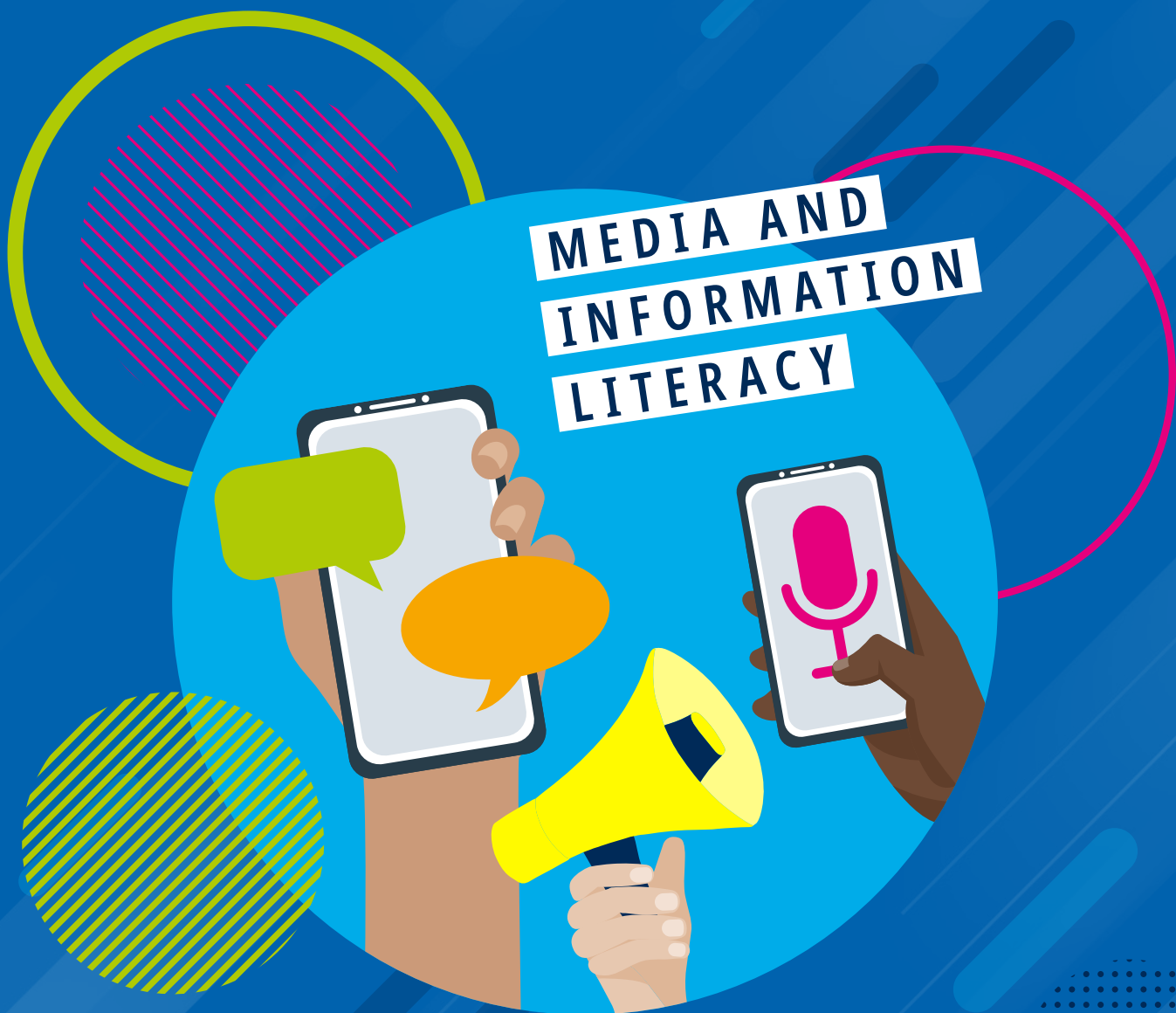


**MEDIA AND  
INFORMATION  
LITERACY**



MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY FOR YOUTH

# MIL training online: tips and tricks



## Why is online MIL training different?

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is a set of competencies (access, analyze, create, reflect and act) that enables people to exercise their right to freedom of expression and access to information. Trainings in this field offered by DW Akademie and its partner organizations worldwide help young people understand media and evaluate the impact it has on their lives.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic put MIL projects on hold, and made MIL trainers realize that they now need to use technology in another way.

