

LEARNING PROGRAMME

Empowering Literacy and Critical Thinking Through Arts

10-DAY COURSE

50 learning hours | Course programme

Empowering Literacy and Critical Thinking Through Arts – 10-Day Course

Introduction

This advanced teacher training course examines the pedagogical potential of the arts as a powerful medium for developing literacy and critical thinking across educational contexts. Rooted in contemporary theories of meaning-making, multimodal literacy, critical pedagogy and aesthetic learning, the course positions artistic engagement as both a cognitive and a transformative experience. Participants explore a range of methodologies that enable learners to read, interpret, question and respond to visual, textual and multimodal artefacts in ways that enrich their communicative, analytical and reflective capacities.

Throughout the programme, participants engage in structured encounters with artworks, inquiry-based learning, dialogic practices, and reflective techniques designed to foster deep interpretation and critical reasoning. The course integrates Paulo Freire's problem-posing approach, visual grammar and semiotics, functional and critical literacy frameworks, as well as strategies for connecting artistic engagement with contemporary literacies related to citizenship, media awareness, and social participation.

A distinctive feature of the course is the dedicated full-day module on *Transformative Learning Through Aesthetic Experience*, which draws on Mezirow's theory of transformative learning and positions aesthetic engagement as a catalyst for perspective change, emotional-intellectual integration and renewed understanding of self, others and the world. Participants learn to create pedagogical conditions that support transformative aesthetic encounters and design classroom interventions that are developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive and inclusive.

The course combines theoretical grounding with sustained practical workshops, micro-teaching opportunities, and individual project development. By the end of the programme, participants will have designed their own arts-based literacy and critical thinking activities tailored to their learners' needs and ready for classroom implementation.

Methodology and Assessment

The course employs an experiential, arts-based methodology grounded in inquiry, dialogic learning, and reflective practice. Participants engage in slow-looking, open-ended questioning, visual journaling, collaborative interpretation, and Freirean

problem-posing to explore how artworks stimulate literacy and critical thinking. A full day on transformative aesthetic experience offers immersive, sensory and reflective activities aligned with Mezirow's transformative learning theory. Learning is supported through workshops, group dialogue, micro-teaching, and individual project development. Assessment is formative and continuous, based on participation, reflective tasks, peer feedback, and the design of an arts-based literacy activity adapted to each participant's educational context.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

Knowledge & Understanding

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the role of the arts in supporting literacy and critical thinking across diverse educational contexts.
- Explain key theoretical frameworks, including multimodal literacy, inquiry-based learning, critical pedagogy, functional literacy and visual semiotics.
- Critically analyse the principles of transformative learning and articulate how aesthetic experience can stimulate reflection, perspective transformation and deeper meaning-making.

Pedagogical Skills

- Apply a variety of arts-based strategies—such as slow-looking, dialogic analysis, visual storytelling, open-ended inquiry and reflective writing—to develop learners' observational, interpretative and argumentative competences.
- Facilitate structured encounters with artworks that promote analytical engagement, creative expression and critical reasoning.
- Design classroom activities that leverage artworks as stimuli for literacy development, including reading, writing, speaking and multimodal communication.
- Integrate Paulo Freire's problem-posing approach to encourage critical dialogue, questioning of assumptions and social awareness among learners.

Transformative Learning & Aesthetic Engagement

- Create pedagogical conditions that foster transformative learning through aesthetic experience, including emotional engagement, embodied reflection and dialogic meaning-making.

- Develop and implement classroom interventions that use aesthetic stimuli to support personal growth, empathy, and democratic participation.

Contemporary Literacies & Citizenship

- Promote contemporary literacies—media literacy, cultural literacy, civic literacy and visual literacy—through arts-based learning experiences.

- Guide students in critically reading images, media messages and cultural artefacts, recognising issues of power, bias, representation and voice.

Design, Assessment & Professional Development

- Design coherent teaching sequences and project-based learning activities that integrate arts, literacy and critical thinking in a cross-disciplinary manner.

- Develop appropriate assessment tools to evaluate learners' literacy, interpretative skills and critical thinking processes.

- Create an individual action plan for implementing arts-based literacy and critical thinking methodologies in their own educational setting.

Preparation

After registration participants will receive 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	Introduction, Group Building & Course Foundations
09.00 - 09.45	Introductions & Icebreakers
09.45 - 10.30	Course Overview & Learning Agreement
10.30 - 11.15	Art as an educational tool
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Why literacy through the arts?
12.15 - 13.00	Understanding literacy beyond reading and writing
Day 2	Approaches to Empower Literacy & Critical Thinking Through Arts
09.00 - 09.45	Overview of key pedagogical approaches
09.45 - 10.30	International perspectives on arts, literacy and cognition
10.30 - 11.15	Literacy as communication & interpretation
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Activities using artworks to develop observation, interpretation, argumentation
12.15 - 13.00	Critical thinking through multimodal artefacts
Day 3	Building Meaningful Interactions With Works of Art
09.00 - 09.45	Connecting learners with art
09.45 - 10.30	Slow looking & contemplative analysis
10.30 - 11.15	Dialogic workshops: Art conversations
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Sequencing activities to support meaning-making
12.15 - 13.00	Scaffolding for different learner profiles
Day 4	Open-Ended Inquiry for Development of Critical Thinking
09.00 - 09.45	Theory into practice: open-ended inquiry
09.45 - 10.30	Inquiry with artworks
10.30 - 11.15	Interpreting evidence & building arguments
11.15 - 11.30	Break

11.30 - 12.15	Creating inquiry pathways
12.15 - 13.00	Multidisciplinary inquiry approaches
Day 5	Art as a Stimulus for Literacy Skills
09.00 - 09.45	Introduction to Freire's pedagogy
09.45 - 10.30	Linking Freire with arts-based literacy
10.30 - 11.15	Problem-posing visuals
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Transformative literacy practices
12.15 - 13.00	Debrief & insights
Day 6	Reading Works of Art: Analytical & Reflective Activities
09.00 - 09.45	Frameworks for reading images and artworks
09.45 - 10.30	Analytical literacy techniques
10.30 - 11.15	Reflective literacy practices
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Multilayered reading
12.15 - 13.00	Designing reflective tasks for students
Day 7	Literacies for Learning, Work, Citizenship & Social Life
09.00 - 09.45	Understanding contemporary literacies
09.45 - 10.30	Arts and societal participation
10.30 - 11.15	Critical media interpretation through art
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Designing authentic learning tasks
12.15 - 13.00	Project-based and community-based learning
Day 8	Transformative Learning Through Aesthetic Experience
09.00 - 09.45	Foundations of transformative learning theory
09.45 - 10.30	Understanding aesthetic experience
10.30 - 11.15	Aesthetic stimuli for multicultural education
11.15 - 11.30	Break

11.30 - 12.15	Perkins' 4 phases
12.15 - 13.00	Thinking routines
Day 9	Application Workshops, Role-Play & Classroom Simulations
09.00 - 09.45	Art for critical reading of texts
09.45 - 10.30	Classroom simulations
10.30 - 11.15	Creating critical literacy projects
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Peer review and improvement
12.15 - 13.00	Materials creation session
Day 10	Individual Support, Presentations & Closing
09.00 - 09.45	Preparing the final presentations and individual support (part 1)
09.45 - 10.30	Preparing the final presentations and individual support (part 2)
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.