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[Armanda Stroia]

Before we dive into our learners complicated relationship with media, let's try to brainstorm together some of the problems they're facing right now. Okay, so you have these visual clues. Can you try to guess some of their problems with media nowadays? I can give you some other clues if you need. For example, the first phenomenon.

Yes. Is referring to the habit of continually scrolling through and reading depressing, worrying news, especially on your phone, on their phones. While the Second 1. The second phenomenon is connected to some, well, trends on the Internet with some slang terms like maybe you've heard about some. Six, seven.

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I think every teacher has heard about this. So learners mindlessly repeating something which is, you know, trendy online. What do you think? What do you think are these problems? Let's see.

I cannot see in the chat. Okay.

The first one is doom scrolling. Okay. And this leads to emotional exhaustion. Right. The second one, as you might have guessed, is connected with brain rot which leads to passive consumption without any type of reflection.

So this brings me to our media diet problem. So let's try to picture your learner's media diet. What kind of digital content feels like this feels like, you know, digital fast food. Let's see what type of content the digital Burgers or donuts. So many messages.

Let me see if I can see them now. Yes. Okay.

Actually, some of the teachers from the previous session told me. Cat videos. Yes. What else? Let's see what else.

Junk food. Yes, Marlene, junk food. Unhealthy food. What type of digital content feels like this? Let's try to break this down and question the ingredients.

Tick tock. Exactly. Reels. Yes. Instagram short videos.

Viral TikToks. Yes. Maybe even celebrity gossip. Yes. It's totally addictive.

It's engineered to be that way. Right. Maybe fake news. Exactly. Sensational headlines.

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So it makes you feel full for a minute, but it's zero nutritional value. Right. AI videos. AI generated videos. Cat videos.

Absolutely. Riz. Yes. You remember I told you about this? Okay, so these digital snacks offer, right.

High dopamine levels, but these are served by algorithms just to trigger emotional reactions. Right. And now another question for you. Right? If you had to, I know, to think about your last 24 hours, what would be the ratio between digital phosphate and.

And, you know, nutritious media content like quality information, slow cooked meal, which makes you think, are you 9010? 50. 50 or just 50? 50. Yes.

Actually we're not here to judge. Okay. We are here to help our learners and ourselves become aware of our media habits. Okay. We've all been there down the rabbit hole.

Yes. Of scrolling. Okay, so what can we do about this? Well, I can use. This is something I love.

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Digital vitamin C. What's your vitamin C? Against fake news, against misinformation. What's something that can help you reduce those cravings for junk food? Digital junk food. Reading books.

Okay, it starts with C. Let's see, what can it be? I love books. Critical thinking. Okay. Cooking, fact checking.

Great options. Okay, so it is critical media literacy and it doesn't need to be sophisticated. Right. We, we all have heard about critical media literacy, but hopefully this webinar will get you a better perspective of what is critical media literacy and maybe what is not. And then together we'll explore a new approach, atomic habits, to try to implement this into your classrooms and give you a powerful starter toolkit you can use with your learners.

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Okay, so ready? Let's try to understand better. What is critical media literacy about? We've all heard about it, but are we actually doing this in our classrooms? Let's try an experiment.

What can you see first here? Let's see, what can you see? A duck. Okay. A bird.

What else? A rabbit. Good. What about here? Let's see, what can you see here?

A girl. Okay. What else can you see? A young lady. A woman also.

Good. So both perspectives. Now you might be wondering, oh, Carmen, what's the connection between these informational illusions and. Okay. And critical media literacy?

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Well, I think it's a powerful analogy to help you picture critical media literacy as a tool to help your learners unsee, and I love this word, unsee, informational illusions to help them, you

know, check information from multiple angles, verify the reliability. And media is very good at framing. So I love when I try this experiment in my classes with learners or with teachers, some of them cannot see the second perspective. But when I guide them, see, look, this can be the nose and the chin of the woman. They say, oh my goodness, there is an old woman there, say it's empowering to see when they can notice another perspective, see what's happening.

Media is all about framing. If you give a frame, you can see a different perception. Yes, Reality. Fantastic. Now, lateral thinking.

