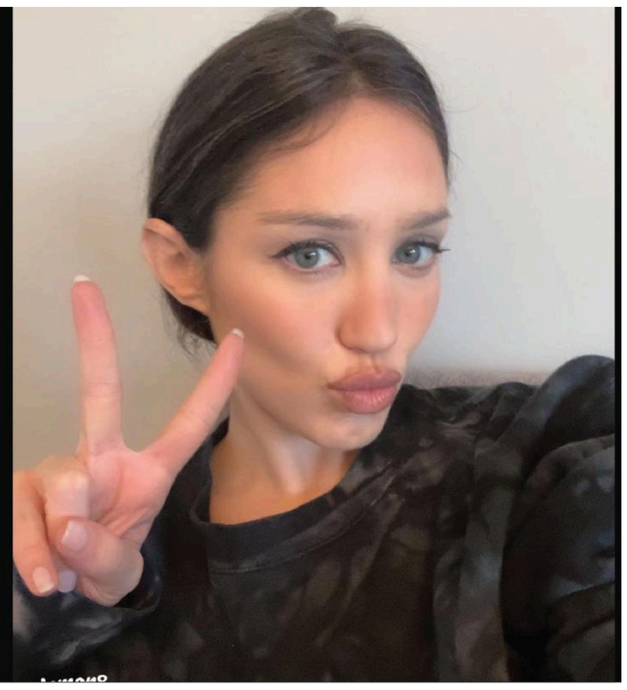
CASE 4: PERFORMANCE

> *"Social media isn't real and I've been struggling lately..."*

Strategic vulnerability can be a tool for engagement. It creates a deep parasocial bond through "raw" content.

The "Sad Selfie" is often a calculated move for viral reach.

A.R.T.S



INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

A.R.T.S
ANALYZE. REFLECT. THINK SMART



Challenge: Create a Fake Post

Pick a goal and use these keywords to design an influential post:

- Emotion
- Persuasion
- Urgency
- Aspiration
- Authenticity

BEYOND THE SCREEN

A.R.T.S
ANALYZE. REFLECT. THINK SMART

The Better Question

"Media literacy is not about distrusting everything online.

It is about asking better questions."

Who benefits from this post? How does it want me to feel? Is it real or a performance?



Digital Empowerment

A.R.T.S
ANALYZE. REFLECT. THINK SMART

The internet is designed to influence:

ATTENTION · EMOTIONS · BEHAVIOUR

Understanding that gives us more control.

True or False?

Facilitator: Izabela Vieriu
Organization: DAC Music Performance
Country: Norway

TRUE or FALSE?

Media Literacy in 60 Minutes
Izabela Vieriu
DAC MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Learn to verify information before you share | Online Workshop

Three Types of Sources

OFFICIAL

Government • Institutions

CREDIBLE

News outlets • Journalists

INDEPENDENT

Unbiased • Journalists

THE GOLDEN RULE

"If you can't find THREE sources, don't share."

This ONE rule stops misinformation.

Case Study: Jonathan the Tortoise

VIRAL: "Jonathan the tortoise (190 years) has died. Rest in peace, legend. "

Why it seemed believable:

- Jonathan IS real & famous
- The emotion ('Rest in peace') triggers sadness
- People share without checking

VERDICT: FALSE — Jonathan is ALIVE

How We Verified It

OFFICIAL

St Helena Government confirmed: *Jonathan is alive*

CREDIBLE

BBC & Reuters fact-checked: FALSE

INDEPENDENT

Guinness World Records: Verified alive

Red Flags: When to PAUSE & Verify

- Story makes you emotional (sad, angry, shocked)
- Sensational language ("SHOCKING!" "YOU WON`T BELIEVE THIS!")
- Vague sources ('*sources say*,' no proof)
- Urgency ('*Share before removed*!')
- Conspiracy language ('*They don't want you to know*')

When you see these: STOP. Find 3 sources. THEN decide to share.

Your Task (Next 25 Minutes)

1. **You'll get a story**
   Is it TRUE or FALSE?
2. **Find 3 sources**
   Official, credible, independent
3. **Fill the worksheet**
   Document your findings
4. **Prepare to present**
   2 minutes: What you found and your outcomes

Be the Critical Thinker

Verify before you share.

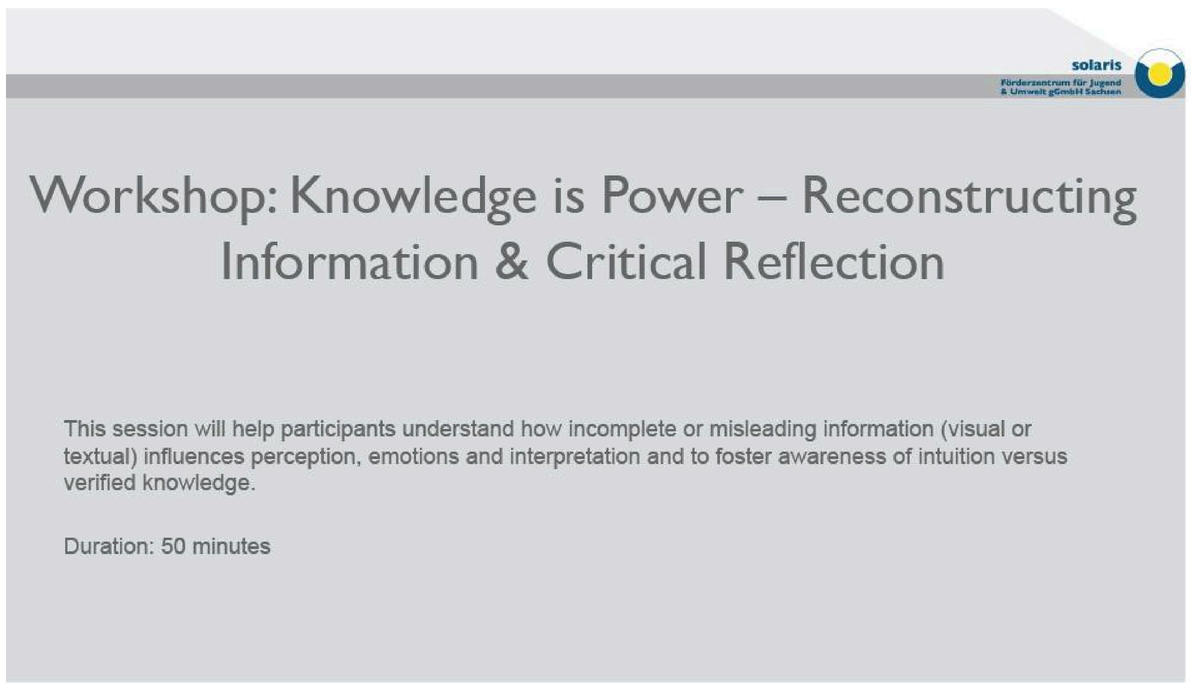
Questions?

