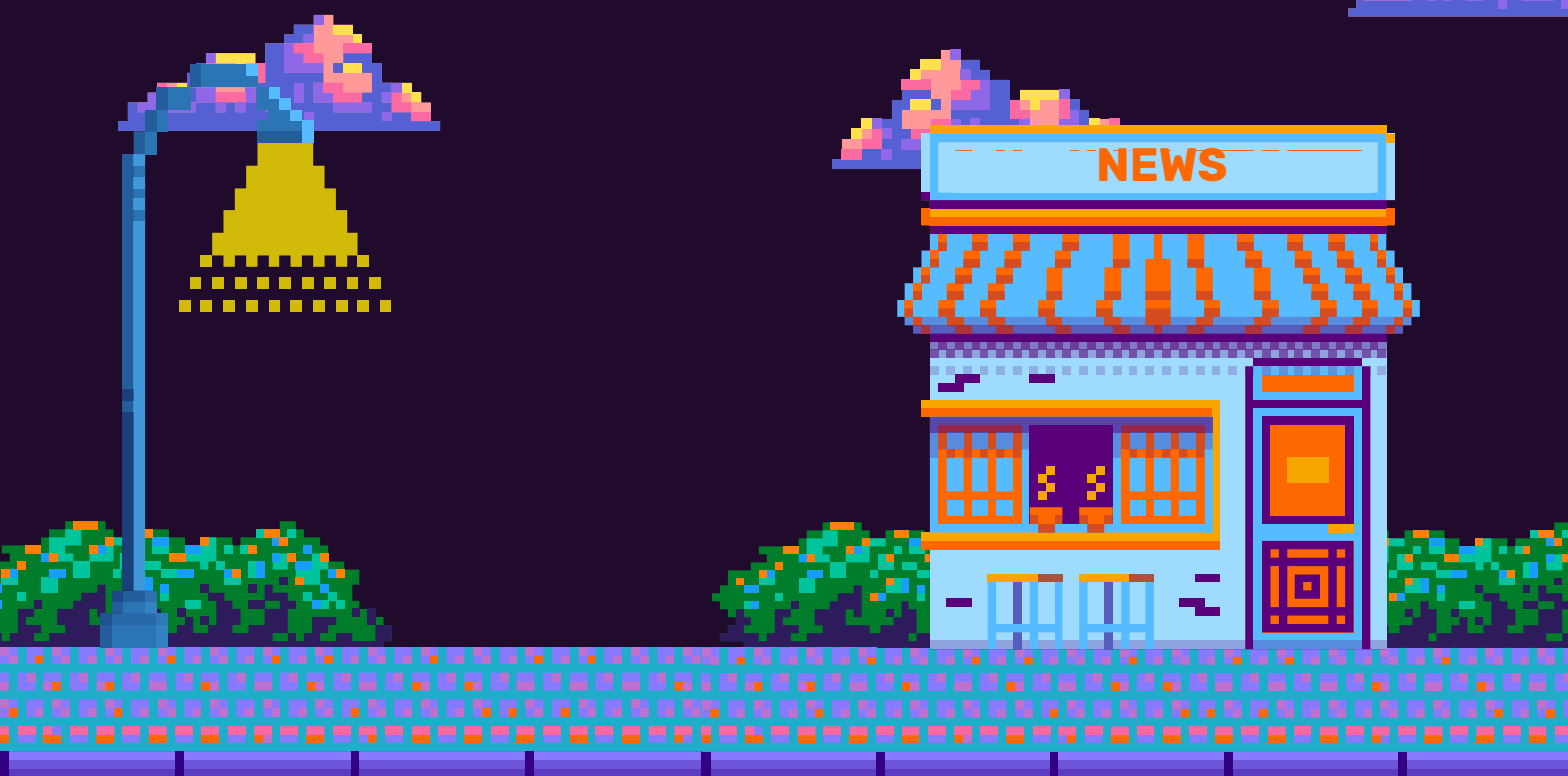
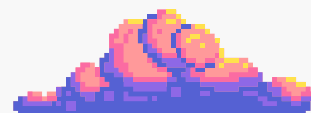
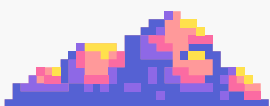




Co-funded by
the European Union





About this report

About Pixel Media:



Co-funded by
the European Union

This report is intended to be the practical foundation of 'Pixel Media: Video Game to Develop Media Literacy' ([CREA-CROSS-2024-MEDIALITERACY 101186931](#)). This project has been co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

How to reuse:



This work is licensed under Creative Commons CC BY-NC 4.0 Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International.

