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Evaluating Reliability in Resources [Library]

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CJF 101 - Criminal Justice

Activity: Evaluating Reliability in Resources

Location: Smart classroom

Learning Outcomes

Students will be introduced to the concept of library academic resources.

Students will learn the strengths and weaknesses of different forms of information.

Introduction

Critical evaluation is an important skill that involves questioning different elements of an information resource to determine its authority on the topic it addresses. Students will practice this process by engaging in a discussion about the reliability of a specific resource. They will be encouraged to contribute to an in depth evaluation of a resource as a group.

This session will give students the chance to develop integrative learning by guiding them through a complete evaluation of information media related to their prospective field. They will learn how to navigate information in a digital format, deconstruct an argument and recognize different types of authority.

Frames	Core Competencies
Authority	Integrative Learning Global Learning

1. After introduction, ask students get out phones, personal tablets or Library provided iPads and pull-up the *ProPublica* reading, "[Machine Bias](#)". Start with a general discussion on the article. What opinions do the students have? How is it relevant to their major or prospective careers? (5 minutes)
2. Quickly introduce evaluation and general characteristics of Popular vs. Scholarly resources. Slides are provided for those interested and available here: goo.gl/bnOy49. Provide students with a quick introduction to evaluation so they can put the core concepts to practice in the discussion that follows. (10 minutes)
3. Demonstrate how to critically evaluate a source through discussion of the article.
 - a. What characteristics indicate that it is popular (interactive pictures, appears to be written for general audience)? What characteristics are scholarly (cites sources, provides data)?
 - b. Who are the authors, what are their credentials (see bottom of page, journalists for Propublica)?
 - c. What is their purpose? Who is the producer, funder, publisher (About Us page on Propublica)?
 - d. Where does the information come from? Sources cited in the article are available as a link. Students can click on each one and practice evaluating it. Discuss the different examples of authority in referenced materials. For example, popular news article ("[Associated Press](#)"), scholarship ("[survey of risk assessment tools](#)"; Social Science Research Network paper), government documents ("[reform bill](#)"; Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015), reports from for-profit company ("[published a validation study](#)"; Northpointe Institute for Public Management Inc), reports from non-profit agencies ("[examined 19 different risk methodologies](#)"; Justice Programs Office).Finally, ask students to decide if the article is credible or not? Why? Which of the criteria discussed was the most important in their decision. (10 minutes)
4. Introduce Library Databases and demonstrate how to find a related scholarly article. (5 minutes)

(Optional) Homework / ePortfolio Assignment

Watch this video of a TED Talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles

Write 2-3 sentences summarizing the video. What was the video about? How did it relate to the reading from ProPublica?

Write 2-3 sentences about what you learned. Are you concerned about the use of algorithms to sort and filter your

web search results?

Post your response to your ePortfolio.