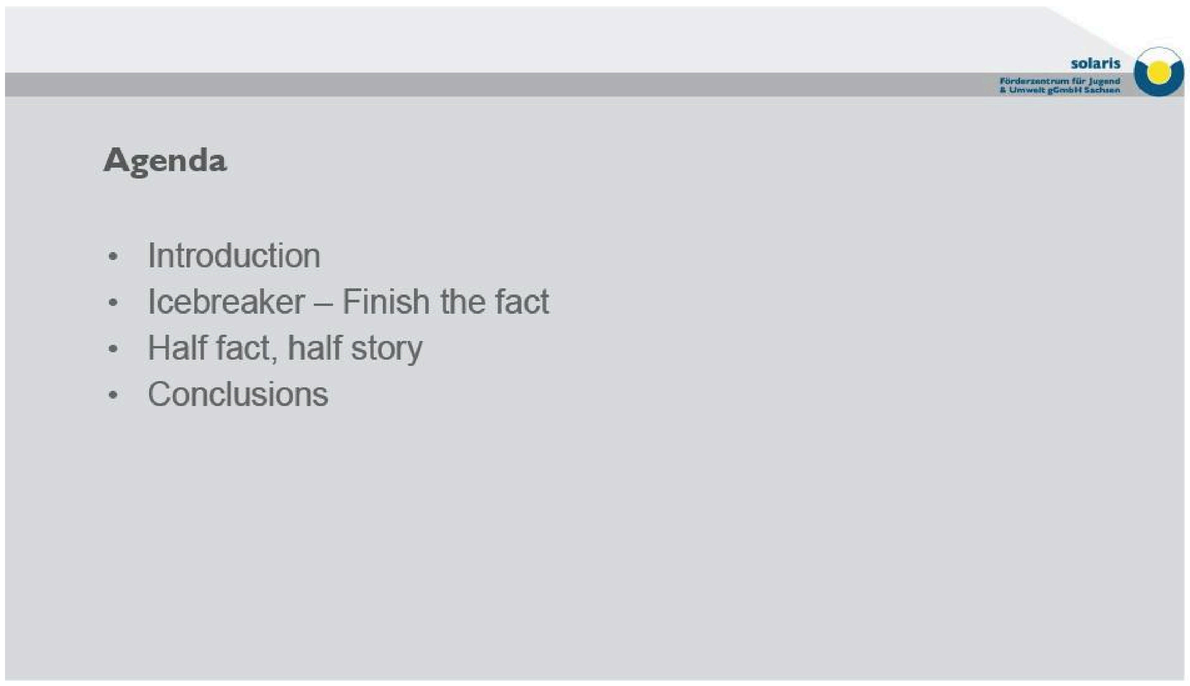
Knowledge Is Power

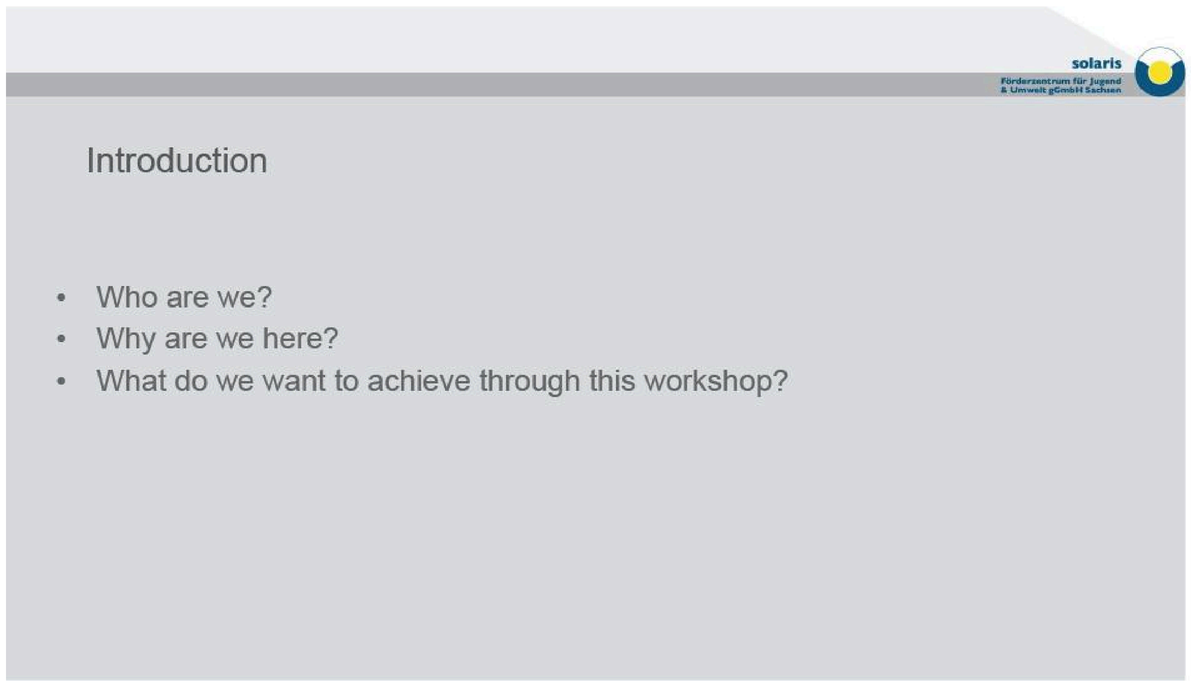
Facilitator: Paula Privighitorița

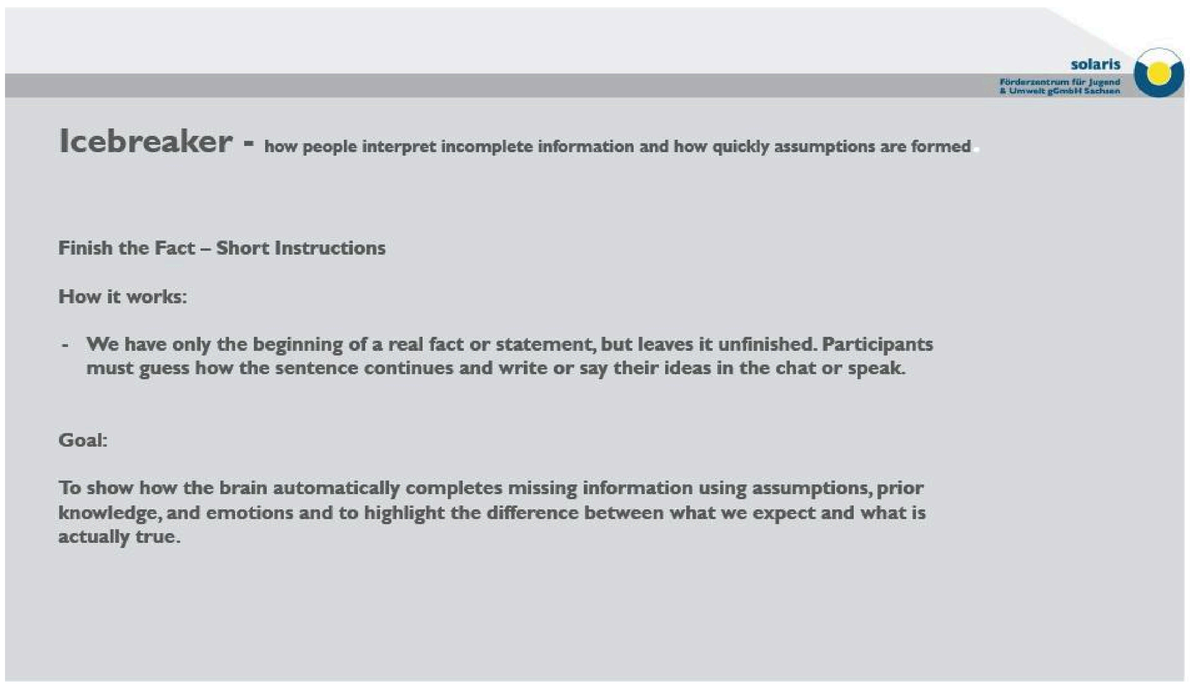
Organization:
solaris FZU gGmbH Sachsen

Country: Germany

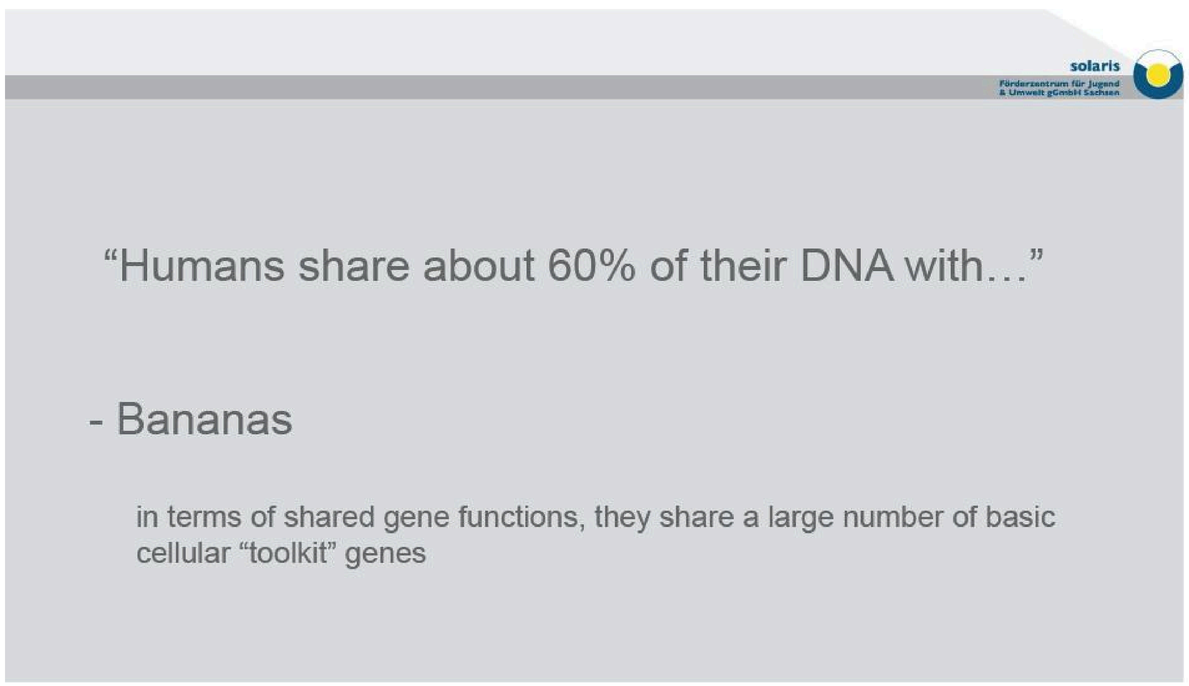


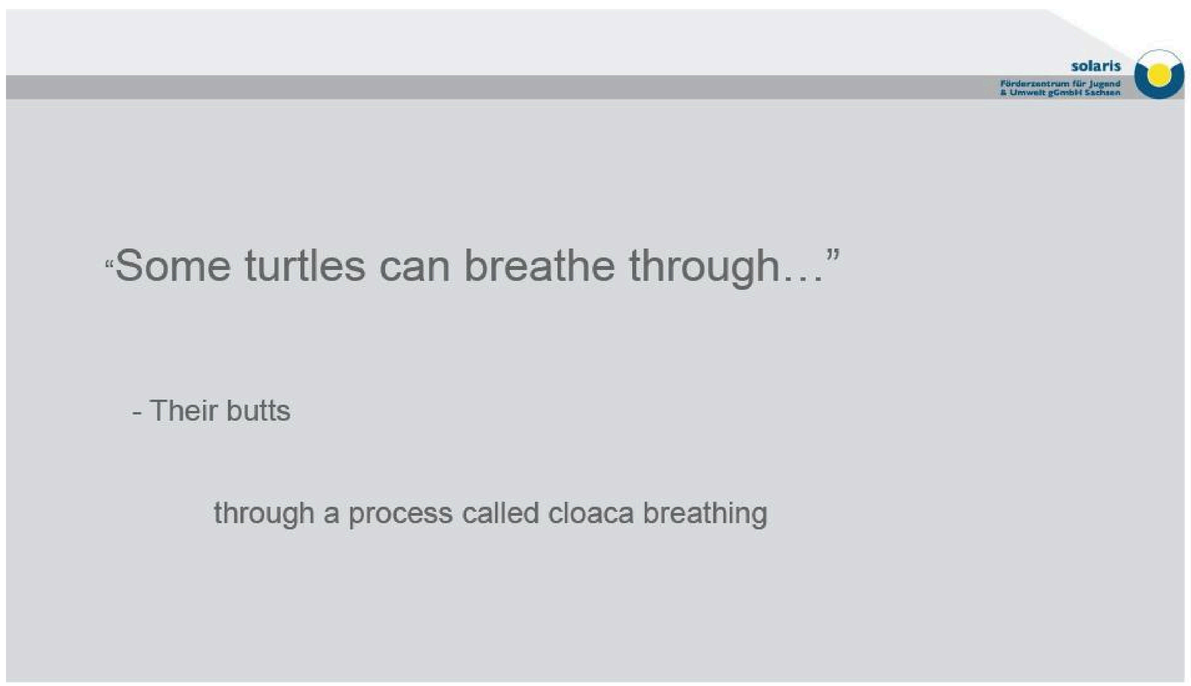












This presentation was delivered by solaris FZU gGmbH Sachsen within the A.R.T.S. – Analyse, Reflect, Think Smart project (2025-1-RO01-KA220-YOU-000366137), co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, as