You are free to:

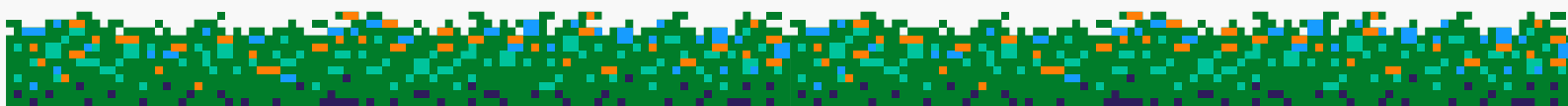
1. Share – copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
2. Adapt – remix, transform, and build upon the material
3. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

1. Attribution – You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.
2. NonCommercial – You may not use the material for commercial purposes.
3. No additional restrictions – You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

[AG1]

See full deed at: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>



Report from the focus group conclusions

WP4: Training activities
Deliverable 4.1



Funded by
the European Union



Project title	Pixel Media - Video game to develop media literacy
Project Acronym	Pixel Media
Grant Agreement Number	101186931
Type of grant	CREA-CROSS-2024-MEDIALITERACY
Start of the project	November 2025
End of the project	October 2027
Document information	
Lead partner	FECE
Dissemination level	Public
Version 1	23/06/2025
Due date of deliverable	



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

1.Introduction

To meet the complex challenges presented by rapidly changing digital landscapes and information ecosystems, media literacy education has become essential for 21st-century education. Understanding educators' viewpoints, needs, and challenges is crucial for creating valuable and transferable educational materials as educational systems around the world struggle to incorporate successful media literacy curricula. As part of the Pixel Media project, which aims at improving media literacy education through engaging resources, a video game, and focused educator training programs, this report analyses focus group discussions with educators in six different countries.

The way that young people create, consume, and engage with content has been profoundly altered by the fast spread of digital media, social networks, and information sources. To effectively engage students in critical thinking about media creation and consumption, educators must have both a theoretical knowledge of media literacy concepts and practical skills and resources. This shift calls for a corresponding evolution in educational approaches. Understanding the state of media literacy education from the practitioners' viewpoint is made possible by the focus groups held for this purpose. The insights gained from these discussions will be directly applied to the creation of the Pixel Media game and related training materials.

This multi-country study acknowledges that media literacy occurs in a variety of educational, technological, and cultural contexts, each with its opportunities and challenges. Through the collection of viewpoints from educators in various national and regional contexts, this report pinpoints both culturally specific and universal themes that need to be acknowledged when creating successful, transferable media literacy teaching resources. The knowledge gathered from these focus groups will be the basis for developing pedagogically sound and practically applicable resources for a range of educational settings.

2. Objectives and Purpose of the Focus Groups

The focus groups with educators were designed to fulfil several interconnected objectives within the broader framework of the Pixel Media project.

The primary objective centred on gathering comprehensive insights and feedback from practising educators ensures that the subsequently developed tools and resources will demonstrate both relevance and transferability across different educational contexts. This objective recognises that effective educational resource development must be grounded in authentic practitioner experiences and needs rather than theoretical assumptions.

The second objective involves collecting detailed feedback on potentially negative representations among game characters and examples in supporting materials, addressing ethical considerations and cultural sensitivity requirements essential for developing inclusive educational content. This objective reflects our commitment to creating educational resources that not only teach media literacy skills but also model positive representation and critical awareness of bias and stereotyping in media content. To fully achieve this goal, the educators who participated in the focus groups will provide feedback on the first video game prototype at the end of 2025 to help us avoid vague connotations and validate the educational content's relevance.

The focus groups with educators also aimed to explore:

- current practices
- innovative approaches to media literacy education
- challenges and suggestions for improvement

The created knowledge base could inform both resource development and longer-term strategies for media literacy education. By understanding how educators currently navigate the complexities of media literacy, the project team could design interventions that build upon existing strengths while addressing identified gaps and barriers.

3.Methodology

The focus group discussions were structured around ten core research questions designed to elicit comprehensive information about educators' perspectives on media literacy education. The semi-structured questionnaire addressed fundamental concepts such as educators' definitions of media literacy in contemporary educational contexts, the challenges they encounter in teaching these concepts, and the specific resources and support they require to enhance their instructional effectiveness (see Annex 1, Semi-structured questionnaire). The questionnaire contains two quantitative questions (Q2 and Q8) intended to initiate a discussion, along with eight qualitative questions for analysis.

The research framework also explored educators' prioritisation of media literacy skills and topics, recognising that curriculum development requires a clear understanding of which competencies educators consider most crucial for student development. Additionally, the focus groups investigated current assessment practices, technology integration patterns and the future vision for media literacy education, providing a comprehensive view of the educational landscape from multiple temporal and practical perspectives.

By examining these diverse aspects of media literacy education through the lens of practitioner experience, the focus groups generated data that inform evidence-based decision-making in resource development, training program design, and strategic planning for media literacy education advancement across international contexts.

3.1 Focus Group Structure and Implementation

Each of the Pixel Media project partners listed below conducted a local focus group with educators between April and June 2025.

- YuzuPulse (Tourcoing, France)
- Department of Education Studies “G.M. Bertin” - University of Bologna (Bologna, Italy)
- Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Culture and Education (Sofia, Bulgaria)
- LogoPsyCom SCS (Mons, Belgium)
- “OPENS” Association of Youth Organisations (Novi Sad, Serbia)
- RINOVA MALAGA SL (Malaga, Spain)

The six focus groups included a minimum of five educators with experience in teaching media literacy, citizenship, technology integration, or related subjects (from government structures, NGOs or expert trainers). The format was either online or in person, considering the experts' residency and availability. The focus groups were approx. 60 to 90 minutes long, and conducted in the partner languages. The unified structure was as follows:

- **Introduction** of the focus group purpose and Pixel Media project
- **Short presentation** of the educators
- **Discussion** on the semi-structured questionnaire with follow-up questions to encourage deeper reflection
- **Conclusion** and final thoughts

An analysis of each focus group discussion following the semi-structured questionnaire was developed in English. This final report presents educators' feedback, conclusions, attention points and common grounds across countries.

