Voter literacy pilot project
How to inform, engage, empower & activate students

Kari Kivinen - UNESCO MIL event 25.9.2019, Göteborg
• Faktabaari is an awarded Finnish fact-checking service bringing accuracy, especially to the public election debates.

• Faktabaari is a non-partisan journalistic service using social media for collecting and distributing factual information with crowds.

• The FaktabaariEDU project brings together fact-checking experts, journalists, media specialists and pedagogues to create internet literacy tools:
  • to support teachers in dealing with social media issues in the classroom context;
  • to activate students to verify their social media content empowered with critical thinking and media literacy skills to resist mis- and disinformation.

• [https://faktabaari.fi/](https://faktabaari.fi/)
Finnish core curriculum

• According to the new core curriculum, all the Finnish schools should provide their pupils basic competences to use information independently and in interaction with others for problem-solving, argumentation, reasoning, drawing of conclusions and invention and they should have opportunities to analyse the topic being discussed critically from different viewpoints.

• The pupils should be able to know where and how to search for information and they should be able to evaluate the usability and reliability of sources.

• The schools should support the pupils’ growth into active, responsible, and enterprising citizens.

How to activate students to take part in election discussion and follow-up empowered with critical thinking and media literacy skills to resist mis- and disinformation?
Give them tools to deal with social media information overflow
Provide them basic information about the ethics of journalism & fact checking. Invite journalists, visit redactions, make your own publications etc.
Deal with issues which are interesting for youngsters.

Here legal rights in social media.
Listen their views
Let students to explore party programs from their own perspective and organise role game debates & election panels
Let students to produce their own election materials and campaigns.
Let them interact with the real politiciens
We can respect different points of views.
Questions today

• Should 16 year olds have voting rights?
• Are the views of young people listened to enough in your country?
• Should climate change be taken into consideration in politics?
• Should school obligation be prolonged from 16 to 18 years?
• Should there be a strict immigration policy?

[Buttons: NO, YES]
Use drama and music
Organise student elections
Voter literacy approach

• Faktabaari has co-created with teachers a simplified version of its fact-checking methodology for educators.

• It encourages critical thinking and participation for fact-based public debate and to resist disinformation.

• The method is compatible with IFCN code and "information disorder" vocabulary and ideally adaptable.

• It brings fact-checking and media literacy communities together for apparent synergies.

• The toolkit for educators include examples to inspire, create and share new lesson plans.

• [https://faktabaari.fi/assets/FactBar_EDU_Fact-checking_for_educators_and_future_voters_13112018.pdf](https://faktabaari.fi/assets/FactBar_EDU_Fact-checking_for_educators_and_future_voters_13112018.pdf)
Pilot project "DIGITAL SELF-DEFENSE SKILLS"
autumn 2019
Teacher training materials are needed!

- The quantity of information has increased and the variety of sources has been diversified.
- The media landscape is re-shaping constantly.
- It is more and more difficult to distinguish information from dis-information.
- Schools and teachers need an updated set of tools and methods to be able to meet the curricular goals and to provide support and encouragement for their pupils which are confronting and dealing with unclear and conflicting information.
Internet literacy toolkit elements

1. There is a **need to analyse the media use / scene** of the youngsters. **Where do they get their news and information from?**
2. Information about **ethical principles of journalism**.
3. **Science > opinion**
4. “Fake news” are replaced by Dis- Mis and Mal-information definitions
5. How do real fact-checkers work?
6. **Empower students to check the facts** themselves by using a check-list and other tools.
7. **Disinformation awareness**
8. **Algorithm awareness** is crucial for understanding the functioning of social media platforms – be aware of our information “bubbles”.
9. **Tools for verifying the authenticity of the photos and videos**
10. **Privacy awareness** and ethical reflection about data. Which data do I want to share about myself? We encourage teachers and students to take ownership of their data.
Social media is an essential part of the life of a teenager!