part of the transnational "Knowledge Is Power" workshop held online on 20 May 2026. Images © solaris FZU.

The first computer bug was actually…

- a real moth stuck inside a computer

In 1947, engineers working on a large early computer called the Harvard Mark II discovered that the machine had stopped working because a moth became trapped inside the hardware.

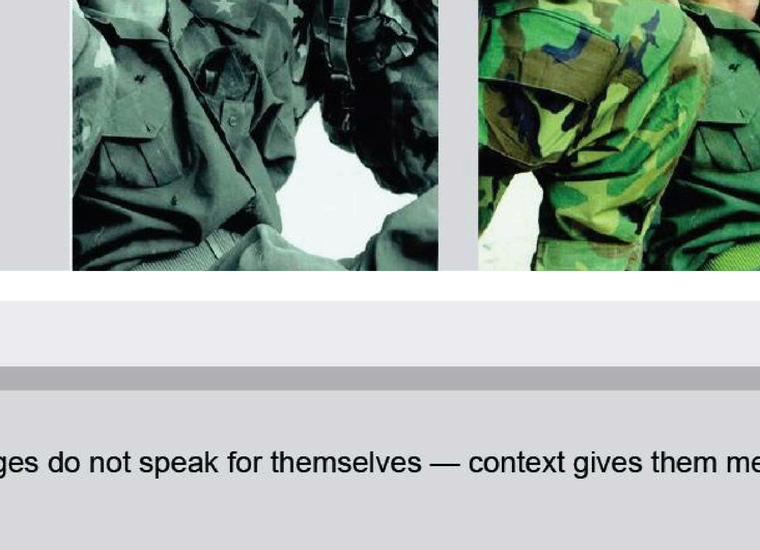
They removed the moth and taped it into the logbook with the note:
“First actual case of bug being found.