4. Comparative Analysis Across Countries

The conclusive report provides an analysis across countries, implementing a structured thematic analysis framework that presents cross-national patterns. The standardised data matrix follows the semi-structured questionnaire and maps systematic comparison among countries. This approach should identify both explicit themes mentioned by participants and implicit patterns emerging through comparative analysis. The comparative analysis highlights the main conclusions, attention points, and commonalities across countries.

Various factors could reflect on the results collected from the focus groups, affecting the reliability, comparability, and interpretation of the data. These factors include cultural differences, demographic variations, different formats (online/in situ), and moderator's influence. To minimise their effect, the focus group implementation was structured in the same way—national teams followed a unified semi-structured questionnaire that had been consulted with each project partner. Some focus groups were conducted online, whereas others were in person. The target attendees vary in age and education; however, this is a search characteristic corresponding to the target group with diverse experience in teaching media literacy, citizenship, technology integration, or related subjects (from government structures, NGOs, or expert trainers). The following table indicates the overall expertise of each focus group.

Project Partner	Date	Location	Number of educators	Overall expertise
FECE (Bulgaria)	2.04.2025 17:00:00	Online - Webex platform	5	Educators teaching media literacy in universities and schools, along with members of the Media Literacy Coalition involved in shaping media literacy education in Bulgaria
UNIBO (Italy)	12.05.2025 18:00:00	Online - Webex platform	5	Three media educators for different NGOs, a freelancer and two expert trainers in the field of media literacy with experiences at an academic level
OPENS (Serbia)	08.05.2025 12:00:00	<u>OPENS</u>	6	The focus group consisted of educators, journalists and trainers on media and information literacy, professor specialized in media literacy and reporting on vulnerable groups and a podcaster and film director covering topics such as media literacy and the importance of being informed.
Rinova Malaga (Spain)	30.05.2025 11:00:00	Online - Microsoft Teams	27	Participants were split into two groups based on their profiles: • Educators, trainers and youth workers • Public institutions, NGOs, volunteers and students Both groups responded to the same set of questions, offering a variety of perspectives - from educational experts in one group, and learners, institutions and civil society actors in the other.
YuzuPulse (France)	16.05.2025 14:00	In situ	4	Youth educators, educators using video games
Logopsycom (Belgium)	03.06.2025	Zoom	6	Educators teaching media literacy in universities and schools, along with journalists raising awareness about media consumption and interpretation, are all actively involved in shaping media literacy education in Belgium

4.1 Media Literacy Definitions and Conceptual Frameworks

Question: How do you define media literacy in the context of education in today's society, and why is it crucial for today's youth?

Regarding the first question of the focus group about the definition of media literacy in the context of education in society and its importance for youth across all countries, media literacy is recognised as essential for young people to navigate the overwhelming amount of information available today. Media literacy appears foundational for adaptability, employability, and full participation in civic life.

Interestingly, responses from all countries include the term *critical*, frequently in the context of critical thinking, which underscores that the ability to think critically about media—questioning sources, context, and intent—is universal. This encompasses not only consuming information but also analysing, synthesising, and responsibly creating it. The results indicate clearly that media literacy is highly correlated with a better understanding of content creation and news consumption. Media literacy is fundamentally about developing analytical and evaluative skills to be applied in the media environment.

For young people who spend a significant amount of time online, particularly on social media, where they encounter news, information, and opportunities to interact with others, the social media environment and its algorithms are particularly relevant. According to the educators who attended the focus groups, media literacy must be taught in ways that resonate with young people's actual media consumption (e.g., TikTok, Instagram). The educators from Italy and Belgium expand the definition to encompass an understanding of algorithms, persuasive strategies, data protection and even video games, reflecting the multifaceted nature of modern media (digital media and even AI).

Other common themes among countries include the fight against disinformation, active participation, and practical skills relevant to real life.

When addressing why media literacy is crucial for youth, educators in Bulgaria and Belgium emphasise the need for early and continuous education integrated throughout schooling to prepare young people for real-life challenges and to assimilate strategies to safeguard themselves amidst everyday information overload.

The significance of media literacy is enormous, as it shapes the relationships between people and media and the skills for creating media content.

4.2 Teaching Challenges and Barriers

Quantitative: On a scale of 1 to 5, how challenging do you find it to teach media literacy?

Qualitative: What are the challenges you face when teaching media literacy?

Across the six countries with available data, experts rate teaching media literacy as moderately to highly challenging, with most clustering around 4 or 5. The perception is that while some technical aspects may be manageable, the overall task—especially contextual and engagement issues—is difficult.

