

LEARNING PROGRAMME

Democracy Education in a Changing Europe (Critical Thinking, Media Literacy and Democratic Culture)

10-DAY COURSE

50 learning hours | Course programme

Democracy Education in a Changing Europe (Critical Thinking, Media Literacy and Democratic Culture) – 10-Day Course

Introduction and Description

This comprehensive 10 day programme is designed to equip educators with the knowledge, pedagogical tools, and reflective capacities required to strengthen democratic culture in European schools. In an era characterised by rapid digital transformation, political polarisation, the spread of disinformation, and declining civic trust, the role of education in sustaining democratic resilience has become increasingly critical. This course responds to these challenges by positioning democracy education as a transversal, whole-school responsibility rather than a standalone curricular topic.

The programme offers an in-depth and interdisciplinary exploration of democratic education, combining theoretical foundations with extensive pedagogical application. Over ten days, participants examine the values and principles underpinning democracy in Europe, including human dignity, equality, pluralism, inclusion, participation, and the rule of law, while critically reflecting on how these principles are enacted—or undermined—in contemporary educational contexts. Particular attention is given to the pressures facing democratic societies, such as populism, social fragmentation, digital manipulation, and civic disengagement, and to the ways schools can actively respond to these dynamics.

A central focus of the course is the development of critical thinking and media literacy as essential democratic competences. Participants analyse how information is produced, mediated, and consumed in digital environments, exploring algorithms, visual persuasion, emotional framing, and emerging forms of disinformation, including AI-generated content. Through structured workshops and media analysis, educators acquire concrete strategies to support learners in evaluating sources, recognising manipulation, and forming reasoned judgements.

The programme further addresses democratic participation and school culture, with dedicated modules on student voice, shared decision-making, deliberative dialogue, and inclusive practices. Educators explore participatory pedagogies, methods for facilitating controversial issues, and approaches to creating safe spaces for respectful disagreement. Digital citizenship is examined as a key dimension of democratic life, focusing on ethical online participation, responses to hate speech, and responsible civic engagement in digital spaces.

Throughout the ten days, strong emphasis is placed on transfer to practice. Participants design interdisciplinary learning activities, project-based approaches, and school-level action plans that embed democratic principles across curricula and institutional

structures. Individual support and peer feedback ensure that learning outcomes are contextualised and sustainable.

The 10-day format allows for depth, reflection, and progressive competence development, making this course particularly suitable for cross-curricular teaching teams, innovation-oriented schools, and Erasmus+ projects seeking to strengthen democracy, digital citizenship, inclusion, and active participation through education.

Methodology and Assessment

The course adopts a learner-centred, participatory methodology grounded in experiential learning, collaborative inquiry, and reflective practice. The programme combines short theoretical inputs with interactive workshops, case studies, media analysis, simulations, and group discussions, encouraging participants to critically engage with real-world democratic challenges. Emphasis is placed on peer learning, interdisciplinary exchange, and the practical transfer of concepts to participants' professional contexts. Individual support sessions allow participants to adapt course content to their specific school environments and educational levels.

Assessment is formative and continuous, focusing on active participation, reflective contributions, and the development of practical outputs such as lesson plans, learning activities, or school-based action plans. Peer feedback, self-assessment, and guided reflection are used to support professional learning and competence development. The course concludes with the presentation of learning outcomes and a reflective evaluation of progress, ensuring alignment with Erasmus+ quality standards and professional development objectives.

Learning Objectives

1. Democratic Culture and European Values

Participants will deepen their understanding of democratic values, principles, and institutions in Europe and explore how democratic culture can be fostered through everyday educational practices and whole-school approaches.

2. Critical Thinking for Democratic Citizenship

Participants will develop competences in critical thinking, including analytical reasoning, argument evaluation, and awareness of cognitive biases, and learn how to embed these skills across subject areas.

3. Media Literacy and Information Integrity

Participants will strengthen their media literacy by analysing contemporary media ecosystems, recognising manipulation and disinformation, and designing classroom strategies for source evaluation and fact-checking.

4. Participation, Inclusion, and Student Voice

Participants will explore participatory pedagogies, student voice mechanisms, and inclusive practices that support democratic engagement, equity, and social cohesion within schools.

5. Digital Citizenship and Ethical Participation

Participants will examine digital citizenship as a democratic competence, addressing online participation, ethical behaviour, and responses to polarisation and hate speech in digital environments.

6. Educational Design and Transfer to Practice

Participants will design interdisciplinary learning activities, projects, and action plans that integrate democracy education into curricula, school culture, and Erasmus+ cooperation projects.

Preparation

After registration participants will receive a pre-course questionnaire which will be used by the trainer to learn about participants' teaching backgrounds and to assess their exact needs. Before the beginning of the course a basic reading list will be suggested to participants to prepare for the training. Participants will also be asked to prepare a presentation about themselves, their professional context and their culture. The presentation will be presented on the first day of the course to facilitate networking opportunities. Participants will receive information about the country they are going to visit in order to prepare them for their cultural experience.