Activity 2. Exploring how incomplete information affects perception.

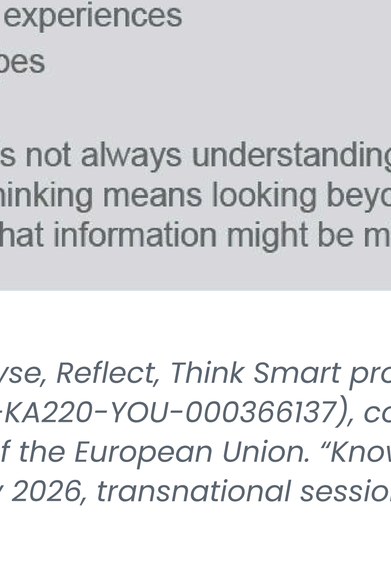
Half fact, half story

Simple Instructions:

You will get some photos that shares certain situations. Write down what you think is happening here. Describe **the scene, the people, the emotion, and what story you believe this image tells.**



1. The scene
2. The people
3. Emotions
4. What is the image telling us?



1. The scene
2. The animals
3. Emotions
4. What is the image telling us?

Conclusions:

- Incomplete information changes interpretation
- Misinformation spreads through fast assumptions
- Headlines are designed to create quick reactions
- Slowing down before judging



1. The scene
2. The people
3. Emotions
4. What is the image telling us?

- Conclusions:

When context is missing, the brain automatically fills the gaps using:

- assumptions
- emotions
- previous experiences
- Stereotypes

- “Seeing is not always understanding.”
  Critical thinking means looking beyond the first impression and asking what information might be missing.

“Images do not speak for themselves — context gives them meaning.”

A.R.T.S. – Analyse, Reflect, Think Smart project (2025-1-RO01-KA220-YOU-000366137), co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. “Knowledge Is Power” workshop, delivered online, 20 May 2026, transnational session. Images © solaris FZU.

From Reaction to Reflection

Material proposed during the tool-finalization workshop “The Art of Educating: Creative Tools for Young People”, held in February 2026

EMOTION RADAR

How Media Moves Me

Track • Reflect • Think critically

Name _____

Date _____

Am I reacting - or thinking?

Quick Guide to Your Emotions

Remember: emotions make us human!



The **3** Easy Steps:

1. Notice what you feel
2. Slow down & investigate
3. Reflect & connect patterns



Am I reacting - or thinking?

What did I just see?

On what platform? Briefly describe it.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

First emotion

Circle or highlight.

Anger
Fear
Excitement
Happiness
Disgust
Sadness
Surprise
Pride
Anxiety
Other: _____

Am I reacting - or thinking?

Intensity scale

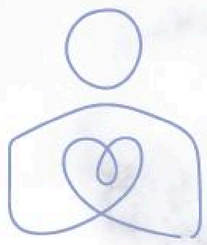
1 2 3 4 5

Barely felt → Very strong reaction

Body check

Where did I feel it?

- ☐ Chest
- ☐ Stomach
- ☐ Head
- ☐ Shoulders
- ☐ Face
- ☐ Nowhere else



Am I reacting - or thinking?

Slow Down & Investigate

Why might I be feeling this?

Does it confirm my beliefs?

Is it dramatic?

Is it urgent?

Is everyone reacting?

What might the creator WANT me to feel?

Who benefits if I react strongly?

- [ ] Creator
- [ ] Platform
- [ ] Advertisers
- [ ] Political group
- [ ] Not sure

Think Like a Media Detective

What information might I be missing?
Did I check the source?
Would I react the same way tomorrow?
Did emotion affect my judgment?

Reflection Page

Which platform triggered me the most?
When was I most likely to share?
Are my strongest reactions mostly positive or negative?
What surprised me most about myself?

7. Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Comparative Research Report (Romania, Germany, Norway)

Table of Contents

1. **Introduction**.....42

2. **Comparative analysis of the national research findings and analysis of the questionnaire results for young people**.....42
   2.1. Socio-demographic profile of respondents - comparative analysis.....42
   2.2. Descriptive-comparative analysis of the data.....44
   2.2.1. Non-formal education and its role in young people's development.....44
   2.2.2. Critical thinking and its promotion in non-formal education setting.....46
   2.2.3. The impact of the arts on media perception and cognitive processes.....46

3. **Summary of the discussions and conclusions from the round tables**.....51

4. **Conclusions and recommendations in a European context - towards a methodology for media education through art**.....53

Key terms used in this report

Formal learning: learning that takes place in an organised and structured environment (e.g. school, university), is intentional from the learner's perspective, and typically leads to a qualification or certification.

Non-formal learning: intentional learning that takes place through planned activities (e.g. youth work, community or arts programmes) outside formal education settings, which is not necessarily certified.

1. Introduction

This synthesis and comparative report is based on **three national research reports (Germany - Chemnitz, Norway, Romania)**, developed within the **A.R.T.S. - ANALYZE, REFLECT, THINK SMART** project (Erasmus+). The analysis looks at how non-formal education, critical thinking and the arts contribute to young people's development across different socio-educational contexts.

The report includes:

- quantitative analysis (figures, percentages);
- comparisons between countries;
- integrated interpretation of the results;
- data-based SWOT analysis;
- concrete recommendations for improvement;
- conclusions.

2. Comparative analysis of the national research findings and analysis of the questionnaire results for young people

2.1. Socio-demographic profile of respondents - comparative analysis

Looking at the characteristics of the research samples in the three participating countries (Germany, Romania and Norway), the following relevant comparative features can be identified, given that the socio-demographic structure of respondents directly influences how the results on non-formal education, critical thinking and the role of the arts should be interpreted.

Sample size and distribution by country

Country	Number of respondents	Type of research
Germany (Chemnitz)	154	quantitative questionnaire
Romania (Iași - urban/ peri-urban/rural)	313	quantitative questionnaire
Norway	103	quantitative questionnaire

The differences in sample size need to be taken into account in the comparative analysis. Romania has the largest sample, which allows for a more detailed analysis by subgroup, while Germany and Norway offer narrower but contextually relevant perspectives. Methodologically, it should be noted that the three samples are not equal in size, so any comparison for this purpose must take into account the limitations this places on the internal validity of the research.

Note: throughout this report, findings are reported as precise percentages where the original national data allowed for this; where source reports used qualitative categories (e.g. high / moderate / low / comparable), these have been kept as originally provided by the partner organisations.

Age structure

Country	Dominant age range	Relevant percentage
Germany	15-18 years	majority of respondents
Romania	15-16 years	75.7% of the sample
Norway	adolescents	concentrated in secondary education

Analysis:

- The Romanian sample is the most homogeneous in terms of age, concentrated within a key stage of cognitive development.
- Germany shows a wider age range, which brings diversity but also variation in cognitive maturity.
- Norway follows the standard European structure for research involving adolescents.

Gender distribution

Country	Girls	Boys
Germany	balanced	balanced
Romania	54.63%	45.37%
Norway	balanced	balanced

Interpretation:
The relatively balanced gender distribution in all three countries reduces the risk of gender bias and allows for valid comparisons of educational attitudes and behaviours.

Area of residence

Country	Urban	Rural
Germany	92.2%	7.8%
Romania	44.41%	55.59%
Norway	mostly urban	low

Comparative analysis:

- Germany and Norway are dominated by respondents from urban areas, reflecting greater access to educational and cultural infrastructure.
- Romania stands out for its rural majority, a key factor in interpreting lower participation in non-formal activities and limited access to cultural resources.