The most frequent challenges are:

- Keeping pace with technological change and AI
- Lack of systemic, structured, and continuous approaches
- Low learner motivation and engagement
- Insufficient educator training and resources
- Generation gap (Adapting to different backgrounds and generations is a shared concern.)
- Fostering critical thinking and applying knowledge in a context

These challenges are all interconnected. The results from Bulgaria, Italy, and Serbia emphasise the need for a systematic educational approach. The educational system's neglect of the significance of media literacy is markedly evident regarding educators' preparation and the lack of a holistic, centralised approach.

The rapidly evolving media environment and AI complicate educators' preparedness and capacity to cover the latest trends. However, keeping pace with technological changes and AI is essential for both educators and learners. Additionally, the term *digital natives* in the analyses from Serbia and Italy emphasises the gap between generations and their differing belief systems and backgrounds.

On one hand, educators are more aware of the media environment and contextualisation, but they lack digital skills. On the other hand, young people are more familiar with digital aspects but lack basic knowledge and skills in related areas, e.g. financial and political literacy. They are not yet equipped to reliably distinguish facts or verify information, which creates a barrier that demotivates learners and contributes to teachers' uncertainty on the topic. Not surprisingly, the mentioned challenges are closely followed by low student motivation and the difficulty of fostering critical thinking.

The opportunity to collaboratively work on the topic of media literacy leverages the strengths of each generation. Including more discussions, game-based approaches, and activities that require the combination of expertise from both generations seems a promising perspective for media literacy education, which will also nurture highly valued skills in real-life situations such as empathy, teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking. The role of teachers shifts towards that of mentors empowering young people rather than adhering to the classical understanding of a person who must know everything.

According to the focus groups, improving teachers' qualifications is still necessary. Educators of all ages, including those over 40, need support. Resource limitations are mentioned less frequently but remain significant barriers. However, the key feedback for designing training programs is to emphasise the transmission of knowledge from training courses to the classroom. The educators also identify the inclusion of new tools in the education process as a weak point and even a barrier.

4.3 Educational Needs and Resource Requirements

Question: What are your 3 specific needs for better presentation of media literacy key topics? (Consider skills, resources, access to tools, and education for trainers, support (in what way?))

The collected information on the specific needs of educators on media literacy highlights three universal priorities that emerged alongside country-specific responses. The identified needs request media literacy to be embedded holistically in the educational system with structured educational plans and licensed resources to be used by teachers. This need addresses the lack of national support and prioritisation of developing media and information-literate citizens capable of critically approaching information in general. Although Bulgaria and Serbia emphasise the serious need to reduce administrative burdens through centralised resource platforms, this is supported by experts in all partner countries.

The top three specific needs ranked by the focus groups are as follows in the table:

Table 1. Comparative Analysis

Identified Needs	Bulgaria	Italy	Serbia	Spain	Belgium
Educator training & resources	x	x	x	x	x
Centralised/accessible materials	x	x	x	x	
Curriculum integration	x	x			

Educators from Bulgaria, Serbia, Belgium, Italy and Spain emphasise the need for educational training and resources. To identify possibilities for improvement the following analysis will consider training and resources as different sections.

As training needs vary across countries, overlapping and valuable insights for future training of educators are clustered:

- **Rethinking teaching methods and learning processes** - Italy and Serbia emphasise the need to provide a detailed theoretical and practical study of media literacy frameworks. Simultaneously, Bulgaria and Serbia use the term centralised education in the same context.

- **Effective and engaging hybrid/active teaching strategies** -Bulgaria and Belgium underline tailored methods to the visual learning preferences of Generation Z/Alpha, with Bulgaria advocating for discussion-based critical thinking assessments and Belgium prioritising scenario-based simulations (e.g. phishing email tests). Spain offers simulations, role-playing or content related to real-life scenarios.
- **Continuous updates on digital evolutions** and diverse media ecosystems including AI development, social media algorithms and other critical digital competencies. How to manage expectations when it comes to training outcomes.
- **Equitable access** - Spain and Serbia uniquely address socioeconomic barriers: Spain mandates free tools to prevent device/ subscription costs from limiting participation, while Serbia seeks funding solutions for underserved communities.

Centralised/accessible materials/ resources:

- **Materials for educators** - Base of **verified, approved and easy-to-use resources** with **guidelines for implementation**. (The available resources are rarely included in educational plans and require extra effort and time from educators to inform themselves on the subject and embed the tools in their lessons. The wide variety of resources complicates the selection of the right ones per the lesson).
- **Generation adaptation** - the resources should be tailored to all ages of learners, considering different learning styles and media environment awareness.
- **Engaging and practical real-life tools** - to engage the young generation, a diversity of tools is requested, e.g. simulation-based activities, discussions, educational video games, exposure to media and safe space to reflect on its influence, gamified experiences (e.g. scenarios involving phishing emails or fake news), quizzes, that help students connect the topic to their daily lives and real-world risks.

Key differences among countries worth sharing are that Belgium stands out with its journalism-focused approach, aiming to rebuild trust in news media by explaining press agency workflow; Serbia is the only country explicitly linking media literacy to funding challenges; and Italy uniquely emphasises the need for informal education with families and communities.

