

PREPARATION TIME: 30'

TEACHING TIME: 1 X 60'

**ABSTRACT**

This learning scenario introduces the notion of critically reading media messages. Critically reading media messages means to be aware, to think, think critically, about this angle that the story is being told. the media. Participants will learn about the concept of narrative theory that very news footage is a narrative, which means that it has someone telling it, and that every story has a particular angle from which it is narrated or told. This particular angle is called the perspective or point of view.

**KEYWORDS**

*Media,  
Critical Approach,  
Narrative,  
Covid 19*

**ONLINE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

- *Lesson on Critically Reading Media Messages from [mediactiveyouth.net](http://mediactiveyouth.net)*
- *Prezi presentation Critically reading media messages*
- *Clips on Covid 19 for illustration & analysis:*
  - *China in US politics and media*
  - *Russia in Western Politics and Media*

**LESSON AIM**

The aim of the lesson is for students to understand that all media messages are constructed, that is, all have certain features and angle or perspective they are representing, and to be able to recognize these key features and think critically about them.

**LESSON OUTCOME**

Students will have a better understanding of the media messages, of how they are constructed, what views they promote and how, and also how to approach and think critically about the media messages that we are surrounded by.

**LESSON IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

**Min 1-5 Warming-up:** An effective way of involving participants and setting common expectations about what they will learn is to ask a few preliminary questions on the subject. The educator introduces the topic and class contents, prepares PowerPoint/Prezi presentation; various teaching methods: lecturing, discussion, group work, self-reflection.

**Collaborative learning** – for the next 15 minutes participants talk about the media; using a Prezi presentation, the educator explains some key ideas being that: All messages are created in a certain way – constructed; Media messages are used by using a creative language in a specific, unique way; Different people understand media messages differently; Media contain in itself values and views of the world; Most media messages have been created for power and/or profit.

**20-55 The educator then shows representative clips** about the outbreak of Covid 19 in the Western media, asks the participants to think critically about the clips and have in mind the abovementioned key concepts. The key questions the participants should have in mind when thinking critically about media messages are: *Who is the author of this message? How it attracts my attention? How can different people understand it differently? Which values, attitudes, and point of views does it contain, and which ones is it excluding? and: Why was this message sent/created?*

After watching the first clip, **China in US politics and media**, the educator asks some – or all – of the following questions:

*Who are the "bad guys"?*

*Who among the officials has been included, i.e. whose statements have been presented?*

*How does the clip from China look like?*

*What do you think about the overall position of the clip's author?*

*What does this tell us about the general position of this TV network?*

After watching the second clip, **Russia in Western Politics and the media**, the educator asks some – or all – of the following questions:

*How is Russia portrayed in this clip?*

*Who is the correspondent from Russia?*

*A government official, someone highly ranked within the system or someone without an official position?*

*How are the common Russians presented?*

*What are narrative and visual strategies of undermining/questioning official Russian figures and statements?*

**55-60 Conclusion:** Make a short summary of the lesson, mentioning that thinking more critically and thoroughly about these clips tells us a lot about a particular TV station or network, their relation to mainstream politics of their country, hidden biases and agenda, and about the more or less subtle, but always necessarily present subjectivity or particular point of view and values transmitted by media messages. Ask a couple of questions which help reminding the participants about the most important messages you would like to give.

## **MATERIALS / TOOLS**

Video projector, laptop/desktop, Internet connection, Moodle

PowerPoint/Prezi presentation enriched with visual materials (images and video clips) and research based factual information.