Ethnic and migration background

Country	Majority	Minorities
Germany	86% German	14% migrants
Romania	92.3% Romanian	7.7% minorities
Norway	moderate diversity	high level of integration

Analysis:

- Germany shows the highest level of cultural diversity, which points to a need for intercultural non-formal programmes.
- Romania has a more ethnically homogeneous sample, though this may mask the specific needs of vulnerable groups.
- Norway benefits from inclusive education policies that help offset cultural differences.

This structure points to a relatively good level of family stability, but also to certain vulnerabilities that can affect school motivation and access to extracurricular activities.

Correlating sample characteristics with the results

- The predominance of urban respondents in Germany and Norway explains the higher level of access to non-formal education.
- Romania's strong rural component correlates with occasional participation and with reliance on school as the main provider of educational opportunities.
- Germany's cultural diversity accounts for the emphasis placed on empathy, art and intercultural dialogue.

2.2. Descriptive-comparative analysis of the data

2.2.1. Non-formal education and its role in young people's developmen

Perception of the role of non-formal education

Country	Major role in personal development	Complementary role	Marginal role
Germany	~60%	~30%	~10%
Romania	>85%	~10%	<5%
Norway	>90%	marginal	almost non-existent

Interpretation: In Romania and Norway, non-formal education is seen as essential for **holistic development**, while in Germany it is predominantly viewed as complementary rather than central.

Frequency of participation

Frequency	Germany	Romania	Norway
Weekly	18.2%	14.4%	high
Monthly	37.3%	10.9%	medium
Occasional / rare	36.4%	68.7%	low

Descriptive trend:

- Romania → sporadic participation
- Germany → moderate participation
- Norway → consistent participation

The extent to which non-formal education contributes to young people's development

Assessment by area (score 0-4)

Area	Germany	Romania	Norway
Personal development	high	3.29	high
Creativity	medium	3.25	high
Social skills	medium	3.25	high
Critical thinking	medium	3.20	high
Civic engagement	low	2.96	medium

Interpretation: Non-formal education appears to have the greatest perceived impact in Romania, although civic applicability remains limited. These comparative figures should also be read against certain statistical limitations, since the samples are not equal in size.

Access to non-formal educational resources

Resource type	Germany	Romania	Norway
Schools / teachers	78.4%	85.9%	high
Cultural centres / museums	moderate	low	high
NGOs / youth centres	low	8.6%	medium-high
Digital educational resources	limited	15.7%	medium

Interpretation: Norway has a diversified educational ecosystem, Germany has infrastructure that remains underused compared with Norway, and Romania has resources concentrated mainly within schools, with non-formal educational institutions outside school remaining almost undeveloped.

2.2.2. Critical thinking and its promotion in non-formal education settings

Behaviours associated with critical thinking

Indicator	Germany	Romania	Norway
Considering multiple perspectives	83.7%	83.7%	very high
Arguing with evidence	46.1%	60.3%	high
Checking media sources	53.2%	23.6%	high

Interpretation: Germany excels at verifying information, Romania at building arguments, and Norway at combining both behaviours.

Verifying information

Country	Frequently verifies information
Germany	53.2%
Romania	23.6% (always)
Norway	high (media literacy)

2.2.3. The impact of the arts on media perception and cognitive processes

Time spent online (4-6h/day)

Germany	Romania	Norway
51.3%	46.3%	comparable

Art forms with cognitive impact

Art form	Germany	Romania	Norway
Music	74.8%	high	high
Film / documentary	78.3%	69.9%	very high
Reading	53.1%	53.1%	high

Common effects identified:

- development of creativity (70%+);
- empathy and social reflection (35-40%);
- analytical and observational skills.

Art as a filter for interpreting media

Effect	Germany	Romania	Norway
Greater attention to detail	46.9%	42.3%	high
Critical reflection on messages	37.8%	~40%	high
Awareness of media manipulation	medium	low-medium	high

Interpretation: The arts support the critical reading of digital media, with the greatest impact where they are integrated methodologically (Norway).

Cognitive skills stimulated through art

Cognitive skill	Germany	Romania	Norway
Creativity	73.9%	high	very high
Logical thinking	38-40%	38-40%	high
Observation	42.3%	42.3%	high
Empathy	35.0%	medium	high
Metacognition	low	low	medium

Final interpretation: Art predominantly stimulates creativity and observation, but Norway achieves a more consistent transfer towards metacognition and critical thinking, thanks to its integrated educational framework.

On the other hand, in summary, when it comes to the level of media literacy and critical thinking, media literacy is assessed through young people's ability to discern information and apply verification mechanisms (fact-checking).

Indicator	Romania (Iași)	Germany (Chemnitz)	Norway (Oslo)
Sample	313 students	154 students	103 young people/youth workers
Source verification	Low: only 23.6% always verify information.	Moderate: 53.2% verify regularly; 23.1% rarely.	Inconsistent: most rely on intuition.
Institutional trust	High in family (74.1%) and teachers (73.2%).	High in facts/evidence (53.9%) and school.	High in institutions and official sources.
News source	Social media (dominant).	A mix of online sources and formal education.	Online, with discernment still developing.

Detailed interpretation:

- **Romania:** There is an emotional reliance on close sources (family/teachers). Although young people recognise the importance of critical thinking, they fall short when it comes to fact-checking, leaving them vulnerable to disinformation.
- **Germany:** Young people are more pragmatic. More than half of them actively look for evidence before accepting information as true, reflecting an education system that emphasises factual rigour.
- **Norway:** A high level of systemic trust is observed. However, the report notes a gap between awareness of risks and active verification behaviour, with young people often relying on a “feeling” of truth rather than a technical verification process.

When it comes to media consumption and its influence on young people's development, digital consumption is massive in all three countries, although its psychological and social impact differs slightly.

A. Time and platforms:

- **More than 4-6 hours/day:** This is the common average (46.3% in RO, 51.3% in DE).
- **Platform hierarchy:**

  TikTok: The clear leader in Germany (79.5%) and very popular in Romania (77.9%).
  Instagram: More popular in Romania (89.7%) than in Germany (58.9%).
  YouTube: Consistent across all regions (approx. 50-70%).

B. Influence on development:

- **Romania:** A dual impact. 81% feel more informed, but 22% admit that social media distorts their perception of reality. Art consumed online (music) directly affects their emotional state.
- **Germany:** Social media is seen mainly as entertainment (92.6%). There is concern about digital "overload" and a need for non-formal literacy to make up for the school system's focus on purely technical skills.
- **Norway:** Development is even across rural and urban areas. Digital media is a tool for critical socialising, but the report highlights the risk of young people becoming passive consumers in the absence of creative ways to engage.

When it comes to integrating art into media education, examples and cultural context, the A.R.T.S. project proposes art as an antidote to passive consumption. Here is how this plays out in each context:

Romania: Art as an Exercise in Observation

- **Example:** Using photography and film to analyse subliminal messages.
- **Impact:** 62.3% of young people feel that art helps them notice details they would otherwise miss.
- **Interpretation:** In the Romanian context, art is a vehicle for empathy. The risk identified in the report is that young people may stay at the level of emotion (I like it / I don't like it), without moving on to a critical analysis of the political or social message behind the work.