4.4 Priority Skills and Key Topics

Question: In your opinion which are the top 3 media literacy skills/ key topics ranked by importance for media literate learners? Please justify your opinion.

The focus group results from Bulgaria, Italy, Serbia, Spain, and Belgium reveal both shared and country-specific priorities in media literacy education. Critical thinking, digital dynamics, and proactive engagement emerge as cross-cutting themes, while AI awareness and content creation show regional variation.

The top 3 media literacy skills/ key topics ranked by importance for media literate learners vary. However, in all countries, the experts highlight **(1) critical thinking/ analysis** as a universal skill. Interestingly, critical thinking is used more than bringing awareness, indicating that the focus should not be on informing, but on the mental immersion and comprehension of the processes behind the construction of the information flow through experience which is at the core of educational games. Cultivating both analytical and abstract thinking is necessary to understand and interpret information effectively.

(2) The understanding of the digital ecosystem occurs in 5 of 6 countries, particularly regarding algorithms and AI (Bulgaria, Italy, Spain, Belgium, France). Understanding the media construct and underlying messages within media, the functioning of social media algorithms, digital safety, socio-emotional aspects, information fatigue and online ethics appear essential for youth.

(3) Active creating and sharing content - Civic engagement features in Italy, Serbia, Spain, and Belgium linking media literacy to social participation. Developing a habit of reading and checking the information before sharing it is listed in the responses. AI is a hot topic when it comes to creating content and understanding its role in media. The results from France indicate that the younger generation is more interested in debating rather than verifying information which is a critical skill when it comes to media literacy.

4.5 Student Engagement and Learning Preferences

Question: Can you share any specific feedback or particular interests you've observed in learners during media literacy lessons?

When it comes to media literacy education, young people are more interested in learning through creation, AI, digital footprint, and recognising advertising content and messages rather than journalism and news. The interests, knowledge, and experience of teachers and students diverge, which evokes the need for discussions on key topics and mutual understanding. Observed specific feedback and interest in media literacy lessons from learners are as follows:

- **Active Creation and Engagement:** Across Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain, learners show enthusiasm for active content creation—such as producing digital content, participating in debates, and engaging in game-based learning. These activities not only foster engagement but also enhance critical thinking skills and digital literacy.

- **Interest in AI and Algorithms:** Learners in Bulgaria, Italy, and Serbia express a strong curiosity about artificial intelligence, algorithms, and their impact on information and daily digital experiences.
- **Social Media Literacy:** Social media is a focal point in Bulgaria and Serbia, with learners interested in understanding advertising, disinformation, hate speech, and the differences between news on social media and traditional outlets. There is also an emerging trend of young people teaching adults about digital news consumption.
- **Gamification and Playful Learning:** Spain, France and Italy report that game-based and challenge-based activities significantly boost learner engagement, especially among at-risk youth, those with learning difficulties, and older learners.
- **Focus on Online Safety and Ethics:** Online safety, data protection, digital footprint, and the ethical dimensions of media use are recurring themes, particularly in Bulgaria and Serbia. Learners are keen to understand how to protect themselves and navigate digital environments responsibly.
- **Media Representation and Identity:** In Belgium, media literacy lessons leverage topics such as sports to help learners analyse media bias, commercial interests, and cultural narratives, highlighting the broader societal impact of media representation.

Points of attention worth mentioning:

- **Divergence Between Teacher and Student Interests:** In Bulgaria, a gap exists between what teachers and students find engaging, necessitating mutual understanding and adaptive teaching methods.
- **Pragmatic Approach to Learning:** Serbian learners are increasingly motivated by the practical and economic value of media literacy skills, reflecting a shift from technological fascination to utility.
- **Socioeconomic and Cognitive Inclusion:** Spain's focus on using playful methods for learners at risk of exclusion or with cognitive challenges highlights the need for inclusive pedagogies.
- **Ethical Ambiguity Around AI:** Serbian learners' ambivalence toward AI technologies suggests a need for deeper exploration of digital ethics and critical reflection on technological adoption.

4.6 Current Educational Materials and Tools

Question: Are there any educational materials that you find particularly useful for teaching media literacy?

The experts in the focus groups present diverse educational materials and games that can be adopted in the educational lessons on media literacy.

[The Media Literacy Coalition resources](#): The coalition works to fully integrate media literacy into the educational process and increase media literacy in society.

[CLEMI resources](#): a French organisation offering resources for educators, categorised by level and theme.

[MediaSmarts resources](#): Lesson plans, tip sheets, and other resources on various media topics.

[Media Education Lab](#) (propaganda platform; educational materials, webinars, conferences, media clubs): professional development and curriculum resources on various aspects of media literacy education.

[Crash Course Media Literacy](#): A series of 12 episodes by Jay Smooth, teaching media literacy concepts.

[TeaMLit online training course](#): an online course designed to help teachers integrate media literacy into their classrooms.

Games: [Bad News](#) (one of the students' favorites), [Harmony Square](#), [Cat Park](#), [Fake News Inc.: Plague Game](#), [Cranky Uncle](#).

[Reading Wikipedia in the Classroom](#): The modules start with a theoretical introduction, an overview of Wikipedia's philosophy and structure, but also include lesson plans and worksheets.

