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Opening Digital World's Doors to # Next Digital Generations

LESSON PLAN 2 – MEDIA ANALYSIS

TARGET

Helping students use analytical questions to evaluate source credibility, we also want them to understand that information comes from lots of places (not just textbooks). So they need to apply their skills to analyse all types of media. When they get to that point, they're ready to move on to analysing special categories of media, like news or scientific data.

EDUCATION METHODS

Discussion

OBJECTIVES

✓ **Identify** the tools you already use to know that information is **credible**.
✓ **Consider** how certain things like **expertise** and **motive** affect credibility.
✓ **Learn** 4 questions for evaluating source credibility.
✓ **Understand** that a source that's credible on one topic is not necessarily credible on other topics.
✓ **Know** that checking multiple sources often helps you see whether information is credible.

VERIFICATION

When we hear things from a media source like a video, a person on TV, or website, we don't personally know the source and they don't know us. We may not be sure about whether to believe them.
Even when someone we know sends us a text there are no clues from facial

expressions or tone of voice, so we might not be sure what they mean. That's when we need to ask questions…

FLOW OF LESSON

1.Tell students how to make a media analyse

"Collecting Stories to Analyse

1. List all of the media outlets in your area. *Include newspapers, news websites, radio stations, television news shows, and any other media outlets you want to include. Depending on the story you hope to share and its scope, you may also extend your search to include state wide and national media outlets.*

- *For example, you may include the local newspaper, radio station, web news sources, and possibly any major news sources in the nearest big city if you're in a rural area or suburb.*
- ***Alternatively, you might want to focus on national or worldwide news sources to analyse a larger company or subject.***

2. Make a list of search terms based on your topic. *Identify the key terms that will help you to gather articles pertaining to your topic. This will help to streamline your research by giving you terms that you can plug into each of the media channels you decide to investigate.*

- ***Collect news stories from research databases from the last 6 months.*** *Use the key terms to find articles on your topic in databases, such as subscription resources like Lexis Nexis and Ebsco Host, or free resources like Google Scholar. Plan to go back about 6 months and aim to collect between 100-200 articles if you're doing a professional media analysis.*

- ***Make sure to include a variety of different types of media sources unless you're hoping to examine a specific medium, such as TV, radio, or print news.***

- ***Separate the stories into categories and eliminate irrelevant data.*** *The three main categories you'll likely collect include opinion, news, and feature stories. Eliminate obituaries, calendar items, and any other extraneous items from the data you collect*

- ***Separating the data into categories can help you know what to expect when you start reading a story.***

Analysing the Stories

Read the articles and underline or take notes. *This will make it easier for you to write about your findings. Use a pen or highlighter to note important information in*

print articles, or make a note of this information if you're reading digital media or if you examine TV or radio sources. Some things to watch for as you review the media you've collected include:

- *Buzzwords, which are terms that come up again and again across different media channels.*
- *Bias, which is using emotional appeals to convince readers of something even if the evidence is lacking.*
- *Similar portrayals of a story, such as portraying it in a positive or negative light across different media channels.*
- *Positioning of the story, such as whether it's a front-page or prime-time news story.*

Answer questions about the articles you read. *A major part of the analysis is asking questions and answering them based on the evidence you find in your sources. Some questions you might consider as you review the sources you've gathered include.*

- *How does the media frame this topic?*
- *Who are the spokespeople for the topic and how are they being represented?*
- *Are any voices noticeably absent from the articles on this subject?*
- *What topics are getting the most coverage within the category?*
- *What media outlets are covering this topic?*
- ***Does coverage seem to peak or drop at certain times of the year?***

Summarize what you have learned. *After you have completed your media analysis, write a brief summary of what you have learned about how the media is covering your subject. Include your answers to all of the questions you asked about the data you collected. Note anything of special importance or that you're still unsure about.*

Identify ways this may help you to introduce your own story. *A media analysis is a helpful way to determine how best to introduce a story into the media. Consider what you've learned and decide if there are any strategies that may help to get your story out to a broader audience or make it more appealing to readers.*

Give readers your conclusions and recommendations. *At the end of the media analysis, explain what the major findings were for the study and how this may be beneficial to your reader or organization. This may include detailed suggestions for how to frame a story, where to place it in a media channel, and who to quote in the story. Be as detailed as possible and cite specific examples from your study to support your recommendations.**"***

2.Use your computer lab for searching articles.

