



Teaching SIFT

Empowering Students against Misinformation

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**What seems most important to
your students when they
evaluate sources?**

<https://tinyurl.com/3ptybat5>

Source Evaluation

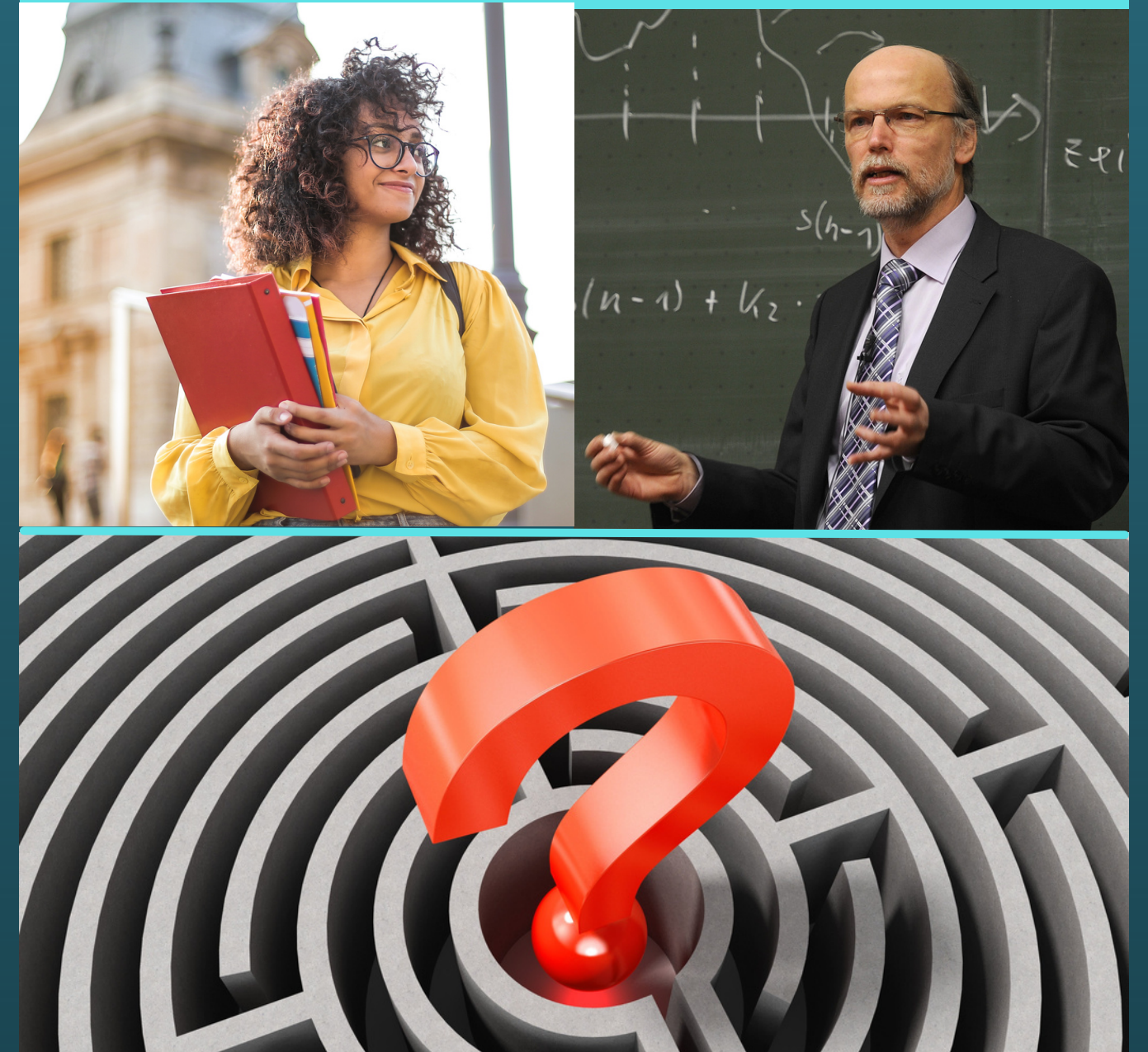
Traditional Strategies



- ✓ Is it recent?
- ✓ An author?
- ✓ No errors?
- ✓ Any sources?
- ✓ .ORG/.GOV?
- ✓ No ads?

Universal questions, often applied without consideration of content.

