

Instructional Plan, Goals, and Reflections for an Information Literacy Session

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The following lesson plan and accompanying materials are designed to teach a 50-minute session on thinking critically about social software resources. The session will address a variety of learning styles and preferences by including a mixture of lecture and presentation; discussion and reflection on key concepts; guided demonstration; and individual exploration. The session is designed to be utilized in an online environment, but could function equally well in a face-to-face setting with some minor modifications. Additionally, while it will be utilized initially in an asynchronous learning environment, it could easily function in a synchronous setting simply by utilizing course delivery software that allows for live discussion, chat, and slide viewing.

Audience

This instructional session is designed for use by an art library located within or associated with an academic institution. The intended audience is undergraduate art and design students, including, but not limited to, large Foundations in Art seminar classes that would cater primarily to freshmen. The coverage of critical thinking as related to social media resources is relevant to students in any major, however the content and examples focus specifically on sources and subjects that are likely to be useful to art and design students.

Production Resources

This instructional session is designed for delivery over the Internet. In order to create an interactive session the following resources were used:

- Audacity audio software
- Prezi presentation software
- Screenflow screen capture software
- YouTube video page

Goals, Objectives, and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELO)

Instructional Goals

- To teach students how to critically evaluate social media and social networking resources.
- To teach students how to effectively locate and utilize social networks and social media sources for formal research and other informational purposes

Objectives and ELOs

1. Objective: After a 50-minute instructional session students will be able to identify, access, and evaluate a variety of types and formats of social network and related sources for information.

ELO: Students will identify, access, and evaluate at least one resource in the categories of blogs, social bookmark pages, wikis, Wikipedia articles, and multimedia websites that meets their informational needs

Aligns with ACRL Information Literacy Standard One:

The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.

▪ Performance indicator Two:

The information literate student identifies a variety of types and formats of potential sources for information:

- c. Identifies the value and differences of potential resources in a variety of formats (e.g., multimedia, database, website, data set, audio/visual, book)
- d. Identifies the purpose and audience of potential resources (e.g., popular vs. scholarly, current vs. historical)

2. Objective: After instructional session students will be able to evaluate the sources they encounter on the Internet according to a variety of criteria in order to determine authority, credibility, and usefulness of the information.

ELO: Students will evaluate and discuss an article from the journal Nature using three sources that note differing opinions about the legitimacy of the article's research claims. They will be able to support their rationale for or against using the source with reasoning learned during the teaching session.

Aligns with ACRL Information Literacy Standard Three:

The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

▪ **Performance indicator Two:**

The information literate student articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources:

- a. Examines and compares information from various sources in order to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias

▪ **Performance indicator Four:**

The information literate student compares new knowledge with prior knowledge to determine the value added, contradictions, or other unique characteristics of the information:

- a. Determines whether information satisfies the research or other information need
- b. Uses consciously selected criteria to determine whether the information contradicts or verifies information used from other sources
- c. Draws conclusions based upon information gathered
- e. Determines probable accuracy by questioning the source of the data, the limitations of the information gathering tools or strategies, and the reasonableness

of the conclusions

3. Objective: Students will be able to identify an information need and track their process while conducting research to increase awareness of how social networks such as Facebook can be used as tools to acquire additional information sources from other social networks.

ELO: Students will keep a detailed log tracking their search process while identifying five social media sources that fulfill their information needs.

Aligns with ACRL Information Literacy Standard Four:

The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

▪ **Performance indicator Two:**

The information literate student revises the development process for the product or performance.

- a. Maintains a journal or log of activities related to the information seeking, evaluating, and communicating process

Instructional Plan for Information Literacy Session

Social Software: Evaluating Sources of Information

Students will access the presentation at Prezi.com. They will participate in hands-on activities and discussion at various intervals throughout the session; they will follow along with the demonstration videos (which they can pause and rewind as needed) that cover Quora, Wikis, Wikipedia, and CiteULike. This is intended to function as guided practice, however it can easily be utilized as a lecture if the student prefers a lecture format. The video concerning locating blogs through Facebook is intended as a lecture and demonstration. Any reading of slides noted in the plan below would be lecture in a synchronous environment.

Instruction

1. Critical Thinking (lecture/reading of slides for asynchronous)

- Ask question to get students thinking and reflecting on the topic: How do you define critical thinking?
- Present four critical thinking definitions
 - Ennis, 1989
 - Glaser, 1941
 - Paul, Fisher, & Nosich, 1993
 - Fisher & Scriven, 1997
- Show common points between the definitions
 - Note particular critical thinking skills to apply to resources found on the Internet

2. Critical Evaluation (lecture/reading of slides for asynchronous)

- Mention types of content and authors—scholarly, popular, professional, amateur, etc. and show links for further reading on evaluation of web resources
 - SUNY University at Albany Library page
 - University of California at Berkeley Library page
- How to evaluate sources on the web
 - Present checklist of questions to ask about social media resources—
checklist items will be used later in session for assignment and demonstrations

3. Overview of social networking sources for research (lecture/reading of slides/videos/Twitter response activity/discussion board activity)

- Show overview of types of resources: blogs, wikis, social bookmarks

- Introduce negative Wikipedia reactions
 - Show negative Wikipedia quote and Steven Colbert “Wikilobbying” video
 - Have students react to usefulness of Wikipedia thinking about quote and video; they will use Twitter to send concise initial responses
- Wikis
 - Present definitions of wiki and Wikipedia
 - Activity: Students will download and read short passages from the journal Nature and the Encyclopedia Britannica; the readings are responses from each source to an article published by Nature on the accuracy of Wikipedia and the Encyclopedia Britannica. Students will then complete a short discussion response indicating whether or not they think the article in question, given the responses of each side, would be a credible source of information. They will use the evaluation checklist to help them with their critical thinking.
- Social Software
 - Introduce using the Quora community to aid in research, refining a research question, and assessing the authority of authors in that forum—Fitzsimmons video

