

PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

How to find reliable information and sources using critical thinking techniques

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EntreComp Competence Framework:

Cope with uncertainty and ambiguity

Purpose and recipients

The Learning Unit is addressed to iVET students and aims to provide “critical thinking skills,” in order to help them make rational decisions based on reliable information and sources.

Learning outcomes

- Learners can look for, compare, and contrast different sources of information that help me reduce ambiguity, uncertainty, and risks in making decisions
- Learners can pull together different viewpoints to take informed decisions when the degree of uncertainty is high

Description of the activities and exercises:

Starting with a discussion on a topic proposed by the teacher or students and summarized in a question, such as:

- Is artificial intelligence good or bad?
- Is climate change due to human activities or is it just a natural occurrence?
- Nowadays is it more cost-effective to buy an electric or hybrid or fuel car?
- Is life better today or was it better in the past?
- Is being in the European Union an advantage or a disadvantage?
- Is it better to shop online or buy in stores?
- Other questions ...

Students, individually or in small groups, will:

- Look for reliable sources and do a fact checking of the information collected (STEP 1)
- Make brief summaries of the information gathered (STEP 2)
- Compare and discuss different point of views and opinions (STEP 3)



STEP 1 RESEARCH AND CONTROL OF SOURCES AND INFORMATION

The learning facilitator explains how important is to find reliable information. The first step is to learn how to question or doubt what one reads and sees, not taking the reliability of every source of information for granted. It is therefore crucial to raise awareness on the importance of using reliable sources to interpret a phenomenon, rather than to trust any information found on the web, social media or from hearsay.

Below are some questions that students can use as research guidelines and that can be adapted based on the chosen theme and the learners' characteristics:

Useful questions to verify reliability of source and information contained

- Who created this content? A person, an organization? Is this an authoritative source? Are they competent in the topic presented? Can I trust them? Why? Does the author have a direct interest in the topic, information or news presented?
- Can I believe to the information presented by this source? Why can I say that? How can I prove it?
- Is this believable, based on what else I already know about this topic?
- Have I checked that all the contents are authentic? That, for example, the photos or videos are real, not manipulated.

STEP 2 SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION GATHERED

Students prepare brief summaries (oral or written) of the content gathered.

Content can be text (for example, newspaper articles), photos or videos gathered from the web, YouTube or other social media. It is important that they gather different opinions and points of view of the chosen topic to compare and discuss them.

Useful questions to prepare a summary

- Have you included the main ideas, concepts, facts, events, processes, topics covered in the original sources?
- Have you faithfully reported the meaning of the original?
- Have you avoided including your own point of view unless you were specifically asked to do so?
- Have you cited all sources?



STEP 3 SYNTHESIS: COMPARING, ASSESSING AND DISCUSSING DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Students individually or in group present the content gathered - information, photos, video:

- highlighting the different points of view
- trying to find a synthesis, if possible, among the different positions
- and giving their own opinion on the subject.

Useful questions to prepare a synthesis

- Have you indicated different points of view of the topic?
- Have you considered both advantages and disadvantages of the topic?
- Does the conclusion contain my opinion, with evidence or reasoning?

Methodology

- Use of the Internet and social media
- Individual or group work
- Plenary or group brainstorming sessions, etc
- Open discussions
- Oral, written presentations or using digital presentation tools, PPT, Miro, Mural

Supporting resources

About critical thinking tools and debunking fake news:

- [It's Getting Harder to Spot a Deep Fake Video](#), YouTube
- [This is not Morgan Freeman](#) - A Deepfake Singularity, YouTube
- [Critical thinking animations](#), Nerdvet project, YouTube

About Summary and Synthesis:

- [Explained in one minute](#), Summary, Synthesis, Making a summary, Animations

Duration: 3h

Competence level: EQF 3

