**Assignment Title:** True or False—Authority is Constructed and Contextual

**Goal:** The goal of this activity is to help students develop a broader understanding how authority is determined and what types of sources are considered appropriate in different contexts. It is also intended to help address some of the misconceptions that students have related to the source evaluation process.

**Framework Concept:**

* Authority is Constructed and Contextual

**Learning Outcomes:**

* Define different types of authority, such as subject expertise, societal position, or special experience
* Use indicators of authority to determine the credibility of sources, understanding the elements that might temper this credibility
* Recognize that authoritative content may be packaged formally or informally and may include sources of all types

Outcomes from the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (ACRL, 2016)

**Assignment Description:**

1. Divide students into pairs or small groups.

2. Provide each pair or group with a list of statements related to the authority of different types of information sources. Examples include:

* All articles published in a scholarly journal are scholarly sources
* If someone is an expert in Topic A, they are also an expert on Topic B
* A source that is appropriate for one situation may not be appropriate for other contexts
* Scholarly journal articles are always the best type of sources to use
* You should never cite a blog post in a paper
* A .org source is always a credible source
* The best indicator of whether or not a website is credible is the domain name (.com, .org., .gov)
* If an article is written by a recognized scholarly, it is a scholarly article

*Note: Statements can be adjusted to focus more specifically on information use within a specific discipline or field.*

3. Have students review and discuss the statements amongst themselves.

4. Discuss as a large group, correcting any misconceptions that students may have related to authoritative sources and context.

**Note: This assignment could be adapted for a virtual environment using the discussion board feature.**