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Absolutely. What about this visual? What do you think is this visual about? Any ideas? See AI coding, data metrics, technology.

Very close metrics. Okay. Digital media. You're very close. It is an algorithm operating with hexadecimal numbers.

And I think this visual manages to capture in a very powerful way a thought provoking idea by historian Yuval Harari in his famous book Nexus. You might have heard about. And historian Harari argues that we are evolving into something shaped, not necessarily into something smarter or wiser. I know it doesn't sound flattery, but into something which he calls Homo algorithmicus. So what defines homo algorithmicus?

Well, when our decisions are influenced by predictions by algorithms, they are actually the chefs right behind everything. And think about it like this. They are designed to serve you the most delicious digital fast food. Yes, ever. The most engaging, because the goal is not to give you nutritious meal, but to keep you engaged.

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Unfortunately, nowadays engagement matters most than accuracy. Okay, so we need to be very careful about this idea and to train our learners. So what is critical media literacy? It's the ability to access, analyze, evaluate. Have we seen information from multiple points of view?

And most importantly, help them create and act. Most people think that critical media literacy is all about deconstructing, analyzing media messages. But it is very important to know how to create your own responses, counter narratives. And we'll see in a few minutes how we can actually do this in our classrooms. Okay, so another worry is that, well, you might say we are English teachers.

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Why should we teach critical media literacy? We don't have time. We all know we have the pressure of exams, right? We have overloaded curricula. So when do we have time for this?

And why should we teach critical media literacy? Well, if you look around, I think the response is obvious. We live in this media saturated world. Media is everywhere, right? And I love this phrase.

It has become the digital wallpaper of life. Media is teaching our learners what to think. Okay. What to wear, what to say. So I think it's so important to be there and to guide our learners with the right tools to take their own decisions to become responsible as critical thinkers, not just consumers, passive consumers.

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Another common myth about media literacy is that it's often, you know, seen as a sophisticated framework, something maybe for now for students, academics, not necessarily for the real classroom. But I'll show you that it's actually really easy to implement. I came to this realization that critical media literacy is not a topic, it is a habit. It's what we do every single lesson. We don't have to have just one project of fake news and then students forget about this.

Right? What about having powerful micro routines, three to five minutes, in which we'll see some tools to help our learners to deconstruct and question what they see. And you might say, well, critical media literacy teaches you what to think. Actually, you'll see it gives your learners the tools to help them how to Sing how to take, you know, responsible, informed decisions. So let's see, how can we do this?

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Let's see, how can we, you know, shift from something which feels like time consuming to something which is doable in our lessons? And this brings us to a new approach. Atomic habits. You might be familiar with this idea from James Clear's Atomic Habits. Right.

And I tried to adapt this for our topic. I think we don't need a new unit or a new curriculum, right? We maybe we need just powerful micro routines. As I was saying before, if we keep this analogy with food, right? If you only change your food, you want to eat healthily, right?

And you change once a year, you eat healthy, healthily. Does this mean that you have a healthy lifestyle? Not at all. Right. What about changing what's on your plate every single day?

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Start small and let's see, how can we do this in our own classrooms? Okay. First we need to understand something very powerful. It's called the habit loop. What is this is the engine which drives every single behavior.

The good one, the bad one, all of our behaviors. Actually it's a simple four step neurological process. For example, we have this cue, right? It can be a delicious digital cookie or a fast food, which in our case can be something like a sensational headline or viral post. And what is the craving here?

Well, these are designed to trigger emotional reactions, right? Maybe fear, maybe anger, maybe curiosity, outrage. And what happens? What happens? Well, we want to see what's there.

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So we click, right? We scroll and we try to even sometimes without reading. And what's the reward in our case? Can you guess what's the reward here? After we click Any ideas?

Usually when you click to see what's there, you get that, you know, high intense dopamine, right? Intense level of dopamine. Very, very short. And that's it, that's all. And then you get go down the rabbit hole of scrolling satisfaction.

Exactly. And then I was thinking how can we adapt this habit loop? How can we re engineer it to serve our, you know, purpose to become critical thinkers? Well, the question is what can we do when we see, see these triggers, right? With this popular videos TikToks viral headlines.