[Factcheck.bg](#) is the only platform in Bulgaria dedicated solely to fact-checking, an initiative of the Association of European Journalists-Bulgaria (AEJ).

[Faky](#) is an online platform that supports critical thinking and media analysis by offering users a combination of journalistic and algorithmic tools to evaluate the reliability and nature of digital content.

[Jedoute.be](#) is an educational campaign under EDMO Belux that equips internet users with practical tools and guidance to critically evaluate online information and manage digital uncertainty.

[Harmony Square Game](#) is a game about disinformation where the player takes on the role of a disinformation officer. Over the course of four short levels, the goal is to disturb the town's peace by sowing division and turning residents against each other. The game is intended for players over 15. The game is designed to be inclusive and accessible to players from diverse backgrounds.

[EUDisinfoLab](#): An independent non-profit organisation that gathers knowledge and expertise on disinformation in Europe.

Ethical Code of Journalists of Serbia, especially the updated version that included guidelines for digital media.

[Fake News Tragač](#): an online portal dedicated to tracking and analysing fake news. Useful especially when giving examples from everyday life.

[Young People in Media Mirror](#): annual report on young people in media published by the KOMS organisation. The material is useful for setting a framework and focus of future workshops and lectures.

Storytelling as a tool is very powerful in group settings to explain more complex topics and to understand storytelling as a tool used by the media to manipulate information.

Analyses of media discourse, especially the analysis of one event reported through different media channels and how different media put different focus. This is especially useful when working with students that all come from very different backgrounds.

[Educaplay](#) and [Genially](#) are platforms for creating interactive quizzes, presentations, and escape rooms. These tools allow for customisable, interactive learning, combining creativity and knowledge testing.

[Maldita](#) and [Faro Digital](#) are platforms for combating disinformation through fact-checking and educational content. Used to support analytical skills and develop source verification habits.

[Mural del Clima](#) is a game exploring climate change misinformation. It uses discussion-based methods to engage players in reflection and critical questioning.

Free programs for creating **interactive experiences**, such as Twine.

Platforms for **simulations** (e.g., Go Viral!).

[Democracy 3](#): More for politics education, with a grain of salt like any game that uses humor.

Youtuber's life: https://store.steampowered.com/app/428690/Youtubers_Life/

[Detroit: Become Human](#) (more for citizenship and society topics, interesting to see the impact of choice).

As well as collaborative boards and visual organisers, editing software and generative AI tools, using video games in class or as homework, video analysis and presentations/discussions of video games.

4.7 Assessment Methods and Evaluation Practices

Question: What methods do you use to assess whether learners have grasped key concepts in media literacy?

Many of the following responses revolve around discussions and interactive game-based tools. An educator from Serbia suggests creating a test game that would be regularly updated, allowing users to play it periodically (for example, every six months) to assess their media literacy and evaluate how 'contaminated' their knowledge might be. The focus is consistently on interactive tools, discussions, and practical activities that align with the interests of young people. All these methods aim to measure conceptual understanding, practical application, and the development of critical awareness.

Quizzes and Games

- Interactive quizzes and role-playing games - Educaplay and Genially offer integrated assessment features, e.g. quizzes, drag-and-drop tasks and mini-games revealing concept understanding
- Collaborative games (like Mural del Clima) emphasise peer dialogue and reflection, which act as both self-assessment and formative evaluation methods.

Discussions

- Feedback and reflection discussions
- Guided discussions and recapitulation sessions to define concepts
- Real-life situations

Presentations

- Presentations on a particular topic
- Having students present and analyse international frameworks and documents (e.g., DIGCOMP 2.2, EDEH, JRC), incorporating personal examples and re-elaboration.

Workshops and media analysis projects

- Workshops of applying knowledge in media literacy to create content – in this case, the assessment is based on the quality of the content (videos, podcasts, etc.)
- Media analysis projects or scenario-based evaluations to better align with the real-world nature of media literacy
- Evaluating learner-designed and produced projects, often accompanied by justification sheets and rubrics.

Pre and Post Evaluation

- Utilising pre- and post-learning pathway questionnaires and self-assessments with rubrics to gauge changes in perspective and comprehension
- Evaluations before and after training (for informal education). This evaluation is sometimes on paper, and sometimes they use online tools to make questionnaires and/or quizzes.
- Seminar papers and exams (formal education)

4.8 Technology Integration and Digital Tool Usage

Quantitative: How often do you use digital tools or apps to teach media literacy?

(1) Never, (2) Occasionally, (3) Frequently, (4) Always

Qualitative: Please give an example if your answer is (2, 3 or 4); What is the reason if (1) Never.

The average quantitative score for the use of digital tools in media literacy education across the focus group countries is 3.1, indicating a rating of 'frequently'. Notably, Bulgaria and Serbia rated the use of digital tools as a 4, which corresponds to 'always'. Italy received an average score of 3.6, while Spain rated it as a 3, indicating 'frequently'. In contrast, France and Belgium rated their use of digital tools at 2, meaning 'occasionally'. This variation may reflect the educators' backgrounds or cultural differences, but we cannot conclusively determine this based solely on the information gathered.

