InterAct

LEARNING PROGRAMME

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

5-DAY COURSE

25 learning hours | Course programme

Democracy Education in a Changing Europe (Critical Thinking, Media Literacy and Democratic Culture) – 5-Day Course

Introduction and Description

This intensive 5-day course is designed to support educators in strengthening democratic competences, critical awareness, and active citizenship within contemporary European school contexts. In a period marked by political polarisation, digital disruption, the spread of disinformation, and increasing societal fragmentation, schools are called upon to play a key role in safeguarding democratic values and fostering informed, participatory, and resilient citizens.

This course approaches democracy education as a transversal and practice-oriented field, embedded across curricula, school culture, and everyday pedagogical interactions. Participants engage with the fundamental principles of democratic culture in Europe, including human dignity, equality, pluralism, inclusion, participation, and the rule of law, while critically reflecting on how these values are enacted in educational settings. The programme offers educators a conceptual and pedagogical framework for addressing current democratic challenges through education.

A central focus of the course is the development of critical thinking and media literacy as core competences for democratic citizenship. Participants explore how information is produced, mediated, and consumed in contemporary digital environments, examining the role of algorithms, visual persuasion, emotional framing, and misinformation and disinformation. Through guided media analysis and practical workshops, educators acquire concrete strategies to support learners in evaluating sources, recognising manipulation, and forming reasoned and evidence-based judgements.

The course further addresses democratic participation and dialogue in schools, with particular emphasis on student voice, inclusive classroom practices, and the facilitation of respectful discussion around controversial issues. Digital citizenship is examined as an integral dimension of democratic life, focusing on ethical online participation, civic engagement, and educational responses to online polarisation and hate speech.

Throughout the five days, strong emphasis is placed on transfer to practice. Participants design classroom activities, interdisciplinary learning approaches, and small-scale school initiatives that embed democratic values into teaching and learning processes. The condensed 5-day format offers a coherent and focused professional development experience, 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 follows a learner-centred and participatory methodology grounded in experiential learning, collaborative inquiry, and reflective practice. Short theoretical inputs are combined with interactive workshops, media analysis, case studies, group discussions, and practical design tasks. Peer learning and interdisciplinary exchange are encouraged throughout the programme, while individual support sessions enable participants to contextualise learning within their own school environments.

Assessment is formative and continuous, focusing on active participation, reflective engagement, and the development of practical outputs such as lesson plans, learning activities, or small-scale school initiatives. Self-assessment, peer feedback, and guided reflection support professional growth and competence development. The course concludes with the presentation of learning outcomes and a reflective evaluation, 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: 400 €

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 (25 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	Critical Thinking for Democratic Citizenship
09.00 - 09.45	Critical thinking as a democratic competence
09.45 - 10.30	Cognitive biases and emotional reasoning
10.30 - 11.15	Argumentation and evidence
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Teaching critical questioning across subjects
12.15 - 13.00	Classroom transfer of critical-thinking tools
Day 3	Media Literacy and Disinformation
09.00 - 09.45	Understanding today's media landscape
09.45 - 10.30	Algorithms and information bubbles
10.30 - 11.15	Disinformation and misinformation
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Visual persuasion and narrative framing
12.15 - 13.00	Verification and fact-checking skills
Day 4	Participation, Dialogue and Digital Citizenship
09.00 - 09.45	Democratic dialogue and deliberation
09.45 - 10.30	Teaching controversial and sensitive issues
10.30 - 11.15	Student voice and school participation
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Digital citizenship and ethical participation
12.15 - 13.00	Hate speech and online polarisation
Day 5	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.