Germany: Art as a Bridge to Creativity

- **Example:** Programmes run by the solaris organisation in Chemnitz, which combine technical education (the city's industrial heritage) with film and music workshops.
- **Impact:** 73.9% of respondents associate art with the development of creativity.
- **Interpretation:** Art is used to "humanise" an educational path shaped by industry and technology, giving young people tools to express their own opinions, not just to process data.

Norway: Art as a Method of Media Construction

- **Example:** "Media construction literacy" workshops where young people deconstruct how a visual or artistic message is created.
- **Impact:** 48.5% believe in the effectiveness of artistic methods for critical thinking.
- **Interpretation:** The Norwegian approach is the most structured of the three. The emphasis is on understanding how art can be used either to manipulate or to free up thinking, which calls for very clear pedagogical frameworks so it is not perceived merely as "play".

The analysis shows that although all young people are "digital natives", **Romania** needs more support with active fact-checking, **Germany** needs greater openness to non-formal learning, and **Norway** needs pedagogical structures that link art to media literacy in order to reduce scepticism. Across all three contexts, art remains the most welcomed tool for turning passive consumption into critical reflection.

We can therefore summarise the following points for each country, drawing on all the methodological aspects presented above:

Germany (Chemnitz)

The German sample shows high cognitive potential but underuse of non-formal education. Although 83.7% of young people say they consider multiple perspectives, only 39.5% are explicitly familiar with the concept of non-formal education.

Key characteristics:

- non-formal education is seen as a complementary rather than a central role;
- cultural infrastructure exists but is insufficiently connected to schools;
- the arts (film, music) have a cognitive impact, but without pedagogical continuity;
- verification of media information is relatively better than in Romania.

Romania

Romania stands out for an extremely positive perception of non-formal education, with average scores between 3.08 and 3.29 (out of 4) for young people's development. Over 85% of respondents are familiar with non-formal education, but participation is often occasional.

Key characteristics:

- school plays a central role as a provider of non-formal education;
- limited access to NGOs and community resources;
- the arts stimulate creativity and reflection, but less so metacognition;
- civic engagement remains the lowest-rated dimension.

Romania is a system with high potential but structurally fragmented.

Norway

Norway stands as the reference model in this analysis. Non-formal education is implicitly built into the educational path, and the arts are used methodologically to develop critical thinking and media literacy.

Key characteristics:

- consistent access to diverse resources (schools, NGOs, community, digital);
- critical thinking is treated as a cross-curricular competence;
- art supports the transfer towards metacognition and social reflection;
- a balance between personal development and civic engagement.

Norway functions as a coherent and sustainable educational ecosystem.

The SWOT analysis below is built strictly on the empirical results from Germany, Romania and Norway, and reflects how non-formal education, critical thinking and the arts function as an educational ecosystem.

A. Strengths

- Strong interest among young people in reflection and dialogue: over 80% of respondents (Germany and Romania) say they consider multiple perspectives.
- Strong role of the arts in stimulating creativity (70%+ in all three countries).
- Active cultural consumption (film, music, digital media), which offers strong educational potential.
- A functional Nordic model (Norway), which demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating non-formal education into the system.

B. Weaknesses

- Inconsistent participation in non-formal education, particularly in Romania and Germany.
- Low awareness of the concept in Germany (only 39.5%).
- Limited verification of media information, especially in Romania (23.6% say they consistently check sources).
- Lack of pedagogical continuity: many activities are isolated, with no long-term impact.

C. Opportunities

- Integrating the arts as a cross-cutting pedagogical tool (film, theatre, digital storytelling).
- Developing media literacy using the platforms young people already prefer (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube).
- Transferring good practices from the Norwegian model to Romania and Germany.
- European funding (Erasmus+, CERV) to strengthen non-formal education.

D. Threats

- Increased exposure to disinformation and fake news in the digital environment.
- Overemphasis on traditional formal education, to the detriment of critical skills.
- Inequalities in access (urban-rural, cultural infrastructure).
- Lack of institutional recognition of non-formal education in some national contexts.

3. Summary of the discussions and conclusions from the round tables

The A.R.T.S. project aims to identify young people's needs in developing critical thinking and to use artistic methods as complementary educational tools. The consultations brought together experts, artists, teachers and youth workers to inform the creation of practical tools for countering disinformation.

Perspectives of the actors involved

A. Experts and specialists

Art as neutral space: Experts see art as “safe ground” for debating polarising topics (gender, politics), avoiding the barriers of political correctness that can inhibit dialogue.

Emotional regulation: Artistic practice helps young people manage their emotional reactions to media content.

Institutional role: Examples such as the Nobel Institute are seen as models of education for peace through cultural means.

B. Teachers

Education through emotion: Teachers argue that education without emotion is bound to fail, and that dialogue is essential for development.

Sanctioning systems: In some countries, students are already penalised for using uncritical sources or AI-generated work.

Curricular integration: It is proposed that theatre or art classes be introduced on a permanent basis to develop discernment and synthesis skills.

C. Artists

Deconstructing illusions: Theatre is defined as a place of intense emotional experience, but also as a powerful tool for deconstructing manipulation.

Active interpretation: Taking part in artistic events forces young people to analyse and compare information, rather than just passively receiving it.

Risk of manipulation: Artists themselves acknowledge that art can be used to manipulate the masses if it is not accompanied by critical reflection.

D. Youth workers

Algorithmic bubbles: They report that young people are trapped in bubbles that promote far-left or far-right propaganda, with limited autonomy in evaluating sources.

Online trends: Schools frequently see incidents of violence or mobbing that reproduce trends from social media.

Digital gap: Youth workers feel they lack the skills to work with new media formats and AI-generated content.

Challenges identified at European level

- **Disinformation and manipulation:** Consumption of platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and podcasts often presents one-sided perspectives.
- **Shrinking attention spans:** Young people mostly consume short visual formats, which makes traditional analysis tools ineffective.
- **The urban-rural gap:** Access to specialised arts education is far more limited in rural or peripheral areas than in major urban centres.
- **Funding:** In Norway, although a balanced civic system exists, artistic engagement is seen as underfunded and less centralised than in other parts of Europe.

Practical recommendations for educational materials

Participants proposed a series of concrete solutions that will form the basis for future A.R.T.S. modules:

I. Micro-tools and gamification

Visual checklists: Creating sets of "3-5 key questions" for the quick analysis of Reels- or TikTok-style content.
Quizzes and simulations: Gamifying the fact-checking process to boost young people's engagement.

II. Structured art workshops

Decoding emotions: Exercises to identify manipulation techniques used through music, editing or headlines.
Hands-on creation: Using media collage, forum theatre, graffiti and visual storytelling as forms of reflection.

III. Methodological approaches

Scaffolded learning: Gradually moving from facilitator-led analysis to independent analysis.
Micro-learning: Short, dynamic sessions built around young people's personal experiences (identity, success, peer pressure).
Digital application: Developing a digital tool for checking the credibility of news websites.

4. Conclusions and recommendations in a European context - towards a methodology for media education through art

Building on the analysis carried out across the three discussion groups, here is an action plan structured around strategic pillars, which brings together the good practice examples identified in Norway, Germany and Romania:

Pillar 1: Rapid analysis methods and “micro-learning”
This pillar focuses on adapting the learning process to young people's short attention spans and their consumption of short-form visual content.