3. Type in Google for the keywords (for example "Climate changes")

4.Find the most appropriate articles. Decide is the information trustfully enough?
Discuss: Who would be a good source to go to and why do you think so?

Teacher's comment:
"Credibility isn't just about **who** we believe. It's also about **what** we believe. We get

ideas about the world from all sorts of places, not just directly from people. A movie about a tsunami shows a giant wave—taller than a skyscraper—heading towards people on shore. Is that what tsunamis **really** look like? An ad implies that most scientists are men with crazy hair who wear thick glasses and white lab coats all the time. Is that true?

We can check out any source using the 3 Steps on the **Deciding what's credible** handout. They're about what we already know about motive and expertise.

Step 1: Use common sense

Ask: Is it logical—does it make sense?

If a) what you're seeing doesn't make sense, b) you know it isn't true from your own experience, or c) it just doesn't work with facts you already know, you don't have to take any additional steps. You are looking at a source that is not credible.

Step 2: Ask questions

Not just any questions, but these four:

Expertise

a) Does this source know me or care about me?

The answer to this question depends on the information you're looking for. If you're checking some information about plastic water bottles polluting the ocean, it really doesn't matter if the source knows you or not. But if a site promises that you will love their new toy, it would need to know what kinds of toys, games, or activities you like for their promise to be credible.

b) Does this source know a lot about this topic? How did they learn what they know?

Some people think that the easiest way to find credible information is to ask a digital voice assistant. Digital assistants seem to know everything! Did you ever wonder how they can know all those answers? They use mathematical calculations (called "algorithms") to find answers.

For simple questions that only have one possible answer (like the temperature outside or the name of a celebrity famous for singing a particular pop song) they is usually a credible source? But if the question is complicated, it would be better to start with people or groups who have lots of experience or have earned awards or PhDs related to your topic. **Then** you can use a voice assistant to confirm that information (see Step 3).

Motive

c) What does this source want me to do or believe and why would they want me to do or believe that?

Does the source make money if you follow their advice? For example, do you think an influencer earns a fee if you buy the product they're wearing or talking about? Does a professional athlete wear a certain brand of shoe or shirt just because they like that brand or because they're paid to talk about it?

Money can often be one reason why you're seeing a logo or brand name in a video or ad—it can affect what the influencer or athlete is telling you (and what they're **not** telling you). They probably don't intend to hurt you, but it's possible that making money is more important to them than giving you all the facts or saying what is good for you.

d) Who benefits and who might be hurt if people believe this source?

This isn't always easy to tell. Here's an example:

Imagine an ad for an app that promises to make you a better student.

• What are the possible benefits? The app maker would benefit if you buy the app because they would make money. And you might benefit if the app really helped you.

• Who might be hurt if you believed the ad? You might be wasting your money if you bought the app. You might also be spending time practicing the wrong things, and then actually do worse in school. Or you might rely on the app, which can only make guesses about what you need, instead of seeking help from your teacher, who actually knows what you need.

Step 3: Confirm

Ask: Do other **credible** sources back up what this source says?
The job isn't just to check **more** sources. It's to look for a variety of sources. If you can't find a variety of credible sources that agree with the source you are checking, you shouldn't believe that source.

4. Check your sources

Now that you understand, it's time to practice. Pick a question related to something you are covering in class or something you have seen online. Find a source that provides an answer to that question and, in small groups, use the questions on the handout to decide if the source is credible.

5.Read articles carefully and underline the most necessary information.

6. Compare the articles!

WRAPPING IT UP

Questions are our friends. When you ask good questions about sources **and** the information they provide, you'll get much better information. The more sources you use, the better. And remember that a great source for one subject doesn't mean it's great for everything.