

## **Critical Thinking and Media Literacy Skills: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach**

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### **Abstract**

This paper discusses experiences from an ongoing intervention study, designed to improve students' media literacy skills and critical thinking. The purpose is to contribute to research on disinformation and conspiracy theories, and discuss to what extent critical thinking and motivations to use critical thinking skills can be employed to mitigate the harmful consequences of disinformation and conspiratorial meaning-making. Drawing from knowledge and experiences from working with an ongoing intervention, we will address questions such as: How can we merit from a cross-disciplinary approach to disinformation and conspiracy theories? What challenges are associated with designing an intervention to mitigate the allure of conspiracist thinking? Furthermore, we will address methodological challenges of assessing critical thinking as a cognitive measure and a skill, and relate this to ideals associated with critical theory. Finally, we will problematize approaches to conspiracist thinking and its implications for critical media literacy.

### **Keywords**

Conspiracist beliefs, critical thinking, media literacy

### **Bio**

**Linus Andersson.** Associate professor in media and communication studies, Halmstad University. Over the past years Andersson's work in the fields of alternative and activist

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media, and media literacy has been published in journals such as *New Media & Society*, *Media & Communication*, and *Environmental Communication*. sAndersson is an active member of Sweden's national team to EU Kids Online, a multinational research network that seeks to enhance knowledge of European children's online opportunities, risks and safety.

**Torbjörn Josefsson** is a senior lecturer in psychology at Halmstad University. Josefsson has mainly focused his research on the area of mindfulness and acceptance, particularly in a sport context. He has also studied the benefits as well as the negative aspects of exercise. Josefsson has previously planned, led and carried out several intervention studies in both general populations and specific populations (e.g., adolescent athlete populations).

**Sara Svensson** is associate professor in political science, and benefits from 15 years of experience of coordination, management and active research, mainly within the remit of European research funding. Svensson has contributed to EU-funded projects in various capacities since 2004, including projects in FP6, FP7 and Horizon 2020 and research projects commissioned directly by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. She also has extensive experience in conducting policy-relevant research and teaching from earlier employments at the Center for Policy Studies and the School of Public Policy at the Central European University in Budapest.

**Peter Karlsson** is a senior lecturer in Psychology at Halmstad University. Karlsson has hitherto conducted research on cognitive processes in relation to aging and has extensive knowledge regarding cognitive processes as well as statistical analyses and quantitative design-features.

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