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Well, when we see those cues, maybe it's a signal for fact checking. On, right? Check mode on. And then maybe we can encourage our learners to crave something different. To crave, for example, I want to be in control.

I want to be a critical thing thinker. I want to, you know, I don't want to be manipulated. And then they pause and the Response should be to question. Okay? Pause and question.

Simple questions like who is behind the message? Who benefits? Who's left out? How does this make me feel? Right.

And the response in our case is going to be again, dopamine hit. But also, most importantly, we are empowering our learners with voice, with agency, and this is what we want, right? They say, okay, I can distinguish between fact and manipulation because I stopped. Okay. Before sharing this.

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This is basically the model. I think it's important to have this mind shift, right? Usually we are focused on outcomes, right? What if instead of going in our classrooms and say, today we are going to analyze news media? What if you're trying to say today you are becoming media detectives or fake news detectives.

Okay. Because you are the type of person who asks smart questions if they are younger learners. See what happens here? Basically it's a small shift, but you're rewriting their internal story. Why?

Because if you read this book, you'll understand that habits, they stick only when they match your identity, your core values. Only then you can have real impactful change, right? Until then,

you can't. So let's try to open a toolkit to see what can we actually do in our classroom to implement these ideas. And the first tool, I love it.

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It's a fantastic one. A quick tool for lateral reading. I remember you mentioned some of you in the chat about lateral reading and it's called sift. Can you guess? Can you type in the chat?

What do you think is sift? How can we sift media messages? What do you think it stands for? Let's see. See Any ideas?

S, maybe. Yeah, let's see. Filtering. I love this. Yes, filtering.

What else? What do you think?

I have no idea. We'll see if you're curious. I'll show you in a few moments. Checking. Analyzing.

S is for stop. Bingo. Now. Well done. Screening, Clarity.

Understanding. Stay in control skill. Scanning info. Filtering. Okay, fantastic.

So you are right. The first one is stop. Okay? So literally pause before you react. Teach your learners to pause, stop before they share, then investigate.

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Okay. And I don't mean just become turn into a Sherlock Holmes, right? And get lost into investigating down the rabbit hole. But just investigate who is behind the message, right? And then try to find trace.

Okay. Try to see who's covering this. Open some tabs, see who's reporting on this. And finally, trace. Trace the claim back to the original post.

Trace the evidence. Exactly. Karina, well done. Follow them back. So this is a super quick way to force your learners to think.

To think. Instead of just Reacting. Right. And I think the first. The first step in this framework, in this tool, stop or pause.

It's very powerful. Why do you think it's very powerful? Well, according to research, many, many people just share even without reading, just based on their headlines. Can you guess the percentage of people who share and young people who share? 80, 90%.

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20, 70. Spot on. More than 70. More than 70% of people actually share before reading. That's.

That's staggering. Right?

It's incredible because we don't even click the link. But we share. Right. And then we contributed as a viral post. So it's important to help our learners ask these powerful questions.

Who is behind the message? What's the agenda? What are the emotions? Okay. And check the evidence.

So let's do a little something I like to call headline surgery. What is headline surgery? Well, here's our patient. It's a biased, emotionally loaded headline. Just look at those words take control.

This frames a very specific power dynamic we dissected. Rewrite the story. Yes. It's a word specifically chosen. Look at dangerous.

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It's specifically chosen to make you feel. What? Dangerous. To make you feel afraid. Exactly.

Fear. Right. So what can you do with your learners? Ask them to, you know, take away this emotional loaded words. Right?

And let's see. Here's the headline. After successful surgery. Okay? So see how all the bias framing and those emotional triggers are just gone away now?

It's neutral, let's say. And this version doesn't tell you how to feel. Right. It just gives you the basic facts. Right.

So learners can decide for themselves what to think. Okay, so that word dangerous from the headline, that leads us right into our next tool, which I love this. And it's called emotional adjectives hunt. So let's go hunting. But we'll hunt for, you know, emotionally loaded words and see words like this shocking, outrageous, terrifying, or, you know, even breaking news.