It is possible to educate responsible media consumers and producers using only an online platform. But what aspects of an online training does a trainer need to rethink?

- **Motivation of the target audience:** teaching people who are tech-savvy may seem easy, but the switch to remote learning has caused general fatigue and disfavor of any online activities. We have to check the needs and capacities of young people and make sure we use a platform they feel comfortable with.
- **Definition of learning outcomes:** equally important in offline and online settings, but the knowledge, skills and attitude the trainer wants to develop requires more thorough planning when taught virtually.
- **Tools and teaching methods:** which tools are known to participants and most importantly, how and what should be used to make MIL trainings interactive at all stages?
- **Structure and organization of the MIL training:** 3-5 days of workshops with a "creation" section lasting 5-6 hours cannot be organized as it was before. That is why trainers have to consider what is a reasonable amount of time for participants to spend in front of a screen and complete the assignments.
- **Synchronous vs. asynchronous training:** this differentiation becomes especially relevant as we have to decide what participants need to do in a group and what they can do alone. For example, participants can read a handout or watch a video independently. This allows them to work at their own pace which reduces stress.

- **Individual vs. group tasks:** just as in offline MIL training, in online training we also need to think about tasks that can be done in teams, especially if they are for the analysis or reflection competencies. Opportunities for socializing and teambuilding in an online environment also need to be considered.

These guidelines were collected and designed together with DW Akademie partner organizations from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and aim to make trainers' lives easier, in addition to providing helpful tips for planning MIL activities. "MIL Training online: tips and tricks" is meant for trainers who already have some experience in delivering online trainings. For those starting from scratch we recommend attending one of the "Train the eTrainer" courses, e.g. at DW Akademie. Online learning in the form of a massive open online course (MOOC) or similar eLearning format has not been considered. The focus was mainly on short-term online synchronous trainings with asynchronous elements based on non-formal education principles, as they represent the core activity of our partners.

While sharing experiences from online trainings, it is impossible not to mention digital aids. The list of apps and tools that can be integrated in an online setting is endless, that is why these guidelines include only those which are actively used by our partners in their trainings, mainly in Eastern Europe.

“ Digital resources became the highlight of trainings.

It makes MIL activities dynamic, so that participants learn about media, develop certain skills, but also have fun. My aim is to make this experience a comfortable one, so that they turn their cameras on and share their thoughts.





## Tips and tricks for an eTrainer

Our partner organizations' trainers have been through several types of MIL trainings in the online environment. Here they share their insights into different aspects of the training process.

### Design and preparation

- Leave yourself enough time for preparation, particularly if you are doing this for the first time. The preparation should take at least the same amount of time as the training.
- **Don't train alone:** if your group is bigger than 5-6 participants, it will be hard for you to manage participant support, technical facilitation, methodology and content.
- How well do you know your participants? Assess their needs by talking to some of them or launching a general survey to collect their questions and expectations. Only then should you start with the definition of learning outcomes and the training's matrix.
- Have a shared trainer's matrix with learning outcomes, content, methods, media, links and clear division of roles in the team.
- **Duration and time-frame** of your synchronous training sessions should be realistic for participant availability and capacity to concentrate.

### Methods

- What is your goal? Before thinking about methods, make sure your learning outcomes are clear.
- It is not always helpful to use offline training methods as your starting point when choosing one to be used in an online setting. Think digital from the start.
- Create breathing spaces for participants: Balance your methodology and see where you can introduce energizers or breaks. Be aware of even shorter attention spans and prepare your inputs respectively.
- What needs to be synchronous? How much asynchronous or individual work can your participants handle without dropping out of the process?
- Buzz groups of two to share impressions or thoughts, bigger groups for working together on a task or simulation in the form of a talk-show. This also works online.
- Create rooms for socializing and help your participants relax — the situation is stressful enough.
- What has not been visualized does not exist: As in offline training, cater to the needs of different learners with various learning types — not only audio, but visual or kinesthetic.

