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## Teaching Lateral Reading with an Online Tutorial: Preliminary Study Findings.

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# Teaching Lateral Reading with an Online Tutorial: Preliminary Study Findings

Challenges to Digital Literacy Education  
Stanford Cyber Center Policy  
December 2, 2020

Andrea Baer & Dan Kipnis  
Campbell Library, Rowan University



# Rowan University

- Carnegie Classifications (R3: 2017; R2: 2018)
- Rapidly growing enrollment (3,550 increase in 3 years)
- FTE Fall 2019 = over 17,000
- 176 new tenure track faculty hired in five years, initiative to hire 100 more in next five
- Pandemic highlights need for critical source evaluation & online learning



# Online Toolkit: Evaluating Online Sources



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## Evaluating Online Sources: A Toolkit

### Evaluating Online Sources: Initial Moves

[Evaluating Online Sources: Simple Strategies for Complex Thinking](#)

[Click Restraint](#)

[SIFT: Moves for Web Evaluation](#)

[Four Moves of Fact-Checkers](#)

[+ One Habit: Checking Your Emotions](#)

[Why Lateral Reading?](#)

[Lateral Reading in Action](#)

[Quick Tips](#)

[Beyond "Four Moves": Closer Reading](#)

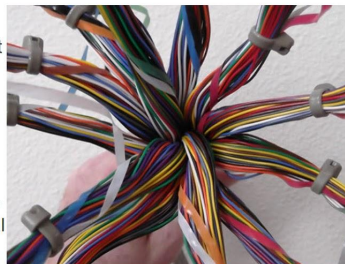
### Evaluating Online Sources: Simple Strategies for Complex Thinking

The Internet allows people to create and to share information in ways that once seemed possible only in science fiction. At the same time that we can benefit from the open nature of the Internet, it's sometimes hard to decide what online information to trust and to use.

We'll offer some simple, evidence-based strategies for evaluating the credibility of online sources, as well as reading critically. More specifically, we'll teach you about **"lateral reading,"** the practice of doing a quick initial evaluation of a website by spending little time on the website and more time reading what others say about the source or related issue. Lateral reading is used commonly by fact checkers.

These strategies will help you look beyond less important surface features of a web source (for example, how professional it looks or if it's a .org), and think more carefully about who is behind the source, what their purpose is, and how trustworthy and credible they are.

On this page we'll introduce you to several lateral reading strategies and concepts. On the guide's other pages (see the navigation menu) we'll share additional source evaluation strategies and learning resources.



**Misinformation on COVID-19:** *There is a lot of misinformation circulating about COVID-19 and the novel coronavirus. [University of Toronto Libraries](#) offers helpful tips on spotting such information. Many of those strategies are similar to the broader strategies presented in this guide.*

<https://libguides.rowan.edu/EvaluatingOnlineSources>

# Tutorial: Evaluating Online Sources through LR



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## Tutorial: Evaluating Online Sources through Lateral Reading (Part 1/2)

Search this Guide

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### About This Tutorial

About This Module

More Information for Instructors

Evaluating Online Sources:  
Part 1 Introduction

Pre-Activity

An Overview of "Lateral  
Reading"

SIFT and Four Moves

Lateral Reading in Practice

Stop/Pause

Investigate/Find trusted  
coverage

Trace information back to  
the original context

Time to Practice

### About This Module

**Title:** Evaluating Online Sources through Lateral Reading: An Introduction

**Audience:** Rowan students, faculty, and staff interested in strengthening their fact-checking and online source evaluation skills

**Purpose:** Developing new strategies for evaluating online sources and improving one's ability to investigate source credibility in order to recognize credible sources

#### Learning outcomes:

- Be familiar with the SIFT and "Four Moves" approaches to evaluating online sources.
- Recognize the importance of pausing when you have a strong emotional reaction to an information source in order to analyze sources more critically.
- Apply the SIFT and "Four Moves" approaches to completing an initial evaluation of a web source's credibility.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Suggested time:** 30-40 minutes

**Suggestions for proceeding with module:** To protect your device from malware, do not click on links that look suspicious, and do not download files that you do not recognize!

**Suggested search engine:** Google

About the Authors

<https://libguides.rowan.edu/tutorial-evaluatingonlinesources1>

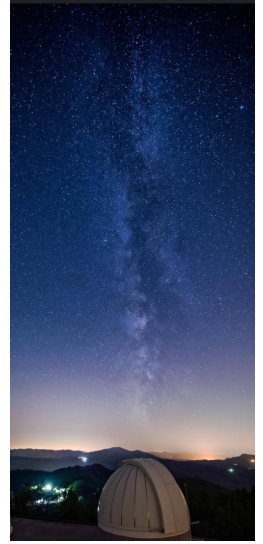
# Scaffolded Instruction



- Scaffolding: Designing learning experiences that help students continually strengthen their understandings and abilities through the use or removal of learning supports
- Scaffolding principles:
  - Drawing from and building on prior learning
  - Modeling processes with examples
  - Ongoing opportunities for student practice and reflection, coupled with instructor feedback
  - Engaging with material at increasing levels of complexity