Follow up

After the course participants will be asked to share what they have learned with the rest of the staff in their schools. Further books and articles to deepen the topic and contacts with some other practitioners all over Europe and in the world will be suggested by the trainer. The methods shared and explored and the bibliography given will allow the participants to complete and improve their educational path.

Certificate

Certificate complies with the guidelines of the Erasmus+ programme and includes the topic, number of didactic hours, dates and location of the course. We can list the record of learning outcomes on the Europass Mobility Document on request of participants. In case a participant requires a specific format of certificate we can accommodate that if requested at least one week before the start of the course. It is necessary to attend at least 80% of the hours in order to receive the certificate.

Accommodation

We do not directly offer accommodation and subsistence and participants are responsible for organizing it by themselves.

Paperwork

We also provide all the support with paperwork you might need for your Erasmus+ project documentation such as mobility agreement and registration letter.

Fee: 800 €

Cancelation policy

We have a flexible cancellation policy in force at the moment and you can cancel your registration up to 30 days before the course and receive a full refund. In case you don't cancel the registration more than 30 days before you will not receive any refunds, but you will be able to choose to attend any other confirmed course session later (within 6 months) without any additional costs. In case you are not able to travel, your school can send someone else to take instead of you and you can change the details of the participant any time before the start of the course at no additional cost.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME (50 didactic hours - 5*45min per day) Monday to Friday	
Day 1	Democracy, Education and European Values
09.00 - 09.45	Introductions & Icebreakers

09.45 - 10.30	Course Overview & Learning Agreement
10.30 - 11.15	Democracy as a lived educational practice
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Core European democratic values
12.15 - 13.00	Democratic culture in schools
Day 2	Democracy Under Pressure in Contemporary Europe
09.00 - 09.45	Democracy in a changing Europe
09.45 - 10.30	Populism, polarisation, and disengagement
10.30 - 11.15	Pluralism and diversity
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Inclusion and equity in democracy education
12.15 - 13.00	Connecting European and local realities
Day 3	Foundations of Critical Thinking
09.00 - 09.45	Understanding critical thinking
09.45 - 10.30	Cognitive biases and emotional reasoning
10.30 - 11.15	Argumentation and logical reasoning
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Teaching critical questioning
12.15 - 13.00	Classroom transfer of critical-thinking tools
Day 4	Media Literacy in the Digital Age
09.00 - 09.45	Today's media landscape
09.45 - 10.30	Algorithms and information bubbles
10.30 - 11.15	Visual and emotional media
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Media literacy as a democratic competence
12.15 - 13.00	Media analysis workshop
Day 5	Disinformation and Democratic Resilience
09.00 - 09.45	Misinformation and disinformation

09.45 - 10.30	Emerging digital threats
10.30 - 11.15	Propaganda and narrative framing
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Verification and fact-checking skills
12.15 - 13.00	Designing anti-disinformation activities
Day 6	Democratic Dialogue and Deliberation
09.00 - 09.45	Dialogue, debate, and deliberation
09.45 - 10.30	Teaching controversial issues
10.30 - 11.15	Creating safe spaces for disagreement
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Participatory teaching methods
12.15 - 13.00	Reflecting on the teacher's role
Day 7	Participation, Student Voice and School Democracy
09.00 - 09.45	Participation in school life
09.45 - 10.30	Student voice and co-decision
10.30 - 11.15	Civic engagement and service learning
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	From classroom to community
12.15 - 13.00	Designing participation initiatives
Day 8	Digital Citizenship and Ethical Participation
09.00 - 09.45	Digital citizenship fundamentals
09.45 - 10.30	Online participation and activism
10.30 - 11.15	Hate speech and online polarisation
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Inclusive and ethical digital practices
12.15 - 13.00	Digital citizenship learning scenarios
Day 9	Democracy Education Across the Curriculum
09.00 - 09.45	Interdisciplinary democracy education

09.45 - 10.30	Cross-curricular integration
10.30 - 11.15	Project-based democratic learning
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Assessing democratic competences
12.15 - 13.00	Feedback and reflection round
Day 10	Individual support, presentations & Closing
09.00 - 09.45	Action Planning for School Implementation
09.45 - 10.30	Preparing the final presentations and individual support
10.30 - 11.15	Final presentations and feedback
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Evaluation & Reflection
12.15 - 13.00	Validation of learning outcomes and certification

*This is only a tentative timetable. The exact hours or the course might differ and will be announced for each session 2 weeks before the start. However, there will always be a total of 5 didactic hours per day and all will be in line with the Erasmus+ quality standards. The trainer might slightly modify the content in response to the needs of the group.
**Cultural and social programmes will be organized in addition to the academic programme. The exact cultural and social programme depends on the location, season, weather, etc.