4. Social Bookmarks (Video and article)

- Present using social bookmarking as a research tool; using CiteULike to identify resources and locate quality users to follow—Fitzsimmons video
- Introduce Facebook and social bookmarks: how to use them as sophisticated resource identification tools—students will read the ReadWriteWeb blog post on identifying super-users within Delicious

5. Blogs (Video and lecture/slide reading for asynchronous)

- Present blog basics, uses, and sources
- Introduce method for using Facebook to locate blog sources—Fitzsimmons video

6. Wikis (Video and lecture/slide reading for asynchronous)

- Present overview of things to look for when evaluating a wiki for authoritative content
 - Show New Media Art wiki from Brown University and discuss identifying author and examining resource for quality and authority—Fitzsimmons video
 - Present Wikipedia article on New Media and discuss examining this resource for quality and authority—Fitzsimmons video

7. Citing Social Media Sources in APA Style (Lecture/slide reading for asynchronous/handout)

- Present proper citation style—Author, I. (date). Title of document [Format description]. Retrieved from http://
- Show handout from the APA—*How to Cite Something You Found on a Website in APA Style: What to Do When Information Is Missing*

8. Assignment: To be completed after class and turned in to the instructor (feedback will be provided). Students will find and evaluate a source from the five categories outlined on the handout and covered during the class session. They will complete all fields of the handout for each item. They will then choose one resource and post their full response to the class discussion board.

Notes: The plans for this class session assume that in asynchronous settings course software including a discussion board, blog, or forum feature will be available. If not, a wiki

would be created to host the required discussions. Twitter will be used for part of the discussion, so students should have accounts set up in advance. In the event that this is not possible for some students, they would be allowed to post 140 character responses to the class discussion forum for the Twitter activity. This length restriction is imperative in either environment—the point is to generate quick, succinct reactions to the material. The final activity could be assigned as a group project if the environment allows; this could be a good way to get students interacting with one another about the material covered in the session.

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Appendix A

Locating Social Media Resources

Directions: Find and evaluate one specific social media resource for each of the following: **Blog, social bookmark page, multimedia site, wiki, and Wikipedia entry**. Please use the “Questions to Ask When Evaluating Web Resources” document to guide your answers below and record the steps to locate the information. Choose one answer to share on the class discussion board.

Website title:

URL:

Author or Organization:

Date:

Evaluation of author:

Evaluation of information:

Evaluation of website:

Search process steps:

Citation in APA style:

Appendix B

Questions to Ask When Critically Evaluating Web Resources

General:

The following general criteria for evaluating content found on the web are useful guidelines, but the absence of these elements does not *automatically* make the information low quality.

- Is the website professional looking and relatively free from serious errors, including those in grammar and spelling?
- Are there citations for information (especially scholarly sources) and/or links to sources? Do the links work?
- Can you find an author, contact information, and/or date for the site or the information?
- Can you verify the information through other credible sources?
- Does the domain seem to match the content (.edu, .gov, .org, etc.)?

Evaluating an Author:

- Are the authors credentials listed somewhere? Do they seem relevant?
- Can you check the authors credentials through an about page, university or business association, or through information found elsewhere on the web?
- Do they have other works that you can identify or have others in the field cited them? Try looking on Google Scholar to find this information.

Blogs:

- Is the blog currently active, containing regular or frequent posts? If it is an archive, does it explicitly state that the contents are no longer being actively maintained?
- Can you find citations or bookmarks to this blog through other blogs, search tools, or social bookmarking sites?
- Can you identify the author and find credentials that indicate they are an expert on the topic of the blog? If it is an institutional blog, can you find information on the individual contributors? Is the institution authoritative?
- Do the general contents focus on substantive material as opposed to daily activities?

Wikis:

- Does the wiki have guidelines that editors should follow when adding or altering content? If so, do they seem reasonable?
- Are you able to identify who has made changes and what their credentials are?
- Can you trace the history of changes to the page? Do the changes make sense and is the logic for contributions noted in the history?
- Can you identify who sponsors the wiki? Does this seem like an appropriate or related organization or individual?
- Can you check citations through links to other sources? Can you verify information independently?

Social Networking Sites:

- Can you locate the identity of the poster, including information from a profile page?
- Can you verify any identifying information you locate?
- Does the institution or person posting the information have authority on a particular subject? For instance, NASA posting information about a rocket launch is more credible than the National Gallery of Art posting that information.
- Does the information seem accurate, factual, and/or otherwise appropriate for your needs?
- Can you check information against outside sources and verify facts or assertions?

Social Bookmarking Sites:

Can you tell what the focus of the bookmarking website is (Delicious has popular and scholarly links while CiteULike focuses on scholarly links only).

When looking at a link page, can you locate bookmarks for websites that you know are quality resources on the same page as resources with which you are unfamiliar?

Can you find the identity of the user that bookmarked a site and verify their expertise?

Multimedia Sites and Content:

Can you identify the poster on a site such as YouTube or Flickr? Can the authority of that user to post information on a particular topic be verified?

If the video is a presentation or lecture, can you identify the speakers in the video and verify their authority on the subject?

Can you find contact information for an individual or institution hosting a page on a multimedia website?

Is there a date accompanying the information so you can tell if it is current (which may be more or less important depending on the nature of the information)?

Resources:

This list has been modified from the extensive criteria located at:
State University of New York, University at Albany library website:
<http://library.albany.edu/usered/eval/evalweb/multimedia.html>

University of California, Berkeley library website:
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/evaluation.html>