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They literally hijack our brains and bypass our rational thought. And I remember While during my PhD doing my PhD a couple of years ago, I loved, you know, analyzing these journalistic cliches and finding out what they're trying to feel, what to send the social, social aim behind it. So what can you do with your learners? Ask them to take away the junk food ingredients, all the sensational verbs, emotional adjectives. Right.

This is very easy to do. Just takes a couple of minutes. You can give them some, you know, pieces of news headlines and what else? Maybe a big question mark, A question toolkit. I love this question toolkit.

And it's designed around six Conceptual areas from critical media scholars Kellner and Cher. What is this question about? Let's see. The first puzzle I gave my students, literally, a question mark. And first, the first one addresses the idea of authorship.

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Who is behind the media text? Right. Is it the person, a company, or maybe a non human agent? Right. These days, once they understand who is behind the message, then help your learners think about the format.

Right. How is the media message built to grab their attention? Well, think about the techniques. Right? What techniques are used?

Sound, color, layout, editing, Maybe sometimes slow motion. Yes. Upbeat music, bright colors. Our learners need to understand that in media messages, nothing is accidental. Every stylistic.

Yes, as you said, every stylistic choice is designed with a target audience in their mind. Right. And once more, learners understand how the message is engineered. Right. To trigger their curiosity.

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Now, maybe we can ask another powerful question. What ideas, what values are represented? And maybe even more importantly, whose stories are missing? Whose voices are silenced there? Okay.

Which leads to the aim behind the text. Okay. Why was this message created? Maybe there is, I know, political aim or maybe a commercial one. Maybe it's trying to make us know, buy something.

There's always a reason behind a media message, and this leads to the social justice. Right. Such questions allow learners to reflect on the concept of social justice and examine who benefits from the message, who is harmed, and how media, you know, how media can reinforce or challenge inequality. So you can actually have this question mark. Maybe you can work in teams.

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You can have these teams. I usually do this. I give these guiding questions. I ask my learners to work in teams, have a piece of media, and then they analyze together. So let's analyze together a very, very short media ad on Philadelphia cheese, which was banned, by the way.

Can you tell me why was it banned? Let's see.

Okay, so let's see if you can. Can you hear? Okay, can you hear? Let's see.

[Video 1]

No.

That too. Wow, look at this launch. Yeah. Cheers.

Let's not tell mom.

[Armanda Stroia]

Oh, let's not tell mom. That's the final part. Okay. So what.

Why do you think it was bent? Why?

Because. Well, they complained that actually it portrays dads as incapable caregivers. Right.

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What? What happened? They were so attracted by the delicious cream cheese that they forgot their toddlers on the conveyor belt. Right. So that's why they complained.

Well, you cannot, you know, it's a harmful gender stereotype. Yes. However, if you put on the marketer hat, and if you think, how can this media message be interpreted in a different way by different audiences? They say, well, we tried to Portray fathers well as involved with kids. Actively involved in a positive light.

See? Two different perspectives. This is only one example. So until now we've had some fun analyzing together deconstructing media messages. But this is not enough.

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We need to shift from passive, you know, consumption and deconstructive to actively creating media responses. What can we do in our classrooms? For example, what do you think happens when influencers TikTok influencers partner with scholars with critical media scholars? Well, they create powerful short infomercials to address address fake news. Are you curious to see how is this possible?

Let's see. And this can serve as a source of inspiration for your learners. Okay.

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[Video 2]

Hold it right there. This claim sounds fishy. Before you go any further, you're going to want to question the source. Source investigator will help you identify this source source. Are you having trouble knowing what to believe on the Internet?

You're in luck. I can help. Time to ask questions. Let's identify the source and verify the credibility of the author.

Aha.

Just as I suspected. A focus source. Now that's how you do it. Good work, Sam Star source investigator.

Remember to identify the source, verify the credibility of the author, and always ask questions and report accounts or content that spreads false or misleading information.

00:31:47

[Armanda Stroia]

Okay, so very, very short. One media counter media response. Right? Share this with your learners. Challenge them to create one minute counter media to I know, address fake news.

