Combating Digital Misinformation:
Teaching Students to Read Like Fact Checkers

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Objectives

- Work through civic online reasoning assessments and lesson
- Identify patterns in students’ online reasoning
- Reflect upon best practices for integrating these types of materials into classrooms

Schedule

- Introductions
- Assessments of civic online reasoning
- Research with fact checkers
- Model lesson
Every Fourth of July, our Declaration of Independence is produced, with a sublime indignation, to set forth the tyranny of the mother country and to challenge the admiration of the world. But what a pitiful detail of grievances does this document present in comparison with the wrongs which our slaves endure! In the one case, it is hardly the plucking of a hair from the head; in the other, it is the crushing of a live body on the wheel—the stings of the wasp contrasted with the tortures of the Inquisition. Before God, I must say that such a glaring contradiction as exists between our creed and practice the annals of 6,000 years cannot parallel. In view of it, I am ashamed of my country.

I am sick of our unmeaning declamation in praise of liberty and equality; of our hypocritical cant about the inalienable rights of man. I could not, for my right hand, stand up before a European assembly and exult that I am an American citizen, and denounce the usurpations of a kingly government as wicked and unjust; or, should I make the attempt, the recollection of my country's barbarity and despotism would blister my lips and cover my cheeks with burning blushes of shame.

Will this be termed a rhetorical flourish? Will any man coldly accuse me of intemperate zeal? I will borrow, then, a ray of humanity from one of the brightest stars in our American galaxy, whose light will gather new effulgence to the end of time. "This, sirs, is a cause that would be dishonored and betrayed if I contented myself with appealing only to the understanding. It is too cold and its processes are too slow for the occasion. I desire to thank God that, since He has given me an intellect so fallible, He has impressed upon me an instinct that is sure. On a question of shame and honor—liberty and oppression—reasoning is sometimes useless, and worse. I feel the decision in my pulse: if it throws no light upon the brain, it kindles a fire at the heart."...
Introductions

- Name
- School/organization
- Your role at school/organization
- What is most challenging about teaching students to evaluate online information?
- What do you hope to take away from this workshop?
“The way I see this election, it’s really been a circus anyways, and I don’t think either side has really been looking for the truth. This was my attempt to look for the truth. I texted a couple of friends and thought, ‘What the heck, I’ll put this on Twitter.’ I had no idea it would blow up to be this huge thing . . . I’m also a very busy businessman and I don’t have time to fact-check everything that I put out there, especially when I don’t think it’s going out there for wide consumption . . . I got it wrong.”
Main source of news by age group in Q1 2017

18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55+

History Assessments

True or False?
1. It is hard to write. It must be true. (T)
2. There is an email address listed in the website, so it must be a legitimate source. (F)
3. There is a link to the White House at the top of the page, so I can definitely trust this website. (F)
4. There are a lot of graphs and charts on the site, with all this information it must be true. (F)
5. I should always compare the information I find online with at least 2 other sources. (T)
6. I should always think about what’s missing from a website. (T)
7. I should always review the sources for author of the website. (F)
Core Competencies of Civic Online Reasoning

Who is behind the information?
What is the evidence?
What do other sources say?

7,804 middle school, high school, and college students in 12 states

Ads: Slate

EVALUATING INFORMATION: THE CORNERSTONE OF CIVIC ONLINE REASONING

7,804 middle school, high school, and college students in 12 states
Student Responses

- Beginning
- Emerging
- Mastery

This is not (circle one) an advertisement because
- it had a coupon code, a big company logo, and has the
- words limited time offer

This is not (circle one) an advertisement because
- the purpose is not to try to lure people to use a website/product. It is just an article on reasons why women don’t go into technology.
Debrief

• What did you notice about how the Stanford student evaluated the article and website?
• What did you notice about how the fact checkers evaluated the article and website?
• What are the implications for teaching students how to evaluate online content?

In order to understand a site, leave it.
Smart people vs. Fact checkers

1. Focus on single page
2. Read vertically
3. Unfocused searching
4. Trust their intelligence
5. Look for familiar markers

1. Leave page
2. Read laterally
3. Click restraint
4. Distrust their intelligence
5. Turn to the web

How can we do better?

MediaWise
Tools for students: Checklists

Evaluation Criteria

- Currency: The freshness of the information.
- Authority: The information's credibility.
- Accuracy: The information's reliability.
- Relevance: The information's suitability for the topic.
- Audience: The information's appropriateness for the audience.
- Language: The information's clarity and style.
- Purpose: The information's intent and impact.
- Bias: The information's potential for bias.
- Tone: The information's tone and approach.
- Objectivity: The information's objectivity and neutrality.
- Sourcing: The information's sources and credibility.
- Accessibility: The information's availability and ease of use.

4/8/19
CRAAP Test

✔ Currency
✔ Relevance
✔ Authority
✔ Accuracy
✔ Purpose
Problems with checklists

- Focus on easily manipulated features
- Time consuming
- Can lead students astray
- Outdated

Who is behind this information?

- What person or organization sponsored the website or post?
- Who is the author? What is their perspective? What are their qualifications for providing this information?
- What might the organization’s and/or author’s motivations be for presenting this information?
- Based on this, how reliable is the information?
Lateral Reading

What do other websites say about this source?

Perspective on issue

againstmalaria.com
Guiding Questions
Who is behind this information? Do you know anything about this person or organization already?

What can you learn about the author or sponsoring organization’s authority and perspective by reading laterally?

What sources did you use to learn about who is behind this information? How do you know that these are good sources?

How do you think the source of the information influences the information itself?

At this point, how reliable is this source of information? Explain.

tinyurl.com/mercolatweet

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION with DR. JOSEPH MERCOLA
Wednesday, March 27th on Mercola.com
Guiding Questions

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Debrief

• What skills were taught in this lesson?
• What did you notice about how the lesson was structured?
• What did you notice about how the lesson was taught?
• How might you adapt it for use in your context?

Needed: A digital toolbox
Resources for Lateral Reading

Places to look:

➔ Wikipedia & its references
➔ Fact checking organizations (Snopes, PolitiFact, FactCheck, etc.)
➔ News stories

Strategy to try:

➔ Add keywords like funding, critique, or reliable to search

The Realities of Wikipedia

Revision as of 18:48, 26 May 2014 (show)
Line 72:
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Revision as of 17:57, 26 May 2014 (show)
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Feedback