Typical Outcomes



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**Which methods of teaching
source evaluation have you used?**

<https://tinyurl.com/57j3sbh3>

Source Evaluation

New Strategies

SIFT



Michael Caulfield

Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers

STOP

Consider the info you need based on the source you have.

TRACE

Trace claims and quotes to the original sources. Verify the context.

INVESTIGATE

Investigate the source. Get an overview of the author or publisher.

FIND

Find trusted sources on the same topic; get a general consensus.

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Which group of participants in the Stanford Study do you think did best at evaluating sources?

<https://tinyurl.com/2wsskxxe>

Source Evaluation

New Strategies

SIFT



Fact-Checkers

Professional fact-checkers use lateral reading.



Traditional vertical reading is vulnerable to high-production misinformation.

Rather than rely on the original source, lateral reading uses other sources to evaluate it.



Teaching Source Evaluation

LIBR 1XX

1 Credit, Half-Semester
Asynchronous, Online

Built for First-Years

Open to All Years, All Majors

Count as Electives

Included Source Evaluation

LIBR 103: Academic Research



LIBR 123: Business Research



Teaching Source Evaluation

LIBR 103: Academic Research



Students learn about and practice using general academic research strategies and resources



SIFT

LIBR 123: Business Research



Students study business sources and databases to compile reports.

CRAAP



Teaching Source Evaluation

LIBR 103: Academic Research



Video

Students watched a few short videos on SIFT by Caulfield and some videos on lateral reading.



Discussion Posts

Students posted an image that had tricked them and explained how they discovered it was fake.



Source Evaluation

Students provided an evaluation of each source in their reports using a technique from SIFT.

Teaching Source Evaluation

LIBR 123: Business Research



Discussion Posts

Weeks 3 & 6 -- Students discussed their evaluation strategies. Same in the final.



Readings

Week 2 -- Students were told the best place to party on campus and asked how they'd trust the answer.

Week 3 -- Students were given a source and asked how an author's experience or publisher's reputation could impact its quality.

Week 5 -- An explanation of implicit bias; a rundown of SIFT.

Teaching Source Evaluation

LIBR 123: Business Research



Results

Students showed no significant improvement. Source quality and supporting rationale was mixed.

- It matched my assumptions.
- It was well-written.
- It had few ads, minimal clutter.
- It had a trustworthy domain.
- It referenced other sources.
- It was from the library.

Teaching Source Evaluation

LIBR 103: Academic Research



Results

Students showed substantial improvement in selection and evaluation of sources. Focus was given to authors, publishers, and external sources for verification.



Student Feedback

- Misinformation is a fun topic.
- SIFT was surprisingly useful.

Teaching SIFT



Major Takeaways

- Students need more practice and discussions, fewer readings.
- Practice is most effective when SIFT is covered early and directly.
- Students enjoyed discussing the drawbacks of poor evaluation.
- Students felt empowered.

LIBR 103: Academic Research



LIBR 123: Business Research



Teaching SIFT

LIBR 103: Academic Research



- Introduce SIFT in Week 1.
- Shift source evaluation as the core, not just a component.
- Include more discussions on the dangers of misinformation.
- Include more SIFT activities.

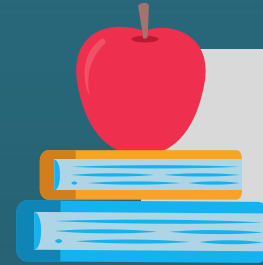
LIBR 123: Business Research

- Introduce SIFT in Week 1 with examples of business sources.
- Weekly source evaluation.
 - Discussion posts that offer a selection of sources.
 - Reports, theirs and peers, that allow for revision.
 - Include SIFT in the rubric.
- Bonus points for evaluation when not otherwise required.

Teaching SIFT

SIFT

Given the nuanced nature of SIFT, it isn't as plug-and-play as CRAAP or other methods. It's also counter to years of research habits. Still, it can work even beyond a credit-bearing course.



One-Shot Instruction

1. Discuss a source as a group before SIFT.
2. Discuss it with SIFT. Note the difference.
3. Split students into teams; ask each to review a unique source and discuss.
4. Ask each team to share its evaluation.

If you don't have the entire session....

- Focus on one phase; reference the rest.
- Practice lateral reading. It's the simplest.
- Emphasize SIFT as a habit beyond school.

Additional Readings

Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers

by Michael Caulfield

<https://webliteracy.pressbooks.com/>

Civic Online Reasoning Curriculum

The Stanford History Education Group

<https://cor.stanford.edu/>

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