### Tools

- What can you do if Zoom is down? Have fall-back tools in mind for all the digital tools you are using (mainly an asynchronous one) in case of power outages or connectivity issues.
- Balance your tool-kit — less is more: Which tools do you really need? It always takes some time to get acquainted with a new tool. Tools should help and not hinder the process.
- Brainstorm and visualize the results of group work or

reflections with a *Zoom* whiteboard, *Jamboard*, *Miro*, *Mural* or *Padlet*. Ask questions, get feedback or play quizzes with *Mentimeter*, *Kahoot* or *Quizlet*.

- Whatever you choose — test your tools before using them in the training.
- Learn continuously yourself — ask participants for feedback by having them fill out an evaluation form, e.g. on *Google Forms*.
- What is the copyright of the image you have just posted? Why did you choose an open source tool? Reflect on the technology you are using with the trainees — using these examples you can create an organic MIL education activity.

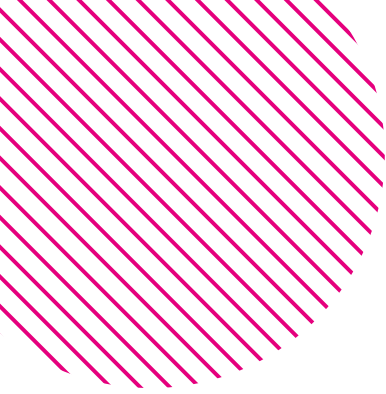
### Communication and facilitation

- Always have a separate parallel tool for communication with your participants — e.g. a messenger service. Use it for engaging with participants, updates, sharing links, communication between synchronous sessions or to stay in touch after the training has finished.
- Share the responsibility of the training's success with your participants. Consult with them and get them involved in the design and delivery of the training course.
- In online training everyone is alone — help your participants get in touch with each other, be ready to support them individually, and make sure everyone is on board before you take the next step.
- Call on your participants by name to ensure that not only those who are very active are participating.

“ When preparing for the training, it is important to consider the needs and interests of the audience. Alternate between informative and interactive parts during the training itself. For our trainings we choose 1-2 online tools (usually *Miro*) with which the audience is familiar, as registering for new platforms takes up a lot of training time and throws off the dynamic of the group. To facilitate a dialogue with the audience, start with informal communication while the participants are doing an icebreaker activity (e.g. asking participants to send a photo showing the view from their window in the chat etc.) and during the course of the training use energizer activities tailored to online training. Various audio-visual tools can be used to get feedback. Ask them to make a video, record a voice message or to draw how they felt or what they gained during the training.



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## Recruitment and participant management

Attracting and convincing participants to do the training requires effort. The widespread shift to remote learning has made the recruitment process and participant management even more complicated. Organizations who recruit participants online have several tips on how to gain access to young people and enhance training participation:

- **Have a clear dissemination strategy:** use social media platforms that are popular among your potential participants. Create brief and concise announcements that fit your target audience, such as youth-friendly language for young people. Clearly state what you are offering them.
- **Advertise using visualization:** make a poster or banner for digital events, such as a Facebook event, to promote your training. Add text, photos, or create an illustration or a collage so it looks appealing to the audience. Canva is a simple and free design tool you may want to try.
- **Precise information matters:** inform the educational institution or coordinator about the exact number of participants who can take part in the online training and the age range. The impression that "places are limited" generates interest and motivation, in this case more young people may want to attend the training.
- **Direct communication with young people before and during the training:** run a chat (on the platform chosen by the beneficiaries, be it *Viber, Instagram, Messenger, Telegram*). Start the first discussions and get to know the target group beforehand. Likewise, in chat discussions tell participants that you are flexible to their needs, e.g. let them decide what time the training will start. This may help you build a good relationship with the participants.
- **Make use of previous feedback and insights:** include photos, videos and testimonials from previous trainings. It will give your potential participants an overview of how the activity will play out and what they can expect from the event.
- **Media and community outreach:** contact NGOs working in related areas, sign cooperation agreements with institutions active in MIL and cross-promote activities or causes.



Youth Media Centre organizes MIL trainings and practical workshops at schools and shares their most successful strategies for recruiting and selecting participants:

“ **Informative testimonials before the training:** send teachers an agenda and a video on the topic of the training or impressions from other young people who have attended a similar activity. This promotion ensures that young people are properly informed about what they can learn there. At the same time, the impressions of other young people are a powerful tool in mobilizing participants: peer-to-peer always works!

