Lesson Plan

Information Literacy

Evaluating Internet Sources

Objective: Students will analyze Internet sites for credibility.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate information-literacy skills.**

Demonstration includes

- *defining **information literacy***
- *locating and evaluating credible and relevant sources of information*
- *using information effectively to accomplish work-related tasks.*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

- Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving.
- Demonstrate integrity.
- Demonstrate work ethic.
- Demonstrate career- and life-management skills.
- Demonstrate an understanding of information security.

Correlations to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL):

- English: 6.C, 6.DSR, 6.RI, 7.C, 7.DSR, 7.RI, 8.C, 8.DSR, 8.RI, 9.C, 9.DSR, 9.RI, 10.C, 10.DSR, 10.RI, 11.C, 11.DSR, 11.RI, 12.C, 12.DSR, 12.RI
- History and Social Science: CE.9

Instructional Steps:

1. ***Introduce the lesson with the following (hoax) website: Help Save the Endangered Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus from Extinction*** (https://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/)**.** Ask students to describe their initial impressions of the site (hopefully they will recognize that it cannot be credible). Host a discussion about what strategies the author of this page used to make the site look credible, even though the premise of the entire site is completely implausible. Explain that in this lesson, students will be examining information found on the Internet and evaluating its credibility.

2. ***Explore relevant vocabulary.*** Introduce the following terms. Ask students to match the terms with the definitions. (You may choose to cut and use the cards contained on Handout #1, Information Literacy Vocabulary, to assist with this.)

   bias
   (noun) having preference for one thing over another in a way that's unfair

corroborate
(verb) to support with evidence or authority; to make more certain

credible
(adjective) able to be believed; trustworthy

evaluate
(verb) to carefully examine something to figure out its value

evidence
(noun) something that furnishes proof

reliable
(adjective) dependable or deserving of confidence

sensational
(adjective) arousing or tending to arouse (as by lurid details) a quick, intense, and usually superficial interest, curiosity, or emotional reaction

Explain that, because anyone can publish to the Internet, many people and organizations use it to attempt to convince others of their viewpoints. Also, because many businesses earn money through advertising (and therefore through the *reach* of their posts), their motivation for choosing what to post may be based upon what they hope will be popular and create buzz rather than what is necessarily reliable. Companies may be more interested in spreading ***sensational*** news that gets people angry or excited than posting ***reliable*** information (which may or may not excite). Because of this, it is very important that consumers of information think critically about the sources from which they get news and information.

3. ***Analyze news and fake news.*** Use the lesson activity provided by Common Sense Media (https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship/lesson/finding-credible-news), ask students to dig into an analysis of news sources and complete the News or Fake News (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Bbif83S-jqagpYP9Z0oM5ZgVZ-Djl-NXPP5o2NOj7bQ/edit) handout. Discuss the following:
    - What is the source of the information in each of these sources; is it a company, a not-for-profit organization, a governmental agency, or an individual? How can you tell?
    - Can you detect bias in any of the sources? What are examples of this?
    - To what extent is the content attempting to persuade or convince the reader? How do you know?

4. ***Apply it.*** Give students time to choose and review a news or information site on the Internet. Ask students to think critically to analyze the credibility of their chosen sites. Ask students to complete Handout #2: A Rubric for Analysis. Discuss and review student findings.

Formative Assessment:

- Assess student understanding as demonstrated in the correct matching of cards cut from Handout #1: Information Literacy Vocabulary.
- Evaluate student understanding of concepts within the lesson as demonstrated by class discussion and student notes gathered on Handout #2: A Rubric for Analysis.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

- To offer scaffolding to students and to complete this activity in a shorter time frame, choose just one site to review and discuss as a whole group.
- Create a video to offer tips to other students on evaluating information on the Internet.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

- Follow up this lesson by using additional activities from Common Sense Media (https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship/lesson/finding-credible-news), including Tricky Wiki and Fighting Fake.
- Ask students to reflect in writing on the following prompt:

  Liz saw an article posted by her aunt that criticized a local politician. Since Liz does not agree with this politician's views and opinions, she shared the article among all her social media friends. Later, Liz realized that the claims in the article were false (and she realized that she helped spread those falsehoods). What should Liz do?

Teacher Resources:

- Common Sense Education (https://www.commonsense.org/education/), Common Sense Media.
- Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) Assessment: Virginia Overview (https://www.ctecs.org/virginia/virginia-overview), Career and Technical Education Consortium of States (CTECS).
- Workplace Readiness Skills (https://www.cteresource.org/resources/workplace-readiness-skills/), Career and Technical Education (CTE) Resource Center.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

- Ask students to apply their learning by creating a classroom policy centered on a daily routine (e.g., turning in homework, behaviors when entering and exiting class, expectations for participation in group discussions).
- Ask students to write a journal reflection using the following prompt:

> *Adil has worked hard in his chosen career field, construction. He is finally ready to make the big jump—Adil is starting his own business as a home renovator. Before doing so, he must plan for budgets, workload, employees, equipment, and more. As part of his planning, Adil is considering what policies and procedures he should put in place to protect his business, his employees, and his customers/clients. What policies and procedures should Adil consider? Explain.*

Handout #1:

Information Literacy Vocabulary

BIAS	(noun) having preference for one thing over another in a way that's unfair
CORROBORATE	(verb) to support with evidence or authority; to make more certain
CREDIBLE	(adjective) able to be believed; trustworthy

RELIABLE	(adjective) dependable or deserving of confidence
SENSATIONAL	(adjective) arousing or tending to arouse (as by lurid details) a quick, intense, and usually superficial interest, curiosity, or emotional reaction
EVALUATE	(verb) to carefully examine something to figure out its value
EVIDENCE	(noun) something that furnishes proof

Handout #2: A Rubric for Analysis

Aspects to Consider	Questions to Ask	Notes
Authority	• Who is the author? • Is he or she reputable? expert? • Does the information provide references? • Are there unbiased, reputable organizations affiliated with the site or author?	
Type of Source	• How would you categorize the source (e.g., academic, commercial, governmental)? • What is the purpose of the site (to educate, convince, sell)? • Can you corroborate the facts stated on the site with other (unbiased) sources?	
Timeliness	• How recent is the information presented? • Has the information been recently updated? • Is the publication date available?	
Objectivity	• Is the author's purpose clear? • Do any points of view or opinions reflect bias? • Are opinions or assumptions presented as facts? • Are facts presented corroborated by other (unbiased) sources?	