Social media services have brought to my life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>30 %</td>
<td>70 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer support</td>
<td>28 %</td>
<td>72 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of togetherness</td>
<td>23 %</td>
<td>73 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on interesting subjects</td>
<td>6 %</td>
<td>94 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way to spend time</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>95 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorrow</td>
<td>47 %</td>
<td>53 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>7 %</td>
<td>93 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://www.ebrand.fi/somejanuoret2019/ N=6247 Year 2019
Finnish study on media use of Finnish youngsters aged 13-29 N=6247

- Average use of social media 15 -20 hours weekly mainly during 15-01
- The most popular time is between 18-21.
- The most popular services are WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Spotify and Facebook.

https://www.ebrand.fi/somejanuoret2019/
FACT?
Description of mis-, dis- and mal-information

**Mis-information** - false information is shared, but no harm is meant.

**Dis-information** - false information is knowingly shared to cause harm.

**Mal-information** - genuine information is shared to cause harm, often by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere.
Trafic lights: true, untrue or “50/50”

• A true claim holds true in the context and there are sources to support it. But since fact-checking deals with very specific contexts, the claim can still be untrue in another context.

• An untrue claim is clearly false, i.e. the source material and the expert statements are at odds with it. The claim can be either a deliberate lie or simply a careless slip: fact-checking may not be able to pinpoint the motivation behind the claim.

• A 50/50 claim includes factual information but it cannot be regarded as completely accurate. This is especially common in the case of over-simplified views. For example, if an expert states that the claim cannot be either verified or refuted or that it is considered ambiguous or the source material is conflicting, the verdict is usually 50/50. So it is not a matter of being ‘half true’, but rather about not being entirely verifiable or certain.

• There are naturally claims that simply cannot be checked or the verification wouldn’t be meaningful from the point of view of public debate.
Science is the pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world following a systematic methodology based on evidence.

https://sciencecouncil.org/about-science/our-definition-of-science/
GRETA CASE

• February 2019 the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg (16) delivered a strong speech in Brussels before EU elections. Thunberg teamed up with IPCC science and scientists and encouraged politicians to take urgent action to combat climate change.

• Thunberg said that politicians should listen to scientists and “follow the Paris agreement and the IPCC reports”.

• Her speech contained four science-based claims that lasted scrutiny of two independent top scientists Professors Ollikainen (University of Helsinki) and Breyer (LUT University).
Greta has done her science homework

Greta’s science-based claims 21.2.2019

1. “...by the year 2020 we need to have bended the emissions curve steep downward.”

2. “According to the IPCC report we are about 11 years away from being in a position where we set off an irreversible chain reaction beyond human control.”

3. “To avoid that unprecedented changes in all aspects of society, [actions] need to have taken place within this coming decade, including a reduction of our CO2 emissions by at least 50% by the year 2030. And please note that those numbers do not include the aspect of equity, which is absolutely necessary to make the Paris agreement work on a global scale, nor do they include tipping points or feedback loops like the extremely powerful methane gas released from the thawing Arctic permafrost. They do, however, include negative emission techniques on a huge planetary scale that is yet to be invented, and that many scientists fear will never be ready in time and will anyway be impossible to deliver at the scale assumed.”

Faktabaari contacted two independent specialists:

- Christian Breyer, [7] Professor of Solar Economy, LUT University:
  - “I can clearly approve her Brussels speech from a scientific point of view, every single sentence.

- Markku Ollikainen, [8] Professor of Environmental and Resource Economics, University of Helsinki & Chair of Finnish Climate Panel:
  - “I agree on the general approach and arguments 1 - 3

Faktabaari conclusion:

- We checked the science references in Thunberg’s speech for pedagogical use with top scientists from Finland.
- Three science-related claims were found accurate
Checklist

It would be good to ask certain questions before liking or sharing a suspicious piece of news:

• **Who is the author?**
  • Can you find a name or reliable web address?

• **To whom it is made for?**
  • Where has it been published first and to which target audience?

• **What does it really say?**
  • Is it an advertisement, a piece of news or opinion of someone?

• **Why is it made?**
  • To whom it is targeted. How did you get it?

• **On what information it is based?**
  • Can you find references?

• **Are pictures authentic?**
  • Is there a real link between the title, photo and text?
  • Would it be wise to check the origin of the photo/video?
Outcomes

• A very positive feedback from teachers & students.
• Students took a real interest in the election follow-up
• They learned to check the sources and learned to use the tools and check-lists also in other context.
• They were able to verify if the news/claims were reliable or not – and from where to find help, if needed.

On Monday 6-graders brought an address with 335 signatures to create a small football field in the school site.
”We have learned, that if we want something, we have to act”
Kiitos!

More: [www.faktabaari.fi/edu](http://www.faktabaari.fi/edu), [https://kivinen.wordpress.com](https://kivinen.wordpress.com)

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