# Our Tutorial Findings

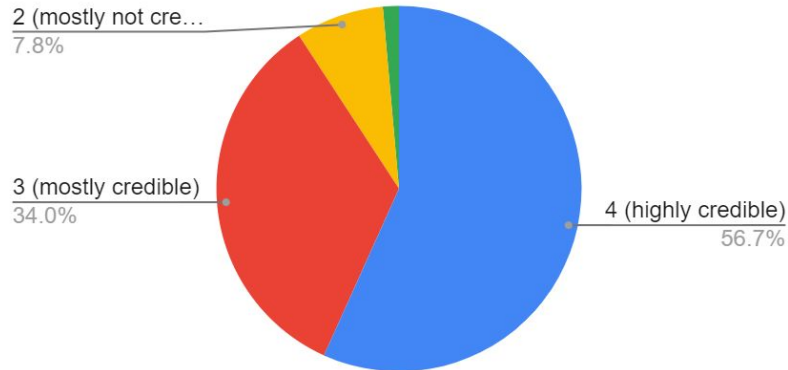
- First year business students (n=141)
- Notable increase in use of lateral reading after completing tutorial
- When engaging with lateral reading, varying degrees of “surface” and “depth” analysis
- Common use of ineffective evaluation strategies
- Need for continued practice and guidance with critical source analysis



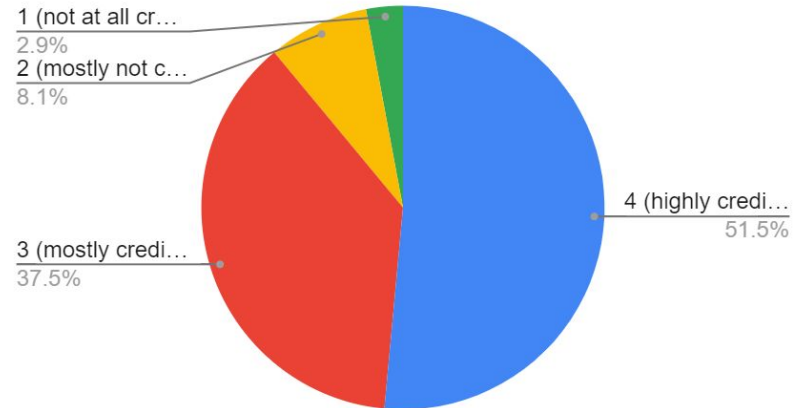
# Pre-Test: Challenges Distinguishing a Reputable Source from a Hate Site

Please briefly evaluate the credibility of the following two sources. Then rate each source's credibility on a scale of 1-4 (with 1 being the not all credible and 4 highly credible). Please briefly describe your process of evaluating the sources.

American College of Pediatricians Evaluations



American Academy of Pediatrics Evaluations

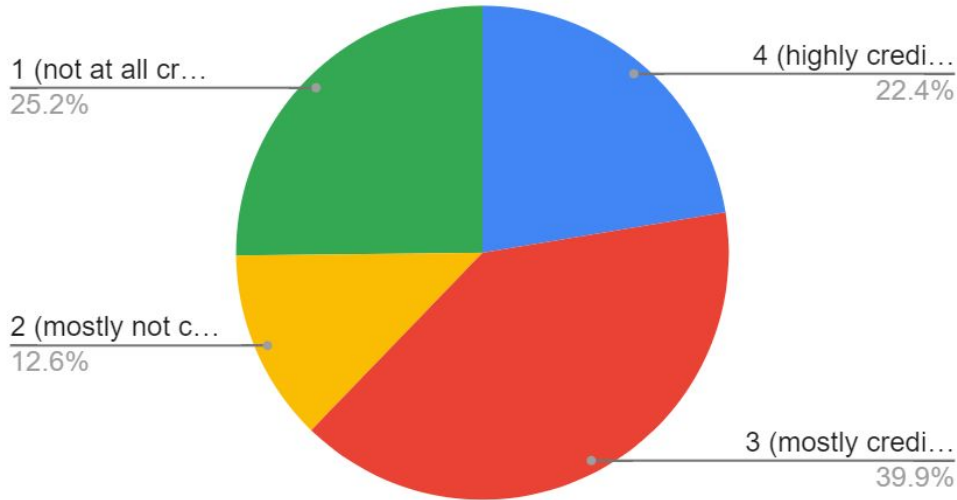




# Final Activity: Evaluating Minimumwage.com

Based on a scale of 1 (not at all credible) to 4 (highly credible), how trustworthy is Minimumwage.com? Explain your reasoning. How did you decide how trustworthy MinimumWage.com is? What evidence supports your assessment?

## Minimumwage.com Evaluations



The screenshot shows the homepage of Minimum Wage Facts & Analysis. The header includes the logo and navigation links for ALL STATES, MINIMUM WAGE 101, RESEARCH, BLOG, ABOUT, and ADS. The main content area features a section titled "What is the minimum wage?" with a brief explanation and a "LEARN MORE" link. Below this is a "MINIMUM WAGE IN THE U.S." section with a dropdown menu to "Choose Your State". On the right, there are four circular images of diverse workers. At the bottom right, there is a date "NOVEMBER 25, 2020" and a promotional banner for "This Small Business Saturday" with the text "SMALL BUSINESS FIGHTING FOR" and an image of a woman.

# Next Steps

- Further analysis of data
- Developing two follow-up tutorials
  - 2: Lateral Reading + Critical Source Analysis
  - 3: Perspective & Bias
- Continued outreach to faculty and librarians to adopt our tutorials



# Questions



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Slides available at:

[https://rdw.rowan.edu/lib\\_scholarship/27/](https://rdw.rowan.edu/lib_scholarship/27/)