**Follow-up activities:** working with the same schools in a certain period of time and with the same groups of students allows us to build a network of young people interested in non-formal education. Occasionally they can become peer educators in MIL, e.g. at our Media Camp, which has also been an online event since 2020..

**NATALIA STROGOTEANU**  
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## Gamification and game-based learning

MIL trainings include different games, from energizers to help introduce a topic in a playful way to simulation games that make trainees reflect on a media-related subject. In online training, elements of gamification are necessary for engaging and creating immersive learning experiences.

**Gamification** is the application of game-playing elements like point systems, leaderboards, and badges into learning activities in order to increase engagement and motivation. For example, an online discussion forum for a journalism course might be gamified via a badge system: students might be awarded an “Associate Editor” badge after they have done 10 posts, a “Contributor” badge after 20 posts, “Creative Director” after 30, “Editor-in-Chief” after 40, etc.

**Game-based learning** involves designing learning activities so that game characteristics and principles are inherent to the learning activities themselves. For example, in MIL training participants might role-play as they pretend to be news reporters who are reporting a story. They have to prepare a short news segment and can act it out together.

The most common game-based learning elements include:

- **Interactivity:** a framework in which participants share an experience and interact with each other;
- **Use of multimedia:** combination of text, image, audio, video, and animation to transmit information to players;
- **Involvement:** desire to continue playing;
- **Challenge:** motivation trigger that sharpens focus and prompts the player to participate;
- **Reward:** the possibility of getting an award motivates people to work for it. Rewards can be based on completing a number of actions/tasks;
- **Social embedding:** creating a sense of belonging through communication with other players.

“ I believe that adding gamification elements to MIL online training would be effective for all age groups, especially for teenagers and young adults. Even a small part of the training can be gamified, therefore leaderboards and time-based elements may be the simplest to add, but they raise motivation as well as have an effect on group dynamics.

Our project partners are successfully using gamification in their activities and shared several best practice cases:

Insha Osvita gamified the learning process of designing workshops for MIL multipliers who work with direct beneficiaries. The game board symbolizes the path of developing a workshop. Each player has their own chip with their photo. Fields on the game board represent different stages of the workshop (energizer, main part, reflection, etc.), and different aspects such as preparation of necessary materials and practice. In the learning process participants must complete these steps, each time moving to a different field. It helps to structure the learning process and adds fun and excitement to it. Video: [youtube.com/watch?v=KD8aE2IAwpg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KD8aE2IAwpg)

Diversitate developed the *FaMILy Quiz*, an online quiz meant to playfully start intergenerational conversations between young people and their parents about their use of media. They used Kahoot, a game-based learning platform to introduce various topics in the field of MIL. Each family plays online in real-time as a registered team and is represented by a team captain. Together families answer questions from the moderator about media use, disinformation and social networks. The fastest team gets the most points. The most recent version of the *FaMILy Quiz* also features creative tasks for more interaction and fun, for example “Create your own most important unwritten rule for social media”.

MDF has developed several quiz games for young people. For example, in “Dr. Fake” a player has to confront Mr. Deepfake, Mr. Troll, Mr. Clone and Mr. Phisher and answer their questions. A player has four lives to use on their mission to save Media Literacy City from Dr. Fake. In “Grandma’s Album” the player has to identify the geolocation of each photo by observing details and learning the story of the place shown in the historic image. More games can be found here: [millab.ge/en/](https://millab.ge/en/)



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## Mobile only training

It does not always need to be Zoom that is used when it comes to synchronous online training. Particularly if your participants don't have a stable internet connection and only have mobile devices, a so-called "mobile-only" training could be a good option. Even if you are not facing this situation we would like to invite you to experiment with this format and experience how much more relaxed it can be to learn without sitting in front of a computer.

A mobile-only training takes place through a messenger service. This means that the trainer sends messages with text, images, audio clips or videos. Trainees react to these and upload their own responses and assignments. A defined group and time-frame is required for the mobile-only training course to run successfully. On the trainer side, thorough preparation is needed so that tasks can quickly be sent out. As in Zoom trainings, longer moments of silence might result in participants getting distracted with other chats they have open.