One definitive conclusion is that digital tools are utilised in media literacy education across all countries. However, the frequency and depth of their integration vary. Many educators are increasingly turning to game-based and interactive tools, as these methods enhance student engagement and create a safe environment for exploration and learning. There is a collective interest in employing digital tools that align with students' everyday digital habits, including the platforms, apps, and video games they enjoy. In Serbia, educators have listed a variety of tools used in their practice, like Google Forms for quizzes and interactive environments such as Mentimeter, Miro Board, Padlet, Kahoot!, and Wordwall. Additionally, teachers use short videos available on YouTube to explain topics in a fun and easily digestible manner. Another observation is that young people enjoy investigative work, which allows them to engage easily with the topic of fact-checking.

4.9 Future Perspectives on Media Literacy Education

Question: Looking ahead, how do you envision the future of media literacy education, especially with the increasing use of technology and digital games?"

The rapid development of everyday life environments is a predictor of change in the educational system and the skills required for success among young people. Adjusting to constant changes demands adaptability, while the flow of information necessitates critical thinking, filtering, and understanding of technological functionality. The medium of receiving information is shifting to digital formats and AI, which cannot be neglected and should be integral to the future perspective of Media Literacy education. Italy highlights the necessity of acquiring skills to navigate and critically engage with emerging technologies such as augmented/ immersive reality, generative AI, and the Metaverse, and the ability to distinguish human and artificial content in blended realities. However, AI continues to raise concerns regarding reliance on external factors that may lead to a loss of cognitive training. Another concern is the challenge of recognising AI-generated content, especially engineered images and videos. Regardless of that, this future is imminent, and content creation, algorithmic bias, and information filtering should become central themes in media literacy curricula.

The majority of the responses recognise the implementation of virtual reality, mobile forms of education, and video games in the educational process. The integration of video games in school practices is noted by Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain, leveraging game-based learning to develop a broad range of competencies beyond rote memorisation, such as problem-solving, collaboration, and technology use.

The results from Serbia emphasise the need for collaborative joint efforts from experts and educators to reduce the numerous accessible resources and create meaningful resources together, considering the on-the-field experience of teachers as well as the capabilities of tech and media experts. Media literacy experts and educators should be involved in the process of creating new tools and materials, including apps and games. France and Serbia draw attention to the issue of information fatigue and the importance of not becoming overwhelmed by anxiety or fear of missing out due to constant connectivity. Aligning student experiences with real-life and self-directed learning is also referenced.

4.10 Additional findings

Question: Is there anything else you'd like to share about media literacy education or digital games that we haven't covered?

The educators from Italy highlight critical systemic issues and key aspects:

- The significant lack of systemic, structured training for teachers across technical, ethical, semiotic, and sociological domains is a major challenge.
- Addressing the cultural gap ('digital mismatch') between educators and youth is crucial for effective dialogue; media literacy should act as a bridge.
- Educating learners about algorithmic opacity and the non-neutrality of digital media is vital for contemporary literacy.
- Empowering young people to be media creators, rather than simply passive consumers, is essential to counter the narratives that promote passivity.
- Integrating technology requires a conscious pedagogical framework to avoid simply delegating the educational role and potentially amplifying inequalities.
- Despite challenges, well-structured media literacy can foster active citizenship, creativity, empathy, and responsible content production.
- Practical needs include better access to appropriate software and equipped laboratories and structured, non-commercial support for areas such as video game didactics.

One of the participants from Serbia noted that it seems we rely too much on new digital tools created to mitigate the damage made by other digital tools. Other participants agreed, adding that there is a need for live and physical activities to take place. The best practice is to mix both digital and 'analogue' activities that combine diverse modes of learning (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, etc.) because people learn in different ways. Also, escape rooms and board games can enrich workshops and training. The Serbian educators mentioned that the Bum Bečej youth organisation and Fake News Tragač web portal jointly published a free card game from the Bum Bečej [website](#). The 'Theatre of the Oppressed' and 'Image Theatre' are also suitable educational methods.

Two educators from France mentioned that educational resources should not focus heavily on political topics, as politics can already seem complicated to young people and some educators. It is better to start with small examples and gradually dive into more complex issues. In the context of game development, the use of humour and even cynicism makes players react. Educators and young people would prefer having a game that unravels over several sessions (between half and one hour each) and space to experiment.

In Headliner, Novinews, the players liked to see the impact of the news they selected for publication on the characters or the main character's mood, depending on the general atmosphere. They were more comfortable with health and consumption topics than international and political ones. The young participants usually play action and shooting games but are interested in Headliner because they see the impact of their actions, whether they give 'proper' or 'troll' answers.

5. Conclusion

The defined needs of educators reflect the challenges they face and are a predictor of the reliability of the information collected. There are no major discrepancies among the focus group participants. In general, there is also a clear correlation between students' engagement and interests in media literacy and teachers' challenges and needs. The digital environment is seen as a priority by both sides. Therefore, the challenges, such as the generational gap and the information flow environment, identified by teachers and learners coincide.