You'll be surprised how creative they can be. And let me share with you a real classroom example. So I challenged my learners to create a one minute counter media to address this time stereotypes. And I helped them. I scaffolded this task a bit.

For example, you know, ads, they have three parts. First, identifying a problem. Okay. Then you have the solution. And they brainstormed these unsterotyping glasses.

And then we have a call to action. And you'll see in a few minutes how this looks like. I had a group of a team, four or five students working together. One was the media expert putting together the storyboard. One was the skidwriter.

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And you'll see the actor who brought these ideas to life. Are you curious to see how one counters media looks like in a real classroom? Let's see. Detective glasses. Let's see now.

[Video 3]

Aren't you tired of seeing stereotypes everywhere you look? Aren't you tired of seeing people being put into boxes? How many times have you heard people say things like asians are always good at math, boys shouldn't cry, or immigrants are uneducated, Girls can't learn science wondering how can we break free from all of these labels. Drumroll sleeves. Introducing the unsterotyping glasses, designed not to change how you see, but how you understand the world.

Wear these glasses every day to see beyond labels. Are you ready to truly see the world? These glasses are priceless. You can only buy them with empathy and kindness.

00:34:15

[Armanda Stroia]

Okay, so one challenge. One minute counter media challenge. Okay, so this is possible. See, it's possible in your classrooms. You just need to challenge your learners to be.

You'll be amazed how creative they can be. So it's all about these tiny consistent habits. And here is a three habit starter you can use in your classrooms. For example, on Monday, pick just

one news story and perform headline surgery, if you remember. Okay, on Wednesday, maybe find one social media post and do a quick emotional adjective hunt.

And on Friday, maybe before your learners share that viral video everyone is talking about, just give it a quick sift, okay? Just sift. You remember, sift the media messages. See, just three tiny actions to start building a powerful new habit in your classrooms, right?

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So I think that this can be your atomic recipe. First to wrap up. Remember, recognize the diets, right? The fast food nature of our diet. Then shift your mindset from big heroic projects to micro routines in your classrooms.

And then question the ingredients. Do you remember the sift, the surgery, the headline surgery, Maybe the adjective hunt? Just a few ideas you can use in your classrooms. And finally, most importantly, cook your own. Teach your learners to cook their own media.

Right? Create one minute counter media to help them find their own voice. Okay, so this I think leaves us with a final powerful question. And if you are curious and ready to start implementing this in your classrooms, you can scan these codes, QR codes, and you'll find ready to use lesson plans, ideas, frameworks here that can be really helpful for ideas. Okay.

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Even on Brain Rod, lesson plans on social media news. So finally, I will leave you with this big question. Are we going to let the algorithms do the thinking for our learners or are we going to give them the tools to help them think, question, and most importantly, create. Well, the choice really is ours. Thank you so much.

[Martín Sánchez]

Thank you so much, Armando. That was really inspiring. It started a little scary because, you know, social media is scary, especially for little kids. But I really liked this, the similarity that you did with fast food and digital fit, because it is. I never thought of it like that.

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And also, and also when you talked about habits, you know, because we've heard that social media can be scary and dangerous and everything, but those little habits and those little tips that you gave us for the classroom. I thought that they were amazing. Amazing. Thank you so much, Armanda.

[Armanda Stroia]

Thank you.

Thank you for your engagement. Look at this. So many hearts. I guess I can feel it from the screen, beyond the screen. Thank you for all your ideas, for contributing.

I think it's so important to understand and to, you know, to make the first step to start small. That's what matters. Because we have so many resources out there. We just need to, you know, to be brave enough and start small because we can shape critical thinkers. It's our responsibility, I think.

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[Martín Sánchez]

Exactly. Thank you so much.

[Armanda Stroia]

I think I need to share the codes again. I see in the chat, you see the. Okay, let me try to.

[Martín Sánchez]

And for the teachers, remember that you're going to get a goodie back with your certificate in a couple of weeks. And you're going to find these QR codes, too. So in case you miss them or whatever, you can go there, check your email, open your goodie bag. You're going to find this and other surprises.

[Armanda Stroia]

Okay, thank you. Thank you again for your contribution.