INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



SIFT

This strategy provides a reflective process that students follow to evaluate and determine the credibility of sources.

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SIFT

Summary

SIFT is a method for students to determine the validity and reliability of sources and claims they find on the internet. It is a series of simple steps for students to quickly apply to nearly any kind of online content, including articles, videos, images, websites, etc. SIFT stands for: stop and reflect, investigate the source, find reliable coverage, and trace claims.

Procedure

1. Have students identify an online information source that they could use as part of formal or informal research. This can be a website, article, video, image, or other type of online content.
2. First, direct students to **stop** and reflect on what they already know about the topic and the source. Have students ask themselves the following questions:
    - Does the information from the source align with what you already know?
    - Do you know the source's reputation?
3. Next, have students **investigate** the source. This can be started within the source by finding the "About Us" or a similar section on the site. Students should also search for information about the source using Google or Wikipedia to see what others say about it. Have students ask themselves the following questions:
    - What can you find out about the author or creators?
    - What is their mission or goal? Is there any bias present?
4. Next, direct students to try to **find** reliable coverage. To do this, have students try to find the claims from the source corroborated in other reliable news sites or library databases. Have students ask themselves the following questions:
    - What coverage is available on this topic?
    - Do other sources say similar things?
5. Finally, students should **trace** Claims, Quotes, and Media to their original sources. If a source uses quotes, data, etc. to support its claims, where did that information come from? Use a search engine or database to find the original source of that information. Sometimes data can be misrepresented, so it is important to understand the original context. Have students ask themselves the following questions:
    - Was the claim or quote fairly represented?
    - Does the information presented support the original context?

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