InterAct

LEARNING PROGRAMME

Empowering Literacy and Critical Thinking Through Arts

5-DAY COURSE

25 learning hours | Course programme

Empowering Literacy and Critical Thinking Through Arts – 5-Day Course

Introduction and Description

This intensive five-day course explores the pedagogical potential of the arts to enhance literacy, foster critical thinking and promote reflective learning across diverse educational contexts. Grounded in contemporary theories of multimodal literacies, inquiry-based learning, critical pedagogy and visual semiotics, the course positions artistic engagement as a dynamic and meaningful pathway for developing learners' interpretative, analytical and communicative competences.

Participants engage in structured encounters with artworks using methods such as slow-looking, dialogic analysis, open-ended inquiry, visual journaling and problem-posing education. Drawing on Paulo Freire's dialogic and emancipatory approach, the programme emphasises the role of the arts in stimulating critical questioning, supporting social awareness, and empowering learners to read both the world and the word.

A significant feature of this 5-day version is the dedicated full-day module on Transformative Learning Through Aesthetic Experience, inspired by Mezirow's transformative learning theory. Participants experience and analyse how deep aesthetic engagement can act as a catalyst for perspective transformation, empathy development, emotional–cognitive integration and enhanced self-awareness. The course guides participants in designing developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive aesthetic learning experiences capable of fostering personal and collective transformation.

The course integrates theory with sustained hands-on practice, offering opportunities for collaborative learning, group dialogue, micro-teaching and individual project development. By the end of the programme, participants will have developed an implementable arts-based literacy and critical thinking activity adapted to their own classrooms and learner needs.

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

Knowledge & Conceptual Understanding

- Explain the principles of multimodal, visual, media and cultural literacies and their relevance for contemporary education.
- Demonstrate understanding of how the arts can be used to support literacy, communication skills, critical thinking and learner engagement.
- Describe key theoretical frameworks, including inquiry-based learning, critical pedagogy, Freirean problem-posing education and Mezirow's transformative learning theory.

Pedagogical & Practical Skills

- Apply a range of arts-based strategies—such as slow-looking, interpretative dialogue, visual journaling and open-ended inquiry—to develop students' analytical and interpretative skills.
- Facilitate dialogic encounters with artworks that promote collaborative reasoning, questioning of assumptions and construction of meaning.
- Design literacy activities that use artworks as stimuli for reading, writing, speaking and multimodal communication tasks.
- Integrate critical literacy practices into lessons by helping learners examine issues of power, representation, bias and voice in visual and cultural texts.

Transformative Learning & Aesthetic Experience

- Create learning environments that support deep aesthetic experiences and encourage emotional, sensory and intellectual engagement.
- Use aesthetic encounters as opportunities for reflective dialogue, perspective transformation and the development of empathy and critical consciousness.
- Design short transformative-learning interventions based on selected artworks, soundscapes or multimodal artefacts.

Contemporary Literacies & Citizenship

- Promote digital, media, civic and cultural literacies through arts-based tasks that connect learning with real-world contexts.
- Guide learners in critically reading visual and media messages and constructing informed, evidence-based interpretations.

Professional Development & Implementation

- Develop a practical arts-based lesson or project tailored to the participants' own teaching context and learner needs.
- Create appropriate scaffolding and assessment tools to support diverse learners in engaging with literacy and critical thinking through the arts.
- Formulate an individual action plan for integrating arts-based literacy and critical thinking methodologies into regular teaching practice.

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: 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	Introduction, Group Building & Course Foundations
09.00 - 09.45	Introductions & Icebreakers
09.45 - 10.30	Course Overview & Learning Agreement
10.30 - 11.15	Understanding literacy beyond reading and writing
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Approaches to empowering literacy through the arts
12.15 - 13.00	Art as a catalyst for critical thinking
Day 2	Building Meaningful Interactions & Open-Ended Inquiry
09.00 - 09.45	Engaging learners with artworks
09.45 - 10.30	Dialogic encounters with art
10.30 - 11.15	Open-ended inquiry as literacy practice
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Argumentation, reasoning & evidence
12.15 - 13.00	Designing inquiry-based literacy tasks
Day 3	Literacy Through Arts: Freirean Pedagogy & Reflective Practices
09.00 - 09.45	Paulo Freire’s problem-posing education
09.45 - 10.30	Problem-posing visuals
10.30 - 11.15	Reflective literacy practices
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Reading works of art: analytical & reflective literacy
12.15 - 13.00	Designing Freire-inspired literacy sequences
Day 4	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 5	Contemporary Literacies, Project Development & Closing
09.00 - 09.45	Art-based approaches to examining bias, representation, power and voice
09.45 - 10.30	Designing an action plan
10.30 - 11.15	Individual Support, Presentations & 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.