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Teaching Online Source Evaluation: Going Beyond CRAAP Using Lateral Reading

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Teaching Online Source Evaluation: Going Beyond CRAAP Using Lateral Reading

Unchartered Waters: Navigating with a Compass of Adaptability Workshop
ACRL-NJ/NJLA CUS Assessment Committee

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Online learning

- Source evaluation critical across disciplines and in and beyond university
- Rowan University
  - 20,000+ FTE
  - Significant growth
- COVID-19 reality

Image: Growth by Naddsy
What is lateral reading?

- Reading “across sources” to see what others say about a web source (spending limited time on the web source itself when initially evaluating it)
- The practice of fact-checkers
Why “Lateral Reading”?

- Limitations of evaluation checklists like CRAAP and RADCAB (Caulfield, 2018)

- Research on “civic online reasoning” by the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) (Breakstone et al. 2019; McGrew et al. 2019)
Why “Lateral Reading”?

“Online Verification Skills: Investigate the Source”

Go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hB6qjlxKltA&t=24s. Watch to 1:22 mark.
Seeming Simplicity

Lateral reading is seemingly simple, but sometimes tricky.

- How widely do you read? How deeply do you go? (balancing depth of source analysis and time constraints)
- Getting creative when information on a source isn’t readily found
- The power of beliefs and confirmation bias
The Power of Beliefs

**Confirmation bias:** tendency to more readily believe information that fit one’s preexisting views and to discount information that challenges those views

**Backfire effect:** upon having one’s strongly held views are challenged, those views often become stronger

Sources that require more careful evaluation are often on topics about which people may have strong pre-existing views. (e.g., vaccines, traditional/alternative medicine, government/economic policies).
The Power of Pausing

Step 1 of SIFT: Stop/Pause - allows time for people to move past initial reflexes and to a more critical mindframe.

“STOP. Pause. Ask yourself if you recognize the information source and if you know anything about the website or the claim's reputation. ...Also take note if you have a strong reaction to the information you see (e.g., joy, pride, anger). If so, slow down before you share or use that information. We tend to react quickly and with less thought to things that evoke strong feelings. ...
SIFT and 4 Moves: https://libguides.rowan.edu/EvaluatingOnlineSources

SIFT
1. STOP. Pause and ask yourself
2. INVESTIGATE the source
3. FIND trusted coverage
4. TRACE claims, quotes, and media back to the original context.

From Mike Caufield’s *SIFT (Four Moves)*

4 Moves
1. Check the previous work
2. Go upstream to the source
3. Read laterally
4. Circle Back

From Mike Caulfield’s “Four Moves, “Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers.”
Scaffolding

- Learning as an iterative and ongoing process
- Learning supports that draw on and build on prior learning
- Modeling processes
- Ongoing opportunities for reflection, observation, practice, and feedback

Image: “Scaffolding” by Andrew Wilson
Scaffolding

- Pre- and post-test
- Modeling>Student practice>Librarian feedback
- “Tips” that address common challenges
- Post-activity reflection
Our LibGuide module: go.rowan.edu/evaluating

**Key points:**

- Use or share at your institution!
- IRB approval, no personal identifiers are collected
- Certificate of completion
Pre-test

Pre-Activity: Evaluation Exercise

Please briefly evaluate the credibility of the following two sources. Click the links to view each source. Then rate each source’s credibility on a scale of 1-4 (with 1 being the not all credible and 4 highly credible).

American College of Pediatricians
https://acpeds.org/

- 1 (not at all credible)
- 2 (mostly not credible)
- 3 (mostly credible)
- 4 (highly credible)

American Academy of Pediatrics

- 1 (not at all credible)
- 2 (mostly not credible)
- 3 (mostly credible)
- 4 (highly credible)

Next: An Overview of Lateral Reading.
Autism One Conference example walk through

Let's look at the first result, an article on Autism One from RationalWiki.

Consulting a Second Source

The second result on our Google results page was a Wikipedia article about "Generation Rescue" that mentioned Autism One. As in this situation, often you may not find a Wikipedia article that is exclusively about the source you're interested in, but the source may still be discussed in another Wikipedia article. This can provide important context for understanding the source. Let's look at what it says...

Generation Rescue previously co-sponsored an annual conference in Chicago along with another controversial charity, Autism One. The choice of speakers at these conferences led critics to accuse both organizations of promoting unproven therapies, such as the Miracle Mineral Solution, as a purported cure for autism.[20] These conferences have also been criticized because Andrew Wakefield has spoken at them.[21] They have also been criticized because many of the speakers presenting "so-called treatments" have a financial interest in them.[22]
What is the minimum wage?

The minimum wage is the starting hourly wage an employer can pay an employee for work. Currently, the federal minimum wage is $7.25 an hour (part of the Fair Labor Standards Act). Some states and cities have raised their minimum wage higher than that. In most instances, the higher of the prevailing minimum wage requirements is binding for employers.
Revisiting minimumwage.com: Post-activity reflection

Post-Activity Reflection

If the questions do not appear below, click here to access the post-activity reflection. After submitting your exercise you'll be directed to the last part of this tutorial (Points to Remember).

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Did you arrive at a similar conclusion about MinimumWage.com as we did?

- Yes
- No

How was your evaluation process similar to or different from ours? Would you suggest any strategies that we had not already presented?

[Text box for input]

Now that you've compared your and our source evaluations, would you change anything about your evaluation process?

[Text box for input]
Next Steps

- Summer 2020: assessing tutorial responses
- Ongoing: Inviting participation in and outside of Rowan
- Developing a follow-up tutorial on closer source evaluation (critical questions and analysis when reading laterally)
Discussion & Questions

Contact us at:
Andrea Baer (baera@rowan.edu)
Dan Kipnis (kipnisd@rowan.edu)

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References: Confirmation bias