Some recommendations for your next mobile-only training:

- Use a tool that has a feature for reacting to messages without sending one, like Signal, Telegram or Facebook Messenger. During the introduction agree on common symbols for main phrases, like "I agree", "I am ready", "Need a break", etc.
- Prepare pieces of text that can be copied and pasted and integrate them into your shared trainer's matrix. This way you will be able to share the work with your co-trainer and keep up the pace of the process.
- Keeping every trainee on-board might be a bigger challenge in this environment, so make sure to track their participation and check-in with them even more frequently. For that reason also make sure the maximum number of trainees is manageable.
- Use a variety of methods and media to ensure the interactivity. Launch separate chats for group work or even group calls.
- Integrate other collaboration or visualization tools that you would use in a Zoom training.
- Integrate the mobile-only approach in your synchronous online training for more flexibility and methodological variety — your participants can learn with their mobile device anywhere they have internet access.

“ It was very beneficial to consider young people as both facilitators and participants for MIL training on *WhatsApp*, as they are comfortable with this platform and the pace of exchange. During a three-day online training, facilitators selected their topic from a MIL manual, considered the learning objectives, methods and formats, and co-created their training matrix, storyboard and material needed to implement the training. All mobile-only trainings used a variety of methods such as check-ins, topic games, energizers, inputs, discussions, group/individual work, and check-outs. *Google Drive* was used to store all the material, such as flyers and audio recordings for their input sessions, and examples or screenshots for their discussions.

The feedback from participants (35+ years) showed that the pace of *WhatsApp* was too fast, and if they didn't respond in time it caused confusion in the flow of mobile-only training. However most of the group said

that they would use *WhatsApp* to train teachers in Namibia.

Youth participants (18-25 years) said they loved the group chemistry and that they learned a lot and enjoyed the exchange with youth from other parts of the country even though they had never met.



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## Asynchronous work

Synchronous training sessions — when all participants are joining the same video-conferencing tool at the same time — are harder to organize. Everybody needs to be available and sitting in front of the camera for hours can be very tiring. Learning is still possible in an asynchronous mode — for example, having individual assignments that can be completed in a more flexible timeframe.

In your training course you can also use an eLearning platform, like *Moodle*, and prepare a sequence of tasks that needs to be accomplished between synchronous sessions. These tasks can include not only watching video tutorials, reading texts, filling out quizzes or submitting essays, but also group tasks to create content that can later be uploaded and given feedback by participants or the trainer.

Keeping younger trainees motivated to continue working on asynchronous tasks might be challenging. Enrich this learning process with some gamified elements, like collecting badges for accomplishments (e.g. on [badgecraft.eu](http://badgecraft.eu)). Check-in with your trainees regularly or offer another way of support to help them progress. Ask to post some assignments using your communication tool, so that trainees can be reminded via message to finish their tasks.

Some tips from our experience:

- Communicate clearly what needs to be done and by when. Provide some structure for the assignment or give examples. Help your participants to plan time in their schedule for the completion of tasks.
- Give a short overview of what they can expect at the beginning of the asynchronous part of the training.

- Tasks should involve an experiential learning cycle (experience, reflect, generalize, test) and can be designed with physical elements, for example, go around the block where you live and make a photo story.
- Divide the asynchronous course into “digestible” bites that come in a fun step-by-step approach.

“ I guess each facilitator sometimes dreams: ‘I will give participants a lot of materials for asynchronous work, in order not to waste time on inputs and during the session we will only have a discussion.’ In reality, only a few participants manage to familiarize themselves with the material. And you need to repeat information anyway.

Consider the specifics of your group. What is the motivation of your participants — to take away deep knowledge or see what’s what? Are they participants of a long-term program or is it just a few lessons? How disciplined are they? Do they have other parallel tasks, such as exams or reports? Or, on the contrary, is it quite free time?

Make asynchronous tasks interesting, use gamification and surprises. An asynchronous task shouldn’t cause thoughts like: ‘A lot of pages of boring text are waiting for me. Better not do it now.’ It should be: ‘I have a new task, hurray! I want to do it now!’





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