TOPIC OR TITLE: Faculty Conversations: Bringing the Next Level of “Fake News” Library Instruction into the Classroom

FACULTY LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Faculty will be able to identify specific critical thinking skills related to fake news in order to determine appropriate library workshop instructional content.
2. Faculty will be able to recognize that meaningful fake news education goes beyond surface approaches to addressing the problem in order to provide students with relevant library instruction
3. Faculty will be able to identify the librarian’s role in student education about fake news beyond “checklist” instruction in order to provide students with instruction that engages their critical thinking skills

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: The librarian will lead the faculty member(s) through a conversation/discussion that will identify and prioritize the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate fake news in a library instruction session. During the conversation, the librarian will advocate for the librarian’s role as an educator in this kind of instruction.

TIME TO RUN ACTIVITY: 30-45 minutes

PREPARATION:

Optional: You may want to provide the following award-winning article to the faculty member(s) in order to provide some context to the conversation.

Bluemle, Stefanie R. "Post-Facts: Information Literacy and Authority after the 2016 Election." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 18, no. 2 (2018): 265-282. doi:10.1353/pla.2018.0015.

*From the abstract: “... [this article] isolates an element of the post-truth phenomenon, an element it calls post-facts, to elucidate why teaching source evaluation is not, by itself, an antidote to fake news or other evidence of Americans’ media illiteracy.”*

TEACHING PLAN:

Follow the steps below to work with faculty member(s) to come to a shared understanding about how fake news library instruction can incorporate critical thinking concepts rather than focus on a checklist approach to source evaluation.

Step 1: Brainstorm fake news-related critical thinking skills with the faculty member(s).

* 1. Ask the faculty member(s), “What critical thinking skills are necessary for students to be able to analyze the news and figure out what’s going on in the world?”
  2. The Walker Center for Teaching and Learning at The University of Tennessee/Chattanooga provides a great definition and discussion of educational practices focused on critical thinking skills. This site can help ground your discussion in pedagogical practices regarding critical thinking. See <https://www.utc.edu/walker-center-teaching-learning/teaching-resources/ct-ps.php> for more information.

Step 2: In collaboration with the faculty member(s), prioritize the answers to the previous step and consider the following factors.

1. Do any of the critical thinking skills you discussed above work together in an essential way, and if so how?
2. Are there 1-2 critical thinking skills that are of paramount importance? Why?
3. Do any of these critical thinking skills seem particularly relevant for your academic discipline?
4. Which of the critical thinking skills are not as important for this stage in the learning process?
5. Are there any of the critical thinking skills that are too complex to address in the time allotted?

Step 3: Describe the librarian’s role and ability to teach these critical thinking skills in a library workshop.

1. Based on the answers listed in Steps 1 and 2 and using the resources provided in this book, present potential learning outcomes and activities that might address the critical thinking skills prioritized in Step 2.
2. Manage expectations with the faculty member(s) regarding how much content can be taught in the time allotted.

HELPFUL HINTS:

Consider having a conversation with a trusted faculty member in the department prior to any other high stakes conversations you might have with other faculty members in order to better predict the answers to Steps 1 and 2 and in order to be prepared for ideas that you may present in Step 3.