Needs ->	Skills related to real-life	Place for improvement	Training
Educators perspective	Critical thinking, disinformation, analytical thinking, filtering information, financial and political context, fake news, media environment awareness, journalism and news	- Systemic, structured, and continuous approaches - Access to verified and easy to use resources (included in the educational plans or resources with instructions) - Gamified approach and discussions	- Theoretical and practical study of media literacy frameworks - Trainings on new engaging teaching methods and resources (linked to the curricula) - Emphasise on the transition from training course to work implementation - Including educators over 40 and above - Involving media literacy experts
Learners perspective	Content creation, AI, social media algorithms, active participation and youth empowerment, digital footprint, recognising advertising content, gamification.	- Outdated curriculum/ Real-life scenarios - Interactive tools - Up-to-date digital environment development information.	- Learning by doing - Games - Discussions - Collaborative activities - Roleplaying - Interactive quizzes

The above table not only describes the generation gap but also outlines the need for adaptation leading to changes in the education system, curricula, teaching methods and the conventional roles of teachers and learners. It is a long process, but working in this direction will also help to ensure that the holistic approach to media literacy is recognised at the government level.

The integration of video games into school practice is widely recognised. In doing so, game-based learning develops a wide range of skills beyond memorisation, such as problem-solving, collaboration and technology use. Discussions are needed to bridge the gap between generations and build shared knowledge. Educators rethink their teaching methods and learning processes by employing effective and engaging hybrid teaching strategies.

Various media ecosystems, including AI tools and social media, surround learners, and they need more information on how to navigate this environment and make critical decisions. This is why the opinions of experts and educators are helpful. The key point is that knowledge no longer rests with one person, the educator. The contemporary environment requires space for the active participation of all, and the facilitation of simulations, game-based scenarios, video games, discussions, and joint project development is favoured. The educators' task is to create an environment with playful exploration of crucial topics and developing social, analytical and creative skills. While teachers focus on teaching specialised terminology, learners are more interested in the way they receive this information. The fast-paced world brings with it information anxiety, and the ability to filter, analyse, verify, and have a clear understanding of the context is crucial. Encouraging critical thinking and the application of knowledge, as the focus groups showed, can engage and motivate youth.

In this report, we present the current needs of educators, the pressing challenges and their views on learner development and the future of media literacy education. The Pixel Media project will feed the report's findings into the development of a library of resources, a self-assessment quiz, a video game, a manual for educators, training activities and conferences. By collecting needs, challenges and suggestions for improvement from educators in the field of media literacy, the Pixel Media project aims to identify further actions and practical improvements to their work, ensuring the transfer of the developed resources to different learning contexts.

Annex 1 Semi-structured questionnaire

Discussion Questions

1. How do you define media literacy in the context of education in today's society, and why is it crucial for today's youth?

Purpose: Explore their understanding of media literacy and its relevance in today's society education.

2. **Quantitative:** On a scale of 1 to 5, how challenging do you find it to teach media literacy? (*Modify the question to make it relevant to the experts attending the focus group.)

- 2.1 **Qualitative:** What are the challenges you face when teaching media literacy?

Purpose: Identify common obstacles such as curriculum constraints, student engagement, or resource limitations.

3. What are your 3 specific needs for better presentation of media literacy key topics? (Consider skills, resources, access to tools, and education for trainers, support (in what way?))

Purpose: Identify gaps in the educational system and particular needs of the educators so as to take them into account in the development of the Pixel Media Game and for the development of the training program for educators.

4. In your opinion which are the top 3 media literacy skills/ key topics ranked by importance for media literate learners? Please justify your opinion.

Purpose: Enhancing engagement and learning outcomes. Common skills/ key topics could serve to develop the moral values of the characters in Pixel Media Game.

5. Can you share any specific feedback or particular interests you've observed in learners during media literacy lessons? (*Modify the question to make it relevant to the experts attending the focus group.)

Purpose: Understand the triggers of student engagement and receive feedback about their interests on the topic/ preferred educational medium.

6. Are there any educational materials that you find particularly useful for teaching media literacy? (These may include platforms, articles, videos, or other interactive content and resources.)

7. What methods do you use to assess whether learners have grasped key concepts in media literacy?

Purpose: Ensure alignment with the educational goals.

8. **Quantitative:** How often do you use digital tools or apps to teach media literacy?
(*Modify the question to make it relevant to the direction of the discussion.)

(1) Never, (2) Occasionally, (3) Frequently, (4) Always

8.1 Qualitative:

Please give an example if your answer is (2, 3 or 4); What is the reason if (1) Never.

Purpose: Identify the accessibility to resources or potential obstacles/ training needs.

9. Looking ahead, how do you envision the future of media literacy education, especially with the increasing use of technology and digital games?

Purpose: Gather predictions and ideas for the evolution of media literacy education.

10. Is there anything else you'd like to share about media literacy education or digital games that we haven't covered?

<https://pixelmedia-project.eu/>



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

The focus group was conducted to better understand how educators currently navigate the complexities of media literacy. Based on these findings, the project team designed the project's resources to build on existing strengths while addressing the identified gaps and barriers. 'Pixel Media: Video Game to Develop Media Literacy' ([CREA-CROSS-2024-MEDIALITERACY 101186931](#)) has been co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>