Stockton University Assessment Institute 2015 - Rubric Development

*Learning to Critically Evaluate Information Sources*

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**Learning Outcome:**

At the end of this assignment, students will be able to efficiently summarize, critically evaluate, and effectively communicate their findings on popular media articles in the context of their credibility, reliability, quality, thoroughness, objectivity, and accuracy.

**Assignment:**

1. Select and read a popular media article (newspaper, magazine, video clip, podcast, blog, etc.) related to wildlife conservation issues in the United States. It could relate to a specific species or issue, or be a general article on conservation in the U.S.
2. Write a brief (1 paragraph) summary of the article. Add another paragraph including why you found it interesting and any questions that came up as you read the piece.
3. Evaluate the article's credibility, quality, and objectivity, as well as how these characteristics might impact how it is received by its intended audience (2-3 pages).

Here are some questions to guide your evaluation. Make sure to explain and provide clear evidence and justification for your answers from the article and other sources:

Credibility/Reliability:

* Is the author educated and respected in their field? How do you know?
* Is the website, magazine, newspaper, or other information source reliable and reputable? How do you know?
* Does the article use reliable and reputable sources (people, scientific research, other articles, etc.)? How do you know?

Quality/Thoroughness:

* Describe the article’s organization. Are the main points clearly presented in a logical order? Is the article difficult to read or repetitive? How could it be improved?
* Does there seem to be relevant information missing from the article? If so, what? If so, why don’t you think so?

Objectivity/Accuracy:

* Is the information presented based largely on opinions or facts? How can you tell?
* Does the author present several viewpoints on the issue, or does s/he focus primarily on one viewpoint? What are the different viewpoints presented?
* What evidence is presented to support the author’s main points?
* What assumptions (if any) do you think the author might be making in the article? Are they reasonable? Why or why not?
* Can you find other sources/articles on the topic that confirm or refute the main points in the article?

Interpretation/Implications:

* How do you think the article might be perceived differently by different audiences (e.g., general public, scientists, animal rights activists, etc.)? What implications/consequences might this have for the issue presented in your article?

Your summary should include the title and source of the piece as well as a weblink if available. Be prepared to share your article, findings, and questions with the class.

Critically Evaluating Information Sources RUBRIC Tredick 2015

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| **Criteria** | *Does not meet Expectations*  (0-10 pts) | *Marginal*  (11-20 pts) | *Proficient*  (21-30 pts) |
| **Article Summary** | Misses most or all of author’s main ideas and style. Wording is largely copied directly from article and contains too much unnecessary information. | Captures most but not all of the author’s main ideas and style using original wording. Unnecessary information is present, but minimal. | Concisely and accurately summarizes author’s main ideas and style using original wording. |
| **Evaluation of**  **Article Credibility/Reliability** | Provides little or no evidence of the credibility and reliability of the author, source, and cited sources and research related to reputation, connections to and use of reputable information sources, and balance of arguments is missing. | Provides some evidence to support the credibility and reliability of the author, source, and cited sources, but more research related to reputation, connections to and use of reputable information sources, and balance of arguments should be included. | Provides clear evidence to support the credibility and reliability of the author, source, and cited sources by researching their reputation, connections to and use of reputable information sources, and balance of arguments presented. |
| **Evaluation of**  **Article Quality/Thoroughness** | Does not provide evidence of article’s clarity, organization, and thoroughness (is information missing?), and suggestions as to how organization, clarity, and thoroughness could be improved are missing altogether. | Describes and provides evidence of article’s clarity, organization, and thoroughness (is information missing?), but suggestions as to how organization, clarity, and thoroughness could be improved are weak or lacking. | Clearly describes and provides evidence of article’s clarity, organization, and thoroughness (is information missing?). Suggestions are made as to how organization, clarity, and thoroughness could be improved. |
| **Evaluation of**  **Article**  **Objectivity/Accuracy** | Assumptions and biased viewpoints in the article are not clearly identified, explained, or supported with sufficient evidence. No alternate sources are referenced to confirm or refute accuracy. | Assumptions and biased viewpoints in the article are identified but not clearly explained and supported with evidence. Alternate sources are referenced, but do not adequately confirm or refute accuracy. | Assumptions and biased viewpoints in the article are identified and clearly explained and supported with evidence. Alternate sources are referenced to confirm or refute accuracy of article. |
| **Evaluation of**  **Perceptions and Implications**  **of Article** | Perceptions are not clearly or logically explored. Biases, assumptions, and evidence are not identified nor evaluated. Implications of perceptions are not discussed or lack logic and clarity. | Perceptions are explored and discussed from only one point of view. Biases, assumptions, and evidence are identified but not evaluated in detail. Describes implications, but points are weak or lacking in logic or clarity. | Perceptions of at least 2 different audiences are explored and discussed. Identifies and evaluates bias, validity of assumptions, and logic of evidence on which their perceptions are based. Logically and clearly describes implications of these perceptions. |
| **Communication of Findings** | Assignment is very unorganized or incomplete, contains numerous grammatical errors, and does not include title and source of article. Main points are not presented to class at all. Questions are missing altogether. | Assignment is not well organized, contains several grammatical errors, or does not include title and source of article. Presents main points to class in a disorganized fashion. Questions lack substance and don’t spur discussion. | Assignment is well organized and contains few grammatical errors. Includes title and source of article. Clearly and concisely presents main points to class. Questions are thought-provoking and spur further discussion. |