• **Implementing visual “micro-tools”:** Creating simple checklists or sets of 3-5 “key questions” that young people can apply instantly when consuming content on TikTok, Reels or YouTube.
• **Gamifying information verification:** Using quizzes, challenges and digital simulations to turn fact-checking into a competitive and engaging activity.
• **Scaffolded learning:** Gradually moving from mentor-led analysis exercises to independent evaluation of sources, to build young people's confidence in their own judgement.

Pillar 2: Art as a tool for deconstruction and reflection
Using the arts to provide “neutral”, safe ground on which difficult or manipulative topics can be explored.

• **Forum theatre and documentary:** Using performances followed by debrief sessions (“post-performance reflection”) to visualise and deconstruct manipulation mechanisms and stereotypes.
• **“Decoding emotions” workshops** : Practical exercises analysing how music, video editing and headlines are used in media to generate quick emotional reactions at the expense of logic.
• **Participatory artistic creation:** Using media collage, graffiti and visual storytelling to let young people express their own perspectives on social reality.

Pillar 3: Reducing gaps and promoting social inclusion
Extending resources to disadvantaged areas and countering isolation within “algorithmic bubbles”.

• **The A.R.T.S. caravan in rural areas:** Organising themed caravans with artists and specialists travelling to schools in peripheral areas, where access to cultural infrastructure is limited.
• **Creating “safe spaces”:** Facilitating workshops where young people can discuss taboo topics (identity, politics, religion) without fear of being stigmatised or judged.
• **Countering political segregation:** Using art as a mediator to bring together young people with different political views, giving them a space to practise respectful dialogue.

Pillar 4: Training educators and engaging the community
Ensuring the project's sustainability by preparing the adults who guide young people.

• **Methodological guides for educators:** Producing handbooks with clear steps for teachers and youth workers on how to use art in lessons or youth activities.
• **Educational programmes for parents:** Organising information sessions for parents, so that critical thinking continues to be built at home as well.
• **Integrating digital tools:** Developing an application to help check the credibility of news websites, bringing technology into the critical learning process. .

Good practice examples identified:

1. **The “ungdomsskole” system (Norway):** Integrating critical thinking principles directly into art and music classes.
2. **The German/Italian assessment model:** Penalising the use of uncritical sources or AI-generated content in grading, encouraging academic rigour.
3. **Using prestigious institutions:** Using examples such as the Nobel Institute to illustrate education for peace through culture.
4. **Adapted logistical restrictions:** Using printed questionnaires in schools where phones are banned (Saxony), to ensure full accessibility.

Comparative examples of good practice across European countries

1. The curricular integration model: a systemic approach

The A.R.T.S. action plan proposes permanently integrating art and media classes into the school curriculum to develop discernment.

- **The A.R.T.S. project (Norway/Germany):** In Norway, the “ungdomsskole” model already integrates critical thinking into music and art classes. In Germany, the system penalises the use of uncritical sources or AI, imposing early academic rigour.
- **European comparison:** This model is similar to the approach in **Finland**, where media literacy is not a separate subject but a cross-curricular competence built into all disciplines, from mathematics (analysing false statistics) to history (propaganda).

2. Art as a mediator in disadvantaged and rural areas

The A.R.T.S. plan highlights the need for “themed caravans” and extended programmes for young people in rural areas, where access to culture is limited.

- **The A.R.T.S. project (Romania/Norway)**: It proposes using cultural institutions to give students from villages equal opportunities, narrowing the urban-rural gap through visual art and theatre.
- **European comparison:** This practice is similar to the **“Erasmus+ MuseArt”** programme or initiatives in France (Pass Culture), which subsidise young people's access to culture, though A.R.T.S. adds a specific critical-thinking component through post-event analysis.

3. Countering “algorithmic bubbles” and extremism

A major priority in Chemnitz and Iași is drawing young people out of propaganda bubbles and creating “safe spaces” for dialogue.

- **The A.R.T.S. project (Germany/Norway)**: Art is used as “neutral ground” to discuss taboo topics (migration, ideology) without fear of stigma. In Chemnitz, the focus is on countering the far-left/far-right propaganda that emerged after the 2025 elections.
- **European comparison:** This method reflects good practice from **Belgium** and the **Netherlands** (the TerInfo project), where teachers are trained to discuss traumatic or sensitive current events through artistic images and narratives in order to prevent radicalisation.

4. Micro-learning and gamification

The German document proposes “micro-tools” (3-5 key questions) and the gamification of information verification to capture young people's fragmented attention.

- **The A.R.T.S. project (Germany)**: The focus is on “scaffolded learning” and the use of current content (TikTok, memes) to make the process feel relevant.
- **European comparison:** This strategy is in line with European platforms such as **“Lie Detectors”** (Austria/Germany/Belgium), which send journalists into classrooms for short 90-minute sessions, showing that focused but intense, interactive interventions are more effective than long theoretical courses.

Possible action plan model 1:

1. *Methodological foundations*

The A.R.T.S. methodology proposes moving from “intuitive thinking” to “analytical thinking” by using the arts as a critical filter.

- **Scaffolded learning approach**: moving from facilitator-led analysis to independent evaluation of media messages.
- **Art as “neutral ground”:** using the creative process to discuss polarising topics (migration, politics) in a safe way, reducing political segregation (identified as a problem in Norway and Germany).
- **Emotional grounding:** using artistic practice to help young people self-regulate their reactions to manipulative content that relies on fear or anger.

2. Action pillars and concrete measures

Pillar I: Deconstructing the message through visual arts and film

- **Concrete measure:** The “Anatomy of Manipulation” workshop.
  - **Activity:** Analysing a short video clip (TikTok/Reels) by isolating its elements: visuals, soundtrack, text. Young people identify how music shapes the perceived “truth” of a news story.
  - **Tool:** The “3-5 critical questions” checklist (e.g. Who created the message? What emotion is it trying to provoke?).

Pillar II: Forum theatre and storytelling for debate

- **Concrete measure:** Social theatre sessions on cyberbullying and fake news.
  - **Activity:** Staging a conflict triggered by false information shared among groups of students. The audience (the students) steps into the scene to propose fact-based mediation solutions, rather than impulsive reactions.
  - **Location:** Non-formal spaces (such as the Solaris Turm or the Turkish Bath).

Pillar III: Micro-learning and gamification

- **Concrete measure:** Developing a digital application / resource hub.
  - **Activity:** Creating quick quizzes that use memes and fragments of contemporary art to test the ability to distinguish between opinion, fact and artistic creation.
  - **Logistical adaptation:** In schools where phones are banned (Saxony), these exercises will be delivered through printed “Fact or Fiction” cards.

3. Specific recommendations by category of actor

Actor Implicat	Recomandări Metodologice (Măsuri Concrete)
Educatori/ Profesori	• Integrarea analizei de imagine în orele de istorie/limba română • Folosirea penalizării surselor necritice în evaluări (modelul german).
Lucrători de Tineret	• Organizarea de „Caravane A.R.T.S.” în mediul rural (nevoie majoră în România). • Training-uri pentru utilizarea IA în scop creativ, nu doar ca avertisment.
Instituții Culturale	• Deschiderea spațiilor (Muzee, Atheneuri) ca „laboratoare de gândire critică” post-vizionare. • Expoziții participative unde tinerii își pot crea propriile „mesaje de reziliență”.

