HOW TO ANALYSE FAKE NEWS

PACT

Target group	Adult learner
Setting	• Frontal lecture • Group work • Plenary
Time	7 units à 45 minutes

This activity is a set up to promote the benefits of Critical Thinking (CT) through a desktop research and reflection exercise. With the help of 7 questions, the participants practise critical questioning of information.

PREPARATION

A room where all participants have space,
All participants should have access to a laptop/smartphone or tablet on which to conduct the research.
A laptop should be connected to the beamer so that research results can be shared.

MATERIALS NEEDED

MATERIAL	Y/N
Projector	Y
Flipchart	Y
Printed handout	N
Other (please specify): Smartphones, Laptops Pens	Y

METHOD / PROCESS DESCRIPTION

Practical application of critical thinking
How to analyse Fake News.
Analysing a satirical theory: With the help of 7 questions, the theory is examined from different angles and critically evaluated.

"Birds Aren't Real" is a satirical conspiracy theory founded by Peter McIndoe in Memphis, Tennessee in 2017. We will find out what became of it in the following According to Birds aren't Real, between 1959 and 1971 all the birds of the United States were exterminated and replaced by drones. Quoting Wikipedia, they claim that birds sit on power lines to recharge and that bird droppings on cars are a tracking method. The theory is that US President John F. Kennedy was assassinated by the government because he refused to kill all the birds.
There is different content on many platforms about the satirical conspiracy theory that helps us apply CT.

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METHOD / PROCESS DESCRIPTION

A brief introduction to conspiracy theories: Birds are´ t real

The use of Critical Thinking (CT) has already been discussed in the
The following questions can be used to practice using CT to evaluate fake news.
As an example, we work with the theory "Birds aren't real".
"Birds Aren´t Real" is a satirical conspiracy theory founded by Peter McIndoe in Memphis, Tennessee in 2017. We will find out what became of it in the following
According to Birds aren't Real, between 1959 and 1971 all the birds of the United States were exterminated and replaced by drones. Quoting Wikipedia, they claim that birds sit on power lines to recharge and bird droppings on cars are tracking methods. The theory is that US President John F. Kennedy was assassinated by the government because he refused to kill all the birds. There is different content on many platforms about the satirical conspiracy theory that helps us apply KD.

1.Research exercise Who is behind it?

On the internet, you can find a lot of information within a few seconds. The research exercise goes beyond quick results. It takes more than 5 minutes to do thorough research. The aim is to find out:
Who is behind the theory?
Which people/companies/groups are associated with it? Work can be done in small groups or alone.
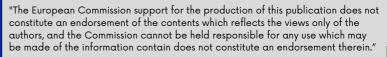Research can be done, for example, on the following sites:
Website (imprint)
Wikipedia
Instagram / Twitter / Facebook / other social media
Everyone has 30 minutes to research and collect the results. 15 minutes are used to select and present the results.

METHOD / PROCESS DESCRIPTION

2. Reflection exercise: What is being said?

The website or the contributions are looked at closely. The statements are read. Now the reflection takes place. One's own "gut feeling" is decisive here. The following questions help the participants:

- What do I feel when I read this?
- Do I believe the statements?
- Does it confirm something I have heard before?
- Do I enjoy reading the posts?
- Then create your own evaluation of the website/posts: The theory states:
- I find the website ....
- I would recommend the website to others:.............. The information reads:

Finally, the different impressions of the participants are discussed in the plenary.

3. Research exercise: where does the theory resonate?

The question of "where" is about finding out through which channels the statements are spread, which countries/states are addressed, where does the movement exists, do the statements also apply to one's own country?

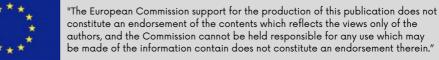Again, different channels can be used for the research.

You can work alone or in small groups. Research can be done, for example, on the following websites:

- Website
- Wikipedia
- Press services
- Instagram / Twitter / Facebook / other social media

Everyone has 30 minutes to research and collect the results.

15 minutes are used to select and present the results in the plenary.

METHOD / PROCESS DESCRIPTION

4. Research exercise: Why does this theory exist?

Why does this theory exist?
Can a certain purpose be pursued with it?
Again, different channels can be used for the research.
You can work alone or in small groups. Research can be done, for example, on the following sites:
- Website
- Wikipedia
- Press services
- Instagram / Twitter / Facebook / other social media

Everyone has 30 minutes to research and collect the results.
15 minutes are used to select and present the results in the plenary.

5. Reflection exercise: How is the information communicated?

How is the information disseminated?
In what tone, with what attitude is the information disseminated on the website / in the posts?
The research tasks are distributed, and the participants can work alone or in small groups. Research can be done, for example, on the following sites:
- Website
- Wikipedia
- Press services
- Instagram / Twitter / Facebook / other social media
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Everyone has 30 minutes to research and collect the results.
15 minutes are used to select and present the results in the plenary.

METHOD / PROCESS DESCRIPTION

6. Research task: Who benefits?

The question: Qui Bono, who benefits?
Here, both financial benefits (T-shirt, button sales, etc.) can be examined, as well as who benefits from this information being brought to the people. (Drone manufacturers? CIA
Work can be done alone or in small groups. Research can be done, for example, on the following sites:
- Website
- Wikipedia
- Press services
- Instagram / Twitter / Facebook / other social media

Everyone has 30 minutes to research and collect the results.
15 minutes are used to select and present the results in the plenary.

7. Research task: who is being addressed?

The target group of the statements/website
- When we evaluate information, it is helpful to find out whom the information is aimed at. If the target group is not clearly stated, there are other ways to find out who is being addressed:
- The tone of the information. (Satirical? Particularly "youthful"? Factually informative?)
- Where is the information disseminated? Twitter partly addresses different people than Facebook, Instagram is different from TicToc. And who is addressed via Youtube?

Research task:
1. what target group does the website indicate? 2. what is the graphic design of the website?
3. in what tone is the information passed on?
4. where is the information distributed?
Everyone has 30 minutes to research and collect the results.
15 minutes are used to select and present the results in the plenary.