Possible action plan model 2:

1. Integrating artistic methods into the school and non-formal curriculum

- **Developing educational modules based on film and music:** Given that music (72.52%) and film (56.87%) are the art forms with the greatest impact on young people in Romania, it is proposed that they be used to analyse media messages, stereotypes and manipulative narratives.
- **Hands-on "image deconstruction" workshops:** In Germany (Chemnitz), where participation in non-formal artistic activities is low (under 40% awareness), workshops are needed that link technical skills with creativity, using art to stimulate critical thinking.
- **Using literature as a reflection tool:** Although less popular than visual media, literature remains a direct path to cultivating in-depth analysis in all three countries.

2. Developing verification skills and digital responsibility

- **"Creative fact-checking" programmes:** In Norway, a gap was observed between awareness of risks and active information-verification behaviour. Artistic "emotional grounding" exercises are proposed to help young people identify the instinctive reactions that leave them vulnerable to disinformation.
- **Social media awareness campaigns**: Since most young people (over 85% in Romania and 78% in Germany) learn about education through school, but spend their time on TikTok and Instagram, it is essential that institutions create educational artistic content directly on these platforms.

3. Inclusion and adaptation to the regional context

- **Adapting for rural areas and vulnerable groups:** In Romania, over 55% of respondents come from rural areas, which calls for cultural caravans and offline (printed) educational resources, a model also adopted in Germany to comply with school rules on mobile phones.
- **Social cohesion programmes through art:** In multicultural cities such as Chemnitz, art should be used as "neutral ground" for dialogue among young people from diverse backgrounds (14% of the sample being immigrants), supporting integration and empathy.

4. Training educators and youth workers

- **Methodological guides for teachers:** Round-table participants called for clear tools to use art as a tool for critical reflection in the classroom.
- **Inter-institutional partnerships:** Collaboration between schools, museums, cultural organisations (e.g. the National Athenaeum of Iași or solaris) and families to build a stable learning ecosystem.

A possible set of 10 educational tools to improve young people's media education through art - MODEL 1

1. The “A.R.T.S. Filter” checklist
(3-5 key questions)
Inspired by the need for “micro-learning”, this is a pocket-sized or digital tool for quickly analysing social media posts (TikTok/Reels).

- **How it works:** Young people apply 3 questions to any viral content: Who paid for this? What emotion is it trying to provoke in me? What information is missing?
- **Goal:** Moving from an intuitive reaction to logical analysis.

2. Forum theatre for disinformation
A method identified in the focus groups in Romania and Germany as highly effective for addressing bullying and fake news.

- **How it works:** A scene is performed in which false information destroys someone's reputation. The audience (young people) can pause the scene and step into a role to change the ending using source verification.
- **Goal:** Building empathy and social resilience.

3. The “Anatomy of Impactful Music” workshop
Based on the observation by experts in Norway that music is a powerful tool for emotional manipulation.

- **How it works:** Students listen to the same news story with two different soundtracks (one heroic, one ominous) and discuss how their perception of the facts changed.
- **Goal:** Understanding how sound “sells” an emotion at the expense of truth.

4. “Fact vs. Fiction” cards (printed format)
A solution for schools in Saxony (Germany), where phone use is banned during lessons.

- **How it works:** Sets of physical cards showing news stories or famous artworks, where young people must identify elements of propaganda versus pure artistic expression.
- **Goal:** Accessibility in technology-free settings.

5. “Digital Mirror” - a visual storytelling exercise
A tool proposed to counter the “algorithmic bubbles” identified in the Norwegian report.

- **How it works:** Young people create a collage representing their “bubble” (what the algorithm shows them) and compare it with the physical reality of their community.
- **Goal:** Raising awareness of informational isolation.

6. Analysing symbols in urban art (graffiti/murals)
Using industrial (Chemnitz) and cultural (Iași) heritage as teaching material.

- **How it works:** Analysing the political or social messages hidden in local street art.
- **Goal:** Developing the ability to interpret symbols (identified as a gap in the Romanian report).

7. The "Truth-O-Meter" application (resource hub)
Proposed in the Iași meeting notes for checking the credibility of news websites.

- **How it works:** A digital platform where young people can report and jointly verify suspicious links, earning points for accuracy (gamification).
- **Goal:** Active, collaborative engagement.

8. "Deepfake workshop" through digital art
Instead of simple warnings, young people learn to create manipulated content themselves (for creative purposes).

- **How it works:** Using AI to change the context of a famous painting, then discussing how easily a credible visual lie can be fabricated.
- **Goal:** Demystifying AI technology.

9. The post-cultural-event reflection journal
A tool recommended for collaboration between schools and institutions such as the National Athenaeum of Iași or museums in Oslo.

- **How it works:** After watching a performance or visiting an exhibition, young people fill in a short journal built around questions such as: "What stereotype was challenged today?".
- **Goal:** Turning an aesthetic experience into a critical thinking exercise.

10. The "A.R.T.S. Caravan" (mobile workshop)
A concrete measure for narrowing the urban-rural gap (identified as a priority in Romania).

- **How it works:** A portable equipment kit (projector, tablets, painting materials) that brings media-education-through-art workshops directly to isolated communities.
- **Goal:** Equal opportunities in access to non-formal education.

Together, these tools form a complete ecosystem that combines traditional art, modern technology and human interaction to build a generation of "smart" and resilient young people.

A possible set of 10 educational tools to improve young people's media education through art - MODEL 2

1. The video deconstruction sheet (visual literacy)
Inspired by the popularity of music and film consumption, this tool is an analysis table in which young people break a video down into: images (symbols), sound (induced emotion) and text (message). It helps move from intuitive to analytical consumption.

2. The "News from the Future" workshop (speculative design)
Young people use collage or drawing techniques to create the front page of a newspaper from a utopian or dystopian world. The process forces them to understand how media narratives are built and how fear or hope can be manipulated through visual art.

3. The "emotional grounding through music" exercise
Based on the Norwegian report, this tool teaches young people to identify what emotions a particular piece of music or podcast triggers in them. The aim is to recognise the "emotional triggers" that disinformation often uses to suspend critical thinking.

4. Role play: "The curator of truth"
An educational theatre method in which young people play the role of museum curators who must decide which "news" deserves to be exhibited as real and which is "artistic fakery". This builds digital responsibility and discernment.

5. The critical reflection journal (printed format)
To work around the technological restrictions identified in schools in Chemnitz (Germany), this physical journal contains guided questions to fill in after watching a play or a film, encouraging written argument instead of quick "like/dislike" reactions.

6. The map of trusted sources (creative mapping)
A visual tool in the form of an infographic created by young people, in which they map out their own information ecosystem (e.g. NRK in Norway, local journalists in Romania). Visualising it helps them see whether their sources are diverse or form a "bubble".

7. Forum theatre for countering hate speech
Used to bring together young people from diverse backgrounds (as in the multicultural sample in Chemnitz), this tool lets young people act out scenes of media-driven conflict and "pause" the action to propose non-violent communication solutions.

8. The fact-checking-through-photography lab
Young people are given famous photographs and must research their original context versus how they were used on social media. The focus is on “framing” and how cropping an image can completely change the truth.

9. The critical analysis podcast
A non-formal education tool in which young people produce mini-episodes interviewing experts or peers about the influence of algorithms. It combines audio technical skills with sociological research.

10. The “Algorithm as Artist” guide
A set of cards with reflection exercises on generative artificial intelligence. Young people compare an artwork created by a human with one created by AI, discussing ethics, intellectual property and “truth” in the digital age.

These tools are designed to be **adaptable**: they can be used in rural areas (where resources are limited) as well as in urban areas, using art as “neutral ground” for dialogue and learning.

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